

Bengal

It is here that the earliest attempts were made to reorder rural society and establish a new regime of land rights and a new revenue system.

- ♣ The **Permanent Settlement** had come into operation in 1793. The East India Company had fixed the revenue that each zamindar had to pay. The estates (**mahals**) of those who failed to pay were to be auctioned to recover the revenue.
- ♣ 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.
- ♣ Over 75 per cent of the zamindaris changed hands after the Permanent Settlement.

In introducing the Permanent Settlement, British officials hoped to resolve the problems they had been facing since the conquest of Bengal. By the 1770s, the rural economy in Bengal was in crisis, with recurrent famines and declining agricultural output. Officials felt that agriculture, trade and the revenue resources of the state could all be developed by encouraging **investment** in agriculture. This could be done by **securing rights of property and permanently fixing the rates of revenue demand**. If the revenue demand of the state was permanently fixed, then the Company could look forward to a regular flow of revenue, while entrepreneurs could feel sure of earning a profit from their investment, since the state would not siphon it off by increasing its claim. The process, officials hoped, would lead to the emergence of a class of yeomen farmers and rich landowners who would have the capital and enterprise to improve agriculture. Nurtured by the British, this class would also be loyal to the Company.

The Permanent Settlement was 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.

In the early decades after the Permanent Settlement, however, zamindars regularly failed to pay the revenue demand. Reasons:

1. The initial demands were very high, as it was felt that if the demand was fixed for all time to come, the Company would never be able to claim a share of increased income from land when prices rose and cultivation expanded. To minimise this anticipated loss, the Company pegged the revenue demand high, arguing that the burden on zamindars would gradually decline as agricultural production expanded and prices rose.
2. This high demand was imposed in the 1790s, a time when the prices of agricultural produce were depressed, making it difficult for the ryots to pay their dues to the zamindar.
3. The revenue was invariable, regardless of the harvest, and had to be paid punctually. In fact, according to the **Sunset Law**, if payment did not come in by sunset of the specified date, the zamindari was liable to be auctioned.
4. The Permanent Settlement initially limited the power of the zamindar to collect rent from the ryot and manage his zamindari. They could therefore not easily assert their power over the ryots. They could prosecute defaulters, but the judicial process was long drawn.
5. Sometimes bad harvests and low prices made payment of dues difficult for the ryots. At other times ryots deliberately delayed payment. Rich ryots and village headmen – **jotedars and mandals** – were only too happy to see the zamindar in trouble.

The PS was rarely extended to any region beyond Bengal. One reason was that after 1810, agricultural prices rose, increasing the value of harvest produce, and enlarging the income of the Bengal zamindars. Since the revenue demand was fixed under the PS, the colonial state could not claim any share of this enhanced income. Keen on expanding its financial resources, the colonial government had to think of ways to maximise its land revenue. So in territories annexed in the 19th century, temporary revenue settlements were made.

The rise of the jotedars

1. By the early 19th century, jotedars (rich peasants) had acquired vast areas of land – sometimes as much as several thousand acres.
2. They controlled **local trade** as well as **moneylending**, exercising **immense power** over the poorer cultivators of the region.
3. 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.
4. Within the villages, the power of jotedars was more effective than that of zamindars. 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.
5. 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.
6. In fact, when the estates of the zamindars were auctioned for failure to make revenue payment, jotedars were often amongst the purchasers.
7. The jotedars were most powerful in North Bengal, although rich peasants and village headmen were emerging as commanding figures in the countryside in other parts of Bengal as well.
8. In some places they were called **haoladars**, elsewhere they were known as **gantidars or mandals**.

