

Revolt of 1857 event in Indian History was an important landmark. It is also known as the "first war of Independence". It has been observed that in the last year papers of competitive exams, there are 1-2 questions asked from Revolt of 1857, its causes and leaders.

In this article, we are sharing you with complete notes on Revolt of 1857 in Hindi & English. At the end of the article, we have also provided a direct link to download "Revolt of 1857: Causes, Leaders" PDF in Hindi & English.

Revolt of 1857: Causes, Leaders

Nature of the revolt

- Revolt of 1857 began as a revolt of the sepoys but eventually secured the participation of the masses.
- V.D. Savarkar called 1857 revolt as the First War of Indian Independence.
- Dr S.N. Sen describes it as "having begun as a fight for religion but ended as a war of independence."
- Dr. R.C. Majumdar considers it as neither the first, nor national, nor a war of independence.
- As per some British historians, it was just a peasant sepoy mutiny.

Causes of the revolt

(i) ECONOMIC CAUSES

1. Highly unpopular revenue settlement
2. Heavy taxation – causing peasants to go for a loan from moneylenders at usurious prices
3. British policy discouraged Indian handicrafts which were not accompanied by the development of modern industries
4. Excessive interference by Britishers: loss of status for Zamindars

(ii) POLITICAL CAUSES

1. Subsidiary Alliance – of Lord Wellesley
2. Doctrine of Lapse – of Lord Dalhousie
3. Religious Disabilities Act, 1856 –change in religion would not debar child to inherit property

(iii) ADMINISTRATIVE CAUSES

1. Rampant corruption in the Company's administration – especially at a lower level (police, petty officials)
2. No focus on Indian development

(iv) SOCIO-RELIGIOUS CAUSES

1. Britisher's attitude of superiority
2. Activities of Christian missionaries
3. The attempts at socio-religious reform such as the abolition of Sati, support to widow-remarriage and women's education

4. To tax mosque and temple lands

(v) IMMEDIATE CAUSES

1. General Service Enlistment Act – decreed future recruits to serve anywhere even beyond seas.
2. Inferior emoluments compared to his British counterpart.
3. News of mixing of bone dust in wheat flours
4. The cartridge of Enfield rifle was made of beef and pork fat

INFLUENCE OF CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

1. First Afghan War (1838-42)
2. Punjab Wars (1845-49)
3. Crimean Wars (1854-56)
4. Santhal rebellion (1855-57)

Important facts of the Revolt

- Meerut incident - 19th Berhampur Native Infantry refused to use the newly introduced Enfield rifle and mutiny broke out in February 1857, later dissolved in Mar' 1857.
- The 34th Native Infantry's young sepoy, Mangal Pandey, fired at his unit's sergeant major at Barrackpore.
- The 7th Awadh Regiment was also disbanded
- Meerut rose to revolt May 10, they released their imprisoned comrades, killed their officers and moved to Delhi after sunset.
- Delhi- Centre of the Great Revolt

Leaders of the revolt

- At **Delhi**, the symbolic leadership was to the Mughal emperor, Bahadur Shah, but the real command was led by **General Bakht Khan**.
- **Kanpur** rose under **Nana Saheb, Tantia Tope, AZimullah Khan**. Sir Hugh Wheeler, commanding the station, surrendered. Nan Saheb declared himself the Peshwa and Bahadur Shah as Emperor of India
- **Begum Hazrat Mahal** took over the reign of **Lucknow** and Birjis Qadir, her son, was declared Nawab. Henry Lawrence, the British resident, was killed. The remaining Europeans were evacuated by Sir Colin Campbell, the new commander - in - chief.
- At **Bareilly**, **Khan Bahadur**, in **Bihar**, **Kunwar Singh**, Zamindar of Jagdishpur and **Maulvi Ahmadullah of Faizabad** led the revolt at their respective places.
- **Rani Laxmibai**, the most outstanding leader of the revolt, was driven out of **Jhansi** with the application of Lapse's Doctrine as Lord Dalhousie, the Governor - General refused to allow her adopted son to succeed to the throne.

Suppression of the revolt

- On September 20, 1857, the British captured Delhi. John Nicholson was the leader of the siege, succumbed to injuries later.

- Bahadur Shah was taken the prisoner, exiled to Rangoon where he died in 1962. Royal princes were publicly shot point blank by Lieutenant Hudson. With the fall of Delhi, one by one all local revolts were suppressed.
- Sir Colin Campbell recaptured Kanpur and Lucknow.
- At Benaras, a rebellion was mercilessly suppressed, by Colonel Neil.

Causes of failure of the revolt

- Bahadur Shah has gone old and weak, so unable to lead the revolt.
- Limited territorial spread
- Most parts of India remained more or less unaffected.
- Many Big zamindars supported Britishers.
- Modern educated Indians viewed the revolt as backward looking
- The Indian soldiers were poorly equipped materially.
- The revolt was poorly organized with no central leadership or coordination.
- The revolt lacked a clear understanding of the British rule and was poorly prepared.

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