

Deindustrialization and Economy

History

Land Revenue Settlement

- Since the grant of diwani for Bengal, Bihar and Orissa in 1765, the major concern of the East India Company's administration in India was to collect as much revenue as possible. Agriculture was the main basis of economy and the main source of income and hence, although the nawabi administration was retained with Muhammad Reza Khan acting as the Naib Diwan for the Company, several land revenue experiments were introduced in haste to maximise extraction. And here they did not want to take any chances.
- So, although native officials were in charge of collection, European officers of the Company were given supervisory authority over them, and their corruption as well as lack of understanding of the local situation led to complete disorganisation of the agrarian economy and society in the diwani provinces within a few years. The devastating famine of 1769-70, in which about one-third of the Bengal population was wiped off, was but only one indication of the prevailing chaos.
- The Company directors, unable to pay their shareholders the expected amounts of dividend, began to look for reasons for falling revenues and the devastations of famine. They found an easy "scapegoat" in Reza Khan, who was arrested on false charges of corruption and embezzlement. But the real reason for his removal was the desire of Warren Hastings, the newly appointed Governor of Bengal, to get rid of Indians altogether from the administration of revenue and make the British the sole controller of the resources of the province.

Hasting's system

- In 1772, he introduced a new system, known as the farming system. European District Collectors, as the nomenclature suggested, were to be in charge of revenue collection, while the revenue collecting right was farmed out to the highest bidders.
- About the periodicity of the settlements, a number of experiments were made, but the farming system ultimately failed to improve the situation, as the farmers tried to extract as much as possible without any concern for the production process. The burden of revenue demand on the peasants increased as a result and often it was so onerous that it could not be collected at all. The net outcome of this whole period of rash experimentation was the ruination of the agricultural population. In 1784, Lord Cornwallis was therefore sent to India with a specific mandate to streamline the revenue administration.

PERMANENT SETTLEMENT

- In 1776 itself, Philip Francis, a member of Hastings' council, recommended a permanent settlement in land revenue. In the end, Lord Cornwallis was sent as governor general with instructions that the land revenue settlements with the zamindars be made permanent.
- Lord Cornwallis set up a committee consisting of himself, Sir John Shore, and James Grant to examine the issue. Cornwallis, himself a member of the landed aristocracy of Britain, favoured giving the right of ownership to the zamindars, who, he hoped, would improve the land as English landlords did
- Cornwallis realised that the existing system was impoverishing the country, ruining agriculture and was not producing the large and regular surplus that the Company hoped for. Company's trade also suffered, because of the difficulty in procuring Indian goods for export to Europe. Production of silk or cotton, two of the Company's major export items, was mainly agro-based, while decline in agriculture also affected handicraft production.
- It was thought, therefore, that the only way to improve this situation was to fix the revenue permanently. Indeed, it was since 1770, i.e., even before Cornwallis arrived, that a number of Company officials and European observers, like Alexander Dow, Henri Parullo, Philip Francis and Thomas Law were advocating for the land tax being permanently fixed. Despite their various ideological orientations, they shared a common faith in the Physiocratic school of thinking that assigned primacy to agriculture in a country's economy.
- These ideas went into the making of the Permanent Settlement of 1793, which introduced in Bengal the policy of "assessment for ever". This would reduce, it was hoped, the scope for corruption that existed when officials could alter assessment at will. The landlords would invest money in improving the land, as with the state demand being fixed the whole of the benefit from increased production and enhanced income would accrue to them.
- The Company would get its taxes regularly and when necessary, as Cornwallis thought, it could raise its income by taxing trade and commerce. The land revenue, since it was going to be fixed in perpetuity, was also to be fixed at a high level-the absolute maximum. So taking the assessment for the year 1789-90 as the standard, it was fixed at Rs. 26.8 million (approximately £3 million). While according to P.J. Marshall, the revenue demand in 1793 was just about 20 per cent higher than what prevailed before 1757, in B.B. Chaudhuri's calculation, it "nearly doubled" between 1765 and 1793.
- The other problem for the Company was to decide as from whom the revenue was to be collected. The nawabs used to collect it from the zamindars, Some of them were big landlords who controlled large areas and had their own armed retainers; in 1790 twelve big zamindari

houses were responsible for paying more than 53 per cent of the land revenue assessment in Bengal.

- Others were smaller zamindars, who paid revenue either directly to the state or through the bigger zamindars. Peasants undertook cultivation and paid the zamindars at customary rates, which often varied from subdivision to subdivision and sometimes extralegal charges called abwabs were collected as well.
- By 1790, however, the Company's administration had profoundly confused this situation by retaining some zamindars and replacing others by new revenue farmers. In terms of assessment too, the old customary rates were ignored and by the time Cornwallis arrived, a complete confusion prevailed in this area. Being a member of the landed aristocracy of Britain and imbued with the idea of improving landlordism, his natural preference was for the zamindars. They were expected to invest for the improvement of agriculture if their property rights were secured. There were also other practical reasons: it was easier to collect revenue from a small number of zamindars than from the innumerable peasants, which would require a large administrative machinery; and finally, it would ensure the loyalty of a powerful class of the local population.
- So the Permanent Settlement in 1793 was made with the zamindars. Every bit of land in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa became a part of a zamindari or estate and the zamindar had to pay the tax fixed upon it. If he did so, then he was the proprietor or owner of his zamindari: he could sell, mortgage and transfer it; land could also be inherited by heirs. But failure to pay the revenue would lead to the confiscation of the zamindari by the government and its sale by auction; the new purchaser would then have the ownership right on it. This was the so-called creation of private property in land; the magic of private property, it was widely hoped, would bring in the desired improvement in agriculture.
- The Permanent Settlement vested the land ownership right in the zamindars, who previously enjoyed only revenue collecting rights. Therefore, those who lost out in this settlement were the peasants, who were left at the mercy of the zamindars. Their customary occupancy right was ignored and they were reduced to the status of tenants.
- The provision of patta, or written agreement between the peasant and the zamindar providing a record of the amount of rent to be paid, was rarely followed by the zamindars. Nor was it liked by the peasants who always feared to lose in any formal record of rights and obligations. The burden of high revenue assessment was thus shifted to the peasants, who were often also called upon to pay illegal cesses. The subsequent regulations of 1799 and 1812 gave the zamindars the right to seize property of the tenants in case of nonpayment of rent without any permission of a court of law. It is no wonder, therefore, that as a cumulative effect

of this support to the coercive power of the zamindars, the condition of the actual cultivators declined under the Permanent Settlement.

