

## REBELS AND THE RAJ

### Multiple Choice Type Questions

1. From where did the revolt of 1857 start?  
(a) Ambala  
(b) Meerut  
(c) Lucknow  
(d) Gwalior
2. Who was forced to lead the revolt?  
(a) Bahadur Shah Zafar  
(b) Peshwa Baji Rao II  
(c) Nawab Shaukat Ali  
(d) Kunwar Singh
3. Who led the revolt at Kanpur?  
(a) Bahadur Shah  
(b) Nana Saheb  
(c) Shah Mai  
(d) Maulavi Ahmadulla Shah
4. Wajid Ali Shah was the Nawab of \_\_\_\_\_  
(a) Awadh  
(b) Bengal  
(c) Hyderabad  
(d) Karnataka
5. Birjis Qadr was the younger son of \_\_\_\_\_  
(a) Nawab Shaukat Ali  
(b) Nawab Siraj-ud-daula  
(c) Nawab Mir Ali  
(d) Nawab Wajid Ali Shah

### Answer

1. (b)      2. (a)      3. (b)      4. (a)      5. (d)

### SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. How did the message about the Revolt of 1857 spread?

#### Answer:

1. The Revolt of 1857 was associated not only with the people of the court but also with ordinary men and women. Besides the ranis, rajas, nawabs, and taluqdars, many common people, religious persons and self-styled prophets participated in it.
2. The message of rebellion was carried by ordinary men and women.
3. At some places, even the religious people spread the message of the Revolt of 1857. For example, in Meerut, a Fakir used to ride on an elephant. Many sepoys met him time and again.

4. After the annexation of Awadh, Lucknow had many religious leaders and self-styled prophets who preached the destruction of the British rule.
5. At many places, the local leaders played an important role. They urged the peasants, Zamindar, and tribals to revolt.
6. In Uttar Pradesh, Shah Mai motivated and mobilized the residents of Barout paragana.
7. Similarly, Gonoo, a tribal who cultivated in Singh hum in Chotanagpur, became a rebel leader of the Kol tribe.

2. What were the causes for the discontent among the soldiers before the Mutiny of 1857?

Or

Discuss military causes for the Revolt of 1857.

**Answer:** There were many reasons for discontent among the soldiers:

1. **Fear of New Cartridges:** The sepoys were provided bullets which were coated with the fat of cows and pigs. Before use, the soldiers had to bite these bullets. So they feared that it would corrupt their caste and religion.
2. **Grievances about Leave and Promotions:** The sepoys were not easily granted leaves. They were also paid lower salaries as compared to the British soldiers. They were not given due promotions which enraged the soldiers and nurtured a sense of discontent among them.
3. **Grouse Against Misbehaviour and Racial Abuse:** Earlier, the British officials had very friendly relations with the sepoys. They joined them in their leisure activities and talked to them in the local language. They also familiarized themselves with their customs and culture. They posed themselves as fatherly figures to all the Indian soldiers. But after 1840s, there was a change for the worse. The British officers started considering themselves as superior. They treated Indian sepoys as their social inferiors and ignored their feelings and sensibilities. They even abused and assaulted them. It was naturally resented by the soldiers.
4. **Nexus between Soldiers and Villagers:** Awadh was the nursery of the Bengal Army. In other words, a large number of soldiers were recruited from the villages in the vicinity of Awadh. So these soldiers had a close relationship with the villages. Such a link between the two had grave implications during the mutiny.

3. List any five ways in which taluqdars of Awadh were affected by the British Policy. (C.B.S.E. Sample Paper 2011)

Or

how did the British dispossess the taluqdars of Awadh during 1857? Explain with examples. (C.B.S.E. 2014 (D))

**Answer:** The taluqdars of Awadh felt influenced by the British policy in the following way:

- ✓ The forts and castles of the taluqdars were demolished and their armed forces were disbanded.
- ✓ They were deprived of their lands under the Summary Settlement of 1856. Many taluqdars lost even more than half the villages under their control.
- ✓ Their freedom was snatched.
- ✓ They lost a lot of power and respect because of the loss of their land.
- ✓ The demand for revenue was doubled. It generated a sense of anger among the taluqdars.

4. What was Subsidiary Alliance?

Or  
examine the provisions of the 'Subsidiary Alliance System' devised by Lord Wellesley in 1798 for India.  
(C.B.S.E. 2015 (O.D.))

