

Important Question For Class-9 Chapter-1 French Revolution

1. Describe the division of French society before French revolution?

Answer

Before French revolution, French society was divided into three Estates:

(i) First Estate (Clergy): It comprised of persons who were involved in the functions of church. They were exempted from paying taxes and enjoyed certain privileges by birth.

(ii) Second Estate (Nobility): It comprised those persons who had high social and political rank. They enjoyed certain privileges based on birth and also exempted from paying taxes. They also enjoyed feudal privileges. They extract feudal dues from the peasants.

(iii) Third Estate: It comprises of big businessmen, merchants, court officials, lawyers, peasants, artisans, small peasants, landless labourers and servants. They pay direct tax to state called taille and a number of indirect taxes, levied on articles of everyday consumption. Peasants also pay called tithes to church.

2. How did the political system work in France under the constitution of 1791?

Answer

(i) The Constitution of 1791 gave the power to make laws in the National Assembly, which was indirectly elected.

(ii) Citizens were given the right to vote for an electoral group which in turn, elected the Assembly.

(iii) But all the citizens were not given this right. Only those men older than 25 years who paid taxes equal to minimum 3 days of a labourer's wage were given this right.

(iv) Rest of the men and women were classed as passive citizens and not given right to vote.

3. How was slavery abolished in France?

Answer

(i) The National Assembly held long debates about whether the rights of man should be extended to all French subjects including those in the colonies but it did not pass any laws, fearing opposition from businessmen whose incomes depended on the slave trade.

(ii) It was finally the Convention which in 1794 legislated to free all slaves in the French overseas possessions.

(iii) However, ten years later, Napoleon reintroduced slavery.

(iv) Slavery was finally abolished in French colonies in 1848.

4. Describe the concept of active and passive citizens of France.

Answer

(i) Active citizens were those who had the right to vote.

(ii) Only men above 25 years of age who paid taxes equal to at least 3 days of a labourer's wage were given the status of active citizens.

(iii) Passive citizens were the remaining men and all women. They had no right to vote.

5. What was the Estates General? Which demand of the Third Estate did Louis XVI reject?

Answer

The Estates General was a political body to which the three estates i.e., the clergy, the nobility and the third estate sent their representatives.

(i) In the past, voting in the Estates General had been conducted according to the principle that each estate had one vote.

(ii) But the third estate demanded that voting now be conducted by the assembly as a whole, where each member would have one vote.

6. Describe briefly the contribution of Mirabeau in the formation of National Assembly.

Answer

(i) Mirabeau was born in a noble family but was convinced of the need to do away with a society of feudal privilege.

(ii) On 20 June, representatives of the third estate led by Mirabeau and Abbé Sieyès, assembled in the hall of an indoor tennis court in the grounds of Versailles.

(iii) Mirabeau brought out a journal and delivered powerful speeches to the crowds assembled at Versailles.

7. How did peasants protest against the feudal lords or nobles in the countryside of France?

Answer

(i) In the countryside rumours spread from village to village that the lords of the manor had hired people who were on their way to destroy the ripe crops.

(ii) Due to fear, peasants in several districts seized hoes and pitchforks and attacked chateaux.

(iii) They looted hoarded grain and burnt down documents containing records of manorial dues.

(iv) A large number of nobles fled from their homes, many of them migrating to neighbouring countries.

8. Why was the reign of Robespierre termed as 'reign of terror' despite various reforms introduced by him?

Answer

(i) Robespierre's government adopted various reforms such as maximum ceiling on wages and prices, rationed meat and bread, fixed prices of grains, made whole-wheat bread compulsory for all and converted buildings of churches into barracks or offices.

(ii) However, his period from 1793 to 1794 is referred to as the Reign of Terror because Robespierre followed a policy of severe control and punishment.

(iii) All those whom he saw as being 'enemies' of the republic – ex-nobles and clergy, members of other political parties, even members of his own party who did not agree with his methods – were arrested, imprisoned and then tried by a revolutionary tribunal.

(iv) If the court found them 'guilty' they were guillotined.

(v) Robespierre pursued his policies so relentlessly that even his supporters began to demand moderation.

