

# The Great Uprising of 1857

## Time To Learn

### I. Fill in the blanks:

1. By his policy of Doctrine of Lapse **Lord Dalhousie** annexed **Nagpur** and **Jhansi**.
2. Rani Laxmibai captured **Gwalior** with Tantya Tope's help.
3. In Lucknow **Hazrat Mahal** led the revolt.
4. The rebels proclaimed **Bahadur Shah Zafar** as the emperor of India.

### II. Match the contents of Column A and Column B:

#### Column A

##### Column A

1. Jhansi
2. Kanpur
3. Enfield
4. Raja of Jodhpur
5. Bahadur

#### Column B

##### Column B

- (a) Nana Saheb
- (b) rifle
- (c) Rani Laxmibai
- (d) exiled to Rangoon
- (e) did not join the revolt

#### Answer:

#### Column A

1. Jhansi
2. Kanpur
3. Enfield
4. Raja of Jodhpur
5. Bahadur

#### Column B

- (c) Rani Laxmibai
- (a) Nana Saheb
- (b) rifle
- (e) did not join the revolt
- (d) exiled to Rangoon

### III. State whether the following statements are True or False:

1. Awadh was annexed on the ground of maladministration.  
**True**
2. The British supported Sati.  
**False.**
3. The Indian soldiers were given lesser salary as compared to their British counterparts.  
**True.**
4. The Revolt of 1857 did not involve the masses.  
**True.**

### IV. Answer the following questions:

**Question 1.**

How were the economic policies of the British responsible for the Revolt of 1857?

**Answer:**

**The British had changed the entire economic structure of India.**

1. Introduction of the new land revenue system which allowed the government to confiscate land and accept revenue in cash caused suffering to the Indian peasants.
2. Due to Industrial Revolution markets were flooded with machine made goods. Indian Industries could not compete with them and thus declined.
3. When an Indian state was annexed, the administration was replaced by the company. This created unemployment and caused resentment.

**Question 2.**

Discuss the social and religious causes responsible for the Revolt of 1857.

**Answer:**

1. British advocated many reforms such as abolition of Sati, female infanticide, child marriage, widow remarriage. This caused discontent all over. These reforms were interpreted by Indians as interference in their religious and social customs.
2. Introduction of Railways and telegraph was viewed with fear and suspicion.
3. Introduction of western Education was viewed as an attack on Indian social and religious customs.
4. Policy of racial discrimination practiced by British led to anger and resentment.

**Question 3.**

Why do you think the Revolt of 1857 failed? Discuss four, causes for its failure.

**Answer:**

1. Though it was wide spread it failed to involve all sections of the population.
2. The revolt did not involve the masses. Only those people joined revolt who had been adversely affected by the British. Scindia, Holkar, Raja of Jodhpur did not join it. Instead they supported the British. Merchants, western educated middle class did not join it.
3. The British soldiers were better equipped. Indians had outdated weapons. The British had experienced and competent Generals. Indian leaders lacked this expertise.
4. The revolutionaries did not have enough resources. The British were stronger financially and militarily.
5. The revolt was not planned and organised.
6. The British had the advantage of post and telegraph. This helped them to communicate and exchange messages, plan strategies and act immediately.

**Question 4.**

Discuss the nature of the Uprising/Revolt of 1857.

**Answer:**

There are divergent views regarding the nature of the outbreak of 1857. British historians have called it a Mutiny – confined to the army which did not command the support of the people at

large.

Same view was held by contemporary Indians like Munshi Jiwan Lai, Moinuddin, (Both eye witnesses at Delhi) and Durgadas Bandopadhyaya. Others have described it as racial struggle for supremacy between the Black and White. Some describe it as a struggle between oriental and occidental civilisation and culture.

A few have described it as Hindu-Muslim conspiracy to overthrow the British rule. Some Indian have called it a "well planned struggle" and as "the first war of Indian Independence".

#### **V. Give reasons why:**

1. State of Awadh was annexed by the British.

**Ans.** The state of Awadh was annexed on account of maladministration.

2. Indian artisans, weavers and craftsmen lost their means of livelihood.

**Ans.** With the coming of Industrial Revolution markets were flooded with machine made goods. Indian Industries could not compete

3. The Indian sepoys refused to bite the cartridges of the Enfield rifle.

**Ans.** The Indian sepoys refused to bite the cartridges of the Enfield rifle as it was rumoured that these cartridges were greased with the fat of cows and pigs. This enraged the Hindus and Muslims as the cow is a holy animal of Hindus and the pig is considered taboo for the Muslims.

