

**Background:**

- Enfield rifle + Bone dust in atta + General service enlistment Act
- May 10<sup>th</sup> Soldiers release their imprisoned comrades and killed their officers → Start moving towards Delhi under Bakht Khan + Proclaim Bahadur Shah Zafar as Emperor Hindustan on 11<sup>th</sup> May, 1857

**Causes of Revolt:**

It started as sepoy mutiny but was gradually joined by various sections of society

Long term factors (Social + Political + Economic) + Immediate factors

- **Social Factors:** (a) Racial discrimination very common (b) Interference in socio religious affairs (c) Christian missionaries ridiculed Indian religion
- **Economic factors:** (a) Land revenue Settlement (b) destruction of handicraft industries (c) recurrent famine (d) exploitation by money lenders (e) Economic Drain
- **Political factors:** (a) Raja/ Nawab dispossessed of state (b) Land Revenue Systems (c) Muslims hurt at ill treatment of Mughal ruler
- **Military factors:** (a) Racial discrimination + angry at treatment of peasant as Sepoy was “peasant in uniform” (b) Soldier can’t rise above a particular rank (c) Religious reasons (d) Conditions of retreat of Afghan war (e) General Service Enlistment Act, 1856
- **Outside Events:** First Afghan war (1838-42), Anglo-Sikh Wars (1845-49), Crimean War (1854-56) → Exposed vulnerabilities of British

**Popular Centres, Leaders and British officers Associated:**

- (a) Delhi + General Bakht Khan → John Nicolson + Lt. Hudson
- (b) Bareilly + Khan Bahadur → Was unsatisfied with amount of his pension
- (c) Kanpur + Nana Saheb → Denied title of Peshwa → Sir Colin Campbell
- (d) Lucknow + Begum Hazrat Mahal → Nawab was deposed by British → Henry Havelock + Outram + Sir Colin Campbell
- (e) Bihar (at Jagdishpur) + Kunwar Singh → Major Vincent Eyer
- (f) Faizabad + Maulvi Ahmadullah
- (g) Jhansi + Rani Laxmibai → Hugh Rose

**Reasons for failure:**

- (a) No central leadership (b) Lack of popular support (c) Limited territorial base (d) Lack of modern weapons (e) Lack of coordination (f) No single objective/ common plan of action (g) Lacked a vision of future society and economy + No common unifying ideology

**Nature of revolt:**

- The Azamgarh Proclamation (Azamgarh Ishtehar), 25 August 1857 → contained five sections, one each for Zamindars, Merchants, Civil servants, Artisans, Pundits and Other learned persons + British hurt four things most dear to Hindus and Muslims → Religion, Honour, Life and Property
- Complete Hindu-Muslim unity → Bahadur Shah Proclaimed and recognized emperor of India by all + Cow slaughter banned

**Different historians interpret in different way:**

- **Indian view** → V.D. Savarkar “First War of Indian Independence” + R.C.Majumdar in his book → “Neither first, nor national, nor war of Independence” + S. N. Sen “1857” → Begun as a sepoy mutiny and took character of national revolt
- **British View** → Sir John Lawrence + Seelay → “Just a military revolt, absence of any nationalist feeling” + Rees → “It was war of religious fanatics against Christianity” + Outram “Muslim Conspiracy” + T. R. Holmes “Clash between civilization and barbarians” + Benjamin Disraeli “It was nothing less than national revolt”
- **Modern Historians** → Different interests of different strata of society + Differentially of factors and commonality of interest i.e., directed against company and collaborators

**Impact of the revolt:**

- **GOI, 1858** → EIC rule abolished from administrative responsibilities + Board of control and Court of Directors abolished + Ministry created in England known as India House with Secretary of State who was a cabinet minister
- **Queen’s proclamation of 1858**
- **Changes in Military** → Peel Commission
- **Further Impact:** (a) Increase in Racial Animosity between the British and the Indians (b) Setback to Socio-religious reforms esp. among the Muslims (c) Policy of divide and rule (d) Policy of economic drain instead of direct plunder and conquest + Indian Councils Act, 1861