



INSTITUTE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION
IDE
Rajiv Gandhi University



MAHIS -505

History of India (1707-1857)-II

MA HISTORY

4th Semester

Rajiv Gandhi University

www.ide.rgu.ac.in

HISTORY OF INDIA

(1707-1857)-II

MA [History]

Fourth Semester

MAHIS – 505

RAJIV GANDHI UNIVERSITY

Arunachal Pradesh, INDIA - 791 112

BOARD OF STUDIES	
1. Prof. SK Singh Department of History, Rajiv Gandhi University Arunachal Pradesh	Chairman
2. Prof.B. Tripathy Department of History Rajiv Gandhi University Arunachal Pradesh	Member
3. Prof. S. Dutta (Retd.) Ward No. 2, Bairagimath, PO: Dibrugarh-786003 Assam	Member
4. Prof. (Mrs.) S. Hilaly Department of History Rajiv Gandhi University Arunachal Pradesh	Member
5. Prof.AshanRiddi Director, IDE Rajiv Gandhi University	Member Secretary

Authors

Rajeev Garg, ©Reserved, 2021

Col Pradeep Bajaj(Retd) ©Reserved, 2021

Dr. Vijay Kumar Tiwary & Bhaskar Pridarshy, 2021

Vikas Publishing House©Reserved, 2021

All rights reserved. No part of this publication which is material protected by this copyright notice maybe reproduced or transmitted or utilized or stored in any form or by any means now known or hereinafter Invented, electronic, digital or mechanical, including photocopying, scanning, recording or by any information storage or retrieval system, without prior written permission from the Publisher.

"Information contained in this book has been published by Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd. and has been obtained by its Authors from sources believed to be reliable and are correct to the best of their knowledge. However, IDE—Rajiv Gandhi University, the publishers and Its Authors shall be in no event be liable for any errors, omissions or damages arising out of use of this information and specifically disclaim any implied warranties or merchantability or fitness for any particular use"



Vikas®¹ is the registered trademark of Vikas® Publishing House Pvt. Ltd.

VIKAS® PUBLISHING HOUSE PVT LTD¹

E-23, Sector-8, Noida - 201301 (UP)

Phone: 0120-4078900 • Fax: 0120-4078999

Regd. Office: 576, Masjid Road, Jangpura, New Delhi 110 014

• Website: www.vikaspublishing.com • Email: helpline@vikaspublishing.com

About the University

Rajiv Gandhi University (formerly Arunachal University) is a premier institution for higher education in the state of Arunachal Pradesh and has completed twenty-five years of its existence. Late Smt. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, laid the foundation stone of the university on 4th February, 1984 at Rono Hills, where the present campus is located.

Ever since its inception, the university has been trying to achieve excellence and fulfill the objectives envisaged in the University Act. The university received academic recognition under Section 2(f) from the University Grants Commission on 28th March, 1985 and started functioning from 1st April, 1985. It got financial recognition under section 12-B of the UGC on 25th March, 1994. Since then Rajiv Gandhi University, (then Arunachal University) has carved a niche for itself in the educational scenario of the country following its selection as a University with potential for excellence by a high-level expert committee of the University Grants Commission from among universities in India.

The University was converted into a Central University with effect from 9th April, 2007 as per notification of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.

The University is located atop Rono Hills on a picturesque tableland of 302 acres overlooking the river Dikrong. It is 6.5 km from the National Highway 52-A and 25 km from Itanagar, the State capital. The campus is linked with the National Highway by the Dikrong bridge.

The teaching and research programmes of the University are designed with a view to play a positive role in the socio-economic and cultural development of the State. The University offers Undergraduate, Post-graduate, M.Phil and Ph.D. programmes. The Department of Education also offers the B.Ed. programme.

There are fifteen colleges affiliated to the University. The University has been extending educational facilities to students from the neighbouring states, particularly Assam. The strength of students in different departments of the University and in affiliated colleges has been steadily increasing.

The faculty members have been actively engaged in research activities with financial support from UGC and other funding agencies. Since inception, a number of proposals on research projects have been sanctioned by various funding agencies to the University. Various departments have organized numerous seminars, workshops and conferences. Many faculty members have participated in national and international conferences and seminars held within the country and abroad. Eminent scholars and distinguished personalities have visited the University and delivered lectures on various disciplines.

The academic year 2000-2001 was a year of consolidation for the University. The switch over from the annual to the semester system took off smoothly and the performance of the students registered a marked improvement. Various syllabi designed by Boards of Post-graduate Studies (BPGS) have been implemented. VSAT facility installed by the ERNET India, New Delhi under the UGC-Infonet program, provides Internet access.

In spite of infrastructural constraints, the University has been maintaining its academic excellence. The University has strictly adhered to the academic calendar, conducted the examinations and declared the results on time. The students from the University have found placements not only in State and Central Government Services, but also in various institutions, industries and organizations. Many students have emerged successful in the National Eligibility Test (NET).

Since inception, the University has made significant progress in teaching, research, innovations in curriculum development and developing infrastructure.

About IDE

The formal system of higher education in our country is facing the problems of access, limitation of seats, lack of facilities and infrastructure. Academicians from various disciplines opine that it is learning which is more important and not the channel of education. The education through distance mode is an alternative mode of imparting instruction to overcome the problems of access, infrastructure and socio-economic barriers. This will meet the demand for qualitative higher education of millions of people who cannot get admission in the regular system and wish to pursue their education. It also helps interested employed and unemployed men and women to continue with their higher education, Distance education is a distinct approach to impart education to learners who remained away in the space and/or time from the teachers and teaching institutions on account of economic, social and other considerations. Our main aim is to provide higher education opportunities to those who are unable to join regular academic and vocational education programmes in the affiliated colleges of the University and make higher education reach to the doorsteps in rural and geographically remote areas of Arunachal Pradesh in particular and North-eastern part of India in general. In 2008, the Centre for Distance Education has been renamed as "Institute of Distance Education (IDE)."

Continuing the endeavor to expand the learning opportunities for distant learners, IDE has introduced Post Graduate Courses in 5 subjects (Education, English, Hindi, History and Political Science) from the Academic Session 2013-14. The Institute of Distance Education is housed in the Physical Sciences Faculty Building (first floor) next to the University Library. The University campus is 6 kms from NERIST point on National Highway 52A. The University buses ply to NERIST point regularly.

Outstanding Features of Institute of Distance Education:

(1) At Par with Regular Mode

Eligibility requirements, curricular content, mode of examination and the award of degrees are on par with the colleges affiliated to the Rajiv Gandhi University and the Department(s) of the University.

(ii) Self-Instructional Study Material (SISM)

The students are provided SISM prepared by the Institute and approved by Distance Education Council (DEC), New Delhi. This will be provided at the time of admission at the IDE or its Study Centres. SISM is provided only in English except Hindi subject.

(iii) Contact and Counseling Programme (CCP)

The course curriculum of every programme involves counselling in the form of personal contact programme of duration of approximately 7-15 days. The CCP shall not be compulsory for BA. However for professional courses and MA the attendance in CCP will be mandatory.

(iv) Field Training and Project

For professional course(s) there shall be provision of field training and project writing in the concerned subject.

(v) Medium of Instruction and Examination

The medium of instruction and examination will be English for all the subjects except for those subjects where the learners will need to write in the respective languages.

(vi) Subject/Counseling Coordinators

For developing study material, the IDE appoints subject coordinators from within and outside the University. In order to run the PCCP effectively Counseling Coordinators are engaged from the Departments of the University. The Counseling-Coordinators do necessary coordination for involving resource persons in contact and counseling programme and assignment evaluation. The learners can also contact them for clarifying their difficulties in their respective subjects.

SYLLABUS
History of India (1707-1857)-II

UNIT I: AGRARIAN POLICY OF THE BRITISH

- a) Land Revenue- Agriculture
- b) Permanent Settlement
- c) Ryotwari
- d) Mahalwari

UNIT II: HISTORY OF EDUCATION IN INDIA

- a) Growth of English Education
- b) Ram Mohan Roy
- c) Derozio
- d) Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar

UNIT III: MERCANTILE CAPITALISM AND EAST INDIA COMPANY

- a) Mercantilist Capitalism and East India (1757-1813)
- b) Transition of Mercantilism to Free Trade Imperialism (1813-1857)

UNIT IV: FRONTIER POLICY OF THE BRITISH

- a) Relations with Afghanistan
- b) Relation with Burma
- c) Relation with Nepal

UNIT V: Revolt of 1857

- a) Historiography
- b) Causes
- c) Nature
- d) Impact

INTRODUCTION

The period from 1707 to 1857 was interjected with events which had profound consequences on the history of India. The advent of the European traders and their subsequent domination of the subcontinent changed the socio-political and economic milieu forever. The ascendancy of the British colonial enterprise was a more complex process than it was initially thought to be. While the British have been criticized for exploiting India's economic resources, the colonial rulers were instrumental in initiating reforms in social, educational, commercial and judicial spheres.

This book History of India (1707-1857) has been designed keeping in mind the self-instruction mode (SIM) format and follows a simple pattern, wherein each unit of the book begins with the Introduction followed by the Unit Objectives for the topic. The content is then presented in a simple and easy-to-understand manner, and is interspersed with Check Your Progress questions to reinforce the student's understanding of the topic. A list of Questions and Exercises is also provided at the end of each unit. The Summary, Key Terms and Activity further act as useful tools for students and are meant for effective recapitulation of the text.

This book is divided into five units:

Unit 1: Outlines the agrarian and revenue policies of the British.

Unit 2: Familiarizes you with the education system in India from the 18th century till the 20th century. You will learn how the Company's attempt to improve the administrative system led to the spread of education in the country and how Western education gave birth to new thoughts among the Indians.

Unit 3: Acquaints you with the phases of colonialism, and how the British manoeuvred policies to suit their business interest causing drain of wealth.

Unit 4: Outlines the British East India Company's relations with Afghanistan, Burma and Nepal and the numerous wars fought with them.

Unit 5: Discusses the causes of the Revolt of 1857, its nature and effect, and the debate regarding it.

UNIT 1 AGRARIAN POLICY OF THE BRITISH

Structure

- 0 Introduction
- 1 Unit Objectives
- 2 Land Revenue—Agrarian Settlement
- 3 Permanent Settlement in Bengal
 - 3.1 History of Permanent Settlement in Bengal
 - 3.2 Features
 - 3.3 Failure
- 4 Ryotwari Settlement in the Deccan
 - 4.1 Features
- 5 Mahalwari Settlement in Central India
 - 6.5.1 Features
- 6 Summary
- 7 Key Terms
- 8 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 9 Questions and Exercises
- 10 Further Reading

0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, you studied about the various administrative policies of the British East India Company, such as the Diwani, the Regulating Act, Pitt's India Act and the Charter Acts of 1813 and 1833.

Agrarian economy is considered to be the backbone of Indian economy. More than half of the Indian population depends on the agrarian sector for its livelihood. This ratio was much higher before the advent of British rule in India. As the British entered India, the entire agrarian economic system changed as they brought profound changes in the history of agrarian India. Before Independence, several pioneering experiments were made by kings, landlords, and the British government for agrarian development, but all these efforts could not wipe out the multidimensional problems of rural India. In agrarian society, land is the primary resource on which the rural economy is based. The pattern of ownership of the land has to be rational if growth and justice has to be achieved along with profit.

In this unit, you will learn that the East India Company formulated several policies and added several settlement acts during their period. Some of the most well known acts were the Permanent Settlement of Bengal (1793), the Ryotwari Settlement, and the Mahalwari Settlement. All these system gave birth to zamindari system in India under which the land was owned by the landlords and a fixed amount of rent or tax was paid to the government.

1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Describe the land revenue and agrarian settlement of India
- Explain the process of Permanent Settlement in Bengal
- Discuss the Ryotwari Settlement in the Deccan
- Describe the concept of Mahalwari Settlement in Central India

2 LAND REVENUE—AGRARIAN SETTLEMENT

Agrarian settlement is one of the most important features of the Indian agrarian economy. The agrarian settlement mainly denotes the land system of rural India. Since, time immemorial, the country derived its principal revenues from agriculture. According to some thinkers, private property and peasant proprietorship existed in agrarian India even in the Vedic period. According to one view, the kings could acquire proprietary rights on the plot of the agrarian land under a tenant only if he purchased it from the latter. Thus, the king was not the owner of the land, but he was only entitled to levy taxes on the holders of the land.

According to the *Manusmriti*, 'land is the property of him who cut away the wood or who tilled or cleared it'. In the *Arthashastra*, it is maintained that 'land may be confiscated from those who do not cultivate them and given to others; or they may be cultivated by village labourers and traders, left those owners who do not cultivate them might pay less'.

In ancient times, the main aim of the king was to get the agrarian land continuously cultivated as the tenant paid them taxes. The king claimed not the ownership right of the soil but the right to the realization of rent, cess and the power to grant the waste land. The king, thus, enjoyed the right to a share of the produce. In the beginning there was no intermediary between the cultivator and the king. Even before the Mauryan times the right of the ruler to a share in produce of all cultivated land was recognized. It was normally one-sixth of the gross produce. Later on it was raised to one-fourth. This was the time when the agrarian land was classified into several classes. Some of such classes are as follows:

- State land
- Land in the occupation of the tenant who paid taxes to the king
- Uncultivated and wasteland under the control of the king
- Land allotted to officers of the ruler in lieu of their services

Thus, the king's right in the agrarian land was at best a limited one. The right in the soil actually belonged to the person who had brought it under cultivation. But with the change in the political situations over centuries the rules invested their senior officers or relatives with the right of revenue collection and general administration in distant places of the kingdom. This resulted in rack-renting by changing the holders from year to year in order to extract the enlarged revenue.

In some part of the country, all village lands were jointly owned by the village community. The growth of monarchies like the Mauryan empire and subsequently the Gupta empire produced the whole system of bureaucratic administration. The rights on the land were divided between chiefs of the state, the village communities

and the individual producers. The rulers or their vassals had the right to collect tribute from the village communities. But the state was the ultimate power in a certain sense because it collected a share of produce, realized through tributary chiefs. In between the collapse of one dynasty and the rise of another the local rulers and the chiefs were the actual caretaker of the agrarian land.

During the Muslim rule in India significant changes took place in the agrarian land settlement. This was the time when the system of revenue farming developed. The new rulers farmed out kingdoms for fixed revenue either with the old rulers or with their superior officers and relatives. Despite this new development the long established rights of the *khudkasht raiyats* were not only recognized but also honoured by the new rulers. But between the king as the supreme owner of the entire domain and the actual tillers of the soil there grew up an intermediary class who collected and transmitted the land revenue to the king. A number of zamindars and jagirdars came into existence as a result of generous gifts offered by the king. The multiplication of land titles originated mainly from these grants or assignments of revenue. It was always intended to convey a title to the land as well. Such grants were called *inam* or *muafi* grants. The other type of grant had nothing to do with the land right. These were jagir lands of which the revenue was assigned to certain state offices and military commands. In course of time, people receiving such gifts established their own estates. Usually, such zamindars acted as an intermediary between the king and the *khudkasht raiyat* and appear to be closely related with the right of collecting land revenue.

During the Mughal period all the agrarian lands were divided into two categories, i.e., the Khalsa lands and the assigned lands. The revenue administration of the former was directly under the government while the revenue of the latter was assigned by the emperor to different categories of officers and subjects. Revenue was accepted both in cash and in kind and was often taken in installment. As a matter of fact, the position of the cultivators during the Muslim period was essentially the same as during the earlier Hindu period.

During the British rule, initially they did little to interfere with the existing land system. As a matter of fact, the East India Company itself obtained zamindari rights over the estates. These zamindaries were framed out to the highest bidders, because the Company was interested only in the collection of highest amount. Thus, the company's *banyas* and other speculator became the farmers of revenue and began to fleece the peasants. The introduction of a new zamindari system marked the beginning of a new feudal landlordism in total disregard of the peasant's traditional rights. For the first time the agrarian land became a commodity.

In 1765, the East India Company obtained the diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa from Mughal Emperor Shah Alam. For some years the Company did not take upon itself the actual collection of revenue, but delegated it to the naib diwan whose role was to collect the largest amount of money in the shortest possible time. From 1765 to 1772 this system continued and caused great hardship to the peasants. In 1772, Warren Hasting was sent to Bengal as governor general and was directed to undertake the work of diwani directly. As a result of this many of the zamindars were displaced and the peasants suffered the most.

In 1784, Pitt's India Act was passed. It called for an inquiry into the real jurisdiction, rights and privileges of zamindars and directed the rehearsal of the

grievances of those zamindars who had been unjustly displaced. The Court of Directors suggested that the settlements should be made with the land-holders, but at the same time the rights of all descriptions of persons should be maintained. It also suggested that durable assessment of revenue on the basis of past experience should be made. Thus, during the time of Lord Cornwallis, the Decennial Settlement was ordered in 1789 in the agrarian sector of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. It was ultimately made permanent in 1793. This is known as the Permanent Settlement of revenue for Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and gave birth to zamindari system in these provinces.

By the Permanent Settlement of 1793, the zamindars were declared to be the proprietors of their estates and were given the right to transfer their proprietary rights to whomever they liked by sale, gift or otherwise. The main objective of the Permanent Settlement was to ensure a regular flow of revenue to the Company and to create a class of persons who would be a great supporter of the English in India. With this settlement, British brought three major changes in the agrarian land relation. Firstly, all the remnants of village communities were swept away. Secondly, the British converted the landlords into real estate owners. Thus, the capitalist concept of private property in land relations was introduced with the hope that the landlord would take measures for the improvement of agriculture in India. Thirdly, under the British land systems, land became a saleable commodity. Previously, the concept of sale and purchase of land for money was completely unknown to the Indian agrarian society. The British introduced measures which transformed land into a commodity. Under this new settlement, three classes emerged in the rural society of India, i.e., the landlords the peasants and the agricultural labourers.

Later, the British extended the settlement to the other states and created zamindari there too, but they changed over to 'temporary settlement' under which the land revenue could be reassessed after a period ranging between 25 and 40 years in different states.

Another and totally different agrarian settlement known as Ryotwari Settlement evolved for large parts of Bombay and Madras and subsequently extended to north-eastern and north-western India. According to this settlement, each peasant holding a plot of land was recognized as the landlord and made directly responsible to the state for the annual payment of land revenue.

Next was the Mahalwari Settlement, which also had the same features of Ryotwari Settlement but here the settlement was made with the entire village community instead of an individual peasant.

It may be pointed out that in all the cases the land rents fixed were excessive and all the settlements were instrumental in the destruction of the organic village community based on custom and tradition. According to Daniel and Alice Thorner 'whereas the zamindari system made the landlords the master of the village communities, the Ryotwari system cut through the heart of the village communities by making separate arrangements between each peasant, cultivator and the state'. Through the introduction of several forms of agrarian settlements in rural India, the British were able to create a class of people whose interests were directly tied to British rule in India. But the system also helped to create a class of absentee landlords who were more interested in squeezing higher land rents than in real agricultural progress. Excessive pressure of population resulting in a high demand for land helped the zamindars to charge exorbitant rent and numerous other exactions from the

tenant cultivators. The result of the whole change in the agrarian land system led to the emergence of subsistence agriculture. Even the Ryotwari settlement lost its original form and the rigorous, prompt and inelastic demands of high revenue forced peasant cultivators to sell land to moneylenders. The British agrarian settlements introduced by Lord Cornwallis thus, helped the concentration of economic power in the hands of absentee landlords in rural India. It depressed the agriculture and peasantry.

Thus, we see that the Indian agrarian society has undergone a great change since the beginning of the last two centuries. The evolutionary process of history has built the agrarian structure of India in which the social, economic and political changes did play a very prominent role. The feudalism of the Indian type developed between the sixth and the twelfth centuries CE and it further developed and perpetuated through the entire period of Muslim rule in India. The introduction of the zamindari system under British agrarian settlement marked by the beginning of a new feudal landlordism in total disregarded the peasants' traditional rights.

Agrarian production

Agrarian production forms the backbone of the Indian economy and despite the concerted industrialization in the last five decades; it occupies a place of pride. The performance of the agrarian sector is judged primarily by its ability to expand production of food and raw materials. Increased agrarian production is of critical importance when both population and the income growth are concerned, particularly if the poorest segments of the population share in the economic growth. For example, the ratio of population growth and the agrarian growth should not be same, that is, the quality of food demanded will change the pattern and volume of demand. Therefore, the agrarian production in terms of quantity and quality must accelerate if future demands are to be met. It was observed generally that the increase in the agrarian production may come from the following major sources:

- Extension of the agricultural land
- Increase in yield or intensification method
- Change in cropping pattern or the increasing percentage share of high yield giving crops

The above-mentioned sources were not very functional before India got Independence in the year 1947. The available agrarian statistics for pre-independence period, though sketchy and defective, indicate that during the first half of this century, agrarian production rose only marginally, as compared to the growth of population. For instance, according to J.P Bhattacharjee, India's population rose by 38 per cent between 1901 and 1946, but the area of cultivated land rose only by 18 per cent, the average productivity of all crops rose by 13 per cent and of food crops by 1 one per cent. The increase in population had thus overtaken the increase in food production by a considerable extent. The common belief held at that time was that there was deterioration in fertility of land and a general decline in the efficiency of the agricultural practices.

ACTIVITY

What factors helped the British East India Company establish its rule in India?

3 PERMANENT SETTLEMENT IN BENGAL

Bengal became famous during the British period because of the Permanent Settlement system of land revenue. Bengal was the first considerable province to come under the British administration. Zamindars and revenue farmers were very famous in the territory of Bengal and they were used by the British to interact with the locals. The British administration attributed a proprietary interest for the first time to them. In the case of revenue-farmers there was no well established rule of inheritance. But the British administration made their position definitely hereditary by recognizing them as proprietors. This was passed as an Act in the year 1793. The act was famous by the name of Permanent Settlement. The act was especially passed for the state of Bihar, Bengal and Orissa.

Through the Permanent Settlement Act, the British declared that all landlords, zamindars and *talukadars* have to pay some amount of rent to the government. The amount of rent was fixed permanently by the government itself. The zamindars were elevated to the rank of landlord over the land in respect of which he was merely responsible for revenue collection. This was one of the ways through which the British rule established a permanent position in India. In Bengal, the Permanent Settlement created royal zamindars that strengthened the hold of British rule in India.

3.1 History of Permanent Settlement in Bengal

It was in 1784 that Pitt's India Bill became law which placed the administration of the Company under the control of the Crown, and thus, compelled some reforms. The directors of the Company felt that they must put their house in order. They selected a nobleman of high character and broad sympathies to succeed Warren Hasting, and in their letter of the 12th April 1786 they gave the new Governor General, Lord Cornwallis, full instructions for his guidance.

