

## **META DATA**

**Theme: Begum Hazrat Mahal and the Revolt of 1857**

**Subject :** History

**Class :** Class VIII Part II

**Linkage of Theme: When People Rebel 1857 and After**

**Objectives:**

- 1. To create awareness on the contribution of different sections of society in the 1857 uprising.**
- 2. To appreciate the courage displayed by Begum Hazrat Mahal in her struggle against British forces.**

**Key Words :** Revolt, Hazrat Mahal, Awadh, Nawab, Queen Victoria, Wajid Ali Shah, Wali.

### **Description**

The Revolt of 1857 occupies an important place in people's struggle against British rule in colonial India. It was the first rebellion against the unjust policies of British rulers. While many scholars have termed it as *India's first war for Independence* and *'an uprising'*, some call it a *'sepoy mutiny'* and *'an unorganized rebellion destined to fail'*. Its causes lay deeply embedded in the grievances that many sections of Indian society nurtured against the British rule. Much has been written about the revolt and a number of books have provided ample space to various leaders who led the revolt. But we must not forget that there were many others who played a significant role during the revolt, most of who have been confined to a small paragraph in history books. The names of Rani Laxmibai, Tantia Tope, Nana Saheb and Bahadur Shah Zafar are familiar to many in the context of the Revolt of 1857. But it is equally

important to remember that there were many others belonging to different sections of society who stood their ground against the British. One of those unsung icons of the Revolt of 1857 was the erstwhile Begum of Awadh, Begum Hazrat Mahal, wife of the then ruler of Lucknow, Nawab Wajid Ali Shah. By sheer strategy and strength of character she led the revolt against the British in the absence of her husband who was deposed in 1856 and sent to exile in Calcutta.

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## EARLY LIFE OF BEGUM HAZRAT MAHAL



Nawab Wajid Ali shah



Begum Hazrat Mahal

Begum Hazrat Mahal was the wife of Nawab Wajid Ali Shah, ruler of Lucknow. According to local legends she was brought up to be a dancer but she caught the fancy of Nawab Wajid Ali Shah and became part of his harem. After she gave birth to a son, she was given a higher status of Begum. Her maiden name was Muhammadi Khanum and she was bestowed the title 'Hazrat Mahal' after the birth of their son, Birjis Qadr. She was an extraordinary woman who decided to revolt against the mighty British. She has been given the name Iftikharun-Nisa, 'the pride of all women' as she had the courage to rebel against the British in 1857.

## Seal of Hazrat Mahal



*“ While the seals of all other queens bore the symbols of belbutes and flowers hers showed the sword and dagger...”*

*‘Ghadar ke Phool’*

Silver rupee of Wajid Ali Shah, struck at Lucknow in AH 1267 (1850–51 CE) and showing the Awadh coat of arms on the reverse. The two figures holding the pennants are intended to be fish.



## THE BEGUM TAKES CHARGE OF AWADH



Proclamation of Birjis Qadr as Nawab of Awadh

**After the British took over Awadh, Nawab Wajid Ali Shah was exiled to Calcutta . However, Hazrat Mahal preferred to stay behind. Taking advantage of the discontentment in Awadh arising due to British rule, she took charge of the administration. With the help of popular support and revolutionary forces, she proclaimed her 14 year old son as the Nawab of Awadh. She took charge of the affairs in the state of Awadh and seized control of Lucknow. By virtue of her bravery and intelligence and with the help of supporters like Sarafad-daulah, Maharaj Bal Krishna, Raja Jailal Sigh and Mammon Khan she tried to take over Awadh. She appointed Raja Jailal Singhas the leader of her forces. With his help, she arranged for her son, Prince Birjis Qadr, to become Wali of Awadh.**