- Though the settlement was pro-zamindar, they too had to face a number of difficulties. As Daniel Thorner has argued, creation of private property in land was a misnomer, as the absolute ownership was retained by the imperial authority. The zamindars had to pay a fixed amount of revenue by a particular date (the so-called 'sun-set' law), failure leading to the sale of the zamindari.
- Often they found it difficult to collect the rent, as demands were too high and there were the uncertainties of nature. The result was the frequent sale of zamindari estates: between 1794 and 1807 land yielding about 41 per cent of the revenue in Bengal and Bihar was sold out in auction; in Orissa between 1804 and 1818, 51.1 per cent of the original zamindars were wiped off because of auction sales.'
- This of course meant the collapse of most of the old zamindari houses; but contrary to the old myths, those who bought these estates were not exactly 'new' men in the Bengal agrarian society. The old zamindaris were parcelled out by their own amlas (zamindari officials) and rich tenants or by the neighboring zamindars among themselves. And some of the old houses, such as the Burdwan raj, survived by resorting to the novel method of subinfeudation that complicated the tenurial structure to an absurd level.
- These subinfeudatory patni tenures, which sometimes proliferated up to twelve grades between the zamindar and the peasants, increased the demand on the latter. In 1859 and 1885 there were tenancy legislations, which to some extent protected the tenants by recognising their occupancy rights. This was the time when the Company Raj had transformed itself into a self-confident territorial state trying to penetrate deeper into the economy and society and co-opt wider sections of the population. But zamindari power remained largely unrestrained and their alliance with the Raj unaltered.
- The new legal reforms could not provide any relief to the poor cultivators. These reforms on the other hand only strengthened the position of a group of powerful rich peasants-the jotedars-who are believed to have been actually controlling landholding at the village level, as argued by Rajat and Ratnalekha Ray (1973, 1975), while the zamindars enjoyed only the revenue collecting right. Beneath all the changes effected by colonial policies, the Rays argue, the power of this class . and their control over the rural society remained unaffected and herein lay the basic continuity of the rural social structure in colonial Bengal.
- This 'jotedar thesis', however, came under serious attack in a monograph by Sugata Bose (1986) who found such jotedar domination confined only to northern Bengal. In the rest of the

region he discovered two other distinct modes of peasant economy—the peasant landholding-demesne labour complex in the west and the peasant small holding system in eastern Bengal. In both the regions he found the power of the zamindars continuing unhindered till the 1930s, a position which has found support also in the works of Akinobu Kawai (1986-87) and Partha Chatterjee (1984a).

- In a subsequent essay in defence of the 'jotedar', Rajat Ray (1988) conceded the fact that the zamindars probably retained some of their influence and authority in rural Bengal till about the 1930s, but there still existed all along a section of substantial peasants who yielded considerable power in the Bengal countryside. This modified position has found partial corroboration in two subsequent works. Nariaki Nakazato (1994) has shown the existence of a powerful jotedar-haoladar class in certain districts of central and eastern Bengal in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This did not mean, however, as he argues, a demise of the old zamindari system, as the interests of the two classes were complementary to each other and not necessarily antagonistic.
- In western Bengal, on the other hand, in Midnapur district for example, Chitta Panda (1996) has detected only unqualified decline of the zamindars, who were losing out to a class of rich peasants who dominated the land market, rural credit and the trading networks. Both Nakazato and Panda, however, argue emphatically that there was more change than continuity in the agrarian structure of post Permanent Settlement Bengal. And, these changes, which almost uniformly affected the poor peasants, perennially excluded from any control over land and power, resulted in a series of peasant revolts.

RYOTWARI SETTLEMENT

- Lord Cornwallis expected that his Permanent Settlement, or the zamindari system, would be extended to other parts of India as well. When Lord Wellesley came to India, he and Henry Dundas of the Board of Control equally shared a faith in the Bengal system, and in 1798 Wellesley gave orders for its extension to Madras Presidency.
- Here the problem was to find a sizable zamindar class as in Bengal; but still between 1801 and 1807 the Madras authority introduced it in large areas under its control. The local poligars were recognised as zamindars, and in other areas, where such people could not be found, villages were aggregated into estates and were sold in auction to the highest bidders. But before this could go on very far, in British official circles there was growing disillusionment with the Permanent Settlement, which provided for no means to raise the income of the government, while the increased income from land was being garnered by the zamindars.

- This distrust for the large landlords was also partly the result of Scottish Enlightenment, which insisted on the primacy of agriculture and celebrated the importance of the yeoman farmer within the agricultural societies. Such ideas obviously influenced Scottish officials like Thomas Munro and Mountstuart Elphinstone, who took the initiative to change the Company's revenue administration.
- This was also the time when Utilitarian ideas had begun to influence policy planning in India, and among them David Ricardo's theory of rent seemed to be hinting at a revision of the existing system. Rent was the surplus from land, i.e., its income minus the cost of production and labour, and the state had a legitimate claim to a share of this surplus at the expense of the unproductive intermediaries, whose only claim was by virtue of their ownership right. The theory provided, therefore, an argument to eliminate the zamindars and appropriate a larger share of the increasing income from the new acquisitions of land. But theories alone hardly guided policies in India." A more powerful reason for a new settlement was the perennial financial crisis of the Madras Presidency, worsened by the rising expenses of war. This was the genesis of the Ryotwari Settlement in Madras Presidency.
- The Ryotwari experiment was started by Alexander Reed in Baramahal in 1792 and was continued by Thomas Munro from 1801 when he was asked to take charge of the revenue administration of the Ceded Districts. Instead of zamindars they began to collect revenue directly from the village , fixing the amount each village had to pay.
- After this they proceeded to assess each cultivator or ryot separately and thus evolved the Ryotwari System. It created individual proprietary right in land, but it was vested in the peasants, rather than in the zamindars, for Munro preferred it to be "in the hands of forty to fifty thousand small proprietors, than four or five hundred great one " .
- But Munro's system also made a significant distinction between public and private ownership. In David Ludden's words: "it defined the state itself as the supreme landlord, and individual peasants landowners who obtained title by paying annual cash rents, or revenue assessments, to the government" . This was, as it evolved eventually, a field assessment system, as rent payable on each field was to be permanently assessed through a general survey of all lands.
- And then annual agreements were to be made between the government and the cultivator, who had the choice of accepting or rejecting the agreement. If he agreed, he would get a patta, which would become a title to private property and if no cultivator was found, the land might lie fallow. The system, therefore, in order to be attractive and equitable, required a detailed land survey: the quality of soil, the area of the field and the average produce of every

piece of land had to be assessed and on the basis of that the amount of revenue was to be fixed.

- But this was the theory; in practice the estimates were often guesswork and the revenue demanded was often so high that they could only be collected with great difficulty or could not be collected at all. And the peasants were to be coerced to agree to such unjust settlements. So the Ryotwari system was almost abandoned soon after Munro's departure for London in 1807.
- But around 1820 the situation began to change as Thomas Munro returned to India as the governor of Madras. He argued that Ryotwari was the ancient Indian land-tenure system and therefore best suited to Indian conditions. This reference to the past was however in the interest of the empire. He believed that the British empire needed a unified concept of sovereignty and the Ryotwari system could provide a foundation for that.
- The security and administration of the empire needed, as his experience in the Ceded Districts revealed, the elimination of the overmighty poligars and collection of revenue directly from individual farmers under the supervision of British officers. He therefore justified his position by arguing that historically land in India was owned by the state, which collected revenue from individual peasants through a hierarchy of officials paid through grant of inam land.
- The power of this landlord-state rested on military strength and when that declined, the poligars appropriated land and thereby usurped sovereignty. This process of alienation needed to be reversed now.
- In arguing this, he briskly set aside the contrary observations by men like Francis Ellis who argued that property right was traditionally conferred on the community or tribes and that family had a variety of rights to the community assets. Munro at the same time insisted that this system would reduce the revenue burden for farmers, while it would yield larger amount of land revenue for the state, as no intermediaries would be having a share of the surplus."And London was happy too as this system would place authority and power directly in British hands in a way which the Cornwallis system would never hope to achieve.
- The Madras government was chronically short of funds and so it decided to introduce the Ryotwari Settlement in most parts of the presidency; but gradually it took quite different forms than the one which Munro had visualized. It raised the revenue income of the government but put the cultivators in great distress. In many areas no surveys were carried out and the tax of a ryot was assessed on an arbitrary basis, based on village accounts.

