

8th Social Science Lesson 4 Notes in English

4. Peoples Revolt

Introduction

- The establishment of political and economic dominance by the British over many parts of India after the **Battle of Plassey, 1757** disrupted the political, social and economic order of the country.
- This led to the divesting many landlords and chieftains of their power and estates.
- Naturally, many of them revolted against the British. The English assumed the right of collecting the annual **tribute from the Palayakkarar**.
- The first resistance to the British was offered by the Pulithevar.
- Since then there had been rebellions by Palayakkarar such as **the Veerapandiya Kattabomman, Oomathurai, Marudu brothers and Dheeran Chinnamalai**.

Origin of Palayam

- The Vijayanagar rulers appointed Nayaks in their provinces. The **Nayak of Madurai** in turn appointed Palayakkarar.
- Viswanatha became the Nayak of Madurai in **1529**. He noticed that he could not control the chieftain who wanted more powers in their provinces.
- So with the consultation of his minister **Ariyanatha Mudaliyar**, **Viswanatha instituted Palayakkarar system in 1529**.
- The whole country was divided into **72 Palayams** and each one was put under a Palayakkarar.
- Palayakkarar was the holder of a territory or a Palayam. These Palayams were held in military tenure and extended their full co-operation to be need of the Nayaks.
- The Palayakkarars collected taxes, of which one third was given to the **Nayak of Madurai** another one third for the expenditure of the army and rest was kept for themselves.

Early revolts of South India



Revolt of the Palayakkars

- During the 17th and 18th centuries the Palayakkarars played a vital role in the politics of Tamil Nadu. They regarded themselves as independent.

- Among the Palayakkarars, there were two blocs, namely the Eastern and the Western blocs.
- **The Eastern Palayams** were the Nayaks ruled under the control of Kattabomman and the Western palayams were the Maravas ruled under the control of Pulithevan.
- These two palayakkarars refused to pay the kist (tribute) to the English and rebelled.
- The early struggle between the Palayakkarars and the East India Company had a strong political dimension.
- By the **Carnatic treaty of 1792**, consolidated the English power over the Palayakkars. The English got the right to collect taxes.
- The result was the outbreak of the revolt of Palayakkars.

Pulithevar

- Pulithevar was the pioneer in Tamil Nadu, to protest against the English rule in India. He was the **Palayakkarar of the Nerkattumseval, near Tirunelveli**.
- During his tenure he refused to pay the tribute neither to Mohammed Ali, the Nawab of Arcot nor to the English.
- Further he started opposing them. Hence, the forces of the **Nawab of Arcot and the English attacked Pulithevar**.
- But the combined forces were defeated by **Pulithevar at Tirunelveli**. Pulithevar was the first Indian king to have fought and defeated the British in India.
- After this victory Pulithevan attempted to form a league of the Palayakkars to oppose the British and the Nawab.
- In **1759, Nerkattumseval** was attacked by the forces of Nawab of Arcot under the leadership of Yusuf Khan.
- Pulithevar was defeated at **Anthanallur and the Nawabs forces captured Nerkattumseval in 1761**.
- Pulithevar who lived in exile recaptured **Nerkattumseval in 1764**. Later, he was defeated by **Captain Campell in 1767**.
- Pulithevar escaped and died in exile without fulfilling his purpose, although his courageous trail of a struggle for independence in the history of South India.

Virapandya Kattabomman

- The Ancestors of Kattabomman belonged to Andhra. They migrated to Tamil country during the 11th century.
- As a feudatory under **Pandya**s, **Jagaveerapandiaya Kattabomman ruled Virapandyapuram**.
- Panchalankurichi was its capital. He later became a Poligar during the rule of Nayaks. He was succeeded by his son **Veerapandya Kattabomman**.
- His wife was Jakkammal and his brothers were Oomathurai and Sevathaiah.

