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The Indian Revolt of 1857 : Global Response



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Introduction

The second half of the nineteenth century witnessed struggles in different parts of the globe by the people of native colonies against their rulers to gain freedom. While the British Empire was at its peak and had the maximum footprint across various continents, others such as the French, Spanish and Dutch empires were on the decline. The Indian Revolt of 1857 (also known as the Sepoy Mutiny) was one such landmark struggle, which not only shook the British Empire to its foundation, but also evoked huge response from the world over. The news about this historical event, travelled across the globe, which made it one of the first global media event. Although it may have faded from memory across the globe, the records of the Indian Revolt of 1857 are still available with these nations in their archives, books, poems and novels.

The Revolt of 1857 has been comprehensively researched by numerous Indians, British and other

Key Points

- The bulk of the writings on the Indian Revolt of 1857 by British authors were guided by their own political and imperial motivations, with an aim to project their racial superiority as well as heroism of their citizens against the Indian rebels.
- The revolt saw the exceptional leadership of four most prominent military leaders, namely Nana Sahib, Rani Lakshmi Bai, Begum Hazrat Mahal and Kunwar Singh —whose combined efforts ensured that the fight continued for almost two years in spite of innumerable odds stacked against them.
- While the domestic aspect of the Indian Revolt of 1857 has been adequately covered and written about in the Indian academic landscape, not many Indians are aware of the international dimension of this defining historical moment of the Indian history.
- The revolt led to not only public and political debates in numerous countries such as US, Russia, Ireland, Italy, China and the Middle East, but also inspired their people to fight against their colonial masters.
- The military perspective and leadership aspects, pertaining to this historical event, needs to be studied in greater details as part of the Indian Military History.

historians in so far as its domestic dimension i.e. the causes of revolt, actual conduct of numerous battles and other related factual aspects are concerned. However, the international dimension, pertaining to how the events of the Indian Revolt of 1857 were covered in the world media, has not yet been adequately researched and written about. In this article, an endeavour has been made to analyse the global response to this defining historical moment of the Indian history.

The British rule over India, from 1757 to 1857, was characterised by imperialist and economic exploitation of Indians as well as disruption of their social and religious structure. The British, in their belief that they fully understood the psyche and requirement of the Indians, continued to exploit them for too long which finally led the Indians to rise in revolt.¹ The Indian Revolt of 1857, that happened exactly hundred years after the Battle of Plassey, posed a very stiff and credible challenge to the British and had almost brought the British rule to an abrupt end.²

The Indian Revolt of 1857

Overview. The events of 1857 have been accorded different titles, depending upon the view point and the period—Britishers preferred to call it ‘Sepoy Mutiny’ or ‘The Great Mutiny’ in a bid to redefine the event as a “mutiny” of few disgruntled sepoys rather than a formidable uprising by the people from all castes and class that posed a potent threat to the Empire itself.

At the start of the revolt, the total strength of the British East India Company forces was 1,41,361 personnel, of which the majority were native soldiers and balance 22,698 personnel were Europeans. The revolt, which started from Meerut on 10 May 1857³ had spread to Delhi on 16 May 1857.⁴ Within a week of its beginning, the British authority in Northern India had almost totally collapsed. The revolt gained momentum when more than one lakh Indian soldiers, mostly of the Bengal Army, joined the revolt, supported by many more volunteers. Out of a total of 74 Indian Infantry Regiments of the Bengal Army, 63 Regiments had revolted⁵. Less than a month later, on 06 Jun 1857, the revolt had further spread to Jhansi as well as Kanpur⁶, roughly at the same time. Main centres of the revolt were Meerut, Jhansi, Delhi, Lucknow, Kanpur and Bareilly. In addition, the struggle also happened with lesser intensity in more than 30 places across India.

The initial response of the British was slow due to their commitment in the Crimean War (1853-1856) and the Second Opium War (1856-1860). However, the British by virtue of centralised planning, availability of resources from a wider geographical area and better intelligence network, were able to deploy larger forces and tackled these centres, in a

sequential manner. The British reinforced their forces in India from overseas, during 1857- 58 in an unprecedented manner— starting from Delhi, which had the largest strength of revolted and where the stakes of the British were the highest. Delhi witnessed fierce battles between the two sides, lasting four months, till it was re-captured by the Company forces on 14 September 1857. Lucknow, which was the second most powerful stronghold of the rebels, was recaptured by the British forces on 17 November 1857.⁷ Although, the British were able to crush the bulk of the revolt by July 1858, sporadic fighting continued till late June 1859. The British suffered about 3000 casualties; however the aspect of Indian casualties is still unclear.⁸ As per one estimate, out of a total population of 150 million, between 2 to 5 million Indians died in the Revolt, which was far greater than the British casualties.⁹ Majority of the Indian casualties were civilians who were indiscriminately killed by the British as against a lowly figure of around 1500 British civilians who were killed by the rebels.

