

1 By Himanshu Khatri

### **Pre 1857 Peasant & Tribal Revolts + Post 1857 Tribal Revolts**

Q- 1857 uprising/revolt was culmination of small & big rebellions in 1st 100 years of the British rule.

(\*answer: prove that there was similarity in – Reasons, Goals, Methods, Leadership- in pre 1857 revolts and 1857 revolt)

Q- 1857 revolt was the biggest peasant revolt (\* answer is covered in 1857 revolt)

### **Grievances of Peasants**

#### **1) Farming System 1772 in Bengal**

- a) Oppression by revenue farmer who extracted high LR
- b) had support of British officials as collected LR under DC's supervision.

#### **2) Permanent Settlement 1793 –**

- a) oppression by zamindars via high rents
- b) illegal abwabs
- c) lack of occupancy rights or forced evictions
- d) British officials & British courts which supported the Zamindar as all rights in land legally with Zamindars
- e) Ineffective implementation of Rent Act 1859 in Bengal leading to lack of respect for occupancy rights of ryots (\*who cultivated a piece of land continuously for >12 yrs)

#### **3) Ryotwari & Mahalwari –**

- a) oppression of high LR by British government + loss of land in auction by government;
- b) indebtedness to money lenders & high interest rate on loans & then loss of land to moneylenders on default on loans i.e due to indebtedness.

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#### 4) Contract Farming

- a) oppression by indigo planters in Bengal until 1860 & later Bihar until 1918 - they forced ryots to cultivate indigo on part of their occupied land
- b) forced to take loans from planter
- c) were not given right price for indigo cultivated leading to continued indebtedness to planter
- d) soil productivity hurt
- e) oppression by Indian agents of planter, Br officials & courts if ryot refused to cultivate indigo.

#### 5) ROLE OF RELIGION (esp pre 1857 revolts)

- a) Grievance that religion under threat due to
  - i) Conversions by Christian missionaries.
  - ii) Britishers ending revenue free or rent-free tenures on lands of religious sects & institutions i.e temples/mosques
  - iii) Social reforms by law e.g. Sati Abolition Act 1829, Lex Loci Act 1850 (\* gave Right of inheritance even after conversion), Hindu Widow Remarriages Act 1856.
- b) Religion helped in giving organization especially when a Sect revolted i.e. a leader, who did planning, coordination & unity (\*BJP, Congress, AIMIM, RSS etc are modern organizations – absent pre 1857 therefore their work was done by Religion)

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### **Grievances of Tribals**

- 1) two special aspects of Tribals
  - a) Tribal autonomy(\*in civil & criminal matters)
  - b) Lived in forests/Hills away from mainstream society of plains.
- 2) Agrarian order/life was turned upside down by outsiders i.e.
  - a) British government & officials, British laws, British LR systems, British businesses & Christian Missionaries
  - b) Zamindars from plains, Revenue Farmers, Merchants & Money lenders
- 3) Primary concern of British was extraction of LR therefore
  - a) zamindars of plains were made owners of tribal areas/forest land +
  - b) Land was farmed out to Revenue farmers i.e. LR collection auctioned off to highest bidder +
  - c) In some cases, tribal chief was recognized as zamindar & in some cases tribal ryots were made landowners.
- 4) Due to high LR, there was influx of moneylenders and consequent indebtedness & loss of lands
- 5) Hence there was grievance of loss of land to outsiders, i.e. zamindars, merchants, moneylenders, British government + high rents, high LR, indebtedness.
- 6) Also autonomy of tribal chiefs & tribals hurt due to application of British law in civil & criminal matters.
  - a) Example, British law banned JHUM cultivation/slash & burn/Shifting cultivation & banned hunting – because Br wanted settled peasant communities paying LR regularly. Chenchus of Hyd became nearly extinct.

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- 7) Loss of home for tribals due to Indian Forests Act 1878 that categorized forest into –
- a) reserved forests - no access to tribals,
  - b) protected forests - tribals can use forest produce but only for personal consumption & not for sale.
  - c) Uncategorized which were open to all.
- 8) Loss of home due to land acquisition by Govt for rail-road projects, mining & for forest produce e.g. timber (\*used in railways, ships etc). Also, tribals were made to do forced labor on these projects. Thus they lost their **forest lands & right to forest produce (\*today Forests Rights Act 2006)**.
- 9) Entry of Christian missionaries post 1813, led to religious interference.

