

The Political, Social, Religious, Economic Conditions prevailing at the time of 1857

The East India Company was established in 1600 in England for trade. In 1608 they reached the western coast of India at Surat and there they established an Industrial house. Other European countries as the French, the Portuguese had also come to India in this period for the propose of doing trade with India.

The English East India Company had initially started as a trading power but gradually became a political power. The process of establishing itself into a political power is said to have begun with its victory under Robert Clive at the battle of Plassey in 1757 over Siraj-ud-Daula, the Nawab of Bengal. Thereafter the East India Company started looking for various administrative ways to establish its control over India. The East India Company made many changes in the administrative policy towards India between 1757 to 1857, but simultaneously it also promoted its business and took its profits to Britain.

Whatever changes occurred in the economic policies of England, East India Company introduced similar changes in India. Different methods were adopted by it to capture the economy, and in the process it reject^{ed} the self-reliant villages of this country, which were the backbone of the Indian economy for centuries. The company destroyed the economic base of the country by destroying the handicraft and cottage industries Rajni Pramodutta had said that 'the objective of the East India Company was not to search market for the British goods alone but to control the supply of such goods, which could be sold in England and other European countries'. The company made efforts to maintain law and order in the country so that their trade operations could be conducted smoothly.

The ill effects of the rule of East India Company-

In 1857, Sepoy Mutiny accompanied with civilian revolt had taken place in the North and Central India with the objective of driving away the British. In this Mutiny, besides the sepoys of the East India Company who had rebelled against their own masters, the Kings, Nawabs, Zamindars, and the civilian population had taken an active part.

This mass revolt was the result of prolonged grievance of the Sepoys, Kings, Nawabs, Zamindars, peasants and the civilian population against the rule of the East India Company over hundred years and the decline of Swadeshi trade and industry since 1757. R.C. Dutta has written while expressing his views on the British policies which destroyed the Swadeshi industries- 'Britishers had a well planned policy to destroy the swadeshi industries, due to which the Indians could not sell their products to anyone but to the company, on the rates fixed by the company.'

The British industries had a political support. To ensure that Indians weavers do not stand in competition with the British weavers, their thumbs were cut. Britain adopted protectionist policy towards their industries as against the Indian industries. This cruelly destroyed the economic life of India and compelled it to become a political slave

The Britishers made no effort to develop Indian administration judiciary, agriculture and Indian industries. If at all any changes were made then their sole object was to ensure that the land revenue was levied efficiently.

Marx while accepting this had said that the historical page of British rule in India is nothing but a story of how swadeshi industries were destroyed in India. As a result, in the different communities of Indian society, dissatisfaction and hatred against the British rule was going on increasing. This disaffection rose in a mass uprising, behind which 'Swadeshi' had a very important contribution.

Earlier also, there was invasion of India by foreigners, but there were only changes in political heads of the country, but the economic policies and

social bonds were allowed to remain according to the Indian system. But the Britishers were the first rulers who not only destroyed the Swadeshi industries but also destroyed the basic fabric of its villages, economy and society, Dr. Tatachand has written in his book.

‘The destruction of Swadeshi industries is a sad story of heart rending, selfish and cruel injustice’.

Gradually the Indian masses had become aware of the selfish and exploitative character of the East India Company and realised that they were not its well wishers and began to view their work with suspicion. This was one of the reasons for the anti British feelings among the Indian public, which manifested itself in the uprising of 1857 where concepts of swadeshi was visible.

The study of the condition of the people with reference to their political outlook and consequences of a national feeling is specially important for a proper understanding of the form and the nature of the Indian efforts towards the improvement of their political status which culminated in their achievement of freedom from the British Yolk. ¹

Consequence of the British rule

The immediate consequences of the new system of administration were dismal in the extreme. The complete elimination of Indians from the higher services and its total exclusive from any share in government had the most untoward effect both immediately and in the long run. Memos in his minute dated Aug. 12, 1817 to Lord Hastings had said

There is no example of any conquest in which the natives have been so

1. History of freedom movement of India, Vol-1 Pg 26 by R.C. Majumdar

completely excluded from all shares of the government of their country as in British India.

All avenues to fame and wealth or power were closed to Indians; no opportunities were left for public services or the performance of the citizen's duties to defend the country or to advance its property.²

The condition of the country on the eve of uprising in 1857 is explained as under-

Social life and discontent due to social causes - - Indian society was divided on the basis of religion language, and castes. The Hindu society was divided into four varnas or classes, which in turn were further divided in myriads of other castes and sub castes. The practice of untouchability was prevalent against the lower castes to such an extent that the lower castes were forbidden to touch the Higher caste Hindus. The Muslims were also divided into different castes and tribes. Shias and Sunnis were often engaged in clashes against each other. The Iranians, Afghans and Indian musalmans were divided into various tribes. As regards the relations between the Hindus and Muslims, even before the establishment of British rule, there was a distinct cleavage between the Hindus and Muslims and Bengal.

In a written memorandum on the 'Judicial system of India' which the Raja Ram Mohan Roy submitted before a committee of House of Commons, the contrasts the Hindus with the Muslims. The queries and the answers show that the Hindus and Muslims were regarded both by the British and the Indians as two separate communities with distinct cultures and

2. History of freedom movement of India, Vol-1 Pg 286-288 by Tara Chand.

different physical, mental and moral characteristics. This view was also echoed by other prominent leaders like Dwarkanath Tagore.

This communal distinction was tacitly accepted almost in every sphere of life. Even as late as 12.8.1969, we find the Amrit Bazar Patrika a long article on the Muslims, which begins with the statement that the population is divided into two classes viz. Hindus and Muslims, and then traces the origin of a majority of Muslims to the conversion of low caste Hindus. Throughout the 19th century we find this sharp distinction between the Hindu and Muslim communities reflected in the Bengali Literature³.

Nevertheless in spite of occasional communal riots, there was generally speaking, no ill feeling between the two communities at the beginning of 19th century, and each tacitly recognised the position evolved in the course of centuries as normal and usual. There was of course no social intercourse between the two. In all vital matters affecting the cultures, the Hindus and Muslims lived in two watertight compartments as it were. Despite social evils and cultural stagnation, the Hindus and Muslims by and large sank their differences to get united and fight against the Britishers in 1857.

As regards intellectual development, the higher education was confined to Sanskrit Arabic and Persian in Tols Chatuspathis, Maktabas and Madarsas. In addition to religious texts, the curriculum consisted of literature ancillary studies, law, and logic. These were valuable for imparting knowledge of religion and customs on orthodox principles such as were in vogue hundreds of years ago⁴.

3. History of freedom movement of India, Vol-1 Pg 28 by R.C. Majumdar

4. History of freedom movement of India, Vol-1 Pg 32 by R.C. Majumdar

The elementary education was provided in primary schools through the medium of Bengali to both Hindus and Muslims in Bengal, Urdu being unknown for this purpose. But the two communities had separate institutions. The percentage of students was overwhelmingly Hindu. The aggregate average number of pupils for all the districts was no more than 7 ½% and the aggregate average of adult population who could read or write was no more than 51/2%. There were few structures for these schools and they were usually held in private houses and not unoften under the shade of trees. As regards the female education it was practically unknown and there was no public institution for this purpose. There was a superstitious idea that a girl taught to read and write would soon after marrying become a widow.⁵

The intellectual stagnation indicated by the above facts explains to a large extent the moral torpor and social abuses that characterized the Hindus.

The Hindu society was over sensitive to the ideas of purity, and severe restrictions were imposed by caste rules. Nothing forcibly illustrates the degrading character of the age as its callousness to women. It was seriously debated in Bengali periodicals throughout the first half of the 19th century whether the Hindu scriptures are in favour or against female education. The case of sati, or burning of a widow along with the body of her dead husband is well known.

In Calcutta and its neighbourhood alone there were 253, 289 and 441 cases of sati respectively in 1815, 1816 and 1817.

A scandalous social evil prevalent was the marriage of Kulin Brahmins

5. History of freedom movement of India, Vol-1 Pg 34-35 by R.C. Majumdar

Owing to old conventions, a few Brahman families in Bengal were regarded as Kulins, ie superior in respect of social prestige, and their boys alone came to be regarded as suitable husbands for the girls of certain families. The result was that each of them married a large number of wives often as many as 50, 60, 100 or even more. These wives lived in their fathers house and many of them scarcely saw their husbands after marriage. The evil was heightened by the fact that many girls according to social usage were all together married to an old man just to remove their maidenhood, which was considered a disgrace.

It seems as if there was paralysis of moral sensibilities and utter lack of humane feeling among the Hindus at least quite a large section of them. There was a deep-rooted belief in number of Gods and Goddesses; image worship; the caste system, restrictions of food and marriage, strict prohibition of marriage of the widows in the 19th century at the time of revolt of 1857. As regards the attitude of the English towards the Indians, the attitude of a conquering people to the conquered people is bound to be arrogant in most cases, and the Englishmen were no exceptions. From the very beginning of the British rule, the unsociable character of the English men offended the sensibilities of Indians. There were some reasons for the bitterness of the relations between the two communities.

English in general regarded the Indians as barbaric and the Christian missionaries held in open contempt the idolatrous practices of the Hindus. Warren Hastings wrote in 1784 ' a few years ago most of the Englishmen regarded the Indians almost as barbarian, and though the feeling has decreased it has not entirely disappeared. 'The Englishmen could and not unoften did inflict all kinds of insults and humiliations upon the Indians and assaulted and sometimes killed, them practically with impunity. This

arrogant spirit of the Englishmen was cause of bitter resentment against them.