Leadership. The contribution of four most prominent military leaders—Nana Saheb, Rani Lakshmi Bai, Begum Hazrat Mahal and Kunwar Singh, was a crucial and important factor in the revolt. Rani Lakshmi Bai (1828-1858) was the tallest and the most inspiring leader of the Revolt of 1857—she made use of the ‘scorched- earth tactics’ to fight against the Britishers. Before the Battle of Kalpi (May 1858), she motivated her sepoys to take the mass oath of ‘fighting till death’.¹⁰ She also inspired, trained and led many women in her kingdom to fight.¹¹

Begum Hazrat Mahal (1820-1879), also known as the Begum of Awadh, was a woman of great energy and ability, who revolted against the British in 1857. After taking charge of the Awadh State, she organised an army of women and gave a stiff resistance. Subsequently, on 07 January 1859, she along with her confidantes escaped to Nepal. She was given the offer by the British to return to India, however she refused and she continued her struggle for freedom for another twenty years till her death.¹²

Another great military leader was Kunwar Singh (1777- 1858), who in spite of his advanced age, led the rebels in the Bihar region in the fight against the British forces¹³. Although, he did not have any formal military training, he possessed extraordinary courage and resolution—he led the revolt by the three Regiments of the Bengal Army in Dinapur. Due to his charisma and leadership skills, he was able to inspire a large number of Indians to fight the British, for the defence of Arrah.

Nana Saheb (1824-1859), a Peshwa of the Maratha Empire, made a remarkable contribution in the fight against the British. His decision to kill about 200 British men, women and children

(who were earlier held captive in Bibighar for two weeks) in July 1857, made him the most hated figure in the British accounts.

Tactics Used by the Revoltors. The Revolt was also characterised by large scale participation of peasants, who joined as volunteers with the rebel forces. In spite of the lack of military training, these peasants fought bravely and earned praise for their sacrifice and valour. In the battle of Miaganj, located 45 kms away from Unnao, out of the total strength of 8000 Indian rebels force, only about 1000 were rebel sepoys. Similarly, at Sultanpur, the Indian rebel force comprised of 20,000 peasants and 5,000 rebel sepoys. Another feature of the fight by the rebels was the use of 'guerilla tactics'¹⁴ —the rebels were given detailed instructions by their leaders on how to fight the British East India Company Forces, including orders to avoid direct contact with the regular troops, interception of communication lines and cutting-off the logistics support. Lastly, the unique courage of these leading figures needs to be acknowledged who knew very well about the bleak chances of their success in the prevailing circumstances, yet they sacrificed everything for their cherished goal.

Though militarily unsuccessful, the Revolt undermined the prestige of the world's most powerful Empire and forever altered the supposition that the British Empire was absolute, infallible and invincible. It led to many far reaching changes, which included the abolition of the East India Company and the commencement of direct rule by the British Crown. The most important outcome was the introduction of numerous reforms, through the "Act for the Better Government of India 1858" and other acts, as a result of which the Indians were given more rights.¹⁵ It also led to a major restructuring of the sourcing of three Presidencies of the British forces¹⁶. From then onwards, the British stopped expanding their territories in India¹⁷. Lastly, the Revolt spawned the first seeds of nationalist aspirations and the first bonds of a common nationality from where the freedom struggle by Indians of all religions, castes and class commenced in the right earnest.

Military Perspective of the Indian Revolt of 1857

The military perspective of this event can be summed up by highlighting four essential aspects—*firstly*, this was a fight between two grossly uneven forces i.e. the British East India Company Forces with a structured and well-tested military hierarchical system along with good intelligence and logistical backup on one hand, and on the other hand, the soldiers of the Bengal Army, who had revolted almost *en masse* and provided the core of the rebels' forces. Rebels thus lacked such an organisation and were mostly fighting isolated battles at multiple locations with no means to either communicate or coordinate with each other.