- Known as the putcut settlement, the revenue to be paid by a ryot was fixed on his entire farm, not on each field, which might have varying irrigation facilities and therefore different levels of productivity. And where the survey was actually undertaken, it was often "ill-conceived and hastily executed", resulting in over-assessment. Contrary to Munro's insistence that the cultivator be given freedom to take as much or as little land as he chose to, this "right of contraction or relinquishment" was effectively dropped by 1833.
- The cultivating peasants were, therefore, gradually impoverished, and increasingly indebted and could not invest for the extension of cultivation. Except for Coimbatore, there was practically no land market in Madras, as buying land would mean paying extortionate land revenue.
- The Ryotwari system did not also eliminate village elites as intermediaries between the government and the peasantry. As privileged rents and special rights of the mirasidars were recognised and caste privileges of the Brahmans respected, the existing village power structure was hardly altered, and indeed even more strengthened by the new system.
- This whole process was actually supported by a colonial knowledge, collaboratively produced by officials and Tamil writers, that the mirasidars of good agricultural castes, like the Vellalas, were the original colonists and good agriculturists. Such stereotypes made such traditional village elites as the mirasidars pivotal to the British ideal of a sedentary agricultural community. The latter therefore could gradually position themselves comfortably in the subordinate ranks of the revenue establishments, and some of them bought lucrative and large tracts of irrigated land after getting their official appointments.
- These revenue officials after 1816 combined in themselves both revenue collection and police duties in the countryside. This enhancement of power inevitably resulted in coercion, bribery and corruption by the subordinate officials of the Collectorate, which were revealed in abundant and gory details in the Madras Torture Commission Report in 1855, indicating the need for effective reform.
- It was from this year that a scientific survey of land and a fresh assessment of revenue were undertaken, resulting in decline in the real burden of tax. It was decided that the revenue rate would be half of the net value of the produce of the land and the settlement would be made for thirty years. The reformed system was introduced in 1864, immediately leading to agricultural prosperity and extension of cultivation. This was interrupted by two famines in 1865-66 and 1876-78; yet, as Dharma Kumar asserts, "recovery was faster in the Presidency as a whole". She also argues that contrary to prevalent myths, "statistics . . . fail to support the view that land was increasingly passing into the hands of rich farmers and 'moneylenders'".

- Inequality increased only in the prosperous and irrigated areas, such as the Godavari delta; elsewhere it declined. There is also no evidence, she affirms, that indebtedness was resulting in widespread dispossession. Debts varied in nature, while absentee landlordism, except in Tirunelveli, declined- everywhere else. However, where the tenants existed, there was hardly any protection for them in the entire presidency.
- The impact of the Ryotwari system on the agrarian society of Madras can be looked at in different ways. As a number of recent micro-studies have revealed, by redefining property rights, it actually strengthened the power of the village magnates where they did exist, and thus intensified social conflict. However, it is also true that this impact had wide regional variations, depending on the existing social structures and ecological conditions.
- David Ludden's study of the Tirunelveli district, for example, shows how the locally powerful mirasidars manipulated the system to get privileged rents and convert their collective rights into individual property rights. The Madras government since 1820 showed absolutely no interest in protecting the rights of the tenants, despite their active but futile resistance to mirasidari power. However, mirasidars in the wet zone, Ludden argues, did much better than their counterparts in the dry or mixed zones.
- Willem van Schendel's study of the Kaveri delta in Tanjavur (Tanjore) district also shows "the golden age" of the mirasidars, who entrenched their control over land and labour and thus "intensified the polarisation of local society". Their power eroded somewhat in the second half of the nineteenth century, because of greater social and economic differentiation within their community and the older families giving way to new commercial groups. But this by no means marked the end of mirasidari power in local society.
- Among other Tamil districts, the situation was largely similar in the wet taluks of Tiruchirapalli (Trichinopoly), while in South Arcot and Chingleput such privileged land ownership rights were being increasingly challenged by the actual cultivators. In other vast areas of Tamilnad, however, where there was abundance of cultivable land, the situation was dominated by a large number of owner-cultivators and a small group of middle landowners.
- In the Andhra districts of the Madras Presidency too the Ryotwari system promoted differentiation within the peasantry. By the beginning of the twentieth century, there was an affluent group of big landholders-whom A. Satyanarayana calls "peasant-bourgeoisie"-who controlled large farms and leased out surplus lands to landless tenants and sharecroppers. The intermediate strata also did well and lived under stable economic conditions. On the other hand, the poor peasants, who constituted the majority of the rural population, lived in squalid conditions, were exploited by rich ryots, creditors and lessors, were forced to hire themselves despite wretched conditions and remained tied to small plots of land.

- The Ryotwari system in the Bombay Presidency had its beginning in Gujarat after its annexation in 1803, and then when the peshwa's territories were conquered in 1818, it was extended to those areas as well under the supervision of Munro's disciple, Mountstuart Elphinstone. Initially, in these areas the British had been collecting revenue through the desmukh and the village headmen or the patil. But this did not yield as much revenue as they hoped for, and hence from 1813-14 they began collecting directly from the peasants.
- The abuses that characterised the Madras system soon appeared in Bombay too, as the revenue rates that were fixed turned out to be extraordinarily high. With frequent crop failures and sliding prices, peasants either had to mortgage their lands to moneylenders or abandon cultivation and migrate to neighbouring princely states where rates were lower.
- A land survey was therefore undertaken by an officer called R.K. Pringle, who classified the land and fixed the revenue at 55 per cent of the net value of the produce. The scheme, first introduced in the Indapur taluk in 1830, was soon found to be faulty and abandoned. It was replaced in 1835 by a reformed 'Bombay Survey System' devised by two officers G. Wingate and H. E. Goldsmid. It was a practical settlement aiming at lowering the demand to a reasonable limit where it could be regularly paid. The actual assessment of each field depended on what it paid in the immediate past, expected price rise, the nature of soil and location. This new assessment began to be made in 1836 on the basis of a thirty years settlement and covered most of Deccan by 1847.
- The impact of the Ryotwari Settlement on the agrarian society of western India is the subject of a major historical controversy, as it gave rise to a rural uprising in Bombay Deccan in 1875. Historians like Neil Charlesworth (1985) do not think that the Wingate settlements actually introduced between 1840 and 1870 caused any dramatic change in western India. It reduced the 'Village patil to the status of an ordinary peasant and a paid employee of the government. But the erosion of his power had started in pre-British days, and British rule "was merely completing a process already in full motion."
- And the settlements did not universally displace all village elites either; in Gujarat the superior rights of the bhagdars, narwadars and the Ahmedabad taluqdars were respected, and as a result, in these regions "greater political and social stability was guaranteed." It was only in central Deccan that a power vacuum was created, which offered opportunities for a greater active role for the Marwari and Gujarati banias. And for the peasants, the new settlements "were making revenue assessment less burdensome and inequitable". If they became massively indebted by the middle of the nineteenth century, such indebtedness was indeed "Jong-standing", not because of the land revenue demands, and did not in itself result in any large-scale alienation of land, as the Marwari creditors had little attraction for the cultivator's land. "

- H. Fukazawa also endorses this interpretation and asserts that: "There is no evidence that land was increasingly being bought up by traders and moneylenders". Ian Catanach thinks that dispossession and land transfer from agriculturists to non-agriculturists did occur in Deccan in mid-nineteenth century, but this did not necessarily cause the Deccan riots. But on the other hand, Ravinder Kumar and Sumit Guha have argued that a significant social upheaval was being caused by Ryotwari Settlement which undermined the authority of the village headmen and thus caused a status revolution in the Maharashtra villages, and that discontent ultimately propelled into the Deccan riots."
- What perhaps can be observed here is that the social effects of the Ryotwari system, both in Madras and in Bombay, were perhaps less dramatic than those of the Permanent Settlement. But it is difficult to argue a case for "continuity", as the older forms that continued were now "differentially enstructured by imperialism".