#### **VI. Picture Study –**

The picture shows the revolt of 1857



#### **Question 1.**

How far were the greased cartridges responsible for the Revolt?

**Answer:**

It was an immediate cause which supplied the spark to ignite dry firewood awaiting to be ignited. Other causes like oppressive economic policy, aggressive annexation policy, religious social interference by the British were already there waiting to be triggered into Revolt. This was provided by the rumour that cartridges were greased with the fat of cow and pig and hence this enraged the Hindus and Muslims.

**Question 2.**

Give your opinion as to how the Revolt would have been successful.

**Answer:**

It would have been successful if it had been well organised and well planned or if it had involved the masses. It would have been successful if merchants, educated middle class and zamindars had supported it and the Indian soldiers had better weapons and goods generals.

**Additional Questions****EXERCISES****A. Fill in the blanks:**

1. Dalhousie annexed the states of **Satara, Nagpur, and Jhansi** on the basis of the Doctrine of Lapse.
2. Prior to the outbreak of the Revolt, Bahadur Shah Zafar lived in Delhi as a **Pensioner** of the British.
3. The Revolt of 1857 started as a **Mutiny** of the sepoys.
4. The immediate cause of the Revolt was the issue of the **greased cartridges**.
5. The Revolt ended the rule of the **English East India Company**.

**B. Match the following:**

A	B
1. Nana Saheb	(a) confiscation of jagirs
2. Bentinck and Dalhousie	(b) exiled to Rangoon
3. Hindu and Muslim sepoys	(c) adopted son of Peshwa Baji Rao II
4. Bahadur Shah Zafar	(d) Tanya Tope
5. Commander of Nana Saheb	(e) greased cartridges

**Answer:**

- |                                   |                                       |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Nana Saheb                     | (c) adopted son of Peshwa Baji Rao II |
| 2. Bentinck and Dalhousie         | (a) confiscation of jagirs            |
| 3. Hindu and Muslim <u>sepoys</u> | (e) <u>greased cartridges</u>         |
| 4. <u>Bahadur Shah Zafar</u>      | (b) exiled to Rangoon                 |
| 5. Commander of Nana <u>Saheb</u> | (d) <u>Tantya Tope</u>                |

**C. Choose the correct answer:**

1. When Awadh/Nagpur/Jhansi was annexed, the estates of the zamindars and talukdars were confiscated by the British.

**Ans.** When Awadh was annexed, the estates of the zamindars and talukdars were confiscated by the British.

2. The rumour regarding greased cartidges started in Madras/ Calcutta/Delhi.

**Ans.** The rumour regarding greased cartidges started in Calcutta.

3. Mangal Pandey was a sepoy at Barrackpore/Nagpur/Satara, who refused to use the greased cartidges in 1857.

**Ans.** Mangal Pandey was a sepoy at Barrackpore, who refused to use the greased cartidges in 1857.

4. The Revolt in Lucknow/Meerut/Kanpur was led by Nana Saheb.

**Ans.** The Revolt in Kanpur was led by Nana Saheb.

5. Nana Saheb/Hazrat Mahal/Rani Lakshmibai led the Revolt in Lucknow.

**Ans.** Hazrat Mahal led the Revolt in Lucknow.

**D. State whether the following are true or false:**

1. Indian rulers were quite satisfied with Lord Dalhousie's expansionist policies.

**False.**

Correct: Indian rulers were dissatisfied with Lord Dalhousie's expansionist policies.

2. Peasants benefitted from the land revenue system of the British.

**False.**

Correct : Peasants were not benefitted from the land revenue system of the British.

3. Social reforms such as the abolition of sati and female infanticide, and the Widow Remarriage Act caused deep resentment among the orthodox sections of society.

**True.**

4. The Doctrine of Lapse was abolished after the Revolt.

**True**

5. The Revolt of 1857 had come as a shock to the British.

**True.**

**E. Answer the following questions in one or two words/ sentences:**

**Question 1.**

Why did Rani of Jhansi become a staunch enemy of the British?

**Answer:**

Dalhousie annexed the states of Satara, Nagpur and Jhansi by applying the Doctrine of Lapse. The annexation transformed the courageous Rani of Jhansi into a staunch enemy of the British.

**Question 2.**

Why did Nana Saheb fight against the British during the Revolt of 1857?

**Answer:**

Nana Saheb, the adopted son of Peshwa Baji Rao II (a pensioner of the British), was denied a pension after his father's death. Nana Saheb became one of the leaders of the Revolt.

**Question 3.**

Why did the zamindars and talukdars become sworn enemies of the British?

