

## The Company Becomes the Diwan

- 12 August 1765: Mughal emperor appointed East India Company as Diwan of Bengal.



 Fig. 1 – Robert Clive receiving the Diwani of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa (1765)

- Company became financial administrator of Bengal → Needed regular revenue to fund trade and expenses.
- Aim: Collect more revenue & buy cotton and silk at cheap rates.

### Result:

- Artisans forced to sell at low prices → many left villages.
- Peasants couldn't pay high dues → agriculture declined.
- 1770: Terrible famine in Bengal → 10 million deaths (~1/3 population).



 Fig. 2 – Weekly market scene in Murshidabad, Bengal

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## The Need to Improve Agriculture

- Company wanted better revenue → agriculture had to improve.
  - So, in 1793: Introduced the Permanent Settlement.
- ◆ Definition: Permanent Settlement – A system where zamindars collected rent from peasants and paid a fixed revenue to the Company. The amount was fixed forever.

- **Expected:** Zamindars would invest in land improvement.
- **Reality:**
  - Revenue fixed too high → many zamindars lost land in auctions.
  - Cultivation expanded later, but Company didn't benefit (revenue couldn't be increased).
  - Many zamindars did not invest, just collected rent.



 Fig. 3 – Charles Cornwallis (Governor-General during Permanent Settlement)

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- ◆ **Definition:** Zamindar – Landowner who collected rent from peasants.
- ◆ **Definition:** Ryot – Cultivator or peasant

 **Source 1 – H.T. Colebrook (1806):** Under-tenants were exploited → high rent, loans, and debts left them hopeless.

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## **A New Revenue System – Mahalwari Settlement (1822)**

- Introduced by Holt Mackenzie in North-Western Provinces (now UP).
  - Believed village was a key institution.
  - Village-wise (mahal) revenue assessment based on land quality and customs.
  - Revenue collected by village headman, not zamindar.
- ◆ **Definition:** Mahal – Revenue estate (village or group of villages)

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## **The Munro System – Ryotwari Settlement (South India)**

- Introduced by Captain Alexander Read and developed by Thomas Munro (1819–26).



 Fig. 4 – Thomas Munro

- **Belief:** No zamindars in South → settlement should be directly with cultivators (ryots).
- **Surveyed** each field and assessed revenue.

**Problem:** Revenue officials demanded too much → peasants couldn't pay → villages deserted.

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## Crops for Europe

- **British** saw countryside as a source of:
  - **Revenue**
  - **Raw materials** (indigo, opium, jute, tea, cotton, etc.)



**Fig. 5** – A kalamkari print, twentieth-century India



**Fig. 6** – A Morris cotton print, late-nineteenth-century England

 Fig. 5 – Kalamkari print from Andhra Pradesh

 Fig. 6 – Floral cotton print by William Morris (UK)

### ◆ **Indigo** – A plant used for making blue dye

- **India** was the world's largest supplier.

- ◆ Definition: Plantation – Large farm using hired or forced labour to grow a single crop.

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## Why Demand for Indigo Rose

- Cloth dyers in Europe preferred indigo over local woad (dull color).
- Indigo plantations in the Americas collapsed due to slave revolts.



 Fig. 7 – Slave revolt in St Domingue, 1791

- By 1810, 95% of Britain's indigo came from India.

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## Two Systems of Indigo Cultivation

- ◆ Nij Cultivation – Planter grows indigo on own land using hired labour.

Problems:

- Needed large land blocks, but land was scarce.
- Labourers unavailable (busy with rice farming).
- High cost of ploughs and bullocks.

Result: Only 25% of indigo cultivated this way.

- ◆ Ryoti System – Planters forced ryots (peasants) to grow indigo on their land.

- Contract (satta) signed under pressure
- Ryots got advance loan, but price paid was low
- Cycle of debt → soil exhausted → couldn't grow rice after indigo



 Fig. 8 – Indigo harvesting in Bengal



 Fig. 9 – Indigo brought from fields to factory



 Fig. 10 – Indigo factory near fields






 Fig. 11 – Women carrying indigo plants



 Fig. 12 – Worker beating solution in vat

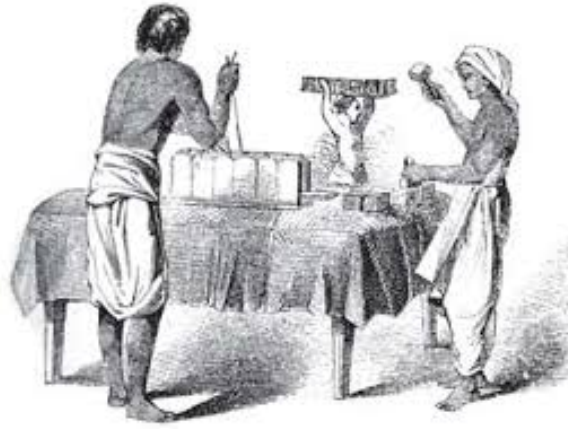


 Fig. 13 – Indigo pulp being dried and packed for sale

- ◆ **Definition: Bigha** – Unit of land area (~ $\frac{1}{3}$  acre in Bengal)
- ◆ **Definition: Vat** – Large container for fermenting and processing indigo

## ★ The Blue Rebellion (1859)

- **March 1859:** Thousands of ryots in Bengal refused to grow indigo.
- Riots, factory attacks, social boycott of planters and gomasthas (agents).
- Women joined fight with household tools.

### Reasons for rebellion:

- Support from village headmen & zamindars
- British government feared another rebellion after 1857
- Lieutenant Governor toured area; magistrate (Ashley Eden) issued notice: No one would be forced to grow indigo.

 **Source 2** – Indigo song from Bengal village: “We will no longer be beaten in silence...”

 **Source 3** – Hadji Mulla to Indigo Commission: “I would rather beg than sow indigo.”

### ✓ Indigo Commission (1860):

- Held planters guilty for coercion
- Said ryots need not grow indigo after completing contracts

### 📌 Champaran Movement (1917):

- Indigo production shifted to Bihar
- Mahatma Gandhi visited after being invited by peasants

- Movement marked the beginning of Gandhi's mass leadership in India

## Important Definitions

Term	Meaning
Diwani	Right to collect revenue & taxes
Zamindar	Landowner who collected rent
Ryot	Cultivator/peasant
Mahal	Revenue village or group of villages
Plantation	Large farm with hired/forced labour
Vat	Large fermenting tank for indigo
Nij	Indigo cultivation on planter's land
Ryoti	Indigo cultivation by peasants under contract
Bigha	Unit of land (~ $\frac{1}{3}$ acre in Bengal)