Winning the battle of Plassey in 1757 the Britishers laid the foundation of British Empire in Bengal. Gradually, the Britishers establish their control across the entire country. To fulfill the ambition of taking over the control of India, the Britishers acted with utter deception. They took benefit out of the internal rifts of Indian. Afflicted with the treachery and tyrannous attitude of the Britishers, the Indians struggled against them on many places; such as in Bengal the protest of sanyasis (Saints), in Maharashtra the “Ramot” community various scheduled tribes of India and the soldiers working the British army protested against them. But these all efforts were made at the local level in segregation, and on different times. Thus, all these efforts went futile. The first countrywide revolution was held in 1857 against the British rule. This revolution was supported by public also. Therefore, it is known as the first Freedom-fight of India. The revolution held in 1857 was not a result of anyone incident, but it was the reaction of the public against the 100 years long undue intervention of Britishers in the political, sociological, religion, and economical areas of Indians. The reasons of this Freedom-fight were as follows:

**Reasons of this Freedom-fight**

**Political Factor**

East India Company which was a Business organization earlier was made a political organization with the diplomatic acts of Clive. Velegeli and Hastings tried to expand the British state unjustly. In due course Dalhousie formed a new policy for expansion of the British Empire. He started mingling the States of those native kings, who didn't have their progeny; though the custom of
adoption was prevalent in the society. In the case of not having son the King would adopt any boy either from his relatives or from his community to appoint him as his heir. After death of the King that boy become successor. Dalhousie nullified this custom; this policy was known as ‘Prohibition of Adoption’. The impact of this policy affected many States such as – Sambalpur, Jaitpur, Satara, Nagpur, Bithur and Jhansi etc.

In principle, the Moghul Emperor was still the king and was insulted every now and then. On the royal coins, the picture of the king of England was engraved instead of the Moghul Emperor. Eventually, the empire of Maratha Peshwa had been snatched and a pension was started instead. In due course, the pension was also stopped for his son and the new Peshwa – 'Nana Sahib'. This caused anger in the Indian public.

Indian Rulers were worried about the policy of expansion, during the time of expansion in the empire, the Britishers made treaties with the Indian Rulers and promised not to intervene into their internal affairs, but they interfered continuously through the political agents in the Indian States. Subsequently, in the name of administrative mismanagement, the Britishers usurp some states such as Avadh State.

Other than the State Rulers the Feudal-lords were also annoyed with the Britishers. Feudal-lords would collect the tax from the public and handed it over to the State Rulers; and provide military power at the time of war; thus, the feudal-lords had a respect in the Court (Darbar). But as a result of auxiliary treaties with the Britishers, the dependence of the rulers on the feudal-lords came to an end. Eventually, the State rulers reduced the rights of the Feudal-lords. The Feudal-lords held the Britishers responsible for this incident. For example, Feudal-lord of Mewar 'Rawat Kesari Singh' (Salumbar) held the instigation of Britishers responsible for the misbehavior of 'Maharana'. In Jodhpur, Thakur Ajit Singh (Alaniavas) was utterly unhappy with the political agent. On the power of British support Deewan 'Jhutharam' of Jaipur made the 'Jagirdars' deprived of their paternal rights. In Jodhpur, the Feudal-lords of Ahua, Asop, Guler, Alaniavas were displeased with the State Ruler and held the Britishers responsible for their powerlessness. Freedom of judgment of the State rulers and Feudal-lords was also come to an end in the Company Rule.

Social and Religious Factors

British started interference in the life of Indians, in the name of social-reforms. It made an intense reaction on the public, besides the Britishers misbehaved with the Indian citizens. A British of a General level could insult any reputed Indian. The mocked at the Indian traditions and customs. Indian were never appointed on the higher positions, thus, there was a growing anger in the society. The Government has given freedom to the Christian Missionaries to propagate their religion; hence they started targeting the weaker sections of the society for their change of religion. The Britishers started making mockery of the Indian Gods and the system of Indian worship. The prisoners were compelled to adopt Christian religion. They would reduce the punishment after accepting Christianity; and were provided with more facilities in comparison to the other prisoners. The people converted into Christians were given higher positions in the Government jobs. This policy generated an intense discord among the Indian society against the British.
Economic Factors

India was an Agricultural and Industry oriented Nation, before the Company rule. Due to its economic affluence it was known as 'Sone Ki Chidiya' (the golden bird), and it was amongst the prominent centres of the world trade. After acquiring the power, the British exploited India ruthlessly.

