

**1. There are conflicting views among historians regarding the 1857 revolt. How would you describe the true nature of the 1857 revolt? Substantiate your views.**

### Approach

Candidates can start the answer with highlighting about 1857 mutiny and different views and perspective on the mutiny. Such as Dr R.C. Mujumdar, Dr S.N. Sen and J. Nehru there nationalistic and feudal-sepoy mutiny perceptions on 1857.

### Introduction

About revolt of 1857 historians have expressed different views depending on their perceptions. Mostly they fall into categories namely Europeans and the Indians, Nationalist and Marxist.

### Body

Conflicting Views and observations on Revolt:

Indian-Nationalistic:

- According to RC Majumdar, the revolt was neither the first, nor was it national, nor was it a war of independence. That there was a tradition of revolts with the onset of British occupation in India.
- S.N. Sen called this revolt a 'Sepoy Mutiny'. Expressed it was mainly an outburst of the military in which certain other groups also started participating.
- J. Nehru maintains that initially it started as a mutiny of the Indian soldiers, but when it spread rapidly assumed the nature of a mass rebellion with feudal uprising although there were some nationalistic elements in it.
- D. Savarkar referred it wholly first national war of independence.

European and Marxists Historians on the Revolt of 1857:

- Reese, observed that the revolt was a 'war against Christianity'. Revolt even though some of the conservative sections of Indian society were against the imposition of Christianity over them.
- Outram observed that the revolt was a 'Muslim Conspiracy' to overthrow the British from India. His views, Muslims wanted to bounce back into the ruling system, and thus conspired against the British rule is definitely not a valid ground of expression.
- Lawrence and Seeley had some coherence with the Indian viewpoint, especially with that of S.N. Sen, that it was a military revolt in the real sense.
- R. Holmes, said that this revolt was a 'clash of civilization and barbarians. And Benjamin Disraeli described it as a 'National Revolt'.

- According to Marxist historians, the 1857 revolt was “the struggle of the soldier-peasant democratic combine against foreign as well as feudal bondage”.

Between Nationalistic and Sepoy-Feudal level mutiny:

- As per my analysis it can be termed somewhere between above two views.
- But had seeds of nationalism and anti- imperialism, concept of common nationality and nationhood was inherent at that time
- It was the first great struggle of Indians to throw off British Rule. It firmly established local traditions of neo resistance to British rule.

### **Conclusion**

Revolt helped in bringing India's people together and pave the way to modern national movement. The revolt demonstrated the unity among Indian people, especially among Hindus and Muslims.

**Qn-2 In what ways did the Hindu-Muslim divide weaken the freedom struggle ? explain with the help of suitable examples .**

**Approach-**

A simple straightforward question where candidates need to write about how Hindu Muslim divide during freedom struggle weakens the freedom movement, Give some examples to substantiate your points .

**Introduction -**

The late nineteenth century saw the emergence of Indian nationalism. Indians felt like one and they tried to overthrow the foreign rule. however the Hindu Muslim divide weakens the freedom struggle.

**Body -**

Partition of Bengal (1905)

- Indian nationalism was gaining in strength and Bengal was the nerve centre of Indian nationalism in the early 1900s.
- Lord Curzon, the Viceroy (1899-1905), attempted to 'dethrone Calcutta' from its position as the centre from which the Congress Party manipulated throughout Bengal, and indeed, the whole of India.
- The decision to partition Bengal into two was in the air from December 1903.
- The partition was meant to foster another kind of division – on the basis of religion. The aim was to place Muslim communalists as a counter to the Congress. Curzon promised to make Dacca the new capital.
- This resulted in a lot of discontent among the Indians. Many considered this as a policy of 'Divide and Rule' by the British.
- 1905 partition had exposed the British tendencies. Muslim League had supported the partition.

Minto-Morley constitutional reforms (1909)

- The Government of India which was headed by Lord Minto as Viceroy and John Morley as the Secretary of State offered fresh reforms in the Legislative Councils.
- They began discussions with Moderates within Indian National Congress regarding this. However, when the decision was taken, not just Moderates but the country as a whole were disappointed.
- The real purpose of the Morley-Minto Reforms was to divide the nationalist ranks and encourage the growth of Muslim communalism.
- For the latter, they introduced the system of separate electorates under which Muslims could only vote for Muslim candidates in constituencies specially reserved for them.

