PARMAR SSC

Revolt of 1857



India Before the Revolt of 1857

Land Revenue Systems in British India

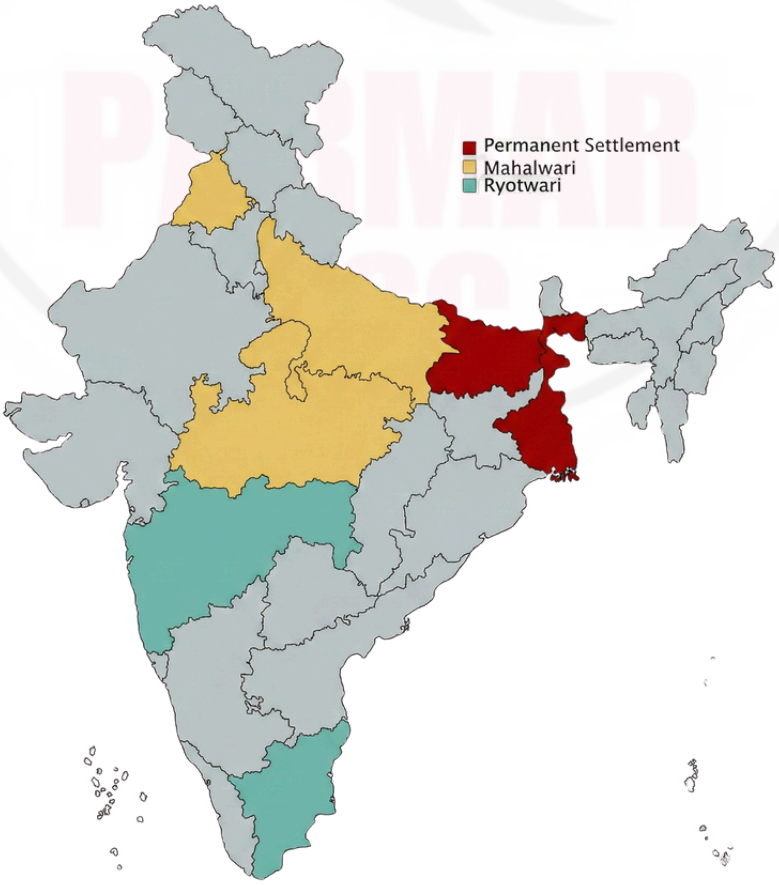
Before independence, the British implemented three major land revenue systems to maximize tax collection.

1. Permanent Settlement (Zamindari System) – 1793

- **Introduced by:** Lord Cornwallis.
- **Planned by:** John Shore.
- **Region:** Bengal, Bihar, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh.

Key Features:

- **Zamindars as Owners:** The Zamindars (intermediaries) were recognized as the owners of the land. They collected rent from the peasants.
- **Revenue Share:** The British government took 10/11th of the revenue, and the Zamindar kept 1/11th.
- **Sunset Clause:** A strict law was introduced requiring Zamindars to deposit the revenue by a specific date before sunset. If they failed to do so, their hereditary zamindari rights were confiscated and auctioned.
- **Impact:** This system created a class of loyal landlords but led to the exploitation of peasants (Ryots).



2. Ryotwari System – 1820

- **Introduced by:** Thomas Munro and Captain Alexander Read.
- **Region:** South India (Madras region of Tamilnadu).

Key Features:

