Class: 10th
Board: Karnataka
Subject: Social

The First War of Indian Independence

INTRODUCTION

- The Revolt of 1857 is called:
  - **First War of Independence** (Indian view)
  - **Sepoy Mutiny** (British view)
- It was the first major uprising against British rule in India.

Causes of the Revolt

Political Causes

- Doctrine of Lapse introduced by Lord Dalhousie
- Annexation of states like Satara, Jhansi, Awadh
- End of princely powers
- Unemployment of soldiers from royal armies
- Removal of Nawabs and Mughal authority

Economic Causes

- Decline of Indian handicrafts due to British industrial goods
- Heavy taxes on Indian goods
- Exploitation under Zamindari system
- Confiscation of Inam lands by Inam Commission
- Poverty and unemployment among farmers and artisans

Administrative Causes

- Unfair British laws for Indians
- English used in courts
- Bias of British judges
- No participation of Indians in administration

Military Causes

- Low salary and poor treatment of Indian soldiers
- No promotion opportunities
- Forced overseas service (sea travel taboo)
- Discrimination between British and Indian soldiers

Immediate Cause

- Introduction of Enfield rifle cartridges
- Rumour: greased with cow and pig fat
- Hurt religious sentiments of Hindus and Muslims
- Soldiers refused to use cartridges → revolt started

Spread of Revolt

- Started at Barrackpore (Mangal Pandey incident)
- Major centres:
  - Meerut → Delhi → Kanpur → Jhansi → Lucknow
- Bahadur Shah II declared Emperor of India
- Leaders:
  - Nana Saheb (Kanpur)
  - Rani Lakshmibai (Jhansi)
  - Tatya Tope (military commander)

Important Leaders

- **Mangal Pandey** – First martyr of revolt
- **Rani Lakshmibai** – Heroine of Jhansi
- **Tatya Tope** – Military strategist
- **Nana Saheb** – Leader of Kanpur revolt

Reasons for Failure

- Revolt was not nationwide
- Lack of unity among Indians
- Poor planning and organization
- No strong central leadership
- British military power was stronger
- Some Indian rulers supported British
- Limited modern weapons and training

Effects of the Revolt

Political Changes

- End of East India Company rule (1858)
- British Crown took direct control
- Queen Victoria's Proclamation

Important Features of Proclamation

- Respect for Indian rulers' agreements
- No further territorial expansion
- Religious freedom promised
- Equality before law declared
- Better governance promised

Importance of 1857 Revolt

- First large-scale struggle against British rule
- Inspired later freedom movements
- Created national consciousness among Indians
- Marked beginning of organized nationalism



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