9. What measures were taken by the Robespierre to bring about equality in the French society?

Answer

(i) Robespierre's government issued laws placing a maximum ceiling on wages and prices.

(ii) Meat and bread were rationed.

(iii) Peasants were forced to transport their grain to the cities and sell it at prices fixed by the government.

(iv) The use of more expensive white flour was forbidden and all citizens were required to eat a loaf made of wholewheat.

(v) Instead of the traditional Monsieur (Sir) and Madame (Madam) all French men and women were henceforth Citoyen and Citoyenne (Citizen).

(vi) Churches were shut down and their buildings converted into barracks or offices.

10.

Explain the role of philosophers in the French Revolution.

Answer

(i) The philosophers presented idea of a society based on freedom and equal laws and opportunities for all.

(ii) John Locke in his book 'Two Treatises of Government', sought to refute the doctrine of the divine and absolute right of the monarch.

(iii) Rousseau carried the idea forward, proposing a form of government based on a social contract between people and their representatives.

(iv) In 'The Spirit of the Laws', Montesquieu proposed a division of power within the government between the legislative, the executive and the judiciary.

(v) The ideas of these philosophers were discussed intensively in salons and coffee-houses and spread among people through books and newspapers.

11.

Emergence of middle class and their belief gave last blow to monarchy rule in France. Explain.

Answer

(i) In the past, peasants and workers had participated in revolts against increasing taxes and food scarcity. But they lacked the means and programmes to carry out full-scale measures.

(ii) The middle class earned their wealth through an expanding overseas trade and from the manufacture of goods.

(iii) All of these were educated and believed that no group in society should be privileged by birth. Rather, a person's social position must depend on his merit.

(iv) These wanted a society based on freedom and equal laws and opportunities for all which were put forward by philosophers. Thus, they revolted against the cruel regime.

12. What was the name of direct tax collected by the state from the peasants in the 18th Century of France?

Answer

Tax named Taille was collected by the state from the peasants in the 18th Century of France.

13. Which was treasury empty when Louis XVI ascended the throne?

Answer

Long years of war had drained the financial resources of France therefore, Louis XVI found an empty treasury when he ascended the throne.

14. Whom did Louis XVI get married to?

Answer

Louis XVI get married the Austrian princess Marie Antoinette.

15. When did the French Revolution begin?

Answer

The French Revolution began on 14th July 1789 with the storming of Bastille fortress prison.

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

Answer

The circumstances leading to the outbreak of revolutionary protest in France were:

→ **Social Inequality:** French society in the eighteenth century was divided into three estates namely The Clergy, The nobility and third estates. First two estates, that is, the clergy and the nobility enjoyed certain privileges by birth. They were exempt from paying taxes. The Third estate comprises of businessmen, merchants, Peasants and artisans, labours had to pay taxes to the state.

→ **Political Causes:** Long years of war had drained the financial resources of France. France had a debt of more than 2 billion *livres*. To meet its regular expenses, such as the cost of maintaining an army, the court, running government offices or universities, the state was forced to increase taxes which angered the people.

→ **Economic Problems:** The population of France also increased from 23 million in 1715 to 28 million in 1789. Food grains were now in great demand. The price of bread shot up. Wages did not keep pace with rising prices. This led to subsistence crisis.

→ Strong Middle Class: A new middle class emerged educated and wealthy during the eighteenth century. They believed that no group in society should be given privileges by birth. Ideas of equality and freedom were put forward by philosophers. The ideas of these philosophers were discussed intensively in salons and coffee houses and spread among people.

→ Immediate Causes: On 5 May, 1789, Louis XVI called together an assembly of Estates General to pass proposals for new taxes. Third estates protested against this proposal but as each estate has one vote, the king rejected this appeal. They walked out of the assembly.

17. How would you explain the rise of Napoleon?

Answer

After Robespierre's rule came to an end a directory was formed to avoid concentration of power in one individual. Members of the directory often fought among themselves leading to total chaos and political instability. This created a political vacuum in France. This was a conducive situation and Napoleon Bonaparte took the reign of power as a military dictator.

Napoleon saw his role as a moderniser of Europe. He introduced many laws such as the protection of private property and a uniform system of weights and measures provided by the decimal system.