

# The Nature of the Revolt of 1857

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## Abstract

The Revolt of 1857 was an unprecedented event in the history of British rule in India. Due to this many sections of the Indian society were united. But the rebellion failed to achieve the desired goal. It sowed the seeds of Indian nationalism. Hence it is known as the First Indian War of Independence, Sepoy Mutiny and Indian Mutiny. There was an armed rebellion against the British rule. The rebellion ended with the end of the East India Company's rule in India. At the time of the rebellion, there was a belief in the public that some company officers were involved in the work of conversion. But the company never approved the conversion. The company was aware that religion could become a cause of rebellion in traditional Indian society.

**Keywords** Suppression, Peasant, Extortion, Adopted, Rebellion.

### Introduction

The Great Rebellion of 1857 is considered as India's freedom struggle against British rule. The 1857 movement was at a national level which was inspired by Indians and strong insistence that the country became free. This was the biggest event in the history of India after the establishment of British rule. It had the participation of people from different sections of the society. This rebellion was started by a company soldier. But it was not just a sepoy's rebellion. Historians felt that this was a great rebellion and it would be unfair to call it just a sepoy mutiny. became a major challenge to the mighty British power in India. Indian soldiers of course revolted but not all Indian soldiers were rebels. Still the sepoy had its limitations and weaknesses but the efforts to free India under British rule were patriotic acts and progressive steps. Despite the failure of a noble cause, he was a source of inspiration in India's freedom struggle. India soldiers who actually rebelled against their British officers. Thus, his rebellion was not against a particular group or class of British officers. Rather was completely against the British government. The Revolt of 1857 was suppressed. But it could not be crushed. Patriotism in the hearts of Indians was in the form of nationalism. Thus was the first war of Indian independence.

1. Suppression of revolt.
2. Formal end of the Mughal.
3. End of company rule in India.
4. Transfer of rule to the British crown.

Different leaders who joined the rebellion had their own interests. There was no constructive ideology and plan for the future before him. The whole country was not with them even after the rebels got the sympathy of the people. Educated people, merchants, Indian rulers were not only supporting them. But they were also cooperating with the British.

### Aim of the study

1. The first war of Independence or the revolt of 1857 has been a subject of profound discussion and has elicited keen attention from researchers from varied quarter
2. To explore and analyze the acknowledged and anonymous martyrs of the first war of Independence 1857.
3. To highlight the role and contribution of the leading figures in the revolt of 1857.
4. To study the nature of the revolution of 1857.
5. Relative consequences of the revolution of 1857.

### Rebellion

The Indian Rebellion of 1857 was a widespread rebellion against the rule of the British East India Company in India. It was the first expression of organized resistance against the British East India Company. It began as a revolt by the soldiers of the British East India Company's army, which had gained public participation. The rebellion is known by many names, the Sepoy Mutiny, the Indian Rebellion, the Great Rebellion, the Revolt of 1857 and the First War of Independence.

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**Political Reason For The Revolt of 1857**

The main political reason for the Revolt of 1857 was the expansionist policy of the British. Because a large number of other chiefs were removed by Indian rulers, which created fear in the minds of other ruling families. The adopted son of Rani Laxmibai was not allowed to sit on the throne of Jhansi. Dalhousie took many princely states like Satara, Nagpur and Jhansi under his control. Jaipur, Sambalpur and Udaipur were also usurped. Awadh was also brought under the British Empire by Lord Dalhousie. As a result, thousands of aristocrats, acolytes and soldiers became unemployed. This action turned Awadh into a hotbed of discontent and conspiracy.

**Social And Religious Reasons For The Revolt Of 1857**

A large section of the population was concerned about the rapidly spreading western civilization in India. Only then in 1850 by an act the law was changed and Indians who converted to Christianity were promoted. Those who followed Indian religion were humiliated in all respects. The law that abolished practices such as sati, female foeticide and legalized widow-remarriage was seen as a threat to the established social structure. Due to this, social discontent started spreading. The western way of receiving education was directly challenging the orthodoxy of Hindus and Muslims.

**Economic Reasons For The Revolt of 1857**

The peasants and zamindars in the rural areas were troubled by the order of extortion and heavy rent on the land. A large number of soldiers belonged to the peasantry and hence the anger of the peasants soon spread among the sepoys as well.

**Military Reasons For The Revolt of 1857**

Indian soldiers accounted for 87% of the British soldiers in India. But they were considered inferior to the British soldiers. An Indian soldier was paid less than a European soldier of the same rank.

**The Immediate Cause of The Revolt of 1857**

A rumor spread that the fat of cow and pig was used in the cartridges of infield rifles and Hindu-Muslim soldiers refused to use them. For this reason, in March 1857, Mangal Pandey raised his voice against the use of the new rifle and attacked his senior officers.

**Center of The Revolt of 1857**

Lucknow was the capital of Awadh, the center of the revolt of 1857. Begum Hazrat Mahal, one of the wives of the former king of Awadh, led the rebellion. The rebellion in Kanpur was led by Nana Saheb, the adopted son of Peshwa Bajirao II. In Jhansi, 22 year old Rani Laxmibai led the rebels and together with Nana Saheb's general Taty Tope marched them to Gwalior and captured them. The Bihar rebellion was led by Kumar Singh who belonged to a royal house of Jagdishpur Bihar. In this, if any ruler was childless by the British, he did not have the right to adopt his successor. Therefore, after the death of the ruler or relinquishing power, his rule was captured. These problems also included the growing discontent of the Brahmins, in which people were turned away from the right to receive revenue or lost their advantageous positions. Along with the Company's expansionist policy, the British started misbehaving with the Indians. The living habits, behavior and inventions of the British had an impact on the social beliefs of Indians. The Hindu law of inheritance was replaced by an Act in 1850. The western way of taking education was challenging the orthodoxy of Hindus as well as Muslims. Farmers and landlords in rural areas were troubled by the heavy rent on land and strict methods of tax collection. British manufactured goods entered India after the Industrial Revolution which ruined India's textile industry. Indian handicraft industries had to compete with cheap machine-made goods from Britain.

**Conclusion**

The rebellion resulted in the Act of 1858, Palmston introduced the bill in February. Secretary of State was made for India. Canning was made the first Viceroy and Governor General. All the rebels were forgiven unconditionally except the direct killers of the British. He was relieved by Canning after the 'Gaur's rebellion' in Meerut and Allahabad. The British carefully restructured the army. Sir H.S. Cunningham (Canning) wrote that the rebellion ushered in a new era in the economic field of India. Canning also introduced agricultural reforms. Attention was also paid to education and public works. In the serious problem of peace and order, the Macaulay-made Indian Penal Code of 1860 came into force. The judiciary was also reorganized by the Indian High Courts Act in 1861. Sir Charles Wood had said

in Parliament on 6 June 1961 that the situation in India could not be turned away from the deteriorating situation, in 1861 the Indian Council assumed the form of the Indian legislature. To avoid the repetition of nationwide movement, the British adopted the policy of 'divide and rule'.

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