CHAPTER - II

FREEDOM MOVEMENT IN INDIA: A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND
Freedom movement was started not merely to drive the Britishers out of India, but the struggle continued to gain recognition for our nation among the other advanced nations of the world. Indians should be the masters of India was the dictum. The main aim was that an Indian has to be an equal to the world citizen. This may be called as freedom movement. Freedom is related to human life namely, traditions, economic activities, rich cultural background and rich heritage. In order to acquire these qualities and goals, Gandhiji dreamt of Swaraj. In his words Swaraj means:

"The wealth of the nation is being washed away. We Indians are very poor. We should come out from poverty. Although India is a rich land, and we may not be affected by famine and epidemic diseases, until and unless the Britishers are driven away from India, we will not rest in peace. We should be free. We must rule ourselves and regain our soul. Therefore we need freedom."¹

¹ Quoted in, Sharma, T.T., Karnatakadalli Swatantrya Sangram, (Kannada), Bangalore, Purogami, 1973, p. pref.vi.
Freedom is related to our mind and knowledge. Freedom and responsibility are two related terms. Many national leaders have understood the meaning of 'Freedom Movement' in their own way. Mahatma Gandhi puts it in this way:

"I am wedded to India because I believe absolutely that, she had a mission for the world. My religion had no geographical limits. I had living faith in it which would transcend even my love for India."  

India has produced numerous patriots, who have sacrificed their lives for the freedom of the nation. Some of the less known or unknown patriots had dedicated their life for the sake of the nation. Both Nana Sahib and Tatya Topy had created lots of problems to the Britishers and they fought bravely.

The Britishers attacked Jhansi, they burnt a number of houses, temples, etc. Many people were killed

and women were molested. So, Rani of Jhansi had to leave the fort. Due to this awakening, Nationalism arose among the Indians.

An incident of an unknown patriot who sacrificed his life for the sake of the nation is as follows:

"In one particular incident, where a sepoy was lying wounded beside the fort was watching all that was going on, because he was not able to get up. He could not bear to see the people who were groaning with pain. Many bodies were scattered here and there and some bodies were cut into pieces; houses were burnt and everywhere there seemed to be a tense situation. He also saw a British sepoy chasing to kill a person who was running along with his pregnant wife who was carrying a baby. At this juncture the sepoy praying to God took the gun, and forgetting all his pain, shot at the British sepoy. He was very happy to see that the couple was saved because of him."
One cannot just guess how the wounded sepoy got the energy to shoot the British sepoy down even when he was unable to drink the water from the running drain. Then with the help of his gun, he somehow managed to reach his village Ukhora, and there he narrated to his family members all that, which he had undergone. What he had said itself is the source to the above mentioned incident.  

RESTORATION OF KINGDOM:

Britishers came to India first only with the intention of trading. But later they came to know the weakness of the Indians, i.e. the disunity among themselves and they (the British) thought of ruling India. Till 1857, the kings in India did not try to achieve independence but, were content to rule over their own small kingdom independently, when the Britishers tried to occupy the whole country. In course of time however, their thinking

3. Ibid., p-16.
changed and efforts were made to create unity among themselves and to fight against the British for freedom. So, the 1857 revolt was considered as the first war of Independence. From 1757 to 1857, it was only the 'Restoration of the Kingdom' by the kings. In 1757, there was no change in the legal order. On 23rd June 1757, the battle of Plassey took place which ended in favour of the British. After this battle the Britishers gradually started settling down as if it was their own territory.

"The battle of Plassey says - Sir J.N. Sarkar - ended Muslim rule in India. The foreign masters of the sword had become its king maker."

The battle of Plassey 1757 and the battle of Buxar 1764, made the English, masters of Bengal, Bajr and Orissa. Thus in this manner Britishers

started invading India gradually. Not withstanding this invasion by the British, Indians gradually started revolting against the British. This revolt continued not just for a few years, but for a very long period of hundred years (1757 to 1857). There were some important reasons on the part of the Indians to revolt against the British.

**CAUSES FOR RESTORATION OF 'KINGDOM':**

The British style of administration itself was the main reason for the rise of revolt by the Indians, against the British. The principle which the British followed could not be tolerated by Indians. Britishers followed a special type of administration namely, ruining of Indian industry and trade, confiscation of estates and principalities, creating sense of racial superiority among themselves, exclusion of Indians from higher civil services, grievances of the sepoys, etc. etc. The cumulative effect of all these generated hatred against the British.
The constant exploitation of the Indian economy by the Britain, from 1814 onwards, the British Government in India, as the instrument of the Industrial classes of England, imposed heavy duties on the Indian goods exported to England. While the British goods would be forced on Indians without the payment of any duty. Thus they suppressed completely the Indian trade and industries.

"Indian paper industry was undermined by the British policy to purchase only British made paper to use in India. Iron smelting industries were also undermined."\(^5\)

So in protest against this policy, the Indian kings resisted. The principle of 'Doctrine of Lapse' introduced by the then Governor-General, Lord Dalhousie, in 1848, was disliked by the Indian mass.

---

This was also one of the main causes for the revolt. This principle not only affected the artisans, petty traders and craftsmen, but also the principalities and estate owners. As a result of this principle, many Indian Hindu principalities lost their identity and titles.

