

NCERT SOLUTIONS

CLASS - 12th



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Class : 12th

Subject : History

Chapter : 11

Chapter Name : Rebels And The Raj

Q1 Why did the mutinous sepoy in many places turn to erstwhile rulers to provide leadership to the revolt?

Answer. In order to fight against the British, leadership and organisation was required. For these the rebels sometimes turned to those who had been leaders before the British conquest. In few cases leaders did not have any option other than joining the revolt.

The rulers were asked to provide leadership as they had wealth and private armies too. The rulers were locally popular and it was easy for them to reach the common masses and ask for support.

→ One of the first acts of the sepoy of Meerut, they rushed to the Mughal emperor at Delhi to accept their leadership of the revolt.

→ In Kanpur, the sepoy and the local people forced Nana Saheb to join the revolt.

→ In Jhansi, Rani was forced by the people to join the revolt.

Thus, people parts from different classes were forced to join the revolt and the erstwhile leaders gave their support.

Page : 314 , Block Name : Short Answer

Q2 Discuss the evidence that indicates planning and coordination on the part of the rebels.

Answer. The evidence that indicates planning and coordination on the part of the rebels was :

→ Captain Hearsey of the Awadh Military Police had been given protection by his Indian subordinates during the mutiny. The 41st Native Infantry, which was stationed in the same place, insisted that since they had killed all their white officers, the Military Police should also kill Hearsey or deliver him as a prisoner to the 41st. The Military Police refused to do either, and it

was decided that the matter would be settled by a Panchayat composed of native officers drawn from each regiment. Charles Ball, who wrote one of the earliest histories of the uprising, noted that panchayats were a nightly occurrence in the Kanpur sepoy lines. It clearly suggests that some of the decisions were taken collectively.

- Another event which shows planning was that : The 7th Awadh Cavalry refused to accept the new cartridges and then they wrote to the 48th Native Infantry that acted upon faith
- Sepoys were talking often found planning and talking about the rebellion.

Page : 314 , Block Name : Short Answer

Q3 Discuss the extent to which religious beliefs shaped the events of 1857.

Answer. The religious beliefs of the people were shaped due to the following factors :

- There were rumours about greased cartridges. It was being told that the cartridges were greased with the fats of cows and pigs.
- Many social reforms were brought about by the British government like widow remarriage and abolition of sati. People thought it to be an interference with in their social life.
- Many Christian missionaries came to India during that time. Indians thought that the British government will gradually make the Indian majority to change their religion.
- Indians were getting introduced to Western Education, Western ideas and Western institution. English medium schools, colleges and universities were set up which taught Western sciences and the liberal arts. Indians thought it to be an attack on their value system.

Page : 314 , Block Name : Short Answer

Q4 What were the measures taken to ensure unity among the rebels?

Answer. The measures taken to ensure unity among the rebels were :

- The rebel proclamations in 1857 repeatedly appealed to all sections of the population, irrespective of their caste and creed.

- Many of the proclamations were issued by the Muslim princes or in their names but even these took care to address the sentiments of Hindus.
- The rebellion was seen as a war in which both Hindus and Muslims had equally to lose or gain. The ishtahars harked back to the pre-British Hindu-Muslim past and glorified the coexistence of different communities under the Mughal Empire.
- The proclamation that was issued under the name of Bahadur Shah appealed to the people to join the fight under the standards of both Muhammad as well as Mahavira.
- It was remarkable that during the uprising religious divisions between Hindus and Muslims were hardly noticeable despite British attempts to create such divisions.

Page : 314 , Block Name : Short Answer

Q5 What steps did the British take to quell the uprising?

Answer. The steps taken by the British to quell the uprising were :

- Troops were sent in order to reconquer North India. The British also passed a series of laws to address the insurgency.
- The whole of North India was put under Martial law but military officers and even ordinary Britons were given the power to try and punish Indians suspected of rebellion.
- All the ordinary processes of law and trial were suspended and orders were given that rebellion would have death as punishment.
- The British began the task of suppressing the revolt. They like the rebels recognised the symbolic value of Delhi. The British thus mounted a two pronged attack.
- The British used military power on a gigantic scale.

