

The Freedom Struggle of 1857

Exercise

Q. 1. Rewrite the statements by choosing the appropriate options.

(Umaji Naik, War of Independence, Lord Dalhousie, Secretary of State, Tatya Tope)

- (a) V. D. Savarkar named the struggle of 1857 as _____
- (b) _____ united the Ramoshis to rebel against the British.
- (c) After the struggle of 1857 the post of _____ was created in the British government to look after the affairs of India.
- (d) _____ was the Governor-General who annexed the princely states.

Answer : (a) WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

Indian students staying in India House translated Savarkar's book "Che Swatantryasamar" (Marathi) which was written in 1857 into English. Finally, this work was published in Holland in 1909, under the title "**The Indian War of Independence – 1857**". He named the revolt of 1857 as the war of independence.

(b) UMAJI NAIK

The ruling king of the Berar, Umaji Naik confirmed war on the British and issued an announcement, demanding of 'all the inhabitants of Hindustan' to revolt against the British.

(c) SECRETARY OF THE STATE

The Revolt of 1857 gave a shake to the British administration in India, and this revolt made its reorganization. The Secretary of State was a member of the British Cabinet and as such was in charge of Parliament.

(d) LORD DALHOUSIE

Lord Dalhousie was the Governor General who took control of the princely states. The doctrine of lapse was the annexation policy which was applied by Lord Dalhousie in India before 1858.

Q. 2. A. Explain the following statements with reasons.

The Paikas made armed rebellion against the British.

Answer : The Paikas were the traditionally armed force of Odisha. They were warriors and were charged with policing functions during peacetime. The Paikas were separated into three ranks notable by their occupation and the weapons they handled. The Paik

Rebellion also called the Paika Bidroha. It was an armed rebellion against the British East India Company's rule in Odisha in 1817.

The Paikas united in revolt under their leader Bakshi Jagabandhu. Jagannath was projected as the symbol of Odia unity. The rebellion rapidly spread in most of Odisha before being brutally put down by the company's armed forces.

The Paika rebellion had several social, economic and political reasons. The Paiks were alienated by the British regime, who took over the hereditary rent-free lands granted to them after the attack of Khurda. They were also subjected to shakedown and oppression at the hands of the British government and its servants.

Q. 2. B. Explain the following statements with reasons.

There was discontent among the Hindu and Muslim sepoys.

Answer : • Sepoys in the time of British rule were regarded as powerless and hopeless peasants in uniform. U.P and Bihar were the regions occupied by the sepoys. Annexation of Oudh by British led to maladministration. The sepoys began to develop discontent. The main reasons are:

- Discrimination of sepoys in all the ways
- Low wages and constant physical abuse from the bosses
- No permission to put caste-marks or religious clothes.(e.g., wearing a turban)
- The grease on cartridges was made of a mixture of beef and pork tallow. The consumption of beef was forbidden in Hinduism. The use of pork is not allowed in Islam. The sepoys were asked to open the cartridge with their teeth. The Muslim and the Hindu sepoys were hurt religiously and mentally.

Q. 2. C. Explain the following statements with reasons.

The Indian sepoys could not keep the stand in front of the British army.

Answer : On May 11, 1857, Indian sepoys revolted against the British in Meerut over the use of cartridges greased with pig and cow fat. The sepoys attacked the British magazine to capture the weapon store stocked there. In the initial hours, the revolt was in the hands of the rebels. But the sepoys couldn't withstand the British army. The reasons are:

A) Political reasons

- The higher class people like princes and educated class stayed away from the revolt



- The revolt did not spread to a large area. It just focused in central India and northwestern India.
- The sepoys could not point out an alternative to the current British rule.