"The Moghal emperor, Bahadur Shah II, Nawab Sahib, the head of the Maratha Confederacy, the Nawabs of Carnatic and Surat, the Raja of Tanjore lost their titles on the death of the holders."6

For this Dalhousie also deprived many ex-sovereign families of their titles and pensions. From 1757 to 1858, it was the scornful attitude of an average Englishmen towards the Indians. The British ridiculed the Indians as 'Black Indians', worshipping stones and going round the trees for blessings. The British thought,

6. Ibid., p-5.
they were carriers of 'Whiteman's' burden to the uncivilized parts of the world. This type of attitude by the Britishers was not tolerated by the Indians and thus they revolted against this. The educated Indians were kept aloof from the higher civil service. They were given only the lower posts. This discrimination led to bitter criticism all over India. Then the Britishers realized this criticism began to think that, the Indians should also be given a chance in the administration of the country and passed a proclamation while granting the Company's Charter in 1833.

"In this new charter all classes of Indians, irrespective of any distinction of race, caste and creed were declared eligible for public office in 1853."\(^7\)

The nationwide criticism led to victory and the Indians were given the chance to appear for the Indian

\(^7\) Ibid., p-6.
Civil Service Examination. Many Indians who belonged to the ruling dynasty had an aspiration to take direct share in the administration. When this was not possible, the Indians agitated against the British rule. The other cause for the revolt was that the British attempted to introduce social reforms in India. Britishers tried to abolish many social evils in India, such as 'Child marriage', 'Sati system', 'Female Infanticide', 'Widow marriage', etc., etc. These and some other social reforms were introduced by Lord William Bentinck. Some people, however, did not agree to this. They opposed this because of the protection of their value based institutions.

"A few administrators and Oriental Scholars pointed out that the Indian institutions had a value of their own and should not be disturbed."\(^3\)

But still the proposed reforms by the British were first made applicable to the Hindu society. Then Lord

\(^3\) Ibid., p-7.
Bentinck declared the practice of Sati as illegal, the child sacrifice was banned, widows were encouraged to remarry under the Hindu Widow Remarriage Act of 1856. There was a common mess in jails. Christian Missionaries encouraged the Indians to get converted to Christianity. The Britishers thought that the society should be reformed from the point of view of liberalism, progressivism and modernism. There were both positive and negative opinions among the Indians.

Muslims strongly revolted against the British mainly because of the collapse of the Moghal rule and with the advent of the British rule, they ceased to be the governing class. All military command came to be vested in the Britishers.

Indian sepoys under the East India Company suffered a lot.

"Unjust and improper treatment that was meted out to the Indian section by the East India Company's army
was the characteristic of British rule."

All these causes basically led them to worry about restoration of their kingdom rather than gaining freedom. But this hundred year struggle by the Indians (1757 to 1857), led to the birth and growth of the Nationalism among the Indians.

RESISTANCE AGAINST THE BRITISH

During the first hundred years of the British rule (since 1757), the administration had been disturbed for about two dozen times by the local upheavals which was limited in scope and was caused either by extraordinary economic distress or by the ambition of some local feudal chiefs. The discontent and dissatisfaction manifested themselves in open acts of defiance, not very often led to active rebellions, which sometimes assumed serious proportions, which may thus lead to primary causes or political causes like 'personal grievances',

'reaction against the British conquest', 'misrule in protected states', 'economic causes', 'religious rebellion', 'Primitive tribal instincts', etc., etc. Thus, series of insurrections were raised due to these causes.

Raja Chaitsing of Varanasi was the first man to revolt against British rule, even though he regularly paid tributes to the British in time. Several exorbitant demands were made by Hastings. This was refused by Chaitsing.

"Hastings, the British Governor-General, imposed a fine of Rs.50/- lakh and he personally went to Varanasi to extort the amount. Hastings arrested the Raja on 16th August, 1781 and confined him in his own place under a strong military guard. But the Raja however escaped."¹⁰

The high handed action of the Britishers towards Raja, led to a rebellion by his subjects and the situation grew so serious that, Hastings in order to save his life had to run away. ChaitSing's force offered heroic resistance for a long time. This was not to be merely a local rising but the whole country rose and the disturbances spread to Avadh and Bihar. A large number of zamindars rose against the British. The Begums of Avadh were suspected of helping ChaitSingh. Thus in this manner, Raja ChaitSing revoluted against the British. This led to a nationwide insurrection rather than a regional rebellion.

A conspiracy was hatched by Wazir Ali of Avadh, to overthrow the British. After the death of Wazir Ali's father Asafuddaula, the Nawab of Avadh, ascended the throne of his father. The strong personality and spirit of independence made Wazir Ali an enemy of the British. Sir John Shore undertook a journey to Avadh, but he found Wazir Ali not so easily manageable. He reversed the previous decision i.e. the Court of Directors instructed the Governor-General to increase the subsidiary
force of Avadh and remove Wazir Ali from the throne and then he offered it to Sadat Ali, who entered into a new agreement with the Britishers and fulfilled all their terms.

