

## Permanent settlement

India is primarily an agrarian country. Most of the people in India depend on agriculture for their livelihood. Land tax is the main source of revenue for the kings from ages. In history also many barbaric kings exploited the common men by imposing unethical taxes.

The permanent settlement also known as the permanent settlement of Bengal was an agreement between east India Company and Bengali landlords to fix revenue to be raised from lands.

In 1765, the east India Company took control over Bengal, Bihar and some districts of Karnataka by acquiring Diwani. It decided to manage land revenue directly but though the expected revenue increased from the last year yet didn't match their expectation. They wanted to increase it for better profits. They wanted more revenue. So permanent settlement was introduced in Bengal and Bihar in 1793 by Lord Cornwallis.

### *Key features of permanent settlement*

1. According to permanent settlement; 'zamindar' would collect the revenue from peasants. The amount to be paid as revenue was fixed permanently by the company.
2. The rajas and taluqdars were considered as zamindars. The Zamindars had the right to sale and purchase land.
3. This was boon to the zamindars. The government had fixed the revenue without any consideration about the productivity of the land. They were only concerned with the money they wanted to expect out of farmers. This act may encourage the zamindars to invest more money to get more profits from the agricultural production. Since the revenue demanded from them would not increase as they had the rights of the land, they misused their powers to gain profits.
4. The company did not have any direct contact with the farmers thus the farmers were unable to raise their grievances.

5. Zamindars were made hereditary owners of the land under their possession. This meant that their successors and they; both had total control over the lands owned.
6. If the zamindars failed to pay the fix revenue, they would lose their zamindari.
7. The landlords were required to give to the tenant the patta describing the area of the land and the revenue of it. In this way tenants get rights on their holdings.

#### *MERITS OF PERMANENT SETTLEMENT*

1. At that time Britishers could not reach the peasants directly to collect revenue as some areas were still inaccessible to the Britishers without any communication means. It was beneficial for the company to appoint someone who performed all these tasks without involving company in each and every matter.
2. The Government officials were ignorant and had no knowledge about Indian cultures, practices and their customs also. A land lord would solve this problem as they were acquainted well with the prevalent traditions and practices.
3. Belonging from Indian origin, it was expected out of the landlord to easily understand Indian villagers and their problems.
4. Zamindars served as loyal servants to the Company as they were provided hereditary property laws. In this way they felt attached to their zamindari served better to the Britishers.
5. Being a permanent settlement, it created a sense of security in everyone's mind. The government knew its exact revenue, time of revenue and how regularly it will get its revenue. Zamindars too knew their area of zamindari and how much amount they had to collect from the peasants. The peasants too knew the plot of their land according to the patta and how much amount he had to pay as revenue to the zamindar.
6. Zamindar had been given the responsibility to maintain all records. Company's involvement was negligible in this regard.

7. In those days some zamindars believed in working for the benefits of their tenants to get their blessings for future generations. But the government had no responsibility to work for the welfare of peasants. This responsibility was of zamindar only and too it was not an imposed liability to work for the welfare of peasants.

#### Demerits of permanent settlement

1. By giving responsibility to zamindars the government avoided its duties.
2. Many zamindars punished and tortured the common men for not depositing revenue on time. They did not think that the farmers were incapacitated to pay the heavy amount of taxes imposed on them. At times, they also inflicted barbaric cruelty on the farmers to extort their money.
3. Peasants were the people who suffered the most under this system of Permanent Settlement. At times of drought, flood and famine they had to deposit fixed revenue. They were at the mercy of the Zamindars who from the fear of losing their Zamindari rights pressurized farmers to pay the taxes.
4. While fixing the revenues, the company's officials took no notice of the type of soil, irrigation facilities and other characteristics of crop production. That was a defective system of assessment.
5. The revenue was fixed without considering the productive capacity of the plot.
6. The government took major part of the earnings of the farmers as revenue and did not take any steps for their welfare or betterment.
7. Landlords too collected their share of revenue and spent the money flowing in, on themselves and their families. They did not spend a penny for the betterment of agricultural land.
8. At times, Zamindars extended the area of cultivation in his zamindari. The government did not get any extra revenue for the produce cultivated on that extended land.
9. Thus, neither the government nor the peasants benefitted from this system. Only the middlemen aka the Landlords benefitted from this

- settlement as they used to extort more money than the Britishers had asked them to so as to fulfill their own selfish motives.
10. In this system, the rich stepped towards more richness and luxuries while the poor became even more poor and backward. So, the gap between poor and rich widened with time. This crippled our country's economy in years to come.
  11. Rich Zamindars started exploiting peasants by other means also like polygamy, adultery and kulinism.

### Conclusion

Something that starts has to end sooner or later. The Zamindars powers also declined when their lands were sold in auctions due to non timely payment of revenue. The auction of lands also put the company's revenue on threshold. The failure of permanent settlement system was accredited to the uncertainty about the amount of revenue the company will receive and many other factors.

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