**Sample Intro for questions on Pre 1857 revolts:**

1. Western educated middle class (\*WEMC) responded to British rule in form of socio religious reforms. They believed in benevolence of British rule i.e. British will modernize India + they benefited from British rule by jobs created by British rule.
2. INM leaders called pre-1857 revolts as “pre-history of modern nationalism”
3. It was the tribals & peasants who 1st responded to Br rule with defiance & often violently.

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**Peasant revolts- of two kinds**

1. **Civil Uprising** – where Leadership of elites i.e. Raja or talukdar/zamindar (\*like 1857 revolt)
2. **Peasant Revolts**- where leadership of peasants

**CIVIL UPRISINGS**

- 1) **(1778-81) - Raja Chait Singh of Benaras** (was Zamindar) (Big Zamindars kept own military, own forts & were regarded as Raja by people) revolted as his estates taken away due to non-payment of LR (\*Benaras annexed by EIC in Treaty of Faizabad 1775 + later PS1793 in Bengal, Orissa, Bihar, North Madras, Benaras)
- 2) **1799-** deposed **Nawab Wazir Ali** (1797-98) revolted in Awadh with peasant support.
- 3) Post 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo Maratha War **(1803-05)-** Interference by Br resident post SA led to revolt by **Bundela chiefs** with peasant support.
- 4) 1799-1805: **Poligars** who were traditionally autonomous revolted against the British due to-
  - a) loss of status due to British Rule of Law & equality before law (\*like loss of status of taluqdars in 1857 revolt)
  - b) Ryotwari settlement led to loss of lands for Poligars (\*like Mahalwari leading to loss of estates for Taluqdars in 1857 revolt)
  - c) high LR demand on peasants led to their participation.
- 5) 1809- **Dewan Veluthampi** of Travancore revolted with Nair troops & peasants due to interference by British resident after SA of 1805.

**Peasant Revolts led by Peasants**

**1) 1783- Rangpur rebellion in North Bengal**

- a) Grievance= oppression by revenue farmers/contractors under Farming System 1772 & corruption of British officials who supported them. Since Great Bengal famine 1770 peasants were already under economic stress.
- b) Action= Targeted revenue farmers Debi Singh & Gobinda Singh- by looting their grain stores.
- c) Attacked prison & released ryots + attacked local courts. Therefore peasants were clearly aware of tools of their oppression.
- d) For some time ran their own government by using money from self-imposed taxes.
- e) Result= crushed by EIC.

**2) Mysore 1830-31**

- a) grievance = High LR under Wodeyar Dynasty since 1799 (\*to pay high subsidy under SA1799)
- b) Peasants revolted <> Wodeyar Dynasty & British agents.
- c) Result= EIC crushed the revolt (\* responsibility under SA 1799).

**RELIGION PLAYED IMPORTANT ROLE IN FOLLOWING –**

**1) [1760-1850s] Sanyasi & Fakir Rebellion in north Bengal & Bihar –**

- a) Peak in 1800 - 50,000 members were participating
- b) These were religious sects.
- c) **Dasnami sanyasis** included peasants & small traders.

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- d)** Grievance = high LR + high rents (\*post 1793) + monopoly of EIC agents over domestic trade of Bengal (\*recall Qasim6063 ending internal duties before BoBuxar1764)
- e)** **Madari Fakirs** included peasants who traditionally enjoyed revenue/rent free tenures which were now ended by EIC.
- f)** Both groups had good relations due to similar religious philosophies.
- g)** Result= finally crushed by British.