B) Military reasons

- The British army was very well organized and strong
- The military supplies of the sepoys were limited

C) Organizational reasons

- The sepoys were unorganized and unplanned
- Very weak leadership. Leaders like Nana Saheb, Tantia Tope, Kunwar Singh, and Rani Lakshmi Bai were not efficient enough to confront the British army.
- The revolt was undirected and did not have any motive.
- It was just the uprising from the religious and emotional wounds of sepoys

Q. 2. D. Explain the following statements with reasons.

After the struggle, the Indian army was divided on the basis of caste

Answer : After 1857 revolt, there was a systematic reorganization of the Army was done for the following reasons:

- To prevent the repetition of another revolt like that of 1857
- To use the Indian Army to defend the Indian territory of the empire from other imperialist powers in the regions like Russia, Germany, France, etc. This guaranteed the ultimate security of British hold over India.
- The proportion of Europeans to Indians was carefully fixed at one to two in the Bengal Army and two to five in the Madras and Bombay Armies. There was severe European control over key geographical locations and departments, such as weapons, tanks, and armed corps.
- The rifles given to Indians were of an inferior quality till 1900.
- No Indians were allowed in the officer rank, and the highest rank an Indian could reach till 1914 was that of a Subedar(a rank position)



- The Indian branch was reorganized on the basis of the policy of balance and counterpoise or divide and rule.
- It was used to give a reason for an unfair employment policy directed towards Sikhs, Gurkhas, and Pathans who had helped in the suppression of the revolt and were marginal social groups.
- The soldiers from Awadh, Bihar, Central India and South India who had participated in the revolt were stated to be non-martial.
- Caste and communal companies were introduced in all the regiments to form a mixture of various socio-ethnic groups so as to balance each other.
- Communal, caste, tribal and regional awareness was made positive to check the growth of nationalist feelings among soldiers.
- Alert efforts were made to separate the soldiers from life and thoughts of rest of the population. They were controlled through measures such as preventing newspapers, journals and nationalist publications from reaching them.
- On the whole, the British Indian Army stayed on a valuable military machine.

Q. 2. E. Explain the following statements with reasons.

The British imposed heavy taxes on Indian industries.

Answer : The most important reason for the British imposing heavy taxes on Indian industries was:

- The industries in India had their leading position in the World market. At the same time, British industries were lagging at the back.
- To advance the position of British goods in the market, they forced heavy taxes on Indian industries.
- Heavy duties were imposed on the import of plain cloth. Other actions like the prohibition of the import of Indian cloth or imposing heavy import duties were also done.
- To put up with these expenses, industries had to raise the prices of the goods, where Britain goods were cheaper.
- As a result, Indian goods were misplaced from their lead in the market, and British industries started to flourish.

Later the pattern of the Company's commercial relations with India underwent a qualitative change. The Indian market and workers suffered, but the British gained out of it.

Q. 3. A. Answer the following question in brief.

What were the social causes behind the struggle of 1857?

Answer : The Revolt of 1857 is called as 'Sepoy Mutiny', 'Great Revolt' and the 'First War of Indian Independence' is the turning point in the account of pre-independent and early colonial India. The revolt was the result of religious insult to the sepoys. Dissatisfaction at the workplace and the continuing abuse and low wages also marked important reasons for the revolt.

The social causes behind the revolt are:

(1) Political and organizational

- Under British rule, each region became a scene of resistance and revolt. The landholders and peasants, the scattered soldiers, the landlords were so depressed and unsatisfied
- The expansionist and annexationist policies of the British power in India made all the Indian rulers, big and small, Hindu and Muslim look with doubt and developed hate towards the British power in India.

(2) Economic

- The economic policies of the British resulted in ruin all the segments of the Indian society.
- Due to their colonial policies of economic abuse, industry, trade commerce, and agriculture suffered, and India became de-industrialized, broken and in debt.

(3) Social and religious

The social and religious partiality of the British was unbearable. Viewing the Indians as racially inferior and culturally backwards made many problems in Indians.

(4) Military and the immediate causes

- Mangal Pandey, a sepoy of Barrackpore near Calcutta on 29 March 1857 initiated the revolt of sepoys, and it started as the revolt of the people.



- Mangal Pandey was a spokesperson of the totality of the sepoys' anger against the British. The unrest of the sepoys in the army of the British is the spontaneous outburst against the British officer, and it was a peak of burning displeasure in sepoys.
- On May 11, 1857, Indian sepoys revolted against the British in Meerut over the use of cartridges greased with pig and cow fat.

Though a failure, the revolt of 1857 made an immense influence on the mindset of Indian people, and they became conscious about the racial discrimination and exploitation of the British. The British could easily suppress the revolt as they had enough armed forces. The sepoys were unorganized, but they could create the sensation of the need for independence among Indians.

