

## Chapter 7. First War of Independence: 1857



### Very Short Questions

**Question 1:** Which is called India's first war of independence?

**Answer:** The Sepoy Mutiny or Revolt of 1857.

**Question 2:** Who were the first to revolt against the British?

**Answer:** The Sepoys at Dum Dum in Calcutta.

**Question 3:** Name two famous Indian leaders of the revolt of 1857.

**Answer:** Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi and Nana Sahib.

**Question 4:** Under what pretext was Oudh annexed to the Company's dominion?

**Answer:** Oudh was not governed properly.

**Question 5:** Why was the 'war of 1857' hailed as the first war of National Independence?

**Answer:** People of different castes, communities and religions came together for the first time and fought for independence.

**Question 6:** Name the policy used by Lord Dalhousie for the extension of British territories in India.

**Answer:** Doctrine of Lapse.

**Question 7:** The Act of 1858 ended the East India Company's rule and the Government of India was transferred to the British Queen. Who became the first Viceroy under this Act?

**Or**

Who was the first Viceroy of India?

**Answer:** Lord Canning.

**Question 8:** What is meant by 'Doctrine of Lapse'?

**Answer:** This was a policy of annexation followed by Lord Dalhousie. The Doctrine meant that when a ruler of a dependent state died without a natural heir, the state is passed on to the English – Company.

**Question 9:** What happened to the Mughal Emperor, Bahadur Shah Zafar, after the Revolt of 1857?

**Answer:** He was deported to Rangoon where he died in 1862.

## **Short Questions – I**

**Question 1:** What was Nana Saheb's grievance against the British?

**Answer:** The British refused to accept Nana Saheb, the adopted son of the last Peshwa Baji Rao II, as the ruler of the Maratha and was refused to get the pension which his father was getting.

**Question 2:** State any two political causes responsible for the First War of Independence.

**Answer:** Two of the important political causes responsible for the First War of Independence were:

(i) The British policy of annexation of kingdoms under the pretext of inefficient administration of the rulers.

(ii) The Doctrine of Lapse introduced by Lord Dalhousie that imposed unsentimental law

of 'no adoption policy' for rulers and the lapse of kingdom into the hands of the British in the absence of natural heir.

**Question 3:** Why did the 'Doctrine of Lapse', become a political cause for the result of 1857?

**Answer:** According to the 'Doctrine of Lapse' if a king died without an heir to the throne, his adopted son could not succeed him. This caused a lot of discontentment amongst the Indians.

**Question 4:** Why did the Indian craftsmen and artisans start resenting the British Rule? Give two reasons.

**Answer:** (i) Thousands of workers became unemployed as Indian handicrafts and village industries died out.

(ii) The British annexed princely states and they lost Royal patronage.

**Question 5:** Mention any two social reforms advocated by the British which affected the religious traditions of the Indian people.

**Answer:** The two social reforms advocated by the British which affected religious tradition of Indian people were:

(i) Abolition of Sati Pratha

(ii) Widow remarriage.

**Question 6:** Mention any two social evils that existed in India during the 19th century. What measures did the British Government take to stop them.

**Answer:** During the 19th century, the two social evils that existed in India were Sati Pratha and problems of widows as they were not permitted to remarry. The British Government passed the widow Re-marriage Act in 1856 and the Abolition of Sati Act in 1829 to remove those evils.

**Question 7:** "The introduction of Enfield Rifles was the major factor in causing the great upsurge of 1857." Discuss.

**Answer:** Introduction of Enfield Rifles:

(i) The cartridges were greased with fats of pigs and cows. The sepoys had to remove the greased covers of the cartridges with their teeth, before loading them into the rifles.

(ii) Hindus and Muslims thought it to be an attempt to defile their religion.

