

10 COLONIALISM AND COUNTRYSIDE

In this chapter we will study

- How British colonialism affected in Indian countryside
- Two provinces came under the control of English East India Company

1 Bengal (Eastern India -roughly present day Indian states of Bengal,Bihar,Jharkand,Orissa,and parts of Bangladesh)

2 Bombay deccan (Present day western India)

Bengal

- Revenue settlement introduced by company called Permanent settlement
- Impacted on the life of Zamindars or Rajas
- Impacted on the life Paharias in Rajmahal Hills (present day Jharkand)
- Impacted on the life Santhals in Rajmahal Hills

Bombay Deccan

- Revenue settlement called Ryotwari settlement
- Impacted on the life of ryots of Bombay Deccan

Bengal and the Zamindars

- Colonial rule was first established in Bengal.
- In 1765 English East India Company acquires Diwani of Bengal(Right to collect revenue)
- Raja :means king but now lost power but they were big land owners.
- Zamindrs :Powerful land owners of rural India
- zamindari:Land of Zamindars
- Taluqdar :literally means “one who holds a taluq” or connection. Taluq came to refer to a territorial unit -they also had controll over landowner
- Ryot : raiyat,means peasants
- Jotedar :Rich and powerful ryot

Permanent Settlement

- ➔ In 1793 Charles Cornwallis (1738-1805)(Governor General of Bengal) introduced Permanent Settlement in Bengal
- ➔ Permanent Settlement was a revenue settlement made with the rajas and taluqdars of Bengal.
- ➔ They were now classified as zamindars, and they had to pay the revenue demand that was fixed in perpetuity.
- ➔ In terms of this definition, the zamindar was not a landowner in the village, but a revenue Collector of the state.
- ➔ The East India Company had fixed the revenue that each zamindar had to pay.
- ➔ Zamindars had several (sometimes as many as 400) villages under them.
- ➔ In Company calculations the villages within one zamindari formed one revenue estate.
- ➔ The Company fixed the total demand over the entire estate whose revenue the zamindar contracted to pay.
- ➔ The zamindar collected rent from the different villages, paid the revenue to the Company, and retained the difference as his income
- ➔ The estates(Zamindaris) of those who failed to pay were to be auctioned to recover the revenue
- ➔ Over 75 per cent of the zamindaris changed hands after the Permanent Settlement

An auction in Burdwan

- ➔ In 1797 there was an auction in Burdwan (present-day Bardhaman West Bengal).
- ➔ Auction of confiscated land of the Raja of Burdwan by English East India Company
- ➔ Raja of Bardwan failed to pay revenue as per permanent settlement
- ➔ A number of mahals (estates) held by the Raja of Burdwan were being sold as per the Permanent Settlement
- ➔ Numerous purchasers came to the auction and the estates were sold to the highest bidder.
- ➔ But the Collector soon discovered a strange twist to the tale.
- ➔ Many of the purchasers turned out to be servants and agents of the raja who had bought the lands on behalf of their master.
- ➔ Over 95 per cent of the sale at the auction was fictitious.
- ➔ The raja's estates had been publicly sold, but he remained in control of his zamindari.

How this Fictitious sale works?

- ➔ Fictitious sale was one strategy of zamindars resistance.
- ➔ The Raja of Burdwan, first transferred some of his zamindari to his mother, since the Company had decreed that the property of women would not be taken over.
- ➔ Then, as a second move, his agents manipulated the auctions.
- ➔ The revenue demand of the Company was deliberately withheld, and unpaid balances were allowed to accumulate.
- ➔ When a part of the estate was auctioned, the zamindar's men bought the property, outbidding other purchasers.
- ➔ Subsequently they refused to pay up the purchase money, so that the estate had to be resold.

- ➔ Once again it was bought by the zamindar's agents, once again the purchase money was not paid, and once again there was an auction.
- ➔ This process was repeated endlessly, exhausting the state, and the other bidders at the auction.
- ➔ At last the estate was sold at a low price back to the zamindar.
- ➔ The zamindar never paid the full revenue demand; the Company rarely recovered the unpaid balances that had piled up.

The problem of unpaid revenue

Why had the raja failed to pay the revenue?

