

The word Colony comes from the Latin word colonia. Generally, the geographical location of outside the country is called a colony. The Portuguese were the first to colonize the Indian subcontinent. They colonized Goa in 1510 and Bengal in 1516 (Dhaka, Jessore, Barisal).

Dutch-1602

Denmark - 1616

French - 1664

From the 7th century the Arabian merchants had monopoly business with this region. They mainly conducted business by sea. Later among the Portuguese, the daring sailor who first came to this country by sea was Vasco-da-Gama. He arrived at Kalikot port on the western coast of India on 27 May in 1498. His arrival in this country introduced a new age in the field of trade and commerce, and communication.

❖ Arrival of the British and Establishment of British East India Company :

The East India Company was an English, and later British, joint-stock company founded in 31 December, 1600. Arrival of the British and the establishment of East India Company was the outcome of the Portuguese traders who earn enormous profit by selling their merchandise in India. The company was the largest corporation in the world, competing with the Dutch East India Company, and had its own private army of around 260,000 soldiers, twice the size of the army of Britain. The company was formed to share in the East Indian spice trade. A group of merchants of England formed an association of

merchants named East India Company. The association of merchants got a certificate from Queen Elizabeth in 1608 to conduct monopoly business in the East. The representative of the company appeared at the court of emperor Akbar, the Great with this certificate with the hope of getting commercial benefits. After that Captain Hawkins with the recommendation letter of James saw emperor Jahangir in 1608 with a view to expanding trade and business. In the later periods in 1615 Sir Thomas Roe as representative of James I came to the court of emperor Jahangir. He got commercial benefits realized from the emperor for the English. He left India in 1619. Meanwhile the company



strengthened their foundation by setting up commercial offices in Surat, Agra, Ahmedabad etc. The company established their second commercial office in Maslimpatnam. They built a commercial office in Hoogly in 1658 with the approval from Shah Suja, a Subedar of Bengal. Thus the company built commercial offices in Kashimbazar, Dhaka and Maldah. Another Englishman named Job Charnak gained the possession of landlord of three villages named Kolkata, Sutanti and Govindapur at

the cost of Tk. 1200 in 1690. In the later periods the city of Kolkata came into being centering round these three villages on the river Bhagirathi. Just here the company built Fort William after the name of the king of England, William III in 1700. Gradually it turned to a powerful center for keeping the interest of the English and for the expansion of political interest. The power of English company increased further when the emperor of Delhi Farukshiar gave them the right of duty free trade in Bengal, Bombay and Madras. At first the English could not make a profit by trading in Bengal. From 1832 they established trading factories at Dhaka, Maldah, Hooghly and Rajmahal.

❖ Fakir-Sannyasi rebellion

The Sannyasi and Fakir Rebellion is an important episode in the early colonial rule in Bengal. The rebellion started 1760 onwards but took a violent turn since 1773 when Warren Hastings assumed the Governor-Generalship of Bengal. The movement covered a wide range of Bengal and Bihar and continued for a long time.

According to traditional practice, fakirs and monks lived on alms. They would travel from one place to another on the occasions of religious festivals and pilgrimage. They had with them light arms for their safety. They had been free and independent before the establishment of British rule in Bengal. But the British government kept interrupting their unrestricted movement. They imposed tax on pilgrimage and declared begging as illegal. Besides, they called them robbers and pirates. As a result, fakirs and monks took part in a long-standing movement against

the English. The name of the leader of fakir groups was Majnu Shah. And the name of the leader of the monks was Bhabani Pathak.

Majnu Shah started activities against the English in the whole of North Bengal in 1771. Majnu Shah was locked in many collisions with the English in the districts of Rangpur, Rajshahi, Dinajpur and Mymensingh from 1777 to 1786. And his fighting strategy was guerilla method.

He died in 1787. Then fakirs Musa Shah, Sohban Shah, Cherag Ali, Karim Shah including Mother Bakhs took the leadership of the rebellion. These leaders kept English administration unsettled for some years. In 1800 they were completely defeated. On the other hand Bhabani Pathak, the leader of monk rebellion was killed along with two assistants by a group of British soldiers under the leadership of Lieutenant Brenan in 1887. He was the main leader of monk rebellion. Monk movement came to an end with his death.

❖ Importance Fakir-Sannyasi rebellion :

This was the first mass uprising in British India. This revolt created intense hatred and animosity towards the British rule among the people of India and paved the way for future struggles.

❖ Reasons for Failure:

- Lack of competent leadership.
- Lack of modern weapons and advanced tactics.
- Lack of organizational capacity
- Lack of specific goals and objectives.
- Lack of sufficient money.

❖ The Revolt of Titumir :

Titu Mir (1782-1831) a peasant leader who resisted the oppression of the local zamindars and European indigo planters on the peasantry with ultimate object of liberating the country from British domination. He was a leader of the tariqah-i-muhammadiya in Bengal and at inspiring the Muslims to follow Islamic principles in their day to day life.