**Answer:**

When Awadh was annexed, the estates of the zamindars and talukdars were confiscated by the British. They became sworn enemies of British rule.

**Question 4.**

What happened to the nawab's army when Awadh was annexed?

**Answer:**

After the annexation of Awadh, the nawab's army was disbanded. The soldiers lost their means of livelihood and their bitterness against the British increased.

**Question 5.**

When and where did the Revolt of 1857 begin?

**Answer:**

May 10, 1857 was a Sunday. The British officers at the Meerut cantonment in North India were preparing to attend church, while many other British soldiers were off duty.

**Question 6.**

Name any two main centres of Revolt.

**Answer:**

The important centres of the Revolt were Meerut, Delhi, Kanpur, Lucknow and Jhansi.

**Question 7.**

What step was taken by the British to reorganize the army after the Revolt?

**Answer:**

The army was reorganized and strengthened. The number of British soldiers was increased and the artillery placed exclusively under their control.

**Question 8.**

Mention any two important results of the Revolt.

**Answer:**

Results of the Revolt 1857

1. The rule of the English East India Company came to an end.
2. Treaties with Indian states would be honoured.
3. The British government would not interfere in the social and religious customs of the people.

**F. Answer the following questions briefly:****Question 1.**

In the context of the Revolt of 1857, answer the following questions:

1. Mention any three political causes of the Revolt.
2. Mention the three economic factors that led to the outbreak of the great Revolt.
3. Explain briefly any four social and religious causes that led to the Revolt of 1857.

**Answer:****(a) Political Causes:**

1. Dalhousie annexed the states of Satara, Nagpur and Jhansi by applying the Doctrine of Lapse. The annexation transformed the courageous Rani into a staunch enemy of the British.
2. Nana Saheb, the adopted son of Peshwa Baji Rao II (pensioner of the British), was denied a pension after his father's death. Nana Saheb became one of the leaders of the Revolt.
3. Bahadur Shah Zafar, the Mughal Emperor, lived in Delhi as a pensioner of the British. Dalhousie announced that Bahadur's successor would not be allowed to stay on in the historic Red Fort. He would have to move to a place near the Qutb Minar, on the outskirts of Delhi. This was a great blow to the dignity of the Mughal emperor and deeply hurt the sentiments of the Muslims.
4. (The annexation of Awadh, on grounds of maladministration, outraged the people of India, in general, and Awadh, in particular. Awadh had always been a friendly, faithful and subordinate ally. The Nawab of Awadh was exiled to Calcutta.
5. The British showed no respect for the treaties they had signed with the Indians. Treaties were broken whenever it suited them to do so. This created a sense of fear and insecurity among the rulers of subordinate states. The axe could fall on them anywhere, at any time.

**(b) Economic Causes:**

1. The land revenue system, introduced by the British, caused great hardship and misery among the peasants. Under the zamindari system, for instance, the peasants were oppressed by the Zamindars and exploited by the moneylenders. If the cultivators failed to pay the land revenue to the Zamindars or return the loans to the moneylenders on time, they were often flogged, tortured or jailed. The impoverishment of the peasantry led to numerous famines.

2. Landlords also suffered from a sense of insecurity. Thousands of jagirs were confiscated by Bentinck and Dalhousie when they were unable to produce written title deeds of ownership.
3. The interests of the Indian economy was sacrificed for the interests of British trade and industry. This led to the utter collapse of traditional handicraft industries. Indian artisans and craftspersons were ruined.
4. The annexation of Indian states was followed by large- scale unemployment and economic distress. When Awadh was annexed, the administration was replaced by Company Administration. As such, hundreds of court officials and their subordinates lost their means of livelihood.

### **(c) Social and Religious Causes:**

1. Social reforms such as the abolition of sati, and female infanticide, the Widow Remarriage Act and the introduction of women 's education caused deep resentment among the orthodox sections of society.
2. The efforts of the missionaries to convert people to Christianity caused great alarm. Some of the missionaries ridiculed the religious beliefs and practices of the Hindus and Muslims in their effort to convert people to their faith. This hurt the religious sentiments of the people.
3. The introduction of Western education undermined the position and importance of the Pundits and Maulvis and was seen as an attack on ancient traditions and values. The office of the Inspector of Schools in Patna was referred to as the 'shaitane dafitar'.
4. The introduction of the railways and posts and telegraphs aroused grave doubts and fears, especially among the simple, backward villagers. They thought that the telegraph system was a form of Western magic. They grew fearful of the intentions of the British
5. The British judicial system introduced the principle of equality. This was regarded as a threat to the existing caste norms and privileges of the upper classes.
6. The British looked down upon the Indians and followed a policy of racial discrimination. They made no effort to interact socially with the Indians. They were convinced of the superiority of the European race and treated the Indians with great contempt.

