

Atomic Energy Education Society
Study material

Class-VIII

Subject- History

Lesson 05-When People Rebel: 1857 and After

Module- 2/2

Important points

❖ **The Rebellion Spreads :**

- The British had initially taken the revolt at Meerut quite lightly. But the decision by Bahadur Shah Zafar to support the rebellion had dramatically changed the entire situation. People were emboldened by an alternative possibility.
- The British were routed from Delhi, and for almost a week there was no uprising.
- The rebellion in Delhi took almost a week to spread as news over whole of the India.
- Many regiments mutinied one after another at various places such as Delhi, Kanpur and Lucknow.
- People of the towns and the villages also rose up in rebellion and rallied around local leaders.
- Zamindars and chiefs were prepared to establish their authority and fight the British.
- Nanasahab Peshwa gathered armed forces and expelled the British garrison in Kanpur. He proclaimed himself the Peshwa. He declared that he was a governor under Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar.
- Birjis Qadr, the son of Nawab Wajid Ali Shah, was proclaimed the new Nawab. He too acknowledged suzerainty of Bahadur Shah Zafar.
- Begum Hazrat Mahal took an active part in organizing the uprising against the British.
- In Jhansi, Rani Lakshmi Bai joined the rebel Sepoys and fought the British along with Tantia Tope. The General of Nana Sahab.
- Ahmadullah Shah a Maulvi from Faizabad prophesied that the rule of the British would come to an end he caught the imagination of the people and raised a huge force of supporters. He came to Lucknow to fight the Britishers.
- In Delhi a number of GHAZIS or religious warriors came together to wipe out the white people.

- Bakht Khan, a soldier from Bareilly, took charge of a large force of fighters who came to Delhi. He became a key military leader of the rebellion.
- In Bihar an old zamindar, Kunwar Singh, joined the rebel Sepoys and battled with the British for many months.
- Leaders and fighters from across the land joined the fight.

❖ **Important Centres of Revolt and their leaders:**

Barrackpore	Mangal Pandey
Jhansi	Rani Lakshmi Bai
Lucknow	Begum Hazrat Mahal
Kanpur	Nana Saheb
Bareilly	Khan Bahadur Khan
Bihar	Kunwar Singh
Delhi	Bahadur Shah Zafar

❖ **The company Fights Back:**

- The Company decided to suppress the revolt with all its might.
- Reinforcements were brought in from England.
- New laws were passed to make it easy to convict the rebels.
- Delhi was recaptured from the rebel forces in September 1857.
- The last Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar was tried in court and sentenced to life imprisonment.
- His sons were shot dead before his eyes.
- He and his wife Begum Zeenat Mahal were sent to prison in Rangoon in October 1858.
- Bahadur Shah Zafar died in the Rangoon jail in November 1862
- The Britishers had to fight for two years to suppress the massive forces of popular rebellion.
- Lucknow was taken in March 1858.
- Rani Lakshmi Bai was defeated and killed in June 1858.
- Tantia Tope was captured, tried and killed in April 1859.
- The British tried their best to win back the loyalty of the people.
- They announced rewards for loyals, landholders were allowed to continue enjoying traditional rights over their lands.

- Those who had rebelled were told that if they submitted to the British, and if they had not killed any white people they would remain safe and their rights and claims to land would not be denied.
- Nevertheless, hundreds of Sepoys, Rebels, Nawabs and Rajas were tried and hanged.

❖ **Aftermath:**

- The British regained the power once again. But this time they changed some of their policies. Some of them are as follows:
 - The British parliament passed a new act in the year 1858 which transferred the power to the crown from East India Company. A secretary of state of India was appointed for the governance of India. He was given a council to advise him and the Governor-General was now known as Viceroy of India.
 - All the rulers were assured that their territories would not be taken away from them and that they could pass their kingdom to their heirs even the adopted heirs. But with a condition of accepting the supremacy of the British Queen.
 - It was also decided that ratio of Indian soldiers in the British army be reduced and more British soldiers be brought so that there should be no such revolt again. Now the soldiers of Bihar, Awadh, Central India were not recruited, rather Gurkhas, Sikhs and Pathans were considered for this job.
 - The land and property of Muslims were taken away as the Britishers were suspicious of them that they were responsible for the rebellion.
 - The Britishers started respecting the culture and custom of Indians.
 - Policies were made for zamindars and landlords which gave them security over their lands.
 - Thus, a new phase of history started.

❖ **Time line**

- **1849** - Governor-General Dalhousie announced that after the death of Bahadur Shah Zafar, the family of the king would be shifted out of the Red Fort and given another place in Delhi to reside in.
- **1856** - (i) Governor-General Canning decided that Bahadur Shah Zafar would be the last Mughal king and after his death his descendants would be recognised as princes.
(ii) The Company passed a new law which stated that every new person who took up employment in the Company's army had to agree to serve overseas if required.

- **29 March 1857** – Mangal Pandey, a young soldier, was hanged to death for attacking his officers in Barrackpore.
 - **9th May 1857**- Eighty-five sepoy were dismissed from service and sentenced to ten years in jail for disobeying their officers.
 - **10 May 1857** – Sepoys rushed to Delhi from Meerut.
 - **May 1857** -Sepoys mutinied in several places.
 - **September 1857** – Delhi was recaptured by Company
 - **August 1858** – A new Act passed by the British Parliament transferred the powers of the East India Company to the British Crown.
 - **October 1858** - Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar along with his wife was sent to prison in Rangoon.
 - **November 1862** – Bahadur Shah Zafar died in Rangoon jail.
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