Secondly, the fight by the British East India Forces was based upon employment of tactics such as ‘use of mounted infantry operations by small columns’, ‘relentless pursuit of the opposing elements’ and ‘attack from multiple directions on key objectives’. *Thirdly*, the rebel forces— well aware of their own training and weaponry handicaps— relied on guerilla tactics with a view to maximise damage on the enemy forces. The guerrilla operations continued for another one year even though the bulk of the Rebellion was crushed by July 1858. *Lastly*, and most importantly, the revolvers had better leaders at multiple locations who, through their isolated struggles in their respective areas of influence, led from the front and gave a stiff resistance to the British forces. It is because of the combined efforts of these leaders that the Indian rebellion continued for more than one year in spite of innumerable odds stacked against them. The biographies of these leaders like Nana Sahib, Rani Lakshmi Bai, Begum Hazrat Mahal, Kunwar Singh and many others need a detailed study.

Global Responses to the Revolt

The revolt drew mixed responses from across the globe— some of which favoured the British while others favoured the Indians.

British Response

The British account of the revolt was guided by their own political and imperial motivation,¹⁸ because they did not want it to impact other colonies in a negative way. Moreover, the aim was to project the racial superiority of the British as well as the fact that the British were attempting to educate and uplift the Indian society from its primitive and orthodox values.¹⁹

British writings depicting the superiority of the Britishers, were then circulated across the continents—these writings exaggerated the heroism of their citizens against the revolvers in India.²⁰ Books such as *The Defence of Lucknow* by Lord Alfred Tennyson and *In the Round Tower at Jhansi 1857* by Christina Rossetti magnified the valour of Britishers who fought the rebels. It is interesting to note that, sometime in Oct 1857, news about the gallant act of Ms. Ulrica Wheeler, daughter of Maj Gen Hugh Wheeler—Commander-in-Chief at Kanpur—started appearing in British press²¹. It was stated that Ms. Wheeler had very bravely fought the rebels till the last and in the end she jumped into the well to death. Ms. Wheeler, thus, became a legendary figure exemplifying the bravery and purity of British women who would rather die than be violated at the hands of the revolvers. However, after a span of eight years, it became apparent that the earlier known account of her bravery and death was false as according to historian Sir George Trevelyan, Ms. Wheeler has been rescued by Ali Khan and was alive and living under a Muslim identity²².

The British literature also exaggerated the violence by the Indians with a view to sensationalise the same, and thereafter arouse hatred amongst the British populace and eventually justify their own retribution against the Indians. The most glaring example of this misrepresentation was the manner in which the Kanpur massacre was reported, wherein in August 1857, around 200 women and children, who had been earlier taken hostage by the revolt, were massacred by the butchers and their bodies were hacked to pieces and thrown into a well.²³ The literature also deliberately chose to overlook the facts about their own brutality against the Indians. In fact Malleon went a step further and claimed that there was no excessive retaliation on the part of the British. He even attempted a justification of the killing of rebels by blowing them from the barrels of the guns on the ground that it was so authorised by courts martial and necessary to act as deterrent.

Interestingly, some British authors also blamed Russia for inciting the mutiny by claiming that the Russian agents had bribed Indian contractors to supply beef fat instead of mutton fat, which was used in the manufacture of the paper cartridges.²⁴

The event of 1857 left a deep and lasting mark on the British psyche which led to increased fear and racism among the British.²⁵ Just to illustrate the level to which the minds of the British were impacted, a British officer, Capt Costello— who was part of the team that executed a rebel Alum Bhag in Sialkot— chose to bring the skull of the deceased, as a trophy, on his return to Britain. The skull later became the main historical artifact, based on which research was done by Prof Kim A Wagner culminating in the book *The Skull of Alum Bhag*. The significance of the Indian Revolt of 1857 to the British academia can also be gauged from what Lord Cromer wrote in his memoirs “I wish the younger generation of English would read, mark, learn and inwardly digest the history of the Indian Mutiny; it abounds in lessons and warnings”.²⁶

Indian Response

In the first few years following the revolt of 1857, none of the Indians dared to write about the rebels' cause as they were badly terrorised having seen the brutal and mass killings of their fellow countrymen. To add to it, many Urdu poets and reporters, who favoured the rebels' cause had been either punished or killed by the British, thereby dissuading the Indians further from writing about their response. As such, the perspective of the rebels could not be recorded in the manner the Britishers did, as in the second half of the nineteenth century, very few Indians were literate. Moreover, the availability of printing resources in Hindi/ native languages during that period was very limited. The situation got compounded further, as numerous Hindi authors and scholars, out of fear and survival, praised the British and gave incorrect versions of 1857.