Bengal was a rich province before the arrival of Britishers; but the Britishers extracted the Bengal to the extent that the people of Bengal came in the state of famish. Lakhs of people died in a famine. Bones of farmers and handicraftsmen were piled up in the fields of Bengal. The Britishers charged levy up to the extent that the farmers had to leave their farming and many old landlords (Jamindars) had to leave their 'Jamindari' due to their inability of paying the land-tax.

To consume the products manufactured in England, the Britishers imposed massive taxes on the textile of India. The Handicraftsman left their ancestral work due to the atrocity towards them.

The British Rule imposed 'Kharaj' (massive taxes) in the Rajasthan also and started capturing over the economic-resources. Britishers captured the trade of opium and salt. In name of remaining 'Kharaj' the British rule forcibly acquired the sources of salt production from Jaipur and Jodhpur. Octroi on salt was enforced through a pact with the Princely States. Rage of the public was flaired up on this issue. Public's expression may be seen in the contemporary folk-song—

Mhoro Raja Toh Bholo Bhalo, Sambhar Toh De Dini Ingrej Ne | Pan Mhara Tabar Toh Bhokha, Roti Maange Teekhe Loon Ri ||

In 'Hadauti' (South Rajputana), to establish the monopoly on the production of opium, the Britishers imposed heavy taxes in comparison to the opium of Bengal, which caused heavy loss to the farmers and businessman and smuggling increased heavily and the crisis of edible items occurred. The British government earned heavy profit through the salt in the entire Rajputana. All the other trades and industries came to an end.

Military Factors

British army was consisting of mostly the soldiers of 'Avadh'. After mingling Avadh into the British State, the soldiers suffered the state of mental shock. Feeling of revolt started sprouting in their mind. Several soldiers wanted to live life according to their tradition. They used to have hair and beard and wear 'Pagdi' and 'Safa' (turban) on head, British rule made restriction on it, for which the soldiers felt very much insulted. Against the contemporary beliefs they were sent to the foreign countries. It aggravates their anger. Indian soldiers were underpaid. They had to pay for their uniform. The facility of free postal services was also stopped for them. The strongest reason for dissatisfaction in soldiers was the fat of cow and pig in the bullets, which were supposed to be chewed before its use. These all factors caused the feeling of protest in the soldiers against the British Rule.
Role of Poets and Literary Persons
To loose the freedom and power in British Rule was making everyone unhappy. The mindset of the public of Rajputana was inclined towards freedom and self-respect. The literary persons and poets always inspired the society and Ruler to love the freedom and sacrifice towards it.

Literary persons were disturbed with the mere presence of Britishers in Rajputana after having treaties with them. Bankidas of Jodhpur, Surajmal Misan of Bundi, Aadhja Jawanj, Barahate Durga Dutt, Aadhja Jaduram, Asiya Badhije, Gopalana Dadhivadia and many more literary persons condemned the Britishers. They inspired the public and administrators to struggle against the British Rule. They played a vital role in sprouting the feel, then top to bottom to fight against the Britishers.

As written by the Poet Bankidas –
Ayo Ingrej Mulak Re Upar, Ahans Lidha Khenchi Ura|
Dhaniya Mare Na Deedhi Dharti, Dhaniya Ubhan Gayi Dhara||

Means – British came to India, and they took over the control on our breath even, means – captured every field. Earlier, the owners passed away but never allow anyone to rule on his 'Mother-land' (Matrabhumi), but it is pathetic, that the 'Matrabhumi' has become dependent in the life of the owners.

Activity –
Compile some other poetry written by the Folk-poets of Rajastan regarding 1857.

Surajmal Misan wrote a letter to 'Thakur' Phool Singh in Vikram Samvat (Indian Calendar) 1914, in the letter he rebuked the Kings – “these rajas (kings) are the owner of this land, but they have proved themselves of no use. They have embraced the slavery. But remember my forecast – THESE BRITISHERS WILL FINISH THEM, NO ONE WILL REMAIN THE LANDLORD, EVERY ONE WILL TURN CHRISTIAN. Nobody shall be benefitted by it.”