In this letter, the directors expressed their disapprobation of the frequent changes in the revenue system of Bengal and their desire to pursue any one system under watchful superintendence. They condemned the endeavors which had been made to continually increase the land tax, and to exile zamindars in favour of farmers, *sazawals* and *amins*, who had no permanent interest in the well being of the cultivators. They expressed their opinion that the most likely means of avoiding defalcations would be to introduce Permanent Settlement of the land revenue, estimated on responsible principles, for the due payment of which the hereditary tenure of the possessor would be the best and the only necessary security. They directed that the settlement should be made in all practicable instances with the zamindars and they declared that 'a moderate *jumma* or assessment, regularly and punctually collected, unites the consideration of our interests with the happiness of the natives and security of the landholders more rationally than any imperfect collection of any exaggerated *jumma* to be enforced with severity and vexation'. While they intended the settlement to be ultimately made permanent, they desired that the first settlement should be concluded for ten year only. The man who was chosen to give effect to this new scheme was none other than Lord Cornwallis who was worthy of his task.

On his arrival in India, Lord Cornwallis found it impossible to conclude a ten years settlement without some further inquiry into the question of usages, tenures and rents, and he vigorously prosecuted these inquiries. After all inquiries and investigations, in November 1791 an amended and complete Code of Regulation was passed by the government for a settlement of ten years and the settlement was concluded in every district of Bengal in 1793. The whole amount of land revenue obtained from the Bengal, Bihar and Orissa for the year 1790-91 was ₹26,800,989. Lord Cornwallis issued a proclamation on the 22 March 1793, announcing the permanency of the settlement.

Permanent Settlement and the condition of Bengal

The Permanent Settlement is the one Act of the British nation within the century and a half of their rule in India which most effectually safeguarded the economic welfare of the people. It was an Act which was in consonance with the modern policy of the civilized nations to permit the people to profit by their own industries, instead of paralyzing their industries by an uncertain and increasing state demand. Agriculture had largely extended in Bengal within the last hundred years and the land tax of Bengal, which was fixed in 1793 at 90 per cent of the rental, now bears a proportion of about 28 per cent to the rental of landlords and new taxes amounting to 61/4 per cent on the rental have been added for the roads and public works.

Since 1793, there has never been a famine in permanently settled Bengal, which has caused any serious loss of life. If the prosperity and happiness of a nation be the criterion of wisdom and success, Lord Cornwallis's Permanent Settlement of 1793 is the wisest and the most successful measure which the British nations ever adopted in Bengal.

3.2 Features

On the examination of the Permanent Settlement Act in Bengal, it became evident that the British administration made the zamindar the proprietors, instead of recognizing them as mere revenue-collecting agencies. Thereafter, the government had strictly limited claims from them. The significant features of the Permanent Settlement were as follows:

- The total amount of revenue was fixed for each locality.
- The amount was to be fixed in perpetuity and was unalterable.
- The zamindars were to retain one-eleventh of the total revenue.
- Zamindars were given virtually free power to evict the occupiers who fail to pay the rent.
- The zamindars that collected the land revenue were made the owner of the land.
- The zamindars had to pay a fixed amount of revenue to the Company. It could neither be increased nor decreased later on.
- It was decided that the Government would have a claim to the 10/11th of the gross revenue, the balance being kept by the zamindars. The government assured the zamindars that except the land revenue, they would not have to pay any other gift or tax to the government.
- In case any zamindars failed to pay the fixed amount of the revenue, the government had the right to confiscate some part of his land holding to recover the amount due.
- The farmer or the *ryots* were made the tenants of the zamindars.

- The zamindars were deprived of their judicial and administrative powers.
- The government assured the zamindars that it would not interfere with their traditions.

Achievements of Permanent Settlement

The immediate achievements of the Permanent Settlement in Bengal were as follows:

- The security of the interests of zamindars increased.
- There was an assurance of fixed revenue as far as the government was concerned.
- The revenue, the zamindars was to pay to the Government was fixed in perpetuity and the zamindar was left practically free to levy rent at will on his ryots and the underholders.
- The zamindars were permitted to appropriate to their own use the difference between the sum which they paid to the Government and the rent they use to realize from the land.
- They were moreover encouraged to exert themselves to reclaim cultivable waste land for cultivation.

All these achievements helped the zamindars to emerge as a very powerful class in society by concentrating immense bargaining power in their hands as well as in their relation with the land. The Permanent Settlement not only benefited the zamindars but the entire agricultural community. The entire peasant population shared the benefit and become more prosperous and resourceful on the account of this measure. It afforded a protection to agriculture which was virtually the only means of the nation's subsistence. In Bengal, the Permanent Settlement precluded the state from increasing the annual economic drain of wealth out of the country. It saved the nation from fatal and disastrous famines.

3.3 Failure

The Permanent Settlement suffered from many serious drawbacks and hence, failed. It was difficult for then landlords to collect much money from their tenants or *ryots*. The East India Company had fixed exorbitant rates of land revenue. Also, the settlement ignored all the rights of tenants and small proprietors whose land became the private property of the zamindars. Thus, in many cases, the lands of the landlords were sold due to non-payment of fixed amount of land revenue to the Company.

4 RYOTWARI SETTLEMENT IN THE DECCAN

Not long after Cornwallis introduced the Permanent Settlement in Bengal, the question of extending it to other territories, acquired by Company from time to time, presented itself. The capture of Baramahal and Dindigul from Tipu Sultan in the Third Mysore War and the cession of the northern Cicars in 1794 as a *jagir* brought the issue to the fore. In 1799, Tanjore and Coimbatore and in 1801 Malabar and the territory of the Nawab of Arcot had been annexed to Madras Presidency. Among the first officials to be associated with land revenue settlement in these areas were Alexander Read and Lionel Place. Thomas Munro was one of the Read's assistants. In 1800, he was transferred from Kanara to the Deccan districts ceded by the Nizam of Hyderabad.

While these officials were busy sorting out the complex revenue affairs under their charge, Lord Wellesley, the governor general, issued a peremptory order to the Madras government to introduce the Bengal System of Permanent Settlement in its newly acquired dominion. The directive was not well received, for as Munro and his assistants gained in experience, they became extremely critical of the Bengal system. Moreover they were able to sell their new ideas to the local administration. In particular, William Bentinck, the governor of Madras, was attracted by what they were doing and ruled that further progress with the zamindari settlement be stayed. Later in the year 1808, permission was accorded to experiment with village panchayat apart from the Ryotwari Settlement.

The Ryotwari Settlement had a staunch champion in Munro. As a result of the earlier experiences in Tanjore, Hodgson, who was then powerful in the Madras Board of Revenue, was keen on the village panchayats. In 1808–1809, the Ryotwari experiment was tried in most of the districts. The settlement was just like the Permanent Settlement of Bengal. The Ryotwari Settlement in the Deccan also followed similar pattern of collecting revenue from the agricultural land by the landlords. Under the Ryotwari Settlement, the revenue not only consisted of rents but also certain land taxes. The land revenue under this settlement was directly imposed on the cultivators, the actual owner of the land. There was not a single involvement of any middleman in between the landowner and the government. While describing the Ryotwari Settlement in the Deccan John Stuart Mill in his report in the 1857 state that:

Under the Ryotwari System every registered holder of land is recognized as its proprietor, and pays direct to government. He is at liberty to sublet his property, or to transfer it by gift, sale, or mortgage. He cannot be ejected by government so long as he pays the fixed assessment, and has the option annually of increasing or diminishing his holding, or of entirely abandoning it. In unfavourable seasons remissions of assessment are granted for entire or partial loss of produce. The assessment is fixed in money, and does not vary from year to year, in those cases where water is drawn from a government source of irrigation to convert dry land into wet, or into two-crop land, when an extra rent is paid to government for the water so appropriated; nor is any addition made to the assessment for the improvements effected at the Ryot's own expense. The Ryot under this system was virtually a proprietor on a simple and perfect title, and has all the benefits of a perpetual lease without its responsibilities, in as much as he can at any time throw up his lands, but cannot be ejected so long as he pays his dues; he receives assistance in difficult seasons, and is responsible for the payment of his neighbours.

The annual settlements under Ryotwari were often misunderstood and it has necessary to explain that they were rendered necessary by the right accorded to the ryot of diminishing or extending his cultivation from year to year. Their object was to determine how much of the assessment due on his holding the ryot shall pay, and not to reassess the land. In these cases where no change occurs in the Ryots holding a fresh potta or lease is not issued, and such parties are in no way affected by the annual settlement, which they are not required to attend.

DID YOU KNOW

Thomas Munro founded the Ryotwari system of land revenue as the Governor of Madras. Munro was created a Baronet, of Lindertis in the County of Forfar, in 1825. He died of cholera on 6 July 1827 while on tour in the ceded districts, where his name is preserved by more than one memorial.

4.1 Features

According to this settlement there was an individual ownership of land and each landlord was responsible for the payment of the land revenue to the government. The rate of land revenue could be changed from time-to-time and the land was classified according to its productive capacity.

Initially, the Ryotwari Settlement was only a part of Madras Presidency where Sir Thoman Munro was the governor general. But soon after there the settlement extended to several other parts of Deccan India such as Mumbai. In both the areas a significant social upheaval was being caused by the Ryotwari Settlement, which undermined the authority of the village headmen and thus caused a status revolution in the villages of Maharashtra and Madras. In Madras, by 1818, the suppression of landed aristocrats, the poligars, the establishment of judicial courts and the improvement of the revenue system had been ensured. However, in the bargain they had claimed a heavy toll. As soon as Munro became the Governor General in May 1820 the system was declared generally operative in all parts of the Madras Presidency, barring areas already under the Permanent Settlement. As to the latter, every opportunity was taken of getting back, on account of lapses or by means of purchase, the zamindari mootahs and such other tenures as existed, with the view to introducing the new system therein.

The central characteristic of Munro's system was that the government demand on land was now permanently fixed and each cultivator could take or reject the field he was offered if he thought its rent to be excessive. Munro reduced the assessment from roughly half to one third of the estimated produce; even so, in many cases the latter represented the entire economic rent and was thus by definition oppressive.

Two other factors also get associated with this settlement. Firstly, the cultivator had to pay a fixed sum of money irrespective of the actual yield or the prevalent price; secondly, the rent was not calculated through local bodies. According to a rough estimate, by 1928–1929 around 52 per cent of the cultivable land in the Deccan parts of India came under the protection of Ryotwari Settlement.

A common feature of Ryotwari Settlement was the over-assessment and the primary aim of the Company's government was to increase the revenue income. The results were arrears of payment, mounting debt, increasing land sale and dispossession. Contrary to received wisdom, modern research had established that the effect of these changes were less spectacular than once imagined, and had significant regional variations, as the land transfer could not fundamentally alter the structure of landholdings everywhere. Due to this settlement, the agrarian society thus proved to be more resilient than once thought to be. But the group and classes that survived had substantially different rights, obligations and powers. These changes and grievances generating from then were amply reflected in the series of agrarian disturbances that marked the first century of British rule in India.

Benefits to the government and peasants from Ryotwari settlement

The government got the following benefits from the Ryotwari settlement:

- The settlement was not permanent but for a fixed tenure, normally for 30 years; therefore in case of the increased production, the government could also increase the land revenue unlike in Permanent Settlement.
- The Government collected land revenue mainly in cash, therefore, in case of price rise the government also benefitted.

- The government had control over non-occupied and other community land unlike in Permanent Settlement.

Benefits to the peasant

- The peasants were treated as the owner of the land. They could sell or give their land on contract.
- They were saved from any intermediaries.

5 MAHALWARI SETTLEMENT IN CENTRAL INDIA

The word 'Mahal' means village. Under Mahalwari system, the settlement was made with 'Mahal' instead of an individual peasant. The immediate credit for the formation of the system goes to Holt Mackenzie, secretary to the government in the territorial department. He personally made a local investigation into the nature of land tenures in the ceded and conquered provinces; prepared a general survey of their revenue history; studied the silent features in the development of the court's policy and drew from all his researches a principle of settlement, which he recommended to the approval of government in July, 1819. The system got legal sanction in 1822; however, it developed only in 1833–1834.

Under the Mahalwari Settlement, the village land was held jointly by the village communities, and members of which were jointly and severally responsible for the payment of land revenue. Under the settlement, the village common or *Shamlat* was the property of the village community as a whole. Similarly, the waste land also belonged to the village community and it was free to rent it out and divide the rents among the members of the community or partition it to bring it under cultivation without any leave of the Government. The system was the product of Muslim tradition and development.

A certain sum was assessed as land revenue for the whole village for which the whole bodies of co-sharers were jointly and severally responsible. The village *lambardar* collected revenue for which he received *panchotra*, i.e., 5 per cent as commission.

The settlement was first introduced in Agra and Oudh and later on in Punjab and some parts of Central Provinces. In Central India, the settlement got more popularity. There was more village unity in the parts of Central India. Therefore, to generate revenue from a community was an easy task from these areas.

5.1 Features

Some of the common features of the Mahalwari system are as follows:

- Land revenue settlement was made with *mahal* or *gram*. Local zamindars or *Lambardar* was responsible, on behalf of all peasants, for the payment of land revenue.
- Initially, in 1833, two-third of net produce was fixed as land revenue but later it was reduced to one-half of net produce.
- The peasant had to deposit the revenue to the zamindars. The percentage, which each peasant had to pay, was same but the quantity varied.
- The peasant was free to sell or mortgage their land.

- The settlement was made for thirty years and in some places for twenty years.

Benefits to the government

The Government was hugely benefitted from Mahalwari system. It got the following benefits:

- Collection of land revenue from one person instead of all the peasants of the village was easier and cheaper for the Government.
- The system was already prevailing in some areas; therefore the Government had no problem in implementing it.
- The government was assured of its income for the next 20–30 years.

The Mahalwari system affected the peasants in a different manner. They had very little to cheer. They could take solace from the fact that they were saved from a possible corrupt revenue officials of the government and that they had better control over their land. But they had to face some real difficulties, which were as follows:

- High rate of taxation, which was fifty per cent of the net produce
- The idea of net produce was very vague
- The zamindars and the *lambardars* were present to exploit the peasants.
- The moneylenders, by clever means captured the mortgage land.

Effect of Mahalwari Settlement in central province

The effects of Mahalwari settlement on central province were as follows:

- Due to high land revenue demand from the government, large areas of the land began to pass into the hands of moneylenders and merchants, who ousted the old cultivating proprietors or reduced them to tenants at will.
- There was an impoverishment and widespread dispossessions among the cultivating communities of Central India, which led to the development of uprising.

6 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- Agrarian settlement is one of the most important features of the Indian agrarian economy. The agrarian settlement mainly denotes the land system of rural India.
- In ancient times, the main aim of the king was to get the agrarian land continuously cultivated as the tenant paid them taxes.
- The growth of monarchies like the Mauryan Empire and subsequently the Gupta Empire produced the whole system of bureaucratic administration. The rights on the land were divided between chiefs of the state, the village communities and the individual producers.
- During the Muslim rule in India significant changes took place in the Indian agrarian land settlement.
- The multiplication of land titles originated mainly from these grants or assignments of revenue. It was always intended to convey a title to the land as well.
- During the British rule, initially they did little to interfere with the existing land system. In fact, the East India Company itself obtained zamindari rights over the estates.

- In 1765, the East India Company obtained the Diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa from Mughal Emperor Shah Alam.
- In 1772, Warren Hasting was sent to Bengal as Governor-General and was directed to undertake the work of Diwani directly.
- The Pitt's India Act called for an enquiry into the real jurisdiction, rights and privileges of zamindars and directed the rehearsal of the grievances of those zamindars who had been unjustly displaced.
- during the time of Lord Cornwallis, the Decennial Settlement was ordered in 1789 in the agrarian sector of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. It was ultimately made permanent in 1793.
- By the Permanent Settlement of 1793, the zamindars were declared to be the proprietors of their estates and were given the right to transfer their proprietary rights to whomever they liked by sale, gift or otherwise.
- The British extended the system of Permanent Settlement to other states and created zamindari there too, but they changed over to temporary settlement under which the land revenue could be reassessed after a period ranging between twenty-five and forty years in different states.
- Another and totally different agrarian settlement known as Ryotwari Settlement evolved for large parts of Bombay and Madras and subsequently extended to north-eastern and north-western India.
- Next was the Mahalwari settlement, which also had the same features of Ryotwari settlement but here the settlement, was made with the entire village community instead of an individual peasant.
- Through the introduction of several forms of agrarian settlements in rural India, the British were able to create a class of people whose interests were directly tied to British rule in India.
- The British agrarian settlements introduced by Lord Cornwallis thus, helped the concentration of economic power in the hands of absentee landlords in rural India.
- Through the Permanent Settlement Act, the British declared that all landlords, zamindars and talukadars have to pay some amount of rent to the Government.
- The British officers felt that the settlement should be made in all practicable instances with the zamindars and they declared that 'a moderate jumma or assessment, regularly and punctually collected, unites the consideration of our interests with the happiness of the natives and security of the landholders more rationally than any imperfect collection of any exaggerated jumma to be enforced with severity and vexation'.
- On his arrival in India, Lord Cornwallis found it impossible to conclude a ten years settlement without some further inquiry into the question of usages, tenures and rents, and he vigorously prosecuted these inquiries.
- The whole amount of land revenue obtained from the Bengal, Bihar and Orissa for the year 1790-91 was ₹26,800,989.
- On the examination of the Permanent Settlement Act in Bengal, it became evident that the British administration made the zamindar the proprietors, instead of recognizing them as mere revenue-collecting agencies.
- The achievements of Permanent Settlement helped the zamindars to emerge as a very powerful class in society by concentrating immense bargaining power in their hands as well as in their relation with the land.

- The Permanent Settlement failed because it was difficult for the landlords to collect much money from their tenants or ryots.
- Not long after Cornwallis introduced the Permanent Settlement in Bengal, the question of extending it to other territories, acquired by Company from time to time, presented itself.
- Lord Wellesley, the Governor General, issued a peremptory order to the Madras government to introduce the Bengal System of Permanent Settlement in its newly acquired dominion.
- The Ryotwari Settlement had a staunch champion in Munro.
- The Ryotwari Settlement in the Deccan followed similar pattern of collecting revenue from the agricultural land by the landlords.
- Initially, the Ryotwari Settlement was only a part of Madras Presidency where Sir Thoman Munro was the Governor General. But soon after there the settlement extended to several other parts of Deccan India such as Mumbai.
- In Madras, by 1818, the suppression of landed aristocrats, the poligars, the establishment of judicial courts and the improvement of the revenue system had been ensured
- The central characteristic of Munro's system was that the government demand on land was now permanently fixed and each cultivator could take or reject the field he was offered if he thought its rent to be excessive.
- A common feature of Ryotwari Settlement was the over-assessment and the primary aim of the Company's government was to increase the revenue income.
- Under Mahalwari system, the settlement was made with 'Mahal' instead of an individual peasant.
- Under the Mahalwari Settlement, the village land was held jointly by the village communities, and members of which were jointly and severally responsible for the payment of land revenue.
- A certain sum was assessed as land revenue for the whole village for which the whole bodies of co-sharers were jointly and severally responsible. The village lambardar collected revenue for which he received panchotra, i.e., 5 per cent as commission.
- The Mahalwari system affected the peasants in a different manner. They had very little to cheer. They could take solace from the fact that they were saved from a possible corrupt revenue officials of the government and that they had better control over their land.

7 KEY TERMS

- **Khudkasta raiyats:** The khudkasta raiyats were permanent resident cultivators of the village. Under the Mughal system of land control there were two types of raiyats: khudkasta and paikasta.
- **Jagir:** A type of feudal land grant in South Asia bestowed by a monarch to a feudal superior in recognition of his administrative and/or military service.
- **Naib:** A diwan whose role was to collect the largest amount of money in the shortest possible time.

- **Ryots:** Was a general economic term used throughout India for peasant cultivators but with variations in different provinces.
- **Lambardar:** Another term for zamindar.

8 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. In 1765, the East India Company obtained the Diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa from Mughal Emperor Shah Alam.
2. The Pitt's India Act was passed in 1784.
3. The Decennial Settlement, which was ordered in 1789 in the agrarian sector of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, was made permanent in 1793 and came to be known as the Permanent Settlement.
4. The main objective of the Permanent Settlement was to ensure a regular flow of revenue to the Company and to create a class of persons who would be a great supporter of the English in India
5. True
6. Manusmriti
7. J.P Bhattacharjee
8. Cornwallis found it impossible to conclude a ten years settlement without some further inquiry into the question of usages, tenures and rents, and he vigorously prosecuted these inquiries. Following this, in November 1791 an amended and complete Code of Regulation was passed by the Government for a settlement of ten years and the settlement was concluded in every district of Bengal in 1793.
9. Zamindars, revenue farmers
10. True
11. Ryotwari Settlement
12. True
13. Permanent
14. Under the Ryotwari Settlement, the rate of land revenue could be changed from time-to-time and the land was classified according to its productive capacity.
15. The Mahalwari Settlement was the brainchild of Holt Mackenzie, Secretary to the Government in the Territorial Department.
16. Under the Mahalwari system of land revenue, the village lambardar collected the revenue for which he received panchotra, i.e., 5 per cent as commission.
17. True

9 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. What were the achievements of the Permanent Settlement of Bengal?
2. What was the impact of the Permanent Settlement on Bengal?

3. What were the benefits of the Mahalwari system for the government?
4. What are the features of the Ryotwari Settlement?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the land revenue system of India?
2. Why was Permanent Settlement of revenue implemented in Bengal? What are its merits and demerits?
3. Explain Ryotwari Settlement and Munro's role in it.
4. Why was Mahalwari Settlement introduced in Central India?

9 FURTHER READING

- Chandra, Bipin; *History of Modern India*, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 2009.
- Chandra, Bipin; *Freedom Struggle*, National Book Trust, New Delhi, 1972.
- Chopra, P. N.; *A Comprehensive History of Modern India*, Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, 2003.
- Sarkar, Sumit; *Modern India*, Pan Macmillan Australia Pty. Ltd., Sydney, 1983.
- Bhattacharya, Sabyasachi; *Rethinking 1857*, Indian Council of Historical Research, New Delhi, 2007.
- Marshall, P. J.; *The Eighteenth Century in India History: Revolution or Evolution?* Oxford University Press, UK, 2005.
- Robert, P.E.; *History of British India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1978.
- Marshall, P. J.; *Problems of Empire: Britain and India, 1757-1813*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1968.
- Chopra, P.N.; *A Comprehensive History of Modern India*, Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, 2003.
- Grover, B.L.; *History of Modern India*, S. Chand & Company Limited, New Delhi 1971.