**Question 8:** What was the General Service Enlistment Act?

**Answer:** In 1856, the General Service Enlistment Act was passed by the British Parliament. According to this act, the Indian soldiers could be sent overseas. The Brahmin soldiers saw in it a slander to their caste. According to an accepted belief, it was considered a taboo for a Brahmin to cross the seas. This Act disregarded the feelings of the Indian troops, which led to a feeling of resentment among them. As a result, they were angry with the British.

**Question 9:** State the immediate cause for the revolt of 1857.

**Answer:** The sepoys were ordered to use new Enfield Rifles, the cartridges of which were greased with fat of cows and pigs. Both Hindu and Muslim sepoys refused to use them and felt the English were defiling their religion.

## Short Questions – II

**Question 1:** The great rising of 1857 was an important event which produced far reaching results. Explain the Rise of Nationalism, with reference to the great uprising.

**Answer: Rise of Nationalism:** The sacrifices of the great Indian leaders during the revolt gave birth to nationalistic movement in India. Nana Sahib, Laxmi Bai, Bahadur Shah became national celebrities. The revolt soon became a challenge to the mighty British empire and the memory of it caused greater damage to the British rule in India than the revolt itself.

**Question 2:** In context to the various factors responsible for causing the great upsurge of 1857, discuss about the introduction of Railways and Telegraphs.

**Answer: Introduction of Railways and Telegraphs:**

- (i) Telegraph poles were thought to be erected for the purpose of hanging people on them, who opposed the British rule in India.
- (ii) In railways, Brahmins and untouchables were made to sit side by side which they thought would defy their religion.
- (iii) Modern innovations threatened the old social rules and produced unrest among many common orthodox people in India.

**Question 3:** With reference to the British rule in India, mention two economic factors, which became the causes of the First War of Independence, 1857.

**Answer:** The two economic factors which became the cause of the First War of Independence were:

- (i) The British trade policy in India led to the ruin of Indian trade and handicrafts. Heavy duties were imposed on the Indian textile and goods imported to Britain and cheap manufactured goods were sold in India. This resulted in the ruin of Indian textile and handicraft industry, leaving many artisans unemployed.
- (ii) The exploitation of the farmers under zamindari system. Land revenues were high and non payment of the same due to various reasons led to the ejections of farmers from land. This caused discontentment among cultivators.

**Question 4:** The First War of Independence, 1857, led to several changes. With reference to this explain the rights granted to the Indian Princes and Chiefs.

**Answer: Rights granted to the Indian Princes and Chiefs:**

- (i) The Doctrine of Lapse was abandoned and the right to adoption was recognised.
- (ii) The Indian Princes were assured that their territories would never be annexed,

(iii) The British Government declared that all the treaties and agreements would be honoured. Question

**Question 5:** Discuss about the growing unemployment under the British caused due to the 1857 revolt.

**Answer:** Indian weavers and craftsmen could not compete with the machine-made goods of the British and thousands of weavers/craftsmen became unemployed. The demand for Indian textiles was reduced and handloom industry was badly affected. The company used political influence to buy finest quality cotton from India. Annexation of Princely States led to loss of royal patronage. Thousands of soldiers lost their traditional jobs. This led to large scale unemployment.

**Question 6:** Numerous causes were at work in causing the great upsurge of 1857. With reference to this statement, explain the laws that interfered with the religious customs of the people.

**Answer: Laws that interfered with the Religious Customs of the people:**

- (i) The practice of Sati was made illegal and punishable by law.
- (ii) Laws were made to forbid infanticide, allow re-marriage of widows and stop polygamy.
- (iii) Government imposed tax on the property belonging to temples and mosques.
- (iv) Dalhousie passed a law which entitled a person converted to Christianity to inherit his ancestral property.

**Question 7:** With reference to the revolt of 1857 explain briefly about the British policy of racial discrimination.

**Answer:** The British considered themselves racially superior to Indians. Educated Indians were not given appointment to high posts. In Civil Services they could rise to the post of Sardar or an Amin, in military service to the rank of a Subedar. They were hated and humiliated in their own country.