**Answer:** Subsidiary Alliance was a system of land revenue introduced by Lord Wellesley in 1798 C.E. All the local rulers had to accept the following terms and conditions who entered into such an alliance with the British:

- The ally would have to keep a British armed contingent in his territory.
- The British would be responsible for the protection of their ally from any type of external and internal threats to their power.
- Resources for maintaining the British contingent would be provided by the ally.
- The ally could not enter into the agreement with other local rulers or foreign companies or engage in warfare without the permission of the British.
- One British Resident would be stationed in the Court of the allied king.

5. What was the thinking of the British behind the removal of taluqdars in Awadh? Up to what extent, this thinking was correct?

**Answer:** The British land revenue officials thought that if they could remove taluqdars then they could give land to their actual owners. It will reduce the level of exploitation of peasants and increase the revenue returns for the State but this did not actually happen. There was a definite increase in revenue returns for the State but the burden of demand on peasants remained the same.

Officials soon came to know that most of the areas of Awadh were actually heavily over assessed. At some places, the increase of revenue demanded was from 30% to 70%. That is why neither taluqdars and nor the peasants were happy. The result of the dispossession of taluqdars was the breakdown of the whole of the social order. The ties of loyalty and patronage were disrupted which had bounded the peasants to the taluqdars.

### LONG ANSWER QUESTION

1. To what extent the discontent against the foreign rule was responsible for the Revolt of 1857? Can it be called the first war of Indian Independence?

Or  
what were the reasons for the revolt of 1857? Was it a mutiny of sepoys or a national struggle for freedom? Justify your answer with arguments

**Answer:** The mutiny of 1857 is termed the first war of Indian Independence. It is true that the rebellion was started by the sepoys but soon it had become a mass rebellion. It was a revolutionary uprising against the British. The main reason for this rebellion was extensive discontent among the common people. The people of India were oppressed by the policies and imperialist exploitation of the British. The native rulers, farmers, traders, soldiers, and the ordinary people all suffered insult and humiliation under British rule. All of them wanted to get free from the British by any means. So as the fire of rebellion broke out in 1857, the people belonging to different religions, castes, and sections of society participated in it. The following points will clarify that this revolt was the result of extensive discontentment among the people:

#### A. Political Causes:

- The Subsidiary Alliance of Lord Wellesley and the Doctrine of Lapse enforced by Lord Dalhousie generated a sense of discontentment and dissatisfaction among all the Indians.
- The pension of Nana Sahib was stopped due to which he turned against the British.
- The Rani of Jhansi was not permitted to adopt a son so she was also annoyed with the British.
- The Zamindar and chiefs were also against the British because their land had been snatched by the British officials and rulers

#### B. Economic Causes:

1. Due to the industrial revolution, the things produced in England were quite cheap. As a result, the sale of British goods increased immensely. The Indian industry almost collapsed and many artisans and craftsmen of India lost their means of livelihood and therefore they turned against the British.
2. Because of the British, the policy of trade, the Indian trade was shattered. If Indian things were sent to England, a heavy-duty was imposed on these things. Consequently, the Indian goods became very costly, and therefore there was a decline in the demand for Indian goods. In fact, the Indian trade lost its ground.
3. During the British rule, the Zamindars were considered as the owners of the land. They collected fixed revenue and deposited it in the government treasury. On the other hand, they collected revenue from the farmers as per their wish. As a result, the farmers felt suffocated and wanted to get rid of this oppression and exploitation.
4. Heavy taxes were imposed on the people of India. The taxes were so much that the people found it difficult to survive. Ultimately they revolted against the government.

#### C. Social and Religious Causes:

1. The Christian missionaries were engaged in the process of religious conversion. They were exhorting Indians to adopt Christianity due to which many Indians turned against them.
2. William Bentinck had introduced many reforms in Indian society. He had abolished customs like Sati and permitted the remarriage of Hindu widows. He also banned child marriages. Many Hindus considered it as interference in their religious affairs.
3. There was also widespread discontentment among the Indians because of the British system of Education. As the British introduced western education, western ideas, and western institutions, many Indians felt that it was an attempt to turn them into Christians.
4. Many Indians were enraged when the Christian missionaries criticized Hindu scriptures.

#### D. Military Causes:

1. In 1856, the British Parliament passed a law by which the Indians could be sent across the sea to fight against any enemy. During those days, the Hindus considered it a sin against their religion to cross the sea. So they opposed the British rule.
2. The Indian soldiers were maltreated during the parade. So they could not bear their insult for long.

3. The Indian soldiers got less salary as compared with their British counterparts. It generated a sense of discontentment among the Indian soldiers.
4. The British officials made fun of the Indian culture and civilization even in front of the Indian soldiers. Naturally, the Indian soldiers wanted to avenge their insult.