Nawab of Arcot

- After the decline of the **Vijayanagar empire**, the **mughals** established their supremacy in the south.
- The Nawabs acted as their representatives in Karnataka. Panchalamkuruchi palayam was acted as an ally to the Nawab of Arcot.
- Hence it paid tribute to the Nawabs. But in 1792, the political condition had completely changed.
- Based on the Carnatic treaty of 1792, the company gained the right to collect taxes from Panchalamkuruchi.
- The collection of tribute was the main cause for the rivalry **between the English and Kattabomman**.

Kattabomman met Jackson

- In 1798, **Colin Jackson**, the collector of Ramanathapuram wrote letters to Kattabomman asking him to pay the tribute arrears.
- But Kattabomman replied that he was not in a position to remit the tribute due to the famine in the country.
- Colin Jackson got angry and decided to send an expedition to punish Kattabomman.
- However, the Madras government directed the collector to summon the Palayakkarar at Ramanathapuram and hold a discussion.
- In 1798, **Kattabomman** and his minister Siva Subramaniam met the Collector at Ramanathapuram.
- Upon a verification of accounts, Colin Jackson was convinced that Kattabomman had cleared most of the arrears leaving only **1080 pagodas** as balance.
- During this interview **Kattabomman and his Minister, Sivasubramaniam**, had to stand before the arrogant collector for three hours.
- The Collector insulted them and tried to arrest Kattabomman and his minister. Kattabomman tried to escape with his minister.
- Oomathurai suddenly entered the fort with his men and helped the escape of Kattabomman.
- But unfortunately Sivasubramaniam was taken as prisoner.

Edward Clive and Kattabomman

- After his return to Panchalamkuruchi, Kattabomman wrote a letter to the Madras Council narrating the behaviour of the Collector Colin Jackson.
- **Edward Clive**, the Governor of Madras Council ordered Kattabomman to surrender. The Madras Council directed Kattabomman to appear before a Committee.
- Meanwhile, Edward Clive dismissed the Collector for his misbehaviour and released SivaSubramania.
- Kattabomman appeared before the Committee, and found Kattabomman was not guilty.

- **S.R. Lushington** was appointed collector in the place of Colin Jackson, who was eventually dismissed from service.

The confederacy of Palayakkarars

- During that time, Marudu Pandyan of Sivaganga formed the South Indian Confederacy of rebels against the British, along with the neighbouring Palayakkarars.
- This confederacy declared a proclamation which came to be known as **Tiruchirappalli Proclamation**.
- Kattabomman was interested in this confederacy. He tried to establish his influence over **Sivagiri, who refused to join with alliance of the rebels**.
- **Kattabomman advanced towards Sivagiri**. But the Palayakkar of Sivagiri was a tributary to the Company.
- So the Company considered the expedition of Kattabomman as a challenge to their authority. So the Company ordered the army to march to Panchalamkuruchi.

Fall of Panchalamkuruchi

- Major Bannerman moved his army to Panchalamkuruchi on 5th September.
- They cut off all the communications to the Fort.
- In a clash at **Kallarpatti, Siva Subramaniyam** was taken as a prisoner.
- Kattabomman escaped to Pudukottai.
- **Vijaya Ragunatha Tondaiman, Raja of Pudukottai**, captured Kattabomman from the jungles of Kalapore and handed over to the Company.
- After the fall of Panchalamkuruchi, Bannerman brought the prisoners to an assembly of the Palayakkarars and after trial sentenced them to death.
- Sivasubramania was executed at Nagalapuram.
- On the **16th October ViraPandya Kattabomman** was tried before an assembly of Palayakkarar, summoned at Kayathar.
- On **17th October 1799**, Kattabomman was hanged at the fort of Kayathar.
- Kattabomman's heroic deeds were the subject of many folk ballads which kept his memory alive among the people.

Velu Nachiyar

- Velu Nachiyar was a queen of Sivagangai. At the **age of 16**, she was married to Muthu Vaduganathar, the Raja of Sivagangai.
- In **1772, the Nawab of Arcot** and the British troops invaded Sivagangai. They killed Muthu Vaduganathar in **Kalaiyar Koil battle**.
- Velu Nachiyar escaped with her daughter Vellachi Nachiyar and lived under the protection of **Gopala Nayaker at Virupachi near Dindigul**.