Q. 3. B. Answer the following question in brief.

Why did the Indians fail in the struggle of 1857?

Answer : On May 11, 1857, Indian sepoys revolted against the British in Meerut over the use of cartridges greased with pig and cow fat. The sepoys attacked the British magazine to arrest the weapon store stocked there. In the initial hours, the revolt was in the hands of the rebels. But the sepoys couldn't withstand the British army. The reasons are:

A) Political reasons

- The higher class people like princes and educated class stayed missing from the revolt
- The revolt did not spread to a large area. It just focused in central India and northwestern India.
- The sepoys could not point out any substitute for the current British rule.

B) Military reasons

- The British army was so well organized and strong
- The military supplies of the sepoys were too limited

C) Organizational reasons

- The sepoys were unorganized.
- Very weak leadership. Leaders like Nana Saheb, Tantia Tope, Kunwar Singh, and Rani Lakshmi Bai were not efficient enough to confront the British army.
- The revolt was undirected and did not have any motive.



- It was just the uprising from the religious and emotional wounds of sepoys.

Many parts of central and southern India remained undisturbed in the revolt. The area of influence of the revolt of 1857 was so limited. But the revolt could make necessary changes in people so that they became aware of the inhuman practices of the British. There were limitations for the Indians, and it is natural because all the political and armed powers were with the British.

Q. 3. C. Answer the following question in brief.

Write down the consequences of the struggle of 1857.

Answer : The 1857 revolt failed and crushed by the superior military force of the British was a significant event of far-reaching consequences in the history of British rule in India. It marks the end of an era of trouble-free exploitation of the British in Indians.

The results of the 1857 revolt may be subdivided as:

A) Constitutional Changes:

- The British crown gave up the policy of secondary isolation and advocated a policy of subordinate combination in respect of native states.
- The transfer of power from a trading company to the power of Britain by the Government of India Act of 1858.
- In the place of the President of the Board of Control, the Secretary of State for India was appointed. The Secretary of State for India was helped out and helped by a 15-member body of India Council.
- The designation of the Governor General of India was changed to Viceroy.
- The administrative machinery in India was centralized effectively due to the development of communications.

B) Changes in the Army:

- Before the revolt of 1857, the army of the British in India was divided into two major divisions – king's forces and company's troops.
- The weapons section was entirely kept under the British.
- There were more European soldiers in the army, and the expenditure on the army doubled up.



- They reduced the Brahmins from the army and recruited Gurkhas, Sikhs, Jats, and Rajputs of Punjab.

C) Social Effects:

- India developed the growth of social distance between the Hindus and Muslims which led to the communalisation of social life and partition of India on communal lines.
- There was a setback to Muslim renaissance and efforts of modernity.

Thus the revolt of 1857 had numerous consequences in the social life of Indians. The British took all the steps to avoid any other revolt in the future. The rearrangement in all the fields of administration was a safety measure for it. The revolt made the British more vigilant.

Q. 3. D. Answer the following question in brief.

What were the changes in British policy after the struggle of 1857?

Answer : The revolt of 1857 made changes in every field of life, and the Britishers determined to take necessary actions not to repeat such an uprising thereafter. The following are the major changes:

A) Commercial Policy:

- British tried constantly to open new markets for Indian goods in Britain and other countries. Thereby, it improved the export of Indian manufacturers and thus encouraged their production.
- As a result of such excessive import duties and the development of machine industries, Indian exports to foreign countries fell rapidly.
- There was a steep rise in the burden of taxation on the India peasant. It geared to the collection of land revenues. A major part of the agricultural produce was gone as land revenue to the British by the farmers.

B) The loss of Wealth Policy:

- The British exported to Britain part of India's wealth and resources. India didn't get any adequate economic or material return. This made an 'economic drain' in India and was strange to British rule.
- By the end of the eighteenth century, the drain formed nearly 9% of India's national income. The real drain was even more, as a large part of the salaries and other incomes of English officials

- The drain took the figure of an overload of India's exports over its imports, for which India got no return.