E. **Immediate Cause:**

The soldiers were given new Enfield rifles. The cartridges of these rifles were coated with the fat of the cows and pigs. So a few sepoys of the Barrackpur cantonment refused to use them. Mangal Pandey, a soldier, felt so enraged that he killed a British official. He was later on hanged to death for this offense. All other Indian soldiers lost their patience and revolted against the British.

**Nature of the Rebellion**

1. People from all the sections of society participated in the rebellion though their number was limited.
  2. The people and the soldiers were against the British. They wanted to get rid of them.
  3. The soldiers revolted not to seek any concessions but to get freedom from the foreign rule.
  4. The rebellion did not spread in all parts of a country. Many cities remained calm and quiet. If they were calm, it did not mean that they were with the British. They were silent due to their infirmities but were definitely against the British.
  5. The Hindus and the Muslims unitedly fought against the British. They were not happy with the British rule. So they collectively rose against the British. Thus, the revolt of 1857 was not a mutiny but the first war of Indian Independence.
2. How the Revolt of 1857 began? How it spread everywhere or became a rebellion?  
Or  
describe the main events of the Revolt of 1857.

**Answer:**

1. **Mutinies began at Cantonment of Meerut:** The sepoys in the cantonment of Meerut broke out in mutiny on the late afternoon of 10th May 1857. The mutiny began in the lines of the native infantry. It very quickly spread to the cavalry and then in the city. The ordinary people of surrounding villages and towns also joined the sepoys. The sepoys captured the bell of arms where arms and ammunition were kept.  
  
Then they attacked the white people and started to burn their bungalows and property. The record office, court, jail, treasury, post-office, etc., were plundered and destroyed. The telegraph line joining Delhi with Meerut was cut down. As darkness descended, many sepoys (a group) rode on horses towards Delhi.
2. **Delhi:** The group of sepoys arrived at the gates of the Red Fort on the early morning of 11th May 1857. It was the holy month of Ramzan in which Muslims pray and have the fasts. The Mughal emperor heard the commotion at the gates of Red Fort. The sepoys told him that they had come from Meerut after killing all the English men there because they asked them to bite bullets which were coated with the fat of cows and pigs with their feet®. They also told him that it will corrupt the faith of Hindus and Muslims.

Then another group of sepoys also entered Delhi. Ordinary people of Delhi also joined them. A large number of Europeans were killed. Rich people of Delhi were attacked and looted. Delhi had gone out of

control of the British. Some sepoys even entered the Red Fort and demanded the blessing of the emperor. Bahadur Shah was surrounded by sepoys and was left with no option but to comply. In this way, revolt acquired a type of legitimacy because now it could be carried on in the name of the Mughal emperor.

North India remained quiet through 12th and 13th May. Once the news spread about the fall of Delhi and Bahadur Shah's concept of rebellion, the situation changed very quickly. Mutiny rose swiftly in Cantonment after Cantonment in the Gangetic valley and some to the west of Delhi.

3. **Spread of Revolt:** Sepoys began their activities with any specific signal. At many places, this signal was firing of the evening gun and at many places, it was sounding of the bugle.

The targets of attack widened when ordinary people began joining the revolt. Moneylenders and rich people became the objects of rebel wrath in major towns like Kanpur, Lucknow, and Bareilly. They were considered not only as oppressors by the peasants but were seen as allies of the British. Houses of the rich were looted and destroyed in many places. The mutiny of sepoys became a rebellion very quickly.

4. **Awadh:** The most dangerous form of the revolt was seen in Awadh where Nawab was removed by the British on the issue of misgovernance. Here, the leader of the revolt was the young son of Nawab Birjis Qadr.

6. How do the British pictures of the mutiny of 1857 offer a variety of images that were meant to provoke different emotions and reactions? Explain.

**Answer:** British pictures offer a number of images that were prepared to provoke different emotions and reactions.

In some of the pictures made by the British, the British heroes were commemorated who saved the English and repressed the rebels. One of the painting 'Relief of Lucknow' was painted by Thomas Jones Barker in 1859, is an example of this type when the Lucknow was besieged by the rebel forces then the commissioner of Lucknow, Henry Lawrence, collected the whole of the Christian population and took shelter in the heavily fortified Residency.

Later on, Lawrence was killed but the Residency remained protected under the command of Colonel Inglis. On September 25, Henry Havelock and James Outram reached over there and cut through the rebel forces. They even reinforced the British troops. After 20 days, the new commander of British forces in India, Colin Campbell, came over there with his forces and saved the besieged British forces.

The British historians described the siege of Lucknow and their survival as the ultimate victory of the British power. The painting of Barker shows the moment of Campbell's entry. It created a sense that the troubled times and the rebellion were over. The British emerged victoriously.