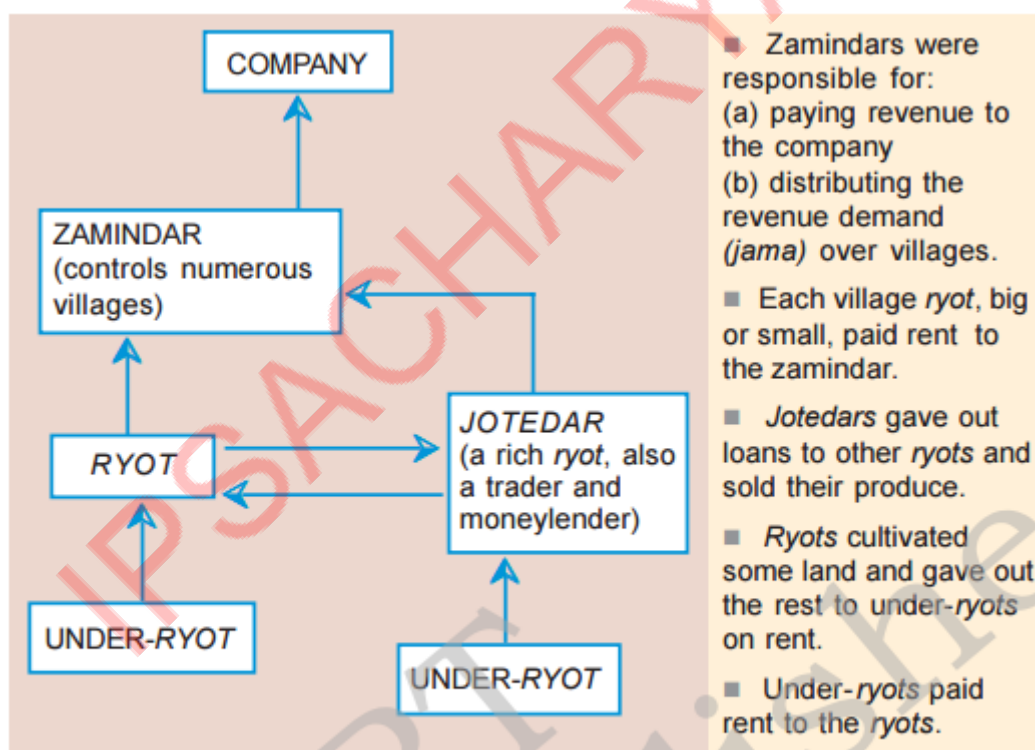


Fig. 10.5
Power in rural Bengal

The Fifth Report

1. It was the fifth of a series of reports on the administration and activities of the East India Company in India.
2. It was submitted to the British Parliament in 1813.
3. 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 written by officials.

4. It became the basis of intense parliamentary debates on the nature of the East India Company's rule in India.
5. With an intent to criticise the maladministration of the company, the Fifth Report exaggerated the collapse of traditional zamindari power, and also overestimated the scale on which zamindars were losing their land.

Many political groups in Britain argued that the conquest of Bengal was benefiting only the East India Company but not the British nation as a whole. Information about Company misrule and maladministration was hotly debated in Britain and incidents of the greed and corruption of Company officials were widely publicised in the press.

The British Parliament passed a series of Acts in the late 18th century to regulate and control Company rule in India. It forced the Company to produce regular reports on the administration of India and appointed committees to enquire into the affairs of the Company. The Fifth Report was one such report produced by a Select Committee.

In the hills of Rajmahal

People were hostile, apprehensive of officials and unwilling to talk to them. In many instances they deserted their villages and absconded.

In the late 18th century revenue records, these hill folk were known as **Paharias**. They lived around the Rajmahal hills, subsisting on forest produce and practising shifting cultivation.

The life of the Paharias was intimately connected to the forest. They considered the entire region as their land, the basis of their identity as well as survival; and they resisted the intrusion of outsiders. Their chiefs maintained the unity of the group, settled disputes, and led the tribe in battles with other tribes and plains people.

The British encouraged forest clearance, and zamindars and jotedars turned uncultivated lands into rice fields.

1. 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.
2. Britishers also associated forests with wildness, and saw forest people as savage, unruly, primitive, and difficult to govern.
3. So they felt that forests had to be cleared, settled agriculture established, and forest people tamed, civilised and persuaded to give up hunting and take to plough agriculture.

As settled agriculture expanded, the area under forests and pastures contracted. This sharpened the conflict between hill folk and settled cultivators. The former began to raid settled villages with increasing regularity, carrying away food grains and cattle. Exasperated colonial officials tried desperately to control and subdue the Paharias.

By the 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.
- They were expected to maintain order in their localities and discipline their own people.

Many Paharia chiefs refused the allowances. Those who accepted, most often lost authority within the community. Being in the pay of the colonial government, they came to be perceived as subordinate employees or stipendiary chiefs. Every white man appeared to represent a power that was destroying their way of life and means of survival, snatching away their control over their forests and lands.

Santhals

1. The Santhals had begun to come into Bengal around the 1780s. **Zamindars hired them** to reclaim land and expand cultivation, and **British officials invited them** to settle in the Jangal Mahals.
2. Having failed to subdue the Paharias and transform them into settled agriculturists, the British turned to the Santhals.
3. The Paharias refused to cut forests, resisted touching the plough, and continued to be turbulent. The Santhals, by contrast, appeared to be ideal settlers, clearing forests and ploughing the land with vigour.
4. The Santhals were given land and persuaded to settle in the foothills of Rajmahal. By 1832 a large area of land was demarcated as **Damin-i-Koh** -- the land of the Santhals.
5. The land grant to the Santhals stipulated that at least **one-tenth** of the area was to be cleared and cultivated within the first ten years. 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.
6. The Santhals, thus, gave up their earlier life of mobility and settled down, cultivating a range of commercial crops for the market, and dealing with traders and moneylenders.