The right of unrestricted entry of the Christian missionaries to India was conceded by the Charter of 1813. The missionaries in their schools and religious tracts, poured forth venomous abuses against the Hindus and this considerably estranged the relations between the two communities. In particular. The conversion of the Hindus to Christianity by force or fraud as the Hindus thought embittered their relations. There was a general feeling among the Indians that it was a deliberate policy of the British Government to convert them en masse to Christianity. ⁶

Discontent due to administrative system

The masses in Bengal did not show disaffection to the English at first when they first obtained political power in Bengal. But gradually there was a feeling of aversion against them, not so much on account of their being foreigners, as on account of the evils of their administration Sir Syed GhulamKhan gave a long list of grievances against the British Administration. The most important of these maybe summed up as follows

- i) The English Officials were not accessible and so people could not place their grievances before them.
- ii) There was difference in customs and language between them,.
- iii) Their administration was impersonal in character and therefore responsible for many evils such as slowness of proceedings, delay in taking action, frequent changes in policy etc.

6. History of freedom movement of India, Vol-1 Pg 92-93 by R.C. Majumdar

- iv) The English had deprived the inhabitants of India of the various branches of commerce and benefit which they were enjoying before.
- v) Partiality of the English to their own country men and their dependants.

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan regarded the non-admission of Indians into the legislative and demonstrative branches of the Government of India as the primary cause of the Mutiny of 1857. He rightly points out that the permanencce and prosperity of the Government depends on an accurate knowledge of the manners, customs, usages, habits, hopes and aspirations, temper, and ability of the people. But the foreign government cannot possess such knowledge until the people are allowed to participate in the administration of the county.

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan also refers to the exclusion of the natives from high appointments under the Government as a source of profound discontent and disaffection, particularly among the Mohammedans who had until recent times held such positions of trust and dignity and being unaccustomed to trade and commerce, depended mostly upon service as means of livelihood. He severally condemned the lack of cordiality shown by the Englishmen towards the Indians, and in particular the officials treating, the Indians with contempt/ Such ill-treatment, he observes was more offensive to the Muslims who for centuries ~~pat~~ had received special honour and enjoyed special immunities in Hindustan

Thus we find that all classes of Indians were greatly dissatisfied with the strange laws and procedures and the system of administration introduced by the English in India⁷.

7. History of freedom movement of India, Vol-1 Pg 93-95 by R.C. Majumdar

Syed Ahmed also criticizes the administrative and judicial procedure, so foreign to the Indians, and cites an example of the imposition of tax on justice in the shape stamps.

Thus we find that all classes of Indians were greatly dissatisfied with the strange laws and procedures and the system of administration introduced by the English in India

Political condition of India in the 19th century. In those days there was no conception of India as country. There were Bengalis, Hindustanis, Sikhs, Rajputs, Marathas but no Indian. Bishop Heber, describing his tour in upper India in 1824 says that the people of Hindustan regarded the Bengalis as much as a foreigner as the English. The Bengalis reciprocated the feeling. To the Bengalis, the Marathas were not only as much as foreigners as English but they were hated foreigner which the English were not. For the outrages committed by the Marathas upon the Bengalis within almost their living memory were such as no people of one part of India were known to have done to the people of another part, and the Bengalis hatred against the Marathas found expression even in their Lullaby.

This explains why when the British from their base in Bengal fought against the Marathas, Gurkhas and other Indian powers, the Bengalis offered regular prayers for the success of the British and voluntarily came forward to help the British with a large proportion of their property.

When gradually towards the end of 18th century, the people realised that the British had ousted the Muslim nawab from all power and authority, the reaction of Muslim and Hindus was different. For the Muslim, there was a sullen resentment against the imposition of British rule in Bengal and

active resistance at the moment. There is however no doubt that the Muslims, who had suffered seriously from the loss of their power and prestige, were in a truculent mood and kept themselves aloof from the English as far as possible.

Far different was the attitude of the Hindus, who welcomed the British as deliverers from the yolk of Muslim tyrants. The disaffection of the Hindu Rajas to the Muhammadan Government had been noticed by observers e.g. Col Scott wrote to his friend Mr Noble in 1754 that 'the Jentue (Hindu) Rajas and inhabitants were much disaffected to the Moor (Mohammedans) government, and sincerely wished for a change and opportunity of throwing off their tyrannical yolk' .⁸

A strong feeling of antipathy towards Muslim rule is expressed by the great Bengali poet Bharatchandra in 'Annadamangal' composed in 1752 AD . He denounces the iconoclastic activities of Nawab Aliwardi Khan and refers to the Maratha ruler as the chosen instrument of God Siva for punishing the wicked Yavana.

The traditional Hindu aversion to the Muslim rule was voiced by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, who was the greatest personality in Bengal at the beginning of the 19th century his views at the point in issue are scattered in his writings, but the following extract from his petition to the King in Council in 1823 is enough to indicate them.

'The greater part of Hindustan having been for several centuries subject to Muhammadan rule, the civil and the conquerors, a great body of their subjects the southern peninsula (Dukkin), afterwards called the Marathas,

8. History of freedom movement of India, Vol-1 Pg 45 by R.C. Majumdar

and another body in the western parts now styled Sikhs, were at last driven to revolt, and when the Musalman power became feeble, they ultimately succeeded in establishing their independence, but the natives of Bengal wanting vigours of body and adverse to active exertion, remained during the whole period of the Mohammedans conquest, faithful to the existing Government although their property was often plundered, their religion insult, and their blood wantonly shed. Divine providence at last, in its abundant mercy, stirred up the English nation to break the yolk of those tyrants and to receive the oppressed natives of Bengal under ~~this~~ protection. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was not alone in holding these views. Some of his younger contemporaries proceeded even further and almost all the evils from which the country was suffering were attributed to the Muslim rule eg -Dwarkanath Tagore writes in a letter to the Englishman dated 6.12.1838-

The present characteristic failings of the natives are want of truth a want of integrity, a want of independence. These were not the characteristics of former days, before the religion was corrupted and education had disappeared. It is the Mohammedans conquest that these evils are owing and they are the invariable results of the loss of liberty and national degradation. The utter destruction of learning and science was an invariable part of their system, and the conquered, no longer able to protect their lives by arms and impence, fell into opposite extremes of abject submission, deceit and fraud. Such had been the condition of the natives of Hindustan for centuries. There is no doubt that the liberal character of British administration, especially its judicial system, made a very favourable impression upon the Hindus who contrasted it with the decadent system of Muslims rule in the 18th century, so strongly marked by inefficiency, corruption and exactions to an almost incredible extent. This is specially true of the upper class and intelligentsia among the

Hindus. Almost all evils from which the country was suffering were attributed to the Muslim rule by Dwarkanath Tagore who expressed his conviction that the happiness of India is best secure by her connection with England

But though the masses in Bengal were indifferent to the British conquest and the Hindu intelligentsia welcomed it as providential deliverance from tyrannical Muslim rule, there was hostile reaction to it in some quarters sometimes leading to active opposition. However, the hostile reactions to the British rule during the second half of the 18th century was inspired mainly by considerations of self interest.⁹

Hyder Ali of Mysore almost all the Maratha chiefs and the Nizam had organised a grand confederacy for making simultaneous raids against the British from their respective headquarters, but superior statesmanship of the British ensured their failure.

The revolt of Chait Singh, raja of Benaras in 1778 was occasioned by the tyrannical measures taken by the Governor General Warren Hastings against him. A large number of Zamindars and common people of the region extending upto Avadh and Bihar rose against the British with the intention to expel the English

Arising of such large proportions cannot be explained as due only to the grievances of an individual against the British. Chait Singh, was helped in his insurrection by Mahadji Sindhia, the most powerful Maratha ruler of those day. Chait Singh was given asylum with his family members at Gwalior, where he lived for the rest of his life ¹⁰

9. History of freedom movement of India, Vol-1 Pg 47-49 by R.C. Majumdar

10. History of freedom movement of India, Vol-1 Pg 78-81 by R.C. Majumdar

Similarly the rebellion of Wazir Ali, the dethroned Nawab of Avadh, from 1799 –1800 AD was a part of all India confederacy against the English towards the close of the 18th century, as admitted by the British themselves. This rising was widespread and was also supported by the Hindus. It was one of the first spontaneous outbreaks of a large section for the Indian people against the newly established and gradually expanding British rule in India. The insurrection of Wazir Ali was a precursor to a number of uprising and revolts against the British in large areas of North and Central India which reached a climax in the great uprising of 1857.¹¹

The discontent and disaffection of Indians manifested themselves in open acts of defiance, not unoften leading to active rebellions which sometimes assumed serious proportions *The most important of these are clearly traceable to political grievance. Many outbreaks were however of mixed character; originating in agrarian discontent or other economic causes. The series of outbreaks due to political, economics, religious frenzy, and primitive tribal instincts may be regarded as the real precursors of the great revolt of 1857.* The following were some of the numerous uprising and revolts against the British till 1857.

Malabar passed in the hands of the British by the treaties with Tipu Sultan in 1792, But for a few exceptions, the Rajas of Malabar openly defied the British for six year's.

Raja Verma of the Kottayam family raised a formidable insurrection and was joined by Raja of Kohote. The British were forced to come to terms with the former. The British occupation of the Assam valley was followed by a series of insurrections with an avowed object of driving the British

11. History of freedom movement of India, Vol-1 Pg 87-88 by R.C. Majumdar

out of their country e.g. in 1830, 1835, 1839 and the revolt of the Nagas in 1849.

Bundelkhand passed into the hands of the British as a result of the 2nd Maratha war (1803-05), but the new Governments were defied by numerous chiefs for several years, eg by Gopal Singh, who was deprived of his estate by the British

After Saharanpur passed into the hands of the British in 1803, the Gujars rose in revolt in 1813, which was easily suppressed.