UNIT 2 HISTORY OF ENGLISH EDUCATION IN INDIA

Structure

- 0 Introduction
- 1 Unit Objectives
- 2 Growth of English Education
 - 2.1 Hunter Commission or Indian Education Commission (1882-83)
 - 2.2 Sir Charles Wood's Education Despatch (1854)
- 3 Rammohan Roy
- 4 Derozio
- 5 Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar
- 6 Summary
- 7 Key Terms
- 8 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 9 Questions and Exercises
- 10 Further Reading

0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, you were introduced to the agrarian policies and land revenue systems of the British, such as, the Permanent Settlement, Ryotwari Settlement and Mahalwari Settlement.

The British rule in India did not just have political and economical impacts; its social impact was deep as well. The constant drumming of the colonial ideology led to serious introspection about Indian culture mainly among the emerging middle class. Some gained inspiration from the indigenous past, others held that modern Western thought had to be imbibed to regenerate the Indian society. The need for reform was, however, recognized unanimously. India made tremendous progress both in the religious and the social fields during the 19th century and after. It was a period of transition from medievalism to the modern age. The Indian mind was stirred as a result of its contact with the forces from the West and no wonder progress was registered in many fields.

In this unit, you will learn about the education system in India from the 18th century till the 20th century. You will learn how the Company's attempt to improve the administrative system led to the spread of education in the country and how Western education gave birth to new thoughts among the Indians.

1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Describe the growth of English education in India
- Explain how various commissions and Acts increased the government's role in spreading education
- Recognize the importance of education and the contemporary factors affecting its development
- Discuss Raja Rammohan Roy's role in spreading liberal thoughts and education in India

- Analyse how Derozio inspired students to question social evils
- Discuss Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar's contribution in ushering a new education system in India

7.2 GROWTH OF ENGLISH EDUCATION

The improvements of modern Western education and thought afforded opportunities for Indians to imbibe a modern rational, secular, democratic and nationalistic political outlook. The system of English education in India was introduced by Sir Charles E. Trevelyan, T.B. Macaulay and Lord William Bentinck (the governor general from 1828 to 1835).

The cause of education in India gained momentum during the British rule. Although many developments took place, the Indian educational system was still seen in a transitional phase. The main characteristic of Indian education during the British rule was the promotion of English as a medium of instruction. This period is also marked by a number of laws and reforms in the field of education.

Though a long period after the establishment of the Company's rule, the British did not take the responsibility of the spread of education, which was left largely to the *madrasas* and *tols*. As a result the Indians 'groped in the darkness.' The Company did not have any enthusiasm to educate the masses over which it ruled. Yet, some enlightened personalities among the Company servants tried to establish new schools and colleges. But they were meant only for the promotion of oriental studies. No effort was made to educate the Indians in Western sciences and philosophies. The British Parliament enacted a Charter Act in 1813, which sanctioned the Company a sum of one lakh of rupees for educational development of the ruled. The East India Company adopted a dual policy of education and gave importance to Western education and English language.

Lord Macaulay's Minute of 1815 on judicial administration of the presidency of Fort William recommended the need of teacher training, which is considered as the first document to recognize the need for teacher training in the British period. As a result many schools were set up in different parts of the country like Surat, Pune and Calcutta. To train teachers, a number of teacher training centers were also set up in places like Meerut, Madras and Agra and by 1824 twenty-six teacher training centers were opened at different corners of the province.

The English system of education, though conceived by the rulers in the interests of efficient administration, opened to the newly educated Indians the floodgates of liberal European thought. The liberal and radical thought of European writers like Milton, Shelley, Bentham, Mill, Spencer, Rousseau and Voltaire inspired the Indian intelligentsia with the ideals of liberty, nationality and self-government and made clear to them the anachronism of British rule in India. The English language played an important role in the growth of nationalism. It became the medium for spread of modern ideas. It also became the medium of communication and exchange of ideas between educated Indians from different linguistic regions of the country.

Early efforts of the Company

In 1781, Warren Hastings founded the Calcutta Madrasa to encourage the study of Islamic laws along with the Arabic and the Persian languages. A decade later, in 1791, British resident Jonathan Duncan started a Sanskrit college at Benaras to

promote the study of Hindu laws and philosophy. Both these institutions were designed to provide a regular supply of Indians to help the administration of law in the courts of the Company. In 1802, Lord Wellesley started the Fort William College for educating English officers in Indian languages and social customs.

Contribution of Christian missionaries

No doubt, the Christian missionaries publicly denounced the persistence of the Oriental learning. Yet, they were themselves opening up schools of vernacular learning. Though, their zeal was only meant for the propagation of their religion, they adopted the vernacular languages and set up schools for the same. At this point it would be apt to mention that the Serampore missionaries were particularly very enthusiastic for the spread of education. The efforts of the Baptist missionary, William Carey outshines every other effort taken in this respect. He was followed by David Hare and many others.

The state of Oriental learning during the establishment of Company rule was clearly evident from the government and church records. During this time, there were about 80,000 traditional institutions of learning in Bengal alone, which means that there was at least one institution for every four hundred people in that province. Different educational surveys of Madras, Bombay, Bengal and Punjab also demonstrate similar facts. All the scholars, i.e., Thomas Munroe (1812-1813) from Madras Presidency, Prendergast (1830) from Bombay Presidency, Adam (1835) from Bengal and Lightener (1880) from Punjab agreed to the fact that there was at least one school in every village of India at that time.

Education and the Charter Act of 1813

The East India Company, for the first time through the Charter Act of 1813, adopted a provision to spend one lakh rupees per annum 'for the revival and promotion of literature and the encouragement of the learned natives of India, and for the introduction and promotion of knowledge of the sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories'. Its importance lay in the fact that the Company at least assumed its responsibilities for the first time in the field of education. However the real motive of the East India Company was not philanthropic; rather, it was more of an administrative necessity. The Company needed people to work as clerks. There was a prolonged debate on education in the British Parliament regarding the Act of 1813. Unfortunately, the matter continued to generate debate for the next 20 years and eventually not even a single penny out of the allocated funds could be spent on education.

Lord Macaulay was instrumental in introducing English as a medium of instruction in Indian education. Although he initiated some developments in education, he considered the Indian educational system inferior. The sense of superiority is obvious in the following words, 'a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia'. In order to strengthen the British rule in India, Macaulay stressed English as a medium to converse. His theory of exploiting a country's resources through a planned system, such as education, was termed as Macaulayism. In simple terms, it can be described as the subjugation of a culture by a colonial power through the medium of education. Though, Lord Macaulay encouraged Indian education, at the same time he considered it impossible to educate the masses. These circumstances gave birth to the theory of

infiltration according to which educated Indians would deliver western knowledge to the illiterate masses of India.

Macaulay also emphasized the development of vernacular languages as it would assist in teaching English language. Though he encouraged teaching English to the Indian masses, his main objective was to create a subservient class of clerical workers who would be 'Indian in blood and colour and English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect'.

2.1 Hunter Commission or Indian Education Commission (1882-83)

The Hunter Commission was also known as the Indian Education Commission (1882). The Government of India set up a commission under W.W. Hunter to review the state of education and make recommendations for its progress. Another reason to implement the Hunter Commission was to find out whether the Indian education system was following the guidelines laid down by Wood's Despatch. The main objective of the Hunter Commission was to enquire about the present state of primary and secondary education and make recommendations to improve the state of education. At this point, no efforts were made in the development of universities as they were excluded from the jurisdiction of the Hunter's Commission.

After visiting all the provinces of British India, the commission laid down its recommendations to improve and develop the current stage of Indian education. They are as follows:

- (i) Special emphasis to be given on improving primary education
- (ii) Use of vernacular language as most of the primary education was aimed at the masses
- (iii) Vocational and literary learning for secondary education
- (iv) Responsibility of primary education should be transferred to the municipal board
- (v) Privatization of education at all stages, except for primary education which was to be provided by reference to local cooperation

2.2 Sir Charles Wood's Education Despatch (1854)

As the President of the Board of Control, Sir Charles Wood did a fine job in spreading education in India. He believed the English race to be superior and considered English institutions as benchmark for education. With these thoughts, he wished to change the Indian educational system to a standard which would eventually benefit the British government. In July 1854, he sent a despatch to Lord Dalhousie, the then governor general of India, setting the guidelines for educational reforms. Wood's Despatch made the following recommendations:

- Set up of an education department in every province.
- Based on the model of the London University, universities to be set up in big cities
- At least one government school to be opened in every district
- Provide grants to affiliated private schools
- Emphasis on vernacular language along with English
- Establishment of technical schools
- Impetus to women's education

Although, all recommendations proved conducive for the development of education, the most important recommendation of Wood's Despatch was the establishment of universities in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras based on the model of London University.

3 RAMMOHAN ROY

One of the most prominent leaders of the Indian Renaissance is Raja Rammohan Roy. He is also known as the father of modern India. He was born in 1774 in Radhanagar, in the state of undivided Bengal, to rich, orthodox, brahmin family of zamindars (landowners). When he was hardly 15, he wrote a pamphlet in Bengali in which he denounced idol-worship which, he asserted, was not recognized in the Vedas. Young Rammohan Roy had to pay very heavily for it. He was turned out from his orthodox family and he had to live in exile. However, he made the best of the opportunity offered to him by providence. He travelled far and wide and, thus, was able to gather a lot of experience and learning. He had deep thirst for knowledge and had learnt many languages like Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit. He was well versed in Hindu and Muslim religious scriptures and laws. As an employee of the East India Company in 1797, he was exposed to the Western culture and traditions and during that period learned English, Greek and Latin. He also learnt Hebrew (the original language of Bible) so that he could study the Bible and other works of Christianity. He had deep knowledge of tantra, Jainism and Buddhism.

In 1805, Rammohan Roy joined the service of the English East India Company in Bengal, and continued to work there up to 1814. After his retirement, he settled in Calcutta and devoted himself entirely to the service of the people. In 1814, he started the Atmiya Sabha. In 1828, he founded the Brahmo Samaj. He went to England in 1831 on a special mission to plead the cause of the Mughal emperor of Delhi. While he was still busy in that work, he died at Bristol on 27 September 1833. He was given the title of Raja by the Mughal emperor.

The 18th and early 19th century was termed the dark age of India as the Indian society was crippled with many social evils and inequalities. Some of the practices that plagued the India society during that time were polygamy, child marriage, female infanticide, sati and the caste system. The people were superstitious and backward.

Raja Rammohan Roy started a campaign against all these social evils by setting up modern religious groups, by publishing books and newspapers, by initiating debates and discussions and by establishing modern schools and colleges.

The first book he wrote on Islam and its influence was *Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhidin*. It was published in 1803 and clearly portrays the influence of Islam and Matazilah's philosophy on him. The great Persian Sufi poets and mystics, Maulevi Jalal-ud-din Rumi and Hafiz also had deep impressions on him.

The concepts of one God and absence of idol worship were the main attributes of Islam that influenced him deeply.

His deep knowledge of Christianity and the Bible and his admiration for the Christ and his teachings are all reflected in the various books he wrote. His book, *The Precepts of Jesus*, reflects his deep respect for Jesus Christ and his teachings. His knowledge of Sanskrit enabled him to translate many old Hindu scriptures like

the Upanishads and Shakracharya's works into Bengali. *Gayatrir Artha* and *Atmanantratma Vivek* are two of his famous works. The main reason for all this research and writings was to influence the Indian society with the concept of belief in one Supreme Self and God. He deeply desired that all religious and social superstitions could be eradicated from the India cultural and social psyche. His book *Manazarat-ul-Adiyan* showed the common message of all religions, in order to bring about religious harmony in India. He tried to allay the fears that Hindus had about the goals and aims of the Christian missionaries. The Raja fought for the freedom of the press. He himself founded and edited a Bengali journal called the *Samvad Kaumudi* which was among the earliest Indian-edited newspapers. He carried on a vigorous agitation against the Press Regulations of 1823. He submitted a memorial to the supreme court in which he dwelt on the benefits of a 'free press. His agitation for the freedom of the press must have paved the way for the final emancipation of the press in 1885.

Raja Rammohan Roy was a man of reason and great rationality. He had deep faith in the universal message of all religions but also did not hesitate to reject ideas or concepts that were unreasonable and irrational.

During his stay in England from 1831 to 1833, the Raja agitated for reform in the administrative system of British-India. He was the first Indian to be consulted on Indian affairs by the British Parliament. While giving his evidence before a Select Committee of House of Commons, he suggested reforms in practically all branches of Indian administration.

Raja Rammohan Roy along with many other modern thinkers of that time like, Dwarkanath Tagore (father of Devendranath Tagore), Prasanna Kumar Tagore, Kalisankar Ghosal, Brindaban Mitra, Brajmohan Majumdar, Nandkishore Bose, Siva Prasad Mitra and Ram Chandra Vidya Vagish, set up the Atmiya Sabha in 1814 in Calcutta. However his ideas of one God and influence of Islam and Christianity and his rejection of caste system shocked many traditional and conservative Hindus and thus the Atmya Sabha could not sustain itself beyond a point and by 1819 it ceased to exist.

In the year 1829 he started the Brahma Samaj with the philosophy of devotion to one Supreme Being, the Brahman. He believed in the one immortal soul from which spring the whole of the Universe and its numerous beings and non-beings to unite with it after death. The Brahma Samaj had some specific guidelines:

- No idol or image worship.
- People from all castes and creeds were allowed to be part of the Samaj.
- No religious rituals were practiced. Meditation and prayer were held. The Upanishads were read.

Raja Rammohan Roy was almost single handedly responsible for the abolition of the practice of Sati. He proved how Sati was a ploy to keep the widow of the deceased from inheriting a share the husband's property and had no religious significance. It was also a way to get rid of the widow who would now be a burden on the relatives with the husband dead. He often went to spots where Sati was being practiced and tried to stop the heinous ritual of burning a woman alive. A petition to stop it from being banned was made by the orthodox Hindus before the Governor-General Lord William Bentinck but Raja Rammohan Roy filed a counter petition and finally got it banned. The British Government legally prohibited the practice of Sati with effect from 1829.

Raja Rammohan Roy campaigned for the right to inheritance of women, for the remarriage of widows especially widows who were products of child marriages. However he himself could not explain why he wore a sacred thread when he was against caste system, or why he had three wives when he opposed polygamy. Despite this he remains one of the foremost torch bearers of India's social and religious revival till today.

The Raja has been rightly called 'the herald of a new age'. According to Monier-Williams, the Raja was 'perhaps the first earnest minded investigator of the science or comparative religions that the world has produced'. According to Seal, 'the Raja was the harbinger of the idea of universal humanism, the humanist, pure and simple, watching from his conning tower the procession of universal humanity in universal history'. According to Colet, 'Rammohan stands in history as the living-bridge over which India marches from her unmeasured past to her incalculable future. He was the arch which spanned the gulf between ancient caste and modern humanity, between superstition and science, between despotism and democracy, between immobile custom and conservative progress, between a bewildering polytheism and a pure, if vague, theism'.

According to Nandlal Chatterjee, Raja Rammohan Roy 'was the human link between the unfading past and the dawning future, between vested conservatism and radical reform, between superstitious isolationism and progressive synthesis, in short, between reaction and progress'.

According to Rabindranath Tagore, Raja Rammohan Roy 'inaugurated the modern age in India'. He has also been described as the Father of Indian Renaissance and the Prophet of Indian Nationalism. Behind all of his ideas of social and religious reforms, there lay the thought of bringing about the political regeneration of his countrymen. To quote him, 'I regret to say the system adhered to by the Hindus is not well-calculated to promote their political interest. The distinction of castes, introducing division and sub-divisions among them, has entirely deprived them of political feeling, multitude of religious rites and ceremonies and the laws of purification have totally disqualified them from undertaking any difficult enterprise. It is, I think, necessary that some change should take place in their religion at least for the sake of their political advantage and social comfort'.

Did You Know

The tomb of Raja Rammohan Roy was built by Dwarkanath Tagore in 1843, 10 years after Rammohan Roy's death. The tomb is located in the Arnos Vale Cemetery on the outskirts of Bristol. Roy died at Stapleton, which was then a village to the north east of Bristol but currently a suburb, on 27 September 1833. In June 2008, the Arnos Vale restorers conceded that they could not locate Roy's remains at the site after searching for it by digging. Thebrahmosamaj.net stated, to everyone's surprise the coffin was not to be seen under the *chattri*.

4 DEROZIO (1809–1831)

Henry Louis Vivian Derozio, a teacher of the newly established Hindu College, was probably the youngest faculty of his age. Though he died young, at 22, he had inspired many young men to question social norms and evils of the Indian society.

Derozio and Hindu College

Derozio was appointed as a teacher in English and History at the Hindu College in May 1826 when he was seventeen. Though he taught youngsters, his forthcoming nature and radical views encouraged even senior students to open up to him. He encouraged students to read Thomas Paine's Rights of Man and similar literature, which encouraged open and logical reasoning. He also infused in his students the spirit of free expression, the yearning for knowledge and a passion to live up to their identity, while questioning irrational religious and cultural practices. He even organized debates on social issues. Himself being an atheist, Derozio encouraged questioning the orthodox Hindu customs and conventions on the basis of Italian renaissance and its offshoot rationalism.

While he created a sensation at Hindu College, Derozio's followers came to be known as Derozians. In 1828, he urged students to form a literary and debating club called the Academic Association. In 1830, this club brought out a magazine named Parthenon (only one issue came out).

He was the editor of many papers such as *The Hesperus* and *The Calcutta Library Gazette* and was associated with the *India Gazette* as well. Derozio inspired people like Rasik Krishna Mullick and Krishna Mohan Banerjee. The journal, *Jnanavesan*, and *The Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge* were used as their mouthpiece. The movement was at its peak between 1826 and 1831. S.N. Banerjee termed the leaders of the movement as the 'pioneers of modern civilization of Bengal'.

Young Bengal

The Young Bengal movement was started by a group student from the Hindu College of Calcutta with a radical bent of mind. They were mostly the Derozians. These college students were inspired by the spirit of free thought and revolt against the existing social and religious structure and practices of Hindu society. When the Young Bengal movement started fading, several Derozians got attracted to the Brahmo Samaj movement of Raja Rammohan Roy. A scholar characterized this change stating, 'the Young Bengal movement was like a mighty storm that tried to sweep away everything before it. It was a storm that lashed society with violence causing some good, and perhaps naturally, some discomfort and distress'.

5 ISHWAR CHANDRA VIDYASAGAR (26 SEPTEMBER 1820 – 29 JULY 1891)

Born as Ishwar Chandra Bandopadhyay, Vidyasagar was a key figure of the Bengal Renaissance. He was a philosopher, academic, educator, writer, translator, printer, publisher, entrepreneur, reformer, and philanthropist. Born in a simple rural family in Medinipore of Bengal, Ishwar Chandra worked very hard as a child to educate himself. At the age of 6, he went to Calcutta to study where he came to realize the plight of the widow.

He was an ardent knowledge seeker and studied under streetlights. He was rewarded with a number of scholarships for his academic performance. He also took up part-time job as a teacher to support his family. His philanthropism was

evident at a very early age. As a student of Sanskrit College, he would spend part of his scholarship proceeds to feed the poor and provide medicines for the sick.

He received the title 'Vidyasagar' (sea of knowledge) from the Calcutta Sanskrit College for his sterling performance in Sanskrit and philosophy. In 1839, Ishwar Chandra passed law examination. In 1841, at the age of twenty one, he joined Fort William College as a head of the Sanskrit department. After five years, Vidyasagar joined the Sanskrit College as assistant secretary. In the first year of service, he recommended a number of changes to the existing education system. This resulted into a serious altercation between Ishwar Chandra and College Secretary Rasomoy Dutta. In 1849, he again joined Sanskrit College, as a professor of literature. In 1851, Ishwar Chandra became the principal of Sanskrit College. In 1855, he was made special inspector of schools with additional charges. But he soon left the college due to his differences with Rasomoy Dutta.



Figure 7.2 Sketch of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar

Source: <http://www.vivekananda.net/pplheknew/Images/Vidyasagar.jpg>

He believed that money was not enough to ease human suffering, and showed profound compassion for those who needed love and compassion. He opened the doors of the Sanskrit College to lower caste students (previously it was exclusive to the Brahmins), nursed sick cholera patients, and went to crematoriums to bury unclaimed dead bodies, dined with the people of the lower cast, which was not acceptable to the society.

In addition to his responsibilities as the principal of Sanskrit College, he travelled around Bengal in the capacity of inspector of schools. This enabled him to feel the distress of poor women in Bengal, and the superstition they were subjected to. He saw this as a result of absence of education. In two months, he established twenty model schools. He also realized that unless women were educated, it was impossible to emancipate and liberate them from the terrible burden of inequalities and injustices in the society. He worked day and night and opened thirty schools for the education of girls.

He commenced the process of education with his first book of alphabet (part I and part II) called *Varna Porichoy*, first published in 1855. His pioneering works in Bengali education, in laying the foundation stone of Bengali prose (even though his writing style, was considered at the time as conservative since it was aligned closely with Sanskrit lexicon and grammatical traditions). He also translated some of the Sanskrit masterpieces to Bengali, in his quest to spread of knowledge among the common man.

Widow remarriage

Vidyasagar championed the cause of uplift of the women in the Indian society, particularly in his native place Bengal. Unlike some other reformers who sought to set up alternative societies or systems, he sought to transform orthodox Hindu society from within. Vidyasagar introduced the practice of widow remarriages to the sterile Hindu society. He also proposed and struggled for passage of the Widow Remarriage Act of 1856, which was enacted on 25 July.

The mid-19th century saw many reforms in Kolkata and Bombay. One of them was opening of the colleges for girls.

Apart from the concept of widow remarriage, Vidyasagar raised concern about child-marriage and polygamy. He also opened the doors of the colleges and other educational institutions to lower caste students, which was earlier reserved only for the *brahmins*. For his immense generosity and kind-heartedness, people started addressing him as '*dayar sagar*' (ocean of kindness).

His compassion for widows was not empty rhetoric as some might have assumed, he married his own son off to a widow.

In order to fight the vested interests and orthodox Hindus, he conducted extensive research in Hindu scriptures and proved that there was nothing against widow remarriage and that the polygamy was an evil and hence, should be abolished and not accepted by the sane society. He published two volumes on remarriage of widows and another two volumes on polygamy citing quotes from scriptures and explaining the validity of his arguments.

It was not surprising, therefore, that for his stand he was virulently attacked by vested conservative groups and the *shastrakars* (cleric) of the day. He often received threats of physical violence and death. But nothing stopped Vidyasagar from what he set out to do. His iron-will prevailed in the end. On 26 July 1856 widow marriage was legalized by the then government.