- During this period she organised an army and employed her intelligent agents to find where the British stored their ammunition.
- She arranged a suicide attack by a faithful follower Kuyili, a commander of Velu Nachiar.
- She recaptured Sivagangai and was again crowned as queen with the help of Marudu brothers.
- She was the first queen to fight against the British colonial power in India. She is known by Tamils as Veeramangai and also known as '**Jhansi Rani of South India**'.

Marudu Brothers

- Marudu brothers were the sons of Mookiah Palaniappan and Ponnathal.
- The elder brother was called **Periya Marudu (Vella Marudhu)** and the younger brother Chinna Marudu.
- Chinna Marudu was more popular and was called Marudu Pandiyan. Chinna Marudu served under **Muthu Vaduganatha Peria Udaya Devar (1750-1772) of Sivaganga**.
- In 1772 the Nawab of Arcot laid siege of Sivaganga and captured it.
- **Muthu Vaduganatha Peria Udaya Devar**, died in battle. However after a few months Sivaganga was re-captured by Marudu Brothers and Periya Marudu was enthroned as the ruler.
- Chinna Marudu acted as his adviser. Due to the terrorist activities against British, he was called as "**Lion of Sivaganga**".
- In the later half of the eighteenth century the rebellion against the British was carried by Marudu Brothers in South India.

Causes for the conflict

- Kattabomman was hanged to death and his **brother Umaithurai** and others fled to Sivaganga, where Marudu Pandya gave protection to them.
- The merchants of Sivaganga did not like the interference of the company in their internal politics.
- The company waged war against Sivaganga for these two causes.

The South Indian Rebellion (1800-1801)

- In February 1801 the brothers of Kattabomman, **Oomathurai and Sevathaiah** escaped from **Palayamkottai prison and reached Kamudhi**.
- Chinna Marudu took them to Siruvayal, his capital. They reconstructed their ancestral fort at Panchalamkurichi.
- The British troops under Conlin Macaulay retook the **fort in April and the Palayakkarar brothers sought shelter in Sivaganga**.
- The English demanded Marudu Pandyas to hand over the fugitives, the latter refused. Conlonel Agnew and Colonel Innes marched against them.

- The Palayakkarar War assumed a much broader character than its predecessor. It was directed by a confederacy consisting of **Marudu Pandiar of Sivaganga, Gopala Nayak of Dindugal, Kerala Varma of Malabar and Krishnappa Nayak and Dhoondaji of Mysore.**
- The English declared war against the confederacy.

The Tiruchirappalli Proclamation (1801)

- The Marudu Pandyas issued a proclamation of Independence called Tiruchirappalli Proclamation in June 1801.
- The Proclamation of 1801 was the first call to the Indians to unite against the British.
- A copy of the proclamation was pasted on the walls of the **Nawab's palace in the fort of Tiruchi and another copy was placed on the walls of the Vaishnava temple at Srirangam.**
- Thus Marudu brothers spread the spirit of opposition against the English everywhere.
- As a result many Palayakkarars of Tamil Nadu went on a rally to fight against the English.
- Chinna Marudu collected nearly **20,000 men** to challenge the English army. British reinforcements were rushed from **Bengal, Ceylon and Malaya.**
- The rajas of Pudukkottai, Ettayapuram and Thanjavur stood by the British. Divide and rule policy followed by the English split the forces of the Palayakkarars.