Why zamindars defaulted on payments

- ➔ **First:** the initial demands (rate of revenue) were very high.(The Company pegged the revenue demand high, arguing that the burden on zamindars would gradually decline as agricultural production expanded and prices rose.
- ➔ **Second:** This high demand was imposed in the 1790s, a time when the prices of agricultural produce were depressed,(recurrent famines and declining agricultural output) making it difficult for the ryots to pay their dues to the zamindar. the zamindar could not collect the rent, the could not pay the Company
- Third:** the revenue was invariable, regardless of the harvest, and had to be paid punctually. According to the Sunset Law, if payment did not come in by sunset of the specified date, the zamindari was liable to be auctioned.
- Fourth:** The Permanent Settlement initially limited the power of the zamindar to collect rent from the ryot and manage his zamindari.

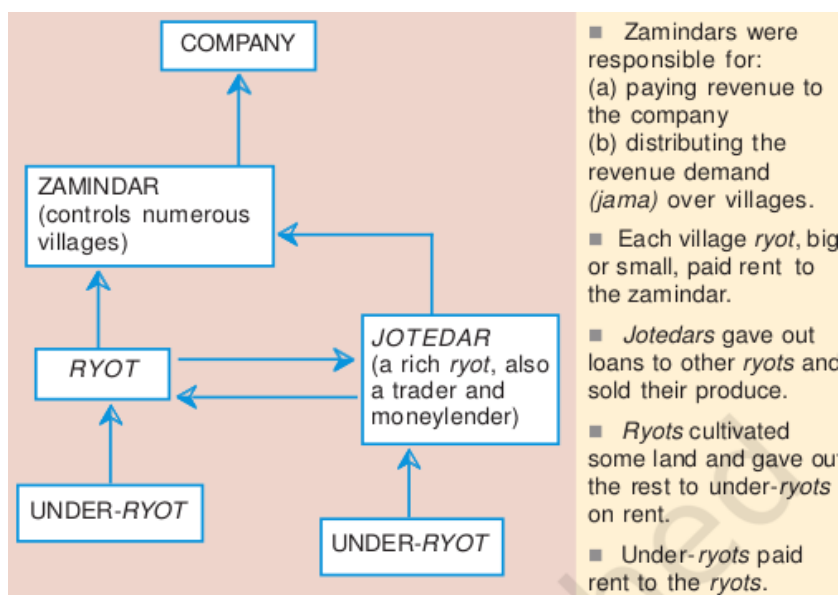
Limited power of Zamindars

- 1) The zamindars' troops were disbanded
- 2) Customs duties abolished,
- 3) Their "cutcheries" (courts) brought under the supervision of a Collector
- 4) Zamindars lost their power to organise local justice and the local police.
- 5) The collectorate emerged as an alternative centre of authority
- 6) At the time of rent collection, an officer of the zamindar, usually the amlah, came around to the village.

- 7) Rich ryots and village headmen – jotedars and mandals – were only too happy to see the zamindar in trouble.
- 8) Zamindars could prosecute defaulters, the judicial process was long drawn.

The rise of the jotedars

- ➔ Jotedars were rich peasants.(In some places they were called haoladars, elsewhere they were known as gantidars or mandals)
- ➔ In Francis Buchanan's survey of the Dinajpur district in North Bengal described jotedars.
- ➔ By the early 19th century, jotedars had acquired vast areas of land
- ➔ They controlled local trade , money lending, exercised power over the poorer cultivators
- ➔ A large part of their land was cultivated through sharecroppers (adhiyars or bargadars) who brought their own ploughs, laboured in the field, and handed over half the produce to the jotedars after the harvest.
- ➔ Unlike zamindars who often lived in urban areas, jotedars were located in the villages and exercised direct control over a considerable section of poor villagers.
- ➔ They fiercely resisted efforts by zamindars to increase the jama of the village, prevented zamindari officials from executing their duties, mobilised ryots who were dependent on them, and deliberately delayed payments of revenue to the zamindar.
- ➔ In fact, when the estates of the zamindars were auctioned for failure to make revenue payment, jotedars were often amongst the purchasers.