## **THE BEGUM'S STRUGGLE TO RETAIN LUCKNOW**



**Qaisar Bagh Complex of Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India**

**When the Begum assumed control of Awadh, they started forcing Company officials to leave Lucknow. In September 1857, when Lord Clyde wanted to take control of Lucknow, he ordered the royal ladies to vacate the palace. Queen Hazrat Mahal decided to fight and with the help of her loyal followers, she took control of Lucknow. However, her army was ill-equipped and had little training. The Indian troops were not able to re-capture the Residency because of arguments between her generals. On March 6, 1858, the British recaptured Lucknow.**



**GATES OF PALACE AT LUCKNOW**-the Begum started fortifying Lucknow when the British attacked

## BRITISH FORCES TAKING LUCKNOW IN MARCH 1848



Begum Hazrat Mahal was forced to leave the city with her army and followers. She joined Nana Sahib and attacked the British army at Shahjahanpur in collaboration with Maulvi Amadullah of Faizabad. However, she could not re-establish herself and her son in Lucknow. She was ultimately forced to leave the country and finally found asylum in Nepal where she died in 1879.



## THE DEFIANT BEGUM

Despite all this, she remained defiant and declined all overtures of the British. She remained in Nepal and refused all terms of agreement made by the British government. When Queen Victoria issued a proclamation taking over the Company's possessions in India, she was the only one who responded and criticised the British. She accused the British of taking over the country by taking advantage of disunity among the Indians.

## MEMORIALISING OUR ICONS

### (1) Begum Hazrat Mahal Park, Lucknow



In 1962, Begum Hazrat Mahal of Avadh was honoured at a simple ceremony held in the Victoria Park ( Lucknow) on 15 August. A marble memorial in memory of the contribution of Begum Hazrat Mahal who had fought against the British was declared open. The memorial is a marble tablet which has four circular brass plaques bearing Coat of Arms of Avadh Royal Family .It was decorated with strings of flowers and illuminated with multi-coloured bulbs and neon tubes. The inaugural function was attended by two great grandsons of the Begum .The monument is decorated with fountains, trees, flowers and stoned pathways which adds to the beauty of the park and attracts large number of visitors.

## (2) Stamp Issued In Honour of the Begum

To honour and acknowledge the contribution of Hazrat Mahal, the Government of India issued a commemorative stamp on 10 May, 1984. The cover was designed by C.R.Pakrashi and 15,00,000



stamps were issued.

<b>Stamp Issue Date</b>	:	10/05/1984
<b>Postage Stamp Dinomination</b>	:	0.50
<b>Postal Stamp</b>	:	1123

Serial Number

Postal Stamp  
Name

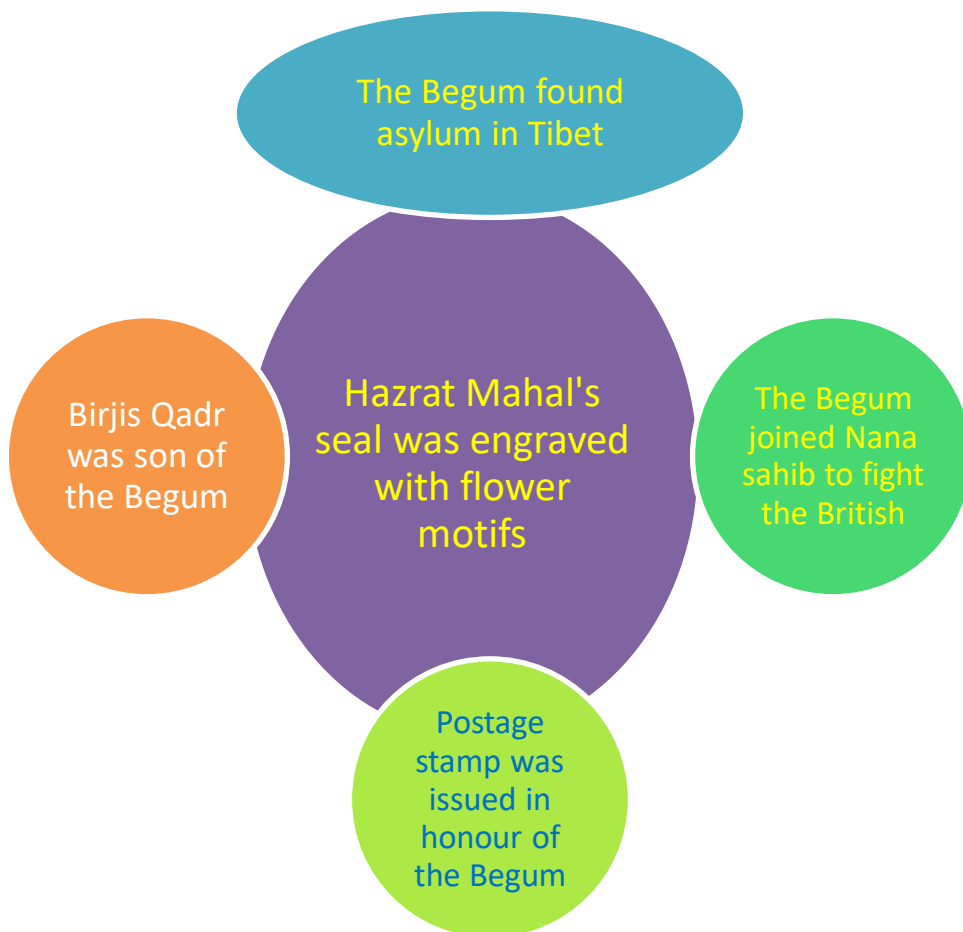
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BEGUM HAZRAT MAHAL

