

## Paika Rebellion - Facts about Paika Bidroha [UPSC History Notes]

Paika Rebellion of 1817 is an armed revolt against the British by the Paikas of Khurda in Odisha. The rebellion took form and shape under the leadership of Buxi Jagabandhu Bidyadhara.

On 24th December 2018, Prime Minister Narendra Modi released a commemorative stamp and coin on the Paika Rebellion. Along with the stamp and coin, PM announced to set up a Chair on Paika Rebellion in Bhubaneswar's Utkal University. The Union Budget speech of 2017-18 mentioned about the commemoration of the 200 years of the Paika Rebellion.

### History of Paikas (Paika Rebellion)

“Paika” literally translates to warrior/ fighter in Odiya. “Paika Akhada”, their style of fighting can be traced back to ancient Kalinga and was patronized by king Kharavela. Paikas of Odisha were the landed militia who were involved in performing policing functions for the Gajapati rulers. They also acted as warriors to help the king during wars. They were divided into:

1. Praharis – experts in fighting with swords
2. Banuas- excellent marksmen using matchlocks
3. Dhenkias- the archers in the battlefield.

The kingdom of Khurda had granted them rent-free land for the military services that they offered to the kingdom.

### Paika Rebellion – Reason of Paikas’ Revolt

Soon after taking over Odisha from the Marathas in 1803, the British started to introduce a system of administration that angered the King of Khurda, Mukunda Deva II. His planned revolt in collaboration with the Paikas was soon discovered by the British and he was torn apart. They then usurped all the land from the Paikas under the deposed King’s estate. Besides, many other activities of the British like the introduction of a new currency system, oppression of the Paikas in the hands of the officials of the company, ban on making salt from seawater gave rise to widespread dissatisfaction and hatred against the British. In 1817, a strong group of 400 Khonds from Ghumusar marched to Khorda and declared their intentions to free Khorda and Ghumusar from the British rule. The group was joined by the Paikas of Khurda as well.

#### Paika Rebellion – Who was Buxi Jagabandhu?

Also called Paika Bakshi, Buxi Jagabandhu was the commander of the militia army of Khurda’s Gajapati king. Khurda was a kingdom near Puri. He was among the freedom fighters of India.

### Paika Rebellion – Course of Events

The Paikas, set ablaze a police station and also killed some officials of the East India Company during their march towards Khurda. The revolt enjoyed a great level of support from the Kings of Nayagarh, Kujang, Kanika, Village headmen, peasants and zamindars. The rebellion quickly spread to Purl, Pipli Cuttack and other parts of Odisha. Initially, the Paikas seemed to have gotten hold of the battle and saw some victory, but was suppressed by the British in just three months. Some Paikas however, fought guerilla warfare against the British yet the revolt was completely suppressed by 1819. Therefore, it lasted for a year and a half before being ruthlessly suppressed by the British East India Company’s forces.

After successive defeats, the Paika leader, Bakshi Jagabandhu, surrendered to the British in 1825 and lived as a prisoner in Cuttack till his death in 1829.

## Paika Rebellion – Effects & Outcome

The result of the Paika Rebellion was disheartening as the rebels involved were awarded sentences of death, long-term imprisonment.

A commission was appointed by the British officials to enquire into the rebellion. There were severe uprisings post this Paika rebellion initiated by people from Kandha & Koi region. The major issue that prevailed post the Paika rebellion was the revenue policy which didn't undergo any change.

The rebellion projected Lord Jagannath as the symbol of Odiya unity. Though this was a bloody rebellion prior to the famous **Revolt of 1857** that challenged British Supremacy in India, it did not gain much popularity. On the event of the 200th anniversary of the rebellion, the descendants of families associated with the rebellion were recognized and felicitated by the Prime Minister.

### Conclusion

Aspirants should read about Paika Rebellion in a way where they can answer the cause, leadership and the outcome of the revolt. The questions can be asked in both Prelims and Mains papers.