The zamindars resist

Resistance of zamindars against permanent settlement

Two strategies of Zamindars

- (1) **Fictitious sale:** was one strategy of zamindars resistance. (See example of Raja of Bardwan) Between 1793 and 1801 four big zamindaris of Bengal, including Burdwan, made benami purchases that collectively yielded as much as Rs 30 lakh. Of the total sales at the auctions, over 15 per cent were fictitious.
 - (2) **Attacking outsiders :-** When people from outside the zamindari bought an estate at an auction, they could not always take possession. At times their agents would be attacked by lathiyals of the former zamindar. Sometimes even the ryots resisted the entry of outsiders.
- ➔ By the beginning of the 19th century the depression in prices was over. the zamindar's power over the villages was strengthened.
 - ➔ It was only during the Great Depression of the 1930s that they finally collapsed and the jotedars consolidated their power in the countryside
 - ➔ **Benami**, literally anonymous, is a term used in Hindi and several other Indian languages for transactions made in the name of a fictitious or relatively insignificant person, whereas the real beneficiary remains unnamed
 - ➔ **Lathyal**, literally one who wields the lathi or stick, functioned as a strongman of the zamindar

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Monopoly of of English East India Company opposed by many groups in Britain

- Monopoly of EEIC in India over trade was opposed by other traders industrialists and many political groups in Britain
- Company misrule and maladministration was hotly debated in Britain
- They demanded revocation of royal charter and controll of EEIC
- In 1773 Regulating Act passed by the British Parliament to regulate the activities of the East India Company
- British government appointed committees to enquire into the affairs of the Company
- It forced the Company to produce regular reports on the administration of India
- The Fifth Report was one such report produced by a Select Committee

The Fifth Report 1813

- ➔ The fifth report is a report that was submitted to the British Parliament in 1813 by EEIC.
- ➔ It was the fifth of a series of reports on the administration and activities of the East India Company in India.
- ➔ It ran into 1002 pages, of which over 800 pages were appendices that reproduced petitions of zamindars and ryots, reports of collectors from different districts, statistical tables on revenue returns, and notes on the revenue and judicial administration of Bengal and Madras (present-day Tamil Nadu) written by officials.
- ➔ The evidence contained in the Fifth Report as a source of history is invaluable.
- ➔ Researchers have carefully examined the archives of various Bengal zamindars and the local records of the districts to write about the history of colonial rule in rural Bengal.

The Hoe and the Plough

Hoe (Tool of Paharias symbolising shifting cultivation)

A hoe is an ancient hand tool used to shape soil, remove weeds, clear soil, and harvest root crop

Plough (tool of Santhals symbolising settled cultivation)

A plough is a farm tool for loosening or turning the soil before sowing seed or planting

Francis Buchanan

- ➔ Francis Buchanan was a physician
- ➔ He came to India and served in the Bengal Medical Service (from 1794 to 1815).
- ➔ He was surgeon to the Governor-General of India, Lord Wellesley.
- ➔ During his stay in Calcutta (present-day Kolkata), he organised a zoo that became the Calcutta Alipore Zoo
- ➔ He was also in charge of the Botanical Gardens for a short period.
- ➔ On the request of the Government of Bengal, he undertook detailed surveys of the areas under the jurisdiction of the British East India Company.
- ➔ In 1815 he fell ill and returned to England.
- ➔ Upon his mother's death, he inherited her property and assumed her family name Hamilton.
- ➔ So he is often called Buchanan-Hamilton.

The accounts of Buchanan

- ➔ He was an employee of the British East India Company.
- ➔ His journeys were not simply inspired by the love of landscape and the desire to discover the unknown.
- ➔ He marched everywhere with a large army of people – draughtsmen, surveyors, palanquin bearers, coolies.
- ➔ The costs of the travels were borne by the East India Company since it needed the information that Buchanan was expected to collect.
- ➔ British looked for natural resources it could control and exploit.
- ➔ It surveyed landscapes and revenue sources, organised voyages of discovery, and sent its geologists and geographers, its botanists and medical men to collect information.
- ➔ Buchanan, undoubtedly an extraordinary observer
- ➔ Everywhere Buchanan went, he obsessively observed the stones and rocks and the different strata and layers of soil.
- ➔ He searched for minerals and stones that were commercially valuable, he recorded all signs of iron ore and mica, granite and saltpetre.
- ➔ He carefully observed local practices of salt-making and iron- ore-mining.
- ➔ When Buchanan wrote about a landscape, he most often described not just what he saw, what the landscape was like, but also how it could be transformed and made more productive – what crops could be cultivated, which trees cut down, and which ones grown.
- ➔ And we must remember that his vision and his priorities were different from those of the local inhabitants
- ➔ His assessment of what was necessary was shaped by the commercial concerns of the Company and modern Western notions of what constituted progress.
- ➔ He was inevitably critical of the lifestyles of forest dwellers and felt that forests had to be turned into agricultural lands.

