



1. Why did the mutinous sepoys in many places turn to erstwhile rulers to provide leadership to the revolt?

Ans: Following are the major reasons to explain why the rebellious soldiers turned to native rulers for leadership:

1. East India company defeated native rulers to grab power in India. Many believed that the native Indian rulers had the legal and legitimate authority to regain power in the respective kingdoms. Therefore, it was natural that they became the leaders of the rebels and regain the lost status of rulers.
2. The erstwhile rulers had substantial resources at their command. They had wealth and private armies too. The rebels waited to get the support of resources from them, and by declaring them the leaders it was natural outcome.
3. Most of the erstwhile Indian rulers were popular at the local level. Their subjects often sympathised with them as they believed that the latter were unlawfully thrown out of power and even suffered humiliation. Choosing these native rulers was echoing the sentiments of the people and winning more support for the cause.

2. Discuss the evidence that indicates planning and coordination on the part of the rebels.

Ans: The rebellion was not abrupt and sporadic but to a great extent done with planning and care. This is brought out by the following points:

1. The rebels decided to strike when the large part of the British army was in Burma.
2. The time chosen for the rebellion was summer that is very hostile weather condition for the British. Summer was also the season when the entire countryside would be easy to navigate.
3. To spread the message of rebellion, the rebels used symbols bread and lotus from village to village.
4. Efforts were made to maintain Hindu-Moslem unity. Whenever an area would fall under rebel control, cow slaughter was banned.

3. Discuss the extent to which religious beliefs shaped the events of 1857.

Ans: People during the company rule felt that their religious sentiments are systemically hurt by the government. For them it was an attack on their religious freedom, and an insult. The religious causes for the Revolt are as follows:

1. Immediate cause: The soldiers were given cartridge greased with cow and pig fat. This angered Moslems and Hindus alike.
2. Reforms by Company: The Company introduced many religious and social reforms. Many Indians began to believe that it was an attempt on the part the government to deviate them from their own religion. Important of such reforms were prevention of sati system, widow remarriage, etc.
3. Activities of Christian Missionaries: During company rule involved in spread of education. But local people looked upon them with suspicion. Thus, the people plunged in rebellion

against the foreign rule.

4. What were the measures taken to ensure unity among the rebels?

Ans: A very important element of the revolt of 1857 was the unity shown by Hindus and Moslems in the struggle against the foreign rule. First the immediate cause of the rebellion was the use of cartridge greased with fat of cow and pig, angering Hindus and Moslems alike. After the rebels marched to Delhi, they declared the Mughal emperor Bahadurshah their all India leader. Thus, the Mughal emperor was the leader of Hindus and Muslims alike. Both Hindus and Muslims respected each others' religious sentiments. Whenever a new area fell into the control of rebels, cow slaughter was made illegal to respect Hindu sentiments. Thus, Hindu-Muslim unity was the hallmark of the mutiny.

5. What steps did the British take to quell the uprising ?

Ans: In 1857 a sepoy mutiny broke out in East India that became a mass uprising in many parts of the country. The Company had faced rebellions in the past too, but not of this magnitude and extent. The British rulers realised that unless the rebellions is suppressed, their empire was destined to fizzle out. They took swift measures to put down the flame of the rebellion, some were of military nature while others were of political nature. The important measures taken by the British to suppress the rebellion are as follows:

1. Imposition of Marshal Law and large scale of execution: In north India where rebels were holding ground, Marshal Law was imposed. Apart from enforcing law, military officers also had the power to dispense justice and pronounce conviction and punishment. Thus, for all practical purposes, rebels and their sympathizers could be declared guilty without fair trial. The punishment was not just swift, cruel and partisan but in most cases execution. The execution was carried out in a manner that fear grips the masses. The people were blown up by canons, still others were hanged by trees. The objective was to terrorize the people and make them subservient to the might of the British empire.
2. Diplomacy: The British masters used diplomacy as tool to weaken and destroy the rebellions. They tried to win the support of native kingdoms who were not on the side of rebels , by promising them rewards and securing their kingdoms. The communities who were not involved in the mutiny, viz. Sikhs were recruited and sent to fight the rebels.
3. Use of technology: The British used technology to get an upper hand in the battle fields. Apart from having superior weapons, it was the superior communication system that routed the rebels. The company used telegram to instantly communicate with others, the rebels were totally clueless about such things. To conclude the British strategy and technique to defeat the rebels was multi-pronged and superior to those employed by the rebels. It was natural that the rebels crumbled in course of time.

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