The real name of Titu Mir was Saiyid Mir Nisar Ali. He was born on 14 Magh 1188 BS (1782 AD) at village Chandpur (controversially Haiderpur) under Bashirhat subdivision of the district of 24 Parganas in West Bengal. Titu Mir went on a pilgrimage to Makka in 1822 and came in close contact with the great Islamic reformer and revolutionary leader Saiyid Ahmad who inspired him to free his fellow countrymen from un-Islamic practices and foreign domination. On his return from Makka in 1827, Titu Mir started preaching among the Muslims in the districts of 24 Parganas and Nadia. He advised them to refrain from practising Shirk and bidaat and inspired them, especially the weavers and peasants, to follow the Islamic way of life. But soon he was in conflict with the Hindu zamindar Krishnadeva Rai of Purniah for his sectarian attitude towards the Muslims and for imposing illegal taxes on them. Titu Mir happened to be in conflict with other landlords like Kaliprasanna Mukkhopadhyay of Gobardanga, Rajnarayan of Taragonia, Gauri Prasad Chowdhury of Nagpur and Devanath Rai of Gobra-govindpur for their oppression on the peasantry.

To face the situation and to give protection to the peasants Titu Mir formed a Mujahid force and trained them in lathi (bamboo stick) and other indigenous arms. His disciple and nephew, Ghulam Masum was made commander of the force. The increasing strength of Titu Mir

alarmed the zamindars who however attempted to take united stand and to involve the English in their fight against him. Being instigated by the zamindar of Gobardanga, Davis, the English kuthial (factor) of Mollahati, advanced with his force against Titu Mir, but was beaten back. The zamindar of Gobra-govindpur was killed in a conflict with Titu Mir. Alexander, the collector of Barasat, advanced against Titu Mir with the daroga of Bashirhat, and sustained a severe defeat in the hands of Titu Mir. By this time Titu Mir filed a complain to the government of east india company against the oppression of the zamindars, but to no result.

Titu Mir built a strong fort with bamboo poles at Narkelbaria in October 1831, recruited mujahids and gave them military training. The number of Mujahids soon rose to nearly five thousand. Having completed his military preparation Titu Mir declared himself Badshah (king) and urged upon the people to participate in jihad (sacred war) against the British. He soon established his control over the districts of 24 Parganas, Nadia and Faridpur. Titu Mir demanded tax from the zamindars of Taki and Gobardanga who implored protection of the English. An English contingent was sent from Calcutta. But the combined forces of the zamindars and the English sustained severe defeat in the hands of the mujahids (troops). Subsequently, Lord william bentinck sent a regular army against Titu Mir under Lieutenant Colonel Stuart consisting of 100 cavalry, 300 native infantry and artillery with two cannons.

The English launched attack on the mujahids on 14 November 1831. The mujahids with traditional weapons failed to resist the English army equipped with modern arms, and took shelter inside the bamboo fort. The English opened fire and totally destroyed the fort. There was heavy

casualty on the side of the mujahids. Titu Mir along with many of his followers fell in the battle (19 November 1831). The mujahids numbering 350 including their commander Ghulam Masum were captured. Ghulam Masum was sentenced to death, and 140 captives were sentenced to imprisonment on different terms.

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❖ Faraizi Movement

The founder of Faraizi Movement Hazi Shariatullah was born in Faridpur in 1781. He stayed in Macca for twenty years. He became a profound scholar studying there on Islam. He was determined to make Islam free from superstitions and these non-Islamic malpractices. Out of this determination in the first half of the 19th century he brought about the beginning of a religious and social reformation movement among the Muslims. The name of this religious reformation movement of Shariatullah is called Faraizi Movement. The word Faraizi has come from Arabic word 'Faraz' (bounden duty). Those who perform 'Faraj' are called Faraizi and those who were the followers of Hazi Shariatullah in

Bengal are called Faraizi in history. The 'Faraz' on which Shariatullah put emphasis were five bounden principles described in the holy Quran. These fundamental principles are belief in the uniqueness of Allah and the conveying of divine messages of Prophet Muhammad, prayer, fasting, pilgrimage (Haj) and 'Jakat'. He called upon the Muslim society to perform ever what are obligatory to be done in Islam, giving up all non-Islamic beliefs, practices and manners and ceremonies.