The poligars of "South India" who had maintained their independence from the time immemorial offered obstinate resistance to the imposition of British rule. Series of rebellions broke out in several parts of South India, such as Bellary, Anantpur, Cuddapah, Kurnool districts and North Arcot. Savantvadi on the coast of North Konkan passed under the British protection in 1819, but the insurrections broke out in 1830, 1832, and 1836. At the time of a rising in the neighbouring state of Kolhapur in 1824, there was a general revolt, but was suppressed by the military. There was a rising in Bijapur in 1824. A similar rising took place in 1840.

Kimedi was a large zamindar's estate in the Gunjan district. The arrest of its Zamindar for non-payment of arrears of rent provoked an outbreak in 1798. Although the outbreak was suppressed, recurring disturbances of serious nature continued till 1834.

On the death of Shivalinga Rudra of Kittur in Belgaun district, the British refused to accept his adopted son as the heir. This provoked a rebellion in 1824 for overthrowing the British rule. Similarly, annexation resulted in rebellion of the Gadkaris at Kilhapur in 1844.

A spirit of general hostility against the British rule was fomented among the Rajpur chiefs of Kathiawar by Baji Rao – II in 1815 –18. Similarly, the interference of the British in the affairs of Cutch by virtue of treaty with Gaekwar of Baroda, led to several conspiracies and risings to drive out the British out of Kathiawar ¹²

Discontent due to economic causes - It can be said that the thought for swadeshi was behind the revolt, interalia of the civil population in 1857, which was manifested in their desire to drive out the British from their territories to secure freedom from foreign rule, for they were responsible for destruction of the self contained 'swadeshi' village economy of this country of its swadeshi handicrafts, agriculture, and for driving the public at large to poverty and deprivation.

The feelings of swadeshi grew with the east India company rule and its visible and invisible effect. A situation of confrontation between the Indian and British interests had arisen. The British had conquered India for the fulfilment of their interest and accordingly they safeguarded their interests as against those of the Indians.

Throughout the British rule, India was mercilessly impoverished. Her famous manufacturers were ruined and poor artisans and craftsmen driven to make out a living from primitive agriculture. The situation deteriorated so much that famines and scarcities became four times as numerous during the last thirty years of the 19th century as they were 100 years earlier¹³. At the time of establishment of the East India Company, the economic condition of India was very good. The Indian trade and industry

12. History of freedom movement of India, Vol-1 Pg 106-111 by R.C. Majumdar

13. Economic History of India by G. Kaushal, Pg 8

was well developed. India even had an international trade. The Muslin of Dhaka was famous in the whole Europe. However all this changed with the systematic destruction of her economy due to the selfish economic policies followed by the British. This had led to the destruction of her self contained village economy, handicraft and cottage industry and her agriculture as described below. The economic decline of the peasantry was reflected in the twelve major and numerous minor famines witnessed by this country from 1770 to 1857. The Rev Mr.Sutherland in the New England magazine Boston, Sept. 1900 wrote. The causes of the Indian famines was not due to rains, not to over population, but to the extreme, abject and awful poverty of the Indian people, and this is due to enormous tribute, the cost of the most expensive Government in the world, the army and the foreign wars'.¹⁴

Mr Ranade and Mr Gokhale have pointed out that the amount levied on the land leaves no savings to the cultivators but actually trenches on his subsistence. Hence, despite his incessant labour, his indebtedness is always increasing .

Annie Besant had made the following observation about the state of Indian Economic – ‘ Comparing relative income and taxation we find that England paid 81/2% of her annual income as taxation, whereas India nearly 22% it must be remembered that England pays out of wealth, India out of poverty in England taxes are spent in the country in India, half goes out.’ Annie Besant further said that some of the taxes are particularly cruel such as the tax on salt, which is an absolute necessity of life.¹⁵

14. India a Nation by Annie Besant, Pg 36

15. India a Nation by Annie Besant Pg 40-41

Dadadhai Naroji, R.C. Dutta and others had addressed themselves to the study of Indian poverty and put forward the drain theory. The concept of drain theory was a *unilateral transfer of wealth from India to England*.

Before 1833, the drain consisted of a) outright tributes paid by Indian rulers and b) Investment of surplus revenues of Bengal in exports from India by the company after the grant of Diwani and c) in payment of dividends to its shareholder. It was supplemented by the exports of bullion to China, and remittances of private fortunes accumulated by the company's servants through a process of undisguised looting.

After 1833, the drain consisted of –a) Home Charges, which refers to the expenditure incurred in England by the Secretary of State on behalf of India. Before Mutiny it varied from 10-13% of the average revenue in India. After mutiny, its proportion was 24% in the period from 1897 to 1901; and went up to 40% in 20th century. Home charges comprised of the following.

- i) Dividend to the proprietors of the Indian Stock- under the charter of the 1833, the company was stripped of its commercial ~~protect the~~ interests of but in order to protect the interests of the proprietors, it was decided to pay out of the revenues of India an annual dividend of 6.30 lakh pounds to the stock holders of the company.
- ii) Interest on public Debt- Before Mutiny in 1857, the public debt of India was due partly to wars both in and outside India and partly to home charges.. It represented the money with which India was conquered. It amounted to 37 million pounds in 1834, and rose to 49.2 million pounds in 1856 and 93 million pounds

1860. This great increase represents the cost of suppressing the mutiny

This large public debt involved an equally large interest liability also. Military and marine charges – The charges under this head included pay, furlough allowances and pensions of the British military and naval personnel, contribution to military services fund, charges for the transport of troops and cost of foreign wars. India had to bear the cost of recruitment and training of British army personnel posted in India and disburse their pay and allowances at British rates. The transport service organised for carrying British troops from England to India and back was another charge India had to pay.

The most important evil resulting from the drain was the impoverishment of the country. It meant a direct transfer of a part of the domestic product to England ¹⁶.

Ruin of Trade and industry - - After the battle of Plassey, the process of conquest of India continued side by side with commerce and the political power was exercised to the full extent for commercial advantage. Piece by piece, the unconquered parts of India were conquered with money from the conquered areas. The wealth of the conquered territories was spent to purchase the raw materials of the said territories for exportation to England.

Plassey being the result of conspiracy, the ruling nawab Nawab Siraj-ud-Dauland was replaced by Mir Jafar, who was a puppet in the hands of the British. He was obliged to exhaust his treasury to please his protectors. It

16. Economic History of India by G. Kaushal, Pg 8-18

is gathered from the accounts of the Englishmen themselves that huge amounts went out of India in the form of bullion in a continuous stream/Since it went out as individual acquisitions, did not bring any return.

The other way in which there was drain out of India is as follows- The company's servants amassed their private fortune in India. They gave it to the company in India to receive it back in England. The company utilised it in India to purchase Indian goods for export. Thus the Indian goods were purchased from money acquired in India and the goods went out of India. Such exports had no matching imports to retain the economic balance. Likewise, the East India company also earned its own money through political and military exploits. These large amounts were used to purchase Indian goods for export. Thus here again the Indian goods were purchased with Indian money and sent out for trade, the profit of which went in the pockets of the English. On the other hand, India had to pay for her imports. Thus the balance of trade was destroyed gradually.

There was another source of drain. The company collected the revenues to meet its administrative expenses. The surplus of land revenue collected by the company, was utilised for trade purposes.¹⁷

The handloom weaving was i.e. greatest village industry in India, Indian textiles were reputed in the west for their beauty and durability and were thus in good demand. The weavers had freedom to procure cotton, to spin the thread and weave the cloth and sell in local markets as well for export.

17. A social, Cultural and Economic History of India, by P.N.Chopra, B.N. Puri and M.N. Dass, Pgs 163-166.

With the East India Company in power, a violent dislocation occurred in the profession of weavers of Bengal and Bihar.

Since cotton fabrics were being exported to Europe from the beginning the company wanted to make this business as large and profitable as possible. In order to make arrangement for profitable supply of cotton cloth to its godowns, it brought the weavers into an economic web of rules and regulations from which they could not escape. The weavers freedom was restricted by the company by contracts under which they were enquired first to fulfil the demands of the company before they worked for anyone else, treat, force and punishments were used. The injustice was compounded by the fact that the company fixed the price of cloth arbitrarily. Gradually the company monopoly was established over the manufacture and procurement of cotton cloth. To achieve its objectives, weaver the company purchased the cloth at the minimum possible price, leaving the weaver with smallest margin. In some cases the cost of the cloth was less than the cost of raw materials. The weavers having been forced to weave mostly for the company had no extra cloth to sell in the local market.

Thus his labour turned less remunerative than before. In fact, company compelled the weavers to sign a bond for the delivery of a certain quantity of goods, at a certain time and at a certain price. The assent of the weaver was not deemed necessary if they declined to weave for the company, they were sent for flogging.¹⁸

18. A social, Cultural and Economic History of India, by P.N.Chopra, B.N. Puri and M.N. Dass, Pgs 168-170.

Use of political power to destroy industry”

The company manipulated prices to the detriment of the artisans. It oppressed the weavers and followed other relative policies which ruined Indian industries particularly the cotton industry of Bengal.

The effect of the practices followed by the company and its servants was bound to prove destructive. The crafts men were ruined.

The prices of Indian manufacturers were inflated without any corresponding increase into the wages of labour. The quality of Indian products was debased. The history of the early period of British rule in India is thus a solid tale of vandalism, plundered oppression and destruction of Indian handicrafts and manufacturers.¹⁹

It is a remarkable coincidence of History that the British conquest of India and the industrial revolution of England began almost side by side. In 1785, the power loom was made by Cart Wright. The machines which made the industrial revolution required money and material in abundant quantities to hasten the pace of the evolution. There lay the significance of the Indian helped the growth of industrial revolution in Britain.

The company's directors introduced a policy that the Indian raw material could now be exported without any limit. The company's surplus revenue therefore, got transferred to England in the shape of raw materials. That helped the industrial revolution as the British industries got continuous supply of raw material to turn out a continuous supply of manufactured goods.