Folk songs were composed in praise of Dungji and Jawaharji, who robbed the British cantonments. Poets composed their poetry in praise of the administrator of Bikaner because he refused to surrender Jawaharji to the British Government. Satires were created on the administrator of Jodhpur, because he had surrendered Doongji to the British Government.

With the above description it is apparent that the literary persons of Rajasthan inspired the State Administrators, feudal-lords and the public as well, and prepared a background for the 1857 Battle (Sangram). This wave of Battle spread in the entire India. Every-where the soldiers, feudal-lords and the State Administrators participated voluntarily in the Battle. Rajputana also joined in the Battle.
Explosion of Revolution and its Propagation

Plan of revolution was mainly prepared by Nana Sahib Peshva and his assistant Ajemullah with Rangoji Bapu. In the leadership of Mugal Emperor Bahadur Shah, on May 31, 1857 the revolution had to be commenced in the entire India, on the same time. Many confidential meetings were held in the Red Fort in this respect. Messengers of revolution in their pseudo-attire travelled with the emblem of revolution – 'Lotus Flower' and 'Roti' (bread). The revolution had to start on May 31, 1857 from every place simultaneously. But the plan was stripped due to the rage occurred after the incident of cow-fat contained bullets. The revolution started before the 31st May with half preparation. On March 29, the bullets containing cow-fat were distributed in the cantonment of Bairakpur. The soldiers refused to bite the bullet with teeth. The British officers tried to arrest these soldiers. On the spur of the moment, a soldier named Mangal Pandey stood forward with his gun and shot dead both of the officers present there. Pandey was caught and on 8th April he was hanged to death. The bullets containing the cow-fat were distributed in Meeruth where the soldiers refused to use them. They all were arrested. Dissatisfaction widely spread amongst the soldiers. This incident took place on 9th May. The leaders of revolution tried to apprise them to stay calm and wait, but on the very next day these soldiers protested harshly and got their arrested friends free. They killed many British officers. The soldiers marched towards Delhi; and acquiring the possession on Delhi, they declared Bahadurshah as Emperor (Samrat).

Gradually, the fire of revolution widely spread across the India. In Kanpur, Nana Sahib and Tantya Tope led the revolution. They acquired Kanpur. In Avadh, Begum Hazrat Mahal led the struggle along with the public of Avadh. Thus, Laxmi Bai in Jhansi, Babu Kunwar Singh in Bihar, Deevan Maniram and Kandarpeshwar Singh in Assam, Surendra Shahi and Ujjawal Singh of Oddisha led the revolution.

At that time, Lord Canning was the Governor General of India. He called the Military forces from Madras, Bombay, Burma and Lanka. Punjab's Sikh Army and Nepal's Gorkha Army supported the British Government. Commander General Neill freed the Banaras and Allahbad from the revolutionaries. The army of Nana Sahib was also defeated in Kanpur. The British Government arrested Bahadurshah and acquired Delhi. Bahadurshah's two sons were shot dead and he was sent to Rangoon Jail. But Tantya Tope and Laxmi Bai fought very strongly against the British. Some treacherous people opened the gates of Jhansi-fort, but the 'Rani' went across the Military of the enemy and escaped. She reached Kalpi. Tantya Tope also joined her there.
They both attacked on Gwalior. The British army encircled Gwalior. 'Rani' escaped from there but again encircled by the enemy. Not seeing any alternative for escape, she fought fiercely with the enemy's army and got heroic death in the battle. Tantya Tope remained alone now but he unnerved the Britishers - continuous hiding from their sight. At last due to some disloyal people he was caught and hanged to death. Thus, Mangal Pandey, Tantya Tope and Laxmi Bai etc. the true progenies of Mother India achieved the martyrdom in the first battle of freedom-fight.

**Contribution of Rajasthan in the Freedom Fight of 1857**

Impact of Indian revolution may be seen in Rajasthan also. In Rajasthan, there were cantonments of British soldiers in Nasirabad, Beawar, Kherwada, Devli, Arinpura and Neemuch. British Representative of Governor General (A.G.G.) was positioned in Ajmer, who held the control on Rajasthan's Administrators.

The revolution started in Rajasthan from Nasirabad. On May 28, the soldiers of 15th Native Bengal Infantry, stationed in Nasirabad attacked on their officers. They went towards Delhi, where they wanted to join with the revolutionaries.