Buchanan and hills of Rajmahal

- ➔ In the early nineteenth century, Buchanan travelled through the Rajmahal hills. (in present day Jharkand)
- ➔ From his description the hills impenetrable, a zone where few travellers ventured, an area that signified danger.
- ➔ Wherever he went, people were hostile, apprehensive of officials and unwilling to talk to them.
- ➔ In many instances they deserted their villages and absconded.
- ➔ Buchanan's journal gives us tantalising glimpses of these hill folk in the early nineteenth century.
- ➔ His journal was written as a diary of places he visited, people he encountered, and practices he saw.

Paharias in Rajmahal hills

- ➔ Paharias lived around the Rajmahal hills, subsisting on forest produce and practising shifting cultivation.
- ➔ They cleared patches of forest by cutting bushes and burning the undergrowth.
- ➔ On these patches, enriched by the potash from the ash, the Paharias grew a variety of pulses and millets for consumption.
- ➔ They scratched the ground lightly with hoes, cultivated the cleared land for a few years, then left it fallow so that it could recover its fertility, and moved to a new area.
- ➔ From the forests they collected mahua (a flower) for food, silk cocoons and resin for sale, and wood for charcoal production.
- ➔ The life of the Paharias – as hunters, shifting cultivators, food gatherers, charcoal producers, silkworm rearers – was thus intimately connected to the forest.
- ➔ They lived in huts within tamarind groves, and rested in the shade of mango trees.
- ➔ They considered the entire region as their land

- ➔ Their chiefs maintained the unity of the group, settled disputes, and led the tribe
- ➔ With their base in the hills, the Paharias regularly raided the plains where settled agriculturists lived.
- ➔ These raids were necessary for survival, particularly in years of scarcity
- ➔ The zamindars on the plains had to often purchase peace by paying a regular tribute to the hill chiefs.
- ➔ Traders similarly gave a small amount to the hill folk for permission to use the passes controlled by them.
- ➔ Once the toll was paid, the Paharia chiefs protected the traders, ensuring that their goods were not plundered by anyone.

Impact of colonialism on Paharias

- ➔ In the last decades of the 18th century British encouraged settled agriculture in Rajmahal hills
- ➔ The British encouraged forest clearance, and zamindars and jotedars turned uncultivated lands into rice fields.
- ➔ To the British, extension of settled agriculture was necessary to enlarge the sources of land revenue, produce crops for export, and establish the basis of a settled, ordered society.
- ➔ British saw forest people as savage, unruly, primitive, and difficult to govern.

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Conflict between Hoe and plough

- ➔ As settled agriculture expanded, the area under forests and pastures contracted.
- ➔ This sharpened the conflict between hill folk and settled cultivators.
- ➔ The Paharias began to raid settled villages carrying away food grains and cattle.
- ➔ In the 1770s the British started hunting the Paharias down and killing them.

- ➔ In 1780s, Augustus Cleveland, the Collector of Bhagalpur, proposed a policy of pacification.
- ➔ Paharia chiefs were given an annual allowance and made responsible for the proper conduct of their men.
- ➔ Many Paharia chiefs refused the allowances (those who accepted, most often lost authority within the community).
- ➔ The Paharias withdrew deep into the mountains, insulating themselves from hostile forces, and carrying on a war with outsiders.
- ➔ So when Buchanan travelled through the region in the winter of 1810 -11 the Paharias naturally viewed him with suspicion and distrust.
- ➔ Santhals (settled cultivators) were pouring into the area, clearing forests, cutting down timber, ploughing land and growing rice and cotton.
- ➔ As the lower hills were taken over by Santhal settlers, the Paharias receded deeper into the Rajmahal hills.
- ➔ The battle between the hoe and the plough was a long one.

