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## A study examines the reasons for Genesis in the 1857 revolution

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DOI:[euro.ijress.99452.33142](https://doi.org/10.24394/euro.ijress.99452.33142)

**Abstract:** One of the most significant moments in Indian history is the Revolt of 1857, which is also known as India's First War of Independence. We have outlined the revolt's causes, effects, significance, and results in this research study. The Revolt of 1857 encompassed an extended period of violent rebellions against British occupation in Northern and Central India, as well as other parts of the subcontinent. January saw the emergence of minor signs of growing unrest related to arson incidents in cantonment regions. Subsequently, in May, a widespread uprising began that may be considered a full-fledged war in the impacted area. Following the conclusion of the British East India Company's administration in India, the British Government (British Raj) took direct control of a large portion of the Indian Subcontinent for the following ninety years. The Indian Mutiny of 1857–1859 was a protracted uprising against the British East India Company, which ruled India as a sovereign power on behalf of the British monarchy, but it was ultimately unsuccessful.

**Keywords:** Military Grievances, revolution, Subcontinent Patronage, British East India

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The years 1757–1857 were hardly calm and untroubled; instead, they were filled with peasant uprisings, agrarian riots, and civil rebellions. After a while, the mutiny that started on May 10, 1857, in Meerut spread to other regions of India and gave rise to several nationalist leaders who opposed British Empire policies. It started in the native infantry lines, quickly moved to the cavalry, and eventually reached the city. With sepoys, everyone joined the mutiny. When the sepoys reached the Red Fort, they assembled under the ancient Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah's palace and declared, "We have come from Meerut after killing all the Englishmen there because they asked us to bite billets that were coated with the fat of cows and pigs with our teeth." They insisted on receiving the emperor's blessings. The emperor was forced to obey and become one of the rebel leaders.



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The 19th Native Infantry in Berahampore was dissolved in March 1857 after going on strike in February 1857 over their refusal to use the recently adopted Enfield rifle. The youthful sepoy Mangal Pande fired shots at his unit's senior officer. That marked the start of the revolt, which was later joined by the sepoys from other military battalions. When ninety men from the 3rd Native Cavalry refused to take the greased cartridges on April 24, the British government fired some of the men and imprisoned many more. Following that, Mangal Pande's activities led to the incident in Meerut on May 10, which marked the start of the uprising.

The East India Company had gained control over a large area of India by the first half of the 19th century, but its objectives remained the same: (i) maintain its conquests and (ii) profit from trade. The firm would stop at nothing in its betrayal and avarice to achieve these goals. Many local territories were forcibly absorbed into the British Empire prior to 1857 A.D. The populace and the ruling class were being drained of blood by the British government. There were uprisings against the British East India Company's rule everywhere. While conquering additional lands was relatively simple, maintaining authority over those regions under the British East India Company proved to be quite challenging.

Many Indian groups were deeply dissatisfied with the British during the East India Company's administration (1757–1857) and turned against the British. The Muslims, many of whom had benefited from status and favouritism under the Mughals and other Muslim provincial rulers, suffered a psychological blow with the collapse of Mughal control. The company's commercial strategy destroyed artisans and craftspeople, and its varied land revenue policies—particularly the permanent settlement in the north and the Ryotwari settlement in the south—sent peasants down a path of destitution and suffering.

## **2. The Revolt**

- ❖ It started as a rebellion by the army of the British East India Company's sepoys but finally gained the support of the general populace.
- ❖ It was the first instance of organised resistance against the British East India Company.
- ❖ There are various titles for this uprising: the Indian Mutiny, the Great Rebellion, the Revolt of 1857, the Indian Insurrection, the First War of Independence (by



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VinayakDamodarSavarkar), the Sepoy Mutiny (by the British historians), and the Revolt of 1857 (by the Indian historians).