Mahalwari System

- The 'village community', which some of the early Western observers from Charles Metcalfe to Henry Maine spoke so eloquently about, figured neither in the Permanent Settlement nor in the Ryotwari system. However, when these two systems were being worked out, vast stretches of territory in north and north-western India were overrun between 1801 and 1806.
- This region, once the heartland of the Mughal empire, stretching from the Himalayan foothills to the central Indian plateau, including the Ganga-jumna Doab, formed the North-Western Provinces. In the agrarian structure of this area, there was on the one hand, a small group of magnates, known as the taluqdars. Nurul Hasan has described them as the "intermediary zamindars", who "contracted with the state to realise the revenue of a given territory".
- There were, on the other hand, a large group of "primary zamindars", who were the "holders of proprietary rights over agricultural as well as habitational lands". Included in this group were both the small owner-cultivators and also the large proprietors of several villages.
- With the Bengal model in mind, the British initially proceeded to collect revenue from the taluqdars, who by the end of the eighteenth century included two distinct social groups. On the one hand there were the locally entrenched "rulers of the lineage-dominated principalities" and on the other, the Mughal jagirdars, revenue officials and tax-farmers who had instituted themselves as "de facto rajas or taluqdars".
- These initial short-term settlements, eventually to be made permanent, were based on artificial and faulty estimates of the productivity of the newly conquered lands, and therefore revenue assessments in many cases were abnormally high. Many of the big taluqdars resisted

the new regime and its high revenue demand, and were liquidated with utter ruthlessness. Many were driven off and their mud fortresses razed to the ground.

- In other cases, defaulting estates were sold off by the government. As a result, by 1820, many of this "inchoate magnate class of upper India", as Eric Stokes described them, had "either lost their position entirely or were left in a shrunken condition". The land sold in auction was often bought by the amlas and tehsildars, who used their local knowledge and manipulated their power to buy some of the best properties in the area.
- In the Banaras region, for example, about 40 per cent of land had changed hands by the middle of the nineteenth century and they went into the possession of, as Bernard Cohn gives the list, "under civil servants and their descendants, and to merchants and bankers". These people came to constitute a "a new class of landlords", who were outsiders to the village community and had different attitudes to the land. But on the other hand, as Thomas Metcalf has argued, since the land market was imperfect (often there were no buyers) and frequently the new purchasers had to leave the former owners in charge, in few cases only the land actually changed hands.
- The situation created nevertheless a scare that land was passing into the hands of non-cultivating classes, Holt Mackenzie in 1819 describing it as a "melancholy revolution"; for in his judgement only the village coparcenary bodies were the "sole owners of the land".
- So from taluqdars British preference now shifted to the 'primary zamindars' and village communities. Mackenzie's recommendations were incorporated in the Regulation VII of 1822, which provided for a detailed field-to-field survey for revenue assessment. Settlement was to be made with the village community or with a taluqdar where available; and in addition to the rights of the proprietors, the rent to be paid by the resident cultivating peasants was also to be ascertained and recorded.
- Thus taluqdars were not completely eliminated; but where possible joint proprietary right in land was vested in the village communities. The refractory and oppressive nature of the taluqdars and the need to maximise revenue as well as protect the rights of the peasant proprietors to ensure the improvement of agriculture, rather than the influence of the Ricardian theory of rent, prompted the making of the Mahalwari Settlement.
- But the new settlement from the very beginning was enmeshed in confusion, and corruption, as in practice it was virtually impossible to implement. The survey, which was at the core of the new arrangement, failed, because it was too complex to be carried out with the existing administrative machinery. The obvious result was over-assessment, based on "idiosyncratic estimates".

- The situation was worsened by the agricultural depression of 1828. Arrears started mounting, land remained uncultivated; buyers were difficult to find. Some reforms had become clearly necessary, which came in the Regulation XI of 1833.
- The revised system, as worked out by another civilian, R.M. Bird, provided for a detailed survey to assess the revenue of an entire mahal or fiscal unit, based on the net value of potential produce of the field. The total revenue thus fixed was then to be shared by the members of a co-sharing body. The state was to appropriate two-thirds of the net income of the land and the settlement was to be made for thirty years.
- But the village settlements, started by Bird and completed by James Thomason, were again based on imperfect survey, inaccurate calculations and therefore over-assessment. And they were marked by an unconcealed hostility towards the taluqdars, whom Bird considered to be a "host of unproductives". Many of them were dispossessed and pensioned off with a cash allowance; and so effective was this policy that it nearly "flattened the whole surface of society", as the Lt. Governor of the province commented in 1842 after Bird's retirement. But this did not mean the ushering in of a golden age for the village communities, which were ruined by high revenue demand, mounting debt burden, arrears of revenue and the resulting sales of their properties and dispossession through decrees of the civil courts.
- Land in many cases passed into the hands of moneylenders and merchants, more so in the commercialised districts. Whether this meant a fundamental social upheaval is open to question, as in many cases the formal sale of properties did not effect any real change in the structure of landholding in the villages, as the new purchasers could hardly do anything without the original owners. But, as Thomas Metcalf concedes, "one can hardly say that 'nothing happened'". The grievances of the rural society of north India were soon to be expressed rather loudly and violently in the revolt of 1857.

Conclusion

- Thus by the middle of the nineteenth century the Company's administration had devised three systems of land revenue administration, creating private property in land and conferring that proprietary right on three different groups-the Permanent Settlement was made with the zamindars, the Ryotwari Settlement with the ryots or peasant proprietors and the Mahalwari Settlement with the village community. The latter system was extended to Punjab and central India when those regions were conquered subsequently, while the Ryotwari system was introduced in Sind, Assam and Coorg. The zamindari system was tried in the northern districts of the Madras Presidency where zamindars could be found.

- According to a rough estimate, in 1928-29 about 19 per cent of the cultivable land in India was under zamindari settlement, 29 per cent under Mahalwari settlement and 52 per cent under Ryotwari system." A common feature of all the settlements, as we have noted, was over-assessment, as the primary aim of the Company's government was to maximise revenue income. The results were arrears of payment, mounting debt, increasing land sales and dispossession. Contrary to received wisdom, modern research has established that the effects of these changes were less spectacular than once imagined, and had significant regional variations, as the land transfers could not fundamentally alter the structure of landholding everywhere.

- The agrarian society thus proved to be more resilient than once thought to be. But the groups and classes that survived had substantially different rights, obligations and powers. These changes and grievances generating from there were amply reflected in the series of agrarian disturbances that marked the first century of British rule in India.

Economic Impact of British Rule in India

Stages of Colonialism in India

- The Period of Merchant Capital (Mercantilism), often described as the Period of Monopoly Trade and Direct Appropriation (or the Period of East India Company's Domination, 1757–1813), was based on two basic objectives:

(i) To acquire a monopoly of trade with India, against other English or European merchants or trading companies as well as against the Indian merchants

(ii) To directly appropriate or take over governmental revenues through control over State power.

- During this period, no basic changes were introduced in administration, judicial system, transport and communication, methods of agricultural or industrial production, forms of business management or economic organisation. Nor were any major changes made in education or intellectual field, culture or social organisation. In fact, the traditional Indian civilisation, religions, laws, caste system, family structure, etc., were not seen as obstacles in the colonial exploitation.

