

Ryotwari System

[UPSC Notes]

The Ryotwari System was a land revenue system in British India. This concept of land revenue enabled collection from farmers and was introduced by Thomas Munro. The Ryotwari System permitted the government to collect direct revenue from the cultivators, who were also called the 'ryot'.

Here in this article, you will get to know more about the Ryotwari, and you can also check out the **Ryotwari System UPSC notes**. Ryotwari System UPSC Notes will allow you to prepare the topic for UPSC Prelims and Mains usually asked under Modern History.

What is Ryotwari System?

The Ryotwari System was a land revenue system introduced by the British. The government could deal directly with the farmer ('ryot') for revenue collection, and the peasant may cede or purchase more land for agriculture. Learn more about Ryotwari System for the upcoming UPSC Exam below.

- The term Ryot refers to peasant cultivators.
- Sir Thomas Munro first introduced the concept of collecting land revenue from farmers in 1820. He was the former governor of Madras and was also a British Soldier.
- He made more than half of the British India cultivators pay these taxes.
- He brought this action to be practised with the farmers of Madras, Bombay, Assam, and Coorg provinces. The Ryotwari System was where the farmers or the cultivators were supposed to be the landowner, which means they had complete rights to their land.
- Being the owners of the total land area, each cultivator was given complete ownership. They had all the rights to buying, selling, mortgaging, and even gifting the land to anyone.
- According to the statement issued by Sir Thomas Munro, the taxes were applied to the land by the government, which had to be paid by the peasants. The rates were also set for the type of land, meaning if the land is dry land, the rates would be 50%, and if it is wetland, the rate will increase to 10%, and it will be 60%.
- These rates were temporary, which means that there was no permanence in the rates of the taxes on land, and they may vary, mostly increasing with time.
- Because of this uncertainty in the rating system of taxes on land, if any peasant or the cultivator failed to pay the taxes on time, they were evicted by the government from the ownership of the land. Although the zamindari system has the concept of a middle man, in this Ryotwari System, there was no middle man.

- The taxes were very high and supposed to be paid in cash only as the British government did not accept any kind. Hence another problem that the cultivators faced was the money lenders who loaned the money at very high interests.

The concept of Ryotwari, Mahalwari and the Zamindari System ran hand in hand. Ryotwari System UPSC questions are mostly asked in the prelims. Ryotwari System UPSC PDF notes are also available here.

Ryotwari System UPSC

Ryotwari System is an essential part of Modern Indian History. It is more important from the sight of UPSC Mains answer writing but equally important for prelims. The Ryotwari System UPSC notes will help you to learn the topic easily.

Ryotwari System UPSC Questions

Question - Which of the statements are correct regarding the Ryotwari System-

- 1- The Zamindar was responsible for paying land revenue to the state.
- 2- A Patta was maintained to keep the records of land revenue.
- 3- Land revenue was based on the quality of soil and the nature of the crop grown.

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 only
- D. All of these

Ans:- Option B

Ryotwari System UPSC [Points to Remember]

Let's look at some of the important points related to Ryotwari System that are important for the upcoming UPSC Exam.

Ryotwari System UPSC Notes	
Also known as	Munro System
Ryotwari System Introduced By	Sir Thomas Munro

Main Features of Ryotwari System	Ryotwari System removed the middleman and collected the revenue directly from the cultivators.
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Ryotwari System in Madras

- In 1820, when sir Thomas Munro was the governor of Madras state or province, he introduced the concept of the Ryotwari System first.
- The concept behind launching this type of land revenue collection process was that the British believed that no middlemen should be involved in the Ryotwari System, and they could get the most of the revenue directly from the cultivators.
- Another main reason for introducing this type of revenue collection was that the Madras government was underfunded for a long time; therefore, this type of revenue was logically correct.
- The Madras government proposed this idea to the British Parliament. However, it was rejected, and hence the temporary Ryotwari Settlement was enacted.

Ryotwari System in Bombay

- Originally, the Ryotwari System of Bombay originated in the province of Gujarat.
- Before introducing the Ryotwari System, the British government collected the taxes from the 'desias, who were the hereditary officers and the village's headman.
- However, this collection wasn't sufficient for them, so they brought the Ryotwari System and started collecting the land revenue from the cultivators.
- Later, in 1818, after conquering the territory of Peshwa in Bombay, they introduced the concept of the Ryotwari System.
- There in Bombay, that system was under the guidance of the disciple of Munro, Elphinstone.
- The same pattern of revenue collection was established in Bombay, where the peasants were forced to give the revenue, and the government gradually kept increasing the rates rapidly.

Issues with Ryotwari System

- The power related to the Ryotwari system was delegated to the subordinate revenue officials. Those were then misused by them as there was nobody to monitor them.
- The increased taxes were a big issue for the cultivators, for which sometimes they had to mortgage even their lands.
- The money lenders and the mahajans also exploited the cultivators if they couldn't pay the interests.

Drawbacks of the Ryotwari System

- The rates of collecting taxes from the cultivator were very high, which was a very important drawback of this system.
- This is because the rates fixed for land as tax were relatively much higher than the actual land production capacity.
- The collection method of the revenue was quite rude and rigid for the British government. If the cultivator could not pay the desired amount at the time, the British government would torture the peasants, and they were also evicted from the government.
- Another major drawback of this system was that the officers could be easily bribed while assessing the land. Hence bribery increased to a wide level.
- The increased taxes on the lands devalued it as there was no proper care. This is because farmers were unable to take care of their land.