Vidyasagar passed away on 29 July 1891 at the age of 70. Though he lived as a modest life, his work of charity was that of a king. Vidyasagar was a lonely tall tree in the bush around him. He was not happy and his health deteriorated badly in the latter part of his life. Disaffected with petty-mindedness and confronted with selfish behavior, he severed connection with his family and lived with the tribal people in the last years of his life.

No doubt, Vidyasagar can be judged as one of the best literary figures of Bengal, for he mostly devoted his time writing reformist literature and text books, and his Bengali prose has been and is a great influence to the education in Bengal. His simplification of idiomatic expressions and clarification of the writing style provided sound base on which Bengali writers like Tekchand Thakur, Pyarichand Mitra and Bankim Chandra Chatterjee built their literary superstructures. Indeed,

Tagore revered him as 'the father of modern Bengali prose'. Vidysagar's other contribution in this area was to translate the best of Sanskrit works to Bengali so that the ordinary people, who were not sufficiently versed with that language, could appreciate the immortal contribution by literary greats of India. *Betal Panchavinsati* (The twenty-five tales of the demon), published in 1847, was a translation from the Sanskrit *Kathasaritsagara*. It was probably the most popular work of Vidysagar. Some of the other works of Vidyasagar are as:

- *Bidhobabivah*, (a text on whether widows should remarry) (1855)
- *Bidhobabivah*, the second book, (1855)
- *Bahubivah*, (whether polygamy should be banned) (1871)
- *Bahubivah*, the second book, (1873)
- *Balyabivah*, (a text on the flaws of child marriage). Publication date not known.

6 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- The system of English education in India was introduced by Sir Charles E. Trevelyan, T.B. Macaulay and Lord William Bentinck (the Governor-General from 1828 to 1835).
- The liberal and radical thought of European writers like Milton, Shelley, Bentham, Mill, Spencer, Rousseau and Voltaire inspired the Indian intelligentsia with the ideals of liberty, nationality and self-government and made clear to them the anachronism of British rule in India.
- Though long after the establishment of the Company's rule, the British did not take responsibility of the spread of education, which was left largely to the madrasa.
- In 1781, Warren Hastings founded the Calcutta Madrasa to encourage the study of Islamic laws along with Arabic and Persian.
- Though the Christian missionaries publicly denounced the persistence of the Oriental learning yet, they were themselves opening up schools of vernacular learning.
- Scholars such as Thomas Munroe (1812-1813) from Madras Presidency, Prendergast (1830) for Bombay Presidency, Adam (1835) from Bengal and Lightener (1880) for Punjab agreed to the fact that there was at least one school in every village of India at that time.
- The East India Company for the first time through the Charter Act of 1813 adopted a provision to spend one lakh rupees per annum 'for the revival and promotion of literature and the encouragement of the learned natives of India, and for the introduction and promotion of knowledge of the sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories.'
- As the President of the Board of Control, Sir Charles Wood did a fine job in spreading education in India.
- Hunter's Commission was also known as the Indian Education Commission (1882). The Government of India set up a commission under W.W. Hunter to review the state of education and make recommendations for its progress.
- Curzon on becoming the Governor-General of India sought to make changes not only in administration but in education as well.

- On 21 February 1913, the Government of India refused to recognize the principle of compulsory education, but accepted the policy of the removal of illiteracy.
- Sir Michael Ernest Sadler was appointed by the then Secretary of State in India, Austen Chamberlain to head a commission to study and report the problems of Calcutta University.
- The Congress Party prioritized education in its list of objectives and devised a national scheme of education for the country.
- The Sergeant Plan contemplated a forty year reconstruction plan for education.
- The name of Raja Rammohan Roy stands foremost in the field of religious and social development.
- In 1805, Rammohan Roy joined the service of the English East India Company in Bengal, and continued to work there up to 1814.
- Although he himself was one of the foremost Orientalists of the age, his conviction was that India could progress only through liberal education covering all the branches of Western learning.
- During his stay in England from 1831 to 1833, the Raja agitated for reform in the administrative system of British-India.
- Roy was a prolific writer in many languages. He was one of the greatest savants of his age.
- Henry Louis Vivian Derozio, a teacher of the newly established Hindu College, was probably the youngest faculty of his age.
- He infused in his students the spirit of free expression, the yearning for knowledge and a passion to live up to their identity, while questioning irrational religious and cultural practices.
- Ishwar Chandra Viswasagar was a key figure of the Bengal Renaissance.
- He received the title 'Vidyasagar' (sea of knowledge) from the Calcutta Sanskrit College for his sterling performance in Sanskrit and philosophy.
- In 1841, at the age of twenty one, he joined Fort William College as a head of the Sanskrit department. After five years, Vidyasagar joined the Sanskrit College as assistant secretary.
- He opened the doors of the Sanskrit College to lower caste students (previously it was exclusive to the Brahmins), nursed sick cholera patients, and went to crematoriums to bury unclaimed dead bodies, dined with the people of the lower cast, which was not acceptable to the society.
- He commenced the process of education with his first book of alphabet (part I and part II) called *Varna Porichoy*, first published in 1855.
- Unlike some other reformers who sought to set up alternative societies or systems, he sought to transform orthodox Hindu society from within.
- He also proposed and struggled for passage of the Widow Remarriage Act of 1856, which was enacted on 25 July.
- Apart from the concept of widow remarriage, Vidyasagar raised concern about child-marriage and polygamy.
- Vidyasagar passed away on 29 July 1891 at the age of 70.

7 KEY TERMS

- **Macaulayism:** Lord Macaulay's theory of exploiting a country's resources through a planned system, such as education, was coined as Macaulayism.
- **Madrassa:** Muslim educational institutions.
- **Shastrakars:** People who studied the shastras and prescribed their applications in day-to-day life.
- **Derozians:** Students who followed Derozio.
- **Brahmo Samaj:** A school of thought started Raja Rammohan Roy which denounced idolatry.
- **Sati:** A practice by Hindu women to self-immolate in the pyre of her husband.

8 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. The system of English education in India was introduced by Sir Charles E. Trevelyan, T.B. Macaulay and Lord William Bentinck.
2. The first Hindu educational institution came up in 1791 in Benaras under the stewardship of British Resident Jonathan Duncan.
3. The Wood's despatch made the following recommendations:
 - Set up of an education department in every province.
 - Based on the London University, universities to be set up in big cities
 - At least one government school to be opened in every village.
 - Provide grants to affiliated private schools.
 - Emphasis on vernacular language along with English.
 - Establishment of technical schools.
 - Impetus to women's education.
4. The Indian Education Commission of 1882 was commonly known as the Hunter's Commission.
5. 1813
6. Macaulay
7. True
8. Raja Rammohan Roy's first public was a pamphlet in Bengali in which he denounced idol-worship. He was 15 then.
9. Samvad Kaumudi
10. False
11. True
12. Derozio's student followers were known as Derozians.
13. Derozio was the editor of the *Calcutta Library Gazette* and was associated with the *India Gazette* as well.
14. The Calcutta Sanskrit College awarded the title of Vidyasagar to Ishwar Chandra for his sterling performance in Sanskrit and philosophy.
15. Vidyasagar joined Fort William College as a head of the Sanskrit department in 1841. He was twenty-one-years old then.

16. Vidyasagar resigned from Sanskrit College twice due to difference of opinion with College Secretary Rasomoy Dutta.
17. The book was called *Varna Porichoy*.
18. The Widow Remarriage Act was passed in 25 July 1856.
19. True
20. False

7.9 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. What role did the Hunter Commission play in spreading education in India?
2. Discuss the early life of Raja Rammohan Roy.
3. Write a note on Henry Louis Vivian Derozio.
4. How was Derozio instrumental in introducing a new thought-wave among young Indians?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss Macaulay's contribution towards English education in India.
2. Analyse Rammohan Roy's contribution towards the Indian education system.
3. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar worked for the uplift of women in India. Discuss.
4. As a reformist and scholar in Sanskrit, Vidyasagar did pioneering work in Bengali language. Give your arguments.

7.10 FURTHER READING

- Chandra, Bipin; *History of Modern India*, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 2009.
- Chandra, Bipin; *Freedom Struggle*, National Book Trust, New Delhi, 1972.
- Chopra, P. N.; *A Comprehensive History of Modern India*, Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, 2003.
- Sarkar, Sumit; *Modern India*, Pan Macmillan Australia Pty. Ltd., Sydney, 1983.
- Bhattacharya, Sabyasachi; *Rethinking 1857*, Indian Council of Historical Research, New Delhi, 2007.
- Marshall, P. J.; *The Eighteenth Century in India History: Revolution or Evolution?* Oxford University Press, UK, 2005.
- Robert, P.E.; *History of British India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1978.
- Marshall, P. J.; *Problems of Empire: Britain and India, 1757-1813*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1968.
- Chopra, P.N.; *A Comprehensive History of Modern India*, Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, 2003.
- Grover, B.L.; *History of Modern India*, S. Chand & Company Limited, New Delhi 1971.

UNIT 3 MERCANTILE CAPITALISM AND EAST INDIA COMPANY

Structure

- 0 Introduction
- 1 Unit Objectives
- 2 Mercantile Capitalism and East India Company
 - 2.1 Phase-I: Mercantile Capitalism (1757–1813)
- 3 Land Revenue Policies
- 4 Transition of Mercantilism to Free Trade Imperialism (1813–58)
 - 4.1 Commercialization of Agriculture
- 5 Drain of Wealth Theory
- 6 Summary
- 7 Key Terms
- 8 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 9 Questions and Exercises
- 10 Further Reading

0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, you learnt about the growth of education in India, the influence of Western education on Indians, the contribution of Indian scholars and reformists such as Raja Rammohan Roy, Derozio and Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar in ushering change in the society.

Mercantilism was an economic doctrine as well as a system that dominated Europe during the 16th-18th century. The doctrine preached that a nation benefits by accumulating monetary reserves through a positive balance of trade, especially of finished goods. The policy led to escalation of exports by these powers, especially of Western Europe, frequent wars and colonial expansion.

The fact that precious metals, especially gold, were in demand across the globe and served as acceptable means of exchange benefited the mercantilist states. They tended to identify money with wealth and scrambled to acquire bullions. This precipitated a setback for domestic trade against foreign trade, while manufacturing or processing was favored at the expense of the extractive industries like agriculture as they supported the supply flow of goods for foreign trade. The state, an essential feature of the mercantile system, supported the cause.

Another important feature in this system was procurement and supply of raw materials for domestic manufacturers. The government of the day levied taxes on import of these materials to earn revenue. The state, in fact, exercised much control over economic life, chiefly through corporations and trading companies. The objective was to secure high quality goods at low cost while the state held a dominant place in foreign markets. The governments made treaties not only with each other, but also with the governments and rulers in the colonies and their subsidiaries to obtain exclusive trading privileges. Exploitation of the colonies, hence, was rampant as their commerce was stymied.

Among the fighting European powers, England emerged as the strongest nation. Her mercantilist policies were effective in creating a skilled industrial population and a large shipping industry. She destroyed Holland's commerce through a series of Navigation

Acts. Classical economists later pointed out that a successful mercantilist policy was unlikely to be beneficial as it created an oversupply of money and, with it, inflation. Mercantilism, however, survived until the Industrial Revolution and the birth of *laissez-faire*.

In this unit, you will get acquainted with the colonial process of the British East India Company, and how the British manoeuvred policies to suit their business interest causing drain of wealth.

1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Delineate the three phases of British colonization in India
- Comprehend the changes brought by colonial revenue settlements in the Indian countryside
- Analyse the mixed impact of colonial capitalist innovations within the colony;
- Explain the 'drain of wealth' theory propounded by early nationalists and
- Understand the distinct nature of colonial 'modernization' in the colony and that it did not necessarily imply 'progress'

2 MERCANTILE CAPITALISM AND EAST INDIA COMPANY

The British East India Company's colonization process was carried out broadly through three phases:

- (i) Phase-I (Mercantile capitalism, 1757-1813):** Mercantile capitalism was a product of the new-found power and wealth of unguided company servants. This was also the period when the East India Company carried out direct plunder. During this phase surplus Indian revenues were used to buy Indian finished goods to be exported to England.
- (ii) Phase II – (Transition of mercantile to free trade imperialism, 1813-1858):** This period saw the transition from mercantilism to free trade imperialism, when India was turned into a source of raw material and a market for British manufactured goods. This is also known as industrial capitalism.
- (iii) Phase-III – (Finance Capitalism/Imperialism, 1858 onwards):** This period witnessed the supremacy of British capital-controlled banks, foreign trading firms and managing agencies in India.

This phased exploitation was carried out through a range of economic policies, primarily in the industrial and agricultural sectors of the colonial economy. In this unit, we shall cover the first two phases.

2.1 Phase-I: Mercantile Capitalism (1757–1813)

The year 1757 marks the beginning the first phase when the British East India Company acquired diwani or the rights to collect revenue from the territories it had subjugated in the eastern and southern parts of the subcontinent, to 1813, when the Company's monopoly over trade with India came to an end. During this phase, the British carried out open

plunder of India and established its monopoly while other European powers were eliminated. From 1600 to 1760, the British carried the trade in putting out system. Advances were given to artisans to purchase raw materials and the East India Company was the sole purchaser of the finished goods. It was a completely monopolistic system and none from the domestic sector, such as the traders, artisans or buyers were part of it.

Initially, the primary charter of the trade for East India Company was to purchase spices, cotton and silk from India and sell them to larger markets, especially European markets, at huge profits. This, however, led to a reverse bullion flow to India as the Company paid for the raw materials. Also, the British failed to sell their goods in India in exchange, to stop or slow down this outflow of bullion. Besides the expenditure on buying commodities, the Company also spent heavily on wars it fought with other European powers, all in search of the same goods to trade in. These included the Portuguese, the Dutch and the French.

As the factory system came in, the elaborate monopolistic system started disintegrating. The industries replaced the small manufacturing houses, and even the site of production shifted to Britain. India became a source for raw materials and the peasants were forced to grow what the 'masters' required; such as indigo was being produced in Bihar and Bengal. Slowly India became a market for the cheap British manufactured goods which gradually destroyed the indigenous markets. A policy of de-industrialization was initiated by the English in India. The British East India Company established the first factory on the banks of river Hugli in Bengal.

To increase their economic hold, the British exploited the administrative and revenue systems. The *dastak*, which was a permit that exempted European traders, mostly of the British East India Company, from paying customs or transit duties on their private trade, was misused. The Company had managed to acquire the *dastak* or the permits from the weak Mughal emperor. This led to a great deal of corruption among the employees of the Company and also meant heavy losses in revenue for the Bengal *nawabs* in way of customs taxes. This became a contentious issue and was one of the chief factors which led to the Battle of Plassey, fought in 1757. The British even collected compensation from native rulers after concluding treaties following wars.

The acquisition of *diwani* (right to collect revenue) in Bengal, after the Battle of Buxar, which followed the Battle of Plassey, opened the way for the Company to raise money for its expenditure in India.

Did You Know

Adam Smith coined the term mercantile system to describe the system of political economy that sought to enrich the country by restraining imports and encouraging exports. This system dominated Western European economic thought and policies from the 16th to the late 18th centuries. The goal of these policies was, supposedly, to achieve a favourable balance of trade that would bring gold and silver into the country and also maintain domestic employment.

3 LAND REVENUE POLICIES

The acquisition of *diwani* rights in 1765 allowed the Company to tap India's wealth from local rulers, zamindars and merchants in the rich province of Bengal and use them to purchase goods to be shipped to Britain for sale. The Company's men, including officials,

took to plunder and corruption on the face of a weak central government and fighting provincial rulers. An instable political environment across the subcontinent aided the Company officials to amass huge fortunes before they returned home. Their illegal incomes also found their way to England. And back home, they were called 'nabobs' who exhibited flashy lifestyles. A lot of this money was used to fuel the Industrial Revolution in Britain. The greed for incomes from land revenue also led the Company to pursue an aggressive policy of territorial expansion in India.

Subsequent to the granting of diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa were granted to the East India Company in 1765; maximization of revenue from the colony became the primary objective of the Company's administration. Tax from agricultural was the main source of income for the Company and the British administration experimented with various land revenue systems to extract the maximum. A key reason behind this was pay dividends to its investors back home.

These experiments with the revenue systems were partly instrumental in determining the relationship the colonial state would share with the people it governed.

In 1772, Warren Hastings, the Governor of Bengal, introduced a system of revenue farming in the region under which the district collector, who would be an European, would sell the revenue collecting rights to the highest bidder. The system did not work as the cultivators became insolvent and went out of business due to arbitrarily high revenue demands by the company servants.

To stop this downslide, a system of 'permanent settlement' was introduced in 1793 by Hasting's successor as governor general, Cornwallis. Under this system, the zamindars were made the proprietors or owners of land and were responsible for collecting the revenue which was permanently fixed. In case the zamindar failed to pay full tax on time, the state had the right to take away the land and auction them. The objective was to create an enterprising class of landowners who would work to improve crop production and subsequently earn profits. This meant the state had to deal with a limited number of zamindars than with every farmer. Politically, they hoped this would consolidate British power, as zamindars, a powerful section of society would remain loyal to the administration.

On the contrary, the system made the tenant-cultivator impoverished. They were excessively suppressed under the burden of high revenues. The zamindars, too, became weak as they lost their lands due to their inability to pay revenue on time. The system also encouraged sub-infeudation i.e. several layers of intermediaries between the zamindar and cultivator were created, or the subdivision of a feudal estate by a vassal who in turn becomes feudal lord over his tenants, adding to the woes of the peasantry. The system strived to keep the intermediaries from revenue collection, so that the state could acquire a larger share of the income from land.

The ryotwari system was instituted in 1820 in some parts of British India. Under this system, the government went back to having direct relation with the cultivator. A settlement was made with the cultivator (the ryots) who would hand over the revenue to the state; each field was measured separately and assessed annually. These revenues included undifferentiated land taxes and rents, collected simultaneously. Initially, revenue was collected from each village separately, but later each ryot was assessed individually. The system eliminated the middleman but sometimes placed the cultivators at the mercy of lower officials, who often formed cliques of caste groups.

Although this system increased the state's revenue, the assessments were faulty and the peasants overburdened by taxes. The landed intermediaries, however, continued to flourish.

After 1822, the mahalwari settlement was established in north and northwest of India. Here the state made settlements with either the village community or, in some cases, the traditional *taluqdar*. Each fiscal unit was called a *mahal*. Under this system, some recognition was given to collective proprietary rights.

As a result of the revenue policies of the British, agriculture stagnated and peasants almost became tenants at will. They also increased the number of landed intermediaries, and strongly entrenched the figure of the moneylender in the countryside. Landlords and zamindars became an important class and collaborators of British colonial rule.

4 TRANSITION OF MERCANTILISM TO FREE TRADE IMPERIALISM (1813–58)

The second phase of colonization is generally believed to have begun in 1813 with the implementation of the Charter Act after the Company lost its monopoly trading rights in India, and ended in 1858, when the British crown took over the direct control and administration of all British territory in India. The period is also called the industrial capitalism.

The government in Britain became precarious of the East India Company's growing power. Several parliamentarian had 'East Indian' interests, who used the Company's resources to maintain their patronage within the government. With increasing industrialization in Britain, the economic interests of the members too were changing. Members the parliament now wanted a more say in the Company's activities and greater control over its earnings. The parliament, hence, started accusing Company officials for corruption and even targeted individual officers of misconduct. For example, Clive and Hastings were charged of misconduct and impeachment proceeding were initiated against the latter.

The 'free traders', dominant in the Parliament with the turn of the 19th century, demanded free access to India, which led to the passing of the Charter Act of 1813. This ended the Company's monopoly in India, while bringing their territorial possessions under the British crown. . Every company from England was allowed to trade in India.

Free trade changed the nature of the Indian colony completely, through a dual strategy. It threw open Indian markets for the entry of cheap, mass-produced, machine-made British goods, on which there were no tariff restrictions, if so, they were too limited to be called a fair competition with the local traders. Indian hand-crafted textiles, once popular in Britain, succumbed to this onslaught as excessive taxes obstructed their trade

Further, British-Indian territory was developed as a source of food stuff and raw material for Britain, which facilitated growth of the manufacturing sector, which is essential to a healthy economy. These changes reversed the favourable balance of trade that was in India's favour earlier. This phase laid the foundations of a classic colonial economy within India through the complex processes of commercialization of agriculture and deindustrialization.

Industrial Revolution, which was expanding in England, led to the emergence of the capitalist class who has great influence in the parliament. A new form of exploitation began in this period. As a consequence, India became the destination for 20 per cent of production from England.

According to Bipan Chandra, 'Indian handicrafts were exposed to the fierce and unequal competition of machine-made goods of Britain and faced extinction.'

Karl Marx said, 'British broke up the Indian handlooms and destroyed the spinning-loom and in-undated in very mother country of cottons with cotton.'

The British adopted the dual tariff policy to carry on de-industrialization in India. High taxes on exports were imposed; it was 67.5 per cent on cotton textiles, 37.5 per cent on muslin cloth and 300 per cent on the Indian sugar.

4.1 Commercialization of Agriculture

Some believe that commercialization of agriculture, a product of the colonial administrators, improved the position of the Indian peasants in many areas. From the 1860s onwards, demands from the overseas markets dictated the nature of agricultural production. The items exported in the first half of the 19th century included cash crops such as indigo, opium, cotton and silk. Gradually, these were replaced by raw jute, food grains, oil seeds and tea. Raw cotton was the most in-demand item. This growth in production of cash crop was facilitated by the railways, after 1850; trade networks improved vastly.

But commercialization seems to have been an artificial process with limited growth and forced on the peasants.

The lack of any large scale, sustained and well coordinated industrial development meant that commercial agricultural activity had no viable channels of investment, for it to be converted into industrial capital. Commercialization, thus, increased the level of sub-infeudation in the countryside and money was channelized into trade and money lending at exorbitant rates. Expansion of the production through investing in manufacturing was also considered risky, as this sector kept fluctuating. The agricultural sector catered for foreign market across the oceans, while the colonial state provided no protection to agriculturists.

The larger part of the profits generated by the export trade went to British business houses, which controlled shipping and insurance industries, besides agents, traders and bankers. Those who benefited in India were big farmers, and some landlord-moneylender exploiting the rules in the rural areas.

Tea was grown in plantations in Assam owned by the whites who treated the labourers like slaves. Similarly, agriculturalists were forced to grow indigo, which yielded low profits and upset the harvesting cycle. This involved inhuman levels of coercion, which eventually led to the indigo rebellion in 1859-60.

Commercialization did lead to limited phases of success in the cotton-producing areas of western India in 1860s and in jute-producing regions in eastern India, but they were because of increase in demand rather than capitalist innovation in production and organization. Also, farmers saw profit in growing cash crops because they had to pay high revenue, rents and debts in cash. The shift from food crops like jowar, bajra and pulses to cash crops often created disaster in famine years. A decline in world demand for Indian cotton led to heavy indebtedness, famine and agrarian riots in rural areas.