The only changes made were:

(i) In military organisation and technology which native rulers were also introducing in their armed forces

ii) In administration at the top of the structure of revenue collection so that it could become more efficient and smooth

- In this phase there was large-scale drain of wealth from India which constituted 2–3 per cent of Britain’s national income at the time. It was this wealth that played an important role in financing Britain’s industrial revolution.
- In this stage, there was no large-scale import of British manufactures into India, rather, the reverse occurred—there was an increase in export of Indian textiles, etc. The weavers were, however, ruined at this stage by the Company’s monopoly and exploitation. They were forced to produce for the Company under uneconomic compulsions.

Second Stage

- Owing to its mode of exploitation being trade, this stage is also termed as Colonialism of Free Trade. It started with the Charter Act of 1813 and continued till 1860s. Soon after the East India Company became the ruler over most parts of India, there was a debate in Britain as to whose interests the newly acquired colony would serve.
- The newly emerging industrial capitalists began to criticise the East India Company and its exploitation of India. They demanded that colonial administration and policy in India should now serve British capitalist interests which were very different from those of the East India Company. Now India was to serve as a market for the ever-increasing output of British-manufactured goods, especially textiles.
- At the same time, the new capitalists in England, needed from India exports of raw materials, especially cotton and foodgrains. Moreover, India could buy more British goods only if it earned foreign exchange by enhancing its exports.
- The export of raw materials was increased sharply to meet the dividends of the Company and profits of British merchants. Besides, there was a need for money to pay for pensions of British officials who would go to Britain after retirement.

In this phase, the following dominant features were visible:

- (i) India’s colonial economy was integrated with the British and the world capitalist economy. This was made possible with the introduction of free trade. All import duties in India were either totally removed or drastically reduced to nominal rates.
- (ii) Free entry was also granted to the British capitalists to develop tea, coffee, and indigo plantations, trade, transport, mining, and modern industries in India. The British Indian

Government gave active State help to such capitalists.

(iii) The Permanent Settlement and the Ryotwari system in agriculture were introduced to transform traditional agrarian structure into a capitalist one.

(iv) Administration was made more comprehensive and included villages and outlying areas of the country. These changes were brought about to make British goods reach, and agricultural products drawn from, interior villages and remotest parts.

(v) Personal law was largely left untouched since it did not affect colonial transformation of the economy. However, the changes related to criminal law, law of contract and legal procedures were overhauled to promote capitalist commercial relations and maintain law and order.

(vi) Modern education was introduced to provide cheap manpower to the vastly expanded administration. However, it was also aimed at transforming India's society and culture for two reasons: (a) create an overall atmosphere of change and development; and (b) give birth to a culture of loyalty to the rulers.

(vii) The taxation and the burden on peasants rose sharply due to economic transformation and costly administration (civil as well as military)

(viii) India absorbed 10 to 12 per cent of British exports and nearly 20 per cent of Britain's textile exports. After 1850, engine coaches, rail lines, and other railway stores were imported into India at a large scale

(ix) The Indian Army was used for British expansion of colonialism in Asia and Africa.

Third Stage

The third stage is often described as the Era of Foreign Investments and International Competition for Colonies. It began around the 1860s in India owing to several changes in the world economy. These changes were as follows:

(i) Britain's industrial supremacy was challenged by several countries of Europe, the United States, and Japan.

(ii) As a result of the application of scientific knowledge to industry, the pace of industrialisation increased sharply (use of petroleum as fuel for the internal combustion engine and the use of electricity for industrial purposes were significant innovations).

(iii) The world market became more unified due to revolution in the means of international transport.

- During this stage, Britain made strenuous efforts to consolidate its control over India. Liberal imperialist policies got replaced with reactionary imperialist policies, which were reflected in the viceroalties of Lytton, Dufferin, Lansdowne, and Curzon. The strengthening of colonial rule over India was meant to keep out the rivals as well as to attract British capital to India and provide it security.
- As a result, a very large amount of British capital got invested in railways, loans (to the Government of India), trade and, to a lesser extent, in plantations, coal mining, jute mills, shipping, and banking in India.
- The notion of training the Indian people for self government vanished (revived only after 1918 because of the pressure exerted by the Indian national movement). Now, the aim of British rule was declared as permanent 'trusteeship' over the Indians.
- The Indians were declared to be permanently immature—a 'child' people—needing British control and trusteeship. Geography, climate, race, history, religion, culture, and social organisation were all cited as factors in making the Indians unfit for self-government or democracy. The British thus tried to justify their rule over Indians for centuries to come—all in the name of civilizing a barbaric people—"the White Man's burden".

One-Way Free Trade

- Cheap and machine-made imports flooded the Indian market after the Charter Act of 1813 allowing one-way free trade for the British citizens. On the other hand, Indian products found it more and more difficult to penetrate the European markets. Tariffs of nearly 80 per cent were imposed on Indian textiles so that Indian cloth could no longer be cheap.
- After 1820, European markets were virtually closed to Indian exports. Cheap British-made clothes flooded the Indian market. The newly introduced rail network helped the European products to reach the remotest corners of the country. From being a net exporter, India became a net importer.

No Steps towards Modern Industrialisation

- The loss of traditional livelihood was not accompanied by a process of industrialisation in India, as had happened in other rapidly industrialising countries of the time. This resulted in deindustrialisation of India at a time when Europe was witnessing a reintensified Industrial Revolution.
- This happened at a time when Indian artisans and handicrafts men were already feeling the crunch due to loss of patronage by princes and the nobility, who were now under the influence

of new western tastes and values.

Ruralisation

- Another feature of deindustrialisation was the decline of many cities and a process of ruralisation of India. Many artisans, faced with diminishing returns and repressive policies (in Bengal, during the Company's rule, artisans were paid low wages and forced to sell their products at low prices), abandoned their professions, moved to villages, and took to agriculture. This resulted in increased pressure on land. An overburdened agriculture sector was a major cause of poverty during British rule and this upset the village economic set-up

Impoverishment of Peasantry

- The government, only interested in maximisation of rents and in securing its share of revenue, had enforced the Permanent Settlement system in large parts. Transferability of land was one feature of the new settlement which caused great insecurity to the tenants who lost all their traditional rights in land. There was little spending by the government on improvement of land productivity.

- The zamindars, with increased powers, resorted to summary evictions, demanded illegal dues and 'begar' to maximise their share in the produce and, as such, had no incentive to invest for the improvement of agriculture. The overburdened peasants had to approach the moneylenders to be able to pay their dues to the zamindars. The moneylender, who was often also the village grain-merchant, forced the farmer to sell the produce at low prices to clear his dues. The powerful moneylender was also able to manipulate the judiciary and law in his favour.

- The peasant turned out to be the ultimate sufferer under the triple burden of the government, zamindar, and moneylender. His hardship increased at the time of famine and scarcity. This was as much true for the zamindari areas as for areas under Ryotwari and Mahalwari systems. The peasant became landless.

Emergence of Intermediaries, Absentee Landlordism, Ruin of Old Zamindars

- By 1815, half of the total land in Bengal had passed into new hands—merchants, moneylenders, and other moneyed classes living in towns. The new zamindars, with increased powers but with little or no avenues for new investments, resorted to land grabbing and sub-infeudation.

- Increase in number of intermediaries to be paid gave rise to absentee landlordism and increased the burden on the peasant. Since the demand for land was high, prices went up and

so did the liabilities of the peasant. With no traditional or benevolent ties with the tenants, the zamindar had no incentive to invest in the improvement of agriculture. The interests of the zamindars lay only in the perpetuation of British rule and in opposing the national movement.