The Santhals: Pioneer settlers

Buchanan wrote:

Santhals are very clever in clearing new lands, but live meanly.

Their huts have no fence, and the walls are made of small sticks placed upright, close together and plastered within with clay. They are small and slovenly, and too flat-roofed, with very little arch

- ➔ Santhals were settled cultivators near Rajmahal hills
- ➔ At the end of 1810, Buchanan crossed Ganjuria Pahar, in Rajmahal ranges, passed through the rocky country beyond, and reached a village.
- ➔ Buchanan found that the frontiers of cultivation here had been extended by the Santhals.
- ➔ Santhals moved into this area around 1800, displaced the Paharias who lived on these lower slopes, cleared the forests and settled the land.

How did the Santhals reach the Rajmahal hills?

- ➔ The Santhals had begun to come into Bengal around the 1780s.
- ➔ Zamindars hired them , and British officials invited them to settle in the Jangal Mahals.
- ➔ Having failed to subdue the Paharias and transform them into settled agriculturists, the British turned to the Santhals.
- ➔ The Paharias refused to cut forests, resisted touching the plough
- ➔ The Santhals, were ideal settlers, clearing forests and ploughing the land with vigour.
- ➔ The Santhals were given land and persuaded to settle in the foothills of Rajmahal

Damin-i-Koh (the land of the Santhals)

- ➔ By 1832 a large area of land was demarcated as Damin-i-Koh (the land of the Santhals)
- ➔ The territory was surveyed and mapped.
- ➔ Enclosed with boundary pillars, it was separated from both the world of the settled agriculturists of the plains and the Paharias of the hills.
- ➔ After the demarcation of Damin-i-Koh, Santhal settlements expanded rapidly.
- ➔ From 40 Santhal villages in the area in 1838, as many as 1,473 villages had come up by 1851.
- ➔ Over the same period, the Santhal population increased from a mere 3,000 to over 82,000.
- ➔ When the Santhals settled on the peripheries of the Rajmahal hills, the Paharias lost their livelihood
- ➔ Fertile soils became inaccessible to Paharias
- ➔ Being part of the Damin-i-ko the Paharias could not effectively sustain their mode of cultivation.
- ➔ When the forests of the region were cleared for cultivation the hunters amongst them also faced problems.

Santhal Revolt (1855-56)

- ➔ Santhal revolted against zamindars, moneylenders and the colonial state in 1855-56
- ➔ Sidhu Manjhi, was the leader of the Santhal rebellion

➔ Causes of Santhal revolt

1. The British government was levying heavy taxes on the land that the Santhals had cleared
2. Moneylenders (dikus) were charging them high rates of interest and taking over the land when debts remained unpaid
3. Zamindars were asserting control over the Damin-i-ko area.

➔ Results of Santhal revolt

1. The rebellion was crushed, the region was searched, suspects were picked up, and villages set on fire.
2. Images of the burning villages were shown to the public in England
3. Once again as a demonstration of the might of the British and their ability to crush rebellion and impose colonial order.
4. The rebellion changed the British perception of the Santhals
5. It was after the Santhal Revolt (1855-56) that the Santhal Pargana was created, carving out 5,500 square miles from the districts of Bhagalpur and Birbhum.
6. The colonial state hoped that by creating a new territory for the Santhals and imposing some special laws within it, the Santhals could be conciliated

The Bombay Deccan

The Deccan countryside and about agrarian changes under colonial rule

A Revolt in the Countryside

- ➔ How Colonialism affected in the countryside in the Bombay Deccan.
- ➔ One way of exploring such changes is by focusing on a peasant revolt.
- ➔ Through the nineteenth century, peasants in various parts of India rose in revolt against moneylenders and grain dealers.
- ➔ One such revolt occurred in 1875 in the Deccan.

The Deccan Revolt 1875

Account books are burnt

- ➔ The peasant revolt began at Supa, a large village in Poona (present-day Pune) district.
- ➔ It was a market centre where many shopkeepers and moneylenders lived.
- ➔ On 12 May 1875, ryots attacked the shopkeepers, demanding their bahi khatas (account books) and debt bonds.
- ➔ They burnt the khatas, looted grain shops, and in some cases set fire to the houses of sahukars.
- ➔ From Poona the revolt spread to Ahmednagar.