Page : 134 , Block Name : Short Answer

Q6 Why was the revolt particularly widespread in Awadh? What prompted the peasants, taluqdars and Zamindars to join the revolt?

Answer. The revolt particularly widespread in Awadh because the kingdom was formally annexed to the British Empire. The conquest happened in stages :

Firstly, The Subsidiary Alliance was imposed on Awadh.

Secondly, The Nawab had to disband his military force and allow the British to position their troops within the kingdom, and act in accordance with the advice of the British Resident who was now to be attached to the court.

Reasons that prompted the peasants, taluqdars and Zamindars to join the revolt were :

→ Lord Dalhousie's annexation created disaffection in all the areas and principalities that were annexed but most of it was in the kingdom of Awadh in the heart of North India.

→ Nawab Wajid Ali Shah was dethroned and exiled to Calcutta on the grounds of misgovernance. The British government also wrongly assumed him to be an unpopular ruler. On the contrary, he was widely loved, and when he left his beloved Lucknow, there were many who followed him all the way to Kanpur singing songs of lament.

→ A chain of grievances in Awadh linked prince, taluqdar, peasant and sepoy.

→ In Awadh, more than anywhere else, the revolt became an expression of popular resistance to an alien order. The grievances of the peasants were carried over into the sepoy lines since a vast majority of the sepoys were recruited from the villages of Awadh. The sepoys defied their superior officers and took up arms then they were joined very swiftly by their brethren in the villages. Everywhere, peasants poured into towns and joined the soldiers and the ordinary people of the towns in collective acts of rebellion.

Page : 315 , Block Name : Long Answer

Q7 What did the rebels want? To what extent did the vision of different social groups differ?

Answer. The rebels wanted :

The vision of unity - The rebels appealed to all sections of the population, irrespective of their caste and creed to be united for the cause of independence. Many of the proclamations issued by the Muslim princes or in their names but even these took care to address the sentiments of Hindus.

The rebellion was perceived to be a war in which both Hindus and Muslims had equally to lose or gain.

Against the symbols of oppression - The rebels completely rejected everything associated with British rule. They condemned the British for the annexations they had carried out and the treaties they had broken. The rebel leaders said, that the British could not be trusted.

The people were enraged by the British land revenue settlements and the way they dispossessed landholders, both big and small, and foreign commerce had driven artisans and weavers to ruin. The rebels wanted to restore that world. The proclamations expressed the widespread fear that the British were bent on destroying the caste and religions of the Hindus and Muslims and converting them to Christians.

The search for alternative power - The administrative structures established by the rebels were primarily aimed at meeting the demands of war. However in most cases these structures could not survive the British onslaught. But in Awadh, where resistance to the British lasted longest, plans of counter-attack were being drawn up by the Lucknow court and hierarchies of command were in place.

The vision of different social groups :

Zamindars : Exorbitant revenues were imposed on them. They were disgraced and ruined and their estates were put for public auctions. So they were against the British rule and wanted the way they lived earlier.

Merchants : The British government monopolised the trade of all the fine and expensive items. They were imprisoned and ill-treated many a times. Still some of the merchants thought that the British government will help them curb the fraudulent practices and will open opportunities for trade with the outside world.

Pandits and Fakirs : They were strongly against the Europeans, they thought the British to be enemy to both religions and wanted to take part in the holy war.

Artisans : Introduction of English articles in India have made the Weavers, the blacksmith, etc, unemployed. They thought that under the Badshahi Government they will be exclusively employed in the service of the Kings and the rich

Public Servants : The public Servants had very little respect, low pay and no manner of influence and all posts of dignity and emolument in both the departments are exclusively bestowed on Englishmen. Therefore, all the natives in the British service ought to be alive to their religion and interest and abjuring their loyalty to the English, side with the Badshahi Government and obtain salaries of 200 and 300 rupees a month for present, and be entitled to high posts in the future.