19. History of Freedom Movement in India by Tara Chand Vol-1 Pgs 314-316.

At first it was difficult for the Manchester fabrics to compete with Indian hand loom products in India as it was inferior. But gradually their quality improved and produced finer varieties. Improved machine made goods at comparatively cheaper price sealed the fate of the Indian cotton weavers. The company exercised its trade advantages and political privileges to open the markets for the Manchester goods through their empire in India. With the industrial revolution progressing faster, the British industrial goods began to replace various kinds of indigenous products, thereby causing disaster after disaster to the India's village industry²⁰

The import policies of the company were also responsible for the decline of weaving industries of India. Whereas the products of British looms were being imported into India at more nominal duties, heavy and almost prohibitive duties were imposed on her exports to England. With the flow of foreign goods and growth of market for foreign made goods in India, her indigenous industries were paralysed.

In this manner Britain did not allow India to export goods that would compete with Britain home industries in England eg-textiles. Therefore, only agricultural raw materials and other non manufactured goods were exported from India. Therefore, from an exporter of cotton textiles and handicrafts, India was transformed to an exporter of cotton and other raw materials in the 19th century.

Indian village industries continued to produce their traditional gold, silver, brass and copper goods and the needs of the people were met through local products. But the English traders worked hard to create a demand

20. A social, Cultural and Economic History of India, by P.N.Chopra, B.N. Puri and M.N. Dass. Pgs 171-173.

for substitute goods. In cities and towns, foreign goods began to appear in Indian shops and gradually demand was created for British made luxury goods as well as for cheaper commodities of day today use²¹

The opening of the village to foreign imports gave a deadly blow to the village Crafts and industries.. From an industrial worker he was transformed into a landless labourers, seeking work in agriculture, sometimes as a tenant and at other times as a wage labourers.

Under the combined influence of the restrictions on imports into envelope and the growth of the English industry,. The Indian cotton trade with Europe began to suffer a decline from the middle of eighteenth century.

It was not till foreign rule was firmly established in India and political powers was abused by the new rules to strangulate the acts and crafts of the subject people that Indian industries suffered a final extinction²².

In this manner, throughout the 19th century, India witnessed a collapse of her industrial potentiality and her transformation into a purely agricultural country as the weavers abandoned their weaving and turned to land as a sources of livelihood.

But in the meantime the condition of Indian agriculture had also deteriorated.

21. A social, Cultural and Economic History of India, by P.N.Chopra, B.N. Puri and M.N. Dass, Pgs 183.

22. History of Freedom Movement in India by Tara Chand Vol-1 Pgs 304, 311, 312

As the land revenue was the main source of income, the company designed to make the maximum out of it. In order to get the maximum revenue from the territories of the company, by 1782 it sold the estates by public auction. The lands were let by public auction for a short term of three years. The system of auction was profitable to the state but it harmed the peasants in every way. The bidders at the auction offered high values knowing fully well that by oppressing the people, they would pay the promised sums to the state while making a profit for themselves. The Company did not spend the revenues of the land for the benefit of the land and its people, but for remittance of England. The great famine of Bengal in 1770 was the first testimony to the character of the new rule. There was failure of monsoons and consequent failure of crops. But the Government paid no heed to the calamity. On this other hand it collected land revenue more ruthlessly than ever before. It is estimated that 10 million people had died in this famine.

In 1793, Lord Cornwallis introduced the system of permanent settlement. It recognised the landlords as the proprietors of the soil with rights of hereditary succession for the heirs and lawful successors. They could transfer, sell, mortgage their land. But all their rights ceased with their failure to pay the fixed land revenue on the fixed date to the Government treasury. It entrusted the landlords with the duty of safe guarding the rights of their tenants by giving them the pattas wherein the area of the holding and its rent was stated. The permanent settlement subjected the landlords to such rules for securing the rights and privileges of the tenants in their respective tenures and for protecting them against oppression and undue exaction. This system worked successfully in Bengal, Assam and parts of Madras.

However under this system, while making the assessment of land revenue, no account of the productivity of land, gradation of its soil, situation of the plot of land was taken into account. *Therefore, the assessments were arbitrary and the rates of assessment were fixed rather high.* This was a cause of oppression of the cultivators. Further, the land revenue collected was not spent for the welfare of the people or improvement of agriculture. Under this system if the landlord was a man of integrity, intelligence, he served his subject well, or else they became the victims of his personal whims, oppression, and injustice. The tenants were too poor, ignorant and helpless, to carry the grievance against the landlords to the higher authorities. With its advantages and disadvantage this permanent settlement continued to exist where it was introduced..

In UP, MP and Punjab, the Mahalwari or village wise settlement was introduced. The village headman known as the lambardar, signed an agreement on behalf of the entire village to pay the stipulated amount of land revenue to the Government. In this system, the settlements were periodically, say for 30 to 20 years at a time.

The Ryotwari system of settlement was introduced in Madras, Bombay and Sind. The defect of the system was that as long as the ryot paid land revenue he was the master of his land but if he failed to pay the government could take over his land into direct possession.

The main difficulty arising out of the land systems was a sense of fear and insecurity on the part of the peasants as the landlord Government could evict him on one ground or another.

They were forced to pay land revenue in full even in case of crop failure. Side by side with the vexatious system of land settlement, the iniquitous

process of resumption of lands was another source of social discontent and unsettlement.²³

Disintegration of village communities

The land revenue systems established by the British in India and the assumption of all judicial and administrative functions by government officials destroyed the powers of the old intermediates- zamindars and farmers and of the village panchayats. This led to the break up of that ancient social framework within which the agricultural population had lived for centuries.

Sir Charles Metcalfe in his famous minute wrote, "The village communities are little republics, having nearly every thing that they want within themselves and almost independent of any foreign relation. The union of the village communities each one forming a separate state contributed more than any other to the preservation of the people of India, and it is conducive to their happiness and a great portion of freedom and independence.

The growing pressure of population on agriculture made land valuable property and its price, steadily increased. The opening of the market for agricultural produce and the growth of cash crops by the farmer produced, similar effects. These developments imposed, heavy strain on the rural organisation and the village republic faded out of existence in the Mahalwari areas of the north, in the same way as they had done under the zamindari system in Bengal and the Ryotwari system in the south²⁴.

23. A social, Cultural and Economic History of India, by P.N.Chopra, B.N. Puri and M.N. Dass, Pgs 173-181.

24. History of Freedom Movement in India by Tara Chand Vol-1 Pgs 302-303.

Disruption of trade Internal trade

Indians trade suffered with agriculture and industry. Under clive almost the whole of in land trade was monopolised by the company and its servants. The native merchants in Bengal began to import cotton in large quantities from northern and southern India. The company's monopoly was threatened, in consequence with the prospect of heavy loss, Immediately a thirty per cent duty was levied on the land import of cotton passing through Bihar into Bengal such activities not only pushed the Indians out of the internal trade but also defrauded the producers and the consumer by forming the format to sell cheap and the later to buy dear.

Foreign trade - The English had clear understanding of how the resources of India were to be used for promoting the prosperity of Britain .As early as 1769, the directors of the east India company had issued instructions. The essence of the policy was of moulding the Indian economy into the colonial pattern; the main function of which was to buy cheaply raw materials for the home industries and to sell dearly its manufactured goods²⁵

The effect of the aforesaid British Commercial Policy was that the weaving industry declined, and so did the export of cotton and silk goods form India whereas the import of English fabrics increased The English imposed prohibitive import tariffs on the Indian goods entering England; which made their cost prohibitive and lead to decline in exports of Indian silk and cotton goods to England. After 1813,when the British parliament decided to open India to all the British manufacturers, the English traders came in large numbers and began system of systematic exploitation of the

25. History of Freedom Movement in India by Tara Chand Vol-1 Pgs 318-319.

country. After 1833, the East India company was stripped of its Commercial functions. By 1833, the export of Indian manufactured goods of cotton and silk, but also of the export of India raw materials had greatly reduced. England required plenty of cotton for her growing industries which the East India company could have supplied from India. Instead American cotton captured the British market and was sold in far greater quantity than Indian cotton as the company was not interested promoting the case of Indian cotton. Similarly, the East India company did not improve the production of silk or its export but instead encouraged trade in China silk.

Now, the company started and controlled the production and trade of indigo through European indigo planters. From Bengal to Punjab, the indigo cultivation was encouraged but the planters oppressed the tillers. Huge profits from indigo export went into the pockets of European traders. Though India was best suited for the cultivation of sugar, but company did not take any interest in its production.

The Company maintained its monopoly over two important things which it considered as article of trade but as source revenue ie salt and opium. The company's agents supervised the manufacture of salt in Bengal, Madras, Bombay another place. Therefore it levied a certain amount of duty on every maund of salt. Also, salt was imported from England and was allowed to compete with the Indian salt. This caused the Indian salt producers to suffer badly and were driven out of work. Thus, the company's export policies were regulated for its profits to the detriment of Indian industry.

The end of company's rule did not usher in a period of economic benefits for India. The same policies prevailed under the crown leading to even

The end of company's rule did not usher in a period of economic benefits for India. The same policies prevailed under the crown leading to even greater deterioration in the general living conditions of the people. In the words of R.C.Dutta, within twelve years after the change in administration, the economic drain from India had increased four fold²⁶

The poverty of India was the worst result of the British rule and it had reached such phenomenal depths that most people were living just at subsistence level. There was hardly any surplus stock of food grain to sustain the population against crop failure. Therefore, famines and scarcities created constant dread for the people. Some of the worst famine of Indian history had occurred in the second half of the 19th century.²⁷

Results of Economic Policy followed by the East India Company.

