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Q3

Explain how the uprising of 1857 constitutes an important watershed in the evolution of British policies towards colonial India.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2016 · GS I · 12 marks · The Freedom Struggle

The Freedom Struggle - its various stages and important contributors / contributions from different parts of the country.

Core demand of the question

- Explain how the uprising of 1857 constitutes an important watershed in the evolution of British policies towards colonial India
- Cover Crown rule, army, princes, religion, and the political handling of Indians after 1858
- Keep the explanation within a 12.5-mark length

Revision summary

The 1858 Act and the Queen's Proclamation ended Company sovereignty and set Crown-viceroy rule.

The army was recast by region, class mix, and British control of guns.

Princes were preserved as allies; lapse annexation was no longer the default.

Official policy promised religious non-interference while tightening security.

Small council seats for Indians sat beside deeper distrust of the educated public.

Flow diagram

Uprising 1857 -> Crown Act 1858

Uprising 1857 -> Army recruitment mix

Uprising 1857 -> Princes as breakwaters

Crown Act 1858 -> New Raj policy

Army recruitment mix -> New Raj policy

Princes as breakwaters -> New Raj policy

Conclusion

- Treat 1857 as a watershed in structure (Crown, army, princes), not as the birth of the nation-state.
- **Show continuity too:** economic drain and British supremacy remained; what changed was how the Raj insured itself.

1857 forced London to replace Company rule with Crown command, a re-engineered army, allied princes, and a cautious religious pose. Later nationalist politics grew inside that

post-Mutiny Raj, which is why the uprising is a true watershed of colonial policy.

Facts & figures

Government of India Act, 1858

Statute that ended East India Company rule and created the Secretary of State and Crown government of India.

Queen's Proclamation, 1858

Royal statement promising justice, office by merit, and respect for Indian religions and customs.

Doctrine of Lapse

Dalhousie's annexation practice that was politically abandoned as routine policy after 1857.

Martial-race recruiting

Post-revolt preference for Punjab, Gurkha, and similar groups over the old Bengal Army pattern.

Indian Councils Act, 1861

First post-revolt widening of the Viceroy's legislative council with nominated Indian members.

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