

# 1857 के स्वतंत्रता संग्राम के अविवेचित पक्ष

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नालंदा प्रकाशन  
दिल्ली

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संपादक

श्री नवीन कुमार  
सहायक प्रोफेसर  
समाजशास्त्र विभाग  
चमन लाल महाविद्यालय लंडीरा, हरिद्वार  
उत्तराखण्ड

डॉ. धर्मेन्द्र कुमार  
सहायक प्रोफेसर  
राजनीति विज्ञान विभाग  
चमन लाल महाविद्यालय लंडीरा, हरिद्वार  
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नालंदा प्रकाशन

नई दिल्ली

☎ : +91-9968082809,+9315194807

✉ : nalandaaprakashan@gmail.com

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इस पुस्तक के सर्वाधिकार सुरक्षित हैं। संपादक की लिखित अनुमति के बिना इसके किसी भी अंश को, फोटोकॉपी एवं रिकॉर्डिंग सहित इलेक्ट्रॉनिक अथवा मशीनी, किसी के माध्यम से, अथवा ज्ञान के संग्रहण एवं पुनःप्रयोग की प्रणाली द्वारा, किसी भी रूप में, पुनरुत्पादित अथवा संचारित- प्रसारित नहीं किया जा सकता।

## 1857 ke Swatantra ke Avivechit Paksh

by *Shri. Naveen Kumar*

*Dr. Dharmender Kumar*

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# 33.

## Nature of the Revolution of 1857

Mrs. Gurvinder Kaur\*

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The revolution of 1857 was the result of the discontent of Indians. The annexation of native states, economic exploitation, and propagation of Christianity, expansion of western education and civilization and interference in socio-religious life had dissatisfied the people. No doubt, this revolution was a failed attempt to end the British Empire in India. However it shook the roots of the British government in spite of its failure.

Historians have written a lot about the nature of the revolt of 1857, due to which it has become very difficult to know, what the real nature of this revolution was. Many Historians have of different opinion about the nature of this revolution. Asoka Mehta writes that it was no simple contest between modernity and tradition... but a confused struggle in which a proud people felt that they were being humiliated and depressed.<sup>1</sup> Some historians write that it was a military revolt. According to them Indian soldiers were mainly responsible for this revolt. They were dissatisfied with the discrimination policy of the British

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\*Assistant Professor, Department of History, Guru Nanak Girls College Santpura, Yamunagar(Haryana)

officers. At the time of Dalhousie, Commander in chief, Napier had given a warning, in which he said, "He (sepoys) is devoted to us as yet, but we take no pains to preserve his attachment. It is no concern of mine, I shall be dead before what I foresee will take place and it will take place."<sup>2</sup> A feeling of discontent had spread among the soldiers and order to use of greased cartridges provoked them against the British rule. Many contemporary British writers have admitted the influence of the cartridge question over the mutiny. Mr. Edwards, the Collector and Magistrate of Budaon, wrote: "I most solemnly declare my belief that with the mass of our soldiers the dread of these cartridges was the immediate and the most powerful cause of their revolt."<sup>3</sup> Sir John Lawrence writes, "It is my decided impression that the mutiny had its origin in the army itself, and was simply taken advantages of by the disaffected persons in the country to compass their own ends."<sup>4</sup> The Indian soldiers started the revolt of 1857; there was no such thing as patriotism and nationalism in this movement. This movement neither had the native leadership nor the support of the public. Some selfish Indian rulers, in which the names of Bahadur Shah Zafar, Nana Sahib, and Queen of Jhansi are prominent, took part in it only for the fulfillment of their personal interests. According to them, to give this movement the title of mass rebellion would be an injustice to the Indian people and they would be insulted, because in reality if this was a mass uprising, then the English soldiers would never have been able to suppress it. It was only a military revolt in which the Indian people did not contribute at all. According to P.E Roberts, there are two main views of the origin and meaning of the Indian Mutiny: one, that it was a mere military rising; the other, that it was a widespread conspiracy carefully organized for the overthrow of British power. Further he writes we may assume, therefore, that the rising was mainly military in origin, but that it occurred at a time when, for various reasons, there was much social and political discontent, and that the mutineers were promptly joined by interested adventurers, who tried to give it a particular direction to suit their own schemes.<sup>5</sup> Sir John Seeley describes it as a "wholly unpatriotic and selfish sepoy Mutiny". But some historians do not agree with this. They write that apart from the soldiers, many people participated

and sacrificed their lives in this revolt.

Many historians especially the Indian historians consider that it to be the first Indian freedom struggle. They have of the opinion that it was not just a sepoy's mutiny as a large number of people were involved in this revolt. According to V.D. Savarkar, "Not only the sepoy's but thousands of peaceful citizens and Rajas and Maharajas also rose, who had no direct or indirect connection with the army."<sup>6</sup> Some of the common people along with the support of the sepoy's revolted at several places in the Northern and Central India. In Uttar Pradesh and Bihar not only peasant and artisans but the Zamindars those who were deprived from their land also revolted against the British rulers. The chief target was to destroy the British rule. 'Narrative of Events' issued from the Supreme Government dated 12 September, 1857 throw light on the nature of this rebellion. Vipin Chandra writes that the public character of the revolt of 1857 was exposed when the British tried to crush it. They not only suppressed the rebel soldiers, but also fought a fierce and ruthless battle against the people of Delhi, Awadh, Central India and Western Bihar.<sup>7</sup> Ishwari Prasad and S. K. Subedar write, "All evidence supports the view that the events of 1857-58 were something more than a mutiny of the sepoy's."<sup>8</sup> But Thompson and Garratt write, "From every aspect it (revolt) was localized, restricted and unorganized."<sup>9</sup> It was no organized national movement, but simply a sepoy outbreak advantage of which was taken by several interested elements. Rawlinson writes, "It would be inaccurate to describe the Mutiny as a national revolution, for nationalism was not as yet a factor in Indian politics."<sup>10</sup>

Thus analyzing the views of various historians, it can be concluded with R.C. Majumdar. He writes in his book *The Sepoy Mutiny and Revolt of 1857*, it was initially a rebellion of soldiers but later many disgruntled native rulers, landlords and common people joined it. During the Company rule, the Indian rulers and people were becoming dissatisfied due to the political, administrative, economic, social and religious policies of British and when the Indian soldiers revolted, they also joined it.

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