Destruction of Industry and Late Development of Modern Industry

- Indian industry was steadily destroyed. The destruction of textile competition of India is a glaring example of the deindustrialisation of India. The British stopped paying for Indian textiles in pounds, choosing instead to pay from the revenue gained from Bengal and at very low rates, thus impoverishing the peasants further.
- A thriving ship-building industry was crushed. Surat and Malabar on the western coast and Bengal and Masulipatnam on the eastern coast were known for their ship-building industries. The British ships contracted by the Company were given a monopoly over trade routes, while even the Indian merchant ships plying along the coast were made to face heavy duties.
- In 1813, a law by the British parliament prohibited ships below 350 tonnes from sailing between India to Britain; this effectively put a large proportion of Bengal built ships out of commission on the Indo-British trade routes. In 1814, another law was passed under which Indian built ships were refused to be considered 'British-registered vessels' which could trade with America and the European continent. So, the decline of the Indian shipping industry was ensured.
- The British did not allow the Indian steel industry to grow. Industries like the Tatas, which began to produce steel after a lot of trouble getting the required permissions, were restricted by being forced to produce a higher standard of steel for British use. The firms were not able to produce the lower standard of steel at the same time, so they were left out of the larger market that demanded the lower quality of steel. As restrictions were placed by Britain on Indian steel imports, this steel could only be used in India. Obviously, the growth of the industry was hampered.
- Indian traders, moneylenders, and bankers had amassed some wealth as junior partners of English merchant capitalists in India. Their role fitted in the British scheme of colonial exploitation. The Indian moneylender provided loans to hard pressed agriculturists and thus facilitated the state collection of revenue. The Indian trader carried imported British products to the remotest corners and helped in the movement of Indian agricultural products for exports.
- The indigenous bankers helped both in the process of distribution and collection. But the colonial situation retarded the development of a healthy and independent industrial

bourgeoisie, and its development was different from other independent countries like Germany and Japan.

- It was only in the second half of the 19th century that modern machine-based industries started coming up in India. The first cotton textile mill was set up in 1853 in Bombay by Cowasjee Nanabhoy and the first jute mill came up in 1855 in Rishra (Bengal). But most of the modern industries were foreign-owned and controlled by British managing agencies.
- There was a rush of foreign capital in India at this time due to prospects of high profits, availability of cheap labour, cheap and readily available raw material, ready market in India and the neighbours, diminishing avenues for investments at home, willingness of the administration to provide all help, and ready markets abroad for some Indian exports such as tea, jute, and manganese.
- Indian-owned industries came up in cotton textiles and jute in the 19th century and in sugar, cement, etc., in the 20th century. Indian-owned industries suffered from many handicaps—credit problems, no tariff protection by government, unequal competition from foreign companies, and stiff opposition from British capitalist interests who were backed by sound financial and technical infrastructure at home
- The colonial factor also caused certain structural and institutional changes. The industrial development was characterised by a lopsided pattern—core and heavy industries and power generation were neglected and some regions were favoured more than the others—causing regional disparities. These regional disparities hampered the process of nation building. In the absence of careful nurturing of technical education, the industry lacked sufficient technical manpower. Socially, the rise of an industrial capitalist class and the working class was an important feature of this phase

EARLY NATIONALIST VIEWS AND THEIR CRITICS

- The foremost among these economic analysts was Dadabhai Naoroji, the 'Grand Old Man of India', who after a brilliant analysis of the colonial economy put forward the theory of economic drain in *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*. Other economic analysts included Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade, Romesh Chandra Dutt (*The Economic History of India*), Gopal Krishna Gokhale, G. Subramania Iyer, and Prithwishchandra Ray.
- K.S.Shelvankar in *The Problem of India* (London 1940) and R.P. Dutt in *India Today* (Bombay, 1947) called the half century after 1875 the period of deindustrialization and peasantization. So did Colin Clark in *Conditions of Economic Progress*. Although the classic nationalist account of the impact of colonial rule in India by R.C.Dutt, *The Economic History of India in the Victorian*

Age, 1837-1900 (London, 1906), appeared very early in the twentieth century it dealt with the adverse consequences of British manufactured goods for India's hand manufactures.

- However, authors like L.C.A. Knowles and Vera Anstey contested the nationalist argument even in the colonial period itself. A substantial critique of the nationalist argument came from an analysis of the data on occupations from the decennial Censuses from 1881 to 1931. Later, in the 1950s, Daniel and Alice Thorner argued that a case for the decline of employment in the secondary sector during the period covered by the census data was not tenable.
- Essentially Thorners' argument was that there was not much change in the proportion of the population that was engaged in industrial occupations at least in the period covered by the census data, from 1881 to 1931. The case for de-industrialization in India arose from an erroneous reading of the evidence contained in the Census data.

THE 1968 DEBATE ON DE-INDUSTRIALIZATION

Morris David Morris

- In an essay criticizing the lack of theoretical rigour in the writings of the nationalists Morris David Morris argued that the case for the decline of the traditional industries of India rested on the evidence for the rising imports of British manufactured goods into the country.
- According to Morris there was not much direct evidence of the decline of India's traditional industries and the nationalists had ignored the possibility of a rightward shift in the demand curve for cloth in India. If we assume that there was an expansion in the domestic market for textiles in India because of the increase in the population of the country and the increase in the purchasing power of the people based on an increase in the per capita income then despite an increase in imports of manufactured goods into the country there would be little or no decline in traditional artisanal production.
- The argument was that by ignoring the expansion in the size of the market for textiles in India the nationalists had exaggerated the negative consequences of the increase in British exports to India.

Criticism of Morris D. Morris

- The arguments of Morris invited sharp reactions from other historians like Bipan Chandra, the Japanese historian Toru Matsui and Tapan Raychaudhuri who published their articles in the journal The Indian Economic and Social History Review in 1968. Regarding the issue of lack of evidence for the decline of Indian industries they pointed out that evidence was scattered in different types of sources.

- Travellers' and eye-witness accounts, famine reports and official enquiries and government reports of the East India Company administration were full of references to the heavy impact of British manufactured goods in India and the worsening conditions of artisans.
- While conceding that the population in India may have gone up a little, they asserted that there was definitely no evidence to prove that income per capita had gone up. In fact all evidence points to the contrary, that is, a falling per capita income in the 19th century particularly because spinning suffered heavily.
- Spinning was usually done by women at home mostly to supplement family income and the influx of cheap machine-made British yarn destroyed the market for indigenous yarn. Family incomes therefore must have fallen, although statistics for the number of spinners will not be available, as they were not recorded. Contemporary accounts however are full of descriptions of the decline of spinning activity.
- Morris had argued that cheaper British yarn must have been available to Indian weavers, bringing down the cost of production of their cloth to be able to compete with British cloth. In reply Bipan Chandra cited figures to show that the ratio of yarn imports to woven cloth was very low. In the forty years between 1849 and 1889 the import of cloth into India increased by 25.5 million sterling, which amounted to a twelve and a half time increase. By comparison yarn imports increased by 1.8 million sterling that was a four time increase. During this period the productivity of the Indian weaver remained stationary while that of the British weaver was rising.
- What made matters worse for Indian weavers was the fact that the export price of British cloth fell far more rapidly than the export price of yarn. The average export price of per pound of yarn fell from 29 pence in 1819-21 to 15.3 pence in 1829-31 to 12 pence in 1844-46 to 11.7 pence in 1859-61 to 12.8 pence in 1880-82. In the same period the average export price per pound of cloth fell from 70.3 pence to 40.6 pence to 22.5 pence to 20.5 pence to 19.4 pence.
- Indian weavers therefore could not really benefit from the decline in yarn prices which comparatively fell less and it did not bring about the required reduction in the cost of their cloth to be able to compete with British woven cloth that became cheaper by much more
- The general criticism that the nationalists have faced is that the statistical evidence for deindustrialization is weak, especially for the period before the census. Data about various aspects of Indian society started getting generated by Census operations that began in 1872 and were carried out every ten years thereafter.
- Census statistics are an invaluable store of information about Indian society and therefore critics always doubted the nationalists' assertion of de-industrialization for the pre-census

period. However later historians like Amiya Kumar Bagchi have managed to get some statistical evidence from sources that were not available to nationalist or Marxist writers.

