



## Chapter 9

### Society And Economy In The Colonial Period

#### NOTES:

##### Colonialism and Tribal Societies

- Many peasants and tribals in India revolted against British colonialism due to the overexploitation by both the colonial Government and landlords.

##### Santhal Rebellion

- The rebellion broke out in 1854 against the mahajans and traders as they completely controlled the existence of Santhals through interests on loans, with rates from 50% to 500%.
- The movement lasted for six months.

##### Birsa Munda Revolt

- The Birsa Munda Revolt was organised by Birsa of the Munda tribe in the Chotanagpur region of South Bihar.
- In 1898, right after his release from jail, Birsa incited the people to rise in revolt.
- In 1900, his followers attacked the Khunti Police station.
- Birsa was arrested and he died of cholera in jail in June 1900.
- Many tribal revolts also broke out in other parts of India like the Koya rebellion, the Naikdas revolt and the tribal riots in Assam.
- In 1860, an uprising occurred in Jaintia Hills against the imposition of house tax but they were forced to surrender in 1863.

## **Impact of Colonial Agrarian policies on peasants and landlords**

- Warren Hastings policy of auctioning the rights of revenue collection to the highest bidder ruin most of the old Zamindars in Bengal and Chennai.
- The British imperialism in India also had a profound impact on Indian peasants as the Zamindars raised rents to unbearable limits and compelled the peasants to pay illegal dues and to perform forced labour.

## **Growth of Commercial crops**

- Another major aspect of colonial policy was the forceful commercialisation of agriculture.
- The peasants were coerced to grow commercial crops like indigo and cotton which were exported to England.
- The process of commercialisation of agriculture was intensified by the development of the railways in India after 1850.

## **Indigo Riots**

- Indigo riots were one of the greatest peasant movements of the modern era by the Indigo cultivators that engulfed Bengal in 1859-60.
- The main cause of the riot was that the major impact of the colonial exploitation was borne by the Indian peasants as they were made to cultivate indigo plant at the old rate even when the prices of all agricultural produces had doubled.
- In 1859, thousands of riots in Bengal refused to grow indigo and attacked indigo factories with swords, spears, bow and arrows. They even boycotted workers of the indigo planters and agents of the planters who came to collect rents.

## **Peasants Revolts in Northeast India**

- In 1861, the peasants of the Phulaguri area protested against prohibition of poppy cultivation.
- In 1893-94, revolt broke out mainly in Kamrup and Darrang due to the high assessment of land revenue.

## **Irabot and the Peasant Movement**

- Irabot was one of the important peasant leader of Manipur. He was arrested in 1940 and deported to Sylhet Jail for giving speech at the Yaiskul Police lane.
- After his released on 20 March 1943, he stayed at Cachar district to work among Manipuri peasants.
- He joined Kisan movement and in March 1944, he went to Sylhet to join annual session of the Surma valley provisional Kisan Sabha.
- In 1948 election to the Manipur Legislative Assembly, he won from the Utlou Constituency as a Krishak Sabha candidate.

## **Decline of Handicrafts in the 19<sup>th</sup> century**

- The Indian handicrafts collapse due to competition by cheaper imported machine made goods from Britain and one-way free trade on India imposed by the British.

## **Development of Modern Industries**

- Development of modern industries in India started when large scale machine based cotton textile, jute and coal mining industries we're established in the 1850's.
- The first textile Mill was started in Mumbai by Cowasjee Nanabhoi in 1854 and the first Jute Mill in Rishra(Bengal) in 1855.
- During the early period Indian capitalist had to struggle a lot as most of the modern Indian industries were owned and controlled by British Capitalist.