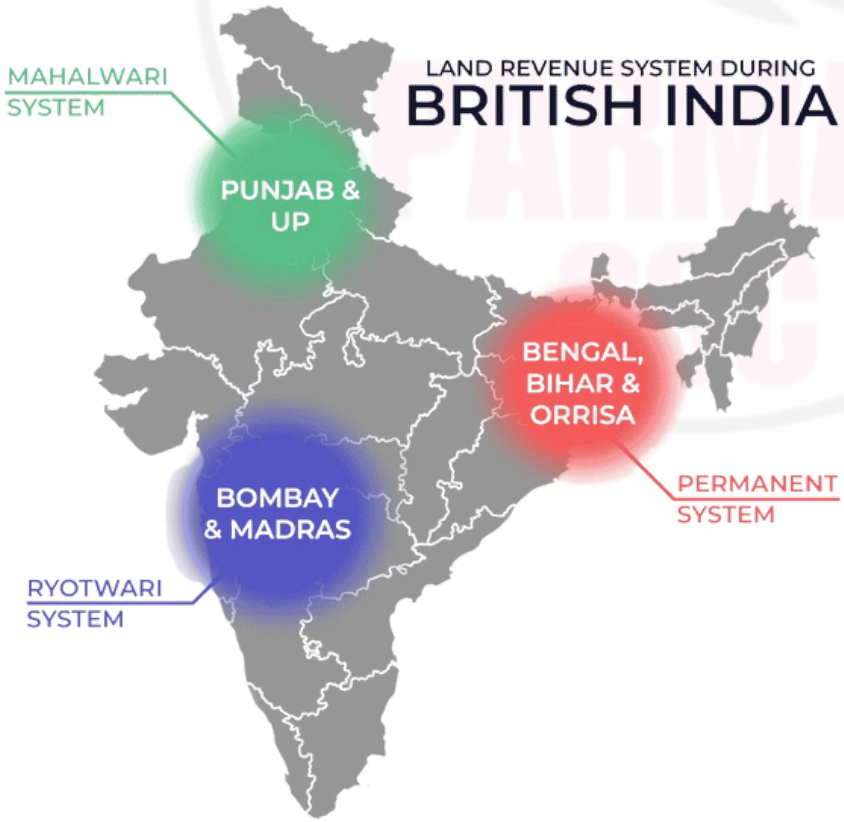
- **Direct Settlement:** There were no intermediaries (Zamindars). The revenue settlement was made directly with the Ryots (Farmers).
- **Ricardian Theory:** It was based on the Ricardian Theory of Rent (by economist David Ricardo).
- **Ownership:** Peasants were given ownership rights as long as they paid taxes.

3. Mahalwari System – 1822

- **Introduced by:** Holt Mackenzie (Concept) and later reformed by William Bentinck (1833).
- **Region:** North-Western Provinces, Central India, Punjab, and parts of Uttar Pradesh (Gangetic Valley).

Key Features:

- The revenue was settled with the entire village or group of villages, called a "Mahal".
- The Village Headman (Lambardar) collected revenue from farmers on behalf of the whole village, not a Zamindar.



Lord Cornwallis introduced Daroga System replacing Zamindari Thanedars.

Major Pre-1857 Revolts (Civil & Tribal Uprisings)

Resentment against British exploitation led to several uprisings before the Great Revolt of 1857.

Sanyasi Revolt (1763–1800)



- It started in **Bihar** and **Bengal**.
- **Context:** Governor-General **Warren Hastings** faced persistent disturbances from Sanyasis and Fakirs.
- **Role of Warren Hastings:** He took strict military and administrative measures to suppress the Sanyasi and Fakir disturbances.
- **Leaders:** Majnu Shah, Bhawani Pathak, and Debi Chaudhurani (famous female participant).
- **Literary Reference:** The revolt is mentioned in **Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's** famous novel **Anandmath**.

Paika Revolt (1817)



- **Region:** Odisha (Khurda).
- **Leader:** Bakshi Jagbandhu Bidyadhar (Military Commander of the Khurda King).
- **Cause:** British land revenue policies and the loss of the Paikas' hereditary rent-free lands.

Kuka Revolt / Namdhari Movement

- Also Known As: Namdhari Movement.

Timeline:

- It started in the mid-19th Century.
- The movement was suppressed by the British in 1872.
- Leader: Baba Ram Singh (also known as Satguru Ram Singh).

Objective:

- **Sikh Purity:** The primary aim was to restore the purity of the Sikh religion and remove corrupt practices that had crept in.
- It was both a religious and political movement against British rule.

Tribal and Peasant Uprisings

Pagal Panthis (1825)

- **Region:** Bengal (Mymensingh).
- **Leaders:** Karam Shah and his son Tipu Shah.
- **Cause:** Against the oppression of Zamindars.

Ahom Revolt (1828)

- **Region:** Rangpur (Assam).
- **Leader:** Gomdhar Konwar.
- **Cause:** British refusal to withdraw from Assam after the First Anglo-Burmese War.

Kol Mutiny (1831)

- **Region:** Chhotanagpur (Jharkhand).
- **Leader:** Budho Bhagat.

Moplah Uprising (1836)

- **Region:** Malabar (Kerala).
- **Cause:** Against Hindu landlords and British taxation.