- ❖ The governor general, Lord Dalhousie, had declined to do so and, using the infamous Doctrine of Lapse, had annexed the state of Jhansi. So she battled alongside Tantia Tope, a close relative of Nana Saheb, against the British army. In Uttar Pradesh's Baghat, the movement was led by Shah Mal. He gathered 84 villages' worth of peasants and asked them to join the uprising against British rule. With the combined efforts of peasants and sepoys, these leaders were crucial to the liberation of the Indian country.

### **3. Reasons for the 1857 uprising**

The role of military complaints and greased cartridges in the Revolt of 1857 has been overstated. Recent studies have shown that there were other factors contributing to this uprising than the cartridge. Actually, a number of factors, including social, religious, political, and economic ones, combined to spark the uprising.

- ❖ **Causes, both social and religious:** The British had given up on their non-interference stance regarding the socio-religious lives of the Indians. Hindu Widow Remarriage Act (1856), Sati Abolition Act (1829). It was permitted for Christian missionaries to travel into India and continue their proclamation work. The customary Hindu legislation was altered by the Religious Disabilities Act of 1850. It said a son's conversion to a different religion would not prevent him from inheriting his pagan father's possessions.
- ❖ **Economic causes:** The collapse of local self-sufficiency under British control, the commercialization of agriculture, which put a strain on the peasantry, the adoption of free trade imperialism starting in 1800, the deindustrialization of the country, and the depletion of wealth were all factors in the economy's general downturn.
- ❖ **Military grievances:** The Sepoys' service conditions were negatively impacted by the British Empire's expansion into India. They had to serve without receiving more Bhatta in a location distant from their families. The General Service Enlistment Act of



1856, which mandated that sepoys cross oceans whenever necessary, was a major factor in military unrest. The free postal option for them was eliminated by the Post Office Act of 1854.

- ❖ **Political Causes:** Dalhousie's reign saw the final significant expansion of British Indian dominion. In 1849, Dalhousie declared that Bahadur Shah II's heir would have to vacate the Red Fort. However, Udaipur and Baghat were freed from their annexation and returned to their royal houses. The court of Directors overruled Dalhousie's attempt to apply the Doctrine of Lapse to Karauli (Rajputana).

#### 4. **Reasons for Not Succession**

- ❖ The rebels' military hardware was subpar, and some local rulers actively supported the British, including the Rana of Nepal, the Scindia of Gwalior, the Holkar of Indore, the Nizam of Hyderabad, the Raja of Jodhpur, the Nawab of Bhopal, and the rulers of Patiala, Sindh, and Kashmir.

#### 5. **Comparative deficiency of effective leadership**

- ❖ The cause was not bolstered by the contemporary, intellectual Indians.

#### 6. **Effects of the Uprising**

- ❖ The insurrection had some nationalist overtones but was mostly of a feudal nature. The Government of India Act of 1858 transferred administrative authority over India to the British Crown.
- ❖ The army was meticulously restructured to avoid a situation like this from happening again.
- ❖ In Indian history, the Revolt of 1857 was a crucial occasion. It was not so much a result of Sepoy as it was a culmination of the populace's complaints about the Company's management and their distaste for the foreign government.

#### 7. **Breakout of the 1857 Rebellion:**

On March 29, 1857, near Barrackpur, a sepoy named Mangal Pandey fired at Lieutenant Baugh when the soldiers of the 34th Native Infantry refused to use the greased



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cartridges. MangalPandey was apprehended and put to death. They were dispersed at Behrampur, which had also defied the authorities. At Meerut, there was the first significant outbreak that ultimately resulted in the Revolt of 1857. On May 10, 1857, the 85 sepoy of the Cavalry Regiment were court martialed for not using greased cartridges.