## ACTIVITY 1

Choose the correct answer by clicking on the circle.

**CIET: The correct circle should be shown with a 'Green Tick'. Wrong Answer should indicate 'Try Again'**



### Correct Answers

- Birjis Qadr was son of the Begum
- The Begum joined Nana sahib to fight the British
- Postage stamp was issued in honour of the Begum

### ACTIVITY 2

Drag and drop the correct answer from the options given below

**CIET: Drag and Drop**

<b>Nawab Wajid Ali Shah</b>	
<b>C.R.Pakrashi</b>	
<b>Nepal</b>	
<b>Muhammadi Khanum</b>	
<b>Sarafad-daulah and Maharaja Bal Krishna</b>	
<b>Calcutta</b>	
<b>Begum Hazrat Mahal Park</b>	

## OPTIONS

Place where the Begum found Asylum

Supporters of the Begum

Place where Nawab Wajid Ali Shah was exiled.

Person who designed postage stamp in honour of the Begum

Memorial dedicated to the Begum on Lucknow

Nawab of Awadh

The maiden name of Begum Hazrat Mahal

## Correct Answer

**Nawab Wajid Ali Shah** - Nawab of Awadh

**C.R.Pakrashi** - Person who designed postage stamp in honour of the Begum

**Nepal** - Place where he Begum found Asylum

**Muhammadi Khanum** - The maiden name of Begum Hazrat Mahal

**Sarafad-daulah and Maharaja Bal Krishna** - Supporters of the Begum

**Calcutta** - Place where Nawab Wajid Ali Shah was exiled.

**Begum Hazrat Mahal Park** - Memorial dedicated to the Begum in Lucknow

## URL

[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/a/af/Rupee\\_of\\_Wajid\\_Ali\\_Shah\\_of\\_Awadh.jpg/240px-Rupee\\_of\\_Wajid\\_Ali\\_Shah\\_of\\_Awadh.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/a/af/Rupee_of_Wajid_Ali_Shah_of_Awadh.jpg/240px-Rupee_of_Wajid_Ali_Shah_of_Awadh.jpg)

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**Qaisarbagh** is a complex in the city of Lucknow, located in the Awadh region of India. It was built by Wajid Ali Shah (1847-1856), the last Nawab of Awadh

[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/4/47/Birjis\\_Qadr.jpg/200px-Birjis\\_Qadr.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/4/47/Birjis_Qadr.jpg/200px-Birjis_Qadr.jpg)

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