

B.A. 3rd Semester  
Paper :- Major I  
Paper Title :- Introduction to modern Indian  
history.

Unit = IV  
Chapter/Topic :-  
Land revenue systems under  
British rule in India.

Introduction :- During British rule in India, there were three main land revenue systems: the zamindari system, the Ryotwari system and the mahalswari system.

Zamindari system :- Under this system, zamindars collected revenue from peasants in exchange for making them cultivate the land.

Ryotwari system :- This system was a modified version of the zamindari system. It was introduced in the Gangetic valley, the North-west provinces, some parts of central India, and the Punjab. The system was revised periodically after 20 to 30 years.

The British East India Company's main goal was to increase land revenue collection. Their policies were focused on maximizing income from land without considering the consequences for peasants and cultivators. The consequences of the British land revenue policy included: payment arrears, more outstanding debt, increased land sales, and dispossession.

The land revenue policy in India was mainly fixed by the Mughal Empire, but the British felt the urgent need for new policies in their favor. As a result, they introduced three land revenue policies — ① permanent settlement, Ryotwari settlement and ③ mahalwari system.

permanent settlement (1793) :- The permanent settlement aimed to establish a permanent amount for the land revenue. It was introduced in Bengal and Bihar in 1793 by Lord Cornwallis and was planned by John Shore. It was later extended to Orissa, the northern districts of Madras and the districts of Varanasi.

main features :-

1. The zamindars, who were earlier only tax collectors without any proprietary rights prior to 1793, were now made the owners of the land.

2. The ownership was hereditary until they paid the tax on time, and in case of failure the lands were auctioned. Thus, the ownership was made transferable.

3. The state was to receive  $10/11$ th of the rent the zamindars received from the peasantry with only  $1/11$ th going to the zamindars themselves. However, the amounts they would be required to pay as land revenue were made

4. Any increase in the rent was to be kept by the zamindars themselves, the state would not put them under any more demand.
5. In order to secure the maximum amount the initial revenue fixation was made arbitrarily and without consulting the zamindars.

Ryotwari settlement (1820):- It was introduced by Alexander Rees and Thomas Munro in parts of the Madras and Bombay presidencies.

main features:-

- (i) The Ryotwari settlement was not permanent. After 20 to 30 years, when the revenue demand typically increased, it was periodically revised.
- (ii) The land revenue was collected from each ryot individually, thus, unlike the permanent settlement, the Ryotwari settlement recognised peasants as the owners of the land.
- (iii) There was no peasant ownership system prior to the Ryotwari settlement.

mahalwari system:- It was a modified version of the zamindari settlement, introduced in the Gangetic valley, the North-west provinces, some parts of central India and the Punjab. The revenue policy was conceptualised by Holt Mackenzie in 1819 and introduced by the British in 1822.

main features :-

(i) This ~~to~~ land revenue settlement was to be made village by village or estate (mahal) by the estate with land lords or heads of families who collectively claimed to be the land lords of the village or the estate.

(ii) The settlement under the mahalwari system was not made permanent. It was revised periodically after 20 to 30 years when the revenue demand was usually raised.