English annexed Sivagangai

- In May 1801, English attacked the rebels in Thanjavur and Tiruchi areas. The rebels went to Piranmalai and Kalayarkoil.
- They were again defeated by the forces of the English. In the end, the superior military strength and the able commanders of the British army won the battle.
- The rebellion failed and English annexed Sivagangai in 1801.
- The Marudu brothers were executed in the Fort of Tirupathur in Ramanathapuram District on **24 October 1801.**
- Oomathurai and Sevathaiah was captured and beheaded at Panchalamkuruchi on 16 November 1801.
- Seventy three rebels were sentenced to Penang in Malaya, then called the Prince of Wales Island.
- Though they fell before the English, they were the pioneers in sowing the seeds of nationalism in the land of Tamil.
- Thus the South Indian Rebellion is a land mark in the history of Tamil Nadu. Although the **1800-1801** rebellion was to be categorized in the British records as the Second Palayakkarar War.
- Under the terms of the Karnataka Treaty on 31 July 1801, the British assumed direct control over Tamil Nadu. The Palayakkarar system was abolished.

Dheeran Chinnamalai

- Dheeran Chinnamalai was born at Melapalayam in Chennimalai near Erode. His original name was Theerthagiri.
- He was a palayakkarar of Kongu country who fought the British East India Company.
- The Kongu country comprising Salem, Coimbatore, Karur and Dindigul formed a part of the Nayak kingdom of Madurai but had been annexed by the **Wodayars of Mysore**.
- After the fall of the Wodayars, these territories along with Mysore were controlled by the Mysore Sultans.
- After the third and fourth Mysore wars the entire Kongu region passed into the hands of the English.
- Dheeran Chinnamalai was trained by French military in modern warfare. He was along the side Tippu Sultan to fight against the British East India Company and got victories against the British.
- After Tippu Sultan's death Chinnamalai settled down at Odanilai and constructed a fort there to continue his struggle against the British.
- He sought the help of **Marathas and Maruthu Pandiyar to attack the British at Coimbatore in 1800**.
- British forces managed to stop the armies of the allies and hence Chinnamalai was forced to attack Coimbatore on his own.
- His army was defeated and he escaped from the British forces.
- Chinnamalai engaged in guerrilla warfare and defeated the British in battles at Cauvery, **Odanilai and Arachalur**.
- During the final battle, Chinnamalai was betrayed by his cook Nallapan and was hanged in **Sankagiri Fort in 1805**.

Vellore Revolt (1806)

- The family members of Tippu were imprisoned at Vellore fort after the fourth Mysore war.
- Some three thousand ex-servants and soldiers of Hyder and Tippu had also been moved to the vicinity of Vellore and their property in Mysore confiscated.
- It was quite natural that they were all unhappy and they hatred the English.
- The Vellore fort consisted of large majority of Indian troops, a good part of it recently been raised in **Tirunelveli after the Palayakkarar uprising of 1800**.
- Many of the trained soldiers of the various Palayams were admitted into the English army.
- Thus the Vellore fort became the meeting ground of the rebel forces of South India. In 1803, William Cavendish Bentinck became Governor of Madras.
- During his period certain military regulations were introduced in **1805-06** and were enforced by the **Madras Commander-in-Chief Sir John Cradock**.
- But the sepoys felt that these were designed to insult them.

Causes for the revolt

- The strict discipline, new weapons, new methods and uniforms were all new to the sepoys.
- The sepoys were asked to shave the beard and to trim the moustache.
- The wearing of religious mark on the forehead and the use of ear-rings were also banned.
- The English treated the Indian sepoys as their inferior. There was the racial prejudice.

Immediate Cause

- In **June 1806**, **military General Agnew** introduced a new turban, resembling a European hat with a badge of cross on it. It was popularly known as '**Agnew's turban**'.
- Both the Hindu and Muslim soldiers opposed it. So the soldiers were severely punished by the English.

Course of the Revolt

- The Indian soldiers were waiting for an opportunity to attack the English officers. Tippu's family also took part.
- **Fettah Hyder, the elder son of Tippu**, tried to form an alliance against the English.
- On July 10th in the early morning the native sepoys of the **1st and 23rd Regiments** started the revolt.
- Colonel Fancourt, who commanded the garrison, was their first victim. The fort gates were closed.
- Meantime, the rebels proclaimed **Futteh Hyder, as their new ruler**. The British flag in the fort was brought down.
- The tiger-striped flag of Tippu Sultan was hoisted on the fort of Vellore.