Major Tribal Revolts in Jharkhand Region

Ho and Munda Uprisings (1820, 1837, 1899)

- **Also known as:** Ulgulan Uprising (The Great Tumult).
- **Region:** Ranchi and Singhbhum (Chhotanagpur).
- **Leader:** Birsa Munda.
- **Birth:** 15 Nov 1875 (Celebrated as Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas and Jharkhand Foundation Day).
- **Death:** 1900 (in jail).
- **Key Concept:** The revolt was against "Dikus" (outsiders/moneylenders) and the destruction of the Khuntkatti System (joint ownership of land).



Santhal Rebellion (1855)



Background:

- Before the Santhals, the Pahariya tribe inhabited the Rajmahal Hills (Jharkhand) and resisted British encroachment.
- **Pahariya Revolt (1778):** Led by Raja Jagannath, they revolted against British land policies that threatened their traditional lifestyle of shifting cultivation and hunting.
- **British Strategy:** To counter the Pahariya resistance and clear the forests for settled agriculture, the British encouraged the Santhals to settle in this region.

Region (Damin-i-Koh):

- The area around Rajmahal Hills was demarcated and declared as **Damin-i-Koh** in 1832.
- It was officially declared as the land of the Santhals.

Note: Santhals is the 3rd largest tribe in India.

The Rebellion (1855):

- **Leaders:** Sidhu and Kanhu Murmu.
- **Causes:**
  - Resentment against the oppression by moneylenders, police, and landlords (Zamindars).
  - The British land revenue system and the exploitation by "Dikus" (outsiders).

Gadkari Uprising (1844) : It started in Kolhapur.

The Revolt of 1857 (The Sepoy Mutiny)

Causes of the Revolt

1. Military Causes:

- **General Service Enlistment Act (1856):** Passed by Lord Canning. It mandated that Bengal Army sepoys must serve overseas if required (crossing the sea was considered a loss of caste).

2. Political Causes (Dalhousie's Policies):

- **Doctrine of Lapse (1848):** Introduced by Lord Dalhousie. If an Indian ruler died without a natural male heir, his kingdom would "lapse" (be annexed) to the British.

- **Annexed States Sequence:**

1. Satara (1848)
2. Jaitpur & Sambalpur (1849)
3. Udaipur (1852)
4. Jhansi (1853)
5. Nagpur (1854)



Subsidiary Alliance (1798):

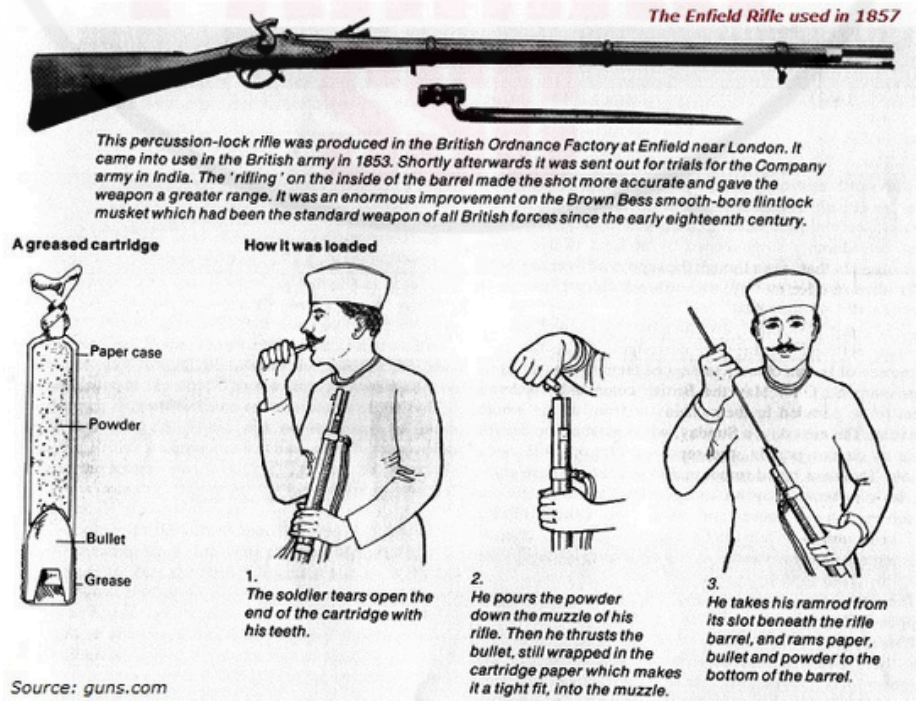
- Introduced by Lord Wellesley
- Awadh was forced to accept this alliance in 1801.