**Question 8:** The great rising of 1857 was an important event which produced far reaching results. Explain the following with reference to the great uprising the changes introduced in the administrative set-up of the British territories in India.

**Answer:** The British realised that the ratio of Europeans and Indian sepoys in the army was a major factor in the Revolt of 1857. Number of European troops was increased and artillery and other weapons were placed under the Europeans only. To curb the unity among Indian troops, the new army was organised on division and counter poise.

- (i) A Royal Indian Army was created by merging the armies of the Company and the Crown together under a Commander-in-Chief.
- (ii) The ratio of Europeans and Indians in the army was fixed at 1 : 2 in Bengal and at 2 : 5 in Bombay and Madras.
- (iii) Indian soldiers were excluded from the artillery and arsenal departments.

**Question 9:** In the context of 1857 revolt, discuss about the subordination of Indian economy to British interests.

**Answer:** After the Industrial Revolution, the British developed their own textile industry. Instead of Indian textile goods, they bought raw material from India, and forced Indians to buy their product from the mills. This led to monopolisation of trade and commerce and the ruin of Indian handicrafts as they forced Indians to sell their raw material at a lower rate and buy English goods at a higher rate.

**Question 10:** Discuss about the economic exploitation caused by the great rising of 1857.

**Answer: Economic Exploitation:** Firstly, the economic drain from India increased on account of salaries and allowances given to Secretary of State for India and his fifteen members of Indian Council. The military and civil administration expenditure were paid from revenue of India.

Secondly, India was turned into a colonial economy exporting raw materials like indigo, cotton, spices, etc., and importing British goods.

Thirdly, the British invested their capital in plantations, jute mills, railways, shipping, etc., and: drained away the profits to England.

**Question 11:** Discuss how the unhappiness of the Indian artisans and craftsmen became a factor for 1857 revolt.

**Answer:** The British rulers deliberately crippled Indian arts and crafts by imposing heavy duties on Indian silk and cotton textiles in Britain. On the other hand British goods were imported into India at a nominal duty. Millions of artisans and craftsmen who lost their job and had no alternative source of income became unhappy with the foreign rule.

## Long Questions

**Question 1:** Explain the political causes that led to the uprising of 1857.

**Answer: Political Causes:**

1. Among the political causes of the revolt the chief factor was the Doctrine of Lapse followed by Lord Dalhousie. This policy deprived many kings of their kingdoms because they had no natural heir of their own since right of adoption in such cases was denied by the British so the states automatically became a part of British empire.
2. Discourtesy of the Mughal Emperors as Bahadur Shah Zafar was removed from Delhi's throne.
3. Treatment melted out to Nana Saheb as he was the adopted son of Peshwa Baji Rao II and was refused pension as he was sending emissaries to different parts of the country and travelling himself to gather support for the rebellion.
4. Annexation of Oudh on grounds of misgovernance by Nawab Wajid Ali Shah.

5. Unpopular administration as the British officials were not easily approachable and the language need was English, alien to the natives. Also, the British officials had great contempt for Indians.

**Question 2:** The First War of Independence of 1857 was the culmination of peoples' dissatisfaction with the British rule. In this context, discuss about the economic causes.

**Answer: Economic Causes:** The British crippled Indian trade and created a high tariff wall in Britain against Indian goods and encouraged the imports of British goods to India. They purchased raw materials from India and manufactured goods were sent back to India making enormous profit. The demand for Indian goods were reduced and handloom industry was adversely affected. Thousands of craftsmen and artisans were thrown out of employment. The manufacturing units of Dacca, Murshidabad and Surat became desolate, even the Indian iron and smelting industry was practically stamped out by cheap imported iron and steel for railways. A new plantation system introduced in 1833 brought incalculable misery for the peasants. The hardest hit were the peasants of Indigo plantation in Bengal and Bihar. The new changes in the agrarian system and exorbitant land revenue impoverished the peasants. Unemployment among the people was widely prevalent. Government took away tax free lands. Monopolization of jute, tea and coffee industry took place. Zamindars and Taluqdars were displaced.

