

## **Ryotwari system**

Ryotwari system was one of the three principal methods of collecting revenue by Britishers in India. Though Imposed by Britishers but its origin was far earlier. It was introduced by Shershah Suri. He had measured and surveyed the entire land under cultivation of his area and fixed tax on per bigha according to three types of soil which are good, middle and low. Later this system was adopted by Akbar also. During British reign in India this system was imposed on Indians by Thomas Munro and Alexander Read in 1820. This system was mostly prevalent in southern India. Major areas of its introduction are Madras, Bombay, parts of Assam and Coorgh provinces of British India.

### **Key features of Ryotwari System**

1. In Ryotwari system the ownership rights of the land were given to the peasants i.e. the rights of the land were hereditary.
2. British Government would collect taxes directly from the peasants so that the involvement of middle man or zamindars would be nil.
3. The revenue rate of Ryotwari system was somewhere about 50% to 60% of the land under irrigation. The percentage depended upon how much yield a land can produce.
4. The Government settlement with the ryots was fixed for a period of thirty years. After that it was subject to re- assessment and re-settlement with new rules.
5. As long as the peasants paid revenue on time, they were not evicted from the land they were catering.
6. Every farmer was held responsible for paying direct revenue to the Government.
7. The farmers being the proprietor of the land could sell, mortgage or gift his land.
8. The peasants were annually presented the option of increasing or diminishing his holdings or of entirely abandoning it.
9. When the climate turned unfavorable and the production of yield became a difficult task, the government undertook proper reassessment of this area, this reassessment was undertaken to

determine the loss suffered by the citizens of that area and were accordingly granted remission for complete, or partial amount of produce.

10. Peasants would also receive assistance in difficult seasons, and were not held responsible for the payment of neighbours.
11. The revenue was fixed on the basis of the quality of the soil and nature of the crops. This was way better than the permanent settlement system where the revenue was fixed according to the will of the government where the common man's needs were not taken care of. Though the Government did not attempt at lowering of the tax yet the consideration of the fixation of the tax according to the quality of the lands came as the great respite to the farmers.

## **Disadvantages of ryotwari system**

1. Sometimes, it so happened that the farmers even after producing the crops could not sell them in the markets or even if they were able to sell the products, they would have to accept low prices. This settlement took toll the farmers and they resisted this system.
2. Money lenders imposed high interests rates and also cheated the peasants as the peasants were illiterate and could not read or write. The moneylenders took advantage of this for their own selfish motives. They told the peasant a different story and made them sign a different clause. This resulted in peasants being former in debt to the moneylenders. The vicious circle of loans and the interest rate would never stop engulfing the peasants and his family's well-being.
3. This system gives rise to another group of moneylenders who exploited peasants and exerted their superficial power over the peasants.
4. This cruelty and barbaric treatment of the peasants and their families for the money destroyed the peasants to the core. It instilled in them fear and the system crushed their revolting voices without any reason. Due to this treatment, farmers became

- depressed and suicide of farmers due to the pressure of repayment of money was a common happening. This destroyed the families also who were solely dependent on the male bread earner for money.
5. Even the cultivator was secure in terms of land proprietorship but the rigid system of collecting revenue put them on the mercy of money lenders.
  6. According to the government, they had brought an end to the zamindari system but Ryotwari was no less than zamindari. It was just that this policy was sickly twisted to look as if it was benefitting the farmers but in actual it was the government who was in a win-win situation. Peasants still had nobody listening to their grievances and fell in a deep pit hole of misery. Though the fall was slow and gradual at the start, yet it attained pace as the drip increased. The farmers were brutally affected by this system.
  7. According to this system government got fixed revenue in terms of money. It had no connection with the actual yield of the holding or the prevailing prices in the market.
  8. On papers it seemed that it was a flexible system but actually it was not. It pushed the peasants to utmost poverty. Being deprived of money they often paid off the land revenue by taking money from money lenders.
  9. The procedure of collection of land revenue was very strict and harsh.
  10. The government itself becomes a zamindar. The collecting officers were brutally exploiting the cultivators.

#### Impact of Ryotwari system

1. The increased cost of production and decreasing revenue did nothing to help them and eventually increased their losses.
2. The peasants were forced to grow commercial crops which led them to buy food grains at higher prices and sell the cash crops at low prices.
3. Also the poor could no longer revolt against the moneylenders i.e. the rich society as the rich society controlled their existence i.e. money which the poor owed the rich.

4. With cash payments of revenues the money-lending activity increased forcing the peasants to more
5. The land tenure system sharpened social differentiation which was already prevalent in the society. Rich will become more rich having all rights while the poor became more poor with no rights.
6. This system strengthened the British economy but shook the stability of Indian villagers. Belonging to an agrarian economy if the crop failed in any year the peasants suffered the most.

***For more info visit at [www.studytoday.net](http://www.studytoday.net)***