Suppression of the Revolt

- Major Cootes who was outside the fort rushed to Ranipet and informed **Colonel Gillespie**. **Col. Gillespie reached Vellore fort**.
- He made an attack on the rebel force. The revolt was completely suppressed and failed. Peace was restored in Vellore.
- On the whole, **113 Europeans and about 350 sepoys were killed** in the uprising.
- The revolt was suppressed within a short period.
- It was one of the significant events in the history of Tamil Nadu.

Effects of the Vellore Revolt

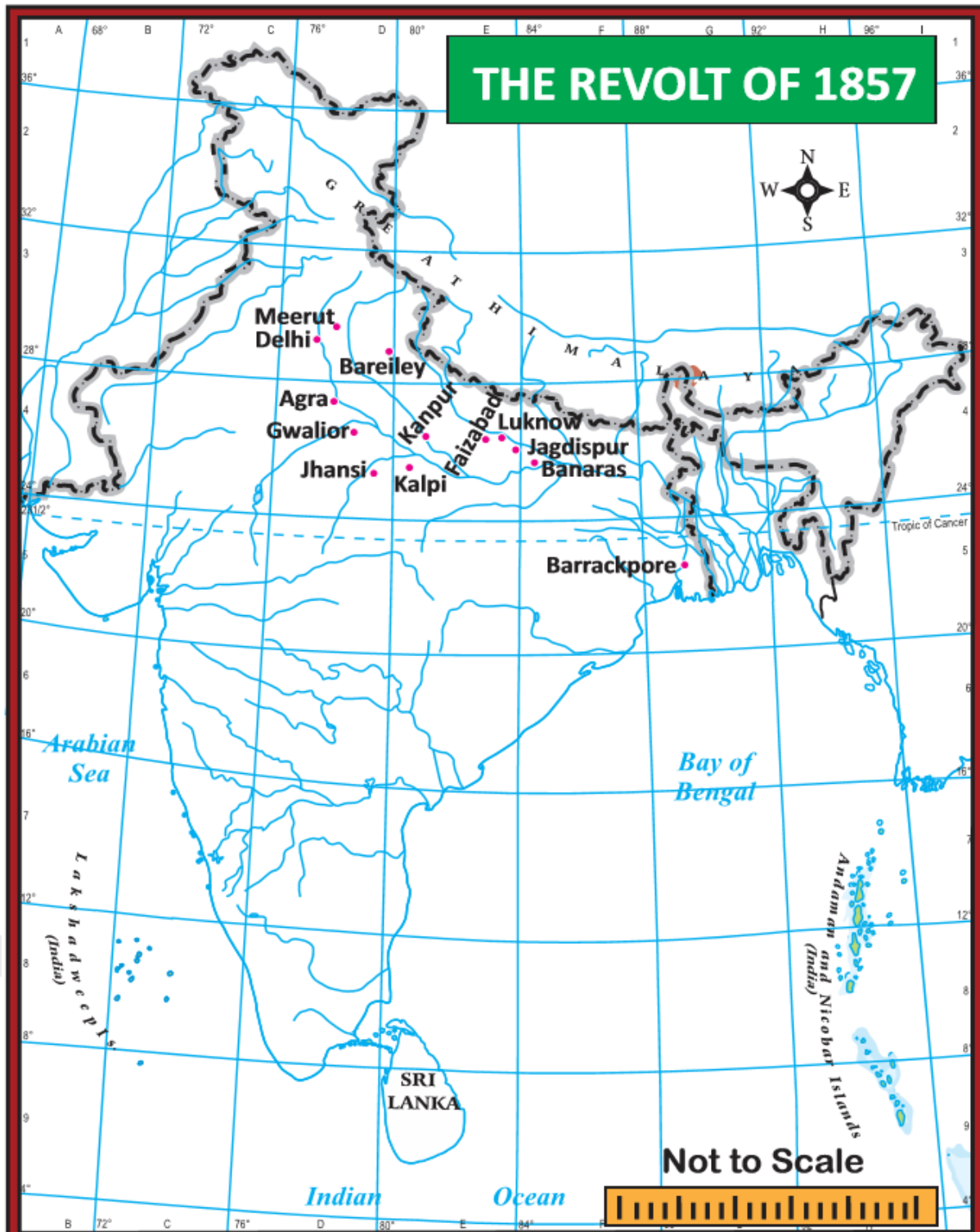
- The new methods and uniform regulations were withdrawn.
- The family of Tippu as a precautionary measure was sent to Calcutta.
- **William Cavendish Bentinck** was removed from his service.