- ➔ Then over the next two months it spread even further, over an area of 6,500 square km.
- ➔ More than thirty villages were affected.
- ➔ Everywhere the pattern was the same: sahuks were attacked, account books burnt and debt bonds destroyed. (A sahuks was someone who acted as both a moneylender and a trader)
- ➔ Terrified of peasant attacks, the sahuks fled the villages, very often leaving their property and belongings behind.
- ➔ Troops were quickly called in; 951 people were arrested, and many convicted.
- ➔ But it took several months to bring the countryside under control.

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Why the burning of bonds and deeds?

Why this revolt?

A new revenue system - Ryotwar settlement in Bombay Deccan

Why not The Permanent Settlement was extended to Bombay Deccan

- 1) One reason was that after 1810, agricultural prices rose. Since the revenue demand was fixed under the Permanent Settlement, the colonial state could not claim any share of this enhanced income.
- 2) By the 1820s, the economist David Ricardo was a celebrated figure in England. Colonial officials had learnt Ricardian ideas. According to Ricardian ideas, a landowner should have a claim only to the “average rent” that prevailed at a given time. When the land yielded more than this “average rent”, the landowner had a surplus that the state needed to tax. If tax was not levied, cultivators were likely to turn into rentiers, and their surplus income was unlikely to be productively invested in the improvement of the land.

Rentier is a term used to designate people who live on rental income from property

The Ryotwari settlement

- ➔ The revenue system that was introduced in the Bombay Deccan came to be known as the ryotwari settlement.
- ➔ Unlike the Bengal system, the revenue was directly settled with the ryot.
- ➔ The average income from different types of soil was estimated, the revenue-paying capacity of the ryot was assessed and a proportion of it fixed as the share of the state.
- ➔ The lands were resurveyed every 30 years and the revenue rates increased.
- ➔ Therefore the revenue demand was no longer permanent.

Revenue demand and peasant debt under ryotwari settlement

- ➔ The revenue that was demanded was high
- ➔ When rains failed and harvests were poor, peasants found it impossible to pay the revenue.
- ➔ When someone failed to pay, his crops were seized and a fine was imposed on the whole village.
- ➔ Prices of agricultural products fell sharply after 1832 and did not recover for over a decade and a half.
- ➔ The countryside was devastated by a famine that struck in the years 1832-34.
- ➔ One- third of the cattle of the Deccan were killed, and half the human population died.
- ➔ Cultivators borrowed. But once a loan was taken, the ryot found it difficult to pay it back.
- ➔ As debt mounted, and loans remained unpaid, peasants' dependence on moneylenders increased.
- ➔ They now needed loans even to buy their everyday needs and meet their production expenditure.
- ➔ Many British officials had begun to realise that the settlements of the 1820s had been harsh.

- ➔ So the revenue demand was moderated to encourage peasants to expand cultivation.
- ➔ After 1845 agricultural prices recovered steadily.
- ➔ Cultivators were now extending their acreage, moving into new areas, and transforming pastureland into cultivated fields.
- ➔ But to expand cultivation peasants needed more ploughs and cattle.
- ➔ They needed money to buy seeds and land.
- ➔ For all this they had to turn once again to moneylenders for loans.
- ➔ This atmosphere led to peasant revolt of 1875 and burning of account books

Then came the cotton boom (cotton boom in Bombay Deccan)

- ➔ In 1857 the Cotton Supply Association was founded in Britain
- ➔ In 1859 the Manchester Cotton Company was formed.
- ➔ Their objective was “to encourage cotton production in every part of the world suited for its growth”.
- ➔ When the American Civil War broke out in 1861, a wave of panic spread through cotton circles in Britain.
- ➔ Raw cotton imports from America fell to less than three per cent of the normal
- ➔ Frantic messages were sent to India and elsewhere to increase cotton exports to Britain.
- ➔ In Bombay, cotton merchants visited the cotton districts to assess supplies and encourage cultivation.
- ➔ As cotton prices soared export merchants in Bombay were keen to secure as much cotton as possible to meet the British demand.
- ➔ So they gave advances to urban sahuks who in turn extended credit to those rural moneylenders who promised to secure the produce.
- ➔ When there is a boom in the market credit flows easily, for those who give out loans feel secure about recovering their money.

