

🏛 Policies and the People

From rulers to peasants, many groups were unhappy with British policies:

- Nawabs & Rajas lost authority, land, armies, and income.
- British Residents controlled their courts.
- Mughal emperor's name removed from coins.
- 1856: Governor-General Canning announced — Bahadur Shah Zafar would be last Mughal king.



🖼 Fig. 1 – Sepoys and peasants gather forces for revolt (1857)

👑 Nawabs and Rulers Resist

- Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi wanted her adopted son to be heir — denied.
- Nana Saheb (adopted son of Peshwa Baji Rao II) wanted pension — denied.
- Awadh was annexed in 1856, declared “misgoverned” by Dalhousie.

British disrespect pushed many Indian rulers toward rebellion.


🚩 Sepoys and Peasants Rebel

- Peasants angry at high taxes & land loss due to loans
- Sepoys unhappy with:
 - Low pay, poor service conditions
 - New law (1856): overseas service made compulsory
 - Greased cartridges rumor (cow/pig fat) offended religious beliefs

📘 Definition: Sepoy – Indian soldier in British army

📘 Definition: Mutiny – Soldiers disobeying army orders



 Fig. 2 – Sepoys exchanging news in north Indian bazaars

Activity Idea:

Imagine advising your nephew not to join Company army —

Reason: “They insult our religion, underpay us, and may send us overseas.”

Voices from the Past

Source 1 – Vishnubhatt Godse’s Majha Pravaas:

- Sepoys warned him not to travel to Mathura — said war of religion would begin in 3 days.

Source 2 – Sitaram Pande’s memoirs (From Sepoy to Subedar):

- Believed seizure of Awadh created distrust
- Agents spread anger & lies; cartridges rumor inflamed sepoy



📷 Fig. 3 – Sepoys attack officers at Meerut, set buildings on fire

🔥 From Mutiny to Rebellion

- 29 March 1857: Mangal Pandey attacks officer in Barrackpore — hanged
- 9 May 1857: 85 sepoy s jailed in Meerut
- 10 May: Meerut sepoy s revolt, release comrades, attack British, march to Delhi
- 11 May: Delhi sepoy s join in — Bahadur Shah Zafar declared leader

📖 Definition: Firangi – Foreigner (term used with contempt)



📷 Fig. 4 – 3000 rebels enter Delhi & attack British cavalry posts

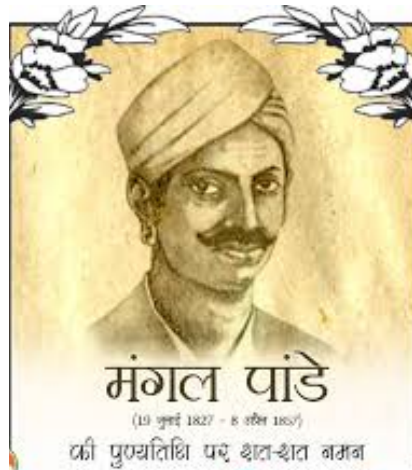


 Fig. 6 – Portrait of Bahadur Shah Zafar

Mughal Emperor Responds

- Reluctant at first, but agrees to lead rebellion
- Sends letters to Indian rulers to join & restore Indian rule
→ Inspired small rulers, zamindars, and people to rise up

The Rebellion Spreads


- Revolt spreads to Kanpur, Lucknow, Jhansi, Bihar
- Local leaders emerge:

| Region | Leader(s) |
|----------------|---------------------------------|
| Kanpur | Nana Saheb, Tantia Tope |
| Jhansi | Rani Lakshmibai |
| Awadh | Begum Hazrat Mahal, Birjis Qadr |
| Madhya Pradesh | Rani Avantibai Lodhi |
| Bihar | Kunwar Singh |
| Delhi | Bakht Khan, Ghazis |
| Faizabad | Maulvi Ahmadullah Shah |



Fig. 6 – Bahadur Shah Zafar



 Fig. 7 – Portrait of Rani Lakshmibai




 Fig. 8 – British officers killed in cantonments



 Fig. 9 – Portrait of Nana Saheb



 Fig. 10 – Portrait of Kunwar Singh

 **British Telegram (Aug 1857):**

“Every village is held against us... zamindars have risen.”

