

NCERT Solutions for Class 8 History Chapter 5 – When People Rebel

1. What was the demand of Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi that was refused by the British?

Answer.

Rani Lakshmibai was the queen of Jhansi. She had adopted a son. Hence, she wanted her son to be the ruler of Jhansi. However, according to Lord Dalhousie's Doctrine of Lapse policy, an adopted heir would not be allowed to acquire the kingdom once the father dies and the same would be annexed by the British. Hence, Rani Lakshmibai's demand for recognizing her adopted son as the male heir of the kingdom was refused by the British.

2. What did the British do to protect the interests of those who converted to Christianity?

Answer.

After 1830, the Company allowed Christian missionaries to function freely in its domain and even own land and property. In 1850, a new law was passed to make conversion to Christianity easier. This law allowed an Indian who had converted to Christianity to inherit the property of his ancestors. Many Indians began to feel that the British were destroying their religion, their social customs and their traditional way of life.

3. What objections did the sepoys have to the new cartridges that they were asked to use?

Answer.

The new cartridges were unacceptable to the Indian sepoys, as they held the belief that these had been coated by the fat of cow and pigs. The sepoys had to bite the cartridges to load them. But their religion did not allow them to even touch these cartridges. Hence, they denied using the new cartridges.

4. How did the last Mughal emperor live the last years of his life?

Answer.

The last Mughal emperor was Bahadur Shah Zafar. His title as the Mughal emperor was a symbolic one. After the death of Aurangzeb, the Mughal rulers had lost their power and held only a symbolic stature. Zafar was also the symbolic head of the 1857 revolt. However, once the revolt was crushed, Bahadur Shah Zafar was tried in court. He was blinded by the British and was imprisoned. Later in 1858, he along with his wife was sent to Rangoon, where he died in 1862.

5. What could be the reasons for the confidence of the British rulers about their position in India before May 1857?

Answer.

The British became confident about their position in India because of the following reasons:

- a. The Mughal rulers, after the death of Aurangzeb, were not strong and powerful. Hence, it was easier for the British to annex states.
- b. The disunity among nawabs and the Mughal rulers helped the British have a firm stronghold over Indian society, starting from Bengal.

- c. The policies, like Subsidiary Alliance, helped British annex territories one after another, without the use of any military power.
- d. The revolt of 1857 was crushed by the British leading to their supremacy over Indian society.

6. What impact did Bahadur Shah Zafar's support to the rebellion have on the people and the ruling families?

Answer.

Aurangzeb was considered as the last strong and powerful Mughal ruler of India. After his death, the Mughal rulers only had a symbolic presence. But Mughal rulers still had their influence over small chiefs and rulers across the country. The revolt of 1857 started only when Bahadur Shah Zafar, the last ruler of the Mughals, gave his permission. His support for the revolt made leaders from various places become confident about opposing the British. Zafar asked all the leaders to form a confederacy to fight against the British. Many small, large kingdoms, rulers and chieftains supported the revolt after Bahadur Shah Zafar extended his support to the revolt. Hence, his support for the rebellion had a widespread effect on the people and the ruling families.

7. How did the British succeed in securing the submission of the rebel landowners of Awadh?

Answer.

The British followed a two-pronged approach to suppress the rebel landowners of Awadh:

- a. The first approach was to hang the rebel landowners who had killed British personnel, in order to threaten the people of Awadh by showing them the consequences of any revolts in future.
- b. The second approach was to reward the loyal landowners of Awadh. The British stated that if the landowners had not killed any British personnel and if they agreed to submit before the British, they would be offered safety and could retain their share of lands.

8. In what ways did the British change their policies as a result of the rebellion of 1857?

Answer.

After the revolt of 1857, the British Crown directly took over the Indian administration. The powers of the East India Company were transferred to the Crown. The following changes were made:

- a. Doctrine of Lapse policy was abolished
- b. The number of Indian sepoys was reduced in the army, so that in future they would not be able to rebel against the British
- c. Zamindars' and landowners' rights were further enhanced
- d. The Crown promised that it would not interfere with the religion of the people.
- e. A Viceroy and a Secretary of the state were appointed for the administration of Indian society.