- ➔ The ryots in the Deccan villages suddenly found access to seemingly limitless credit.
- ➔ They were being given Rs 100 as advance for every acre they planted with cotton.
- ➔ While the American crisis continued, cotton production in the Bombay Deccan expanded.
- ➔ By 1862 over 90 per cent of cotton imports into Britain were coming from India.

Credit dries up

- ➔ By 1865 as the Civil War ended, cotton production in America revived and Indian cotton exports to Britain steadily declined.
- ➔ Export merchants and sahuikars in Maharashtra were no longer keen on extending long-term credit.
- ➔ While credit dried up, the revenue demand increased from 50 to 100 per cent.
- ➔ Peasants again they had to turn to the moneylender.
- ➔ But the moneylender now refused loans.
- ➔ He no longer had confidence in the ryots' capacity to repay

The experience of injustice

- ➔ The refusal of moneylenders to extend loans enraged the ryots.
- ➔ Ryots experienced an act of injustice from moneylenders
- ➔ Moneylenders were insensitive to their plight of ryots
- ➔ The moneylenders were violating the customary norms of the countryside.
- ➔ One general norm was that the interest charged could not be more than the principal.
- ➔ Under colonial rule this norm broke down.
- ➔ In one of the many cases investigated by the Deccan Riots Commission, the moneylender had charged over Rs 2,000 as interest on a loan of Rs 100.

- ➔ In petition after petition, ryots complained of the injustice of such exactions and the violation of custom.
- ➔ The ryots came to see the moneylender as devious and deceitful.
- ➔ In 1859 the British passed a **Limitation Law** that stated that the loan bonds signed between moneylenders and ryots would have validity for only three years.
- ➔ This law was meant to check the accumulation of interest over time.
- ➔ The moneylender, however, turned the law around, forcing the ryot to sign a new bond every three years.
- ➔ When a new bond was signed, the unpaid balance – that is, the original loan and the accumulated interest – was entered as the principal on which a new set of interest charges was calculated.
- ➔ Moneylenders refused to give receipts when loans were repaid, entered fictitious figures in bonds, acquired the peasants' harvest at low prices, and ultimately took over peasants' property.
- ➔ Deeds and bonds appeared as symbols of the new oppressive system.
- ➔ **Deeds of hire :-** When debts mounted the peasant was unable to pay back the loan to the moneylender. He had no option but to give over all his possessions – land, carts, and animals – to the moneylender. But without animals he could not continue to cultivate. So he took land on rent and animals on hire. He now had to pay for the animals which had originally belonged to him. He had to sign a deed of hire stating very clearly that these animals and carts did not belong to him. In cases of conflict, these deeds could be enforced through the court

The Deccan Riots Commission 1878

- ➔ The Government of India, worried by the memory of 1857, pressurised the Government of Bombay to set up a commission of enquiry to investigate into the causes of the riots.
- ➔ The commission produced a report that was presented to the British Parliament in 1878.
- ➔ This report, referred to as the Deccan Riots Report, provides historians with a range of sources for the study of the riot.
- ➔ The commission held enquiries in the districts where the riots spread, recorded statements of ryots, sahuikars and eyewitnesses, compiled statistical data on revenue rates, prices and interest rates in different regions, and collated the reports sent by district collectors

So why the burning of bonds and deeds?

Factors led to The Deccan Revolt 1875

- 1) Ryotwary settlement
- 2) High revenue demand
- 3) Peasant debt
- 4) Cotton boom and availability of credit or loan
- 5) Credit dried up as cotton boom disappeared
- 6) Experience of injustice from moneylenders

TIMELINE	
1765	English East India Company acquires Diwani of Bengal
1773	Regulating Act passed by the British Parliament to regulate the activities of the East India Company
1793	Permanent Settlement in Bengal
1800s	Santhals begin to come to the Rajmahal hills and settle there
1818	First revenue settlement in the Bombay Deccan
1820s	Agricultural prices begin to fall
1840s-50s	A slow process of agrarian expansion in the Bombay Deccan
1855-56	Santhal rebellion
1861	Cotton boom begins
1875	<i>Ryots</i> in Deccan villages rebel