British colonial rule did huge damage to India's economic system. The changes in the policy were actually to take away the wealth of India at the earliest. The revolt of 1857 made the Britishers frightened about the chances of being kicked out from India, the country which they had been invading and ruling brutally.

Project

Q. 1. Search for the book written by V.D.Savarkar entitled 'The Indian War of Independence 1857' and read it.

Answer : The Indian War of Independence The book, which explains the 1857 revolt as a united and national rebellion of India as a nation against British power, was seen at the time as very provocative, and the Marathi edition was banned in British India even before its publication. It is an Indian nationalist history of the 1857 revolt by Vinayak Damodar Savarkar. It was first published in 1909. It was published during Savarkar's stay in London at the India House, the book was influenced by histories of the French Revolution and the American Revolution, and it brought the Indian movement to the public interest in Britain as well as to motivate nationalist revolution in India.

The book was originally written in Marathi. It was penned by Savarkar in response to celebrations in Britain of the 50th anniversary of the 1857 Indian uprising with records from India Office archives. The entire task received support from Indian nationalists in Britain including the likes of Madame Cama, V.V.S. Iyer, and M.P.T. Acharya, as well as Indian students who had the courage not to show their support or sympathy for India House openly.

It was disqualified from the list of the British Library to avoid Indian students from accessing it. In India, the book stayed excluded for many years later.

The highlights of the book are:

- It is a powerful work in Indian history and nationalist writing, and also one of Savarkar's most influential works in developing and outlining ideas of male Hinduism.
- Some modern histories draw similar conclusions as the Savarkar, others, disagreed with Savarkar's conclusions in his book on the national and joined character of the mutiny. (Historians like R.C. Majumdar)
- A leading revolutionary himself, he was attracted and inspired by the flaming passion, the heroism, courage, misery and sad fate of the leaders of 1857.

The content of the book



- British, as well as Indian historians, have described and allowed the rising of 1857 as a 'Sepoy Mutiny' or at finest as 'The Indian Mutiny'. Indian revolution is on the other hand, and national minded leaders and thinkers have regarded it as a deliberate and organized political and military rising aimed at destroying the British power in India.
- Savarkar re-interpreted the incident and related it in full with the help of all the material available to him at the time. He used up days and months at the India Office Library studying the period. Savarkar attempted to look at the incidents of 1857 from the Indian point of view.
- The sepoys, according to Savarkar, were the primary targets in this mission to spread Christianity in India. According to him "If any Sepoy accepted the Christian religion he was praised loudly and treated honourably, and this Sepoy was promoted in the ranks, and his salary increased, in the face of the superior merits of the other Sepoys!"
- Savarkar made an interpretation of modern political thought in India. The book explains that Savarkar established criteria for identifying revolutionaries, but he also argued that studying the life-stories of revolutionaries would encourage Indians to create future revolutions.
- Reading of history was transformative and the contributions of earlier period revolutionaries were meant to create an effective response for readers to become transformed into new revolutionaries.
- Savarkar's ideas and interpretations were making revolutionary thought in India in the early decades of the twentieth century.

Facts about the book

- It was impossible to get this book published in India; the manuscript was returned back to Savarkar.
- Savarkar wrote this book originally in Marathi and completed writing it in 1908. The Marathi name of the book was "Che Swatantryasamar."
- Attempts to get this book published in Germany also failed.
- Some Indian students staying in India House translated this book into English. Finally, this work was published in Holland in 1909, under the title "**The Indian War of Independence –1857**".
- One edition was available secretly in India after the end of World War II. The unique Marathi manuscript was kept in the secure custody of Madame Cama in Paris.



- This document was handed over to Dr Coutinho of the Abhinav Bharat when Paris was in disorder during World War I. Dr Coutinho conserved it like a sacred scripture for nearly 40 years.

- After India became independent, he returned it to Savarkar.

Savarkar is known for his activism for Indian independence. Savarkar coined the term *Hindutva* (Hinduness) to form a collective "Hindu" identity as a soul of Bharat (India). Savarkar was charge-sheeted in the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi but was later cleared, largely because no evidence of his participation was provided. It has helped continue the myth of Savarkar the courageous.

Q. 2. On an outline map of India indicate the regions where the freedom struggle of 1857 took place.

Answer :

