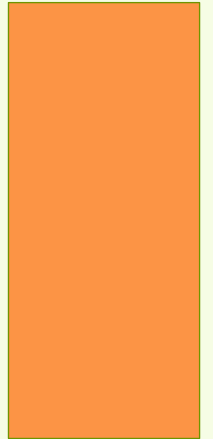


# THE FIRST WAR OF INDEPENDENCE 1857

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# CAUSES OF THE FIRST WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

- The first hundred years of British rule in India i.e., **from 1757 to 1857**, were marked by **British conquests and rapid expansion of their dominion in India**.
- The combined effect of **British expansionist policies, economic exploitation and administrative changes** adversely affected **all segments of Indian society**. The ruling classes were dispossessed of their power; the peasantry was deprived of its land rights; and the artisans lost their livelihood.
- The middle and upper-classes of Indian society, particularly in the northern India, were **annoyed** because of their exclusion from the well-paid higher posts in the administration.
- **Men who followed cultural or religious activities**, like priests and scholars, found themselves without income as they lost their patrons — **the Indian rulers, princes and zamindars,** who had themselves lost their authority.
- The **company's Indian soldiers** were **discontented with their low pay, hard life and the contemptuous treatment** meted out to them by the British officers.
- Thus, by 1857, conditions were ripe for a mass uprising and the accumulated grievances of the people burst forth in the form of the First War of Independence.

# CAUSES OF THE FIRST WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

- *Political Causes*
- *Socio-religious Causes*
- *Economic Causes*
- *Military Causes*
- *Immediate Cause*

# POLITICAL CAUSES

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- Policy of Expansion
- Doctrine of Lapse
- Annexation of Awadh
- Disrespect Shown To Bahadur Shah
- Treatment Given to Nana Saheb and Rani Laxmi Bai
- Absentee Sovereigntyship of the British

# POLICY OF EXPANSION

- The British policy of effective control and gradual extinction of the native Indian States was one of the major grievances of the Indian rulers.
- Ever since the Battle of Plassey (June 1757), the East India Company's territorial power increased rapidly.

# HOW EXPANDED POLITICAL POWER IN INDIA

- The British tried to expand their political power in India by adopting four ways, *i.e.*, by
  - *outright wars*
  - *system of Subsidiary Alliance*
  - *Doctrine of Lapse*
  - *alleged misrule.*

# EXPANSION OF THE EMPIRE

- The Battle of Buxar (1757) established the British as masters of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.
- As a result of their success in Anglo-Mysore Wars (1767 to 1797), the East India Company annexed most of the territories of the Mysore State.
- After the Third Anglo-Maratha War (1817-18) , the Peshwa's entire dominions and all Maratha territory north and south of the Narmada river were acquired by the British.
- The Punjab was annexed in 1849 after the Sikhs were defeated in the Second Anglo-Sikh War. From 1823 to 1856, the British further extended their empire by conquering Sindh, territories of Assam, Arakan and Tenasserim and Pegu in Myanmar.

# *SUBSIDIARY ALLIANCE*

- Some other Indian States were brought under the British control without actually annexing them. This was done by following the ***Subsidiary Alliance***, introduced by **Lord Wellesley**. Under this system, the Indian rulers, who agreed to the Subsidiary Alliance —
  - accepted the British as the supreme power;
  - agreed to maintain British troops at their own cost; and
  - virtually lost their independence.

