

HISTORY AND DIRECTION OF THE 1857 REVOLT

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this essay is to examine the causes and developments of the 1857 Indian uprising. The conscious start of the fight for independence from the British colonial authority was the uprising of 1857. The 1857 uprising is known by a number of titles, including the Sepoy Mutiny and India's First War of Independence. The uprising started as a Sepoy mutiny at Meerut on May 10, 1857. Sepoys in the Bengal Presidency started it as a protest against British commanders. The British East India Company's rule came to an end with this struggle of independence. Following this, the British government exercised direct control over India through officials known as governors general. The hardship that Indians endured under British rule was the cause of the 1857 uprising. In addition to deplorable socioeconomic circumstances, the uprising has been exacerbated by the biased court and economic devastation. It was not an easy assignment to carry out the main battle for India's independence. But the protracted struggle to overthrow the British rule and obtain Indian independence did not end in a matter of days.

Gaining freedom from British authority took nearly the entire 18th and 19th centuries. The common people and brave Sepoys fought with their lives on the line to achieve independence from the English constituents. The Indian Sepoys carried out a variety of uprisings; while some were successful, the majority were unsuccessful. Numerous patriotic Sepoys gave their lives in self-sacrificing ways throughout the uprising. The majority of the revolts in the 18th century was carried out by sepoy and common Indians. One of the most notable uprisings, known as the "Sepoy mutiny revolt," took place in 1857. The other courageous movement, which took place in the late 18th or early 19th centuries, was prompted by the failure of the aforementioned revolt. The "Indian national movements" were mainly supported by the "Sepoy mutiny revolt," which served as a precursor. The "Enfield" rifle's debut was the direct cause. Before inserting the cartridge into the rifle, it had to be chewed off. Indian Sepoys thought that either cow or pig fat was used to lubricate the cartridge. This went against the sentiments of Muslims and Hindus. They were hesitant to employ the "Enfield" rifle as a result. The soldiers were incensed at the British because of this incident. This was thought to be the direct cause of the 1857 uprising.

Keywords: Origin, India, Rajasthan, Revolt of 1857 Etc.

INTRODUCTION

The hardship that Indians endured under British rule was the cause of the 1857 uprising. In addition to deplorable socioeconomic circumstances, the uprising has been exacerbated by the biased court and economic devastation. It was not an easy assignment to carry out the main battle for India's independence.

But the protracted struggle to overthrow the British rule and obtain Indian independence did not end in a matter of days. Gaining freedom from British authority took nearly the entire 18th and 19th centuries. The common people and brave Sepoys fought with their lives on the line to achieve independence from the English constituents. The

Indian Sepoys carried out a variety of uprisings, some of which were successful and the majority of which were not. Numerous sepoy who were patriotic gave their life voluntarily during the uprising. Common Indians and Sepoys were mostly involved in various forms of rebellion during the 18th century. One of the most notable uprisings, known as the "Sepoy Mutiny Revolt," took place in 1857. The other courageous movement, which took place in the late 18th or early 19th centuries, was prompted by the failure of the aforementioned revolt. The "Indian national movements" were mainly supported by the "Sepoy mutiny revolt," which served as a precursor. On May 10, 1857, the first rebellion of 1857 took place in Meerut. The notable uprising lasted for an exhausting year.

Numerous patriotic Sepoys were slain by the British overlords during this period. Nevertheless, the uprising persisted for a considerable amount of time, indicating that the British ruler dominated it and that it was ultimately futile. India mostly required some degree of nonviolent reform, which the 1857 uprising could initially provide. Aside from this, the main event of the uprising in 1857 was the end of the British "East India Company's" dominance in India. The British began to exert control over Indian residents after the powerful "East India Company" arrived in India for business. The whole northern and central region of India took part in the first significant uprising in history, known as the "Revolt of 1857."

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This paper aim is to study the origin and course of the Indian revolt of 1857.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper is purely based on secondary sources of data such as websites, journals, articles, books and other sources.