Notwithstanding the above, amongst the people and regions which had fought against the British, the memories remained alive in the form of folksongs, ballads, poems, etc. which inspired Indians in the next decades to formally record the same. The first such writing giving out the Indian perspective was by V D Savarkar, who wrote *The First War of Independence* in 1908 in Marathi language. Savarkar termed the Indian Revolt of 1857-58 as a national struggle and highlighted how Hindus and Muslims had rallied together to fight their common enemy. Other Indian historians such as R C Majumdar, S N Sen and K K Datta also wrote about the event from a nationalist perspective. Post Independence, many more Indian historians and scholars wrote books in Hindi as well as other vernacular languages. They termed the revolt as a milestone event which marked the beginnings of India's struggle for Independence.

European Responses

The events of 1857 were reported upon extensively in the European press. The Indian Revolt was portrayed in the French, Italian, Czech, Hungarian, Spanish, Portuguese and the German media in a divergent manner. The underlining characteristic of the coverage was that, each nation in Europe viewed the news from India highlighting whatever was in sync with their history and ideology. The nations that were imperialist in their approach, viewed the revolt of 1857 as a warning sign, whereas other European nations, such as Hungary, Czech and Bulgaria, that were still struggling for nationhood viewed this event differently.

- **German Response.** As the event of 1857 unfolded in India, its coverage in the German press commenced simultaneously and continued to increase as the general German public in the nineteenth century was much interested in the happenings in India. Moreover, the reaction of German scholars was also expressed through numerous books, journals and other forms of writing. The two German newspapers i.e. *Volks-Zeitung* and *Kreuz-Zeitung*, both published in Berlin during 1857 and 1858, covered the revolt extensively²⁷. To cite another example, Margrit Pernau has also briefly referred to the impact of the Indian Rebellion on the British psyche²⁸. Claudia Reichel, a German historian, mentions about the differing viewpoints of the three distinguished German authors— Theodor Fontane, Wilhelm Liebknecht and Edgar Bauer, about the Indian Rebellion. Karl Marx wrote about the British rule in India and speculated about its future Independence. German poet Theodor Fontane covered the revolt in *Kreuz-Zeitung*, where he disagreed with the British view about the superiority of Europeans over the Asians and the suggestion that the Indians were required to be governed and civilised by means of the British rule. Fontane also dismissed the view propagated by the British media that the Indian Revolt was being

fomented by Russia. Another German writer, Hermann Goedsche, using the pseudonym Sir John Retcliffe, eulogised Nana Saheb, in his novel *Nana Sahib oder Die Empörung in Indien* (Nana Sahib or: The Uprising in India) and portrayed the Britishers as villains²⁹. German publicist, Edgar Bauer, a political refugee and based in London, reported on the events in India from July 1857 onwards. As reported by him, many Europeans saw the Indian Revolt in the same category as the national movements in Italy, Hungary and Ireland.

- **Italian Response.** In 1857, Italy was going through a tumultuous phase on its journey towards an independent nation. The Italian periodicals mostly used the British, Indo-British and French press as sources to read about the Indian Revolt. The three main currents of the Italian political debates were the— conservative view (Austrian- Hungarian Empire and other monarchies of Italy), democrats' view and the view of the moderates. The 'conservative' press saw the Revolt as an opportunity to denounce and delegitimise British power and expansionism. It claimed that the British had all the interest in downplaying the actual extent and severity of the uprising. The response of the Italian 'democrats' was derived from their own belief that the formation of a modern Italy, as a nation, should be achieved through national revolution by the people. Hence, the democratic view supported the Indian rebels. The Italian daily, *Italia del Popolo*, accused the British of using in India the same repressive methods for which the British press criticised the actions by the King of Naples against the revolutionaries in June 1857. The 'moderates' however, felt threatened by the revolutionary goals of the democrats and saw in Britain, the perfect ally for achieving national unification under the constitutional monarchy of Piedmont-Sardinia and therefore took a pro- British stand on the Indian Revolt.
- **French Response.** As a rival colonial power, French response was essentially favourable to the India's cause. French press covered the Indian Revolt in great detail and the French writings used this event as a rationale to imagine an India beyond British control. Bulk of the French writings, therefore, criticised the retribution by the British. French Newspapers like *Le Siecle* (The Age) condemned the British atrocities. Similarly, another paper *L' Estafette* (The Courier) mentioned that in case the British continued with their oppression against the Indians, France along with other powers will have to intervene to prevent the same³⁰.