As a result of the economic policy followed by the East India company described above, thousands of Zamindars and Poligars had lost control over their lands and its revenues either due to extinction of their rights by the colonial state or by the forced sale of their rights over land because of their inability to meet exorbitant land revenue demanded. The proud Zamindars and poligus resented this loss even more when they were displaced by rank outsiders. Govt officer, merchants and money lenders. Thus, the old chiefs who had lost their principalities, had personal scores to settle with the new rulers. The peasant and artisans, as we have seen earlier had their own reasons to rise up in arms and side with the traditional elite. Increasing demand for land revenue were forcing a large number of peasants into growing indebtedness or into selling their own lands. The new landlords bereft of any traditional paternalism

26. A social, Cultural and Economic History of India, by P.N.Chopra, B.N. Puri and M.N. Dass. Pgs 186-188.

27. A social, Cultural and Economic History of India, by P.N.Chopra, B.N. Puri and M.N. Dass. Pgs 190.

towards their tenants, pushed up rents and evicted them in case of non-payment. The economic decline of the peasantry was reflected in twelve major and numerous minor famines from 1770 to 1857.

The new courts and legal system gave a further fillip to the dispossession of land and encouraged the rich to oppress the poor. Flogging, torture, and jailing the cultivators for arrears of rent or land revenue or interest on debt were also common. The ordinary people were also hit hard by the prevalence of oppression at lower levels of the police, judiciary and the general administration. The police looted, oppressed and tortured the common people at will. William Edwards, a British officer wrote in 1859 that the police were a scourge to the people and their oppression and exactions formed one of the chief grounds of dissatisfaction with the Government.

The ruin of Indian handicraft industries as a result of imposition of free trade in India and levy of discriminatory tariffs against the Indian goods in Britain pauperised millions of artisans. The misery of the artisan was further compounded by the disappearance of their traditional patrons and buyers, the Princes, Chiftains and Zamindars.

The traditional rulers and ruling elite had financially supported scholars, religious preachers, priests, pandits and maulvis and men of arts and literature. With the coming of the British and the ruin of the traditional landed and bureaucratic elite, this patronage came to an end and all those who depended on it were impoverished. Thus civil rebellions began as British rule was established in Bengal and Bihar and they occurred in area after area as it was incorporated into the colonial rule. There was hardly any year without armed opposition or a decade without armed rebellion in

one part of the country or the other. From 1763 to 1856 there were more than 40 major rebellions part from hundreds of minor ones.

Displaced peasants and demobilised soldiers of Bengal huddled religious monks and deposed Zamindars were the first to rise up in the sanyasi rebellion that last from 1763 to 1800.

It was followed by the Chuar uprising covering five district of Bengal and Bihar form 1766 to 1772 and then again from 1795 to 1816. The other major rebellions in eastern India were these of Rangpur and Dinajpur in 1783; Orissa Zamindars from 1804 to 1817; and of Sambalpur from 1827 to 1840. In south India, the Raja of Vizianagram revolted in 1794 the poligars of Tamilnadu during the 1790's, of Malabar and Costal Andhra during the first decade of the 19th century. Dewan Velue Thampi of Travancore organised a heroic revolt in 1805. The Mysore peasants too revolted in 1803-31. There were major uprisings in Vizagapatnam from 1830-34, Ganjam in 1835, and Kurnool n 1846-47.

In western India, the chiefs of Saurashtra rebelled repeatedly form 1816 to 1832. The Kolis of Gujarat during 1824-28, 1839 and 1849 Maharashtra was in a perpetual state of revolt after the final defeat of the Peshwas. Prominent were the Bhil uprisings in 1818-1831, the Kittur uprising of 1841, and the revolt of the Gadkaris in 1844.

The present states of Western UP and Haryana rose in arms in 1824. Other major rebellions were of the Aligarh from 1814-1817, the Bundellas of Jabalpur, 1848 handesh, 1852. The second Punjab war in 1848-49 was also in the nation popular revolt by the people and the army.

These almost continuous rebellions were massive in their totality but were wholly local in their spread and isolated from each other. They were the result of local cause and grievances and were also localised in their effects. They often bore the same character not because they represented national or common efforts but because they represented common conditions though separated in time and space. The semi-feudal leaders of these rebellions were backward looking and traditional in their outlook. They still lived in the old world, unaware and oblivious of the modern world. The basic objective of their resistance was restoration of their earlier form of rule and social relations. Such backward looking scattered, sporadic and disunited uprisings were incapable, of fending off or overthrowing the foreign rule. The British succeeded in pacifying the rebel as one by one. They also gave concessions to the less fiery rebel chiefs and Zamindars in the form of reinstatement, restoration of their restates and reduction of revenue assessments so long as they agreed to live peacefully under alien authority. The more recalcitrant ones were physically wiped out. The suppression of these civil rebellions is a major reason why the revolt of 1857 did not spread to south India and most of Eastern and Western India.

The historical significance of these civil uprising lay in that they established strong and valuable local traditions of resistance of the British rule. Indian people drew inspiration from these traditions in the later nationalist struggle.

Tribal uprisings- - The Tribal people who spread over a large part of India organised hundreds of military outbreaks and insurrections during the 19th century. The uprisings were marked by immense courage and sacrifice on their part and brutal suppression and veritable butchery on the part of the rulers. The tribals had cause to be upset for variety of reasons.

1. The colonial administration had ended their relative isolation and brought them within the ambit of colonialism.
2. The British recognised the tribal chiefs as Zamidars and introduced a new system of land revenue and taxation of tribal products.
3. They encouraged influx of Christian missionaries into the tribal areas.
4. Above all, it introduced a large number of money lenders, traders and revenue farmers as middlemen among tribal. These middlemen were the chief instruments for bringing the tribal people within the vortex of the colonial economy and exploitation. The middlemen were outsiders who increasingly took possession of tribal lands and ensnared the tribal into a web of debt. In time, the tribal increasingly lost their lands and were reduced to a position of agricultural labours, share croppers and rack-rented tenants on the land they had earlier brought under cultivation and held on a communal basis.

Colonialism also transformed their relationship with the forest. They had depended on the forest for food fuel, and cattle feed. They practised shifting cultivation, taking recourse to fresh forest lands when their existing lands showed signs of exhaustion, the colonial Government changed all this. It usurped the forest lands and placed restriction on access to forest products, forest lands. It refused to let cultivation to shift to new areas.

Oppression and exploitation by the policemen and petty official further aggravated the distress among the tribal, the revenue farmers and Government agents had intensified and expanded the system of begar i.e making the tribal perform upon unpaid labour.

All this differed in intensity from region to region, but the disruption of the old agrarian order of the tribal communities provided for all the tribal uprisings. These uprisings were broad based involving thousand of tribals often the entire population of the region. Their rebellions often took the form of spontaneous attacks on outsiders, looting their property and expelling them from their village. Being subjected to the above mentioned cruelties, the tribals rose in an armed rebellion with the Colonial authorities. The tribals fought with bows and arrows, axe, spears etc. as against the modern weapons of the Britishers and hence died in large numbers in an unequal warfare.

Among the major tribal revolts, the most massive uprising was that of the Santhals who lived in an area between Bhagalpur and Rajmahal. They were driven to revolt having suffered from the hands of Zamindars, the police, the revenue officials, and from oppressive extractions, forcible dispossession of property and personal violence. Their rebellion was suppressed ruthlessly in which more than 15,000 Santhal were killed. Their rebellion was crushed by Aug. 1855.

Likewise, the Kols of Chhotanagpur had rebelled from 1820 to 1837 against all attempts to destroy the independence and system of laws and administration, particularly of tribal ownership of land and peasant proprietorship which they enjoyed from time immemorial, in whose suppression, thousand of tribals, were massacred by the British before their authority could be imposed.²⁸

28. India's struggle for Independence 1857-1947 by Bipin Chandra Pgs 42-49.

The Raja of Singhbhum resisted all attempts of the British to penetrate his country. He submitted in 1820. There was another rebellion in 1831 in the present district of Ranchi and Hazribagh, the Tori pargana of Palamau and western portion of Manbhum. The fury of insurgents was directed particularly against foreign settle. The insurrection was suppressed in March 1862. It was more or less a confederacy of the Khasi chiefs resisting the British occupation of their country.

The Khonds of Orissa broke into open revolt in 1846 when measures were taken to suppress their customary human sacrifice and female foeticides, which prevailed among them. Their rising lingered for three years.²⁹

The Bhils of Khandesh raised in revolt in 1818 and 1819 probably the instigation of Trimbaki, the rebel diwan of Peswa Baji Rao –II. There were many outbreaks in 1820-25, 1831 and 1846.

The Kolis were tribes operating in large area from the borders of Cutch to the Western Ghats. They broke out into rebellion in 1824, 1839, 1844 and were not finally suppressed till 1848³⁰

As regards revolts of the Zamindars, in a large number of cases, the disturbances were due to overt assessment of land revenue, heavy exaction from the cultivators, dispossession of old zamindar families by the process of auction sale or resumption of their lands, and depriving a large class of petty landholders of their tenure.

29. History of Freedom Movement of India, Vol-1 Pg. 124 by R.C. Majumdar.

30. History of Freedom Movement of India, Vol-1 Pg. 125-126 by R.C. Majumdar.

Even when the British authority was firmly established in Bengal, several zamindars were led to revolt against it such as by Raja Dhalbhum followed by his nephew Jaggannath Dhal from 1767 to 1773; Debi Singh led an insurrection of the peasants at Rangpur in 1783, Chaur insurrection of 1799 attributed to the resumption of Paik Jagir lands in the Zamindar of Rani of Kamagrah etc. In 1817, the Paiks of Orissa also rose in revolt. The exceedingly high assessment and consequent eviction of the Zamindar caused a great resentment which particularly manifested itself in the district of Khurda whose Raj was held in high respect by the people.

Several landowners of Sagar district of Bundel Khand broke in rebellion in 1842.

