

NCERT Textbook Questions with Answers

Q.1. Describe the circumstances leading to the outbreak of revolutionary protest in France.

Ans. The following circumstances led to the outbreak of revolutionary protest in France :

- (i) **Social Inequality** : France was suffering from social inequality. The clergy and the nobility led a luxurious life and enjoyed many privileges by birth. While the peasant and the labourer lived very hard life. They had to pay heavy taxes.
- (ii) **Extravagant King** : Louis XVI spent lots of money on luxurious living and wasteful festivities. The high posts were generally auctioned which caused inefficiency in the administration. The people were irritated from such system.
- (iii) **Subsistence Crisis** : The population of France also increased from 23 million in 1715 to 28 million in 1789. Food grains were now in great demand, price of bread rose rapidly. This led to subsistence crisis.
- (iv) **Worse Economic Conditions** : Long years of war had drained the financial resources of France. To meet its regular expenses such as the cost of maintaining army, the court, etc. the state was forced to increase taxes.

- (c) **Immediate Cause** : On 5 May 1789, Louis XVI called together an assembly of Estates General to pass proposals for new taxes. Third estate protested against this proposal. This proved to be the immediate cause of the French Revolution.

Q.2. Which groups of French Society benefited from the revolution ? Which groups were forced to relinquish power ? Which sections of society would have been disappointed with the outcome of the revolution ?

Ans. The benefited groups of the French Society :

- (i) All the groups of the Third Estate were benefited from the revolution. These included peasants, artisans, landless labour, servants, merchants, court officials, lawyers, etc.
- (ii) The clergy and the nobility who enjoyed many privileges, were forced to relinquish power with the abolition of feudal system of obligations and taxes the clergy and the nobility came on the same level with the middle class.
- (iii) Nobles, clergy and women were disappointed with the outcome of the revolution as the promise of equality was not fulfilled.

Q.3. Describe the legacy of the French Revolution for the peoples of the world during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Ans. Consequences of the French Revolution (1789) did not bring several vital results for France only but for the other parts of the world as well.

- (i) The idea of liberty and democracy were the most important legacy of the French Revolution.
- (ii) It inspired revolutionary movements in almost every country of Europe and in South and Central America.
- (iii) The French Revolutionary ideas of fraternity spread from France to the rest of the Europe where feudal system were abolished.
- (iv) This revolution inspired the people with the ideal of freedom which became the basis of sovereignty.

Q.4. Draw up a list of democratic rights we enjoy today whose origins could be traced to the French Revolution.

Ans. List of Democratic Rights we enjoy today are :

- (i) Right to Freedom.
 - (ii) Right to Equality.
 - (iii) Right against Exploitation.
 - (iv) Right to Freedom of Religion.
 - (v) Cultural and Educational Rights.
 - (vi) Right to Constitutional Remedies.
- Right to Freedom and Right to Equality and Fraternity could be traced to the French Revolution.

Q.5. Would you agree with the view that the message of universal rights was beset with contradictions ? Explain.

Ans. (i) Yes, I agree with the view that the message of universal rights was beset with several contradictions.

(ii) We can explain it by the following points :

(a) Women were not given equal rights as the men.

(b) The notions of equality and freedom emerged as the central ideas of a new age, but in many countries they were reinterpreted and rethought in different ways. Most of the imperialist powers did not grant full freedom to the people of their colonies.

(c) All citizens did not have the right to vote. Only men above 25 years of the age who paid taxes equal to at least 3 days of a labourer's wage were given the status of active citizens, that is, they were entitled to vote. To be eligible as an elector and then as a member of the Assembly, a man had to belong to the highest bracket of taxpayers.

(d) The task of representing the people had been given to the rich only.

Q.6. How would you explain the rise of Napoleon ?

Ans. The Rise of Napoleon Bonaparte :

(i) After France become a republic in 1792, the then ruler, Robespierre, gave more privileges to the wealthier section of society.

(ii) A new constitution was introduced which denied the vote to non-propertied sections of society. It provided for two elected legislative councils.

(iii) Both the legislative councils appointed a Directory, an executive made up of five members. This was meant as a safeguard against the concentration of power in a one-man executive as under the Jacobins.

(iv) However, the Directors often clashed with the legislative councils, who then sought to dismiss them. The political instability of the Directory paved the way for the rise of a military dictator, Napoleon Bonaparte.

(v) In 1804, Napoleon Bonaparte crowned himself as Emperor of France.