

When People Rebel

1857 and After

Q1. What is a rebellion?

Ans. It is an organized revolt against established authority when people are unsatisfied.

Q2. Why is the revolt of 1857 known as the first war of independence?

Ans. The revolt of 1857 is known as the first was of independence as before this war, no

one was so united in battles.

But in this battle many social groups of the country came together to fight it like Nawabs,

rajas, zamindars, peasants all came together to fight this battle. Such kind of battle was not

expected.

Q3. Why is the revolt known as sepoy mutiny?

Ans. In this revolt, all the sepoys marched to the Britisher’s buildings, houses, police

station and burnt them. They killed the British. The main role in these deeds was of

sepoys. Therefore, the Revolt 1857 is also called sepoy mutiny. Sepoy means soldiers and

muting means ‘March’.

Q4. Describe the causes of Revolt of 1857.

The cause of the Revolt of 1857 are:-

1. Political Cause (Nawabs lose their power)

· Since the mid – eighteenth century, nawabs and rajas had seen their authority and

honour.

· Residents had been stationed in many courts, the freedom of the rulers reduced,

their armed forces disbanded, and their revenues and territories were taken away

by stages.

· Many ruling families tried to negotiate with the company to protect their interests.

Ex: - Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi wanted the company to recognize her adopted son as the heir

to the kingdom after the death of her husband.

Nana sahib, the adopted son of PeshwaBaji Rao II, pleaded that he be given his father’s

pension when he later died. However, the company, confident of its superiority and military

power, turned down these please.

2. Economic Cause

· In the countryside peasants and zamindars resented the high taxes and the rigid

methods of revenue collection. Many failed to pay back their loans to the

moneylenders and gradually lost the lands they had tilled for generations.

· Some of the new rules, moreover, violated their religious sensibilities and beliefs.

· Sepoys also reacted to what was happening in the countryside. Many of them were

peasants and had families living in the villages. So the anger of the peasants

quickly spread among the sepoys.

Q5. What was the demand of Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi that was refused by the British?

Ans. After the death of her husband, Rani Lakshmidai wanted her adopted son to be recognized as the heir to the kingdom.

Q6. What did the British do to protect the interests of those who converted to Christianity?

Ans: In 1850, a new law allowed an Indian who had converted to Christianity to inherit property of his ancestors. This law made it easier to convert to Christianity.

Q7.What objections did the sepoys have to the new cartridges that they were asked to use?

Ans. It was rumoured that the new cartridges were coated with the fat of cows and pigs. This hurt the sentiments of both the Hindus and the Muslims.

Q8.How did the last Mughal emperor live the last years of his life?

Ans.The last Mughal emperor spent the last years of his life in a jail in Rangoon; along with his wife.

Q9. What could be the reasons for the confidence of the British rulers about their position in India before May 1857?

Ans. Within hundred years of assuming the Diwani of Bengal, the British became the unquestioned rulers over a large part of the Indian subcontinent. They rarely had to use force to take control over a territory. They were doing profitable trade which was their main objective. They also succeeded in winning the support of most of the local rajas and chieftains. These are some of the possible reasons for the confidence of the British rulers about their position in India before May 1857.

Q10. What impact did Bahadur Shah Zafar’s support to the rebellion have on the people and the ruling families?

Ans. The decision by Bahadur Shah Zafar to support the rebellion had dramatically changed the entire situation. Most of the smaller rulers and chieftains had been ruling over their territories on behalf of the Mughal ruler. They hoped that if the Mughal ruler could once again resume power, they would also be able to rule their own territories once again. People were emboldened by an alternative possibility.

Q11.How did the British succeed in securing the submission of the rebel landowners of Awadh?

Ans. The British also tried to win back people’s loyalty. Rewards were announced for loyal landholders. The loyal landlords were allowed to enjoy their traditional rights over the land. The rebels were told that if they submitted to the British, they would remain safe and their claims and rights would not be denied. But there was a condition that they had not killed any white people.

Q12. In what ways did the British change their policies as a result of the rebellion of 1857?

Ans.The British made various changes in their policies after the revolt of 1857. Some of them are as follows:

* The British Crown took the direct responsibility of governance in India.
* All the ruling chiefs and kings were assured that their territory would never be annexed in future. They could pass on their kingdom to their heirs; including the adopted sons. However, they were to accept the suzerainty of the British Crown.
* A decision was taken to increase the proportion of Europeans in the army. More people were to be recruited from among the Gurkhas, Sikhs and Pathans.
* It was decided to respect the local customs and traditions.