Wazir Ali was allowed to stay at Varanasi and was given a liberal pension. Britishers suspected that Wazir Ali was secretly intriguing with Zamanshah of Kabul who had invaded India. Wazir Ali received considerable support both from Avadh and various parts of the British territory. He found himself as the head of an army of several thousand men, descended with them into the plains of Gorakhpur and threw the whole kingdom into trepidation and alarm. The brother of Nawab of Dacca (East Pakistan) sent two emmissaries to Wazir Ali. One was deputed to Zamanshah of Kabul and brother of the Nawab of Dacca wrote to Zamanshah"... earnestly imploring him in the name of Islam to destroy the British power."11

11. Ibid., p-44.
Some important people in Bengal and Bihar managed to get the secret records of the East India Company. In the light of these records they actively associated themselves with Wazir Ali in a conspiracy to overthrow the British.

REACTION AGAINST THE BRITISH CONQUEST:

The British occupation of Assam Valley was followed by a series of insurrections with the avowed object of driving the English out of the country. The Gujars also revolted in 1813 on account of the resumption of the enormous estate of Rajaram Dayal after his death.

"The Sadiya insurrection of 1839 assumed a still more formidable proportion. Col. White, the political agent, lost his life and eight others were killed."\textsuperscript{12}

And also the Nagas revolted in 1849.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., pp.44-45.
MISRULE IN PROTECTED STATE:

"Hostility against the British rule was formulated among the Rajput chiefs of Kathiawar by Bajirao II (1815-1818). The British interference in the affairs of Cutch by the virtue of treaty with the Gaekwar of Baroda, led to several conspiracies and risings to drive the British out of Kathiawar. The most formidable was the rebellion of Rao Bharmal II, who raised the Arab troops with the avowed intention of expelling the British from his country."13 Although he was defeated, the struggle was continued by the chiefs of a Wagar district. In the year 1818-20, Bhills also revolted against the British by the inspiration of Peshwe Bajirao and by Trimbakaji Dingley (righthand of Peshwe Bajirao). The same revolt was continued by Bhills in Baglana in the year 1825.

ECONOMIC CAUSES:

A large number of Zamindars in Bengal showed a defiant spirit from the beginning of the British rule.

13. Ibid., p-51.
Even when the British authority was firmly established in Bengal, several zamindars revolted against it. In 1767, Jagannath proved equally refractory. When captain Margaon was sent against him, he found that the whole country was fully prepared with arms against the British authority. It was no longer the resistance of the local zamindar chiefs of the country, who seemed to have rallied round Jagannath.

"The Chuars, a class of wild tribes also joined the fray, and committed many acts of violence in A.D. 1770. Jagannath recruited these wild tribes and in 1773, he carried out violent raids on such an extensive scale that the British authorities were compelled to undertake several military expeditions against him." \(^{14}\) On 14th March, this wild tribe burnt down two villages.

Jagannath threatened total destruction, unless he was reinstated as the 'Raja'. After a long series of attacks and counterattacks, the British government

\(^{14}\) Ibid., p-52.
was compelled to restore peace in the estate. In 1789, a revolt broke out in Bhisnupur.

A severe revolt took place at Bareilly in 1816, on imposition of tax for maintaining Municipal police which was realized with undue severity. Mufti Mohmmad Aiwaz, a grand old man held in veneration throughout Rohilkhand, took up the cause of the oppressed people. The main cause for the rising was due to the wound inflicted on a woman by the police, while she refused to pay the tax. Several rioters were killed and Mufti too received a slight injury.

"Mufti unfurled the green flag of Islam, which evoked a tremendous enthusiasm among the Muslim masses. A vast number of armed Muslims particularly from the town of Philbhit where it produced the greatest tension and also from Shahjahanpur and Rampur. The insurgents murdered the son of Leycester and even outflanked the sepoys in open engagement." 15

15. Ibid., p-54.
Dayaram's fort was considered to be the strongest in India which was called as a second Bharatpur. On the 12th February, 1817, the town was closely invested after some useless negotiations. The siege commenced on the 17th of that month. "A whole division under the command of Major-General Marshall was sent against him. It was a pure act of destruction as Dayaram was not involved in any overt act of hostility. Naturally, he resisted and stubbornly revolted against his powerful enemy for a long period from 12th February till 2nd of March 1817. It was the most powerful assemblage of artillery hitherto witnessed in India."\textsuperscript{16}

In the year 1817, the Paiks of Orissa, also raised a revolt. They revolted under the leadership of Jagabandhu Bidyadhar Mahapatra, formerly the Commander of the forces of the Raja of Khudra. They started committing depredations on the police station and government buildings at Banpur, where they killed 100 men and carried away Rs.15,000/- of

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., p-55.
treasure. This situation became so frightful that the
government officers sought safety in flight and all the
traces of the British rule had been wiped away. Several
land owners of Sagar district and Bundelkhand broke out
into rebellion in 1842.

RELIGIOUS REBELLION (1772):

The Sanyasi rebellion was one of the most formidable
acts that the British had to face almost at the beginning
of their rule in Bengal. This part of the revolt has been
narrated clearly in the novel 'Anand Mutt' written by
Bankim Chand Chatterjee. This movement was initiated by
two different groups; by Hindu Sanyasis and Muslim Fakirs.
After the great famine of 1770, their activities drove
the people in large number to join the sanyasis and defy
the newly established British administration.

