

# **LAND REVENUE SYSTEM & FOREST POLICY**

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**BA 5<sup>TH</sup> SEM (HISTORY HONOURS)**

# HISTORICAL BACKGROUND-

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- The land revenue was a major source of income for the kings and emperors from ancient times.
- The ownership pattern of land has witnessed changes over centuries.
- Land was divided into Jagirs, which were allotted to jagirdars, who in turn split the land they got and allocated to sub-ordinate Zamindars.
- Zamindars made peasants cultivate the land, in return collected part of their revenue as tax.

# INITIAL CHANGES UNDER THE BRITISH-

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- In 1765, the East India Company acquired the Diwani rights, or control over the revenues, of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.
- In 1769, British supervisors were appointed to control them.
- Warren Hasting had introduced Quin-Quennial or Five year term settlement in the year 1772, which gave the highest bidder the authority to collect money for period of five years on a contract basis, But it didn't succeed.
- When Cornwallis arrived in India, he found trade and agriculture decaying, Zamindars and ryots sinking into poverty. So, with the help of Sir John Shore. He introduced Permanent settlement in 1793

# LAND REVENUE SYSTEM



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graph TD; A[LAND REVENUE SYSTEM] --> B[PERMANENT SETTLEMENT]; A --> C[RYOTWARI]; A --> D[MAHALWARI]; B --> E[LORD CORNWALLIS]; C --> F[THOMAS MUNRO]; D --> G[LORD WILLIAM BENETICK]
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The diagram is a flowchart titled "LAND REVENUE SYSTEM". It starts with a central box at the top, which branches into three categories: "PERMANENT SETTLEMENT", "RYOTWARI", and "MAHALWARI". Each category then points to a specific individual: "LORD CORNWALLIS" for Permanent Settlement, "THOMAS MUNRO" for Ryotwari, and "LORD WILLIAM BENETICK" for Mahalwari. The boxes are color-coded: pink for Permanent Settlement, purple for Ryotwari, and green for Mahalwari. The names of the individuals are in boxes with a gradient background.

PERMANENT  
SETTLEMENT

RYOTWARI

MAHALWARI

LORD CORNWALLIS

THOMAS MUNRO

LORD WILLIAM  
BENETICK

# PERMANENT SETTLEMENT-

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- It was an agreement between the British E.I.C and landlords in Bengal, Bihar & Orissa to set a fixed amount of land revenue to be paid to the company.
- It was introduced in 1793 by Governor General- Lord Cornwallis.
- The amount of revenue to be paid to the government was fixed permanently.
- Zamindars were given the right to collect revenue and were also given hereditary rights to the lands.
- Zamindars became landlords and had the right to sell or transfer their property.
- Zamindars could decide how much rent to charge their tenants.

# PERMANENT SETTLEMENT

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## MERITS

- The P.S was advantages for the EIC as it fixed the state revenue which provided financial security to the company.
- The P.S secured the political support of the zamindars of Bengal whose stood loyal during the great revolt of 1857.

## DEMERITS

- These settlement was harmful for the landlords who failed to collect the revenue from the peasants and as a result of that they lost their ownership right over the land.
- The cultivators were deprived of their traditional rights of lands, and over the period of time .They were tortured by the moneylenders, and absentee landlords , Zamindars.

# RYOTWARI SYSTEM-

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- It was introduced in 1822 by Thomas Munro & Alexander Read.
- These settlement was held in Madras, Bombay & Assam.
- Under these system the peasants was recognised as the owner of the land. There were no intermediaries between peasants & govt as long as the peasants paid the revenue in time.
- These settlement was fixed as 50-60% total produce.
- If the peasants failed to pay their taxes, the govt could evict them and confiscate their land.

# IMPACT OF RYOTWARI SYSTEM-

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- The farmers were forced to pay land revenue even during the famines otherwise they were forced to evict the land.
- Further , the land revenue was very high between 45% to 55% in different areas which led to the impoverishment of farmers.
- The peasants did not benefit from this land revenue system and felt that smaller zamindars were replaced by one giant zamindar, the British govt.
- Since the govt itself became a big zamindar, it had right to enhance revenue at will .The cultivator was left at the mercy of the collecting officers.



# MAHALWARI SYSTEM-

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- It was introduced by Holt Mackenzie, 1822. In these land revenue system used in British India to protect the autonomy of villages and also it was a modified version of permanent settlement
- The word “ Mahalwari ” comes from the Hindi word Mahal, which means “House” or “District”.
- The system divided villages into one or more mahals and treated the entire village as a single taxpayer. The tax was assessed on the mahal, and each farmer paid their share. The village headman or leaders collected the revenue.
- The system was introduced in the Punjab, Agra, Gangetic Valley, and North-West Frontier.
- Drawback- The system was considered a failure because it was based on faulty assumptions that led to corruption and manipulation. Sometimes the company spent more collecting revenue than it collected. Also these system further resulted in fragmentation of farms as a result of which the productivity of land decline. But British still demanded the land in cash.

# CONSEQUENCES OF THE BRITISH LAND REVENUE SYSTEM-

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- Land became a commodity.
- Earlier there was no private ownership of land. Even kings and cultivators did not consider land as his 'private property'.
- Due to the very high taxes, farmers resorted to growing cash crops instead of food crops. This led to food insecurity and even famines.
- Taxes on agricultural produce were moderate during pre-British times. The British made it very high
- Insistence on cash payment of revenue led to more indebtedness among farmers. Moneylenders became landowners in due course.

