

Q.) The Revolt of 1857 was a culmination of a series of revolts occurring across India for about a century prior to the Sepoy Mutiny. Discuss.

Ans →

After the Battle of Plassey in 1757, EIC started consolidating their political power in India which led to the abrupt dislocation of socio-cultural and political lives of the natives. Many local groups and tribals rose in rebellion in consequence.

The common cause of high revenue demands created discontentment, triggering numerous revolts which can be divided into 3 categories:-

Tribal uprisings

- caused due to the unfair intervention of EIC in their social life and aiming to bring new policies like concept of private property, the revolt was done by the tribal groups.

- Though there was solidarity but the backward comprehensive thoughts failed to favour them.

Civil rebellions

- High revenue demand by the EIC through extradition of Janes created no development but extraction leading to famine like situations (Bengal).

- e.g.: sambhalpur rebellion, divar velu Thampi's revolt - where the leaders were wholeheartedly supported by the local people and mass base being provided by the disbanded armies.

Peasant movements

- When EIC imposed heavy duties on Indian manufactured goods, the demands decreased in Europe leading to loss of livelihoods of many people like artisans.

- e.g.: chhatai rebellion which surfaced due to the highly exploitative land revenue policies.

Net Revd

Nature of the Revolts:

- The revolts were traditional in outlook.
- Though caused by local grievances, the revolts were scattered.
- There was asymmetric warfare which mostly favoured the Britishers.
- The common objective of the Revolts were the restoration of earlier forms of rules and social relations like sati.
- It was against the common enemy (EIC) but sometimes people fought against their fellowmen like Narkelberia uprising (1831), Moplah rebellion (1921) and Bagal Panthis (1825 - 1850).

The British used the carrot and stick policy to suppress the revolts in which the less fiery chiefs were given concessions and most revolting chiefs were hanged to death (Diwan Veli Thampi and Kottabomma Nayak leading the Poligar Revolt).

Though the differences in interests of the natives favoured EIC in successful oppressions of revolts, but there has been cases of providing a united front to the against EIC like Revolt of Rangpur-Dinajpur (1783) and Sanyasi Revolt (1763 - 1820) where the Hindus and Muslims united against EIC.

This unification later gave rise to the revolt of 1857, widespread but unsuccessful satellite revolt of 1857, one of the renowned war of independence.

Plz. discuss.
future Word limit.