By the end of 1772, there was a great upsurge.
"Upsurge of the Sanyasis in the wild belt of the country
from Rangpur to Dacca and they threatened to sweep away
the British power completely."17 They killed Commander
Captain Thomas of the Company. In the year 1773, the
British Government sent Captain Edwards against them.
The Sanyasis gradually ceased to carry on their
operations in Bengal and Bihar and probably joined
Marathas against the English.

PRIMITIVE TRIBAL INSTINCTS:

The Santal rebellion of 1855-56 was marked by some
of the worst features of elemental tribal passions and
open denunciation of the British rule. About 10,000
Santals met in July 1855 and they declared their intention
to take possession of the country, and set up a government
of their own. They disconnected the postal and the
railways lines between Bhagalpur and Rajmahal. The
Santals proclaimed the end of the Company's rule and the
commencement of the regime of their "Subhah". Even in
the month of August 1855, the number of insurgents who
were armed exceeded more than 30,000 men. They showed

17. Ibid., p-57.
no sign of submission and openly waged war against the British till February 1856, when their leaders were arrested. The Santals had to undergo most barbaric and inhuman treatment after their defeat. In this manner, in the north India all small and great leaders, tribes, religious leaders, zamindars revolted against the British and fought for freedom.

INSURRECTIONS IN SOUTHERN INDIA:

Some of the causes which hold equally good in South India are as follows:

In 1792, the Malbar coast had passed into the hands of the Britishers by the treaty with Tippu Sultan. But with a few exceptions, the Raja of Malbar openly defied the British and was in a state of hostility for six years. Kerala Varma, Raja of the Kottayam family, generally called as the 'Pyche Raja' raised a formidable insurrection and he was joined by the Raja of Kohote. A series of fights had taken place between their followers and the Company's troops.
"The situation became so grave that the British authorities were forced to have good terms with the 'Pyche Raja' who received very favourable terms."\textsuperscript{18}

"In Karnataka, Dhondaji Wagh of Channageri and Venkatappa Naik, who belonged to 'Balam' or Aigur of Hassan district, agitated against the British. This agitation gave rise to the total disturbance in the whole of southern part of India."\textsuperscript{19}

Vizieram Rawze, the Raja of Vijayanagaram, was a very big Zamindar in the Vizagapattam district, in Andhra Pradesh. "He maintained his own military troop of more than 7000, when compared to the military resources of other chiefs, whom he regarded as his tributaries. The British authorities decided to disband his troops and also tried to stop the amount or rent paid by his

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., pp.44-45.

\textsuperscript{19} Kittur Nadina Ithihasa Mattu Samskruti, (Kannada), Dharwad, Karnataka University, 1976, p-73.
tributaries to the Raja. They also decided to remove his control over his tributary chiefs.

Later in 1794, the Raja collected a force of 4000 strong men and fought with the Company's troops. He was defeated and was killed. But then his son Narayan Ravze continued the hostility.20 Later he came to terms with the British.

There were two other rebellions in the same region, under the leadership of Virabhadra Ravze during 1830-33 and Jagannath Ravze in 1832-34 respectively. There was also a general rising in Palkonda in 1831-32. Kemedi was a large Zamindar who had an estate in the Ganjam district. The arrest of the Zamindar, for non-payment of arrears of rent, provoked an outbreak in 1798. Many villages were burnt, grains were carried away in broad day light and the people were ordered not to pay any sort of revenue to the Company at any

painful condition. Similarly, many other Zamindars of Ganjam district rebelled under the leadership of Gumsur Strikara Bhanja (1800-1801) and his son Bhanja Dhananjay raised a more formidable rebellion in 1835, and this reduced the British government to a shadow.

Rani Channamma of Kittur was the first woman in the country to raise a formidable revolt against the British. After the death of her husband, Shivalingarudra Sarja, the Desai of Kittur, Belgaum district, the British authorities refused to accept her adopted son as heir. This provoked a rebellion in 1824 for overthrowing the British rule, in course of which several British officers were killed.

"About 5000 strong insurgents hid themselves and shut the fort of Kittur, and demanded that the independence of the State should be respected. But later they were forced and surrendered." 21

21. Ibid., p-49.
The Rani was arrested and she was put into jail. In 1829, an insurrection was carried out under the leadership of Sangolli Rayanna, who was a close associate of Rani Channamma. There was also rising in Bijapur district. In the month of December 1924, a Brahmin named Divakar Dixit gathered a band of followers and plundered Sindagi about 40 miles east of Bijapur. He established a government of his own by setting up a Thana and making arrangement for the collection of revenue.

"A similar rising took place in the year 1840, when a Brahmin named Narasimha Dattatraya, who led a band of 125 Arabs from the Nizam's territory and captured the Badami fort. He took possession of the town and proclaimed himself as 'Narasimha Chatrapati' and hoisted the flag of 'Shahu' to sustain himself in power. He plundered the government treasury and exercised the royal power by giving lands on lease basis to the cultivators." 22

A series of rebellions broke out in different parts of South India namely, Jinnevelly, ceded district (Bellary, Anantapur, Cuddapha and Karnool districts) and North Arcot. In all these parts the revolt continued to overthrow the British supremacy.