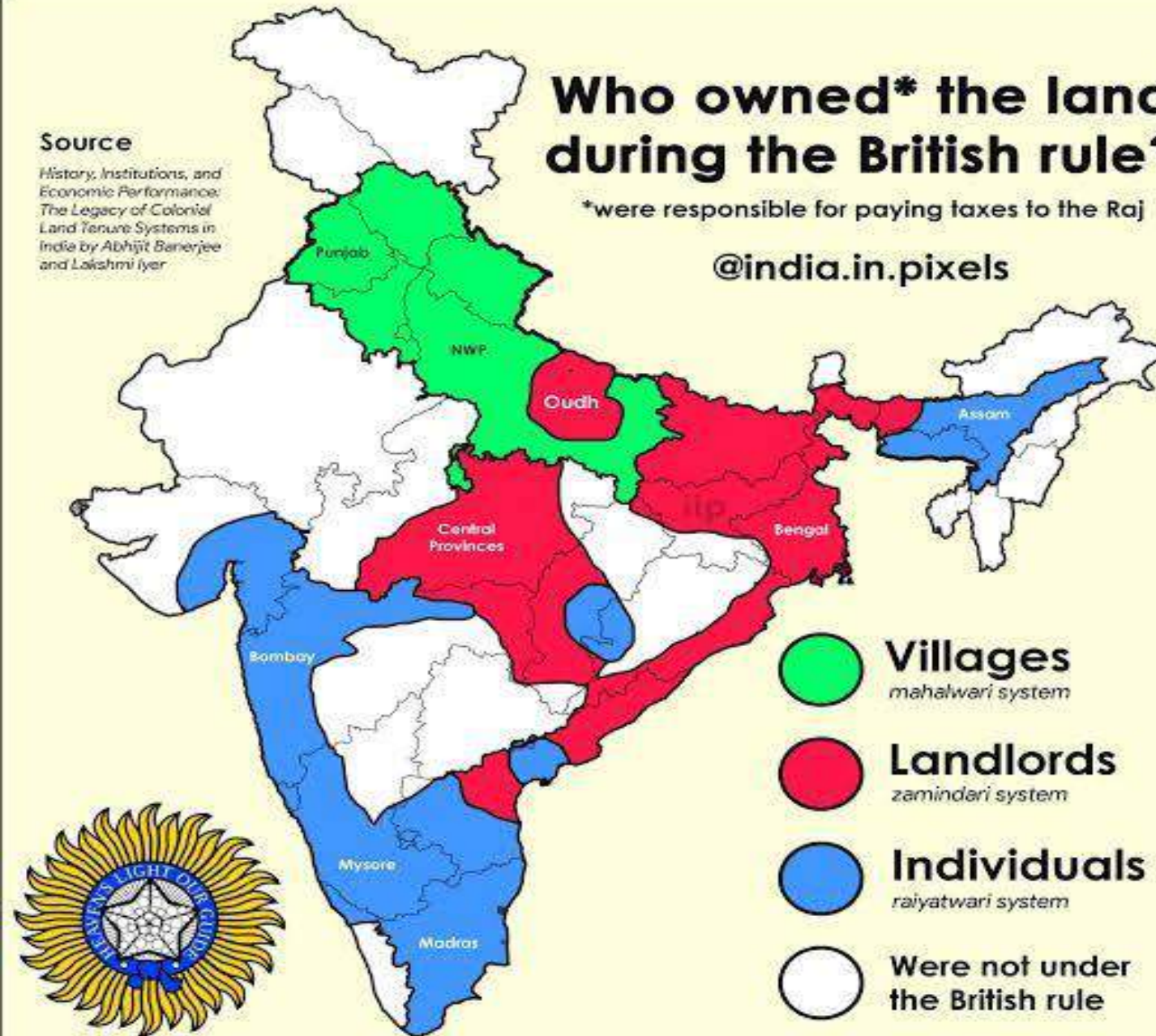
# Who owned\* the land during the British rule?

\*were responsible for paying taxes to the Raj

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## Source

History, Institutions, and Economic Performance: The Legacy of Colonial Land Tenure Systems in India by Abhijit Banerjee and Lakshmi Iyer



# BRITISH MAINLY ADOPTED 3 TYPES OF LAND TENURE SYSTEMS-

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## PERMANENT SETTLEMENT

Roughly 19% of total areas under British rule-  
Bengal, Bihar, Banaras, NWFP divisions

## RYOTWARI SETTLEMENT

Covered about 51% of the area under the British Rule- Assam,  
Bombay and Madras provinces

## MAHALWARI SETTLEMENT

Covered 30% of areas under the British rule-  
Major parts of NWFP, Central provinces and Punjab.

# **FOREST POLICY-**

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Introduction- With the start of Industrial Revolution in England, among the massive alteration and technological breakthroughs. The forests and forest products have also emerged as a significant role in these revolution as a source of income production.

- So therefore the forest not only became part of the greater commercial order, but also it affected the natural resources.
- Forest in the Pre-colonial era – The Mughal kings sponsored large forest removals, although their primary goal was to increase agricultural earnings. The overall impact was modest.
- Forest clearance in the colonial era- With coming of Europeans-
  1. It led to forest resource exploitation in India, land revenue demand increased, Paharia tribals and Santhals were too exploited.
  2. The colonial govt tried to maximise the economic benefits from the forest produce commerce. That later resulted in severe scarcity of wood.

# RISE OF FOREST ACTS -

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- The E.I.C established forest governance and management as a conservation method to help ensure the continued availability of wood and limit govt intrusion.
- In 1806 in Malabar forest – first forest ordinance was enacted for regulating teak trade.
- The task of governance and control over the woods was organised through an institutional and legal framework in modern forestry in India.
- The 1865 act, introduced by Dietrich Brandis. These act empowered several local govts to declare certain areas as State Forests without any interfering with the rights of the people.
- The 1878 Forest act, emphasised on the privileges of the state also contributed to the growth of scientific forestry.
- In 1972 wildlife reserves were designated as National Parks .

# THANK YOU

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