

NCERT Notes: Peasant Movements in the 19th Century - Rangpur Dhing

Subject: History

Category: Modern History

Topic: Peasant Movements in the 19th Century – Rangpur Dhing

NCERT notes on important topics for the UPSC civil services exam preparation. These notes will also be useful for other competitive exams like bank PO, SSC, state civil services exams and so on.

The Rangpur Dhing (rebellion) erupted in the district of Rangpur, Bengal in 1783. It was a protest by the peasants and the Zamindars against the very high demands of revenue by the government.

Causes of the Rangpur Dhing

- The East India Company was intent on squeezing out maximum revenue from the peasants.
- At that time, the Ijaradari system was in place according to which the ijardar/ izaredar (revenue farmer) was contracted by the Company to pay revenue that was fixed either annually or every 5 years on a piece of land. The company would auction off the land to the highest bidder (who became the ijardar).
- The ijardar was not interested in the welfare of the farmers who cultivated the land under him or in the development of the land.
- His sole aim was to squeeze out maximum revenue from the farmers so that he could pay the company and also earn some profit for himself.
- Agrarian economy suffered a lot under the various ‘experiments’ by the British on the land revenue system. Famines became commonplace and rural indebtedness surged. The farmers became mired in deep poverty.
- The tax rates were so high that the farmers found it almost impossible to pay the revenue.
- The zamindars also suffered under this system since the revenue demands were placed on him and he stood to lose his zamindari if he defaulted.
- The ijardars resorted to oppressive means to extract the revenue. Debi Singh, who was the ijardar of Rangpur and Dinajpur was especially severe.

The Uprising

- Debi Singh practiced extremely harsh measures against the peasants.
- When the peasants sent a petition to the company asking for relief, it did not pay any heed to the farmers’ grievances. This led to the farmers taking things into their own hands.

- The uprising started on January 18, 1783 when peasants and zamindars took control of the parganas of Kakina, Kazirhat and Tapa in district Rangpur.
- They attacked the courts, looted grains and released prisoners. For a whole 5 weeks, these areas were under the control of the rebels who appointed a nawab and other officials for running a parallel government.
- One of the main leaders of the revolt was Kena Sarkar.
- They forbid all revenue payments to the company.
- The uprising spread to Dinajpur also.
- Ultimately, the uprising was put down by the British and many rebels were killed.

Effect of the Rangpur Dhing

- This uprising brought to light the weaknesses of the ijardari system.
- Though the rebellion was suppressed, the government brought about some reforms in the farming system.
- It paved the way for a more permanent system of land revenue.
- This rebellion saw unity between Hindus and Muslims.