

POPULAR RESISTANCE TO THE BRITISH RULE

L.No	Title of Lesson	SKILLS	Activity
7	Popular Resistance to the British Rule	Self Awareness, Empathy, Critical thinking	Visit any tribal museums and try to understand their living styles

Meaning

Exploitation of natural and human resources by British led to rise of Popular Resistance Movements mainly by Peasants, Tribals and Sainiks. The most important Popular Resistance to the British rule during the 19th century was the revolt of 1857. There was a sense of self confidence that gave an impact to National Awakening.

Causes of Popular Resistance Movements

- Policies under the British rule had undermined the rights, status and economic position of Indians.
- There were a series of civil rebellions which were led by rulers who were deposed by the Britishers, ex-officials of the conquered Indian states, impoverished zamindars and poligars who wanted to regain their land and estates.
- The tribal groups rebelled because they did not want the traders and moneylenders to interfere in their life style.
- Interference in religious practices was another cause of these popular rebellions. Often these revolts were anti-Christian.

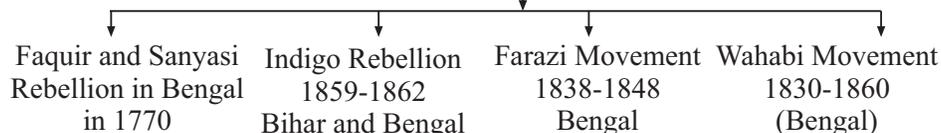
Nature of Popular Resistance Movements

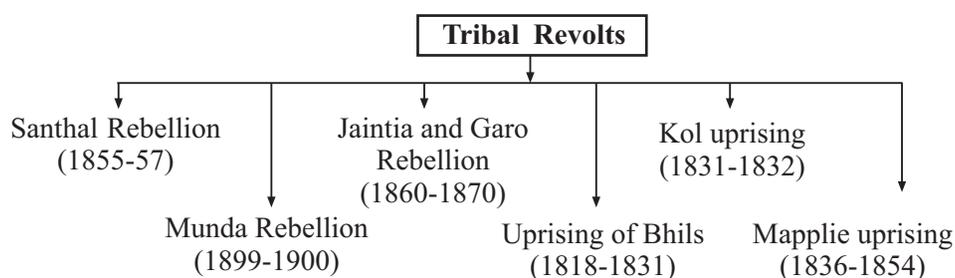
Violence and plunder were the two most popular tools used by the rebels to express their resistance against their oppressors.

Significance of Peasant Revolt

- Though these revolts were not aimed at uprooting the British rule from India, they created awareness among the Indians.
- They now felt a need to organize and fight against exploitation and oppression.

Peasant Revolts

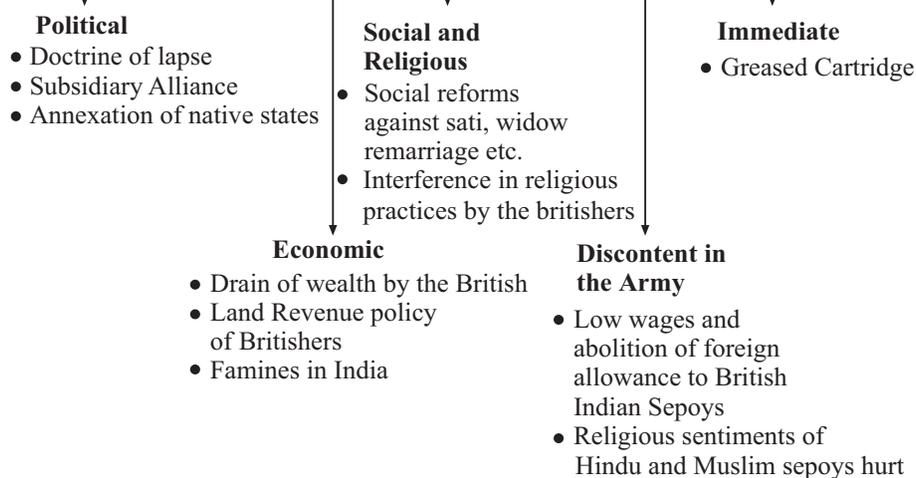




Many other uprisings took place against the British policies of exploitation and destruction of the tribals. They were finally put down.

The Revolt 1857

Causes of the Revolt



Course of the Revolt

- A sepoy called Mangal Pandey was the first soldier who openly disobeyed orders.
- At Meerut where 85 sepoy of the cavalry regiment were sentenced to 2-10 years imprisonment for refusing to use greased cartridges.
- The very next day, on 10th May 1857, three regiments broke into open mutiny.
- They declared the Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah as the emperor of India.
- From Delhi the revolt spread to other places like Kanpur, Lucknow, Jhansi.

Nature of the Revolt

- A big debate surrounds the revolt of 1857. British historians describe the events of 1857-1858 as merely a mutiny by the sepoy.
- Some Indian historians tend to call it the First War of Independence.
- The participation of peasants and artisans made the revolt a widespread and popular event. It was also characterised by Hindu-Muslim unity.

Failure of the Revolt

Various causes led to the failure of the Revolt of 1857.

- There was no unity of purpose among the rebels.
- The middle and upper classes as well as the modern educated Indians did not support the revolt. The leadership of the movement was weak. Indian leaders lacked organisation and planning.
- No national leader emerged to coordinate the movement and give it a purpose and direction.
- The revolt was confined to Bengal Presidency while Madras and Bombay Presidencies were unaffected.

The Legacy of the Revolt

- Though the efforts of the rebels failed, the British government was pressurised to change their policy towards India.
- In August 1858 the British crown assumed control of India from the East India Company and Queen Victoria was crowned empress of India.
- This brought to an end the rule of East India Company.
- Radical changes were introduced in the army.
- The strength of European troops in India was increased and the number of Indian troops reduced from the pre- 1857 figure.

Evaluate Yourself

- Q. Identify the major causes of the revolt of 1857.
 - Q. Why did the revolt fail to sustain its initial success?
 - Q. Why was it felt that the army was responsible for the crisis of 1857?
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