The Santhals, however, soon found that the land they had brought under cultivation was slipping away from their hands.

1. The state 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, and
3. Zamindars were asserting control over the Damin area.

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.

DECCAN RIOTS

The movement began at Supa, a large village in **Poona** district. It was a market centre where many shopkeepers and moneylenders lived. On **12 May 1875**, ryots from surrounding rural areas gathered and 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 sahumars.

From Poona the revolt spread to **Ahmednagar**. Then over the next two months it spread even further.

Everywhere the pattern was the same: sahumars were attacked, account books burnt and debt bonds destroyed.

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.

Causes of failure:

- The revenue that was demanded was so high that in many places peasants deserted their villages and migrated to new regions.
- In areas of poor soil and fluctuating rainfall the problem was particularly acute. When rains failed and harvests were poor, peasants found it impossible to pay the revenue.

Causes for the riot:

1. The collectors in charge of revenue collection were keen on demonstrating their efficiency and pleasing their superiors. So they went about **extracting payment with utmost severity**. When someone failed to pay, his crops were seized and a fine was imposed on the whole village. By the 1830s the problem became more severe.
2. **Prices of agricultural products** fell sharply after 1832 and did not recover for over a decade and a half. This meant a further decline in peasants' income.
3. At the same time 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.
4. 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. By the 1840s, officials were finding evidence of alarming levels of peasant indebtedness everywhere.
5. By the mid-1840s there were signs of an economic recovery of sorts. 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. 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.
6. In the new settlement, the demand was increased dramatically: from 50 to 100 per cent. The ryots turned to moneylenders for loans, but were refused. The refusal of moneylenders to extend loans enraged the ryots because moneylenders were violating the customary norms of the countryside.

One general norm was that the interest charged could not be more than the principal. This was meant to limit the moneylender's exactions and defined what could be counted as "fair interest".

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.

The Revolt of 1857

Proclamations in Hindi, Urdu and Persian were put up in the cities calling upon the population, both Hindus and Muslims, to unite, rise and exterminate the firangis.

When ordinary people began joining the revolt, the targets of attack widened. In major towns like Lucknow, Kanpur and Bareilly, moneylenders and the rich also became the objects of rebel wrath. Peasants not only saw them as oppressors but also as allies of the British.

The reason for the similarity in the pattern of the revolt in different places lay partly in its planning and coordination. There was communication between the sepoy lines of various cantonments.

Panchayats were a nightly occurrence in the Kanpur sepoy lines. This suggests that some of the decisions were taken collectively. The sepoys were the makers of their own rebellion.

Often the message of rebellion was carried by ordinary men and women and in places by religious men too.

Elsewhere, local leaders emerged, urging peasants, zamindars and tribals to revolt:

- **Shah Mal** mobilised the villagers of pargana Barout in Uttar Pradesh;
- **Gonoo**, a tribal cultivator of Singhbhum in Chotanagpur, became a rebel leader of the Kol tribals of the region.

As Governor General, **Hardinge** attempted to modernise the equipment of the army. The Enfield rifles that were introduced initially used the greased cartridges the sepoy rebelled against.

Under the leadership of **Governor General Lord William Bentinck**, the British adopted policies aimed at “reforming” Indian society by introducing Western education, Western ideas and Western institutions. With the cooperation of sections of Indian society they set up English-medium schools, colleges and universities which taught Western sciences and the liberal arts. The British established laws to abolish customs like sati (1829) and to permit the remarriage of Hindu widows.

Awadh

The **Subsidiary Alliance** had been imposed on Awadh in 1801. By the terms of this alliance, the Nawab had to:

1. disband his military force,
2. allow the British to position their troops within the kingdom, and
3. act in accordance with the advice of the British Resident who was now to be attached to the court.

Deprived of his armed forces, the Nawab became increasingly dependent on the British to maintain law and order within the kingdom. He could no longer assert control over the rebellious chiefs and taluqdars.

Subsidiary Alliance was a system devised by **Lord Wellesley** in 1798. All those who entered into such an alliance with the British had to accept certain terms and conditions:

- (a) The British would be responsible for protecting their ally from external and internal threats to their power.
- (b) In the territory of the ally, a British armed contingent would be stationed.
- (c) The ally would have to provide the resources for maintaining this contingent.
- (d) The ally could enter into agreements with other rulers or engage in warfare only with the permission of the British.

In the meantime the British became increasingly interested in **acquiring the territory of Awadh**. They felt that the soil there was good for producing indigo and cotton, and the region was ideally located to be developed into the principal market of Upper India.

Nawab Wajid Ali Shah was dethroned and exiled to Calcutta on the plea that the region was being misgoverned. The British government also wrongly assumed that Wajid Ali Shah was an unpopular ruler.

