

## Peasant Movements in India

In the colonial period, peasants came together around a range of issues such as changes in property relations, issues of begar or forced labour, sometimes religious and economic issues that came together which are going on to explain. The British transformed Indian agriculture, created property rights in lands, also commercialised the land which changed the relationship that people had around the land. Peasant Movement in India During British Period is an important topic for all competitive exams like UPSC, State PSC, and other government exams. These events happened in the different-different part of India. In this article, we will read about the Peasants Movement in India.

Britishers also inserted the Indian economy which was based on the subsistence mode of production into the capitalistic market economy. Gradually reciprocal relations, subsistence relations gave way to more exploitative relation, which was based on the notion of profit, the emergence of classes like zamindars in different parts of the country. Many middlemen were created such as middle peasants, landless labourers. Often people who were worst affected were the rural poor. Along with issues like forced labour or begar in which the rural peasantry was involved often brought them together and they protested in different parts of the country. Forced labour was used to construct dams, roads, to supply water and to the landlords and kings. the protest against the begar was a regular feature.

Majorly two types of uprisings took place against the British. They are broadly regarded as:

- Civil Uprisings
- Tribal Uprisings

### Civil Uprisings

The civil uprisings include uprisings by common people, zamindars, poligars, thekedars etc. It does not encompass anything related to military or defence. The deposed native rulers or their descendants, ex-retainers, officials etc led these uprisings at various parts of the country. Their basic objective was to restore earlier forms of rule and social relations. The major causes for such civil uprisings are:

- Colonial land revenue system: The system of Zamindari, Ryotwari and Mahalwari had led to disruption in the traditional social structure. Peasants were disabled due to high taxation, summary eviction from their lands, frequent rise in the taxes, lack of security of tenure etc.
- Exploitation: The growth of intermediary revenue collectors, money lenders, tenants etc has led to severe economic exploitation of the peasants.



- The impoverishment of artisans: The promotion of British manufactured goods led to the devastation of Indian handloom and handicraft industries. There was a disappearance of traditional patrons of artisans which led to the further ruin of Indian industries.
- Deindustrialization: Migration of workers from industries to agriculture due to the destruction of traditional industries
- Foreign character: The British had remained alien to this land and treated natives with contempt.

### Important Civil Uprisings

Year	Uprising	Facts
1763-1800	Sanyasi Revolt (or) Fakir rebellion	<p><u>Causes:</u> Famine of 1770 and the harsh economic exploitation by the British</p> <p><u>Participants:</u> Peasants, dispossessed zamindars, disbanded soldiers and rural poor. Equal participation of Hindus and Muslims was seen</p> <p><u>Leaders:</u> Debi Chaudhurani, Majnum Shah, Chirag Ali, Musa Shah, Bhawani Pathak</p> <p><u>Literary works:</u> Anandmath and Devi Chaudhurani by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay</p>
1766-1774	Revolt in Midnapore and Dhalbhum	<p><u>Causes:</u> Introduction of Permanent Settlement System in Bengal and dispossession of Zamindaries</p> <p><u>Leaders:</u> Damodar Singh and Jagannath Dhal</p>
1769-1799	Revolt of Momarias	<p><u>Causes:</u> Rise of low-caste Momaria peasants to challenge the authority of Ahom kings</p> <p><u>Results:</u> The Ahom king, though survived the rebellion, finally fell to a Burmese invasion and came under British Rule</p>
1781	Civil Uprisings in Gorakhpur, Basti, and Bahraich	<p><u>Causes:</u> Plan of Warren Hastings to meet the war expenses against Marathas and Mysore. English officers were involved as Izaradars or revenue farmers in Awadh.</p>



1794	Revolt of Raja of Vizianagaram	<u>Causes:</u> British asked for help from the Raja of Vizianagaram, Ananda Gajapatiraju, to oust the French from Northern Circars. After their victory, the British went back on their words, demanded a tribute from the Raja and asked him to disband his troops. Raja Vizayaramaraju, the son of Late Ananda Gajapatiraju rose up in revolt. He was later killed in a battle.
1799-1800	Revolt of Dhundia in Bednur	Dhundia was a Maratha leader who rose up in revolt against the British. He was defeated by Wellesley in 1800.
1797; 1800-1805	Resistance of Kerala Simham Pazhassi Raja	Extension of British paramountcy over Kottayam and exorbitant rates of tax on the peasants led to mass resistance by peasants under the leadership of Pazhassi Raja.
1799	Civil Rebellion in Awadh	Massacre of Benares by Wazir Ali. He was the fourth Nawab of Awadh who was later deposed and pensioned off by the British.
1800; 1835-1837	Uprisings in Ganjam and Gumsur	Rebellion by Strikara Bhanj and his son Dhananjay Bhanj, the zamindars of Gumsur against the British.
1800-1802	Uprisings in Palamau	Agrarian landlordism and feudal system
1795-1805	Poligars revolt	Poligars were the landlords belonging to South India. They rose in revolt against British due to their revenue demands. Kattabomman Nayakan, Oomaithurai and Maruthu Pandian were the important chiefs in the revolt.
1808-1809	Diwan Velu Thampi's revolt	<u>Causes:</u> State of Travancore fell into arrears after agreeing into Subsidiary alliance. The British resident of Travancore was meddling in the internal affairs of the state. This made Velu Thampi rise against the Company. His call to revolt was known as Kundara Proclamation.