In Neemuch, a soldier named – Ali Beg challenged Colonel Abbott and the revolution started from the Neemuch also. The Britishers ran to Udaipur and sought refuge. Captain Shawvers came to Neemuch along with the army of Mewar. Until then, revolutionaries had already marched for Delhi. When these revolutionaries reach Shahpura, they were welcomed by the Administrator of Shahpura, not opened the gates for the Britishers who were following the revolutionaries. From here, the soldiers of Neemuch marched onwards to Delhi.
On August 21, 1857 a corps of an army stationed in Arinpura cantonment made a protest in Abu against the British and attacked on some British officers. On the arrival to Arinpura the soldiers robbed the cantonment with the proclamation 'Chalo Dilli, Maro Firangi' they marched towards Delhi.

The soldiers of Arinpura met with 'Auva' (Pali) Thakur – Kushal Singh in Khairva.

Kushal Singh was dissatisfied with the Jodhpur Maharaja (great-ruler) and the British. He took over the charge of leadership of the soldiers. On call of Kushal Singh, the feudal-lords of Asop, Alaniyawas and Gular reached Auva with their army. The feudal-lords of Khejadla (Marwad) and Salumber, Roopnagar, Lahsani etc. of Mewar also sent their military to help them. At the moment, the Jodhpur Maharaja Takht Singh came to know about soldier's protest; he sent his royal military to Auva against the revolutionary soldiers. On September 8, 1857 in Bithoda the army of Kushal Singh defeated the Jodhpur's royal force very badly. Hearing about the news A.G.G. George Laurens himself reached Auva with his military force. He was defeated too on September 18, 1857. The political agent Mc Monsen was also killed by the revolutionaries. He was beheaded and his head was hanged on the gate of Auva Fort. Laurens stepped back to Ajmer. On the other side, in October 1857, the revolutionary soldiers of Jodhpur legion also marched for Delhi.

In January 1858, an army headed by Holmes attacked on Auva. Thakur Kushal Singh sought refuge in Salumber. The British bribed the kiledar and got the gates open and eventually took the possession of the castle.
The public of Auva was oppressed inhumanly. In 1860, Kushal Singh surrendered himself in Neemuch. A law-suit was filed against him, later on he was acquitted.

Kota was the one amongst the prominent centres of revolution other than Auva. Maharao Ramsingh of Kota was the supporter of British Government, but he couldn’t take any action on the soldiers in view of the wider public-dissatisfaction. Major Burton pressurized Maharao to take action towards the soldiers. Subsequently, on October 15, 1857 the anger flared up in the army. The anger stricken soldiers attacked on the Residency and beheaded Major Burton and wandered across the Kota city. The soldiers took control over the entire administration.

Kota Maharao was confined to his place, like a prisoner, under the leadership of Jайдayal and Mehrab Khan; the revolutionaries had the control of Kota for 6 months. In March 1858, the Military force headed by General Roberts acquitted the Kota City from the revolutionaries Jайдayal and Mehrab khan were hanged to death openly in public.

Army of Dholpur and the public of Bharatpur were also depicting anger against British Rule, but their rulers were loyal to the British.

Some of the feudal-lords of Rajputana accepted the leadership of the Auva Thakur Kushal Singh and adopted the policy of discord. Almost every where, the revolutionaries got support from the local peasants and both Hindu-Muslim communities but the Princely State rulers supported British Rule. They were loyal to British. They provided refuge and military assistance to the British. The Administrator of Bikaner supported the British to the extent that even he went out of his State with his army to support them. Lord Canning the then Governor General has said regarding the loyalty of the heads of Princely States – “If they didn’t obstruct the wave in the storm, our boat would have flown away”.

Before the freedom-fight of 1857, there were Doongji and Jawaharji, the famous uncle and nephew as freedom fighters, who belong to Sikar area. They fought against the British army of Bikaner and Jodhpur. They become immortal in the songs for their sacrifice made for the Nation. One businessman (the resident of Rajputana) Amarchand Banthia is famous as a second Bhamashah for his abandonment and sacrifice. He offered his entire property to Tantya Tope so that he may continue the freedom-fight against British.