Annexation of Awadh (1856):

- Dalhousie called **"Awadh is like that cherry that will drop into our mouth one day".**
- Awadh was captured on the grounds of Misgovernance (Maladministration).
- **Ruler: Mirza Wajid Ali Shah** was the last Nawab of Awadh deposed by the British.
- **"Nursery of British Army":** Awadh was known as the "Nursery of the British Army" because the majority of the sepoys came from this region. The annexation deeply angered these soldiers, fueling the 1857 Revolt.
- **The Summary Settlement (1856):** The British introduced this revenue settlement in Awadh to bypass the Taluqdars (traditional landlords) and settle revenue directly with peasants. This dispossessed the Taluqdars of their land and power, leading them to join the revolt.

3. Immediate Cause:

- **The Enfield Rifle:** A new rifle was introduced replacing the old "Brown Bess".
- **Greased Cartridges:** Rumors spread that the cartridges were greased with Cow and Pig fat. The cartridge had to be bitten off before loading, offending both Hindu and Muslim sentiments.



Outbreak and Timeline

- **Barrackpore Incident:** Mangal Pandey (a sepoy in the 34th Bengal Native Infantry) attacked British officers on 29th March 1857.
- **Consequence:** Mangal Pandey was hanged on 8th April 1857.
- **Meerut Incident:** On 9th May 1857, 85 sepoys were dismissed and sentenced to 10 years in jail for refusing the cartridges.
- **The Revolt of 1857 formally began in Meerut on 10th May 1857 with a march towards Delhi.**

Key Leaders and Centers

Delhi:

- **Nominal Leader:** Bahadur Shah Zafar II (The last Mughal ruler). After the war, he was exiled to Rangoon, Burma (now Myanmar).
- **Actual Military Leader:** General Bakht Khan.

Lucknow:

- Led by Begum Hazrat Mahal.

Kanpur:

- Led by Nana Saheb (adopted son of Peshwa Baji Rao II) and Tantia Tope.

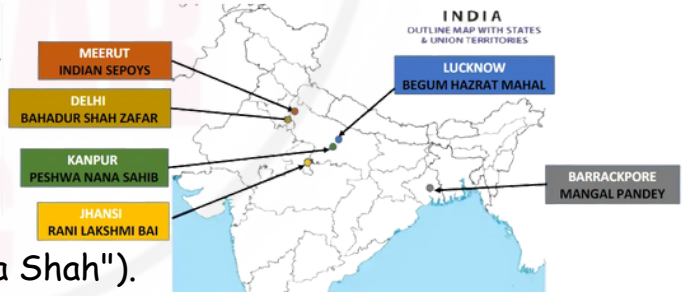
Jhansi:

- Led by Rani Lakshmibai.
- **Original Name:** Manikarnika Tambe (Manu).
- **Tomb:** Her tomb is situated in Gwalior.



Bihar:

- Led by Kunwar Singh (a landlord of Jagdishpur).



Bareilly:

- Led by Bahadur Khan Rohilla.

Faizabad:

- Led by Maulvi Ahmadullah (also known as "Danka Shah").

Uttar Pradesh (Baghpat):

- Led by Shah Mal. He mobilized and organized the villagers of Pargana Baraut.

Ishtahars: These were notifications or posters circulated during the revolt to glorify the co-existence of different communities (Hindu-Muslim unity) under the Mughal Empire.
Azamgarh Proclamation (1857): A manifesto issued by Feroz Shah (Grandson of the Mughal Emperor) appealing to all sections of society to unite against the British.

Gonoo - He was a tribal cultivator of Singhbhum

Battle of Chinhat (1857) resulted in the defeat of the British forces led by Henry Lawrence at the hands of Indian rebels led by Maulvi Ahmadullah Shah and Barkat Ahmad.



Suppression of Revolt

"Khoob ladi mardani, vah to Jhansi wali Rani thi."
— written by **Subhadra Kumari Chauhan**

- **Delhi:** Suppressed by John Nicholson.
- **Lucknow & Kanpur:** Suppressed by Colin Campbell.
- **Jhansi:** Suppressed by Hugh Rose.
- **End Date**: The revolt was fully suppressed by 20 June 1858 (Fall of Gwalior).