There was a violent mass agitation in Surat in 1844 in protest against raising the duty of salt³¹

Religious conditions and religious rebellions The feeling had spread among the Indians that the company rule was a threat to their religion. This fear had primarily cropped up among the masses due to the activities of the Christian missionaries, who on one hand tried to convert the Hindus and Muslims to Christianity and on the other hand they openly criticized the evils among the Hindu and Muslim faiths. Besides, efforts were made to provide Christian education even in the jails.³²

The abolition of sati practice, legalising widow remarriage, promoting female education were considered by the Hindus as interference in their faith³³

31. History of Freedom Movement of India, Vol-1 Pg. 111-116 by R.C. Majumdar.

32. Indian Nationalism and Hindu Social Reform by Charles Hemseth, Printed in 1964. Pg 22.

33. Bipin Chandra Pg 283.

The Sanyasi rebellion was one of the most formidable that the British had to deal with almost at the beginning of their rule in Bengal. The movement was initiated by anti British feelings of the Hindu Sanyasis and Muslim Fakirs but it gained momentum from the support it received from the starving peasantry, dispossessed Zamindars and the disbanded soldiers. After the great famine of 1770, their activities had increased, and the economic distress drove the people in large numbers to join the Sanyasis and defy the newly established British rule. By the end of 1722 there was a great upsurge of the Sanyasis in the wide belt of the country from Rangpur to Dacca. Their fighting qualities were not negligible. However, it is difficult to ascertain the motives which impelled the two religious groups into rebellion.³⁴

Discontent and disaffection of the Sepoys-

The discontent and disaffection against the British Raj was also extended to the Indian section of the army of the East India company. The sepoy always nursed a strong sense of resentment at their low scale of salary and poor prospects of promotion, neither of which in their opinion had any real correspondence to their worth, particularly when contrasted with those of their British colleagues. The difference was scandalous to a degree. Moreover, the European corps took nothing of the rough ordinary duties, of the service. Their lodging, fooding and salaries contrasted with those of their English counterparts and this adversely affected the moral of the sepoy. We learn from a Bengali clerk attached to the cavalry regiment at Bareilly in 1857 that the sepoy had to pay for their uniform and he bought his daily ration on credit from a baniya in the regimental bazaar. On the pay day his account was settled and after deduction for his ration etc. the

34. History of Freedom Movement of India, Vol-1 Pg. 117-120 by R.C. Majumdar.

balance was paid to him. Some Sepoys got at the end of the month no more than a rupee and in other case the monthly savings did not exceed a few annas. What was more galling was the sense of depreciation at every step and the racial discrimination in matters of promotion and privileges.

The sepoy was in fact a peasant in uniform, whose conscious was not divorced from that of the rural population. Almost every agricultural family in Oudh had a representative in the army. He was naturally concerned with the well being of the rural population. A proclamation issued by the rebels after capture of Delhi in the mutiny of 1857 clearly reflected the Sepoy's awareness of the misery brought about by the British rule.

The feeling of the sepoys is reflected in many of the proclamations issued during the mutiny.

'We have ungrudgingly shed our blood in the service of our foreign masters.'

We have conquered for them kingdom after kingdom until nothing remained to be annexed within the four corners of the country., but what has been the return spoliation of our people, degradation of our princes, and worst of all, inconceivable insults to our religion.'

It would appear from these proclamations that the sepoys were influenced by all the causes, which provoked discontent and disaffection among the civil population of all classes. This was quite natural because they and the members of their families formed part and parcel of the civil population.

In spite of their material grievances in respect of pay and allowances, and the prevailing spirit of discontent and disaffection which they share with the civil population, the sepoy generally remained faithful to their masters. But extreme measures on the part of the authorities had occasionally provoked them to mutiny.

One of the most serious revolts, which bears a very close resemblance to the mutiny of 1857 so far as the genesis is concerned, was the mutiny at Vellore in 1806. When the new regulations were introduced in the Madras army forbidding the men to wear the marks of caste upon their forehead's ordering them to change their old turbans for new ones with leather cockades, the Indian soldiers broke into mutiny at Vellore with the backing of the members of the exiled family of Tipu Sultan who lived there, threatened to assume serious proportions.

In 1839, symptoms of disaffection could be clearly seen among the sepoy who were taken to Afghanistan during the first Afghan war. The Hindu sepoy fancied that they had lost their caste for they had to cross the Sindhu and go outside India, which was forbidden by religion. They had to forego their daily bath, take their bread from Muslims, and wear jackets made of sheep skin. The Muslim sepoy were dissatisfied as they had to fight against the men of their own faith. A Hindu and a Muslim subedar were shot dead for expressing these sentiments, which further excited the sepoy.

There was unanimous complaint among the sepoy of the 64th regiment that they had been deceived by their commanding Officer. The sepoy Found that they could not trust their Officer, and no wonder when the crisis came in 1857, the assurances of their officers had little or no weight with them.³⁵

35. History of Freedom Movement of India, Vol-I Pg. 95-104 by R.C. Majumdar.

Mutinous spirit was also displayed in 1849 by the sepoys of Punjab. The discontent and disaffection among all classes of people and sporadic disturbances in all parts of India grew in intensity, till a suitable opportunity in 1857. The series of outbreaks due to political, economic, religious causes, and primitive tribal instincts maybe regarded as the real precursors of the great revolt of 1857.

Cultural factors of or the revolt of 1857 – The policy of modernisation of the Indian society and culture was adopted for the first time in the first half of the 19th century. During the period, western ideas and customs were tried to be implemented here. Efforts were made to introduce the Indians to the western science and literature. The Christian missionaries made special efforts to encourage the modernisation of cultural life, which the Indians regarded as interference in the cultural life.

Modern education was introduced by the Britishers in the second half of 19th century the Indians thought that modern education will finish the cultural life of the Hindus and Muslims and it will encourage westernisation of cultural life. The introduction of English language and western science and literature were cornered as an interference in their cultural life by the in India. Hence they considered the revolt against the British as justified. Therefore the people were inspired by the feelings of Swadeshi in their revolt against the company rule.

The Revolt of 1857 - The reason for this mass upsurge has to be sought in the nature of British rule which adversely affected the interest of almost all sections of the society, discussed above. Under the burden of excessive taxes the peasant had become progressively indebted and impoverished. The company had hurriedly undertaken land settlements, often without any regard to the resource to the land.

Naturally the land revenue could not be collected without coercion and torture. In Rohilkhand also there were as many as 32,37,388 coercive collections during 1848-1856. The Government was very keen on revenue collection but it did not grant remissions even in very adverse circumstances. The Traditional landed aristocracy suffered no less. In Oudh, the Taluqdars lost all their power and privileges. About 21,000 taluqdars whose states were confiscated, suddenly found themselves without any source of income.

These dispossessed taluqdars smarting under the humiliation heaped upon them seized the opportunity presented by the sepoy's mutiny to oppose the British and regain whatever they had lost.

The immediate cause of the mutiny of 1857 was the introduction of Enfield rifle for use by the sepoys. Early in Jan 1857, a rumour was sedulously spread to the effect that the cartridges of these rifles were greased with the lard made from the fat either of the hog or of the cow, and the ends for these cartridges had to be bitten off by the teeth. It was a scilicet act, both for the Hindus and the Muslims involving loss of their caste. The idea gained ground that it was a deliberate move on the part of the Government to convert them en masse to Christianity. The official Missionary nexus gave credence to the rumours. In some cantonments, missionaries were permitted to preach openly and their diatribe against other religions angered the sepoys. The reports about mixing of bone dust in atta and the introduction of the Enfield rifle enhanced the sepoy's growing disaffection with the Government³⁶.

36. India's struggle for Independence 1857-1947 by Bipin Chandra Pgs 34-40.

On 29.3.1857, Mangal Pandey, a sepoy of the 34th Native infantry at Barrackpore openly mutinied, for which he was executed after trial.

On 26th February, 1857, the 19th Native Infantry stationed at Berhampur refused to receive their percussion caps for the parade. Both the 34th and the 19th Native infantry were disbanded.

It was soon evident that the discontent and mutinous spirit had affected the sepoys of the whole Bengal army located in remote parts of India and troubles arose as far as Ambala and Lakhnau.

The sepoys for the third cavalry at Meerut revolted on 10th May 1857, Then they marched towards Delhi and entered it on 11th May 1857 and they persuaded if not coerced Bahadur Shah Zafar to become their leader and was proclaimed the Shahenshah –e- Hindustan. There revolt at Meerut and the capture of Delhi was a precursor to a widespread mutiny by the sepoys and rebellions all over North India as well as Western and Central India. South India remained peaceful and Punjab and Bengal had only marginal effect.

The revolt was marked by intense anti- British feeling and the administration was invariably toppled everywhere Mutiny took place. In the absence of any leaders from their own ranks, the insurgents turned to the traditional leaders of Indian society-the Territorial aristocrats and the feudal chiefs who had suffered at the hands of the British.

The news of Mutiny of Sepoys at Meerut followed by the capture of Delhi, created a sensation all over India. As the days passed by and with the news of lethargy and inactivity on the part of the British and stories of their disgrace and discomfiture in Dehi, the signs of reaction began to

show. A series of mutinies of sepoys followed in many cases by the revolt of the civil population convulsed nearly the whole of Northern India. Even if there was planning and organisation before the revolt, it was important that it was done once it was started. Immediately after the capture of Delhi a letter was addressed to the rulers of all neighbouring states and of Rajasthan soliciting their support and inviting them to participate in the revolt. In Delhi, a court of administration was set up which consisted of ten members, six from the army and four from the civil departments. It was responsible for all matters of the state. It decided the affairs of the state in the name of the emperor. In other centres too, attempts were made to bring about an organisation. Bahadurshah was recognised as an emperor by all the rebel leaders. Coins were struck and all orders issued in his name.