### **Question 2.**

In the context of the military causes of the Revolt of 1857, answer the following questions:

1. Mention any three grievances that the sepoys had against their British masters.
2. How did the Act passed in 1856 by the British hurt the sentiments of the Hindu sepoys?
3. Explain the immediate cause of the great Revolt?

### **Answer:**

#### **(a) The sepoys had numerous grievances against the British-masters:**

1. The sepoys had helped the British to establish their empire in India but they were neither appreciated nor rewarded for their efforts. On the contrary, they were treated with great contempt by the British officers.
2. There was grave discrimination between the Indian sepoy and his British counterpart. A capable and dedicated sepoy could not rise above the post of subedar.
3. In 1856, an Act was passed which made it compulsory for all new recruits to serve overseas if required. This hurt the sentiments of the Hindus because they believed that overseas travel



would lead to a loss of caste. The sepoys interpreted the regulation as another attack on their caste and religion.

4. After the annexation of Awadh, the Nawab's army was disbanded. The soldiers lost their means of livelihood and their bitterness against the British increased.
5. The Indian soldiers greatly outnumbered the British soldiers. In 1856, the number of sepoys in the British army was more than five times that of the British soldiers. This emboldened the sepoys to take up arms against their foreign masters.

**(b)** In 1856, an Act was passed which made it compulsory for all new recruits to serve overseas if required. This hurt the sentiments of the Hindus because they believed that overseas travel would lead to a loss of caste. The sepoys interpreted the regulation as another attack on their caste and religion.

**(c)** In January 1857, a rumour started at the Dum Dum cantonment (in Calcutta) that the cartridges, which the British had introduced, were greased with cow fat and pig lard. The rumour spread like wildfire among the Hindu and Muslim sepoys. They were convinced that the government was deliberately trying to defile their religion. A wave of indignation and anger swept through all the military stations. On 29 March 1857 Mangal Pandey, a sepoy at Barrackpore refused to use the cartridge and attacked his senior officers. He was hanged to death.

### **Question 3.**

In the context of the Revolt of 1857, briefly discuss:

1. The decline of the Mughal dynasty
2. Any four results of the Revolt of 1857
3. Nature of the Revolt of 1857

### **Answer:**

**(a)** On 11 May 1857, Bahadur Shah Zafar was persuaded to accept the leadership of the Revolt. He was proclaimed the emperor of Hindustan. There was jubilation all around. The restoration of the Mughal empire was proclaimed with the booming of guns.

The success of the Revolt proved to be shortlived. British reinforcements arrived from Punjab, and Delhi was recovered in September 1857.

Bahadur Shah Zafar was taken prisoner, tried and exiled to Rangoon. The royal princes (two sons and one grandson of Bahadur Shah Zafar) were shot and their bodies displayed on the streets. The once great dynasty of the Mughals finally came to an end.

### **(b) Results of the Revolt 1857**

1. The rule of the English East India Company came to an end.
2. India came under the direct rule of the British Parliament and the Queen of England.
3. Queen Victoria issued a Proclamation promising to look after the welfare of the Indian people.
4. Treaties with Indian states would be honoured.
5. A general pardon was granted to all the rebels, except those who had killed British subjects.
6. The British government would not interfere in the social and religious customs of the people.
7. Indians would be given opportunities to be associated with the administration. High posts in government services would be given on the basis of merit, not race.

8. The army was reorganized and strengthened. The number of British soldiers was increased and the artillery placed exclusively under their control.

### **(c) Nature of the Revolt of 1857**

1. The Revolt was the outcome of the accumulated grievances of different sections of people and not the sepoys alone.
2. Those who joined the Revolt had different reasons and different motives but they were all united in their hatred of British rule and their determination to overthrow it.
3. It had wide popular support of various sections of society.
4. The struggle created a strong bonding and a sense of unity between the Hindus and the Muslims. They fought shoulder to shoulder, as single brethren against a common enemy.
5. Of the estimated 1,50,000 people killed in the Revolt, 1,00,000 were civilians.

### **G Picture study:**

This is the picture of the queen who led the Revolt in Central India



1. Identify the queen.  
**Ans.** Rani Laxmi Bai
2. Name the city where she led the Revolt.  
**Ans.** Jhansi
3. What were the economic causes of the Revolt of 1857?  
**Ans.** Refer Answer F-I (b) above
4. What was the major outcome of the Revolt of 1857?  
**Ans.** Refer Answer F-3 (b) above.