—

The British Fight Back



- Reinforcements sent from England
- New laws passed for harsh punishment of rebels
- Delhi recaptured in September 1857
 -  Fig. 11 – British troops attack Red Fort & Salimgarh
- Bahadur Shah Zafar arrested → exiled to Rangoon → died 1862
- Rebellion continued for 2 years in parts like Lucknow & Central India



 Fig. 12 – British siege train reaches Delhi (7-mile-long with cannons)



 Fig. 13 – Stamp commemorating Tantia Tope

Rebel Leaders Fall

- Rani Lakshmibai: Died fighting in June 1858
- Rani Avantibai: Committed suicide when surrounded
- Tantia Tope: Captured, executed April 1859
- Guerrilla war continued for months

British announced:

- Land rights safe if no white person was killed
- Rewards for loyalty
- Hundreds tried and hanged

Aftermath: British Rule Changes

1 Company Rule Ends:

- 1858 Act: East India Company's rule ended
- India now ruled directly by the British Crown
 -  Definition: Viceroy – British ruler representing the Queen

2 Indian Princes Assured:

- No future annexation
- Adopted sons allowed as heirs
- But rulers now subordinates of Queen Victoria

3 Army Reorganised:

- Fewer Indian soldiers
- More Europeans
- Gurkhas, Sikhs, Pathans preferred over Awadh, Bihar soldiers

4 Muslims Targeted:

- Properties seized, treated with hostility
- British believed Muslims started the revolt

5 Religious Freedom Promised:

- Customary practices would be respected

6 Zamindars Protected:

- Loyal ones got land security
- Policies favoured traditional landlords



 Fig. 14 – British blow up Kashmere Gate to enter Delhi



 Fig. 15 – British capture rebels near Kanpur

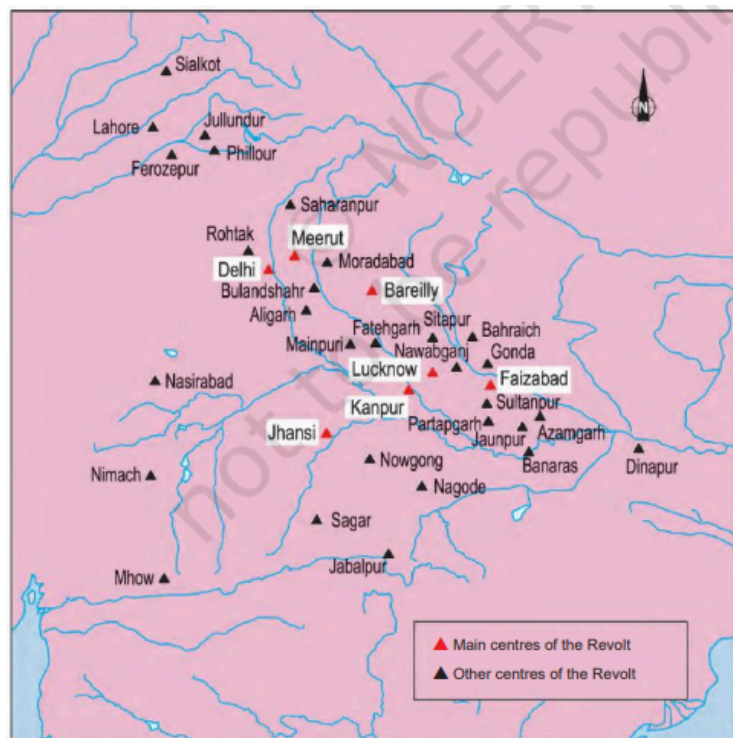


Fig. 16 – Map of main centres of the Revolt



Fig. 17 – Ruins of British Residency, Lucknow (1857 siege)

Case Study: Khurda Uprising (1817)

- In Orissa (Khurda), people rebelled against British before 1857
- Led by Buxi Jagabandhu – commander of former king
 - Definition: Paik – Militia/warrior of Orissa state

Reasons:

- Land loss, forced currency change
- Salt monopoly hurt local trade

- High taxes, corrupt police

29 March 1817: Paiks attacked police station at Banpur

- Rebellion spread to Puri & nearby areas
- King Mukunda Dev II declared ruler again
- Priests of Jagannath Temple supported uprising

British used Martial Law, crushed revolt by May 1817

- Buxi Jagabandhu fought till 1825, later surrendered
 - Reforms followed: price cuts, police reform, land returned

—

Key Definitions

| Term | Meaning |
|---------|---|
| Sepoy | Indian soldier in Company army |
| Mutiny | Collective army disobedience |
| Dikus | Outsiders who exploit locals |
| Viceroy | British Crown's representative in India |
| Firangi | Foreigners (British, used insultingly) |
| Paik | Traditional soldier in Orissa |
| Satyug | Era of truth and peace (golden past) |