5 DRAIN OF WEALTH THEORY

The concept of Drain of Wealth was first mentioned by the Grand Old Man of India, Dadabhai Naoroji, and by Romesh Chunder Dutt. In his book *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*, Naoroji talked about this idea and brought it to the forefront. R.C. Drain of wealth means exploitation of economic resources of a country by the colonial / imperial power. Dutt held the British policies responsible for all the economic ills that India was facing. He referred to this in his book *Economic History of India*. In this book, Dutt mentioned that a major part of the revenue of India 'flows annually out of India'.

Historians believe that the drain of Wealth started after the Battle of Plassey in 1757. Following the victory of the East India Company in this battle, the Company's officials began exporting the riches that belonged to Indian rulers, zamindars, merchants and common people and sending them back to England. On acquiring the Diwani of Bengal in 1765, Company officials began purchasing Indian goods from the revenue of Bengal and exporting them to England. These purchases started to be called Company's investment. British merchants had a competitive edge over their Indian counterparts because of duty free inland trade. The drain included the salaries and other incomes of English officials and the money that the English merchants earned due to trading. Drain took the form of India's exports over its imports, and India got nothing in return.

The depletion of Indian wealth sounded the death knell of Indian enterprises and ensured that capital formation in the country was impeded. All this wealth that was being systematically pumped out of India was being used to support and pay for the development of capitalism in Britain during the eighteenth century and early first part of the nineteenth century. India was being reserved as a zone of free trade; however, the country was not permitted to grow so that it could compete on a level playing field. Foreign trade and export surplus could have raised the income of India if it was allowed to be invested properly. The profits of private foreign capital invested in trade or industry in India were a major source of the drain.

Clearly, by drain of wealth we refer to the unfair practice whereby part of India's national wealth was being exported to England for which the country got no adequate economic or material compensation. Scores of nationalist scholars believe it was this that was the root cause of the abysmal poverty that raged in India. National leaders brought this moot topic to the fore in the second half of the nineteenth century and came together to speak about it on one platform.

As already mentioned, Dadabhai Naoroji was the first individual who brought the true nature of British rule in India to light. He wrote articles in his paper *English Debt to India* which he later read out at a gathering of the East India Association on 2 May 1867 in London. In his article, he wrote that 'out of the revenues raised in India nearly one-fourth goes clean out of the country, and is added to the resources of England'. He presented several papers on this topic such as '*The Wants and Means of India*' (1870) and '*On the Commerce of India*' (1871) in London. But it was his book *Poverty and un-British rule in India* that made both Indians and the rest of the world, especially the English, sit up and take a look. Naoroji called the British rule as plundering, unrighteous, despotic, destructive and un-British. He drew attention to the fact that it was a falsehood that British rule was in any way beneficial to India. On the contrary, it deprived India of her resources and riches.



Figure 8.1 Dadabhai Naoroji

Source: <http://static.guim.co.uk/sys-images/Guardian/Pix/pictures/2013/7/25/1374747983873/Dadabhai-Naoroji-008.jpg>

However, Dadabhai Naoroji was not the only Indian who brought this issue to light. In 1872, at a lecture in Poona, Justice Govind Ranade observed 'that of the national income of India more than one-third was taken away by the British in some form or other'. Other nationalist leaders who denounced this drain of wealth through various papers were Gopal Krishna Gokhle, PC Ray, GV Joshi, MM Malaviya, DE Wacha, G Subramaniya Iyer, Surendranath Banerji and Bholanath Chandra. Many nationalist newspapers also slammed the drain of wealth from India, notably among them was the *Amrit Bazaar Patrika*. In spite of so many voices condemning this unfair depletion of national wealth, the Indian National Congress officially adopted 'the drain theory' only in 1896 at the party's Calcutta session. Not surprisingly, the President of Congress at that time was Dadabhai Naoroji.

Politically conscious Indians and nationalists began to compare the nature of British invasion of India with the invasions of the country by Alexander the Great, Mahmud of Ghazni, Shihabuddin Ghori, Babur, Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali. They realized that the earlier invaders plundered the wealth of India in the form of cash, gold, silver and precious things. But the effect of their plunder was felt by a few, with the exception of Nadir Shah. On the other hand, the British rule distressed the entire nation. It plundered India regularly and systematically. All earlier invaders and rulers who came to India made this country their permanent home. They restricted all their activities within the boundaries of India. Most importantly, the national wealth remained within the country and was spent here. At least some Indians benefited from these invasions. Industry and crafts received a boost under the patronage of these rulers. However, all this changed with the coming of the British. After they founded their rule in India, the local industries and crafts suffered heavily and in a way benefitted only English industries. It was the nature and form of British rule that led to the continuous drain of wealth from India.

As the nationalist leaders set about computing the amount of riches and money that had been drained away, their figures varied greatly from each other. These differences were largely because all individuals were using different modes of calculation. Moreover the gap between exports and imports was growing continuously. In 1867, Dadabhai Naoroji came up with the figure of 8 million pounds worth of wealth that had been

drained. In 1870, he increased the figure to 12 million pounds. In 1905, he declared that an exorbitant 34 million sterling or ₹51.5 crore worth of Indian wealth was being drained out of India annually. In 1888 GV Joshi had claimed that ₹25 crores was being drained every year to England. DE Wacha put this figure between ₹30 and ₹40 crores a year.

ACTIVITY

Do you agree with the drain of wealth theory? Go through the arguments presented by scholars and give your own interpretation.

3.6 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- The British East India Company's colonization process was carried out broadly through three phases:
 - o Phase-I (Mercantile Capitalism, 1757-1813)
 - o Phase II – (Transition of Mercantile to Free Trade Imperialism, 1813-1858)
 - o Phase-III – (Finance Capitalism/Imperialism, 1858 onwards)
- The 'first phase' is generally dated from 1757, when the British East India Company acquired the rights to collect revenue from its territories in the eastern and southern parts of the subcontinent, to 1813, when the Company's monopoly over trade with India came to an end.
- From 1600 to 1760, British carried the trade in putting out system.
- The factory system brought in a lot of change. British started purchasing only raw materials, which the Indian peasants were forced to grow, and finished goods were sold in India.
- The Company had managed to acquire permits or a dastak from the Mughal emperor that exempted it from having to pay duties on its trade.
- Despite efforts, it seemed difficult to find British goods that could be sold in India in exchange, to stop or slow down this outflow of bullion.
- Besides the expenditure on buying commodities, the Company also spent very large amounts on the wars that it had to fight with other European powers, all in search of the same goods to trade in.
- After the diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa was granted to the East India Company in 1765, the maximization of revenue from the colony became the primary objective of the British East India Company's administration.
- In 1772, the Governor of Bengal, Warren Hastings, introduced a system of 'revenue farming' in the province of Bengal.
- Under the Permanent Settlement, zamindars, who earlier only had the right to collect revenue, were established as the proprietors or owners of land.
- If the zamindars failed to paid full tax on time, their lands would be confiscated and auctioned by the state.
- Some of the zamindars, were not able to pay the revenue on time and lost their lands.
- The Permanent Settlement strived to keep the intermediaries from revenue collection, so that the state could acquire a larger share of the income from land.

- Under the Ryotwari system, in which the settlement was made directly with the cultivator, each field was separately measured and annually assessed.
- The system eliminated the middleman but sometimes placed the cultivators at the mercy of lower officials, who often formed cliques of caste groups.
- The Mahalwari settlement gave some recognition to collective proprietary rights.
- Company officials amassed huge fortunes before they returned home, and they were referred to as 'nabobs' in Britain, on account of their flashy lifestyles.
- The second phase is generally seen to have begun with the charter Act of 1813, when the Company lost its monopoly trading rights in India, and ended in 1858, when the British crown took over the direct control and administration of all British territory in India.
- As unprecedented levels of industrialization were achieved in Britain, there was a gradual change in the constitution of the parliament.
- The passage of expensive, hand-crafted Indian textiles to Britain, which had been very popular there, was however, obstructed by excessive taxes.
- Dual tariff policy was adopted by the British to carry on de-industrialization in India.
- From the 1860s onwards, the nature of agricultural production was determined by the demands of the overseas markets for Indian primary products.
- The larger part of the profits generated by the export trade went to British business houses, which controlled shipping and insurance industries, besides agents, traders and bankers.
- Early Indian nationalists like Dadabhai Naoroji, and M.G. Ranade had expected Britain to undertake capitalist industrialization in India, but were deeply disillusioned with the results of colonial industrial policies.
- The drain occurred through the interest that India paid for foreign debts of the East India Company, military expenditure, guaranteed returns on foreign investment in railways and other infrastructure, importing all stationery from England, 'home charges' paid for the Secretary of State in Britain and salaries, pensions and training costs of military and civilian staff employed by the British state to rule India.

7 KEY TERMS

- **Dastak:** It is a permit prevalent in 18th century Bengal exempting European traders, mostly of the British East India Company, from paying customs or transit duties on their private trade.
- **Sub-infeudation:** It is the practice by which tenants, holding land under the king or other superior lord, carved out new and distinct tenures in their turn by sub-letting or alienating a part of their lands.
- **Talukdar:** It is a term used for land holders during the Mughal and British period who were responsible for collecting taxes from a district.
- **Free traders:** Traders in the 19th century who did not come under the jurisdiction of the crown of Britain.

8 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. The three phases of British Colonialism were:
 - (i) Phase-I (Mercantile Capitalism, 1757-1813)
 - (ii) Phase II – (Transition of Mercantile to Free Trade Imperialism, 1813-1858)
 - (iii) Phase-III – (Finance Capitalism/Imperialism, 1858 onwards)
2. The factory system changed the production process. The artisans were no longer required to buy raw materials, but the owners, in this case, the Britishers, and farmers were forced to produce raw material. Finished goods were sold in the colonial countries like India.
3. The dastak was a permit that exempted European traders, mostly of the British East India Company, from paying customs or transit duties on their private trade. The revenue administration too was controlled.
4. False
5. The system of revenue farming was introduced by Warren Hastings, under which the European district collectors would sell the right to collect revenue to the highest bidder. This system, however, failed, and the cultivators became insolvent and out of business as under this system, due to arbitrarily high revenue demands by the company servants.
6. Zamindars
7. False
8. The Ryotwari Settlement made the peasants the owner of the land. Though it increased the revenue collected by the state, the assessments were faulty and the peasants overburdened by the taxes. The landed intermediaries too continued to flourish.
9. The second phase of British colonialism is also known as industrial capitalism. This period began with the Charter Act of 1813, when the Company lost its monopoly trading rights in India, and ended in 1858, when the British crown took over the direct control and administration of all British territory in India.
10. Free trade was allowed in 1813 to every company from England.
11. Free trade
12. True
13. Dadabhai Naoroji put forward the drain of wealth theory.
14. India

9 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. How did the British misuse the dastak?
2. Explain the drain of wealth theory.
3. What were the characteristic of mercantile capitalism?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Explain how India's handloom suffered due to the free trade policy of the British and Industrial Revolution.
2. Explain how the East India Company lost its trade monopoly.
3. Do you think commercialization of agriculture was forced process? Give your view.

10 FURTHER READING

- Chandra, Bipin; *History of Modern India*, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 2009.
- Chandra, Bipin; *Freedom Struggle*, National Book Trust, New Delhi, 1972.
- Chopra, P. N.; *A Comprehensive History of Modern India*, Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, 2003.
- Sarkar, Sumit; *Modern India*, Pan Macmillan Australia Pty. Ltd., Sydney, 1983.
- Bhattacharya, Sabyasachi; *Rethinking 1857*, Indian Council of Historical Research, New Delhi, 2007.
- Marshall, P. J.; *The Eighteenth Century in India History: Revolution or Evolution?* Oxford University Press, UK, 2005.
- Robert, P.E.; *History of British India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1978.
- Marshall, P. J.; *Problems of Empire: Britain and India, 1757-1813*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1968.
- Chopra, P.N.; *A Comprehensive History of Modern India*, Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, 2003.
- Grover, B.L.; *History of Modern India*, S. Chand & Company Limited, New Delhi 1971.

UNIT 4 FRONTIER POLICY OF THE BRITISH

Structure

- 0 Introduction
- 1 Unit Objectives
- 2 British Policy towards Afghanistan
 - 2.1 First Anglo-Afghan War
 - 2.2 Second Anglo-Afghan War
 - 2.3 Third Anglo-Afghan War
- 3 British Policy towards Burma
 - 3.1 First Anglo-Burmese War (1824-26)
 - 3.2 Second Anglo-Burmese War (1852)
 - 3.3 Third Anglo-Burmese War
- 4 Relations with Nepal
- 5 Summary
- 6 Key Terms
- 7 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 8 Questions and Exercises
- 9 Further Reading

0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, you learnt about mercantile capitalism and the East India Company's policies, and transition from mercantilism to free trade imperialism.

While impressing its supremacy over India, the British East India Company was aware that it could not neglect the frontier states. The North-West frontier region and Afghanistan were the most difficult areas, and strategically and militarily important. Tribes from Afghanistan launched frequent attacks. Simultaneously, The East India Company cast anxious glances, early in the 19th century, at India's neighbours to the east—Burma. Burma, truculent and expansionist, seemingly ready to devour Bengal, was hard to subdue. After the initial invasion by the Company in 1824, it took some 60 years and more wars before the whole of Burma came under the British. Nepal was also an important territory, which the British had to subjugate. This was all the more important because it was strategically close to Bengal and the Nepalese government was reluctant to allow the Company trade through the region to Tibet.

In this unit, you will learn the British East India Company's relations with Afghanistan, Burma and Nepal and the numerous wars fought with them.

1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Assess the British policy towards Afghanistan
- Explain the causes of the Anglo-Afghan wars
- Interpret British relations with Burma
- Describe the factors that led to wars between the British East India Company and Burma
- Analyse the causes of the British East India Company to subjugate Nepal

2 BRITISH POLICY TOWARDS AFGHANISTAN

After closely scrutinizing the Russian influence and expansion in Afghanistan, the British decided to have complete control over Afghanistan's foreign affairs. It was observed that after 1858, the British followed a policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. However, this policy of non-interference took an about turn under Lyttons' government. It was in these circumstances that the British attacked Afghanistan in 1878 and were able to conquer some regions. After Lord Lytton finished his tenure, his office was taken over by Lord Ripon whose policies were the total opposite of Lytton. Lord Ripon reversed the policies followed under Lytton in Afghanistan and offered a policy of peaceful co-existence. By this time, the Afghans wanted full autonomy in all state matters and in 1919 declared war against the British. By 1921, Afghanistan became an independent country.

2.1 First Anglo-Afghan War

Until the 1830s, Afghanistan was of little interest to the British Empire. However, with the Russians gradually closing towards India, Britain feared that the Russians wanted to capture all Central Asia and saw destabilizing British India. Britain's major fear was Russia's advance towards south of the Hindu Kush, the mountain range just north of Kabul. It realized that if Afghanistan was captured, the Russians would be able to build up a force and march onto the plains of India with little impediment. With the prospect of all Central Asia, from Persia to Afghanistan, falling under Russian control, the war between Afghanistan and the British empire became imminent. At that time, although Afghanistan was a weak and disunited territory, ruined by a civil war, it was under tight control of a competent leader, the usurper Dost Muhammad Khan.

The first Anglo-Afghan War took place from 1839 to 1842 and was fought between Afghanistan and British India. This war was considered one of the first major conflicts of the Great Game. The Great Game refers to a period of 19th century history which is marked by the tactical rivalry between Britain and Russia for control in Central Asia. This period is also known for the major setbacks suffered by the British powers in this region and is compared to Britain's ill fate during World War II in terms of Japan's invasion of Malaya and Singapore. Although, one factor that has been understated in this war, while mentioning Britain's plight is that most of the war casualties were the Indians who formed the bulk of the British troops. The first attack came from the British in 1839, when they first captured Kabul. In 1841, the Afghans struck back and the British were defeated. The cost of occupation and climate were the major factors responsible for British defeat leading them to retreat back to Peshawar. Efforts to retake Kabul led to another expedition and the British were successful.

Although, they had to abandon Kabul once again in 1842 as they were not able to face resistance from the Afghan forces. The British prided themselves as being unconquerable, however, with losing Kabul, their invincible reputation was challenged. In order to repair its damaged image, the British conquered Sind and the Sikh kingdom in Punjab.

Following the conquests of Sind and the Sikh kingdom, the British achieved a decisive victory over Dost Mohammad and his troops. Dost Mohammad finally

fled the city with some of his loyal followers to Bukhara. In August 1839, Shuja was enthroned in Kabul after a span of thirty years. Though some British troops remained in Afghanistan, the majority of British troops returned to India. However, in a short span of time it became evident that Shuja constantly required British assistance in ruling Kabul. Although, Britain provided assistance in the form of military and finance, most of the Afghans resented their presence in Afghanistan. It was during this time that William Hay Macnaghten allowed British troops to bring their families to Afghanistan in order to boost their morale. The Afghans figured this as one of the many plans of the British to settle in their territory. In this light, Dost Mohammad attacked the British. This disorganized attempt against the British finally led to Afghan defeat and the subsequent surrender of Dost Mohammad who was later exiled to India in 1840.

Elphinstone who then took over the Afghan cause had already lost his authority and command of his troops. In the three decades after the First Anglo-Afghan War, the Russians were steadily advancing towards Afghanistan and by 1842 the Russian border was on the other side of the Aral Sea. The Russian control extended as far as the northern bank of the Amu Darya. After the annexation of Tashkent and Samarkand in 1865, a peace treaty was signed in 1873 between Amir Alim Khan who was the ruler of Bukhara that time stripping him of his independence and conforming Russian control till River Amu Darya.

2.2 Second Anglo-Afghan War

The second Anglo-Afghan War took place from 1878 to 1880 and was fought between the British and the Afghans. During this phase, Afghans were ruled by Sher Ali Khan of the Barakzai Dynasty, who was also the son of the former Emir Dost Mohammad Khan. This was the second instance when the British had invaded Afghanistan. This war ended with the British achieving all its geopolitical goals. After the war, most of the British troops withdrew from Afghanistan as the Afghans were permitted to make decisions regarding internal matters. However, all aspects pertaining to foreign relations were controlled by the British. With the June 1878 Congress session, the tension between Russia and Britain in Europe came to end. Britain and Russia then turned their attention towards Central Asia. Russians also sent an uninvited envoy to Kabul who arrived on 22 July 1878. All attempts on the part of Sher Ali Khan to keep the Russian mission out of Afghanistan proved futile. The British sent a similar mission to Kabul on the 14 August 1878. The British mission under Neville Bowles Chamberlain was not only refused but the Afghans threatened to stop it if it were dispatched. In September 1878, the then Viceroy Lord Lytton ordered another mission to be sent to Kabul which was turned back as it approached the eastern entrance of Khyber Pass. This defiance to the British mission triggered the second Anglo-Afghan War.

The British formulated a strategy to invade Afghanistan. According to this strategy, the 40,000 British troops were divided into three groups and were to attack Afghanistan from three different directions. Sher Ali Khan panicked and made an attempt to appeal to the Russian Czar in person, however, he was unable to do so. He returned to Mazari Sharif without making an appeal and passed away on 21 February 1879. As the British occupied a major part of Afghanistan, Sher Ali Khan's son and successor Mohammad Yaqub Khan signed the Treaty of Gandamak in May 1879. This was done to prevent further British invasion in the rest of the country.

Furthermore, Yaqub Khan surrendered Afghan control of foreign affairs to the British in lieu of an annual subsidy and assistance in case of foreign aggression. Simultaneously, the British installed their representatives in Kabul and other important cities. The British control increased in Afghanistan from the Khyber Pass to the Michni Pass. Apart from these areas, Afghanistan ceded Quetta and various other areas to Britain.

The British army withdrew after these developments as they were content that their goals in Afghanistan had been met. However, on 3 September 1879, Sir Pierre Cavagnari and his men were slaughtered. This incident triggered the next phase of the second Anglo-Afghan War.

The British expedition was led by Major General Frederick Roberts over the Shutargardan Pass. He led the Kabul Field Force into central Afghanistan and defeated the Afghan army at Char Asiab on 6 October 1879 and successfully occupied Kabul. In December 1879, Ghazi Mohammad Jan Khan Wardark attacked the British troops near the Sherpur Cantonment but was defeated. On the other hand, Yaqub Khan, who was considered a prime suspect in the murders of Cavagnari and his men, was forced to renounce his throne. In order to rule an empire as vast as the Afghans, the British contemplated a number of possibilities, which included partitioning of Afghanistan under multiple rulers, and placing Yaqub's brother Ayub Khan on the throne. The British finally decided to install Yaqub's cousin Abdur Rahman Khan instead.

Ayub Khan, who was serving as a governor in Herat, felt insulted with the British decision of installing Abdur Rahman Khan and then decided to attack the British. He was able to defeat a British detachment at the Battle of Maiwand on July 1880, and was successful in annexing Kandahar. The British troops under the leadership of Major General Frederick Roberts defeated Ayub Khan on 1 September at the Battle of Kandahar.

Abdur Rahman then confirmed the Treaty of Gandamak giving the British control of the territories ceded by Yaqub Khan. The Treaty of Gandamak also gave the British autonomous control over Afghanistan's foreign policy. In return, the British power promised protection from foreign aggression and issued a subsidy to Abdur Rahman.

The British withdrew from Afghanistan once it achieved its objectives. The British were content with control of foreign policies of Afghanistan and the huge territories they had acquired and therefore abandoned the idea of maintaining a British resident in Kabul.

2.3 Third Anglo-Afghan War

The Third Anglo-Afghan War was a very short war which lasted for a period of three months. The war began on 6 May 1919 and ended on 8 August 1919 with an armistice. The Third Anglo-Afghan War proved to be a strategic victory for the British as it reaffirmed the political boundaries of British India and Afghanistan. The Durand Line was used as a point of division between the two political entities. This war proved to be a watershed for the Afghans as they were able to gain control of their foreign affairs as an independent state.

Although the Third Anglo-Afghan War was a short war, the root causes for this war lay in Afghanistan's past. After fighting two wars with Afghanistan previously, the British not only considered the Afghans a threat but Russia's intentions in this region was also a matter of worry for them. There was always the fear of

Indian invasion by the Russians through Afghanistan. The British made frequent attempts to impose their will on Kabul and over a period of time fought two wars in the 19th century.

After the second Anglo-Afghan War in 1880, there was a period of peace marked by the good relations between Britain and Afghanistan. In these years of peace, Afghanistan was under the leadership of Abdur Rahman Khan and Habibullah Khan. During this phase also the British managed Afghanistan's foreign policy through the payment of a large subsidy. Although, Afghanistan remained independent to a large extent, in regards to external matters it has been rightly said that it would '...have no windows looking on the outside world, except towards India'. Emir Abdur Rahman Khan passed away in 1901 and it has been said that his death indirectly led to the war that began eighteen years later. He was succeeded by Habibullah, who was a very unreliable and unstable leader.