## 2) (1823-33) Pagal Panthis Revolt in East Bengal

- a)** Leaders of this sect were Karim Shah & Tipu Shah.
- b)** Grievance <> Zamindars (\* high rents + illegal abwabs+ lack of occupancy rights).
- c)** Tipu Shah promised lower rents post victory over Zamindars & British.
- d)** Result= crushed by EIC

## 3) 1831-Titu Mir of 24 Parganas

- a)** Belonged to Wahabi sect & taught teachings of Shah Waliullah of Delhi.
- b)** Followers of Titu were poor peasants & they also followed a distinct identity i.e. a unique beard & dress.
- c)** Grievance <> Tax on beard, **indigo** planters, zamindars & British officials
- d)** Result = setup their own government, self-imposed taxes but finally crushed by EIC army.

## 4) 1830s (\*then in 1870s) Faraizi Movement 1830s in Bengal

- a)** Led by father-son duo Haji Shariatullah & Dudu Mian (\*in 1870s Naya Mian)

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- b) The sect believed in philosophy that Quran is the only true book of Islam & wanted to remove all un-Islamic beliefs & therefore purify Islam by going back to golden past.
- c) Grievance <> **indigo planters**, zamindars & British officials.
- d) Action= Dudu Miya declared that land belongs to God therefore tax/rent on land is un-godly (\* catchy slogan). They set up their own government, self-imposed taxes & set up own courts.
- e) Result = crushed (\*Hunter in his book Indian Muslims argued that neglect of Muslims led to Faraizi movt therefore Br should favor muslims for political stability)

**5) Moplah/Mopilla revolt in Malabar 1840** (\*in 1870s, 1921)

- a) Moplah = Muslim ryot of Malabar.
- b) Janmies= members of brahmin princely families who were traditionally big landlords + there were supervisors who collected LR on behalf of janmies.
- c) Traditionally earnings were shared b/w all 3 sections therefore all 3 enjoyed traditional rights in land.
- d) 1789-92: Malabar annexed by EIC after 3rd Anglo Mysore war
- e) Grievance= EIC LR system recognized Janmies as legal landowners & now Moplahs lost all traditional rights & were oppressed by Janmies (\*\*orientalists believed that Lord Parshuram gave all lands to janmies)
- f) Moplahs revolted violently & revolt took communal color as oppressor & oppressed had different religious identity.
- g) Result= crushed by EIC army.

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### TRIBAL UPRISING (PRE-1857)

#### 1) Kol Uprising 1831-32

- a) In Chhota Nagpur & Singhbhum regions of Bihar & Odisha.
- b) Grievance= tribal autonomy hurt by British rule + oppression by outsiders/**Suds** when Raja of Chhotangapur farmed out lands to merchants & moneylenders. Therefore, loss of customary land rights for tribals.
- c) Action= Kols targeted the property of Suds & not their life.
- d) Result= army crushed it.

#### 2) Kandh uprising 1837-56 in Bihar led by Chakra Basoi.

- a) Grievance = ban on human sacrifice

#### 3) Khasi Uprising 1833 led by Tirath singh

- a) Grievance = loss of lands due to **Brahmaputra Valley-Sylhet Road** & also inflow of outsiders i.e. British businesses, their Indian agents & British officials
- b) Result- crushed

#### 4) Santhal Hool/rebellion 1855-56

- a) In Rajmahal hills (Jharkhand)
- b) Grievance = loss of their fatherland or Damini-i-koh to outsiders/Dikus. British gave tribal lands to non-Santhal zamindars & money lenders + rail road construction also led to loss of lands.
- c) Action =
  - i) Led by **Sido** Murmu & **Kanhu** Murmu

- ii) Santhals gave prior warning in 1855 to British & then revolted <> Unholy trinity of British/zamindars/moneylenders with bows & arrows to win back their fatherland from Dikus
- iii) British rule collapsed.
- iv) British took violent revenge & they burned villages killing **50000** Santhals therefore crushing the revolt.
- v) However, a separate administrative unit Santhal Parganas with protection to tribal culture & identity was created.

#### **CHARACTER OF PRE 1857 REVOLTS**

[\*\*concept begins\*\*]

Modern Nation is summation of Ppl who feel – One (\*Unity/Fraternity), Equal (\*Equality), Supreme (\*Liberty). FR1789 slogan= Liberty Equality Fraternity.