In the year 1844, in Kolhapur district there was an uprising in the course of which Annasahib the heir apparent joined the rebels, assumed a royal style and he began to collect revenue. These rebels even started negotiations with the officers of the British army. This revolt gradually spread even to Varad and Pendur which were under the rule of the British, but was suppressed by various military measures. The evils of annexation resulted in the rebellion of the Gadkaries at Kolhapur in 1844.

"The Gadkaries easily enforced their proprietary right on lands of which they were very jealous. Then they began their operations by shutting out the gates of the forts of Samangad and Bhudaragad in Kolhapur and the attempt of the British forces to take the former
by storm failed. Disaffection spread rapidly, a parallel
government was set up in supersession of the existing one
and all kinds of excesses were committed." 23

MISRULE IN PROTECTED STATE:

The intolerable misrule, in the protected states,
provoked a few rebellions. The earliest was a formidable
revolt in 1804 in the Travancore state by Nair battalions
in the service of the Raja. 10,000 rebellions aimed at
the subversion of British power. In 1808, Velu Tampi,
Dewan of Travancore, broke out into open rebellion.
20,000 men with 18 guns advanced towards Quilon and
Cochin and fought several pitched battles.

Velu Tampi wrote to Zamorin of Calicut "expressing
violent apprehension of the extension of Christian faith,
exhorted him to rise against the British. He murdered
a number of British soldiers. After repeated defeats
the Raja surrendered and accepted the British terms,

23. Ibid., p.50.
the Dewan, when hotly pursued, killed himself in the precincts of a temple where he had taken refuge."

ECONOMIC CAUSES:

The enhancement of the land assessment led to a serious revolt in Malbar in 1802, led by Eda Channa Kungan. The rebels captured the Panamaram fort in the Wynad district. On 11th October 1802, he massacred its garrison. In 1803 the whole province was in ferment. Rebellion had extended in all directions and armed bands openly took the field against the government troops.

There were some general causes for revolt in Southern India. In 1795-99, the preparation for revolt took place in Tamil Nadu. Maradu Pandyan, in Ramanadu district was the leader of the revolt. This insurrection was organised into four groups, namely, Ramanadu Koota, Tinnavelli Koota, Dindigal Koota, Koimbattore Koota. When British army was located in Karnataka during

24. Quoted in, Ibid.
the IV Anglo-Mysore war in 1799, these four groups jointly started the operation. Normally, the British people treated the freedom fighters as dacoits, even though Luchington, the collector of Ramanadu district expressed his feelings of the personality and the capability of the freedom fighters.

Lunchington addressed the citizens stating that, "There was no harm from the rebellions, but in addition to plundering wealth there is something more hidden behind this revolt."  

These series of outbreaks in a span of one hundred years are regarded as the real precursors of the great revolt of 1857.

**THE GREAT NATIONAL UPRISING OF 1857:**

In the year 1857, there was a great national uprising when the 'Sepoy Mutiny' took place. Its aim

---

was to expel the British and to regain the national independence.

"It was the last effort of the old order to regain national independence and honour; it was a heroic effort of a dispossessed people to reassert national dignity."^26

It was the great discovery in the Indian history as the policy, practice and the ideas which the government followed fundamentally became known. The government of the East India Company was displaced during the beginning of the 20th century. Indians launched a vigorous campaign for achieving their National Independence. After their determined and prolonged struggle, under Gandhiji's leadership, the Indians compelled the British to accept finally the claim of India for complete freedom and opened a new chapter in history, by the withdrawal of the British rule and thus changed the political scene in India in the month of August, 1947.

The conclusion can be drawn from the following matter that there was a conspiracy during 1857, Sepoy Mutiny.

The first point that calls for consideration is whether the outbreak of 1857 was the result of an organised conspiracy or not. For the justification of the above statement, the British historian, Malleson, held the most definite view about the conspiracy and conceived a very clear picture of it in his mind. According to him –

"The chief conspirators were Maulavi Ahmadulla of Faizabad, Nana Sahib and the Rani of Jhanshi, who had entered into negotiations before the explosion of 1857. Malleson proceeds to say that, the executive council of their conspiracy had arranged in the beginning of 1857 to act upon the sepoys by means of the greased cartridge, upon the inhabitants of the rural
districts by dissemination of chapatis."

This dissemination was intended as a warning that the rising was imminent. It was further decided that the rising of the sepoys should be simultaneous and more than once the actual date was fixed. Providentially something always happened to prevent the explosion on that day. But Malleson does not tell us when and by whom the executive council was elected. It was an all-India Body. Malleson makes no reference to his source of information on such an important issue. Another British historian, Cracroft Wilson, gives the different view of the conspiracy of the sepoys. He says that, "Sunday 31st May 1857, was the day fixed for mutiny to commence throughout the Bengal army; that there were committees of about three members in each regiment which conducted the duties of the mutiny, that the sepoys as a body knew nothing of the plans arranged."  