Habibullah was known to alternatively side with the British and Russian according to the volume of subsidy. Even though, Afghanistan was not consulted during the 1907 Anglo-Russian Convention, it chose to remain neutral during World War I (1914-1918). Afghanistan was constantly pressurized by the Ottoman Empire and it finally entered the conflict from Germany's side. The Sultan, a titular leader of Islam, called for a jihad against the Allies.

Though Afghanistan remained neutral in the conflict, Habibullah accepted a Turkish-German mission in Kabul and took military assistance from the Central Powers. It was observed that in his own subtle twisted way, Habibullah tried to play both sides of the conflict for the best deal. He constantly misled these powers and refused any sort of assistance. In his quest to fulfill his own selfish motives, he failed to keep a check on the troublesome tribal leaders. Meanwhile, the Turkish agents instigated trouble along the frontier region. Departure of a large part of the British Indian army to fight overseas and a Turkish victory over the British, aided the Turkish efforts at sedition. In 1915, there was unrest among two Afghan clans, namely Mohmands and Mahsuds. Notwithstanding these outbreaks, though, the frontier generally remained settled at a time when Britain could ill afford trouble.

By 1916, the Turco-German mission had left Kabul and during their stay successfully convinced Habibullah that Afghanistan was a free nation and that it should not be under the jurisdiction of anyone. After the end of World War I, Habibullah set out to gain reward from the British government for their assistance during World War I. Habibullah sought the right to control Afghanistan's foreign affairs. He also demanded a seat at Versailles Peace Conference in 1919.

However, this request was denied by Viceroy Frederic Thesiger. Further negotiations were to be held in this respect, however, before anything could be scheduled, Habibullah was murdered on 19 February 1919. With Habibullah's death in 1919, a power struggle ensued between Habibullah's brother Nasrullah Khan and Amanullah, Habibullah's third son. Both of them proclaimed themselves to be successors to Habibullah. The Afghan army suspected Amanullah to have a hand in his father's death. In order to gain their trust and solidify his position as their leader, he presented himself to be a man of democratic ideas, who believed in reforms and changing the system of governance. In his quest for power, he declared that Afghanistan is independent and, therefore, no longer bound by the Treaty of Gandamak.

The first thing Amanullah did after seizing power was that he had Nasrullah, who was not only his uncle but also a strong contender to succeed Habibullah,

arrested. He charged his uncle for the murder of his father and sentenced him to life imprisonment. This conduct of Amanullah did not go down very well with the conservatives who favoured Nasrullah to some extent as Nasrullah himself was known to be more conservative in his outlook. Amanullah saw the conservatives as a threat to his position and realized that he could only hold on to power if he had the support of the conservatives. Meanwhile, British India was going through a phase of civil unrest following the Amritsar massacre and Amanullah saw this as an opportunity. He diverted his attention from the internal turmoil of Afghanistan and decided to invade British India.

The third Anglo-Afghan War ended in a tactical victory for the British who were able to drive the Afghans out of Indian territory. British, though victorious, suffered almost double the amount of war casualties during this war. Some historians even consider this to be of a strategic victory for the Afghans, although, it was quite obvious that, despite going through a phase of civil unrest, British India could easily defeat Afghanistan. It is difficult to understand what Amanullah was expecting to gain from this war. Based on the settlements which came up afterwards, some argue that it was indeed a strategic victory for Amanullah.

A peace treaty was signed at the end of the war. According to this treaty, the British not only withdrew the subsidy they were paying the Afghans, they also ended their right to import arms from India. Over a period of time the British influence declined to an extent that the Afghans resumed their right to conduct their foreign affairs without any British coercion. The Afghans and the British agreed to Durand Line being the political boundary separating Afghanistan from the North-West Frontier Province. On the other hand, the British were content with the fact that the Afghans made an undertaking to stop interfering in the British-dominated territory. Thus, it can be said that both sides did achieve something from this war.

Although the war was long over, the effects of the war were still prevalent on both sides. The nationalism, disruption and unrest that had sparked off during the war itself proved to be more trouble in the years to come, particularly in the region of Waziristan. A large number of tribesmen populated these areas that joined together for a common cause, which was to exploit weakness and cause unrest and violence. These tribesmen had become very powerful during the course of time as they had access to the arms and ammunition left behind by the Afghans. A large number of people who were previously a part of the militia joined their ranks. With ample supply of arms, manpower and confidence, these tribesmen launched numerous campaigns against the British on the North-West Frontier. Their surges continued till the end of the British Raj.

3 BRITISH POLICY TOWARDS BURMA

In order to check French and Russian influence in the Indian subcontinent, the British followed an imperialistic policy towards Afghanistan and Burma to establish control. In 1824-26, the British had seized Lower Burma. However, the old ruling dynasty of Burma continued to rule and control Upper Burma. Simultaneously, the French were settling in regions of Indo-China and became interested in Burma. The French also tried to increase their influence in Burma which was not accepted by the British. Therefore, to safeguard their position in Burma, the British asked the Burmese king to accept British control in their foreign policy and requested that a British resident

be posted at the royal capital of Mandalay. The demands laid down by the British were rejected by the Burmese king. The British troops invaded Burma leading to its annexation in 1885. Despite resisting British rule for many years, Burma finally became a British province.

While the Gurkhas were conquering Nepal in the latter half of the 18th century, Burma was engaged in capturing new territories. The Burmese brought Arakan, Pegu, Tenasserim and the entire Irrawady basin under its control. In 1766, Tenasserim was forcibly taken from Siam and was annexed in 1768. In the period from 1782-1819, King Bodawpaya conquered Arakan (1784), Manipur (1813) and Assam (1816). All these conquests made it necessary for the British to rethink its political policies and alliances with regard to Burma. In this respect, the British government at Calcutta sent three envoys to Burma which is mentioned with the years served in tenure.

- (i) Captain Symes (1795 and 1802)
- (ii) Captain Cox (1797)
- (iii) Captain Banning (1803, 1809 and 1811)

These efforts proved futile as these residents were unable to establish any relation with the Burmese. In 1818, the British were occupied in exterminating the Pindaris; the Burmese pressured Lord Hastings to surrender Chittagong, Decca, Murshidabad and Cossimbazar. Lord Hastings chose to ignore the Burmese demand. However, the Burmese were successful in subjugating Assam in 1821-22 and confronted the British all along their north-east frontier.

3.1 First Anglo-Burmese War (1824-26)

Trivial success in their expeditions against British filled the Burmese with pride and confidence. They now considered Ava, the capital of Burma, to be the centre of the world. The Burmese were confident and were eager to start a war with the English. In September 1823, they attacked Shahpuri, a small island off Chittagong. In response to these Burmese hostilities along the Assam frontier, the British finally declared war on Burma. On 24 February 1824, Lord Amherst declared war which lasted two years. This war brought little credit to either side. The British planned to capture Rangoon by sea route and therefore advanced through the Irrawady River into Rangoon. Without any knowledge of the geography or climate, the British went on with their plan of annexing Rangoon. They had chosen an unsuitable time for their expedition since this expedition took place in May, during the monsoon season. Heavy downpours brought fever and dysentery with it. Later expeditions through Manipur and Arakan made little progress and therefore had to be withdrawn. An able general of the Burmese government Bandula cut up a British detachment at Ramu (Chittagong), in 1824. But he was defeated and killed in April 1825 by Sir Archibald Campbell who occupied Prome, the capital of Lower Burma. By 1824, Tenasserim had also been taken.

The first Anglo-Burmese War ended in a decisive victory for the British and on 24 February 1826, peace was concluded at Yandabo. The Burmese king ceded the provinces of Arakan and Tenasserim. The Burmese also agreed to withdraw from Assam, Cachar and Jaintia also recognizing the independence of Manipur. The Burmese were forced to pay a heavy war indemnity and sign a commercial treaty with the British. They finally agreed to appoint a British envoy in their court.

3.2 Second Anglo-Burmese War (1852)

According to the Treaty of Yandabo which was signed after the First Anglo-Burmese War, John Crawford was appointed as an envoy to Burma in September 1826. However, within months of signing a commercial treaty in December 1826, he withdrew from Burma. The British then sent Major Henry Burney who stayed in Burma till 1837. In 1840, King Tharrawaddy came to power and repudiated all British policies and adopted an unfriendly attitude towards the British. In 1851, a group of merchants who were trading in Burma complained of oppression by Burmese officials at Rangoon and asked for reparation. Lord Dalhousie sent some troops by sea route to Pagan, under the leadership of Commodore Lambert. Commodore Lambert was supposed to meet the new King of Burma to demand compensation for the British merchants. It was later found out that negotiations took place between subordinate officials from both sides, who exacerbated the already tense situation by their hasty decisions.

Lord Dalhousie finally sent an ultimatum to the Burmese King demanding compensation and heavy indemnity. After receiving no replay for a long time, Lord Dalhousie declared war in April 1852. Under the leadership of Commander-in-Chief General Godwin, the British forces reached Rangoon. They were able to conquer Martaban easily and the great Pagoda of Yangon was stormed on 14 April 1852. In September, Dalhousie himself went to Rangoon to oversee the war. By October, the British were able to conquer Prome. In a proclamation issued on 20 December 1852, Dalhousie annexed Lower Burma or Pegu. After the conquest of Lower Burma, Lord Dalhousie refused to advance further into Burma. The second Anglo-Burmese War came to an end in February 1853 with the accession of King Mindon to the throne. He displaced his brother Pagan Min. With the conquest of Lower Burma, the British controlled the entire coast of the Bay of Bengal from Chittagong to Singapore. After the war, Sir Arthur Phayre was appointed the commissioner of Pegu and he, with the help of General Fytche, introduced various administrative reforms.

3.3 Third Anglo-Burmese War

The Third Anglo-Burmese War was the last of the three wars that were fought between the British and the Burmese. Burma during this period was under the Konbaung Dynasty. Their rule was restricted to Upper Burma as Lower Burma was under British jurisdiction since 1853, resulting from the Second Anglo-Burmese War. After the war, Burma came under the British control and became a province of the British India. After 1937, the British ruled Burma as a separate colony which only gained independence in 1948. The British rule in Burma lasted from 1824 to 1948. During this phase, Burma witnessed three wars with the British, saw the creation of Burma as a British province to an independent colony and finally independence in 1948.

Various portions of Burmese territories, including Arakan and Tenasserim were annexed by the British after their victory in the first Anglo-Burmese War; Lower Burma was annexed in 1852 after the second Anglo-Burmese War. The annexed territories were designated the minor province (a chief commissionership of British Burma) of British India in 1862. After the third Anglo-Burmese War in 1885, Upper Burma was annexed, and the following year, the province of Burma in British India was created, becoming a major province (a lieutenant-governorship) in 1897. This arrangement lasted until 1937, when Burma began to be administered

separately by the Burma Office and the secretary of state for India and Burma. Burma achieved independence from British rule on 4 January 1948.

4 RELATIONS WITH NEPAL

The first governor general of Bengal was Warren Hastings who was appointed in 1773 and remained in office for the next 10 years. After him, Lord Wellesley took over and continued the good work. When he had come to India, he had believed that it would be better to follow the policy of non-intervention in terms of the affairs of India. However, as time passed, he realized that the state of the country was such that it would be impossible to rule without intervention at many levels. Since India was surrounded by dangerous neighbours, it had to be protected and only an interventionist policy would make that possible. In fact, it was the first task that Hastings had to accomplish—coming to peace with Nepal.

Hastings had to deal with Nepal, a country run by Gorkhas, who were traditionally hardy warriors. Their strength had grown slowly and gradually and they were well-established in their position in their country. They controlled the entire hilly territory from the edge of Bhutan in the east to the Sutlej on the west. Gorkhas were ambitious and aspired to expand their reign to the plains as well, which was possible only by impinging on the region controlled by the English East India Company.

A lot of governor-generals of Bengal had tried to follow the non-intervention policy and as a result, Gorkhas had been encouraged to proceed with their attacks for expansion. They had managed to occupy a number of villages close to the border on the British side. The turning point came when the Butwal and Sheoraj districts were occupied by the Gorkhas. When the British tried to negotiate peacefully the return of these villages to British control, Gorkhas refused and war was declared in 1814.

It is common knowledge that Nepal is difficult to attack for any military because of its hilly terrain. While the British did go in with adequate planning, they failed to execute those plans in the end. Further, Gorkhas are accomplished fighters and infinitely more familiar and adept at negotiating the hilly terrain than the British or Indian soldiers. Even General Gillespie, who was a well-known soldier and had earned accolades in Java, was killed in the war with Nepal. Three other generals were defeated as well. Ultimately, Amar Singh, the Gorkha leader, lost the battle and surrendered. After his surrender, the Treaty of Sagauli was finalized in March 1816.

As per the treaty, the Gorkhas had to give up the majority of their claims in the Tarai on the southern border. They also had to surrender the provinces of Garhwal and Kumaon while the English side gained control of Simla also. The north-western boundary of the English company now extended up to the mountains. A British official was also placed in the Gorkha capital.

It would not be wrong to say that the Treaty of Sagauli was extremely significant with regard to the relationship between India and Nepal, even now. A large number of soldiers are a part of the Indian army and also take up many other jobs within India. The treaty of 1816 therefore helped to establish a long-lasting friendship among India and Nepal.

Did You Know

The Gorkhas were military units in the British and now a part of the Indian Army. Gorkha units are closely associated with the khukuri, a forward-curving Nepalese knife. Former Chief of Staff of the Indian Army, Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw, once famously said about the Gorkhas: 'If a man says he is not afraid of dying, he is either lying or is a Gorkha.'

ACTIVITY

Compare the Libyan rebellion of 2011 to the Anglo-Burmese conflict and try to figure out similarities regarding the causes of these conflicts.

5 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- After closely scrutinizing the Russian influence and expansion in Afghanistan, the British decided to have complete control over Afghanistan's foreign affairs.
- The policy of non-interference took an about turn under Lyttons' government. It was in these circumstances that the British attacked Afghanistan in 1878 and were able to conquer some regions.
- After Lord Lytton finished his tenure, his office was taken over by Lord Ripon who followed a policy of peaceful co-existence.
- Until the 1830s, Afghanistan was of little interest to the British Empire. However, with the Russians gradually closing towards India, Britain feared that the Russians wanted to capture all Central Asia and saw destabilizing British India as the best way to achieve it.
- The First Anglo-Afghan War took place from 1839 to 1842 and was fought between Afghanistan and British India.
- The Great Game is a period of 19th Century history which is marked by the tactical rivalry between Britain and Russia for control in Central Asia.
- The period of First Anglo-Afghan war is also known for the major setbacks suffered by the British powers in this region and is compared to Britain's ill fate during the Second World War in terms of Japan's invasion of Malaya and Singapore.
- Following the conquest of sindh and sikh kingdoms, the British achieved a decisive victory over Dost Mohammad and his troops. It was during this time that William Hay Macnaghten allowed British troops to bring their families to Afghanistan in order to boost their morale.
- Elphinstone who then took over the Afghan cause had already lost his authority and command of his troops. In the three decades after the First Anglo-Afghan War, the Russians were steadily advancing towards Afghanistan and by 1842 the Russian border was on the other side of the Aral Sea.

- The Second Anglo-Afghan War took place from 1878 to 1880 and was fought between the British and the Afghans. During this phase, Afghans were ruled by Sher Ali Khan of the Barakzai Dynasty, who was also the son of the former Emir Dost Mohammad Khan.
- With the June 1878 Congress session, the tension between Russia and Britain in Europe came to end.
- With the June 1878 Congress session, the tension between Russia and Britain in Europe came to end.
- The British army withdrew as they were content that their goals in Afghanistan had been met.
- The Treaty of Gandamak also gave the British autonomous control over Afghanistan's foreign policy.
- The Third Anglo-Afghan War proved to be a strategic victory for the British as it reaffirmed the political boundaries of British India and Afghanistan.
- After the Second Anglo-Afghan War in 1880, there was a period of peace marked by the good relations between Britain and Afghanistan. In these years of peace, Afghanistan was under the leadership of Abdur Rahman Khan and Habibullah Khan.
- By 1916, the Turco-German mission had left Kabul and during their stay successfully convinced Habibullah that Afghanistan was a free nation and that it should not be under the jurisdiction of anyone.
- The Third Anglo-Afghan War ended in a tactical victory for the British who were easily able to drive the Afghans out of Indian territory.
- In order to check French and Russian influence in the Indian subcontinent, the British followed an imperialistic policy towards Afghanistan and Burma to establish control. In 1824-26, the British seized Burma.
- While the Gorkhas were conquering Nepal in the latter half of the 18th Century, Burma was engaged in capturing new territories.
- The Burmese were confident and were eager to start a war with the English. In September 1823, they attacked Shahpuri, a small island off Chittagong.
- The first Anglo-Burmese War ended in a decisive victory for the British and on 24 February 1826, peace was concluded at Yandabo.
- The Second Anglo-Burmese War took place in 1852. In September, Dalhousie himself went to Rangoon to oversee the war. By October, the British were able to conquer Prome.
- The Third Anglo-Burmese War was the last of the three wars that were fought between the British and Burmese. Burma during this period was under the Konbaung Dynasty.
- After the three wars with the British, Burma became an independent province of India. It finally got independence in 1948.
- Lord Hastings was appointed the Governor-general of Bengal in 1813 and he occupied that exalted office for a decade.
- Lord Hastings came to India with a determination to follow a policy of non-intervention into the affairs of Nepal. But later on felt that the situation of the country was such that it was not possible to follow that policy.

- All military strategists agree on the point that Nepal is a very difficult country from the military point of view.
- The English were able to occupy Almora. Amar Singh, the Gorkha leader, was defeated and surrendered. Thereafter the Treaty of Sagauli was signed in March 1816.
- By the treaty, the Gorkhas gave up most of their claims in the Tarai along their southern 'border.

6 KEY TERMS

- **Khyber Pass:** It is a mountain pass connecting Afghanistan and Pakistan, cutting through the northeastern part of the Spin Ghar mountains.
- **Frontier:** A line that separates two countries, etc; the land near this line.
- **Durand Line:** It represents a long porous border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. It was established after an 1893 agreement between Mortimer Durand of British India and Afghan Amir Abdur Rahman Khan for fixing the limit of their respective spheres of influence.

7 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. The Great Game is a period of 19th century history which is marked by the tactical rivalry between Britain and Russia for control in Central Asia.
2. Treaty of Gandamak was signed between Mohammad Yaqub Khan and the British in May 1879.
3. Since Yaqub Khan was considered a prime suspect in the murders of Cavagnari and his men, he was forced to renounce his throne. The Company initially thought of putting Yaqub's brother Ayub Khan on the throne, but finally decided on Yaqub's cousin Abdur Rahman Khan.
4. The Durand Line was used to demarcate the political boundary between British India and Afghanistan.
5. During the third Anglo-Burmese War, Burma was being ruled by the Konbaung Dynasty.
6. Burma achieved independence from British rule on 4 January 1948.
7. The Treaty of Yandabo was signed after the first Anglo-Burmese War.
8. Lord Dalhousie had sent an ultimatum to the Burmese King demanding compensation and heavy indemnity for obstructing trade and oppressing Burmese traders. After receiving no replay for a long time, Dalhousie declared war.
9. The Treaty of Sagauli was signed in March 1816.
10. After being appointed the governor general of Bengal, Hastings first job was to deal with Nepal.

98 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. The second Anglo-Afghan war was a direct consequence of the British rivalry with Russia in Europe. Discuss.
2. Why was Burma's subjugation important for the British?
3. Briefly discuss the role of Dost Muhammad Khan in the first Afghan War.

Long-Answer Questions

1. What led to the first Anglo-Afghan war?
2. The third Anglo-Afghan War ended in a tactical victory for the British who were easily able to drive the Afghans out of Indian territory. Discuss.
3. The British fought three wars to bring Burma under its control. Discuss.
4. Explain the British East India Company's relationship with Nepal.

9 FURTHER READING

Chandra, Bipin; *History of Modern India*, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 2009.

Chandra, Bipin; *Freedom Struggle*, National Book Trust, New Delhi, 1972.

Chopra, P. N.; *A Comprehensive History of Modern India*, Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, 2003.

Sarkar, Sumit; *Modern India*, Pan Macmillan Australia Pty. Ltd., Sydney, 1983.

Bhattacharya, Sabyasachi; *Rethinking 1857*, Indian Council of Historical Research, New Delhi, 2007.

Marshall, P. J.; *The Eighteenth Century in India History: Revolution or Evolution?* Oxford University Press, UK, 2005.

Robert, P.E.; *History of British India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1978.

Marshall, P. J.; *Problems of Empire: Britain and India, 1757-1813*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1968.

Chopra, P.N.; *A Comprehensive History of Modern India*, Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, 2003.

Grover, B.L.; *History of Modern India*, S. Chand & Company Limited, New Delhi 1971.

UNIT 5 REVOLT OF 1857

Structure

- 0 Introduction
- 1 Unit Objectives
- 2 Uprising of 1857
- 3 Causes of the 1857 Revolt
- 4 Spread of the Revolt
- 5 Causes of Failure of the Revolt
 - 5.1 Impact and Significance of the Revolt
- 6 Reorganization of the Raj (1858 and After)
 - 6.1 Government of India Act, 1858
- 7 Historiography of the 1857 Revolt
- 8 Summary
- 9 Key Terms
- 10 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 11 Questions and Exercises
- 12 Further Reading

0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, you learnt about frontier policy of the British, and their relation with the frontier provinces of Afghanistan, Burma and Nepal.

Over a period of 100 years, starting from 1750s to 1850s, the English East India Company adopted various measures to transform India into a colony. Different policies followed by the British in India during this period were primarily in the interest of the British. A number of land revenue experiments were made which caused hardships to cultivators. Local administration failed to provide relief and natural justice to the rural poor. In this unit, you will study the causes, nature and consequences of the Revolt of 1857. The Revolt of 1857 has a major significance because, for the first time, it brought together people having different ethnic, religious and class background in a unified movement against the British rule.

In this unit, you will learn about the causes of the Revolt of 1857, its nature and effect, and the debate regarding it.

