

HISTORY

THE FIRST WAR OF INDIAN INDEPENDENCE (1857)

Answer the following questions

1) The political factors inspired the revolt of 1857. How?

Ans:- Many kingdoms lost their rights due to the promulgation of Doctrine of Lapse brought about by the British. Satara, Jaipur, Jhansi, Udaipur and other kingdoms came under British control. Dalhousie cancelled the princely titles of the Nawabs of Tanjore and Carnatic kingdoms. The Mughal sultans, the Nawab of Oudh and other kings were dethroned. Consequently, lakhs of soldiers who were dependent on these kings, became unemployed. This became a strong cause for the protest of 1857 against the British.

2) The economic changes of the time were responsible for the 1857 revolt. How?

Ans:- Due to the industrial revolution in England, Indian handicrafts and cottage industries suffered heavily. England, instead of being a trading country, became a hub of industries. The Indian craftsmen became unemployed. Primarily, the textile and wool industries became sick and people lost their jobs. The cottage industries too suffered a death blow. The British imposed a heavy tax on sale of Indian goods in England. Because of the zamindari system, the landlords, acting as commission agents between the Government and the farmers, exploited the farmers. The right given to the taluks to collect tax was withdrawn. An 'Inam Commission' was appointed and all the gifted lands without documents ('Inam lands') were taken back. Due to this, the farmers felt insulted and experienced many financial problems. This too led to the revolt of farmers against the government

3) Write about Eruption of the 1857 Revolt and its spread

Ans:- Most of the Indian soldiers in the British army believed that if they fought together, they could drive away the British from India. In this situation, the soldiers were being given new rifles called 'Royal Enfield'. A rumour spread among the soldiers that the cartridges used in these rifles were greased with the fat of cow and pigs. While cows were sacred to the Hindus, pigs were blasphemous for Muslims. This incident became the immediate cause for the revolt. The rumour that spread in the army troops at Barackpur led to severe dissatisfaction. When the British officers ordered the

Indian soldiers to pull the safety catch with the help of their teeth, the soldiers rejected the command and revolted against their superiors. At this juncture, an Indian soldier named Mangal Pandey killed a British official. Subsequently, he was arrested, tried and hanged. Meerut was a strong military base of the British. When the British ordered the Indian soldiers to use the greased cartridges, the soldiers refused to carry out the order. The soldiers were imprisoned. As a result, there was a revolt in Meerut. Indian soldiers rushed into the prison and released the soldiers jailed there. This initiated seedling for the war of independence. Later, the group of soldiers went to Delhi from Meerut. They laid siege on the Red Fort and declared the aged Moghul king, Bahadur Shah II as the Emperor of India. Protesting soldiers from different parts of India reached Delhi. Consequently, the protest became serious. It spread like wild fire to Kanpur and Jhansi. In Kanpur, Nana Saheb rose in protest. Tatya Tope was his assistant. In Jhansi, a revolt took place under the leadership of Queen Laxmibai. When Kanpur fell into Jhansi Rani the hands of the British, Tatya Tope came to Jhansi to help the Queen. The heat of the revolt was felt in Lucknow too. Ultimately, Lucknow was taken over by the British. The war spread to the south of river Yamuna. As a result, the soldiers in Jhansi felt encouraged. Jhansi Rani Laxmibai who was enraged by the Doctrine of Lapse, declared war against the British. She took Gwalior under her control. When the battle took place again with the British, the Queen laid down her life. (Even today, the queen occupies a proud position in the history of the independence struggle.) In this manner 1857 Revolt Erupted and Spread it self

4) What were Reasons for failure of the revolt?

Ans : The First War of Independence of 1857 failed due to various reasons. The movement did not spread to the whole country. This struggle was intended to protect the interests of a few rather than getting freedom for the country. Instead of being an organized struggle, it erupted due to certain unexpected reasons. The unity among the British forces and lack of it among the Indian soldiers also led to the failure. There was no proper direction or proper leadership. In addition, there was a lack of strategy, expertise among soldiers, effective leadership, discipline and direction. Many provincial kings, on account of their loyalty to the British, did not support the struggle. The people lost confidence in the soldiers due to their arson and looting.