

The First War of Independence (1857)

B . Short Answer Questions

1. Lord Wellesley's Subsidiary Alliance implied the subordination of Indian Princes to the British Company in their external relations.

Indian Rulers who entered into a Subsidiary Alliance –

- Were required to keep the British army at the Capitals of their States.
 - They were to give either money or some part of their territory to the Company for the maintenance of the British Troops.
2. Hyderabad , Lucknow , Mysore , Poona (now Pune) and other.
 3. The Doctrine meant that when a ruler of a dependent State died without a natural heir, the State passed back to the English company.
 4. Satara , Jhansi and Nagpur.
 5. The Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah, had in those days a 'name' or a title only ; in fact he was not at all powerful. But even that was devalued when Lord Dalhousie announced that on the death of the King his successor would have to leave the Imperial palace (the Red Fort). Later in 1856, Lord Canning made it known that Bahadur Shah's successor would not be allowed to use the imperial title, *i.e.*, the title of the '**King**'. Such a discourtesy to the Mughal Emperor hurt people's sentiments considerably.
 6. The main grouse of Rani of Jhansi against the British was, when the ruler of Jhansi died in 1853 leaving no child, the widowed Rani was pensioned. Their adopted son, Anand Rao, was not recognised as a lawful successor to the throne.
 7. Dalhousie's refusal of pension to Nana Saheb, the adopted son of the ex-Peshwa (Baji Rao II) was very much resented by the Hindus in general and Nana Saheb had inherited enormous wealth from the ex-Peshwa. He spent that money in sending messengers to different parts of the country and instigating revolt everywhere.
 8. On 7 February, 1856, Nawab Wazid Ali Shah was deposed on the grounds that Awadh was not being managed well. On February 13, the Court of Directors ordered Awadh's complete annexation to the Company's dominions.
 9. **a.** The '**Bible**' was introduced not only in Christian institutions, but also in Government Schools. Even prisoners in the *jail* (prison-house) began to be instructed in Christianity.
b. The Missionary Society of America established a press at Agra. It published leaflets and little books full of inaccurate information about Hinduism.
 10. **a.** Religious Disabilities Act of 1850 changed the Hindu Law of Property. It enabled the convert from Hinduism to inherit the property of his father. The Hindus regarded it as an incentive to giving up one's religious faith.
b. In the 19th century the British took measures to control some of the social evils. **The Widow Remarriage Act**, passed in 1856, was a progressive measure.
 11. In the 19th century the British took measures to control some of the social evils. **The Widow Remarriage Act**, passed in 1856, was a progressive measure. Earlier **Sati** and female infanticide had been prohibited.
 12. The Railways were looked down upon as means to break social order and caste-rules. In the railway compartments people of all castes had to sit together. It was a progressive change, but the mass of people regarded it as an interference with the caste-rules.

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13. The Englishman in India could insult, humiliate and even kill the Indians at will. An English Magistrate at Agra had issued the following notification: "Every native, whatever his pretended rank may be, ought to be compelled to salute all English gentleman in the streets." Besides, if an Indian was on horseback he had to dismount and stand in a respectful manner until the European had passed him. Such indignities alienated the British from the Indian masses.
14. In 1829, the Bengal government established an English class in Kolkata madrasa, which was a Muslim institution. Later, English classes were introduced at Benaras Sanskrit College also. Shifting of emphasis from oriental learning to Western education was not well received by the people, especially the pundits and maulvis. They saw in it an attempt to discourage Islamic and Hindu studies. There was also the fear that the object was not so much the promotion of literature and sciences as inducing the people to become Christians.
15. An act was passed in 1720 which prohibited the use of Indian silk and cotton in England. Heavy duties on Indian silk and cotton textiles in Britain- 70% and 80%, respectively destroyed those industries. On the other hand, British goods were imported into India at a nominal duty. By the middle of the 19th century, export of cotton and silk goods from India practically ceased. The arts of spinning and weaving which for ages had given employment to thousands of artisans became extinct. Manufacturing towns of Dhaka, Murshidabad and Surat became helpless and desolate.
16. Bihar, Bengal and Awadh emerged as major producers of export crops such as jute, opium and indigo. British companies managed this export trade. **The manufacturers in England required other raw materials also such as cotton and oilseeds for their industries. After the Industrial Revolution, the British did all that they could to keep India mainly as an agricultural country.** This made India an agricultural colony of the British capitalism.
17. In 1852, an *Inam* Commission was appointed to inquire into the title-deeds of the owners of large estates. **Many landowners pleaded that they could not produce their title-deeds on account of the passage of time. The Government did not accept the plea and confiscated some 20,000 estates.**
18. Two reasons for the unhappiness of Indian soldiers in the British army before 1857 were-
 - a. Indians had poor prospects of promotion. All the high ranks in the army were reserved for the British only. The native sepoys could not rise above the rank of Subedar, even though their performance as a soldier was excellent.
 - b. Indian soldiers had low salary. The maximum pay that a subedar of the infantry could expect was less than the minimum pay of a raw English recruit. The sepoys were required to serve in areas far away from their homes without any additional allowance.
19. The General Service Enlistment Act (1856) provided that all recruits to the Bengal Army should be ready for service everywhere, whether within or outside India. This Act caused great alarm in the minds of the personnel of the Bengal Army.
20. The first Afghan War was a complete failure from the British viewpoint. After an enormous waste of money and loss of human life, the British gained nothing. Not only were the British Troops defeated, the war exposed their weaknesses too. This increased the self-confidence of the Indian soldiers, who felt they could challenge the British in India also.
21. The immediate cause of the War of Independence was the introduction of Enfield rifles in place of the old iron made Brown Bess Guns. The cartridges to be used for the Enfield rifles were greased with the fat of cows and pigs. The cow is sacred for the Hindus and the Muslims consider pigs as unclean. The information about the greased cartridges spread like wild fire. The whole Bengal army was seized with panic. The soldiers refused to use these cartridges and staged an uprising when they were forced to use them.

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22. The War of Independence was supposed to begin on 31st May, 1857.
23. The Act for the Better Government of India was passed on 2nd August, 1858. It transferred the Government of India from the Company to the Crown.
24. The War ended East India Company's rule in India. The Company's Board of Control and The Court of Directors were abolished.
25. Lord Canning became the first Viceroy of India under the Act of 1858.
The Governor-General's new role as Viceroy under this Act was that he ruled over the Provinces under the British rule and acted as 'Representative of the Crown' for the native princes and Nawabs.
26. With the death of Bahadur Shah, who was deported to Rangoon, the Mughal Imperial dynasty founded by Babur came to an end.
27. Both Hindus and Muslims had combined against the hated foreigner. The principal leaders were- Nana Saheb, Tantia Tope and others-recognised Bahadur Shah as their Emperor.
The British viewed this development with alarm. Therefore, they tried to create misunderstanding between the Muslims and the Hindus.
Soon after the War the British turned against the Muslims. At a later stage, however, the growing nationalism of the Hindus made them unfriendly in the eyes of the British. The Muslims were taken back into confidence.
The consequences of the policy of 'Divide and Rule' was that the Princes turned against their own people and a rift started between Hindus and Muslims.