The removal of the Nawab led to the dissolution of the court and its culture. Thus a whole range of people – musicians, dancers, poets, artisans, cooks, retainers, administrative officials and so on – lost their livelihood.

Summary Settlement of 1856

1. The British were unwilling to tolerate the power of the taluqdars. Immediately after the annexation, the taluqdars were disarmed and their forts destroyed.
2. The British land revenue policy further undermined the position and authority of the taluqdars.
3. After annexation, the first British revenue settlement, known as **the Summary Settlement of 1856**, was based on the assumption that the taluqdars were interlopers with no permanent stakes in land: they had established their hold over land through force and fraud.
4. The Summary Settlement proceeded to remove the taluqdars wherever possible.

5. Figures show that in pre-British times, taluqdars had held 67 per cent of the total number of villages in Awadh; by the Summary Settlement this number had come down to 38 per cent.
6. The taluqdars of southern Awadh were the hardest hit and some lost more than half of the total number of villages they had previously held.

The vision of unity

- The rebel proclamations in 1857 repeatedly appealed to all sections of the population, irrespective of their caste and creed. Many of the proclamations were issued by Muslim princes or in their names but even these took care to address the sentiments of Hindus. The rebellion was seen as a war in which both Hindus and Muslims had equally to lose or gain.
- The ishtahars (notifications) issued by rebel leaders harked back to the pre-British Hindu-Muslim past and glorified the coexistence of different communities under the Mughal Empire.
- The proclamation that was issued under the name of Bahadur Shah appealed to the people to join the fight under the standards of both Muhammad and Mahavir.
- It was remarkable that during the uprising religious divisions between Hindus and Muslim were hardly noticeable despite British attempts to create such divisions.

Against the symbols of oppression

- The proclamations completely rejected everything associated with British rule or **firangi raj**.
- They condemned the British for the annexations they had carried out and the treaties they had broken.
- The British, the rebel leaders said, could not be trusted.
- The proclamations expressed the widespread fear that the British were bent on destroying the caste and religions of Hindus and Muslims and converting them to Christianity
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Qasbah and Ganj

- **Qasbah** is a small town in the countryside, often the seat of a local notable.
- **Ganj** refers to a small fixed market.
- Both qasbah and ganj dealt in cloth, fruit, vegetables and milk products.
- They provided these items for noble families and the army.

From the **late 19th century**, the British tried to raise money for administering towns through the systematic annual collection of **municipal taxes**. To avoid conflict they handed over some responsibilities to elected Indian representatives. Institutions like the municipal corporation with some popular representation were meant to administer essential services such as water supply, sewerage, road building and public health.

Census:

1. The **first all-India census** was attempted in **1872**. Thereafter, from **1881**, decennial (conducted every ten years) censuses became a regular feature.
2. The census commissioners devised **categories for classifying different sections** of the population. This classification was often **arbitrary** and failed to capture the fluid and overlapping identities of people.
3. Often people themselves refused to cooperate or gave evasive answers to the census officials.

Trend of urbanization:

1. After 1800, urbanisation in India was sluggish. All through the 19th century up to the first two decades of the 20th, the proportion of the urban population to the total population in India was extremely low and had remained stagnant.

2. 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**.
3. The introduction of railways in 1853 meant a change in the fortunes of towns. Economic activity gradually shifted away from traditional towns which were located along old routes and rivers. Railway towns like **Jamalpur, Waltair and Bareilly** developed.

Forts and region around it:

1. In Madras, **Fort St George**, in Calcutta **Fort William** and in Bombay **the Fort** marked out the areas of British settlement.
2. Indian merchants, artisans and other workers who had economic dealings with European merchants lived **outside these forts in settlements of their own**.
3. Thus, from the beginning there were separate quarters for Europeans and Indians, which came to be labelled in contemporary writings as the “**White Town**” and “**Black Town**” respectively. Once the British captured political power these racial distinctions became sharper.
4. After the 1850s, **cotton mills** were set up by Indian merchants and entrepreneurs in Bombay, and European-owned **jute mills** were established on the outskirts of Calcutta. This was the beginning of modern industrial development in India.
5. Although Calcutta, Bombay and Madras supplied raw materials for industry in England, and had emerged because of modern economic forces like capitalism, their economies were not primarily based on factory production. **The majority of the working population in these cities belonged to the tertiary sector.**
6. There were only two proper “industrial cities”:
 - a. **Kanpur**, specialising in leather, woollen and cotton textiles, and
 - b. **Jamshedpur**, specialising in steel.
7. India never became a modern industrialised country, since discriminatory colonial policies limited the levels of industrial development.

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”.

Pasture lands 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.

The first hill stations

The founding and settling of hill stations was initially connected with the needs of the British army.