In Rajasthan and India, one common fact is notable, that all
the revolutionary soldiers marched towards Delhi after expressing their protest in their cantonments. After reaching Delhi they become aimless. Their unity shattered. On the contrary, as soon as the angered soldiers arrived at Delhi, in their absence, the British Government recaptured their control over those places.

Consequently, the revolutionaries could attain stable success. With the loyalty of Princely State Heads towards British, the government suppressed the revolution strongly. Until June 1858, the British control was completely established in most of the places.

‘Sugali Mata’ the kuldevi of Auva has been worshiped in the entire Marwar area. It has 10 heads and 54 arms. The idol of Sugali Mata was the inspiration of the revolutionaries of 1857 freedom-fight. It is said that the freedom fighters commenced their activities after the sight (darshan) of the Devi.

Results of the 1857 Revolution and its World-wide impact

Although the freedom-fight of 1857 was not successful, but its results were far reaching. The Princely State Heads had shown their loyalty towards the British, and cooperated them with body, mind and means. British Government rewarded them for their cooperation. The law regarding 'Prohibition of Adoption' was withdrawn; and the permission was granted to adopt progeny, who could be the successor to their estate. Now, India came directly under the control of British crown instead of East India Company. Queen Victoria ensured in her declaration (1858) that the existence of all the kings will remain as it is.

During the protest, the feudal-lords had played their role against the British Rule. Thus, the British formed a policy to make the feudal-lords powerless. Now, the feudal-lords had to pay in cash for the military services. The army of feudal-lords was dissolved, their judicial rights were seized. Efforts were made to bring down the reputation of feudal-lords in their area. Their prerogatives were seized. To terminate the role of feudal-lords in the administration, the appointments in bureaucracy were given to the persons who were English-educated, experienced, and loyal to the British. Subsequently, a loyal, English-educated medium class developed.

Looking into the military and business interests, Rail road transport was expanded. Arrangements were made for English education to make the Administrators acquainted with the British style so that their loyalty remains towards the British crown and Western culture.

This revolution has affected the future British policies in India comprehensively. Whatever decisions were made by the Governor Generals later, had an impact of revolution. Lord Dufferin has granted permission in his tenure, to form the congress. Behind this, the aim was to provide a platform to the Indian so that they could express themselves and revolution like 1857, never occur in future. Later on, freedom-fighters and especially the revolutionaries were inspired by the revolution of 1857. Whatever the results were, but this is a truth it has shaken British Imperialism and Colonial administration. The impact of 1857 revolution was worldwide. This revolution was the first grand challenge against the European
Imperialism. In any of the revolution held in other countries was not as large as this one. This incident had been covered by all the contemporary Newspapers across world. Although the British called it a 'Soldier's protest' instead of Freedom-fight to limit its effect; but Veer Savarkar, with his irrefutable arguments proved it as India's first Freedom-fight.

Glossary

Despite of being unsuccessful, this revolution generated the feeling of patriotism amongst the citizens. In the subsequent years, this revolution inspired the freedom agitations. According to the Indian point of view, this revolution was not the end of the struggle but the first chapter of Freedom agitation; which eventually come to an end in 1947 as the freedom of the country.

Irrefutable : A fact that cannot be refuted or disputable
Political Agent : Representative of British Government in Princely States
A. G. G. : Representative of Governor General
Kharaj : A sort of cess or tax

Exercise

Write the correct answers of question no. one and two in the bracket-
1. Which date was decided to commence the Revolution of 1857?
   (a) 8 April  (b) 29 March  (c) 31 May  (d) 9 May  
2. Who led the Revolution in Kota?
   (a) Jaydayal  (b) Laxmi Bai  (c) Kushal Singh  (d) Kunwar Singh
3. 1857 Revolution started from where in Rajasthan?
4. Which British officer was killed in Kota?
5. Which poets created the songs of 1857 Revolution?
6. In 1857 Revolution, who was the first revolutionary died as martyr?
7. Write a brief note on the prominent happenings of the revolutions held in Auva?
8. Write a brief introduction of Doongji – Jawaharji?
9. Describe the reasons of 1857 Revolution?
10. Describe the prominent happenings of the 1857 Revolution?
11. What were the results of 1857 Revolution?

Activity-
1. Collect pictures of the Revolutionaries.
2. Collect the Folk-songs related to the Revolution. Take help of your teacher and parents.