INDIAN REVOLT OF 1857

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REASONS FOR THE 1857 REVOLUTION

The following are some of the factors that led to the 1857 uprising:

1. Political Reasons for the 1857 Revolt

The main political cause of the Revolt of 1857 was the British policy of quick acquisition and expansion under the Doctrine of Lapse, which was supported by Lord Dalhousie. During his tenure as Governor-General of India from 1848 to 1856, Lord Dalhousie oversaw the British addition of several new regions to the Indian subcontinent. The Indian kings were deeply enraged by the Doctrine of Lapse and turned against the British government. The titles and pensions of a few Indian princes were also taken away. The Rani of Jhansi lost her right to rule once Baji Rao II passed away, and Nana Sahib's

pension was suspended. Due to the British government's violation of Hindu law, she was stripped. Over the course of eight years, the Governor-General annexed Satara (1848), Sambalpur (1850), Jhansi (1853), Nagpur (1853), Jaipur (1849), and Bhagat (1850). A Hindu who converted to another religion could now inherit his ancestors' fortune thanks to the Religious Disabilities Act of 1850. This was interpreted by Hindus as a justification for abandoning one's faith. Thousands of officials, retainers, lords, and troops were left unemployed after Lord Dalhousie overran Awadh due to inadequate governance. As a result of Lord Dalhousie's action, anti-British sentiment erupted in Awadh. Following the passing of Bahadur Shah II, Dalhousie suggested doing away with the title of Mughal Emperor.

2. Economic Reasons for the 1857 Revolt

The British strategy of economically exploiting India was the source of public hostility. High tax expectations and a stringent revenue collection scheme hurt the common populace. The British took advantage of India's economic potential to establish a colonial economy that served their capitalist objectives. India suffered from poverty following the Industrial Revolution in England as a result of indigenous handicrafts and businesses being weakened by the introduction of British manufactured products. All plantation businesses in India, including those producing coffee, tea, jute, and indigo, were dominated by British colonists. The new British revenue structure led to the beginning of interactions between the British government and peasants. Because the system removed the intermediaries from the equation, talukdars and zamindars, who previously collected land taxes, lost both their earnings and their status. The Inam Commission was tasked by Lord Dalhousie in 1852 with investigating the landlords' title records. Ownership rights were withdrawn for anyone who did not present proof of ownership.

3. The 1857 Revolt Economic and Social Factors

Indians were treated with disdain and harshly by the British due to their race. They were not allowed in many places, such as parks, hotels, and first-class train coaches, since they were reserved exclusively for Englishmen. The Indians were hurt by the British people's racial conceit, and as a result, they began to see the English as their worst enemies. Social dangers were perceived in the legalization of widow remarriage and the prohibition of practices

such as female infanticide and Sati. This was perceived as a setback to the long-standing Indian social structure. Orthodox Indians were upset by the advent of English education, the growth of Christian missionaries, and the modification of Hindu property law.

4. Military Reasons for the Revolt of 1857

In terms of compensation and other benefits, the Indian and British forces received quite different treatment. Because the Indian soldiers were viewed as inferior, high superiors mistreated them. Only Englishmen were permitted to occupy the highest military ranks. During their time in the military, Indian troops were not allowed to wear religious or caste emblems. It amounted to the British meddling in the religious and private affairs of the Indian troops. Sepoys were required by the General Services Enlistment Act to service abroad, notably in the United Kingdom. The vast bulk of Indian soldiers fought for the English in China, Iran, and the Crimea. Crossing the sea was considered a loss of religion in Indian culture at the time. This made people more hostile to the British.

IMPORTANCE

- The fight for freedom began with the "Revolt of 1857." Initially, the uprising was referred to by a number of names across the world, including "Sepoy rebellion, Sepoy mutiny, Sepoy revolt, Indian mutiny, and also the first war of Indian Independence."
- Because it was mostly carried out by Indian patriotic Sepoys, the specific occurrence was known as the Sepoy Mutiny.
- In addition, the Sepoy Mutiny was largely recognized as a significant turning point in the history of the British Empire and Indian administration.
- In addition to forcing the British monarch to acknowledge their army, administration division, and financial system of India, it first caused the powerful East India Company to dissolve.

The 1857 Revolution's Path: Revolution

- This provision was implemented in a derivative manner in 1858 with the passing of the Indian Government Act. According to several 18th-century patriotic heroes, the traits of rebellion first sparked the real complaints against the annexation of unpatriotic Sepoys and also largely contributed to the prevailing fact of rebellion.

- The British government first rejected this important historical issue since strong British governments were originally established from the civilian subject of administering the European continent.
- Four distinct forms of revolution—political, economic, social, and military—were responsible for the Sepoy Mutiny in 1857.
- One of the post-segmented impacts of the Sepoys' mutiny was the restriction of the nation's common people's interwoven relationships in order to quell additional rebellion.