- Bagchi analyzed the evidence provided in the survey conducted by Francis Buchanan-Hamilton in Gangetic Bihar between 1809-13 and the Census data of 1901. According to Bagchi's analysis the percentage of population dependent on industries was 18.6 in 1809-13, which declined to 8.5%.

Buchanan-Hamilton

- Francis Buchanan-Hamilton (1762-1829) was a Scottish physician who came to India from England. He served in the Bengal Medical Service from 1794 to 1815 and also made significant contributions as a geographer, zoologist and botanist.
- He served as a surgeon to Lord Wellesley, the Governor-General of India in Calcutta (now called Kolkata) where he organized a zoo that later became the Calcutta Alipore Zoo. Under instructions from the Government of Bengal he conducted detailed surveys of the areas within the jurisdiction of the British East India Company between 1807-14. He became the Superintendent of the Calcutta Botanical Garden in 1814 but returned to England due to ill health in 1815. There he inherited his mother's property and took her surname calling himself "Francis Hamilton, formerly Buchanan". However he came to be known as Francis Buchanan-Hamilton or just Buchanan-Hamilton.

Colonial Cities: Urbanisation, Planning and Architecture

- The gradual erosion of Mughal power led to the demise of towns associated with their rule. The Mughal capitals, Delhi and Agra, lost their political authority. The growth of new regional powers was reflected in the increasing importance of regional capitals – Lucknow, Hyderabad, Seringapatam, Poona (present-day Pune), Nagpur, Baroda (present day Vadodara) and Tanjore (present-day Thanjavur).
- Traders, administrators, artisans and others migrated from the old Mughal centres to these new capitals in search of work and patronage. Continuous warfare between the new kingdoms meant that mercenaries too found ready employment there.
- Some local notables and officials associated with Mughal rule in North India also used this opportunity to create new urban settlements such as the qasbah and ganj. However, the effects of political decentralisation were uneven. In some places there was renewed economic activity, in other places war, plunder and political uncertainty led to economic decline.

- Changes in the networks of trade were reflected in the history of urban centres. The European commercial Companies had set up base in different places early during the Mughal era: the Portuguese in Panaji in 1510, the Dutch in Masulipatnam in 1605, the British in Madras in 1639 and the French in Pondicherry (present-day Puducherry) in 1673. With the expansion of commercial activity, towns grew around these trading centres. By the end of the eighteenth century the land-based empires in Asia were replaced by the powerful sea-based European empires. Forces of international trade, mercantilism and capitalism now came to define the nature of society.
- From the mid-eighteenth century, there was a new phase of change. Commercial centres such as Surat, Masulipatnam and Dhaka, which had grown in the seventeenth century, declined when trade shifted to other places. As the British gradually acquired political control after the Battle of Plassey in 1757, and the trade of the English East India Company expanded, colonial port cities such as Madras, Calcutta and Bombay rapidly emerged as the new economic capitals.
- They also became centres of colonial administration and political power. New buildings and institutions developed, and urban spaces were ordered in new ways. New occupations developed and people flocked to these colonial cities. By about 1800, they were the biggest cities in India in terms of population.

James Rennell

- Major James Rennell, (3 December 1742 – 29 March 1830) was an English geographer, historian and a pioneer of oceanography. Rennell produced some of the first accurate maps of Bengal at one inch to five miles as well as accurate outlines of India and served as Surveyor General of Bengal. Rennell has been called the Father of Oceanography. In 1830 he was one of the founders of the Royal Geographical Society in London.
- Rennell's first and most influential work was the Bengal Atlas (1779) which was followed by the first detailed map of India (1783)

Colonial Cities

- The growth of cities was monitored through regular headcounts. By the mid-nineteenth century several local censuses had been carried out in different regions. The first all-India census was attempted in 1872. Thereafter, from 1881, decennial (conducted every ten years) censuses became a regular feature. This collection of data is an invaluable source for studying urbanisation in India. The Survey of India was established in 1878.

- A careful study of censuses reveals some fascinating trends. After 1800, urbanisation in India was sluggish. All through the nineteenth century up to the first two decades of the twentieth, the proportion of the urban population to the total population in India was extremely low and had remained stagnant. In the forty years between 1900 and 1940 the urban population increased from about 10 per cent of the total population to about 13 per cent.
- Colonial cities reflected the mercantile culture of the new rulers. Political power and patronage shifted from Indian rulers to the merchants of the East India Company. Indians who worked as interpreters, middlemen, traders and suppliers of goods also had an important place in these new cities. Economic activity near the river or the sea led to the development of docks and ghats. Along the shore were godowns, mercantile offices, insurance agencies for shipping, transport depots, banking establishments. Further inland were the chief administrative offices of the Company.
- The Writers' Building in Calcutta was one such office. Around the periphery of the Fort, European merchants and agents built palatial houses in European styles. Some built garden houses in the suburbs. Racially exclusive clubs, racecourses and theatres were also built for the ruling elite.
- The nature of the colonial city changed further in the mid-nineteenth century. After the Revolt of 1857 British attitudes in India were shaped by a constant fear of rebellion. They felt that towns needed to be better defended, and white people had to live in more secure and segregated enclaves, away from the threat of the "natives".
- Pasturelands and agricultural fields around the older towns were cleared, and new urban spaces called "Civil Lines" were set up. White people began to live in the Civil Lines. Cantonments— places where Indian troops under European command were stationed – were also developed as safe enclaves. These areas were separate from but attached to the Indian towns. With broad streets, bungalows set amidst large gardens, barracks, parade ground and church, they were meant as a safe haven for Europeans as well as a model of ordered urban life in contrast to the densely built up Indian towns.
- For the British, the "Black" areas came to symbolise not only chaos and anarchy, but also filth and disease. For a long while the British were interested primarily in the cleanliness and hygiene of the "White" areas. But as epidemics of cholera and plague spread, killing thousands, colonial officials felt the need for more stringent measures of sanitation and public health.
- They feared that disease would spread from the "Black" to the "White" areas. From the 1860s and 1870s, stringent administrative measures regarding sanitation were implemented and building activity in the Indian towns was regulated. Underground piped water supply and

sewerage and drainage systems were also put in place around this time. Sanitary vigilance thus became another way of regulating Indian towns.

The first hill stations

- As in the case of cantonments, hill stations were a distinctive feature of colonial urban development. The founding and settling of hill stations was initially connected with the needs of the British army. Simla (present-day Shimla) was founded during the course of the Gurkha War (1815-16); the Anglo-Maratha War of 1818 led to British interest in Mount Abu; and Darjeeling was wrested from the rulers of Sikkim in 1835. Hill stations became strategic places for billeting troops, guarding frontiers and launching campaigns against enemy rulers.
- Because the hill stations approximated the cold climates of Europe, they became an attractive destination for the new rulers. It became a practice for viceroys to move to hill stations during the summer months. In 1864 the Viceroy John Lawrence officially moved his council to Simla, setting seal to the practice of shifting capitals during the hot season. Simla also became the official residence of the commander-in-chief of the Indian army.
- In the hill stations the British and other Europeans sought to recreate settlements that were reminiscent of home. The buildings were deliberately built in the European style. Individual houses followed the pattern of detached villas and cottages set amidst gardens. The Anglican Church and educational institutions represented British ideals. Even recreation activities came to be shaped by British cultural traditions. Thus social calls, teas, picnics, fetes, races and visits to the theatre became common among colonial officials in the hill stations.
- Hill stations were important for the colonial economy. With the setting up of tea and coffee plantations in the adjoining areas, an influx of immigrant labour from the plains began. This meant that hill stations no longer remained exclusive racial enclaves for Europeans in India.