The sepoy then staged an open rebellion, shot their superiors, freed their fellow sepoy, and marched in the direction of Delhi. After seizing Delhi on May 12 and taking control of the palace, the sepoy crowned Bahadur Shah II as the new Indian ruler. The uprising quickly extended to other locations, including Central India, Bihar, Orissa, Lucknow, Kanpur, Agra, and Jhansi. The Indian kings, however, continued to support the British and played a crucial role in putting an end to the uprising. Early in the uprising, the British were on the defensive. They started by making a concerted effort to retake Delhi from the Sepoy. The British retook Delhi in September of 1857. Following his imprisonment and banishment to Mandalay, Burma, Emperor Bahadur Shah II passed away a few years later.

A grandson and two of his sons were shot and killed. As a result, the Mughal dynasty in Indian history was ended by the British. Revolt was largely confined and not nationwide: Despite being remarkable and extensive, the uprising was largely restricted, disorganised, and localised. It was not a universal Mutiny. It was never an all-Indian nature; rather, it was localised, constrained, and ill-organized, according to Dr. R.C. Mazumdar. The afflicted areas included the western regions of Bengal and Bihar in the northeast, the United Provinces, Oudh, Rohilkhand, and the territory between the Narbada and Chambal rivers. Under Dost Muhammad, Afghanistan was a peaceful country. Rajputana was devoted, Sindh was quiet. Although there were several violent outbursts of emotions at Hyderabad, the Nizam's capital, and native battalions that mutinied at Kolhapur in the Southern Marathan area, India south of the Narbada river made no significant movement. Bengal's central and eastern regions remained unaffected, and Nepal provided the British with invaluable support in quelling the uprising. That means the uprising was limited to the area and not nationwide.

- ❖ **English superiority in several fields:** British imperialism had boundless resources. Luckily for them, by 1856 the Crimean War and other hostilities the British were embroiled in outside of India had ended.
- ❖ The British army's might was overwhelming, with a vast number of soldiers brought into India from all over the world and many more enlisted within India itself to put down the Mutiny.



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- ❖ The rebels lacked the superior weaponry that the British did. The British used firearms from the contemporary era. The Indians had a limited number of ancient canons. Most of the time, they used swords and spears to combat.
  - ❖ The British Navy was superior. At the same time, British naval power was unmatched. Another factor in the British triumph was the Electric System. The British commander-in-chief was able to make appropriate arrangements because he had access to all of the information regarding the rebels' plans through that method. The British's superiority over the Indians was the reason for their continued failure.
  - ❖ **Absence of Coherence in Goal and Structure:** The Indian rebels lacked a well-coordinated structure, or if they did, it was a very deficient central organization. Its leaders lacked nothing in terms of bravery and audacity, but one notable shortcoming was their lack of organizational and coordinated action expertise. They were unable to restore their lost independence via small-scale theft and sporadic assaults, which are particularly evident in the Gorilla tactics of warfare. Through commissions and boards, the central British government and the provincial governments investigated the mutiny; nevertheless, they were unable to uncover any information that would have allowed them to determine the source of any planned mutiny conspiracy.
  - ❖ On the other hand, the Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah II was surprised by the revolt just as much as the British were when the case against him was initiated. Stated differently, the leaders of the insurrection lacked organization. Mutineers then suffered from a lack of coherence in their goals. There was no agreement between the Hindus and the Muslims when the mutiny suddenly broke out, and no one knew how it would turn out.
  - ❖ They had different goals and no shared political objective. They were unable to work together cohesively to accomplish the shared goal or strategy because they lacked unity. Examining the rebellion documents closely and thoroughly reveals a depressing tale of everyone looking out for themselves and nobody else for the nation. In order to further their personal agendas and interests, the Mughal emperor, the rebellion's leader, the Queen, the Princess, and other leaders all tugged in different ways and engaged in deceit.
  - ❖ While Nana Sahib and the queen of Jhansi pursued their own agendas, the sepoy of Avadh campaigned for the reinstatement of their own monarch. Not motivated by any



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sense of patriotism, a number of smaller-scale escapades emerged to capitalise on the mutiny's potential for their own gain.