IMMEDIATE EFFECT

- Government of India Act, 1858: This Act established direct British Parliamentary authority over India and ended the East India Company's dominance. The EIC went back to being merely a trade company.
- The Governor-General's responsibilities increased, and he was now also considered the Viceroy.
- The Governor-General represented the British Parliament, which had jurisdiction only over British India and not over the Princely States; the Viceroy would represent the Queen. However, this was the distinction between the two positions.
- The Board of Control, which was created by the Pitt's India Act of 1784, was disbanded. The Secretary of State for India, a cabinet-level minister, was appointed head of the newly established ministry known as "India House."
- The "India House" has 15 experts with extensive expertise operating in India. As a result, the British Parliament was working to establish a system that would prevent future uprisings. The India House served as the supreme authority for managing India and as a liaison between the Indian political system and the British Parliament.

Leaders of the Storm Centers and Revolt

From the outskirts of Patna to the borders of Rajasthan, the rebellion spread throughout the entire region. The main hubs of revolt in Bihar are Kanpur, Lucknow, Bareilly, Jhansi, Gwalior, and Arrah. The capital of the state of Awadh was Lucknow. One of the former monarchs of Awadh's Begum, Begum Hazrat Mahal, took over as leader of the rebellion. The revolt in Kanpur was led by Nana Saheb, who was Peshwa Bajirao II's adopted

son. He joined the uprising mostly because his pension had been revoked by the British. The victory was short-lived. The British were able to retake Kanpur after more troops arrived. The rebellion was violently put down. Although Nana Saheb was able to escape, his outstanding leader Tantia Tope persisted. Tantia Tope ultimately lost, was imprisoned, and was hanged. The twenty-two-year-old Rani Lakshmi Bai led the rebels after the British rejected her adopted son's claim to the kingdom of Jhansi. Although she fought bravely against the British troops, she was ultimately defeated by the English. Tantia Tope joined Rani Lakshmi Bai after she ran away, and the two marched to Gwalior before being taken into custody.

Reasons for the 1857 Revolt's Failure

Bahadur Shah was too old and weak to spearhead the rebellion. The rebellion was ill-planned and lacked central leadership and organization. For a short time, the rebellion spread over a wide region. Most of India remained mostly unaffected. The rebellion was opposed by the smaller princely states as well as the major ones, including Hyderabad, Mysore, Kashmir, Travancore, and Rajputana. The British were supported by a large number of zamindars and rich merchants and businesspeople. Indians who had access to contemporary education thought the rebellion was archaic. There was insufficient equipment for the Indian army. The rebellion lacked a solid grasp of British rule and was poorly prepared. One reason for the lack of participation from all throughout India was the revolt's small geographic reach. The eastern, southern, and western parts of India were mostly intact, so it lacked an all-India façade. This was probably brought on by the Company's brutal repression of earlier rebellions in those regions. Big zamindars acted as storm breakers, and even Awadh taluqdars retreated after promises of land restoration were made. All classes did not join." Merchants and moneylenders were especially susceptible to the wrath of the mutineers, and British influence better protected their interests. Educated Indians, who hoped that the British would bring about a period of modernization, viewed the uprising as backward-looking, pro-feudal, and a reaction against

modernity by traditional conservative forces. Most Indian monarchs chose to support the British instead of joining. Inadequate Arms and Equipment: The Indian forces fought mostly with swords and spears, with very few cannons or muskets. In contrast, European soldiers were equipped with state-of-the-art weapons like the Enfield rifle. The commander-in-chief was able to stay informed about the plans and movements of the rebels thanks to the electric telegraph. Uncoordinated and Poorly Organized: There was no central leadership or coordination, and the rebellion was ill-planned. The primary rebel leaders, Nana Saheb, Tantia Tope, Kunwar Singh, and Laxmibai, were completely outclassed by their British rivals in terms of generalship. The Lawrence brothers, John Nicholson, James Outram, Henry Havelock, and others were among the fortunate individuals who worked for the East India Company. No Unified Ideology: The mutineers lacked a coherent philosophy, a political vision, a sociological alternative, a future-focused agenda, and a comprehensive understanding of colonial control.

CONCLUSION

Millions of ordinary Indians took part in the uprising and joined the active insurrection in 1857. Therefore, it is generally believed that the fundamental reason behind the uprising in 1857 was to end the East India Company's control and institute direct government control over India, free from British influence or meddling. The governor of the British parliament mostly succeeded in shocking the uprising remuneration in 1857, when the British government was in power. The main reason the Sepoys joined the uprising was to free the Indian subcontinent from British domination. Because it brought together members of many social strata to fight for a common cause, the Revolt of 1857 is important in the history of Indian freedom. The primary outcome of the Revolt of 1857 was the passage of the Government of India Act, which put an end to the British East India Company's dominance in India and marked the beginning of the British government's direct administration over the country.

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