The first to rise was a detachment of sepoys at Aligarh on May 20, 1857. This was followed by series of mutinies in the Punjab Naushera May 21 and Hoti Mardan. Far more serious were the series of Mutinies in Avadh and North-Western provinces at Etah and Mainpuri (May 23), Rurki (May 25), Hodal, Mathura and Lakhnau (May 30), Bareilly and Shahjahanpur (May 31), Moradabad and Badaon (June 1,) Azamgarh and Sitapur (June 3) Malaon, Mohamoli, Varanasi and Kanpur (June 4), Jhuani and Allahabad (June 6) Fyzabad (June 7), Dariabad, Hatras (July 1) and several other localities.

In general, these mutinies followed the pattern set at Mirat. The sepoys killed the Officers and other Europeans on whom they could lay their hands on, in many cases sparing neither women and children. They released prisoners from Jail, plundered the treasury, burnt Government officer and either set out for Delhi or joined some local Chiefs or roamed

at large seeking to enrich themselves by intimidation plunder of both Europeans and Indians.

After the capture of Delhi, the circumstances that proved fatal to the success of the mutiny was the conduct and attitude of the sepoys themselves. The citizens of Delhi looked upon them as an invading army rather than a force fighting for the freedom of the country. Even respectable Indians were plundered, insulted, and humiliated by the sepoys merely on the report of harbouring fugitives or on suspicion that they were in league with the English. The emperor was powerless to stop the infuriated sepoys.³⁷

At Kanpur, the natural choice was Nana Sahib, the adopted son of the last Peshwa, Baji Rao-II. Jhansi had been annexed by the British by the operation of the Doctrine of lapse by Lord Dalhousie, hence refusing to allow the adopted son of Rani of Jhansi to succeed to the throne after the death of her husband.

At Jhansi, on June 6, 1857, there was a mutiny of Sepoys, in which some Officers were killed or injured and the rest of Europeans took shelter in the other fort outside the town. On June 8, the mutineers promised personal safety to all the Europeans, they left the fort without taking any arms. But as soon as they came out of the fort, all of them, including women and children were killed. The rani of Jhansi's statement that she acted under duress is proved by independent evidence including early official reports about the mutiny at Jhansi. The government of India however suspected her from the very beginning as an accomplice of the mutinous sepoys both in respect of the mutiny and the massacre that followed. The Rani

37. History of Freedom Movement of India, Vol-1 Pg. 135 by R.C. Majumdar.

made repeated attempts to disabuse their minds but failed. No heed was paid to either to her protestations of innocence or to her unequivocal declaration of loyalty to the British. When she was at last convinced that the British were determined to bring her to trial for the massacre of the Europeans-but not till then, she decided to defend her honour by armed resistance to the British.

The revolutionary outbreaks of the Civil population took place over an extensive area in the region now known as Uttar Pradesh. The principal centre of revolt in Rohilkhand was Bareilly, where the sepoys mutinied on 31st May. At Farrukabad the sepoys revolted on 18th June and formally placed the Nawab of Farrukabad on the throne.

At Bijnore, which was not a military station, there was a revolt of the civil population on the 19th May 1857 under the leadership of Mahmud Khan, the nawab of Nazibabad³⁸

The grave discontent in Avadh was caused by the annexation of Avadh among all classes of people. Apart from the general discontent that invariably follows the annexations, the discontent was aggravated by the subsequent incidents, such as the spoilation of the Nawab's palace the lack of timely help which reduced the members of the royal family to utter penury; the new policy of land settlement which deprived the Talukdars of their prosperity he imposition of new and obnoxious duties such as those on stamps, petitions, food, houses. The rebellion in Avadh rallied around the nawab family which was dispossessed of its domains only a year ago. The last Nawab was practically a prisoner in Calcutta but his cause was taken up by his Queen, Begam Hazrat Mahal. Her minor son, Birjis Quadr

38. History of Freedom Movement of India, Vol-1 Pg. 160 by R.C. Majumdar.

was selected as Nawab on July 7 and his coronation was effected. However, not the whole of Avadh rallied around the authority of Begum. As in most of North Western provinces, so in Avadh, a number of local Chiefs had set up tiny independent kingdoms³⁹

The troops belonging to Holkar mutinied on 1st July at Indore. This was followed by mutiny at Mhow, then at several places at Sagar and territories of Narmada. At Dhar, the Arab and Afghan mercenaries in the service of the Raja rose against the British.

Rajasthan was generally unaffected except that the troops at two important military stations at Nasirabad and Nimach mutinied respectively on 28th MAY AND June 3rd. Here the people remained quiet and the Rajput chiefs, particularly the Raja of Jodhpur helped the British. The only exception was Thakur Kushal Singh, the chief of Ahua or Awah, who had specific grievance against the British. He had joined the mutineers and defeated the troops of Jodhpur and those of the British under Captain Mason but ultimately he had surrendered. There was also a mutiny at Kotah.

Bengal was particularly unaffected by the mutiny with the exceptions of sporadic outburst at Dacca and Chitagong.

In British India the most important military station was Danapur (Dinapore) near Patna. When suspicion grew and steps were taken to disarm them the sepoys broke into mutiny and proceeded to Arrah where they were joined by Kunwar Singh, the Rajput Zamindar of Jagdishpur near Arrah. Kunwar Singh was on the verge of bankruptcy, as he had been deprived of his

39. History of Freedom Movement of India, Vol-1 Pg. 165-169 by R.C. Majumdar.

Estates by the English and his repeated appeals to those entrusted with the management had fallen on deaf ears⁴⁰

Mutiny had also broken out at several places in Bihar like Nooda, Gaya, Deogarh, Hazaribagh, and Sanibalpur. The mutiny was merged with general rising of the civil population in Singhbhum, and Palamau.

The mutinous spirit was not altogether absent in the Deccan but there was no actual outbreak of mutiny except at Kolhapur. Attempts of mutiny failed at Ahmedabad in Gujarat and at Hyderabad in Sindh. A mutiny had broken out at Karachi but was easily put down.

There was no serious trouble at Punjab for as soon as the news of Mirat and Delhi reached Lahore, the authorities set about disarming the sepoys at several cantonments and there was no resistance except at a few places.

As already mentioned above, all classes of people in India were thoroughly discontented and disaffected against the British. It is therefore quite natural and no extraordinary phenomenon, that there should be no general rising of the people against the hated foreigners wherever the success of the mutiny had destroyed their power and authority. Motives of personal gain undoubtedly operated to large extent among all the classes and were the sole motive of many, notably the gooda elements and those professional classes who were accustomed to live by plunder, such as the Gujars, Jat, Ranghars etc. Likewise another class namely the Zamidars were influenced by motives of self-interest and had contrived largely to the origin and prolongation of the popular revolt especially in Avadh where the land were, seized by the Government and sold at auction. The

40. India's Struggle for Independence 1857-1947 by Bipin Chandra Pgs 31-40

cultivators and poor class still looked upon them with greater regard than the purchasers at auction, and therefore the ex-zamindar and his family were still the most influential residents of the village. The people therefore sided with the Zamindars.

The desire for personal gain or satisfaction of personal ambitions which impelled the people to revolt took many forms. The leaders thought of recovering their territories, honours, privileges they had lost, gaining new lands and wealth within easy reach or paying off old scores against an enemy. Less important persons sought to remove the source of their misery and humiliation by

- i) Destroying the bonds for loan or title deeds of land deposited with the banyas at the time of borrowing money at high rates of interest which threatened to ruin them and,
- ii) Killing the oppressive landlords or indigo planters
- iii) They welcomed, if not initiated the revolt because it did away with the inconvenient necessity of paying taxes to the Government and rent to the landlords which led them to the removal of all vexations restraints imposed by the Government and above all, meant the end of various sources of discontent which the British rule had introduced in the country. It is possible that less selfish motives were also at work. The general discontent disaffection against the British had made some persons anxious to put an end to their rule. Some Muslim leaders and maulvis were fired by the ambition of restoring the Muslim rule in India. The vision of the Hindu and Muslim leaders did not extend to the whole India and was limited to the narrow horizons of their own locality.

Another feature of the revolt was that though the beginning the revolt was marked by timidity and hesitation after the people had made their choice they often resisted the mighty British force with valour and heroism. The various factors mentioned above were mainly responsible for the general upsurge of the people and it was without any concerted plan and organisation, that the mutiny merged itself into a general rising of the civil population for all types and classes. ⁴¹

The character of the rising continued to be the same after the sepoys had mutinied killed, their officers and released the prisoners from jail. The risings became widespread particularly in Avadh and Rohikhand, and the local leaders, big and small, established their own Raj now that the British Officers had vanished and the British raj was believed to have come to an end. Bareilly, Farukkabad, and Bijnor furnish typical specimens of the numerous tiny kingdom that were established all over Rohikhand as a result of withdrawal of the British after mutiny ⁴²

The great personalities of the revolt, namely Bahabur Shah, Nana Sahib, Rani Laxmibai of Jhansi Kunwar Singh had not joined the mutiny of the Sepoys at the beginning, and had in fact denounced the sepoys. According to their own statements, they were forced against their will to join the ranks of the mutineers, Rani Laxmibai's correspondence with the British leaves no doubt that her sympathy was all along with the British until she found that their unfounded suspicion about her could not be removed by any means. ⁴³

41. History of Freedom Movement of India, Vol-1 Pg. 150-153 by R.C. Majumdar.

42. History of Freedom Movement of India, Vol-1 Pg. 154-155 by R.C. Majumdar.

43. History of Freedom Movement of India, Vol-1 Pg. 204 by R.C. Majumdar.

The outbreak of 1857 will surely go down in the history as the first great and direct challenge to the British rule in India on an extensive scale. As such it helped the genuine national movement for the freedom of India from foreign yolk which started half a century later. The memory of 1857-8 sustained the later movement, infused courage into the hearts of its fighters, furnished a historical basis for the grim struggle, and gave it a moral stimulus

The causes of failure of the mutiny of 1857

1. The most of important cause was the lack of a general plan and central organisation guiding the whole movement. A number of isolated outbreaks without any link or common plan between them could hardly succeed against the British forces, directed with strong will and determination by a Central organisation which could command resources of India, and later of Britain, It is admitted on all hands that Delhi could not have been captured by the British without the constant flow of men and equipment from Punjab yet the only communication between Punjab and Delhi was along a narrow track to the northwest of Delhi running along the border of U.P. the region most affected by the revolutionary spirit. If there were well knit organisation in UP or some able military leaders in the region, serious efforts would have been made to intercept the flow of men, and materials from Punjab to Delhi. But very little was done in this respect.
2. The inferiority in generalship, strategy, military skilled discipline of the mutineers was another cause of the failure of the mutiny of 1857. Delhi was a walled city with good fortifications, and was defended by large army, fully equipped with free access to

the outside territory. Yet it fell after a siege of four months. At Kanpur about four hundred English fighting men took shelter in an improvised camp with weak entrenchment. The besieging army, on the other hand numbered some here thousand trained solders. But Nana failed to reduce the place even in twenty days.