1. **Simla** was founded during the course of the Gurkha War (1815-16);
2. The Anglo-Maratha War of 1818 led to British interest in **Mount Abu**; and
3. **Darjeeling** was wrested from the rulers of Sikkim in 1835.

Importance:

- Hill stations became **strategic places** for billeting troops, guarding frontiers and launching campaigns against enemy rulers.
- These hill stations were also developed as **sanitariums**, i.e., places where soldiers could be sent for rest and recovery from illnesses.
- 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.

- 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.

Madras:

1. The Company had first set up its trading activities in the port city of **Surat**. Subsequently the search for textiles brought British merchants to the east coast. In 1639 they constructed a trading post in **Madraspatam** (locally known as **Chenapattanam**).
2. 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.
3. **Chintadripet** was an area meant for weavers. **Washermanpet** was a colony of dyers and bleachers of cloth. **Royapuram** was a settlement for Christian boatmen who worked for the Company.
4. The **dubashes** were Indians who could speak two languages – the local language and English.
5. Telugu **Komatis** were a powerful commercial group that controlled the **grain trade** in the city.
6. **Paraiyars** and **Vanniyars** formed the labouring poor.

Calcutta: Lottery Committee (1817)

1. It carried on the work of town planning after Wellesley's departure, with the help of the government.
2. It was so named because funds for town improvement were raised through public lotteries.
3. In other words, in the early decades of the 19th century raising funds for the city was still thought to be the responsibility of public-minded citizens and not exclusively that of the government.
4. The Committee commissioned a **new map of the city** so as to get a comprehensive picture of Calcutta.
5. Among the Committee's major activities was **road building** in the Indian part of the city and **clearing the river bank of "encroachments"**.
6. 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

1. Bombay was initially seven islands.
2. As the population grew, the islands were joined to create more space and they gradually fused into one big city.
3. Bombay was the commercial capital of colonial India.
4. It was the centre of international trade.
5. By the end of the 19th century, half the imports and exports of India passed through Bombay.
6. One important item of this trade was **opium** that the EIC exported to China.
7. Indian merchants and middlemen supplied and participated in this trade and they helped integrate Bombay's economy directly to **Malwa, Rajasthan** and **Sind** where opium was grown.
8. This collaboration with the Company was profitable and led to the growth of an **Indian capitalist class**.

When the **American Civil War started in 1861**, cotton from the American South stopped coming into the international market. This led to an upsurge of demand for Indian cotton, grown primarily in the Deccan.

In **1869 the Suez Canal was opened** and this further strengthened Bombay's links with the world economy.

The Bombay government and Indian merchants used this opportunity to declare Bombay **Urbs Prima in Indis**, a Latin phrase meaning the most important city of India.

The architectural style was usually European. This importation of European styles reflected the imperial vision in several ways.

1. First, it expressed the British desire to create a familiar landscape in an alien country, and thus to feel at home in the colony.
2. Second, the British felt that European styles would best symbolise their superiority, authority and power.
3. Third, they thought that buildings that looked European would mark out the difference and distance between the colonial masters and their Indian subjects.

For public buildings, three broad architectural styles were used:

1. Neo-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 (Fig. 12.24) was built in this style in 1833.

2. Graeco-Roman

- ♣ 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
- ♣ Elphinstone Circle (later named Horniman Circle after an English editor who courageously supported Indian nationalists)

3. 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 style was revived in the mid-19th 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.

4. Indo-Saracenic

- ♣ Towards the beginning of the twentieth century
- ♣ 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.

Freedom Struggle

The Defence of India Act 1915 was an emergency criminal law enacted by the Governor-General of India in 1915 with purpose of curtailing the nationalist and revolutionary activities during and in the aftermath of the First World War. The Defence of India act could be applied to any subject of the King. The passage of the act was supported unanimously by the non-official Indian members in the Viceroy's legislative council, and was seen as necessary to protect against British India from subversive nationalist violence.

The act was first applied during the First Lahore Conspiracy trial in the aftermath of the failed Ghadar Conspiracy of 1915, and was instrumental in crushing the Ghadar movement in Punjab and the Anushilan Samiti in Bengal.

However its widespread and indiscriminate use in stifling genuine political discourse made it deeply unpopular, and became increasingly reviled within India.

The extension of the law in the form of the Rowlatt Act after the end of World War I was opposed unanimously by the non-official Indian members of the Viceroy's council

Rowlatt Satyagrah:

During the First WW of 1914-18, the British had instituted censorship of the press and permitted detention without trial. Now, on the recommendation of a committee chaired by **Sir Sidney Rowlatt**, these tough measures were continued.

