

## **Summary**

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**Topic: Forms of Dissent and Protest among Urban Groups during Eighteenth Century Regions of Delhi and Awadh**

Eighteenth century in Indian history is a period mired in controversy of a scholarly kind. The historiography of the period revolves around two distinct views, each diagonally opposite to the other, one view considering the entire century as a period of gloom and decline, stopping just short of dubbing the entire century as 'Dark ages' whereas the other view considers it as a period of prosperity and growth, albeit on a lower scale. This overemphasis on the economic aspect of eighteenth century leads to an imbalance in the study of the period where a lot many cultural and social aspects do not hold as much attention of the scholars of the period.

To a certain extent forms of dissent and protest in pre colonial India by the urban classes is still quite neglected among historians. It is true that random revolts and instances of protests are mentioned in several social histories of the period, but these events are treated as ruptures in an otherwise stable socio-political system. Other forms of dissent, protest and resistance which occurred in routine daily life seems to have been entirely ignored in most studies of the period. In this work an attempt has been made to study dissent, protest and resistance etc as factors of historical change with the view to incorporate the subjectivity of social groups residing in urban centres in the shaping of the social and political institutions of the periods. People living in cities had often communicated and expressed their resentment against any perceived or real oppression and injustice through varied forms of protest.

Historical writings, though quite abundant on different aspects, were somewhat inadequate about the ways of resentment and discontent available to the people of the cities. Thus an effort is being made to study the space available for the people residing in major cities in north India, especially in Shahjahanabad, Lucknow, Faizabad and Akbarabad etc to express their displeasure and discontentment at the turn of events and at the change of circumstances when power was being seen as passing from their hands.

Empirical evidences are not so abundantly available indicating dissent and protest against the ruling elite or against the falling socio-political and economic dimensions of the time but stray references too could be of immense help. Notwithstanding this, at times collective defiance to unpopular acts stopping well short of armed resistance happened. As the period was marked by instability of all kinds so the involvement of the elite section leading to further mistrust amongst the nobility too, could not be discarded.

At times the ritual and symbolic relationship between the ruler-patron and the intelligentsia too was attacked, not directly but in various covert ways. Thus tools of these anonymous resistances were malicious gossip, character assassination, calling nicknames, slander and rumours. These forms of resistance had a task to accomplish, namely to inform the rulers about their discontent and to seek their share in governance.