This is further illustrated by the successful resistance of the garrison at the residency at Lakhnau against heavy odds and for a long time. The fall off the strong fort of Jhansi in 15 days in spite of the disparity in number between the besieged and the besieging forces, and the capture of the Gwalior fort, renowned for its natural strength, was captured by assault by the British, forces in a day, all show the inferiority general ship, strategy military skill and disciple of the mutineers The successive victories of Havelock on his way from Allahabd to Kanpur also reveal the superior skill and morale of the British troops.

3. The failure of the outbreak is also attributed to the fact that the leaders, nor the sepoys nor the masses were inspired by lofty sentiments of patriotism and nationalism. In fact they were not familiar to these sentiments. A strong disaffection and hatred towards the English and hopes of material gain were the principle motive which inspired and sustained the movement.
4. The failure of the outbreak was chiefly attributed due to the absence of a great leader, who could fuse the scattered element into a consolidate force with a definite policy and plan of action Nana Sahib, Bahadur Shah, Rani Laxmibai, Kunwar Signhare popularly regarded as great leaders of the movement of 1857. However, there is nothing to show that Nana organised a great political movement. As a military commander he was a failure,

as is proved by his inability to overthrow the tiny garrison at Kanpur and his subsequent defeats at the hands of Havelock near the city.

As regards Bahadur Shah, he was a traitor to the cause he professed to serve. Leadership was thrust upon him and he had to accept it against his will. As regards Rani Laxmibai, it cannot be regarded that she organised a great revolt. Her activities were confined to a narrow area and for a very brief period. The position of Kunwar Singh and Tantia Tope is analogous so that of Rani of Jhansi. They obtained more success against the British on the battlefield and carried on a more vigorous and prolonged campaign. But their activities were also confined within narrow limits. They did not contribute anything substantial to shaping the general cause of the great movement. In spite of all these defects and drawbacks, the sepoys and the Indian rebels by their very number had threatened to destroy the very fabric of the British Empire in India.⁴⁴

The effect of the Revolt of 1857

The Mutiny of 1857 lasted for almost one year. By 1859, the British rule was once again established in India. The political control of the East India Company had passed on to the British crown. Though the uprising of 1857 failed, it had its importance. It proved to be a source of encouragement to the National freedom struggle and the Swadeshi movement.⁴⁵

44. India's struggle for Independence 1857-1947 by Bipin Chandra, Pgs 233-239.

45. Bharat Ka Mukti Sangram by Ayodhya Singh Pgs 20-32

The mutiny of 1857 helped in unifying the people of India and helped in awakening the feeling that India was one nation. It had a widespread effect on the Indians and it impressed the intellectuals of the country. The ill effects of the destruction of the Swadeshi handloom and village industries, handicrafts industries, the agrarian order but the various land settlements introduced by the British, had interalia resulted in the large scale exploitation and poverty of the masses of the country. This had caused the masses to revolt against the British with the overthrow of the administration during the revolt of the sepoys in 1857.

To the Indians including the intelligentsia, the mutiny of 1857 was a reminder of the importance of Swadeshi, and the exploitative character of the British rule.

The Indian had begun to realise that the Britishers have no interest in the development of the country. Instead they want to keep it poor and backward ⁴⁶

The revolt of 1857 continued to impress and influence the intellectuals of the country and inspired the freedom struggle.

Divergent opinions have been expressed regarding the nature of the great outbreak of 1857. Some hold the view that it was a revolt of the people rather than merely a mutiny of the soldiers, which was an organised campaign to drive away the British from India, and go to the extent of calling it to be the first 'Indian war of Impendence'. The others hold the view that it was primary and essentially a mutiny of sepoys. Though in certain areas it drifted into a revolt of the people.

46. Bharat Ka Mukti Sangram by Ayodhya Singh Pgs 12-15

The most of contemporary writers have subscribed to the latter view. Such views were made by Sh. Kishore Chand Mitra, and a military insurrection. Such views were also held by other eminent Bengali public men Sh. Sambhu Chandra Mukhopadhyaya. And Sri Harish Chandra Mukherji, and by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan.

A general revolt or a war of independence necessarily implies or presupposes a definite plan and organisation. Further such an organisation implies a pre-concerted conspiracy or plot to drive out the British. However, as shown above, there is no evidence for the existence of any such conspiracy. The upsurge of the people was limited to a comparatively narrow region of India comprising at best the great part of UP and a narrow zone to its east, west and south. The whole of Bengal, Assam, Orissa, and Rajasthan and grater parts of Punjab, Bihar, and Mahdya Pradesh as well as whole of India south of Narbada hardly witnessed any overt act of rebellion on the part of the people.

Nor can the upsurge of the people be regarded as a war of independence. The civil population that revolted thought more of plunder and other means of attaining wealth and/or power than anything else, at least there is no evidence to show that with the probable exception of a very few individuals the people were inspired by the idea of regaining freedom of India.

It is true that even in a genuine national war of independence the fight for freedom is planned and actually carried out by a determined and organised minority, but it is always backed by tacit acquiescence and indirect help of an overwhelming majority of people. So far as evidence goes, it is impossible to maintain that such was the case in India in 1857. Even within the limited zone the civil population revolted, there were considerable

sections who were friendly to the English. The ruling chiefs in the East Punjab-Maharaja of Patiala, Nabha, and Jhind and the Nawab of Carnal-the Sindhia of Gwalior Holkar of Indore the Nawabs of Bhopal and Jawara, the Rajas of Jbaha and Dhar, and the entire landed aristocracy in Bihar, with every few exceptions, firmly and consistently stood by the British Government. Even in Awadh and Rohilkhand, several chiefs, including the Nawab of Rampur did the same. One of them Drighhijah Singh, gave shelter to Mowbray Thomson, one of the survivors of the Kanpur massacre.

Even among the sepoys of the effected areas a certain number remained loyal to the British till the last. Outside the Bengal army native soldiers, as a rule remained loyal or at least did not break out into open mutiny. The Sikhs and the Garkhas not only remained loyal to the British, but also actively helped in capturing Delhi and Lakhnau.

The general attitude of the people towards the English even in worst affected area was not uniformly hostile. Charles Raikes, who was the Judge at Agra during the mutiny, bears witness to this. Apart from his own personal knowledge of the good feelings of the people in May 1857 he refers to Messers Phillips and Bramy, civil officers of considerable position and experience at Agra, who traversed the country in June 1857, from Furrukhabad and Etah in the Doab, and from Budaon in Rohikhand, with a very small escort of three or four horseman.

The intellectual, at least the English educated classes as a rule did not join the movement and were treated as enemies by the sepoys. This is supported by the statements made by two contemporary Bengalis, Drugadas Bandyopadhyaya and Jadunath Sarvadhikari. It is also supported by Mr. Raikes.

Though the Sepoys and the common people of both the major communities i.e Hindus and the Muslim, fought together against the English but there was a lack of real communal amity which ought to characterize a national effort. The communal hatred led to ugly communal riots in many part of UP Green Flag was hosted and bloody wars were fought between the Hindus and Muslim in Sirsa, Budaon, Shahjahanpur, Bareilly, Bijnor, Moradabad and other places where the Muslims shouted for revival of the Muslim kingdom. Two famous Hindu places of pilgrimage Haridwar and Kanakhal were mercilessly sacked. Communal feeling were not, of course, universal, but it is clearly proved by the proclamations and Hindu Muslim riots that they largely prevailed in UP. The only province in which the outbreak developed into a general revolt. Even the mass revolt in UP can therefore be scarcely be regarded as a national war of independence.

The communal feeling was not the only obstacle to the solidarity of a national spirit. There was mutual animosity by historical causes. It was clearly manifested in suspicion and jealousy, if not positive hatred between the Muslims on one hand and the Marathas and the Sikh on the other. The racial feeling was certainly shared by the Sikh. The proclamation of Bahadur Shah as emperor alienated the masses they naturally interpreted it as the restoration of the rule of the Muslims from whom they had suffered so much in the past.

Merely a fight against the English, even with the distinct object of driving them away cannot be regarded as a war of India independence the crucial point is the ultimate object with which such a fight is carried on. There is thus no positive evidence in support of the view that the people were inspired by a sense of patriotism to fight for retaining the freedom of the

country, which they had obtained so cheaply, and unexpectedly without having to wage any war.

The mere fact that people and the Chiefs fought heroically against the British when the days of retribution came does not constitute a war of independence. One has to look at the object of the fight. Apart from individual cases, here and there no evidence has yet been brought to light which would support the view that the patriotic motive of freeing the country formed the chief incentive to the general outbreak of the people. It is therefore difficult to regard the outbreak of 1857 as a war of independence⁴⁷

47. History of Freedom Movement of India, Vol-1 Pg. 211-235 by R.C. Majumdar.