The exploited, oppressed poor 'rayat', farmers, weavers and 'teli' communities spontaneously joined this movement. The faith and belief of the poor people on Shariatullah and his extra ordinary success formed a firm unity among the people of lower classes. The Zaminders started to put hindrances on the religious ceremonies and practices of the Muslims. He advised the tenants to refrain from paying illegal tax and took preparation to form resistance against all oppression of Zaminders. There being want all over the country, he also placed the demand of rice and salt. When the Zaminders started oppressing the Faraizi followers on different excuses, he decided to form a stick-fighting battalion to protect the tenants. In 1839 a police injunction was imposed on him. He died in 1840. After his death, his worthy son Muhammad Muhsinuddin Ahmed Dudu Mia took the charge of Faraizi Movement. Faraizi Movement under the leadership of Dudu Mia at the same time turned into an armed struggle of freedom from exploitation of the peasantry side by side of a religious reformation movement. As a result, the character of this movement was not Resistance, Renaissance and Reform Movement in Bengal during British rule. The farmers upset with extreme economic exploitation of the English rulers took part in anti-exploitation direct role through this movement. Thousands of farmers and Zaminders joined the movement in order to survive from

the oppression of indigo-planters. Dudu Mia was the master of the Faraizis. After the death of his father he resorted to armed struggle giving up his father's peaceful principle. He formed a skilled stick fighting battalion by employing Jalaluddin Mollah, a stick fighter of his father's time as the chief of army. Its purpose was to arrange resistance against illegal tax imposed by the Zaminders and oppression of indigo-planters. It is mentionable here that Faridpur, Pabna, Rajshahi, Jessore, Murshidabad, Nadia etc. regions inhabited by chiefly Muslims were the best for indigo cultivation. So, the degree of oppression of the indigo planters were also intolerable. Independent government was formed under his leadership in villages. An army (stick fighting battalion) of the independent government was also formed of tenants who were farmers. East Bengal was divided into some areas in the government system of the Faraizis. Dudu Mia together with his followers continued struggle for a long time against the Zaminders and the indigo-planters. Local Zaminders in alliance with foreign rulers and indigo-planters kept lodging criminal cases against him. But they had to acquit him for want of witnesses. At last in 1857 the first of Indian independence war having been kindled, the British government was intimidated. The alarmed British government detained Dudu Mia as political captive. He came out of the prison in 1860 and this revolting patriot died in 1862. After his death Faraizi Movement became weak for want of competent leadership.

❖ What was the importance of the Faraizi movement?

The Faraizi movement was important because it gave encouragement to the Muslims at the time when they were demoralized by the oppression they suffered from the British.

It brought about a spiritual revival which led to a revival in the Islamic religion in East Bengal.

Develops the concept of progressive meditation. Awaken the fighting spirit of the peasants.

The Faraizi movement was widely received in the districts of Dhaka, Faridpur, Barisal, Mymensingh and Comilla and was led by Haji Shariatullah.

❖ Indigo Revolt:

The Indigo Rebellion (Neel Bidroho) took place in Bengal in 1859-60 and was a revolt by the farmers against British planters who had forced them to grow indigo under terms that were greatly unfavourable to the farmers. The Indigo Rebellion was led by Rafiq Mandal, Digambar Biswas, Vishnucharan Biswas and others.

❖ Background of Indigo Revolt

Indigo cultivation in Bengal dates back to 1777, when a Frenchman named Louis Bonnaud introduced it to the Indian subcontinent. He was the first indigo planter in Bengal, growing the crop in Taldanga and Goalpara near Hooghly.

With the Nawabs of Bengal under Company control, indigo planting became increasingly commercially profitable due to Europe's demand for blue dye. It was made available in large parts of Burdwan, Bankura, Birbhum, North 24 Parganas, and Jessore (part of present-day Bangladesh).



Indigo planters persuaded peasants to plant indigo rather than food crops on their own lands. They offered loans, known as dadon, at exorbitant interest rates.

Once a farmer took out such loans, he was in debt for the rest of his life before passing it on to his heirs. The planters paid a pittance, only 2.5 percent of the market price. Growing indigo was not profitable for the farmers. The farmers were completely unprotected from the indigo planters, who threatened them with mortgages or property destruction if they refused to obey them. The planters benefited from government policies that favoured them. The planters were given a free hand in



dealing with the peasants by an act passed in 1833. The zamindars, who stood to benefit from indigo cultivation as well, supported the planters. Farmers revolted in response to these conditions. British East India Company established Indigo Commission in 1860 to prevent Indigo Rebellion.

The revolt began in the villages of Gobindapur and Chanugacha in Krishnanagar, Nadia district, where Bishnucharan Biswas and Digambar Biswas led the first rebellion against the planters in Bengal in 1859. It quickly spread through Murshidabad, Birbhum, Burdwan, Pabna, Khulna, and Narail.