Page : 315 , Block Name : Long Answer

Q8 What do visual representation tell us about the revolt of 1857? How do historians analyse these representations?

Answer. One of the important records of mutiny is the pictorial images produced by the British and Indians : paintings, pencil drawings, etchings, posters, cartoons, bazaar prints, etc.

British pictures offer a variety of images that were meant to provoke a range of different emotions and reactions. Some of them commemorate the British heroes who saved the English and repressed the rebels.

Newspaper reports have a power over public imagination ; they shape feelings and attitudes to events. Inflamed particularly by tales of violence against women and children, there were public demands in Britain for revenge and retribution. The British government was asked to protect the honour of innocent women and ensure the safety of helpless children. Artists expressed as well as shaped these sentiments through their visual representations of trauma and suffering.

As waves of anger and shock spread in Britain, demands for retribution grew louder. Visual representations and news about revolt created a milieu in which violent repression and vengeance were seen as both necessary and just. There were innumerable other pictures and cartoons in the British press that sanctioned brutal repression and violent reprisal.

Fig. 11.8 : A mosque on the Delhi Ridge, photographed after the revolt of 1857 recorded innumerable images of desolation and ruin.



Fig. 11.9 : Secundrah Bagh, Lucknow. Here, we see four solitary figures within a desolate place that was once the pleasure garden built by Nawab Wajid Ali Shah. The skeletons of 2000 rebel Sepoys strewn on the ground are meant to be a cold warning of the futility of the rebellion.



Fig. 11.12 : Miss Wheeler defending herself against Sepoys in Kanpur.



Fig. 11.13 : "The news of the terrible massacre at Cawnpore (Kanpur) produced an outburst of fiery indignation and wild desire for revenge throughout the whole of England."



Page : 315 , Block Name : Long Answer

Q9 Examine any two sources presented in the chapter, choosing one visual and one text, and discuss how these represent the point of view of the Victor and the vanquished.

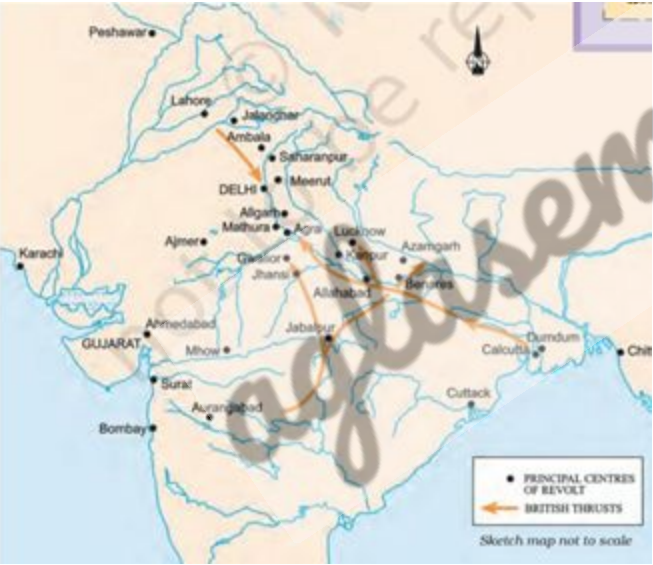
Answer. Source (figure - 11.2) : Ordinary people join the sepoys in attacking the British in Lucknow. This is a picture from the revolt of 1857, where the peasants, zamindars, etc joined the sepoy mutiny.



Source : Ordinary life in extraordinary times : The text tells us about the lives of people in the cities during the time of revolt. People had to go through a lot of problems. They did not get proper food to eat. Water-carriers have stopped filling water. The righteous people became corrupt and there were other problems too.

Page : 315 , Block Name : Long Answer

Q10 On an outline map of India, mark Calcutta (Kolkata), Bombay (Mumbai) and Madras (Chennai), three major centres of British power in 1857. Refer to Maps 1 and 2 and plot the areas where the revolt was most widespread. How close or far were these areas from the colonial cities?



Page : 315 , Block Name : Map Work