Causes for the failure of the Revolt

- There was no proper leadership to guide the soldiers properly.

- The rebellion was also not well organised.
- Divide and Rule policy of the English, split the unity of the Indians. V.D. Savarkar calls the Vellore revolt of 1806 as the prelude to the **first War of Indian Independence in 1857**.

The Revolt of 1857



- The early uprisings did not succeed in threatening the British in India.
- It took the Revolt of 1857 to bring home to the Company and the British that their rule was not accepted to a large section of the population.
- The **Revolt of 1857** was a product of the character and the policies of colonial rule.
- The cumulative effect of British expansionist policies, economic exploitation and administrative innovations over the years had adversely affected the positions of all rulers of Indian states.

Causes of the Revolt

- The **most important cause of revolt 1857** was a popular discontent of the British policy of economically exploiting India.
- This hurt all sections of society. The peasants suffered due to high revenue demands and the strict revenue collection policy.
- Policies of doctrine of lapse, subsidiary alliance and policy of Effective Control created discontentment among people.
- Annexation of Oudh proved that even the grovelling loyalty can't satisfy British greed for territories.
- The conversion activities of Christian missionaries were looked upon with suspicion and fear.
- The priests and the maulavis showed their discontent against the British rule.
- Abolition of practices like sati, female infanticide, support to widow remarriage and female education were seen by many as interference in their Indian culture by the Europeans.
- The Indian sepoys were looked upon as inferior beings and treated with contempt by their British officers.
- They were paid much less than the British soldiers. All avenues of the promotion were closed to them as all the higher army posts were reserved for the British.

Immediate cause

- The immediate cause was the introduction of new Enfield Rifles in the army.
- The top of the cartridge of this rifle was to be removed by the mouth before loading it in the rifle.
- The cartridges were greased by the fat of pig and the cow.
- The Indian sepoys believed that the British were deliberately attempting to spoil the religion of both the Hindus and the Muslims because while the Hindus revered the cow, the Muslims hated the pig.
- The soldiers, therefore, determined to refuse their service and, ultimately revolted.
- Thus, the primary and the immediate cause of the revolt was the use of the greased cartridges.

The Outbreak of the Revolt

- On **29 March 1857 at Barrackpur (near Kolkata) Mangal Pandey**, a young Sepoy from Bengal Regiment, refused to use the greased cartridge, and shot down his sergeant.
- He was arrested, tried and executed. When this news spread many sepoys revolted.

Course of the Revolt

Places of Revolt	Indian Leaders	British Officials who suppressed the revolt
Delhi	Bahadur Shah II	John Nicholson
Lucknow	Begum Hazrat Mahal	Henry Lawrence
Kanpur	Nana Saheb	Sir Colin Campbell
Jhansi & Gwalior	Lakshmi Bai, Tantia tope	General Hugh Rose
Bareilly	Khan Bahadur Khan	Sir Colin Campbell
Bihar	Kunwar Singh	William Taylor