- By 1856, practically all the Indian States had either been annexed or had entered into alliances with the Company.
- The British had become the supreme power and the Indian princes were reduced to puppets

# DOCTRINE OF LAPSE

- **Lord Dalhousie, Governor-General** of India, annexed many Indian States to the Company using the **Doctrine of Lapse**.
- According to this Doctrine, *heirs adopted without the consent of the Company, could inherit only the private property of the deceased ruler, and not his territory, which would come under the Company's rule.*

# DOCTRINE OF LAPSE

- When the **ruler of Jhansi died in 1853**, leaving no natural heir, the widowed Rani was pensioned and their adopted son, **Anand Rao, was not recognised as a lawful successor to the throne.**
- The other prominent States which became victims to the Doctrine **were Satara, Jaitpur, Sambalpur, Udaipur and Nagpur.**
- The principle of Lapse was also applied to take away the **titles and pensions** of the rulers of some States.
- **Regal titles** of the Nawabs of Carnatic and Tanjore were **taken away.**
- This **caused discontentment among the rulers** as well as among the people in general.
- The rulers of Indian States believed that their States were annexed not by the application of Doctrine of Lapse but due to the 'lapse of all morals' on the part of the British.

# ANNEXATION OF AWADH

- On February 13, 1856, Lord Dalhousie annexed Awadh to the Company's dominions on the pretext of ***alleged misrule***.
- The annexation of Awadh was arbitrary as the British seemed to have broken their promises made to the ruling chiefs.
- This caused resentment among the Indians in general and **Awadh** in particular.

# ANNEXATION OF AWADH

- Lord Dalhousie justified the annexation of Awadh on the pretext of "**the good of the governed**".
- But the people of Awadh, on the contrary, got no good and had to face more hardships.
- They had to pay higher land revenue and additional taxes on articles of food, houses, ferries and justice.

- The dissolution of the Nawab of Awadh's army and administration threw **thousands of nobles, officials and soldiers out of jobs.**
- The **British confiscated the estates** of the taluqdars or zamindars.
- The **dispossessed taluqdars** became the opponents of the British rule.

- The company's sepoy, of whom 75,000 were from Awadh, were the worst affected.
- These soldiers had helped the British to conquer the rest of India.
- But they did not like that their homelands should come under the foreign sway.
- The annexation of Awadh also affected the soldier's **financial position**.
- They had to pay higher taxes on the land their families held in Awadh.
- In fact, Awadh played a major role in the uprising of 1857.

# DISRESPECT SHOWN TO BAHADUR SHAH

- Bahadur Shah, the Mughal ruler, was under the protection of the Company and received a pension from the British.
- In 1849, Lord Dalhousie announced that successors of Bahadur Shah Zafar would not be permitted to use the Red Fort as their palace.
- They were required to shift to a place near the Qutab Minar.

# DISRESPECT SHOWN TO BAHADUR SHAH

- In 1856, Lord Canning announced that after the death of Bahadur Shah, his successors would **not be allowed to use the imperial titles with their names** and would be known as **mere princes**.
- This decision of the British hurt the feelings of the Muslims. Consequently, Zeenat Mahal, the wife of Bahadur Shah, began plotting against them.

# TREATMENT GIVEN TO NANA SAHEB AND RANI LAXMI BAI

- Nana Saheb was the adopted son of Bajirao II, the last Peshwa.
- The British refused to grant Nana Saheb the pension they were paying to Bajirao.
- Nana Saheb was forced to live at Kanpur, -far away from his family seat at Poona. This was widely resented in the Maratha region.
- Nana Saheb had inherited wealth from the former Peshwa, which he utilised in sending emissaries to different parts of the country for generating awareness among the Indians about the British policies. Nana Saheb travelled between Delhi and Lucknow to gather support for the movement.

- Rani Laxmi Bai of Jhansi, who became the victim of the Doctrine of Lapse, became a bitter enemy of the British. The other Indian rulers, who were not adversely affected, became suspicious, lest they should meet the same fate.

# ABSENTEE SOVEREIGNTYSHIP OF THE BRITISH

- Absentee Sovereigntyship of the British rule was resented by the Indians.
- ***This means that India was being ruled by the British government from England, a distance of thousands of miles.***
- The earlier rulers like the Mughals, who had conquered India, had in course of time, settled in India. The revenues they collected from the Indians were spent in this country only.
- But in the case of Britain, the Indians felt that they were being ruled from England and India's wealth was being drained to England and not utilised for their welfare.

THANKS.....