In response, Gandhiji called for a countrywide campaign against the "Rowlatt Act". In towns across **North** and **West** India, life came to a standstill, as shops shut down and schools closed in response to the bandh call. The protests were particularly intense in the Punjab, where many men had served on the British side in the War – expecting to be rewarded for their service. Instead they were given the Rowlatt Act. Gandhiji was detained while proceeding to the Punjab, even as prominent local Congressmen were arrested. The situation in the province grew progressively more tense, reaching a bloody climax in Amritsar in April 1919, when a British Brigadier ordered his troops to open fire on a nationalist meeting.

It was the Rowlatt Satyagraha that made Gandhiji a truly national leader. Emboldened by its success, Gandhiji called for a campaign of "non-cooperation" with British rule. Indians who wished colonialism to end were asked to stop attending schools, colleges and law courts, and not pay taxes. In sum, they were asked to adhere to a "**renunciation of (all) voluntary association with the (British) Government**". If non-cooperation was effectively carried out, said Gandhiji, India would win swaraj within a year. To further broaden the struggle he had joined hands with the Khilafat Movement that sought to restore the Caliphate.

What was the Khilafat Movement?

The Khilafat Movement, (1919-1920) was a movement of Indian Muslims, led by Muhammad Ali and Shaukat Ali, which demanded the following:

1. The Turkish Sultan or Khalifa must retain control over the Muslim sacred places in the erstwhile Ottoman empire;
2. The jazirat-ul-Arab (Arabia, Syria, Iraq, Palestine) must remain under Muslim sovereignty; and
3. The Khalifa must be left with sufficient territory to enable him to defend the Islamic faith.

The Congress supported the movement and Mahatma Gandhi sought to conjoin it to the Non-cooperation Movement. Gandhiji hoped that by coupling non-cooperation with Khilafat, India's two major religious communities, Hindus and Muslims, could collectively bring an end to colonial rule.

Impact of NCM and Khilafat Movements:

These movements unleashed a surge of popular action that was altogether unprecedented in colonial India.

1. **Students** stopped going to schools and colleges run by the government.
2. **Lawyers** refused to attend court.
3. The **working class** went on strike in many towns and cities: according to official figures, there were 396 strikes in 1921, involving 600,000 workers and a loss of seven million workdays.
4. **Hill tribes** in northern Andhra violated the forest laws.
5. **Farmers** in Awadh did not pay taxes.
6. **Peasants** in Kumaun refused to carry loads for colonial officials.

These protest movements were sometimes carried out in defiance of the local nationalist leadership. Peasants, workers, and others interpreted and acted upon the call to “non-cooperate” with colonial rule in ways that best suited their interests, rather than conform to the dictates laid down from above.

Non-cooperation became the name of an epoch in the life of India and of Gandhiji. Non-cooperation was negative enough to be peaceful but positive enough to be effective. It entailed denial, renunciation, and self-discipline. It was training for self-rule.

As a consequence of the NCM the British Raj was shaken to its foundations for the first time since the Revolt of 1857.

End of the NCM:

In February 1922, a group of peasants attacked and torched a police station in the hamlet of **Chauri Chaura**, in the United Provinces. Several constables perished in the conflagration. This act of violence prompted Gandhiji to call off the movement altogether.

Gandhiji himself was arrested in March 1922, and charged with sedition. The judge who presided over his trial, **Justice C.N. Broomfield**, sentence him to six years’ imprisonment.

Charkha:

He saw the charkha as a symbol of a human society that would not glorify machines and technology. The spinning wheel, moreover, could provide the poor with supplementary income and make them self-reliant.

He spent part of each day working on the charkha (spinning wheel), and encouraged other nationalists to do likewise.

The act of spinning allowed Gandhiji **to break the boundaries that prevailed within the traditional caste system**, between mental labour and manual labour.

Nationalism in the masses and industrialists

Gandhiji’s success in broadening the basis of nationalism was based on **careful organisation** apart from **mass mobilization**.

1. New branches of the Congress were set up in various parts of India.
2. A series of “Prajā Mandals” were established to promote the nationalist creed in the princely states.
3. Gandhiji encouraged the communication of the nationalist message in the mother tongue, rather than in the language of the rulers, English. Thus the **provincial committees of the Congress were based on linguistic regions**, rather than on the artificial boundaries of British India.

In these different ways nationalism was taken to the farthest corners of the country and embraced by social groups previously untouched by it.

Indian entrepreneurs were quick to recognise that, in a free India, the favours enjoyed by their British competitors would come to an end. Some of these entrepreneurs, such as **G.D. Birla**, **supported the national movement openly**; others did so tacitly.

Thus, among Gandhiji’s admirers were both poor peasants and rich industrialists, although the reasons why peasants followed Gandhiji were somewhat different from, and perhaps opposed to, the reasons of the industrialists.

Role of followers in Gandhian Nationalism

While Mahatma Gandhi's own role was vital, the growth of what we might call "Gandhian nationalism" also depended to a very substantial extent on his followers.