- ❖ The grandson of Hafiz Rehmat Khan, Khan Bahadur Khan, proclaimed himself the viceroy, or naibNazim, of Rohilkhand. Saharanpur's banjaras installed their own new monarch. Different Rajas ruled over different regions of the Gujjar people, with Fatuna declaring himself to be their ruler. In the Mathura district, Devi Singh declared himself the monarch over fourteen villages. Similar to Belsare, a Maratha Brahmin, and MahimajiWadi, a decoit, were drawn to the Rebel who came to change their fortunes. It was a reckless, aimless uprising, and it ended that way.

## **8. Suppression of Revolt**

Beginning in May 1857, the uprising was completely put down in mid-1858 thanks to the determined actions of British army generals who confronted Indian troops with a hopeful outlook in support of their empire. On September 20, 1857, Delhi was taken by the British. In Calcutta, Lord Canning assembled British forces and dispatched them to liberate Delhi. After the royal princes were apprehended by Lieutenant Hudson and executed, Bahadur Shah II was sent to Rangoon prison, where he passed away in 1862.

According to Eric Stokes, the rebel sepoys exhibited an extraordinary "centripetal impulse to congregate at Delhi." British general Henry Lawrence put an end to Begum HazratMahal's uprising in Lucknow. The rebellion in Kanpur, commanded by Nana Saheb, and in Bareilly, where Khan Bahadur Khan was in command of the army, were put down by Sir Colin Campbell. General Hugh Rose was in charge of the insurrection in Jhansi and Gwalior, where British troops directly confronted Rani Laxmibai. Colonel Ocell was dispatched to Banaras and Allahabad to maintain control over the situation in which MaulviLiyakat Ali was leading the rebellion. In Bihar, William Taylor's direct intervention resulted in a solution. Thus, the insurrection was quickly put down thanks to the efforts of British generals and soldiers.

## **9. Negative effects**

Racial hatred between Indians and British increased: The revolt left a legacy of sorts in terms of racial animosity. Indians were viewed as untrustworthy by the British. And as a result, the Indians suffered insults and humiliation. The English and Indians were racially



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hostile as a result of this. The onset of social distancing between the two races in this nation began on this date.

As a result, the rulers and the ruled continued to be in love. Throughout the suppression of the Mutiny, the English officers carried out numerous, horrifying acts of tyranny throughout Punjab and northern India. The result of this terror strategy was to incite intense animosity between the English and the Indians in the aftermath of the Indian Mutiny. The British saw themselves as occupying forces manning a territory under siege. However, Indians made an effort to live within the confines of their traditional culture in order to find honour and self-respect.

In India, the British had established a distinct community. The British were astounded and dismayed to witness the obedient sepoys during the Revolt of 1857 abruptly change into a disobedient As a result, the British believed that only their fellow citizens could provide safety. However, the brutality with which the British put an end to the Revolt of 1857 and the way the sepoys were treated caused the Indians to harbour a great deal of animosity towards the British.

Additionally, thousands of civilians were massacred by the British. Reversal of the Social Reforms: The Indian Revolt of 1857 persuaded the British that meddling with the country's long-standing socioreligious traditions would be pointless. The British were forced to retreat due to the tremendous opposition to the social legislation, particularly from the orthodox sections of the Muslim and Hindu communities. The British government's self-assurance and its intentions to quickly westernize India through social reforms were destroyed. Following the Revolt of 1857, the British chose to focus on establishing a stable and effective government rather than imposing western concepts and reforms on an Asian society that was still rooted in tradition.

### **10. The separate and Rule Policy**

Following the Revolt of 1857, the British used the most unscrupulous methods to separate the Indian population into castes and classes. The British employed caste or class as a means of discrimination. Muslims and Hindus were forced to battle, and the upper caste Hindus were thrilled to oppose the lower caste Hindus. Consequently, the entire nation saw a decline.