Settlement and segregation in Madras

- The Company had first set up its trading activities in the well-established port of Surat on the west coast. Subsequently the search for textiles brought British merchants to the east coast. In 1639 they constructed a trading post in Madraspatam. This settlement was locally known as Chenapattanam.
- The Company had purchased the right of settlement from the local Telugu lords, the Nayaks of Kalahasti, who were eager to support trading activity in the region. Rivalry (1746-63) with the French East India Company led the British to fortify Madras and give their representatives increased political and administrative functions.

- With the defeat of the French in 1761, Madras became more secure and began to grow into an important commercial town. It was here that the superiority of the British and the subordinate position of the Indian merchants was most apparent.
- Fort St George became the nucleus of the White Town where most of the Europeans lived. Walls and bastions made this a distinct enclave. Colour and religion determined who was allowed to live within the Fort. The Company did not permit any marriages with Indians. Other than the English, the Dutch and Portuguese were allowed to stay here because they were European and Christian. The administrative and judicial systems also favoured the white population. Despite being few in number the Europeans were the rulers and the development of Madras followed the needs and convenience of the minority whites in the town.
- The Black Town developed outside the Fort. It was laid out in straight lines, a characteristic of colonial towns. It was, however, demolished in the mid-1700s and the area was cleared for a security zone around the Fort. A new Black Town developed further to the north. This housed weavers, artisans, middlemen and interpreters who played a vital role in the Company trade.

Calcutta

- In 1756, Sirajudaula, the Nawab of Bengal, attacked Calcutta and sacked the small fort which the British traders had built as their depot for goods. The English East India Company traders had been continuously questioning the sovereignty of the Nawab. They were reluctant to pay customs duties, and refused to comply with the terms on which they were expected to operate. So Sirajudaula wanted to assert his authority.
- Subsequently, in 1757, when Sirajudaula was defeated in the Battle of Plassey, the East India Company decided to build a new fort, one that could not be easily attacked. Calcutta had grown from three villages called Sutanati, Kolkata and Govindapur. The Company cleared a site in the southernmost village of Govindapur and the traders and weavers living there were asked to move out. Around the new Fort William they left a vast open space which came to be locally known as the Maidan or garer-math.
- This was done so that there would be no obstructions to a straight line of fire from the Fort against an advancing enemy army. Once the British became more confident about their permanent presence in Calcutta, they started moving out of the Fort and building residences along the periphery of the Maidan. That was how the English settlement in Calcutta gradually started taking shape. The vast open space around the Fort (which still exists) became a landmark, Calcutta's first significant town planning measure.
- Interestingly, the pattern devised for Calcutta was replicated in many other towns. During the Revolt of 1857 many towns became rebel strongholds. After their victory the British

proceeded to make these places safe for themselves.

- In Delhi for instance they took over the Red Fort and stationed an army there. Then they destroyed buildings close to the Fort creating a substantial empty space between the Indian neighbourhoods and the Fort. The logic was the same as in Calcutta a hundred years ago: a direct line of fire was considered essential, just in case the town rose up against firangi raj once again.
- After Wellesley's departure the work of town planning was carried on by the Lottery Committee (1817) with the help of the government. The Lottery Committee was so named because funds for town improvement were raised through public lotteries. In other words, in the early decades of the nineteenth century raising funds for the city was still thought to be the responsibility of publicminded citizens and not exclusively that of the government.
- The Lottery Committee commissioned a new map of the city so as to get a comprehensive picture of Calcutta. Among the Committee's major activities was road building in the Indian part of the city and clearing the river bank of "encroachments". In its drive to make the Indian areas of Calcutta cleaner, the committee removed many huts and displaced the labouring poor, who were now pushed to the outskirts of Calcutta.

Bombay

- Initially, these buildings were at odds with the traditional Indian buildings. Gradually, Indians too got used to European architecture and made it their own. The British in turn adapted some Indian styles to suit their needs. One example is the bungalow which was used by government officers in Bombay and all over India. The name bungalow was derived from bangla, a traditional thatched Bengali hut. The colonial bungalow was set on extensive grounds which ensured privacy and marked a distance from the Indian world around.
- The traditional pitched roof and surrounding veranda kept the bungalow cool in the summer months. The compound had separate quarters for a retinue of domestic servants. The bungalows in the Civil Lines thus became a racially exclusive enclave in which the ruling classes could live self-sufficient lives without daily social contact with Indians.
- For public buildings three broad architectural styles were used. Two of these were direct imports from fashions prevalent in England. The first was called neo-classical or the new classical. Its characteristics included construction of geometrical structures fronted with lofty pillars. It was derived from a style that was originally typical of buildings in ancient Rome, and was subsequently revived, re-adapted and made popular during the European Renaissance. It was considered particularly appropriate for the British Empire in India.

- The British imagined that a style that embodied the grandeur of imperial Rome could now be made to express the glory of imperial India. The Mediterranean origins of this architecture were also thought to be suitable for tropical weather. The Town Hall in Bombay was built in this style in 1833. Another group of commercial buildings, built during the cotton boom of the 1860s, was the Elphinstone Circle. Subsequently named Horniman Circle after an English editor who courageously supported Indian nationalists, this building was inspired from models in Italy. It made innovative use of covered arcades at ground level to shield the shopper and pedestrian from the fierce sun and rain of Bombay.
- Another style that was extensively used was the neo-Gothic, characterised by high-pitched roofs, pointed arches and detailed decoration. The Gothic style had its roots in buildings, especially churches, built in northern Europe during the medieval period.
- The neo-Gothic or new Gothic style was revived in the mid-nineteenth century in England. This was the time when the government in Bombay was building its infrastructure and this style was adapted for Bombay. An impressive group of buildings facing the seafront including the Secretariat, University of Bombay and High Court were all built in this style.
- Indians gave money for some of these buildings. The University Hall was made with money donated by Sir Cowasjee Jehangir Readymoney, a rich Parsi merchant. The University Library clock tower was similarly funded by the banker Premchand Roychand and was named after his mother as Rajabai Tower. Indian merchants were happy to adopt the neo-Gothic style since they believed that building styles, like many ideas brought in by the English, were progressive and would help make Bombay into a modern city.
- However, the most spectacular example of the neo-Gothic style is the Victoria Terminus, the station and headquarters of the Great Indian Peninsular Railway Company. The British invested a lot in the design and construction of railway stations in cities, since they were proud of having successfully built an all-India railway network. As a group these buildings dominated the central Bombay skyline and their uniform neo-Gothic style gave a distinctive character to the city.
- Towards the beginning of the twentieth century a new hybrid architectural style developed which combined the Indian with the European. This was called Indo-Saracenic. "Indo" was shorthand for Hindu and "Saracen" was a term Europeans used to designate Muslim. The inspiration for this style was medieval buildings in India with their domes, chhatris, jalis, arches.
- By integrating Indian and European styles in public architecture the British wanted to prove that they were legitimate rulers of India. The Gateway of India, built in the traditional Gujarati

style to welcome King George V and Queen Mary to India in 1911, is the most famous example of this style. The industrialist Jamsetji Tata built the Taj Mahal Hotel in a similar style. Besides being a symbol of Indian enterprise, this building became a challenge to the racially exclusive clubs and hotels maintained by the British