**+\*\*Modern Nationalism is based on above idea of Nation and Nation is Supreme & National Interest is supreme and Modern Politics (elaborated below as a concept). Hence modern nation has following features:**

1. In Politics
  - a. Democracy & Republicanism,
  - b. Fundamental Rights
  - c. No Taxation Without Representation (NTWR)
  - d. Equality before law
2. In Economy
  - a. Capitalism i.e. democracy in economy
  - b. Security of Property

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- c. No concentration of wealth on basis of birth or due to Crony Capitalism

3. In Society

- a. No Birth based Privileges or Discrimination
- b. Indian 1<sup>st</sup> & anything else later
- c. No oppression of any section

**\*\*Modern Politics** involves

1. United Leadership
2. Clear Ideology & Goal
3. Plan (long term) & Programme (short term)
4. Mouthpiece (\*website, newspaper) to give voice to Ideology, Goal, Plan, Programme & to give directions and justify demands & actions.
5. Organizational Structure so Directions given by leadership are followed effectively by each follower on ground. \*\*\*concept ends\*\*\*]

**CHARACTER OF PRE 1857 REVOLTS:**

**1) Modern nationalism was missing as**

- a) they were not all India movements [\*unity]
- b) no-coordination with each other [\*unity, org]
- c) no outside leaders & only local leaders [\*unity, Indian 1<sup>st</sup> & anything else later]
- d) lacked proper planning [\*org]
- e) goal was not democracy [\*Nation supreme]

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**2) However, called pre-history of modern nationalism –**

- a) They were political in nature & not apolitical.
- b) a political movement has ideology, organization & programme.
- c) **Ideology** was there as they wanted to bring back the moral order disturbed by British rule. Therefore, anger <> foreign rule was there. (*\*thus different vocab than modern political vocab of rights, democracy, colonialism, NTWR etc otherwise immoral rule implies oppression, lack of economic & political & cultural rights*)
- d) **Political symbolism** was there in form of grand marches, idea of fatherland of Santhals'. [*\*modern politics, org*]
- e) **Unity & Organisation-**
  - i) Religion based bonds provided unity, organization & leadership esp where a Sect revolted.
  - ii) **Organization** was evident as in many cases they set up their own government, own courts & collected own taxes
- f) **Programme** was there as meetings were held & some planning was done
- g) Peasants & tribals were clearly **aware of tool of their oppression** [*\*clear goal*]
  - i) Eg – they didn't not attack life of oppressors in many cases but their property, account books etc.
  - ii) Santhals declared that traditionally they have hunted game/animals & now they hunt their oppressors.



- h)** Crimes are done secretly while Politics is public & their revolts were public  
e.g., public meetings; Santhals gave prior warning in 1855.

### **POST 1857 TRIBAL UPRISINGS**

#### **1) Munda Ulugulan/ uprising 1899-1900**

- a)** In Chhota Nagpur, leader Birsa Munda
- b)** Grievances – loss of lands to outsiders + Oppression by br officials + missionary activities of Christian missionaries
- c)** Action –people came to believe in supernatural powers of Birsa e.g. his magical healing powers & that bullets turn to water when fired at Birsa. Therefore, religion in this case gave courage to tribals to rise against mighty British.
- d)** Political symbolism was present as Munda revolted on Christmas of 1899.
- e)** Result = crushed by Britishers.

#### **2) RAMPA REBELLION/FITURI (In Rama hills of Andra)**

- a)** Grievance=
  - i)** commercial exploitation of forests
  - ii)** Land acquisition for road construction
  - iii)** loss of lands to moneylenders & merchants
  - iv)** prohibition on Podu i.e. shifting cultivation
  - v)** restriction on use of forest resources
  - vi)** tax on toddy (local drink).
- b)** Action = Fituri/rebellion under leadership of Muttadars who were local estate holders (\*like poligars/taluqdars).

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- c) Result = crushed by 1880. In 1920 their movement merged into MG's NCM. Eg. violated forest laws in Andhra. Post NCM, **Alluri Sitarama Raju** who had led Gandhian struggle revolted violently as he believed that India can be liberated only by force therefore re-initiated fight. Was captured & executed in 1924.

HimanshuKhatri\_VisionIAS

Only for nagendra.raiput9753@gmail.com

By Himanshu Khatri

Himanshu Khatri\_VisionIAS