Communal literature and Forced conversion :

- Literature like Satyarth Prakash and rangeela rasool had widen the gulf between communities. Shudhi movement in Mewat, Haryana and arrival of taabligi jamat to counter it had instilled hatred against each other.

Invocation of Religion into Politics:

- Khilafat movement invoked Muslim cause into politics. Thought it bring unity but it weakened the the secular cause.

Events led to partition

- Muslim leaders didn't get win in elections in 1939 and it led to more frequent demand of separate country by Jinnah and other Muslim leaders.
- Gandhi-Jinnah talk failed, and nobody came up with good solution for both Hindu-Muslim to live in harmony.

Demand for Pakistan and failure of cabinet mission plan:

- The participation of Muslim masses in independence was no where compare to Hindus. Election in 1946 affirmed the Muslim league as a sole Muslim party. And the failure of cabinet mission plan, paved the way for partition.
- Further few congress leaders also started believing that separate country is good solution than having later civil war. Direct action day was final straw that made partition a reality.
- Another problem was very bad implementation of partition. It caused panic in country, and lead to the death of so many people.

### **Conclusion-**

Plethora of incidents, and was not a one step move divides the hindu muslim communities and led to wekening of freedom struggle and The partition of the Indian subcontinent into into two separate nations.

**Q-3 How did the first world war affect the discourse of nationalist movement in India? Critically examine .**

**Approach -**

In this question candidates need to write about how first world war changes discourse of nationalist movements in India, give both positives and negatives

**Introduction -**

The First World War (1914-1918) altered the economic and political situation in India. The British government declared India as an ally without the consent of the Indians. This created mass resentment among the Indians against the British rule, as the war had the many socio-economic impacts on Indians.

**Body -**

- A huge rise in the defence expenditure of the British Colonial Government, which increased taxes on individual incomes and business profits.
- Increased military expenditure and demands for war supplies led to a sharp rise in prices which created great difficulties for the common people.
- The crop failure of 1918-19 and 1920-21 led to acute food shortages, accompanied by epidemic influenza.
- These factors, among others, gave impetus to the nationalist movement in India. Apart from the economic impact, the war and its aftermath also involved the following:
- A large number of Indian soldiers serving abroad. Many returned with an understanding of the ways in which the imperialist powers were exploiting the people of Asia and Africa, with a desire to oppose colonial rule in India.
- The British were fighting against the Turkish Empire, which was ruled by the Caliph (Khalifa). The Muslims had great respect for the Caliph and joined the Caliphate (Khilafat) Movement for the defence of Turkey against the British.
- The war effort compounded the oppression faced by the agrarian society faced with exorbitant tax rates, high prices of food & other necessities.
- The anguish amongst the tenants was leveraged by nationalists who initiated the process of their organization on modern lines & linked them with politics at the national level e.g. in Kisan Sabhas in UP & Mappila agitation in Malabar.
- The growing nationalism also re-united the moderates & the extremists at the Lucknow session, 1916.
- Furthermore, the Congress & the Muslim League ignored their differences & put up common Political demands in front of the British.
- Ghadarites attempted a violent overthrow of British rule, while the Home Rule Leaguers launched a nation-wide agitation for securing Home Rule or Swaraj.

- Mahatma Gandhi emerged as the leader of the masses & led the Khilafat movement to unify Hindus and Muslims. He also propagated the idea of Satyagraha. The Champaran Satyagraha, Kheda Satyagraha and Ahmadabad Satyagraha- were centred around the issues of locals.
- The Indian business groups reaped great profits from the war; the war created demand for industrial goods (jute bags, cloth, rails) and caused a decline of imports from other countries to India.
- As the Indian industries expanded, the Indian business groups began to demand greater opportunities for development.

### **Conclusion -**

Thus, the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 gave a new lease of life to the nationalist movement which had been dormant since the Swadeshi Movement.