**Question 3:** The Revolt of 1857 can be attributed to many causes. Explain the military causes which led to the revolt of 1857.

**Answer: Military Causes:** The Indian sepoys in the British army moved a strong sense of resentment at the low scale of salary and poor prospects of promotion. In 1856, an act was passed under which every new recruit was expected to serve overseas. This went against Hindu religious beliefs at that time. The sepoys were deprived of the allowances for batta when they served in territories other than their own. Their pent up emotions burst forth when they were ordered to use new Enfield rifles with cartridges greased with the fat of cows and pigs. The British lost their prestige and honour by their defeat in the Afghan War. Annexation of Oudh made soldiers lose their jobs. No credit was given to Indian soldiers for fighting various wars for British Indian soldiers were ill-treated and made to feel inferior. Numerical strength of Indian soldiers was more than the British. It gave them the courage to fight against the British.

**Question 4:** Several factors led to the Revolt of 1857. With reference to this, explain about the discontentment of Sepoys.

**Answer:** The Indian soldiers were unhappy because of their low salary and poor prospects of promotion and working conditions. All the high ranks in the army were reserved for the British only.

The British officers maintained a social distance with Indian soldiers. They held a derogatory opinion about the soldiers and treated them like menial servants. Also the Hindu sepoys of Bengal Army had to cross Sindhu river during Anglo-Afghan War (1839-42) which were forbidden by their religion. The immediate cause of discontentment among sepoys was the introduction of Enfield Rifle with cartridges which were greased with the fat of cows and pigs. The cows are regarded sacred among Hindu and Muslim

regard pigs as unclean. The above factors together led the feeling of discontentment among sepoy, which proved instrumental in sepoy mutiny of 1857.

**Question 5:** Discuss about the resentment of the rulers of the native state against the British which was a major factor of 1857 Revolt.

**Answer:** The last Mughal Emperor was Bahadur Shah. Lord Canning announced that Bahadur Shah's successor would not be allowed to use the imperial title. Such a discourtesy to the Mughal Emperor hurt Muslim sentiments considerably. Dalhousie's refusal to grant pension to Nana Saheb, the adopted son of the ex-Peshwa (Baji Rao II) was resented by the Hindus in general and Nana Saheb in particular. Nawab Wazid Ali Shah was deposed on the ground that Awadh was not being managed well. The annexation of Awadh was a case of high-handedness on the part of the Company. The Nawab of Awadh had been loyal to the Company for long time. The British broke all their pledges and promises to the native rulers. This all caused resentment among the rulers.

**Question 6:** The great outbreak of 1857 brought about important changes in the character of Indian Administration and the future development of the country. In this context discuss about the changes introduced in the administrative set-up of the British territories in India.

**Or**

"The great rising of 1857 was an important event which produced far reaching results in India's struggle for freedom". In this context, explain about the reorganization of Army.

**Answer: Changes introduced in the administrative set-up:**

1. The war ended the East India Company's rule in India and brought the Indian Empire under the direct control of the British Crown. Queen Victoria became the Empress of India.
2. The Act of 1858 abolished the Company's Board of Control and the Board of Directors. All their powers were transferred to a Cabinet Minister, known as the Secretary of State. He was to be advised by a council consisting of 15 members.
3. The designation of the Governor-General was changed to Viceroy. It was his duty to run the Indian Administration on behalf of the Crown. He was under the control of the Secretary of State for India.
4. It was decided that appointments to the civil service were to be made by open competition under rules made by the Secretary of State and the Council.

## Picture Based Questions

**Question 1:** Answer the following:

(i) Name the lady in the picture shown.

(ii) Which proclamation was passed by this lady and when?



**Answer:** (i) Queen Victoria

(ii) Queen's Proclamation. It was passed on 2nd August 1858.