1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the uprising of 1857
- Identify the issues that led to the Revolt of 1857
- Discuss how the revolt spread across various parts of the country
- Analyse the causes of the failure of the revolt
- Explain the impact and significance of the uprising
- State the reasons behind the new Act of 1858
- Assess the debate regarding the characteristic of the revolt

2 UPRISING OF 1857

The year 1857 saw the completion of the first hundred years of British rule in India after the battle of Plassey. It was a period of mounting distress and unhappiness for India. During this century, the British conquests and colonialism marched apace and with that grew the discontent of former ruling chiefs who felt that the zest had gone out of their life. The ruling classes had been dispossessed of their power; the Indian peasantry had been deprived of its land rights and reduced to serfdom. The artisans had lost their traditional skills and livelihood, and trade, commerce and industries, which were in the hands of the colonial masters, were used for their benefit and for draining of India's wealth.

Throughout this period, profit motive had been an important factor in the conflict with the European powers and the wars with 'the feckless and thrift-less Indian princes'. The aggressive wars waged by Hastings, Ellenborough and Dalhousie, the annexations made on the plea of mismanagement by the Indian rulers and the appropriation of territories by a refusal to recognize the adoption of heirs, were prompted by the desire for dominion. Dalhousie's regime marked the high water-mark of the expansion of the British dominion in India and deprivation of the sovereign rights of the native states. The policies of Dalhousie had prepared the ground for the ignition of popular discontent against the British rule in India. Canning, who succeeded him shortly before the revolt, could read the writing on the wall and said grimly, 'We must not forget that in the sky of India, serene as it is, a small cloud may arise, at first no bigger than a man's hand, but which, growing larger and larger, may at last threaten to burst and overwhelm us with ruin'. Canning's apprehensions were proved right. The cloud did burst in the form of the Revolt of 1857 and overwhelmed the British, but ruined them only partially.

3 CAUSES OF THE 1857 REVOLT

The uprising of 1857 had many reasons; some of them were as follows:

- **Political causes:** An important political reason for the outbreak of the Revolt of 1857 was the controversial and unjustified policy of 'Doctrine of Lapse' imposed by Lord Dalhousie on Satara (1848), Jaitpur, Sambhalpur (1849), Baghat (1850), Udaipur (1852) Jhansi (1853) and Nagpur (1854). The adopted sons of these states were not recognized and the states were annexed. But the most controversial annexation was the annexation of Awadh in 1856. The Nawab of Awadh Wajid Ali Shah was accused of misgovernance although its ruler had always been faithful to the British government. A large number of company's soldiers were from Awadh, who had sympathy for their Nawab. Annexation of Awadh meant that the relatives of these soldiers had to pay more taxes, since the new land revenue policy was introduced in Awadh. Large number of taluqdars or zamindars also opposed British rule as their estates were confiscated. The company also stopped the annual pension of Nana Sahib, the adopted son of last Maratha Peshwa Baji Rao II. He proved to be a deadly enemy of the British.

The annexation of native states meant that many Indians lost important administrative posts. Ever since English became the official language (1835), the Persian-Urdu elite, known as '*ashraf*' suffered most as they were holding important assignment in judicial and revenue department. When the revolt broke they participated in the revolt with a hope to regain lost position and glory.

- **Military causes:** Another important cause of the revolt of 1857 was the discontent of the sepoys. When a rumour spread that the cover of the cartridges was made of cow and pig fat, revolt broke out. Most of the soldiers in Bengal army were Hindus or Muslims, especially of upper Hindu castes. The soldiers had many more grievances. Some upper caste Hindu sepoys had earlier revolted on religious issue. In 1852, the 38th native infantry refused to go to Burma, as crossing the sea meant losing caste for upper caste Hindus. The discontentment among the soldiers was also because of discriminatory pay package. The highest paid Indian soldier was the *subedar*, who got less than a rookie English recruit. The sepoy in the infantry got seven rupees a month whereas a *sawar* got 27 rupees. Chances of getting promotion was almost nil for them. Many of them joined the army as *risaldar* and retired as *risaldar*. They were regularly humiliated by their officers. The rumours about conversion of sepoys into Christianity worsened the situation. The Christian missionaries were actively preaching in the cantonment and openly ridiculing the other religions. Large numbers of soldiers in the Bengal army were upper caste Hindu. When the rumour of mixing bone dust in *atta* (flour) and cartridge greased with fats made by tallow derived from beef spread, they were convinced that the company is involved in the conspiracy against their religion and caste.
- **Religious causes:** One of the causes of revolt was the fear among the natives that their religion was endangered by Christianity. The activities of Christian missionaries were extended by the Englishmen in all parts of the country. These missionaries under the British government tried to convert people and made violent and vulgar public attacks on Hinduism and Islam. In 1850, the government enacted a law which enabled a convert to Christianity to inherit his ancestral property, which was not so before the Act.

The conservative religious and social sentiments of many people were also hurt by some of the humanitarian measures which the government had implemented on the advice of Indian reformers. They believed that an alien Christian government had no right to interfere in their religion and customs.

- **Administrative and economic causes:** The most important cause of the popular discontent was the economic exploitation of the country by the British and the complete destruction of its traditional economic fabric. Apart from British revenue policy, their policy of discouraging the traditional industries was also related with the outbreak of revolt. Once, Indian states were annexed, virtually there was no one to patronize the Indian industries as they were the largest consumers of Indian manufactured goods. The East India Company government only encouraged British goods. The downfall of Indian industries led to large-scale unemployment and when the revolt broke, the uprooted workers joined the rebellion.

The efforts of some reformist were also seen as conspiracy against Hindu religion and interference in the internal matters of Hindus. The Religious Disabilities Act, 1850, permitted a converted person to inherit property, contrary to Hindu social laws. There is no reason to believe that the company intended to give equal rights in property to all the members of the family. In fact, the company wanted to encourage conversion. A Christian, as they believed, is more likely to accept British rule and products in India than Hindus or Muslims. The Widow Re-marriage Act of 1856 was also opposed by the orthodox Hindus. Even Bal Gangadhar Tilak, later, opposed the Act.

The Muslim orthodox led by Mohammad Wahab wanted to make India, especially Punjab, *Dar-ul-Islam* (land of peace) from *Dar-ul-Harb* (land of infidels). After annexation of Punjab (1849) their struggle was directed against the British. When revolt broke the Wahabis of Bihar especially of Sadiqpur, Patna, played a pivotal role. They were better organized and armed than the rebels themselves. They declared the revolt as *jihad* (holy war), which made it more energetic. The clash between Islamic and Christian world was not new.

- **The immediate cause:** The greased cartridges did not create a new cause of discontent in the army, but supplied the occasion when the underground discontent came out in the open. The government introduced a new Enfield rifle in the army. Its cartridges had a greased paper cover which had to be bitten off before the cartridge was loaded into the rifle. It was believed that the grease was composed of beef and pig fat. The Hindu as well as Muslim sepoys were enraged because they thought that the use of greased cartridges was against their religion and they feared that the government was deliberately trying to destroy their religion and convert them to Christianity.

4 SPREAD OF THE REVOLT

After firing on their senior officers, the soldiers of Meerut marched towards Delhi. After crossing the Yamuna, they burnt the toll house and knocked the southern gate of Red Fort. The last Mughal king, Bahadur Shah Zafar, an old and sick man, was reluctant to open the gate but his wife Zeenat Mahal with the help of the cook opened the gate. The sepoys declared Bahadur Shah as 'Shahenshah' of India who was in reality only Shahenshah of Red Fort, not even the Yamuna, flowing behind the fort, or Chandni Chowk, situated opposite the fort. Then they attacked Daryaganj, where large number of Europeans lived. Within days, Delhi became a battle ground. Hundreds of people, firstly the English, later the Indians, were killed. Mirza Moghal, the Mughal commander-in-chief failed to lead properly. Mohammad Bakhtawar Khan, a havaladar of the Barielly force became the actual commander. But only chaos prevailed in the city and criminals started dominating. It became difficult to find out who were guilty and who were innocent. Mirza Ghalib, a great Urdu-Persian poet and eyewitness of the revolt at Delhi wrote to his friend '*Ab ki baar itne yaar mare ki ab jo mai marunga to koi rone wala na hoga*' (This time I lost so many friends that when I would die, no one would be left to cry for me.)

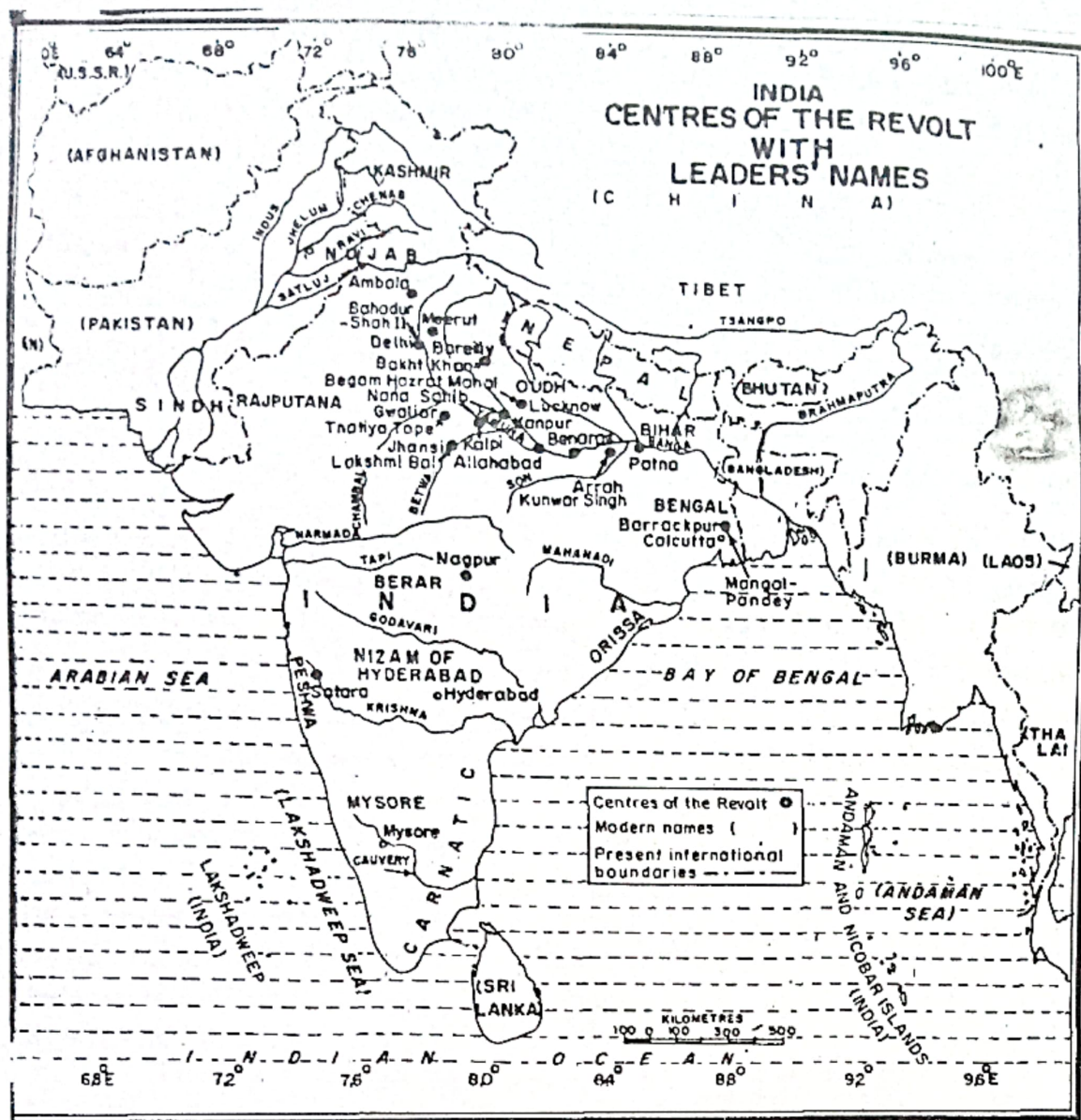


Figure 10.1 Centres of the Revolt of 1857

Once Delhi was captured, the revolt spread to different parts of the country. Awadh became the real battle zone, as most of the sepoys were from this region. Lucknow, Kanpur, Bareilly, Allahabad, Banaras, Faizabad, Jhansi, Jagdishpur (Arrah), Danapur and Patna were engulfed in fire. At Lucknow, the revolt started on 4th June, which was led by Begum Hazrat Mahal who declared Birjis Qadar, her son, as the Nawab of Awadh. The British Resident Henry Lawrence was killed. Havelock and Outram too fell. Sir Colin Campbell was pressed into service. He, with the help of Gorkha regiment, could save the Europeans.

Nana Sahib led the movement from Kanpur. He was supported by Tantya Tope. Sir Hugh Wheeler, the commander of garrison surrendered on 27 June 1857. Some Europeans, including their children, were killed. Later, in December, Sir Campbell captured Kanpur. Tantya Tope escaped and joined Rani Laxmibai.

Rani Laxmibai tried to reverse the decision of Lord Dalhousie when Jhansi was annexed after the death of her husband and the adopted son was not recognized. When her effort failed she finally revolted. The soldiers declared the widow of Raja Gangadhar Rao, Rani Laxmibai, as the ruler of Jhansi. Tantya Tope too joined her when Sir Hugh Rose captured Jhansi in April 1858, Rani and Tantya Tope attacked Gwalior. The Indian soldiers welcomed them but the Scindia decided to be loyal to the British. He escaped to Agra. Gwalior fell in June 1858. Rani died fighting bravely

on 17 June 1858. Later Tantya Tope was arrested with the help of Scindia's men and was executed. At Jagdishpur (Bihar) Kunwar Singh who had been deprived of his estate led the revolt. When the sepoys of Danapur (near Patna) reached Arrah, he led them from the front and defeated the British forces near Arrah. He also fought in eastern Uttar Pradesh.

At Bareilly, the revolt was led by Khan Bahadur Khan, a descendent of the former ruler of Rohilkhand. In Faizabad, it was led by Maulvi Ahmad Ullah and at Patna by Maulvi Pir Ali. They were important leaders of Wahabi movement. The Wahabis had already waged a *jihad* against the British. Once the revolt broke, they joined enthusiastically

Suppression of the revolt

Delhi: It was recaptured by General John Nicholson in September, 1857 (Nicholson died soon due to a mortal wound received during the fighting). It resulted in the murder of the Mughal Emperor's sons and a grandson by Lt. Hodson; arrest and deportation of Bahadur Shah II to Rangoon.

Kanpur: It was defended by Sir Hugh Wheeler against Nana's forces till 26th June 1857 and surrender of the British on 27th on the promise of safe conduct to Allahabad by Nana. All Englishmen were murdered while they were leaving the place in boats on 27 June, after a short period of confinement, on 15 July. Kanpur was recaptured by Major General Havelock on 17 July after defeating Nana in a series of battles (Brigadier General Neill who arrived here soon took revenge by butchering many Indians). It was followed by its occupation by the mutinous Gwalior contingent under Tantya Tope in November 1857; and its final recovery by Sir Colin Campbell in December, 1857 (he became the new commander in chief of the Indian Army in August 1857).

Lucknow: Death of Sir Henry Lawrence on 2 July 1857; arrival of Havelock, Qutram and Neill with reinforcements (25 September) and death of Neill; relief of the besieged British by Sir Colin Campbell on 17 November, death of Havelock in December 1857, and its occupation by Tantya Tope; its final reoccupation by Campbell on 21 March 1858.

Jhansi and Gwalior: Jhansi was recaptured by Sir Hugh Rose on 4 April 1858 and the escape of Rani Laxmibai; capture of Gwalior (whose soldiers revolted and drove out their ruler, Sindhia) by Rani, death of Rani on 17 June 1858 and recapture of Gwalior by Rose on 20 June.

Bareilly: It was recaptured by Campbell on 5 May 1858.

Arrah: Suppression of the Bihar movement under Kunwar Singh by William Taylor and Vincent Eyre temporarily in August, 1857; escape of Kunwar to Awadh and his return to Bihar in April, 1858, to fight his last battle (he died on 9 May).

Banaras and Allahabad: Recaptured by Neill in June 1857.

Central India: The whole of central India and Bundelkhand was brought under British control by Sir Hugh Rose in the first half of 1858. But Tantya Tope, after losing Gwalior, escaped to Central India and carried on guerrilla war for ten months. Finally he was betrayed by Man Singh (a feudatory of Sindhia) and was executed by the British on 18 April 1859. Nana Sahib, Begam of Awadh and Khan Bahadur

escaped to Nepal in December 1858 and died there. Bakht Khan went to Awadh after the fall of Delhi, and died fighting the British on 13 May 1859. Maulavi Ahmadullah was treacherously murdered by Raja of Puwain in June 1858.

5 CAUSES OF FAILURE OF THE REVOLT

The main causes of failure of the revolt are as follows:

- An important reason for its failure was that it was not an all-India revolt, though the British army was all over India. South India was not affected by this revolt. The Madras army remained completely loyal to the British. In fact, half of company's troops did not join the revolt and fought against the Indians. Punjab, Sindh, Rajputana and east Bengal remained undisturbed. Gorakhas too helped the British cause.
- The Company was fortunate in having the services of men of exceptional ability like Nicholson and Outram Edwards.
- Most of the rajas and nawabs also helped the British cause. In fact, only those rulers participated in the revolt who lost their states or whose pension was stopped. Sir Dinkar Rao of Gwalior and Salar Jung of Hyderabad did everything to suppress the rebellion. It is no wonder that the British, for long, paid gratitude to the Nizams.
- It was an unequal fight between the rich resources of the British and the poor resources of the rebels.
- The revolt was poorly organized. Poor leadership, lack of coordination among them and lack of common plan were important reasons for the failure of the revolt. With few exceptions, most of them did not do enough. The weakest link was perhaps Bahadur Shah Zafar who was more concerned for his own safety along with his wife Zeenat Mahal's. They had no faith in the sepoys neither the sepoys had great respect for him. They chose him as leader because there was no other unifying platform.
- The rebels had no vision or forward-looking programme. The revolt was led by old feudal lords not the enlightened educated middle class. These people had already been defeated many times. They hardly had anything new to challenge the mighty British rule.
- The moneylenders and zamindars were pro-British as their existence was based on British rule. They helped the British in the time of crisis. The merchant class also supported the British as their economic interest was linked with the English traders and foreign trade.
- The educated middle-class also did not participate in the revolt. Firstly, they were in small number. Secondly, they saw British rule as an instrument of removing social orthodoxy and bringing modernization in India. Perhaps, they were also not sure about the outcome of the revolt. The revolt was not planned but spontaneous.

5.1 Impact and Significance of the Revolt

The East India Company's rule came to an end after the revolt. Through Queen's Proclamation, later through Government of India Act, 1858, the crown's rule was established. A new post 'Secretary of State for India' was created with India council

which had fifteen members. But this change was more 'formal' and 'real' as the British government had already started regulating the company's rule ever since the regulating Act of 1773 and Pitt's India Act of 1784 were passed.

The policy towards Indian states also changed. Queen Victoria announced in 1858 that the British government would not annex any new Indian state. The loyalty of the Nizam, Rajput, Maratha and Sikh chiefs was appreciated and they were duly rewarded through *sanads* and certificates. Many of them had personal relations with the monarch.

The army was reorganized as the revolt was started by the army. It was reorganized on the policy of division and counterpoise. The number of European soldiers was increased to 65,000 from that of 40,000 and the number of Indian soldiers were reduced to 1,40,000 from that of 2,38,000. In the Bengal army, the ratio between European and Indian army was brought to 1:2 whereas in Madras and Bombay Presidency this ratio was 1:3. To discourage nationalist feeling caste and regional identities were encouraged in the army. The Gurkhas, Sikhs, Jats, Rajputs, and Pathan battalions were strengthened. The artillery and important weapons were kept for Europeans only.

The Hindu-Muslim unity during the revolt had threatened the British rule. After the revolt they did everything to divide them. The Muslims were accused for the revolt so they started discouraging them from government jobs. Person like Sir Sayed Ahmad Khan tried their level best to prove that the Muslims are not anti-British. In fact, the revolt had affected Muslims both materially and culturally. The important literary centers like Delhi, Lucknow and Patna were almost ruined in the revolt. The Muslims and Urdu language had to face the catastrophe of the revolt.

But the Revolt of 1857 had one positive impact too. The feeling of nationalism grew more rapidly after its failure, especially among middle educated class. Formation of various political parties, like East India Association (1866), Poona Sarvajanik Sabha (1867), Indian League (1875), Indian Association (1876), Madras Mahajan Sabha (1884) and Bombay Presidency Association (1885) and finally formation of the Indian National Congress (1885) was the result of growing national consciousness.

Significance

The revolt was a glorious landmark in our history as Hindus and Muslims fought shoulder to shoulder against a common enemy. It left an indelible impression on the minds of the Indian people and, thus, paved the way for the rise of a strong movement. After the revolt, British rule underwent a major transformation in its policy. It started protecting and fostering the princes as its puppets. Reactionary social and religious practices were jealously guarded and preserved against the demands of progressive Indian opinion for their reform. After the initial harsh treatment of Muslims, rulers began having a more favourable attitude towards Muslim subjects.

The direct result of the revolt was the end of the East India Company's rule and the passing of the responsibility of Indian administration into the hands of the British Queen.

6 REORGANIZATION OF THE RAJ (1858 AND AFTER)

The British Administration in India can broadly be divided into two phases: The first phase from 1772 to 1858, when the East India Company ruled and the second phase from 1858 to 1947, when the British Crown ruled.

The Charter Act of 1853 allowed the East India Company to rule India till further order. Many in England and in India opposed the rule of the East India Company, and they wanted to establish the British Crown's rule. The Revolt of 1857 provided an opportunity to the British government to end the company's rule and establish her direct rule. The East India Company was blamed for the outbreak of the Revolt. Though, the company tried to defend itself, John Stuart Mill, a well-known scholar, argued in favour of the company and reminded the British government about the 'great service' the company had rendered both to India and to the Crown. Ross Mangles, the chairman of the company asserted that an intermediate non-political and perfectly independent body like the company was an indispensable necessity for good government in India.

But, the British government had already made up its mind to end the Company's rule. Lord Palmerston, the British Prime minister, introduced the 'Bill for Better Government of India', in February 1858. Addressing the House of Commons, he pointed out: 'The principle of our political system is that all administrative functions should be accompanied by ministerial responsibility to parliament but in this case the chief functions in the government of India are committed to a body not responsible to parliament, not appointed by the crown, but elected by persons who have no more connection with India than consists in the simple possession of so much India Stock'. Palmerston highlighted several defects of the Company's rule, like it was irresponsible, cumbrous, and complex and based on the system of dual government. After a long debate in the British Parliament the Bill for the Better Government of India was passed and it received the royal assent on August 1858.

6.1 Government of India Act, 1858

Till the Revolt of 1857, the Charter Act of 1853 allowed the East India Company to rule India. After the Revolt of 1857, the British empire ended the company's rule and proclaimed India to be under the British crown.