❖ Significance of Indigo Revolt

- The incredible cooperation, organisation, and discipline of the ryots was a major reason for the Indigo Revolt's success.
- Another notable feature was the complete unity of Hindu and Muslim peasants. Leadership for the movement was provided not only by ryots, but also by petty zamindars, moneylenders, and ex-planter employees in some cases.
- The role of Bengal's intelligentsia in organising a powerful campaign in support of the rebellious peasantry was a significant feature of the Indigo Revolt.
- It ran newspaper campaigns, held mass meetings, drafted memoranda on peasants' grievances, and assisted them in legal battles.

Overall, it was a success, and the government eventually announced that ryots could not be forced to grow Indigo, and planters closed all of their factories. It was a brave and wise example for future generations. Indigo cultivation was completely halted in 1917, thanks to Mahatma Gandhi's intervention in Champaran, where a peasant from Bihar persuaded Gandhi to visit them and see their plight.

❖ The Sepoy Mutiny (1857)

The Sepoy Mutiny was a violent and very bloody uprising against British rule in India in 1857. It is also known by other names: the Indian Mutiny, the Indian Rebellion of 1857, or the Indian Revolt of 1857. The events of 1857 have been considered the first outbreak of an independence movement against British rule.



❖ Background of Sepoy Mutiny:

Social and religious:

One of the most important reasons behind the mass upsurge in this sub-continent was religious and social. Though the influence of the west and the social reformations were benevolent for the people during the last part of the 18th and the early 19th century, the conservative Hindus and Muslims could not approve these reforms. English education, the extinction of the Satidaha, re-marriage of the

Hindu widows, the preaching of the Christian priests etc. made the Hindu and Muslim conservatives afraid. Various social and religious reformations infuriated the believers in both of the religions.

Military:

The distinction between the Indian and the British soldiers in the army was one of the main reasons behind the Sepoy mutiny. There was a vast gap in salary and rank between the Indian and the British soldiers in the army. The Indians were less privileged. Besides they were also deprived of their promotions. Moreover the partiality and disproportionate behavior of the British officers inflamed the fire of mutiny among the soldiers. The direct reason behind the mutiny was the attack on the religious belief of the soldiers. The Hindu soldiers firmly believed that they would lose their religion in case of crossing the sea. In that case, the Hindu sepoys were compelled to go across the sea. Besides a new type of rifles, called Enfield was introduced for the use of both Hindu and Muslim soldiers. The bullets of this weapon were to be inserted in the gun after the cartridges were removed by the teeth. A rumour went in rampart that those cartridges were mixed with the fat of the cows and the pigs. As a result, soldiers of both the religions grew rebellious as they believed that the act was sacrilegious.

Economic:

After the establishment of the East India Company the economic backbone of the peasants was also destroyed in the name of the Land Revenue Policy. Many Zamindars or the feudal lords were thus damaged and socially undermined. The peasants were the worst

victims of it. Gradually the agriculture sector was destroyed totally. There was destruction of the local industries in the name of capturing the market. Besides with a view to acquiring more profits lands were given lease. As a result, the economic structure of Bengal ruined absolutely. The common people who were the victims of this circumstance became rebellious against the rule and torture of the company.

Political :

Lord Dalhousie introduced abolitionist policy in India. As a result, the kings of Mysore, Hyderabad and Maratha regions were anti-British. Besides, the primitive tribes like Kolari, Khand etc. became anti-British which set the stage for sepoy revolt.

❖ Results of Sepoy Mutiny :

- According to Sir L. Griffen , “The Revolt of 1857 swept the Indian sky clear of many clouds”.
- Mughal empire declined for good.
- The East India Company rule in India came to an end.
- According to the H. P. Chatterjee, “ The Sepoy Mutiny was a revolt of the old against the new”.
- British blamed the Muslims for this revolt. So after the war their anger fell on the Muslims. As a result, many Muslims were persecuted and their property confiscated.

❖ Significance of the Sepoy Mutiny

- In India, decentralization policy was adopted instead of centralization policy.
- Generated the sense of Indian nationalism
- The Indian army was also extensively reorganized.
- They gave up their expansionist policy.
- India was thereafter administered directly by the British government in the new British Raj.
- The brutal torture of Indian sepoys and people in India came to an end.
- The national and racial discrimination that the British had created with the Indian people came to an end.
- People became conscious in the consequence of this mutiny and the English rule ended in 1947 after various movements and struggles.
- The revolt of 1857 was in fact not only a sepoy uprising but also the first Indian War of Independence against British rule.
- The rebellion posed a threat to British power.

❖ Reasons for the failure of the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857:

1. There was a lack of unity among the sepoys. The movement failed because the sepoys were not united.
2. Lack of competent leadership was one of the reasons for the failure of the rebellion.
3. The revolt failed due to lack of skilled commanders.

4. The British fought with modern weapons, on the other hand the Indian sepoy fought with old weapons and were defeated.

5. The sepoy rebellion had no specific goal and purpose. As a result, not all the people of India supported this revolt. As a result the sepoy were defeated.

CREATED BY ROKON