

## ABSTRACT

The Revolt of 1857 or India's first independence movement can be considered to be the principal milestone that put a specific direction and path for the future freedom fighters of British India. Growing socialism in the international sphere, especially in the Western world brought in a significant impact on the urban and rural leaderships who fought in the revolution. Mass uprising in rural and tribal hamlets took place against the then economic and political structure, which was sometimes native in origin or had the exploitation of the East India Company behind it, Bringing in equality in sharing the profits accrued by the Company, providing as much religious freedom and protection to Indian sepoys as enjoyed by the British soldiers, equal work distribution and lessening of inequality remained to be the primary motive behind the sepoys fighting the imperial power. The ideas of revolt or revolution are intrinsically associated with the; ideas of – socialism. However, there was a unique Indianess to such socialistic mentality which revolved around religious, traditional conservative mindsets fighting against exploitation, making attempts to dismantle the unequal administrative and economic structure.

But how did socialism, which still was growing as a concept amidst theorists in the West found a shape amidst the masses in the then India, who were basically illiterate as well as had more or less no contact with the outside world. Fighting against imperial powers, the masses which included the masses, peasants, and workers, soldiers, together against East India Company's hegemonic political and economic exploitation had a strange socialistic colour, as all castes, creed and religious followers joined the revolution against such exploitation. Marx himself identified such a revolution as one of the most practically successful attempts of a socialistic revolt that was thought of and theorised.

There is a need to assess the nature of the revolt, the causes that lay behind it, as well as the major and minor actors who were involved in giving the revolt a full shape. How could a society already under tight conservative and feudal setup rise to reform and revolt against the then socio-political and economic setup, sometimes even supported by the erstwhile rulers of the native princely kingdoms. The inspiration that forced such masses to unify, breaking the traditional socio-religious divisions created by the society, fighting shoulder to shoulder against a common exploiter, needs to be explored.

The revolt can be broken up into various spectrums to understand the birth of the socialistic mindset that took its birth amongst the masses. Analysing the major and minor causes from a socialist prism, re-thinking the causes that could have narrowed down the traditional gap between the masses and the native rulers and princes, the exploitation that was embedded within the ranks of the East India Company, might provide a better explanation in understanding the momentous revolution that shook the mighty British Empire from its roots, ending the hundred year old exploitation of the East India Company, bringing in direct British rule in India, and innovating new techniques to divide the Indian society for good, which had strangely unified and showed a strength that even defeated the will of one of the biggest capitalist ventures of Great Britain.

The economic aspect of the Revolt brings in new dimensions, grooming a socialistic mentality amongst the masses, bringing in the peasants tribal and rural masses within the revolt's lap. There is a need to assess the growing socialist trend after the revolt, its genesis, and its aftermath moulding the future Indian National Movement from different dimensions bringing the birth of communist parties, socialist thinking amongst

national leaders and growth of a politically conscious mass even before the advent of senior leaders like Mahatma Gandhi in the political spectrum of British India.

To understand the reasons behind the birth of such consciousness amongst the masses, the causes and mentality behind the rise of peasants, workers and tribals against the imperial powers, the birth of a politically conscious urban lower middle class, demand for economic freedom and equality remain to be the primary motive behind part taking this study. As most of the analysis till date revolves around the prominent leaders of the pre and post revolt period and seldom there has been any analysis to study the mindset, the psyche of the general revolutioneers, this study might usher a new aspect in looking at the first freedom struggle in the Indian national movement.