Provisions

- **Establishment of British crown's rule through parliament:** By the Act of 1858 the rule of East India Company was brought to an end and the rule of the British Crown in Parliament was established. The governor general was elevated as viceroy and became representative of British Crown in India. All the army and land occupied by the company were transferred to the British Crown.
- **Secretary of state and Indian council:** The powers of the court director and the board of control were transferred to the secretary of state for India, assisted by a council of 15 members. The Secretary of State was empowered to inspect, conduct and control the work of government of India He was also allowed to sit in the parliament.

Of the fifteen members of the council of the secretary of state, eight were to be appointed by the crown and seven by the court of directors. The Act also provided that at least nine of these members must have served in India for not less than three years and they must not have been away from the country (India) for more than ten years at the time of their appointment. The members got £1200 per annum from India's exchequer.

- **Power of secretary of state:** In some matters the secretary of state was authorized to take decision. He had the power to veto the decision of council. He had also the power of casting vote. He had to honour the decision of council in the matters of revenue, appointments, purchase, mortgage and sale of properties of the Government of India. He was allowed to send secret letters to the viceroy without the knowledge of the council. He was also allowed to make new rules for Indian Civil Services. Indians were permitted to appear in the competitive examination of civil services.
- **Appointments:** The power to appoint viceroy and governor general and governors of Presidencies (Bombay, Madras) was given to the British crown. The power to appoint Lieutenant Governor was given to Viceroy after getting approval from the British Government.
- **Parliamentary control over secretary of state:** The secretary of state had to present report on revenue, railways, law and construction before the House of Commons, the lower house of British Parliament. Without the permission of Parliament, except in emergency case, Indian revenue could not be utilized in military expedition/mission outside the Indian territory. The members of British Parliament could ask questions from the secretary of state in governance and revenue. The parliament was empowered to criticize him and remove him.

On 1 November 1858, Lord Canning published Queen Victoria's proclamation at Allahabad. The term Viceroy was used first time in the queen's proclamation. It was announced that no state would be annexed; no forceful conversion would take place and all the appointments in the public service would be made on merit and qualification. The Queen's proclamation also assured that Indian traditions would be respected framing the law. Full protection would be given in the ownership of properties and succession. The peasant will have their rights on land as long as they were paying revenue.

Did You Know

The Government of India celebrated the year 2007 as the 150th anniversary of 'India's First War of Independence'. Several books written by Indian authors were released in the anniversary year including Amresh Misra's *War of Civilizations*, a controversial history of the rebellion of 1857, and *Recalcitrance* by Anurag Kumar, one of the few novels written in English by an Indian based on the events of 1857.

7 HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE 1857 REVOLT

Historians have different views about the nature of the outbreak of 1857. When Mangal Pandey, a sepoy of 34th native infantry of Bengal Army, fired at a major at Barrackpore on 29 March 1857, he did not realize that he was creating history. Though he was executed and his regiment was disbanded, a few weeks later on 10 May, the soldiers of Meerut defied and killed English officers and marched towards Delhi. The Revolt of 1857 had begun.

For long, the colonial historians called it 'mutiny' firstly used by Earl Stanley. The fashion was originally set by the government of the day. Earl Stanley the then secretary of state for India, while reporting the events of 1857 to Parliament, used the term 'mutiny' and most of the English writers on the subject followed his lead and writers like Charles Ball, G.W. Forrest, T.R. Holmes, M. Innes, J.W. Kaye, G.F. Macmunn, G.B. Malleson, C.T. Metcalfe, Earl Roberts and others used the term 'mutiny' in this connection. Sir John Lawrence was of the opinion that the mutiny had its origin in the army and its cause was the greased cartridges and nothing else. It was not attributable to any antecedent conspiracy what-so-ever, although it was taken advantage of by the mutineers to increase their number.

The view of Sir John Seeley was that the mutiny was a 'wholly unpatriotic and selfish sepoy mutiny with no native leadership and no popular support.' The British officers conducting the trial of Bahadur Shah II held him responsible for organizing the mutiny in conspiracy with the Shah of Iran and other Muslim rulers of the Middle East. Sir Theophilus Metcalfe deposed in the trial of Bahadur Shah that six weeks before the outbreak, a seditious poster was found pasted on the walls of Jama Masjid proclaiming that the Shah of Iran would invade India and all the Muslims should be ready to join the *jihad*. British historians are of the view that Nana Sahib organised the revolution long before its outbreak at Meerut. To quote Kaye, 'For months, for years, indeed ever since the failure of the mission to England had been apparent, they had been quietly, spreading their network of intrigue all over the country. From one native court to another, from one extremity to another of the great continent of India, the agents of Nana Sahib had passed with overtures and invitations, discretely perhaps mysteriously worded, to princes and chiefs of different races and religions, but most hopeful of all to the Marathas. Nana Sahib's two most important agents were Rungo Bapoji in the south and Azimullah in the North.'

There were also writers who considered the Revolt of 1857 the result of a Hindu conspiracy. The Hindus were said to have a genius for conspiracy. 'They possess a power of patience of foreseeing results, of carefully weighing chances, of choosing time and weapon, of profiting by circumstances, never losing sight of the object desired, taking advantage of every turn of fortune—all qualities invaluable for success in intrigue.' It was contended that the circulation of the *chapatis* was originated by the Hindus and the rebellion was successfully engineered by the emissaries of the Peshwa under the guidance of Nana Sahib.

The view of Alexander Duff was that the revolt was neither Hindu nor Muslim in character. It was the spontaneous outcome of the fraternizing sepoys of all castes and creeds.

The view of Lord Canning, the then governor general of India, was that 'The struggle which we have had has been more like a national war than a local insurrection. In its magnitude, duration, scale of expenditure and in some of its moral features, it partakes largely of the former character.'

The view of Thompson and Garratt is that for four months during the summer of 1857, it seemed that the mutiny might develop into a real War of Independence, but by September 1857, it was clear that the Indians who were in revolt were incapable of working to any settled plan or of subordinating themselves to a national leader. Their prestige was waning and their commanders had proved themselves incompetent except in guerrilla warfare. They conclude by observing that the mutiny may be considered either as a military revolt, or as a bid for the recovery of their property and privileges by dispossessed princes and landlords or as an attempt to restore the Mughal Empire or as a peasants' war.

P.E. Roberts accepts the view of John Lawrence and Seeley and observes that the mutiny was mainly military in origin but it occurred at a time when for various reasons there was social and political discontent in the country and the mutineers took advantage of the same.

The first Indian who wrote a book on 1857 was Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan. In his book *Asbab-I-Baghawat-I-Hind* (causes of the revolt of India) he tried to find out the real cause as lack of political organization to represent the Indians. There was no political party which could have worked as a link between government and the common people.

V.D. Savarkar called it as India's first national war of independence in his book *War of Indian Independence*. Here he tried to show how the mutiny was really a war of Indian independence. Asoka Mehta has pointed out to the national character of mutiny in his book entitled *1857: The Great Rebellion*. He admits the sepoys were the mainstay of the rebellion and they bore the brunt of the struggle to break the chains that imprisoned India. They gave backbone to the resistance and became its shield and spear. However, besides the sepoys millions of Indians took part in the rebellion. The number of the civilians killed was as large as that of the sepoys. They joined the struggle to free their country and to redress their grievances. The rapidity with which the revolt spread shows that in some areas at least, the rebellion enjoyed strong mass support. At many stations, the sepoy were egged on to action by the citizens. Those who sided with the British had to face social ostracism. Those who could not join, openly, non-co-operated with the British. General Havelock could not get boats and boatmen to ferry his soldiers across the river. Although labourers at Kanpur were pressed into service by the British, they managed to escape at night. At many places, the natives of all classes tried to keep aloof from the British.

The decisive evidence showing the national character of the rebellion is the note of common harmony it struck in both the Hindus and Muslims. Even the British government found it difficult to separate the two communities. The Mughal emperor prohibited the cow slaughter throughout the country to conciliate the Hindus. In a letter to rajas of Rajputana, the Mughal emperor wrote, 'It is my ardent wish to see that the *feringi* is driven out of Hindustan by all means and at any cost. It is my ardent wish that the whole of Hindustan should be free, but the revolutionary war that is being waged for the purpose will not be crowned with success unless a man

capable of sustaining the whole burden of the movement, who can organize and concentrate the different forces of the nation and unify the people in himself, comes forward to guide the rising. I have no desire left of ruling over India after the expulsion of the English for my own aggrandizement. If all of your native rajas are ready to un-sheath your sword to drive away the enemy, then I am willing to resign imperial powers and authority in the hands of any confederacy of native princes who are chosen to exercise it.'

The Hindus responded to the offer of the Muslims. Nana Saheb declared his allegiance to the Mughal emperor. It was only after the fall of Delhi that the Sikhs joined the British army in large numbers. All this shows that the Mutiny was a national rising, although on a limited scale. In his book entitled *Eighteen Fifty Seven*, S. N. Sen says that the story of the *Chapaties* lends some colour to the theory of prior preparation, propaganda and conspiracy. The view of Wilson was that a date and time had been fixed for a simultaneous rising at all the military stations of India, but he did not give any evidence in support of his view. His view is contradicted by the known facts. The rising at Meerut was not premeditated and the same was the case at other places. The sepoys and their leaders were not in league with any foreign power. The 'only foreign power which was approached by the rebels was that of Nepal and that was done after the collapse' of the mutiny and not during it.

The remarkable thing about the mutiny was that it had its recruits from many sources. The movement began as a military mutiny, but it was not confined to the army. Moreover, the army as a whole did not join the revolt and a considerable section of the army actively fought on the side of the government. Every disarmed regiment was not necessarily disloyal and every deserter was not a mutineer. The rebels came from every section of the population. At all stages, both Hindus and Muslims were well represented in the rebel army. Nana had his Azimullah Khan, Bahadur Khan his Sobha Ram and the Rani of Jhansi her trusted Afghan guards. Outside Awadh and Shahabad, there was no evidence of that general sympathy which would invest the mutiny with the dignity of a national war. At the same time, it is wrong to dismiss it as a military rising. The mutiny became a revolt and assumed a political character when the mutineers of Meerut placed themselves under the king of Delhi and a section of the landed aristocracy and civil population declared in his favour. What began as a fight for religion, ended as a war of independence; for there was not the slightest doubt that the rebels wanted to get rid of the alien government, and restore the old order of which the King of Delhi was the rightful representative. The revolt assumed national dimensions in Awadh although in a limited sense. The mutiny was not a war between the white and the black. No normal issue was involved. Truth was the first casualty and both sides were guilty of false propaganda.

According to Sen, the struggle may be described as 'a war of fanatic religionists against Christians.' The mutiny was not a conflict between barbarism and civilization. It was an inhuman fight between the people driven mad by hatred and fear. Burning and hanging expeditions were an important routine and no distinction was made between the innocent and the guilty. The mutiny was inevitable because no dependent nation could have ever reconciled itself to foreign domination. A despotic government must ultimately rule by the sword and in India sword was in the custody of the sepoy army.

In *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Tara Chand says it is misleading to use the term mutiny to describe the upheaval of 1857-8. Also it is not proper to call them the national war of independence. There was no doubt that the army was abundantly involved in the revolt. It was equally true that the drive was supplied by the Bengal Army, although there were signs of disaffection in some regiments in the other Presidencies also. However, the outbreak was not conjoined to the army. It was not a mutiny in the ordinary sense of the term. Its causes were deeper than those involved in usual breaches of military discipline. Tara Chand has referred to various authorities in support of his view.

It has to be admitted that the war against the British was not inspired by any sentiment of nationalism because in 1857 India was not yet politically a nation. It is true that the Hindus and Muslims cooperated, but the leaders and followers of the two communities were moved by personal loyalties rather than by loyalty to a common motherland. Nonetheless, the upheaval of 1857 was a war for the liberation of India from the yoke of the foreigner because the Britishers had given mortal offence to the dignity and self-respect of the erstwhile ruling class which exercised social influence and carried the burden of administration. The Britishers had also antagonized the masses by oppressive land revenue policy and economic measures which ruined their arts and crafts. On the whole, the rising of 1857 was an attempt to halt the process of dissolution of the medieval order. The uprising of 1857 was a general movement of the traditional elite of the Muslims and the Hindus—princes, landholders, soldiers, scholars and theologians (pandits and maulavis). The Emperor of Delhi, the King of Awadh, some nawabs and rajas, talukdars and zamindars and the soldiers, whether Pathan, Mughal, Rajput or brahmin of northern India, comprised the main body of the rebels. The class composition of the insurgents reflected the geographical disposition of the movement and sheds light upon the motives of the participants. There is no doubt that practically all those who belonged to this order were disaffected although some of them abstained from active participation on account of their peculiar circumstances. The chiefs and landlords constituted the leadership of this rebellious host, the regular and irregular troops of the English East India Company and of the princes, its fighting arm and their dependents and peasants became followers. They had common traditions and common grievances. They sympathized with one another in their misfortune. The loss of territory and political power affected them all. If the higher section was deprived of the titles of authority, the others had lost avenues of employment and position of influence and profit. Scholars, theologians, poets, craftsmen and artists were left without patronage. Many of those whose hereditary occupation was fighting, were rendered jobless and many were obliged to drift into the army of the English East India Company. Tara Chand refers to the charge sheets drawn by the leaders of the movement against the British government in support of his view.

Interestingly, R.C. Majumdar wrote that 'it was neither national nor the first war of independence'. The views of both colonial and nationalist historians lack historical evidences. There is no doubt that the revolt began as a military mutiny but it was not confined to the army. It spread very soon in almost every section of the society. But at the same time it is premature to call it a national war of independence as the feeling of nationalism itself was in embryonic stage. A careful study of historical records, the mutiny papers, the police record and the contemporary literature especially under literature of Delhi, Lucknow and Patna gives an insight of this revolt. He has given many facts and figures to show that its leaders had their own

axes to grind. They were not inspired by any feelings of nationalism as such. There was no cordiality between the Hindus and the Muslims. Bahadur Shah did not heartily cooperate with the mutineers. Rani Jhansi also did not side with them at the beginning and actually did so when she was faced with a trial by the British government. The Muslim Nawabs did not treat their Hindu subjects properly even during the days of the mutiny. Majumdar points out that the Muslims as a community had their special grievances against the British who had deprived them of their former paramountcy. In spite of that Muslim swords were pointed against the Hindus rather than against the British and many Hindus prayed for the collapse of the mutiny. The mutineer sepoys of both the communities freely sacked Indian towns and murdered their fellow countrymen. Not one voice was heard to cry: 'Let me die so that India be free.' Once the British launched their campaign of ruthless suppression and reprisal, all 'rebels' were obliged to fight on to save their skin. The view of Majumdar is that the true significance of '1857' lies in the inspiration which its memory afforded to the later freedom movements and for such 'inspirational purpose, it matters nothing that the sordid and unhappy facts' have become shrouded in a 'fog of pious make-beliefs.

We may conclude with the following words of Asoka Mehta : 'The rebellion of 1857 was more than a mere sepoy mutiny and was an eruption of the social volcano wherein many pent-up forces found vent. After the eruption, the whole social topography had changed. The scars of the rebellion remained deep and shining.'

ACTIVITY

Find out how Rani Laxmibai of Jhansi dealt with the British.

8 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- The year 1857 was the completion of the first hundred years of British rule in India after the battle of Plassey.
- During this century, the British conquests and colonialism marched apace and with that grew the discontent of former ruling chiefs who felt that zest had gone out of their life.
- The aggressive wars waged by Lord Hastings, Ellenborough and Dalhousie, the annexations made on the plea of mismanagement by the Indian rulers and the appropriation of territories by a refusal to recognize the adoption of heirs, were prompted by the desire for dominion.
- An important political reason for the outbreak of the revolt of 1857 was the controversial and unjustified policy of 'Doctrine of Lapse' imposed by Lord Dalhousie on Satara (1848), Jaitpur, Sambhalpur (1849), Baghat (1850), Udaipur (1852) Jhansi (1853) and Nagpur (1854).
- The adopted sons of these states were not recognized and they were annexed.
- The annexation of native states meant that many Indians lost important administrative post.
- Another important military causes for the revolt of 1857 was the discontent of the sepoys.

- When the news spread that the cover of the cartridges was made of cow and pig fat, revolt broke out.
- The discontentment among the soldiers was also because of discriminatory pay package.
- One of the causes of revolt was the fear among the natives that their religion was endangered by Christianity.
- The most important cause of the popular discontent was the economic exploitation of the country by the British and the complete destruction of its traditional economic fabric.
- The downfall of Indian industries led to large scale unemployment and when the revolt broke they joined the rebellion.
- After firing on their senior officers, the soldiers of Meerut marched towards Delhi.
- Once Delhi was captured, the revolt spread to different parts of the country.
- Awadh became the real battle zone, as most of the sepoys were from this region. Lucknow, Kanpur, Bareilly, Allahabad, Banaras, Faizabad, Jhansi, Jagdishpur (Arrah), Danapur and Patna were engulfed in fire.
- Rani Laxmibai tried to reverse the decision of Lord Dalhousie when Jhansi was annexed after the death of her husband and the adopted son was not recognized. When her effort failed she finally revolted.
- An important reason for its failure was that it was not all India revolt, though the British army was all over India.
- Most of the Rajas and Nawabs also helped the British cause. In fact, only those rulers participated in the revolt who lost their state or whose pension was stopped.
- The revolt was poorly organized.
- The educated middle-class also did not participate in the revolt.
- The East India Company's rule came to an end after the revolt. Through Queen's proclamation, later through Government of India Act, 1858, the crown's rule was established.
- The policy towards Indian states also changed. Queen Victoria announced in 1858 that the British government would not annex the Indian states.
- The Hindu-Muslim unity during the revolt had threatened the British rule.
- The revolt was a glorious landmark in our history in as Hindus and Muslims fought shoulder to shoulder against a common enemy.
- The British Administration in India can broadly be divided into two phase: The first phase from 1772 to 1858, when the East India Company ruled and the second phase from 1858 to 1947, when the British Crown ruled.
- The Charter Act of 1853 allowed the East India Company to rule India till further order.
- The British Empire was convinced that rule of the Company had to go and, hence, Lord Palmerston, the British Prime Minister, introduced the Bill for Better Government of India, in February 1858.
- By the Act of 1858 the rule of East India Company was brought to an end and the rule of the British crown through British Parliament was established.
- The power to appoint Viceroy and Governor-General and governors of Presidencies (Bombay, Madras) was given to the British crown.

- Historians have different views about the nature of the outbreak of 1857.
- For long, the colonial historians called it 'mutiny' firstly used by Earl Stanley, later by T.R. Homes, G.W. Forrest, M. Innes, etc.
- The first Indian who wrote a book on 1857 was Sir Sayyed Ahmed Khan.
- V.D. Savarkar called it as India's first national war of independence in his book 'War of Indian Independence'.

9 KEY TERMS

- **Taluqdars:** The term was used for land holders in Mughal and British times, responsible for collecting taxes from a district.
- **Zamindars:** Was an aristocrat, typically hereditary, who held enormous tracts of land and held control over his peasants, from whom the zamindars reserved the right to collect tax (often for military purposes).
- **Jihad:** A spiritual struggle
- **Ashraf:** The Persian-Urdu elite in the court of the Mughal emperors.

10 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. Canning succeeded Dalhousie
2. False
3. A large number of company's soldiers were from Awadh, who had sympathy for their nawab. Annexation of Awadh meant the relative of these soldiers had to pay more taxes, since the new land revenue policy was introduced in Awadh.
4. Nana Sahib was the adopted son of Peshwa Baji Rao II.
5. When the news spread that the cover of the cartridges was made of cow and pig fat, revolt broke out.
6. The British government passed the Religious Disabilities Act in 1850 which permitted a converted person to inherit property, contrary to Hindu social laws.
7. Inherit
8. False
9. True
10. The last Mughal king was Bahadur Shah Zafar. The sepoys proclaimed him as the Shahenshah of India.
11. Mohammad Bakhtawar Khan, a havaladar of the Barielly force became the actual commander.
12. Nana Sahib led the movement from Kanpur, and was supported by Tantya Tope.
13. False
14. The revolt was poorly organized, lacked coordination and a common plan, and even the leadership was poor.

15. The Queen's Proclamation and later the Act of 1858 established the rule of the crown on India.
16. Urdu
17. The Charter Act of 1853 allowed the East India Company to rule India till further order.
18. Lord Palmerston, the British Prime Minister, introduced the Bill for Better Government of India, in February 1858.
19. Mangal Pandey, a sepoy of 34th native infantry of Bengal Army, had fired at a British major at Barrackpore on March 29, 1857, for which he was executed and his army disbanded.
20. The first Indian to write a book on 1857 was Sir Sayyed Ahmed Khan. His book was *Asbab-I-Baghawat-I-Hind*.

11 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Discuss how the revolt was suppressed.
2. What was the significance of the revolt?
3. How did the British East India Company's rule come to an end?
4. What were the causes of the failure of the revolt?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Explain the causes of the 1857 Revolt.
2. Describe how the revolt spread?
3. Discuss the impact of the revolt.
4. Discuss the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1858.
5. Historians have different views on the 1857 revolt. Discuss.

12 FURTHER READING

Chandra, Bipin; *History of Modern India*, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 2009.

Chandra, Bipin; *Freedom Struggle*, National Book Trust, New Delhi, 1972.

Chopra, P. N.; *A Comprehensive History of Modern India*, Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, 2003.

Sarkar, Sumit; *Modern India*, Pan Macmillan Australia Pty. Ltd., Sydney, 1983.

Bhattacharya, Sabyasachi; *Rethinking 1857*, Indian Council of Historical Research, New Delhi, 2007.

Marshall, P. J.; *The Eighteenth Century in India History: Revolution or Evolution?* Oxford University Press, UK, 2005.

Robert, P.E.; *History of British India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1978.

- Marshall, P. J.; *Problems of Empire: Britain and India, 1757-1813*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1968.
- Chopra, P.N.; *A Comprehensive History of Modern India*, Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, 2003.
- Grover, B.L.; *History of Modern India*, S. Chand & Company Limited, New Delhi 1971.



INSTITUTE
OF DISTANCE
EDUCATION **IDE**
Rajiv Gandhi University

Institute of Distance Education

Rajiv Gandhi University

A Central University

Rono Hills, Arunachal Pradesh

Contact us:



+91-98638 68890



Ide Rgu



Ide Rgu



helpdesk.ide@rgu.ac.in



**INSTITUTE
OF DISTANCE
EDUCATION** **IDE**
Rajiv Gandhi University

Institute of Distance Education Rajiv Gandhi University

A Central University

Rono Hills, Arunachal Pradesh

Contact us:

 +91-98638 68890

 Ide Rgu

 Ide Rgu

 helpdesk.ide@rgu.ac.in