Unlike the nomenclature used by the British press to describe the Indian Revolt of 1857, the French writings called it a revolution, taking a cue from and relating it to the French Revolution of 1789. Some French authors wrote about a future scenario

where India would be ruled by France, as a positive and liberating force as against the self- interested, barbaric and greedy British rule.

- **Spanish Response.** In the nineteenth century, Spain was a declining colonial power and saw England as a rival colonial power. However, in the Spanish press, the British domination was justified and reactions were expressed against the Indians. The Spanish journals advocated that the British should have inculcated Christian values more proactively amongst the Indians. The central theme was 'positive and friendly advice' to the British Empire to rule peacefully and spread Christian moral values and beliefs. The support to the British Empire was guided by the concern of the Spanish authors about the possibility of US possessing a larger role in international relations, if in case the British power declined.
- **Hungarian Response.** Nearly eight years before 1857, the Hungarian revolutionaries, in their struggle for freedom, had given a stiff resistance to the Austrian Empire, which after two years struggle broke away³¹. Hungarian response to the 1857 Revolt was characterised by the attitude which had developed after the unsuccessful Hungarian War of Independence of 1848-49 against the Austrian Empire. Therefore, they saw the revolt as a tragedy both for Indians as well as for Hungarians. Events of 1857 Revolt were covered in four Hungarian publications— *Budapesti Hirlap* (Budapest News), *Vasarnapi Ujsag* (Sunday Magazine), *Budapesti Szemle* (a leading journal) and *Pesti Naplo* (the most prominent Hungarian newspaper).
- **Portuguese Response.** The study of the Portuguese response is extremely interesting, because of its colonial presence in South India at that point of time in history. Portuguese colonial India had already witnessed similar uprisings before. The Portuguese presence that started with the control of Goa in 1510 was however on the decline in 1857³². Being a minor colonial power and dependent on the larger colonial power i.e. Great Britain, the Portuguese did not sympathise with the Indian revolt.
- **Czech Response.** The Czech people did not have much contact with the Indians, however, being a small nation under the Habsburg Empire, they were in the same predicament as the Indians under the British Empire. The Indian Revolt of 1857 was

not only covered regularly in the Czech press during 1857 but also in the subsequent decades. In 1857, Czech was under an authoritarian regime, with most of the print media being closed down. The main Czech newspaper, the *Prazsky Noviny*, that supported the government, relied on British sources. Therefore, *Prazsky Noviny* propagated the British viewpoint without any independent analysis by the Czech journalists; but in the subsequent years, the representation of the event became favorable to the Indians due to similarity of prevailing conditions in both the nations.

- **Irish Response.** In the second half of the nineteenth century, Ireland was fighting for independence from the British rule and their revolt for nationhood had also failed in 1848. In 1857, the news about the Indian Revolt was received in Ireland through newspapers, telegraphs and also personal letters. The happenings about the Indian Revolt were received by the Irish people with much hope and anticipation, that the rebels would be able to overthrow the British rule in India.³³ The Indian Revolt provided an inspiration to many Irish nationalists to continue their fight for their Independence from the British. On 04 July 1857, a news item in the Irish newspaper— *Nation* stated that the revolt in India had exposed the weakness of the British rule. The *Nation* in fact compared the Indian Revolt of 1857 with the Irish Movement and highlighted that the actions by the armed and disciplined men of Bengal Native Infantry had lessons for the freedom fighters of any other country, including Ireland. The *Kilkenny Journal* highlighted the valiant struggle of the rebels and stated that this event was an inspiration to other colonies.
- **Bulgarian Response.** The Indian Revolt of 1857 coincided with the era of Bulgarian struggle for national independence. Hence, the Indian Revolt was adequately covered in the Bulgarian journal — *The Bulgarska Dnevitsa* (The Bulgarian Diary), which was edited by the Bulgarian national leader Georgi Stoykov Rakovski. Although, the journal relied on British sources for information, Rakovski carried out his own interpretation of the events and saw in the revolt, a struggle by the Indian people for independence. He was inclined towards this opinion of the revolt as he saw in the Indian struggle a ‘hope for the independence of Bulgaria’. As per the lead article of *Bulgarska Dnevitsa* published on 17 July 1857, the Indian Revolt had ‘shaken’ the confidence of the British Empire as an imperial power and it was also stated that, although the British were moving forces from different regions of the world to tackle the rebels in India, they mainly relied on the Indian natives of the British East India Company forces.³⁴

American Response

In 1857, America was not connected to Europe through the undersea telegraph cable. Therefore, the news about the rebellion in Meerut and Delhi reached the port of New York from London on 23 June 1857 with the arrival of the Royal mail steamship 'Persia'. The first report "Mutiny in the Native East Indian Army" was published in the *New York Daily Times* on 06 July 1857³⁵.

