

Modern Indian History Class 20

2nd December, 2023 at 1:00 PM


PEASANT REVOLTS: (1:10:19 PM):

- Q- The 1857 revolt was a culmination of small and big rebellions in the first hundred years of British rule.
- Q- The 1857 revolt was the biggest peasant revolt.

Grievances of peasants:

- Farming system 1772 in Bengal: or *ljardars*
- Oppression by **revenue farmers** who extracted high LR. *District Collector*
- RF had the support of British officials as collected LR under **DC's** supervision.
- PS 1793:
- Oppression by Zamindars i.e. high rents, illegal abwabs, lack of occupancy rights.
- British officials and British courts supported zamindar as all rights in land legally with zamindars. *Policing power of Zs were taken away and gave occupancy rights to ryots who were cultivating a land for more than 12 years.*
- The ineffective implementation of the **Rent Act 1859** in Bengal led to a lack of respect for the occupancy rights of Ryots (on the cultivation of plots for more than 12 years.) *Indigo Revolt: 1859-63
Pabna Agrarian League: 1873
Bengal Tenancy Act: 1885*
- Ryotwari and Mahalwari;
- Oppression of high LR y British government plus loss of lands by auction by government.
- Indebtedness to moneylenders, high-interest rates on loans, and then loss of land to moneylenders when defaulting on loans.
- Oppression by zamindars where z = landowner.
- Contract farming: *After Indigo commission 1860: Indigo cultivation shifted to Bihar from Bengal.*
- Oppression by Indigo planters in **Bengal until 1860 and later Bihar until 1918.**
- They forced ryots to cultivate indigo on part of their occupied land.
- 25 percent- Bengal, 15 percent- Bihar.
- Forced to take loans from planters.
- Were not given the right price for indigo cultivators leading to continued indebtedness to planters.
- Soil productivity hurt. *(* bz contract = legal)*
- Oppression by Indian **agents** of planters, British officials, and courts if Ryot refused to cultivate indigo *(employee)*
- Role of religion; *(* especially pre 1857 peasant revolts)*



Grievance that

-  Religion is under threat due to conversions.
- Britishers ended revenue-free tenures on lands of religious sects and institutions i.e. temples and mosques.
- Social reforms by law. EX: Sati Abolition Act 1829, Lex Loci Act 1850 (*Gave R2Inheritance to converts in their ancestor's property.)
Hindu WR marriage Act 1856
- Religion helped in giving organization especially when a sect revolted i.e. unity and a leader who did planning and coordination. (* BJP, Congress, RSS etc. are modern organizations- absent pre 1857)
- Therefore ^{this} ~~their~~ gap is filled by religion.

Grievances of tribals: (2:48:48 PM):

- 2 special aspects of tribals:
- Tribal autonomy. (* in civil and criminal matters)
- Lived away from the mainstream. (* live in hills and forest)
(way of life)
- The agrarian **order** was turned upside down by outsiders. that is
- British government and officials, British laws, British LR systems, British businesses, and Christian missionaries.
- Zamindars from plains, revenue farmers, merchants, moneylenders.
- The primary concern of the British was LR extraction.
- Thus:
- Zamindars of plains were made owners of forestland.
- The land was farmed out to revenue farmers i.e. LR collection was auctioned off to the highest bidder.
- In some cases, tribal chiefs made zamindar and in some cases, Tribal ryots made land owners.
(i.e. paisa chahiye anaaj nhi)
- Due to high LR and **insistence on payment in cash instead of produce**, there was an influx of moneylenders and consequent indebtedness and loss of land.

Therefore

-  There was a grievance of loss of land, high LR, and indebtedness.
- The autonomy of tribal chiefs and tribals hurt due to the application of British law in civil and criminal matters.
- Ex- Banned jhum cultivation. and hunting because Br wanted settled peasant communities paying LR regularly.
- Chenchus of Hyderabad became nearly extinct due to a ban on hunting.
- Loss of home for tribals due to;
- Indian Forest Act 1878, which divided the forest into reserved forest (No access to tribals), **protected forest**, and **uncategorized**.  (* open to all)
- Land acquisition by the government for railroad projects, mining, and forest produce. Especially- Timber. (* used in railways, ships etc.)

 (* tribals can use forest produce but only for personal consumption and not for sale.)

- Also, tribals were made to do forced labor on these projects Forest Rights Act 2006
- Therefore They lost their **forest lands and Right to forest Produce.** (Today- **FRA**, Van **Dhan** Yojana) forest produce
- The entry of Christian missionaries post-1813 led to religious interference.

Introduction example: (3:34:13 PM):

- **WEMC** responded to British rule in the form of socio-religious reforms plus they believed in the benevolence of British rule and that Britain will modernize India. for mains
- They benefitted from jobs created by the British rule. Western Educated Middle Class
- INM leader called pre-1857 revolts- prehistory of modern nationalism.
- It was tribals and peasants who first responded to British rule with **defiance** and often violently. (disobedience)
- Peasant revolts- 2 kinds:
- **Civil Uprising**- Where leadership of elites i.e. Raja, Zamindar.
- **Peasant revolts**- where the leadership of peasants.
- Handout for Revolts - document number 16- Peasant revolts.

The topic for the next class is Modern Nationalism