

Welcome students.

This Lecture is for the Third Year B.A Students of History, Semester V, Paper Code HSC 105, Paper Title: Indian National Movement (from 1857 to 1947); Unit: 1, Module Name: Consequences of the Revolt of 1857, Module No: 6.

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The Outline of the E- Module.

1. Introduction of a New Era in the History of British India.
2. Administrative and British policy changes in India.
3. The reforms introduced by the British post 1857 and the impact of the changes introduced.

The Learning Outcome:

This module will enable the students to:

1. Apprehend the repercussions of the Revolt of 1857.
2. Understand the changes affected in the Indian Administration post 1857.
3. Critically analyze the British policies in India.

The Revolt of 1857 was a culmination of various factors. Political, Social, Cultural, Economic and Military factors. The revolt was completely suppressed by the British, however, the impact and the consequences were intense and manifold.

The first consequence was- that the revolt failed. It was a defeat and a set-back to the Indians. Though the revolt was completely suppressed by the British, it however shook the very foundation of their rule in India. To the Indians, it was a major set back. The leader of the rebellion, Bahadur Shah Zafar or Bahadur Shah II, the Emperor of the Great Mughal Dynasty was captured and taken as a state prisoner. The other leaders, like Rani of Jhansi, became martyrs.

Second, the Revolt of 1857 marked the end of the old order. The old order was represented by the degenerated Mughal Empire. The Mughal Empire was abolished. The last Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah II was exiled to Rangoon, the capital of Burma where he died as a disappointed man. So it ended the Mughal dynasty which was established by Babur in 1526.

The old order was also represented by the rule of the East India Company over India. The revolt of 1857 marked the end of the company's rule over India. The once powerful East India Company, established in 1600, came to dissolve. The company's flag, which flew high since, ceased to have the official status.

The revolt introduced a new era in the history of the British Rule in India. The revolt marked the end of the old order, but introduced a new era in the history of British rule in India. The new era was represented by The Crown taking over the administration of India. The power was transferred from the East India Company to the British Crown in Parliament. Thus India came under direct British colonial rule. Queen Victoria was proclaimed as the Empress of India in 1877.

Also, the Queen's Proclamation was pronounced on November 1, 1858. The Queen's Proclamation was read by Lord Canning in a Durbar at Allahabad. Lord Canning was the Governor- General during the Revolt of 1857, and he later went on to become the first Viceroy of British India.

The main content of the Queen's Proclamation was- Lord Canning was appointed as a first Viceroy. The designation was now changed from Governor- General to the Viceroy. The Queen's Proclamation gave assurance to the native Princes. The Queen's Proclamation announced no more annexations or extension of the British territorial possessions in India. The Princes were given the right to adoption, which was denied by the Dalhousie's Doctrine of lapse. The treaties made with them would be now respected. The British would also respect the rights, dignity and honor of the Indian Princess.

The Queen's Proclamation also gave assurances to the people of India. The people were granted the freedom of religion and assured no interference in their customs and traditions. They were granted equal opportunities in the government services. They were assured promotion of their welfare and granted amnesty, to a certain extent.

After 1857 changes were made in the Indian administration. The Act for the Better Government of India 1858 or Government of India Act 1858 came to be passed. The Indian administration was transferred from the East India Company to the Crown of England. The Secretary of State for India who was a British Cabinet Minister was appointed and his office was designated as India House in London. The Secretary of State was assisted by a Council of India. The Council had 15 Members.

After the revolt the reactionary element were ended. The reactionary element is represented by the disgruntled Indian Princes, the Zamindars and Taluqdars. The Princely States were won over and granted assurance of respect, dignity and honor. The Zamindars and the Taluqdars were reinstated and thus were won over. They became the very pillars of the British rule in India. Thus the British rule was perpetuated, nourished and strengthened.

After the revolt, the British introduced a policy of 'Divide and Rule' which was very disastrous to India. Divide and rule was made the main prop of the British control over India. They divided Indians on the basis of different caste and religions.

The army came to be reorganized post 1857. The army was considered as responsible for the revolt. The revolt itself began with Sepoy mutiny.

The strength of the European troops were increased. The Indian Artillery Unit was disbanded. Artillery was placed under the European soldiers. Big posts in the Army Department were reserved for the Europeans. Thus the European control over the key position was strengthened.

There began an era of reforms. The Indian Council Act of 1861 was introduced along with the Indian Civil Service Act 1861, The Indian High Court Act 1861 and High Courts of Bombay, Madras, Calcutta was established in 1862 and the Universities of Bombay, Madras and Calcutta was established in 1857.

It was realized that the lack of contact between the administrators and the Indians was responsible for the revolt of 1857. So an attempt was made to develop a representative institution. The Indian Council Act 1861 was passed, provision was made for the Indians to participate in the Civil Service by participating in the examination which was held in London.

Post 1857 began an era of Economic Exploitation. The revolt marked the end of the era of political expansion, but began another era- the era of economic exploitation of India. The Secretary of State and other officials were paid from the Indian Treasury. There began a systematic draining of the wealth from India as stated by Dadabhai Naoroji in his work "Poverty and Un-British Rule in India' published in 1901.

There was also the emotional after effect of the revolt. It led to racial bitterness. The Indians began to hate the British for the ill- treatment meted to them; while the British felt that they could no longer trust the Indians. After the revolt there was also a distrust between the Indians, for there were some Indians who assisted the British. So it bred distrust between them. Imperialism plus racialism would lead to degradation of all concern. These were the words Pt. Jawharlal Nehru.

Post 1857 we find an emerging socio religious reform movement in India. The Queen's Proclamation had promised non- interference in the religious, social customs and traditions of the Indian. So it was left for the Indians to carry out social reforms. This led to the emergence of the Indian Renaissance movement, the Indian social religious reforms and reformers and the reform movement beginning with Rajaram Mohan Roy.

Most importantly, it led to the rise of nationalism in India. The leaders of the revolt- Rani of Jhansi, Nana Saheb and others were seen as National heroes. They became the martyrs of the revolt. Their stories and struggles served as an inspiration for the Indians and gave rise to Nationalism in India.

Thus, the British were challenged post 1850. However post 1857 the British were faced with a new challenge- that was from the Progressive Indians who were inspired by the writings of John Stuart Mill and other British Liberals of the 19th century.

Suggested References:

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2. Grover, B.L. Grover and S. Modern Indian History. New Delhi: S. Chand & Company Ltd., 2007.
3. Chandra, Bipan & Others. India's Struggle for Independence. New Delhi: Penguin Books India, 2016.

Thank you.