Between 1917 and 1922, a group of highly talented Indians attached themselves to Gandhiji. They included:

1. Mahadev Desai,
2. Vallabh Bhai Patel,
3. J.B. Kripalani,
4. Subhas Chandra Bose,
5. Abul Kalam Azad,
6. Jawaharlal Nehru,
7. Sarojini Naidu,
8. Govind Ballabh Pant and
9. C. Rajagopalachari.

Notably, these close associates of Gandhiji came from different regions as well as different religious traditions. In turn, they inspired countless other Indians to join the Congress and work for it.

Anti-Simon Movement

- In 1928, an all-India campaign was organised in opposition to the all-White Simon Commission, sent from England **to enquire into conditions in the colony**.
- **Gandhiji did not himself participate in this movement**, although he gave it his blessings, as he also did to a peasant satyagraha in Bardoli in the same year.

Nehru Report

1. The Nehru Report of 10 August, 1928 was a memorandum outlining a proposed new dominion status constitution for India, as an answer to Lord Birkenhead's challenge given to Indian politicians to produce an agreed constitution
2. It was prepared by a **committee of the All Parties Conference** chaired by Motilal Nehru with his son Jawaharlal acting as secretary.
3. There were **nine other members** in this committee, including two Muslims.
4. The final report was signed by Motilal Nehru, Ali Imam, Tej Bahadur Sapru, M.-S. Aney, Mangal Singh, Shuaib Qureshi, Subhas Chandra Bose, and G. R. Pradhan.
5. **Shuaib Qureshi** disagreed with some of the recommendations.
6. It contained a **Bill of Rights**

Nehru Report in 1928 was prepared by a committee of the All Parties Conference chaired by Motilal Nehru with his son Jawaharlal as secretary. This committee included Tej Bahadur Sapru, Subhash Chandra Bose, M. S. Aney, Mangal Singh, Ali Imam, Shuaib Qureshi and G.D. Pradhan as its members. Its important recommendations included following:

- Dominion status
- Rejection of separate electorates
- Linguistic provinces
- **19 fundamental rights**
- Responsible government at the centre and provinces
- Full protection to cultural and religious rights
- Complete dissociation of state and religious interests of Muslims.

The rejection by Indian leaders of the all-white Simon Commission led Lord Birkenhead, the Secretary of State for India to make a speech in the House of Lords in which he challenged the Indians to draft a Constitution implying that they could not produce one that would be widely acceptable among the leaders of the various Indian communities. Indians accepted the challenge of **Lord Birkenhead**.

Lahore Session

In the end of December 1929, the Congress held its annual session in the city of Lahore. The meeting was significant for two things:

1. The election of Jawaharlal Nehru as President, signifying the passing of the baton of leadership to the **younger generation**; and
2. The proclamation of commitment to “**Purna Swaraj**”, or complete independence. Now the pace of politics picked up once more.

26 January 1930

On this day, “**Independence Day**” was observed, with the national flag being hoisted in different venues, and patriotic songs being sung.

Gandhiji himself issued precise instructions as to how the day should be observed.

1. The declaration [of Independence] should be made by whole villages, whole cities even.
2. All the meetings should be held at the identical minute in all the places
3. The time of the meeting be advertised in the traditional way, by the beating of drums.
4. The celebrations would begin with the hoisting of the national flag.
5. The rest of the day would be spent “in doing some constructive work, whether it is **spinning**, or **service of ‘untouchables’**, or **re-union of Hindus and Mussalmans**, or **prohibition work**, or even all these.
6. Participants would **take a pledge** affirming that it was “the inalienable right of the Indian people, as of any other people, to have freedom and to enjoy the fruits of their toil”, and that “if any government deprives a people of these rights and oppresses them, the people have a further right to alter it or abolish it”.

Dandi March and CDM

In every Indian household, salt was indispensable; yet people were forbidden from making salt even for domestic use, compelling them to buy it from shops at a high price. The state monopoly over salt was deeply unpopular; by making it his target, Gandhiji hoped to mobilise a wider discontent against British rule.

Course of action

- ♣ The March started on 12 March 1930 from the Sabarmati Ashram.
- ♣ Meanwhile, parallel salt marches were being conducted in other parts of the country.
- ♣ As with Non-cooperation, apart from the officially sanctioned nationalist campaign, there were numerous other streams of protest.
 1. Across large parts of India, peasants breached the hated colonial forest laws that kept them and their cattle out of the woods in which they had once roamed freely.
 2. In some towns, factory workers went on strike
 3. Lawyers boycotted British courts
 4. Students refused to attend government-run educational institutions.
- ♣ As in 1920-22, now too Gandhiji’s call had encouraged Indians of all classes to make manifest their own discontent with colonial rule.
- ♣ The rulers responded by detaining the dissenters.