As Malleson holds there was no idea of existence of committees, but it is clarified and confirmed by Cracroft Wilson, that there were committees consisting of three members in each committee, but the plan arranged was not properly imparted to the sepoys who were actually the body of the 1857 mutiny. The wide circulation of chapatis and lotuses just before the outbreak of 1857 is regarded by many as an important evidence in favour of an organised conspiracy. The lotus is not mentioned in official records.

The chapati is the staple food of a large section of the people in India, who do not take rice. All available evidence indicates that here and there, the distribution of chapatis was not at first associated with any idea of political revolution either by the government or by the people at large. So much so, that even if it is taken for granted that the chapatis were deliberately designed by some as a sign for the outbreak, that this might safely assert that it was certainly not understood by the people in
that light. It seems certain therefore that the large circulation of chapatis cannot be regarded as primary or even cause of the great outbreak of 1857. But there was some thought regarding the circulation of chapatis.

As we know, 31st May 1857, was decided as the date of the outbreak of the mutiny. Chapatis and lotuses were distributed from company to company, regiment to regiment, and sepoy to sepoy as a message of the revolt. Mangal Pandey wanted to revolt against the British, before the dissolution of his 34th regiment. Even though it was fixed on 31st May, he revolted on 29th March 1857, when Major Hughes ordered to arrest Pandey. But Pandey in turn killed him. This was the first bullet triggered as a symbol of 1857, First War of Independence. He killed Lt. Bagh infront of his soldiers. Later the English troops started beating Pandey. Then Colonel Wheeler arrested Pandey and forced him to tell the other names of his friends by torturing and humiliating him. But Pandey did not utter a single word.
And said, "Just the movement has started, my aim is to seek freedom for India from the clutches of the Britishers."  

After making an inquiry Pandey was hanged on 8th April 1857. He was the first patriot who dedicated his life for the first war of Independence.

The main cause for the outbreak of the mutiny was that the sepoys were getting less salary and they were insulted. They had no chance of any promotion of posts in army; nor they could dream for higher post in the army. "The most formidable cause for outbreak of mutiny was that the sepoys were compelled to bite the cartridges while being used. But this was strongly opposed by the sepoys. On 2nd of May the seventh Oudh regiment refused to bite the cartridges, saying that they must do as the rest of the army did. Another cause for the revolt was that, the officers

Delhi became the centre of the great movement. The news of the mutiny of sepoys at Meerut, followed immediately by the capture of Delhi and the declaration of Bahaddur Shah as the Emperor of Hindustan, created a great sensation all over India. It's immediate reaction could be found in an abortive rising of the sepoys at Firozpur on May 3rd and Muzaffarnagar on 4th May.

"The series of mutinies took place in Avadh and western provinces at Etawa, Mainapure (May 23), Rurki (May 25), Mathura and Laknau (May 30), Bareily and Shahajapur (May 31), Moradabad and Budaon (June 1), Azamgarh and Sitapur (June 3), Malaon, Varanasi and Kanpur (June 4), Jhansi and Allahabad

(June 6), Fyzabad (June 7), Dariyabad and Fatepur (June 9), Fategarh (June 18), Hathras (July 1), and several other localities.\textsuperscript{31}

The sepoys killed the officers, plundered the treasury and burnt government offices. British officers and members of their family were killed. The mutineers in some regions, notably Avadh, Rohilkhand and West Bihar, soon merged themselves into revolts of civil population against the British authority under local leaders. The mutiny rapidly spread to the south of Yamuna river. The first to be affected was the sepoys at Jhansi. There were two forts at Jhansi, a small one in the cantonment and another outside it. And also on June 6th there was a mutiny. Some officers were killed. On 8th June the mutineers promised personal security to all the Europeans provided they left the fort without taking any arms. But as soon as they came out of the fort, all of them men, women and children, were taken to a garden and massacred in cold blood.

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., p-85.
According to one account - 57 men, 12 women and 23 children perished in this way. But another account sets the total number as 72. The mutineers proceeded to Delhi three days after this nefarious deed. On 14th June, the sepoys in the Gwalior contingent, recruited from Avadh, mutinised and killed as many Europeans as they could and allowed the women to go unarmed.  

In Rajasthan the mutiny had appeared at Nasirbad and Nimach on 28th May and 3rd of June.

Raja Venkatappa Naik of Surpur, a small principality in the district of Gulbarga (Karnataka), rebelled early in 1858. He was told that the British had lost everything and were fleeing to England, that the Arabs and Rohils of Hyderabad and all the Muslims had declared a crusade against the British. The Raja collected a strong force about 5 to 7 thousand, consisting of Arabs, Rohils and Bedas and attacked the British camp at night on 7th February, 1858. As soon as British reinforcement arrived, the Raja surrendered.