- On **10 May 1857**, the Sepoys of the third cavalry at Meerut openly revolted by swarming the prisons and releasing their comrades.
- They were immediately joined by the men of the **11th and 20th Native Infantry**, and they murdered some English officers and then marched to Delhi.
- The arrival of Meerut sepoys at Delhi on **11th May** and **declared of Bahadur Shah II** as the Emperor of India.
- Delhi became the centre of the Great Revolt and Bahadur Shah, its symbol. The revolt spread quickly.
- There were mutinies at **Lucknow, Kanpur, Jhansi, Bareilly, Bihar, Faizabad**, and many other places in north India.
- Many of them found that it was a good opportunity to burn the papers of their landlords.
- Many others whose titles and pensions were abolished by the British who participated in it, in order to take revenge.
- The **Muslim leaders and Maulvis** sought the opportunity of establishing the Muslim rule in India after turning out the British.

Suppression of the Revolt

- Lord Canning, the governor-general took immediate steps to suppress the revolt. He collected the **forces of Madras, Bombay, Sri Lanka and Burma**.
- On his own initiative, he called the British army which was deputed to China by Britain to Calcutta.

- He ordered the loyal Sikh army to proceed to Delhi immediately. The British regained their lost positions very soon.
- Delhi was recaptured by General John Nicholson on **20 September, 1857** and **deportation of Bahadur Shah II to Rangoon where he died in 1862.**
- Military operations with the recovery of Kanpur were closely associated with the recovery of Lucknow.
- Sir Colin Campbell occupied Kanpur. Nana Saheb was defeated at Kanpur and escaped to Nepal.
- His close associate Tantia Tope escaped to central India, was captured and put to death while asleep.
- The Rani of Jhansi had died in the battle-field. Kunwar Singh, Khan Bahadur Khan were all dead, while the Begum of Awadh was compelled to hide in Nepal.
- The revolt was finally suppressed. By the end of 1859, British authority over India was fully re-established.

Rani of Jhansi:

- In Central India the Revolt was guided by Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi. She was one of the greatest patriots of India.
- **Sir Hugh Rose occupied Jhansi.** Rani Lakshmi Bai fled from Jhansi and joined hands with Tantia Tope who had assumed the leadership of the rebel army at Gwalior.
- But the British captured **Gwalior in June 1858.**
- Rani was killed in the battle.
- Tantia Tope fled away but was captured and later executed.
- According to the British historians, present at the time of revolt, **Rani Lakshmi Bai was the best and the bravest among the leaders of the Revolt of 1857.**

The Causes for the Failure of the Revolt

- Various causes were responsible for the failure of the revolt.
- Lack of organisation, discipline, common plan of action, centralised leadership, modern weapons and techniques.
- The rebel leaders were no match to the British Generals.
- Rani Lakshmi Bai, Tantia Tope and Nana Saheb were courageous but they were not good generals.
- Non-participation of Bengal, Bombay, Madras, western Punjab and Rajputana.
- The modern educated Indians did not support the Revolts as they believed that only British rule could reform Indian society and modernize it.
- The British managed to get the loyalty of the Sikhs, Afghans and the Gurkha regiments. The Gurkhas actually helped the British in suppressing the revolt.
- The British had better weapons, better generals, and good organisation.

Consequences of the Revolt

- The Revolt of 1857 marked a turning point in the history of India. It led to changes in the system of administration and the policy of the Government.
- The administration of India was transferred from the East India Company to the British Crown through the **'Queen's Proclamation' in 1858**.
- The governor general was given the title of viceroy.
- The Board of Directors and the Board of Control were replaced by the **Council of 15 members headed by the Secretary of State to supervise Indian affairs**.
- The Indian Army was thoroughly reorganised. More Britishers were employed in the army.
- The British military policy came to be dominated by the idea of 'divide and counterpoise'.
- Infact, the Revolt of 1857 played an important role in bringing the Indian people together and imparting them the consciousness of belonging to one country.
- The Revolt paved the way for the rise of the modern national movement.
- It was at the beginning of the twentieth century that the 1857 Revolt came to be interpreted as a **"planned war of national independence"**, by V.D. Savarkar in his book, **First War of Indian Independence**.