Indian Revolt and the American Civil War took place on the opposite sides of the globe with a time gap of three years. In the years preceding the American Civil War (1861-1865) the North grew in industrial power and population, while the economy of the South based on agriculture remained stagnant. The American press reported extensively about the Indian Revolt and analysed the possibility of it impacting the North-South divide in US. While New York Times justified the brutal retaliation by the British, other reports focused on the economic repercussions for America in case the revolt was not put down.

Canadian Response

Prior to 1857, Canadians, firmly believed in the 'superiority of the Whites over the Asiatic'. The Indian Revolt of 1857 became the most dominant news event in Canada during 1857- 58. Irrespective of their other differences, all Canadians continued to have a poor image of Indians, being Asians, and thought that the latter lacked in character.

Russian Response

News about the Indian Revolt was received in Russia with great interest as in 1854, Russia was defeated by the British in the Crimean War. Hence, the reports about the success of the Indian rebels against the forces of the British Empire in the initial stages of the revolt brought much joy to the Russian people. Although, the Russian press had to rely on the British and the French sources to get inputs from India, the happenings and the implications of the revolt were correctly understood and reflected in the Russian press. As per NA Dobrolyubov's article "An Opinion of the History and Contemporary State of the East India Company" (published in September 1857), the Indian Revolt of 1857 was a 'historically necessary affair' and not a chance event of resistance.³⁶ Dobrolyubov dismissed the view that, the British were in India with the purpose of civilising the Indian people.

As Russia was an independent nation pursuing the colonial policy of the Tsarist government in power at that point of time, the attitude of the government press underwent a change when it was realised that the Indian Revolt was not merely a mutiny, but a popular

movement by all sections of the Indian society. *Russkiy Vestnik*— an official journal— viewed the revolt as a struggle between ‘barbarism’ and ‘civilisation’ and hoped that the British would be able to overcome the Rebellion.

Chinese Response

It is interesting to note that, in 1857 the people of China and India were engaged in fighting the Second Opium War (1856-1860) and the Indian Rebellion respectively, against a common aggressor i.e. the British. Moreover, there was no direct connect between the people of these two regions as regards the struggle was concerned. Notwithstanding this, the actions by the rebels in India in 1857 forced the British to take a back foot whereby they diverted their forces midway to India as against their intended destination in China, thereby helping the cause of China.

Keeping in view the above fact, it was but natural that the Chinese had sympathy as well as admiration for the people of India against the British Empire. From the limited writings available, it emerges that the people of China were deeply concerned about the Indian rebels and that they wanted the revolt to succeed. However, these sentiments by the Chinese people could not get propagated in a wider academic space because at that point of time China did not have its own vernacular newspapers.

Conclusion

It cannot be denied that currently the typical understanding and knowledge of a scholar warrior of the Indian Military about this important historical event is limited to the domestic perspective of the Revolt. This reminds the famous quote by George Orwell who said “the most effective way to destroy people is to deny and obliterate their own understanding of their history”. Herein lies the profound significance of the need to know this Indian historical event in its entirety including the international dimension of 1857 which will help to enhance the existing perspective of a scholar warrior about this event.

The Revolt of 1857 successfully ‘dented’ the prestige of the British to a large extent and also erased the idea of British invincibility. The Revolt found a detailed mention not only in public and political debates in countries like UK, USA, Russia, France, Germany, Italy, Hungary, but also stirred popular imagination which resulted in publication of numerous novels and other fictional accounts, decades after the event. The subject also assumes importance because it inspired the people of other regions, faced with a similar situation, to fight against their colonial masters.

Indian Army scholars need to get over their hesitation and study this conflict, in greater detail, as part of military history. To give it due importance, the revolt of 1857 should also form part of promotion and competitive exams. The subject will also help the Indian public in better understanding about the struggle and sacrifices made by the Indians during 1857 that sowed seeds for the future nationalist struggle.

End Notes

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