32. Ibid., pp.90-91.
Britishers humiliated Raja Venkatappa Naik to divulge the names of his companions. But he rejected and he did not care for his life. Before his death he told Meadows Taylor, "I will not disclose names of other
allegiances of the sepoys. The chief centre of revolt was Bareilly where the sepoys suddenly and unexpectedly rose and the British officers fled for their lives. Dr. S.B. Choudhari states that, "All the places to the north of the Narmada with the exception of the Sadar stations were in flames." 34

Even though the sepoy mutiny did not succeed in driving out the British out of India, it provided a path for the freedom struggle. With the inspiration of this the struggle for Indian Freedom movement was carried out by several attempts. For instance, mass awakening was created through novels and poems against the British rule. The 'Neela Darpan', a drama in Bengali, written by Deenabandhu Mitra in 1860, made Britishers angry. The familiar 'Vande Mataram' from 'Anandmath' novel written by Bankim Chandra became the national song of independence. Similarly, Subrahmanya Bharati of Tamil Nadu, wrote patriotic songs which

34. Quoted in, Sharma, T.T., Vikrant Bharath, (Kannada), Bangalore, Lekhak, 1965, p-10.
inspired the people. News agencies, the press as well as newspapers condemned the British rule through their articles. Thus all sects or class of people joined in the freedom movement.

**BIRTH OF INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS:**

The Indian National Congress was founded in December 1885 by A.O.Hume. This was mainly established to promote friendly relations among nationalist political workers from different parts of the country, formulation of popular demands and their presentation before the government and the training and organization of public opinion in the country. The first session was presided over by W.C.Bonnerjee.

The Muslim and Parsi leaders like, Sayani Tyabji, Dadabai Navroji, Ferozshah Mehta and many others, joined the freedom movement. As mass awakening continued among the people, Gokhale and Surendranath Bannerjee joined the Congress.
"Rai Narayan Bose, Ashwini Kumar Dutt, Vishnu Shastri Chiplunkar, B.G.Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, Aurobindo Ghosh, Lala Lajpat Rai, believed that Indians themselves must work out their own salvation. India could not progress under the benevolent guidance of the British."  

There was a difference of opinion among the congress leaders of the country after 1905, in gaining the Swaraj. Lal, Bal, Pal, stood as three extremists and B.G.Tilak started to publish articles in the 'Kesari', a powerful Marathi paper in 1889. For his nationalist writings, he was put behind the bars in 1897 for 18 months. He was a great leader and declared "Swaraj is my birth right, and I shall have it". Then Lord Curzon was appointed as Viceroy and he tried to curb the freedom movement completely, as well as the Indian National Congress. He divided Bengal and separated Hindus and Muslims. The whole country opposed

this action and his tactic was foiled, of dividing the people, but led to integration among the people. So revolutionaries killed many cruel British officers. Rajaguru created mass awakening in Punjab. Later they were arrested and sentenced to death. Fifteen year old boy Khudiram Bose was hanged for attempting murder in the year 1908.

Some of the revolutionaries like Madam Cama, Veerendranath Chattopadhyya, Raja Mahendra Pratap, Moulana Barakatullah and Moulana Obaidullah, strived for freedom of India from foreign countries. These freedom fighters brought into light, the evil administration of the British in Europe and America.

"Madam Cama went to Geneva in 1909 and was publishing the magazine called 'Vande Mataram', Veerendra Chattopadhyya was the organizer of 'Indian Freedom Committee' in Berlin, Moulana Barakatullah, Moulana Obaidullah, Raja Mahendra Pratap went to Kabul and formed a temporary government for India. The Punjabis who migrated to America
started a party called 'Gadar' which means revolt. Leaders like Savarkar, Jatin Mukharjee and others helped the Indian revolutionaries, by providing them pistols and rifles." All this happened during the World War-I (1914-18).

GANDHIAN ERA:

Mahatma Gandhi, who had gone to South Africa to practice a case, returned in 1915 and gave inspiration, guidance to the Indians.

"Gandhiji wrote a leading article entitled, 'To every Briton' appealing the British to retire from every Asiatic and African possession and at least from India. He asked for a 'Bloodless end of an unnatural domination and for a new era', unmindful of 'Protests and Wailings' from some of the Indians."  

Gandhiji had realised that the path to the real freedom was the constructive programmes. His constructive programme was a continuous process of education, freedom and non-violence.

PROGRAMMES FOR THE ATTAINMENT OF 'COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE':

The revolutionaries had chalked out the programmes for the attainment of complete independence.

"Cutting the telephone and telegraph wires, removing the railway fish plates, demolition of bridges, travelling in trains without tickets and pulling the chains to stop the trains, visiting the military camps and telling the military personnel to quit their jobs and forcing government servants to resign their jobs. Yarn and grains were collected in villages which were already self-sufficient, running over own post offices and arranging for prompt delivery of letters, picketing the law courts, occupying the seat of the magistrate and performing his functions and also settling disputes with the help of panchayats, not to pay land tax, sales
tax etc., to arrange to inform the village Munsiffs (chiefs) that the British rule in India had come to an end and that India had attained independence; if the village officers had refused to believe they would have been replaced by new officers; if, however, replacement of the village officers was not practicable. They would be disowned by the villagers, organising hartals and News propaganda centres; to organise picketing and attacking foreign cloth shops and government officers; to pass if necessary, no confidence motions against government servants; to tell the shop-keepers that the British government is no more in India and that the Panchayat system of government has taken its place; ryots and merchants were refusing to pay any kind of tax to the government, to arrange to prepare a seal on the model of that of the government of India, bearing the inscription 'Government of free India' or 'Swaraj Sarkar' and use it."

