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II B.A.HISTORY
HISTORY OF INDIA

THE FIRST WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

1857



The Great Revolt of 1857

The great revolt of 1857 was an important event of Indian History. This incident is described by Indian historians as the First War of Indian Independence. The English authors refer to it as the Sepoy Mutiny. Some causes led to the outbreak of the war. They are

1. Political Causes
2. Economic causes
3. Military causes
4. Socio-Religious causes
5. Immediate Causes

Political Causes

The subsidiary system of Wellesley and the Doctrine of Lapse of Dalhousie practically made many Indian rulers slaves to the British. The Indian holders had to pay higher tax to the British. Stopping the annual pension to Nanasahib, the adopted son of Peshwa Bajirao, made him the worst enemy of British. The British policy of annexation of Burma, Assam, Coorg, Sind and Punjab and Awadh created dissatisfaction among the people of these regions. The annexation of Awadh was the most unjustified act of British aggression and the most damaging to the British faith. Nanasahib, Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi and Nawab Wajid Ali were the worst victims of British foulplay and they were waiting for an opportunity to wreak vengeance on the British.

The Economic Causes

The salary of the Indians compared to the Europeans was very low. Indians were not given responsible posts. The resumption of rent free estates in Bengal during the period of Lord William Bentinck created unrest among the aristocracy of Bengal. The British machine made things flooded the Indian market and ruined the Indian manufacture. Moreover the English planters in Bengal and Bihar practised inhuman treatment on Indigo cultivators which constitutes one of the blackest episodes in the History of British rule in India.

Military Cause

The Indian soldiers highest position attainable by a sepoy was subedar. His pay as subedar was equivalent to the minimum pay of a newly recruited European. In 1806 the mutiny broke out at Vellore when the Indian sepoys were ordered to wear a new style of head dress. They were also ordered to remove the caste marks on their forehead and to replace the turban with leather hat. This insulted their religious sentiments. Hence they revolted.

Social cause

The introduction of western civilization through the medium of English language, created imbalance in the traditional orthodox classes of the Indians .The suppression of Sati and infanticide, the legislation of widow remarriage ,the right of inheritance to Christian converts, the promotion of western education at the expense of traditional learning, were not welcomed by the Indians. The introduction of railways , telegraphs and western education created doubt among the ingenious people. Thus tension was inevitable when new ideas and innovations.

IMMIDIATE CAUSES

The cartridges of the new Enfield rifle had a greased paper cover which had to be bitten off before the cartridge was loaded into the rifle. It was said that the greased paper was made up of beef and pig fat. Both the Hindus and the Muslims refused to use them as cow is sacred to Hindus and the pig is detestable to the Muslim community.



MANGAL PANDEY

On March 29, 1857 near kolkata , a young boy Mangal Pandey refused to use the enfield rifle and shot down his sergeant. He was arrested, tried and executed. When this news spread, many sepoys started the revolt



HEROES OF THE REVOLT



RANI LAXMI BAI



BEGUM HAZRAT MAHAL



NANA SAHIB



TANTYA TOPE



MANGAL PANDEY



KUNWAR SINGH



BAHADUR SHAH ZAFAR

CAUSES OF FAILURE OF REVOLT

- The Uprising had been planned for months but it broke before the due date. It was not widespread.
- There was no unity among the rebels. The ideas of nationalism had not yet developed. There was no common ideology.
- It was limited to north and central India . Gurkhas helped the British to suppress the revolt.
- The rebels could not match the sophisticated weapons of the British .
- The leadership was neither strong nor gave directions to the rebels. Moreover the British got timely help from the government of Britain.

RESULTS OF THE REVOLT

- The rule of East India Company ended with Queen Victoria's Proclamation of Nov. 1 1858. She assumed the title of the Empress of India.
- A secretary of state for India Affairs was appointed to look after the governance of India with the help of a council. He was called **Viceroy**.
- The policy of ruthless conquests and annexations of Indian territories was given up. The Indian princes were given the assurance that their states would not be annexed and were given the right to adoption.
- Full religious freedom was granted to the Indians. They were also given assurance that high posts would be given to them without any discrimination.

Thankyou