What Gandhiji asked during the march:

1. He called upon local officials to renounce government employment and join the freedom struggle.
2. He told the upper castes that if they wanted Swaraj, they must serve untouchables.
3. For Swaraj, Hindus, Muslims, Parsis and Sikhs will have to unite.

Importance of the Dandi March:

The Salt March was notable for at least three reasons:

1. First, it was this event that first brought Mahatma Gandhi to **world attention**. The march was widely covered by the European and American press.
2. Second, it was the first nationalist activity in which **women participated in large numbers**. The socialist activist **Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay** had persuaded Gandhiji not to restrict the protests to men alone. Kamaladevi was herself one of numerous women who courted arrest by breaking the salt or liquor laws.
3. Third, and perhaps most significant, it was the Salt March which forced upon the British the **realisation that their Raj would not last forever**, and that they would have to devolve some power to the Indians. To that end, the British government convened a series of "Round Table Conferences" in London. The first meeting was held in November 1930.

Gandhi-Irwin Pact

Gandhiji was released from jail in January 1931 and the following month had several **long** meetings with the Viceroy. These culminated in what was called the "Gandhi-Irwin Pact", by the terms of which:

1. Civil disobedience would be called off,
2. All prisoners would be released, and
3. Salt manufacture would be allowed along the coast.

The pact was criticised by radical nationalists, for Gandhiji was unable to obtain from the Viceroy a commitment to political independence for Indians; he could obtain merely an assurance of talks towards that possible end.

The Second RTC in London held in November 1931 was inconclusive, so Gandhiji returned to India and **resumed civil disobedience**. The new Viceroy, Lord Willingdon, was deeply unsympathetic to him.

1935 onwards:

1. In 1935, a new Government of India Act promised some form of representative government.
2. In 1937, in an election held on the basis of a restricted franchise, the Congress won a comprehensive victory.
3. Now **eight out of 11 provinces** had a Congress "Prime Minister", working under the supervision of a British Governor.
4. In the meeting with the Viceroy, **Lord Linlithgow**, in October 1939, the nature of India's involvement in the War was discussed. When negotiations with the Viceroy broke down, the Congress ministries resigned.
5. Through 1940 and 1941, the Congress organised a series of individual satyagrahas to pressure the rulers to promise freedom once the war had ended.

March 1940 onwards

In March 1940, the Muslim League passed a resolution demanding a measure of autonomy for the Muslim-majority areas of the subcontinent. The political landscape was now becoming complicated: it was no longer Indians versus the British; rather, it had become a **three-way struggle between the Congress, the Muslim League, and the British**.

At this time Britain had an **all-party government**, whose Labour members were sympathetic to Indian aspirations, but whose Conservative Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, was a diehard imperialist.

In the spring of 1942, Churchill was persuaded to send one of his ministers, Sir Stafford Cripps, to India to try and forge a compromise with Gandhiji and the Congress. Talks broke down, however, after the Congress insisted that if it was to help the British defend India from the Axis powers, then the Viceroy had first to appoint an Indian as the Defence Member of his Executive Council.

Quit India

1. Although Gandhiji was jailed at once, younger activists organised strikes and acts of sabotage all over the country.
2. Particularly active in the underground resistance were socialist members of the Congress, such as Jayaprakash Narayan.
3. In several districts, such as **Satara in the west** and **Medinipur in the east**, “independent” governments were proclaimed.
4. The British responded with much force, yet it took more than a year to suppress the rebellion.

“Quit India” was genuinely a mass movement.

1. It brought into its ambit hundreds of thousands of ordinary Indians.
2. It especially energised the young who, in very large numbers, left their colleges to go to jail.

However, while the Congress leaders languished in jail, Jinnah and his colleagues in the Muslim League worked patiently at expanding their influence. It was in these years that the League began to make a mark in the Punjab and Sind, provinces where it had previously had scarcely any presence.

After the war

1. Labour Government: In 1945, a Labour government came to power in Britain and committed itself to granting independence to India.
2. 1946 Provincial Elections: Early in 1946 fresh elections were held to the provincial legislatures. **The Congress swept the “General” category, but in the seats specifically reserved for Muslims the League won an overwhelming majority.** The political polarisation was complete.
3. Cabinet Mission: A **Cabinet Mission** sent in the **summer of 1946** failed to get the Congress and the League to agree on a federal system that would keep India together while allowing the provinces a degree of autonomy.
4. Direct Action Day: After the talks broke down, Jinnah called for a “**Direct Action Day**” to press the League’s demand for Pakistan. On **16 August 1946**, bloody riots broke out in Calcutta. The violence spread to rural Bengal, then to Bihar, and then across the country to the United Provinces and the Punjab.