"Every man is free to go to the fullest length under Ahimsa. Complete deadlock by strikes and all

38. Mathur, Y.B., Quit India Movement Delhi, Pragati Publications, 1979, p-159.
other possible non-violent means. Satyagrahis should go out to die not to live. It is only when individuals go out to seek and face 'Death' that the nation will survive 'Do or Die' (Karenge Yaa Mareenge)."

In 1919 there was a tragedy at Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar, carried out by General Dyer without giving any warning. Thousands of people were massacred. Even then Gandhiji did not give up his principle of Ahimsa. Gandhiji wanted to start Satyagrah in Bardoli in the year 1922, but it was withdrawn due to sudden outburst of violence by the mob at Chauri Chaura. After 6 years, in Bardoli Satyagrah was started again and became a milestone in the history of freedom movement in India. Gandhiji called upon the lawyers to give up their profession and it affected Vallabhbhai Patel also to leave his profession and join the freedom movement. Since, Patel joined the movement, in 1928, 80 thousand farmers refused to pay taxes. Thus he was called as 'Sardar'.

39. Ibid., p-160.
"A very great contribution of the Bardoli movement to the Indian struggle for freedom was to uphold the practical utility of the modus operandi of a non-violent political movement. The declaration of 'Complete Independence' in 1929 and the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930-32 had close links with the Bardoli Movement." 40

In 1929, Lahore session of the Congress called for 'Poorna Swaraj' with Jawaharlal Nehru as the Chairman. In April 1930, Civil Disobedience Movement started under the leadership of Gandhiji. In Bombay also Civil Disobedience Movement had advanced. Lakhs of people participated in the Movement to defy the salt law, about 80,000 people in Calcutta, 50,000 in Madras, 20,000 in Lahore and almost the entire population of the Peshawar city had broken the salt law. "On 12th March 1930, Gandhiji with 78 co-workers, whose identities were published for the benefit of the police, left Sabaramati for Dandi, to

prepare salt in defiance of law. The 'Dandi March' was the veritable triumphal progress. The villagers flocked from all sides, sprinkled the roads, strewned leaves on them and as the pilgrims passed, sank on their knees. The show march over 241 miles in 24 days with full publicity to the world made a profound appeal to all. The story of pilgrims' journey to Dandi, worked up the feelings of the country as a whole, such as nothing else could. When Gandhiji reached the sea at Dandi on 5th of April, his small column had swelled into a several thousand strong non-violent army. Subhas Chandra Bose compared this march to the Napoleon's march to Paris."  

In 1937, elections were held as per the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935. The Congress formed government in nine provinces. But in 1939, due to World War-II, the Council of Ministers in the 9 States resigned, because of two reasons. Firstly, without the prior permission of the Indian leaders,

41. Ibid., p-193.
the British Government announced that India would
be fighting against Germany. Secondly, Germany had
occupied some countries in Europe, Government announced
that Britain was fighting against this for getting the
freedom to these countries. Our leaders questioned,
why cannot Britishers implement this technique with
India only.

In 1942, Congress started 'Quit India Movement'
by asking Britishers to go out of the country. British
government arrested many leaders of the country to
suppress this Movement. This Movement was the last,
to fight against the Britishers in getting freedom.
By going through the speeches of the national leaders
it is clear that they had made up their mind by taking
a firm decision to drive the Britishers out of the
country.

Mahatma Gandhi said, "It is going to be a straight
fight and let there be no mistake about it. And 'our
struggle is now to start', also there is no room for
more bargaining. There is no compromise on the demand
Jawaharlal Nehru replying to the debate at the AICC meeting held in Bombay, on 8-8-1942, said, "we are indeed earnest. Let there be no mistake about it. We are on the verge of a precipice... 'We have entered the fire and we have now to come out of it successfully or be consumed by it."  

"There shall be hartal throughout the country, salt is prime necessity of our life; our struggle is 'non-violent, non-cooperation' on the widest possible scale; the students are vanguard of our struggle; the members of the government services are faced with the choice; as Gandhiji said, let every Indian soldier in the army consider himself Congressman; the Indian students are part and parcel of India; Gandhiji has time and again stressed the vital and decisive part that our women folk can only play in the non-violent struggle; let every man

43. Ibid., p-25.
and woman in the country carry on his person a badge bearing the motto, 'Do or Die'. This is a struggle in which all Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis and Christians have to participate, ending of foreign rule is our objective; last but not least let us not forget spinning, so dear to Gandhiji. If millions spin it will administer a powerful stimulus to the struggle 'Do or Die.' Nearly two hundred years history of revolt and struggle (1757-1947) ended the British rule in India, by getting independence on 15th August, 1947.

"On 14th August 1947, at midnight, during the Constituent Assembly Meeting, Nehru said, "Long years age we made a trust with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom. A moment comes, which

44. Ibid., p-161.
comes but rarely in history, when we step out from
the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the
soul of a nation, long supressed, finds utterance.
It is fitting that this solemn moment we take the
pledge of dedication to the service of India and
her people and to the still larger cause of
humanity." 45

45. Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches, Vol.I, Delhi,
Govt.of India, 1967, p-25.