Reasons for Failure

- Limited territorial base (mostly North India).
- Lack of coordination and unified leadership.
- Lack of a forward-looking political perspective.

Comments on 1857 Revolt

- **V.D. Savarkar:** Called it the "First War of Independence".
- **R.C. Majumdar:** Stated it was "Neither First, nor National, nor a War of Independence".

Aftermath: Government of India Act 1858

- **Transfer of Power:** The East India Company was abolished, and power was transferred to the British Crown (**Queen Victoria**).
- **Viceroy:** The position of Governor-General was changed to Viceroy. The **first Viceroy** was **Lord Canning.**
- **Army:** The army was reorganized based on the Peel Commission recommendations to reduce the proportion of Indian soldiers.

Some Other revolts

Indigo Revolt (1859)



- **Region:** Started in **Nadia** District of Bengal.
- **Leaders:** **Digambar Biswas** and **Bishnucharan Biswas**.
- **Cause:** It was against the exploitative practices of British planters who forced Indian farmers to cultivate Indigo instead of food crops.
- **Result:** It was a successful revolt.
- **Literary & Press Support:**
- **Nil Darpan:** A play written by **Dinbandhu Mitra** about the revolt. The play was translated into English by the famous Bengali poet and playwright **Michael Madhusudan Dutt**.
- **The Hindoo Patriot**, an English weekly started in 1853 at Calcutta by **Girish Chandra Ghosh** and later edited by **Harish Chandra Mukherjee**, exposed the atrocities of British indigo planters and supported peasants during the Indigo Revolt.



Deccan Revolt (1875)

- **Region:** Maharashtra (Deccan region).
- **Cause:** Agrarian riots against moneylenders and debt bonds.

Background: The Cotton Boom

- **Context:** Before 1861, Britain imported 3/4th of its cotton from America.
- **American Civil War (1861):** Supply from America stopped. Britain turned to India.
- **Cotton Supply Association (1857):** Formed to encourage Indian farmers to grow cotton. Farmers took loans to expand cultivation, hoping for high profits.

The Crisis (Why it happened)

- **Crash (1865):** The Civil War ended, American cotton returned, and prices in India crashed. Farmers were left with huge debts.

Immediate Cause (Limitation Law 1859):

- **Rule:** Loan bonds were valid for only 3 years.
- **Trap:** Moneylenders forced farmers to sign new bonds every 3 years, adding unpaid interest to the principal (Interest on Interest).

The Revolt

- **Action:** Farmers attacked moneylenders' houses.
- **Goal:** They seized and burnt the bonds, decrees, and account books (Dastawez) to destroy the evidence of debt.

Result

- **Deccan Riots Commission (1878):** Setup to investigate the causes.
- **Relief:** The Deccan Agriculturists' Relief Act (1879) was passed to protect farmers.

Pabna Revolt (1873-1876)

- **Region:** Bengal.
- **Leader:** Ishan Chandra Roy (also known as "Bidrohi Raja" or "Rebel King").

Ramosi Peasant Force (1879)

- Region: Maharashtra.
- Founder: Vasudev Balwant Phadke.



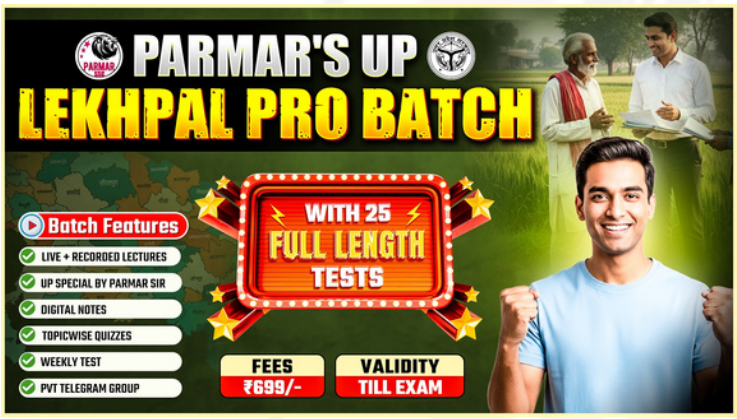


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