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Formation of Misunderstanding between Muslims and Hindus: The Mutiny's fall led to a miscommunication between Muslims and Hindus. Muslims had demonstrated a deeper and more pervasive empathy with the rebels.

Between 1857 and 1859, numerous plots against the British were established among them, even in South India where their numbers were minor. Both Muslims and Hindus participated heavily in the uprising as it started. However, Muslims had a more aggressive attitude towards the British than did Hindus. Muslims were a greater source of anxiety for the British than Hindus. As a result, Muslims experienced greater levels of repression than Hindus did. Many of its prominent men—such as the Nawab Sahibs of Jhajjar, Balabharh, Farukh Nagar, and Farukhabad—were executed by hanging or banished. On November 18, 1857, 24 Shahzadas were executed in Delhi in a single day. The majority of targets were Muslim quarters. Property belonging to Muslims was widely seized.

### **11. This led to animosity and miscommunication between Muslims and Hindus.**

Economic loot replaced territorial conquest: After the Great Rebellion failed, the British age of territorial conquest came to an end, and the British began to exploit the Indians economically instead of pursuing territorial conquest. The British government was no longer afraid of feudal India in any way. India was heavily economically exploited by the English. The progressive forces in Indian society posed a fresh challenge to the British government, one that was being positively reacted to by progressive thinkers like John Stuart Mill and other progressive elements in England.

The Islamic Renaissance suffered a blow: An additional negative consequence of the Mutiny was that it dealt an irreversible blow to the Muslim renaissance that was already flourishing in Delhi before to the Mutiny. The cultural flowers withered. C.F. Andrews claims that it is easy to link the deadly destruction caused by a year of mutiny to the emergence of spiritual life. Decay quickly surpassed Delhi's educational renaissance, from which it never fully recovered. The epicentre of the Hindu Renaissance, Calcutta, was spared the atrocities of the Mutiny.

### **12. CONCLUSION**

In the annals of British control in India, the uprising of 1857 was a first. It brought together numerous segments of Indian society for a same goal, although in a restricted



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manner. The uprising planted the roots of Indian nationalism even if it was unable to accomplish its intended outcome. Following the examination of the Revolt of 1857, it became evident that historians' opinions varied according to their perspectives. The majority of them can be divided into two groups: Europeans and Indians.

The previous school of historians attempted to portray the Revolt as the sepoys' mutiny, meaning that they banded together and rebelled against the British as a result of their grievances. However, this perspective is incorrect. A few historians who support Indian nationalism have attempted to identify the Revolt as the initial Indian Independence War. According to other English historians, it is a conspiracy by Muslims and Hindus to overthrow British rule in India. Jawaharlal Nehru asserts in his 39 Discovery of India that the 1857 Revolt was more than just a sepoy rebellion.

Though it began as an Indian soldier's mutiny, it quickly expanded to take on the characteristics of a mass uprising. Even though there were some nationalistic aspects to the Revolt of 1857, he continues to argue that at its core it was a feudal rebellion. Drs. R.C. Mujumdar and S.N. Sen, two moderate historians, have voiced a similar opinion. They go on to claim that the conflict was entirely national in nature, which implies that it fell somewhere in the middle of the two camps. Even though the Revolt of 1857 was totally put down, it left a deep emotional scar on both the English people and the British Crown. As a result, the British looked over India's whole administrative system and made a number of adjustments. The first of these was the handover of authority from the British Crown to the East India Company. The Mughal dynasty of Delhi was overthrown, the army was rebuilt, Indians were guaranteed equal treatment and freedom of religion, Indians were organised to participate in the British administration of the nation, and a number of reforms were introduced. Through the Queen's, the British Government attempted to do this. Both positive and negative changes were brought about by the Proclamation of 1858 and the Revolt of 1857. Increased ethnic hostility, the implementation of the divide and conquer strategy, and an upsurge in India's systematic economic looting were among the detrimental outcomes. Even yet, it marked the beginning of a new chapter in Indian history as well as British imperialism.

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