1808-1812	Disturbances in Bundelkhand	The insurgency by Bundela chiefs after Bundelkhand was attached with Bengal Presidency. The disturbances were put down by contractual obligations called <i>Ikarnamahs</i> with the Bundelas.
1813-1814	Parlakimedi Outbreak	Resistance from Parlakimedi Raja Narayan Deo against the Company
1816-1822	Kutch Rebellion	<p><u>Causes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· British interference in internal affairs of Kutch.</li> <li>· British administrative innovations</li> <li>· Excessive land assessments</li> </ul> <p><u>Leader:</u> Raja Bharmal II of Kutch</p>
1816	Rising at Bareilly	<p><u>Causes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Imposition of Police Tax</li> <li>· Discontent due to alien administration</li> </ul>
1817	Upsurge in Hataras	High revenue assessment from Hataras resulted in Dayaram revolting against the Company.
1817	Paika Rebellion or Paik Bidroh	<p>The Paiks of Odisha were the traditional landed militia.</p> <p><u>Causes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The English company's conquest of Odisha and the dethronement of the Raja of Khurda had greatly reduced the power and prestige of the Paiks.</li> <li>· The extortionist land revenue policies caused further resentment among the zamindars and peasants.</li> <li>· Increase in the prices of Salt due to taxes</li> <li>· Abolition of Cowrie currency</li> </ul>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requirement of payment of taxes in Silver are other causes</li> </ul> <p><u>Leader:</u> Bakshi Jagabandhu Bidyadhar</p>
1818-1820	Waghera Rising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resentment against alien rule</li> <li>Exactions of the Gaekwad of Baroda</li> </ul>
1828	Ahom Revolt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>British attempts to incorporate Assam into their territory after the First Burma War</li> <li>Gomdhar Konwar was the leader to lead the revolt</li> </ul>
1840's	Surat Salt Agitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raise in taxes on salt from 50 paise to 1 rupee</li> <li>Introduction of Bengal standard weights and measures</li> </ul>
1844	Kohlapur and Savantvadi revolts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gadkaris rose in revolt against the British due to administrative reorganization and unemployment</li> </ul>
1840's	Wahabi movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Islamic revivalist movement founded by Syed Ahmed of Rai Bareilly</li> <li>Conversion of Dar-ul-Harb into Dar-ul-Islam</li> <li>Jihad declared on Sikhs and later on British</li> </ul>
1840's	Kuka Movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Founded by Bhagat Jawahar Mal in Western Punjab. Another major leader was Baba Ram Singh who founded the Namdhari Sikh Sect</li> </ul> <p><u>Objectives:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Abolition of caste and other discriminations in Sikhism</li> <li>Discouraging the consumption of meat, alcohol, and drugs</li> <li>Permission for intermarriages</li> <li>Widow remarriage</li> <li>Removal of British and restoring Sikh kingdom</li> </ul>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Boycott of English laws, education and products</li> </ul>
1782-1831	Narkelberia Uprising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The first armed peasant uprising against the British</li> <li>· Titu Mir inspired Muslim peasants to rise against Hindu landlords</li> </ul>
1825-1835	The Pagal Panthis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Founded by Karam Shah consisting of the Hajong and Garo tribes</li> <li>· They refused to pay rents and attacked the houses of Zamindars</li> </ul>
1838-1857	Faraizi Revolt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Founded by Haji Shariat-Allah of Faridpur</li> <li>· Dadu Mian organized his followers to expel the British from Bengal</li> </ul>
1859-60	Indigo Revolt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indigo was identified as a major cash crop for East India Company's Investments in the 18<sup>th</sup></li> <li>• Indigo had worldwide demand similar piece-goods, opium and salt.</li> <li>• Indigoplanting in Bengal dated back to 1777 when Louis Bonnard, a Frenchman introduced it to the Indians.</li> <li>• The Indigo revolt(or Nil bidroha) was a peasant movement and subsequent uprising of indigo farmers against the indigo planters that arose in Chaugacha village of Nadia in Bengal in 1859.</li> </ul>
1921	Moplah Uprisings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Took place in Kerala</li> </ul> <p><u>Causes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Hike in revenue demands</li> <li>· Reduction in field sizes</li> <li>· Oppression of officials</li> </ul>

