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Sanjiv Refresher

SOCIAL SCIENCE

Based on Latest NCERT Text Book

For Class-9

Price : ₹ 340/-

Publisher :

SANJIV PRAKASHAN
Jaipur

- Published by :
Sanjiv Prakashan
Dhamani Market, Chaura Rasta,
Jaipur-302003
email : sanjeevprakashanjaipur@gmail.com
website : www.sanjivprakashan.com

- © Publisher

- Laser Type Setting :
Sanjiv Prakashan (D.T.P. Department),
Jaipur

- Printers :
Punjabi Press, Jaipur

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Postal Address : Publication Department
Sanjiv Prakashan,
Dhamani Market, Chaura Rasta,
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Social Science—Class IX

India and the Contemporary World-I (History)

SECTION I : EVENTS AND PROCESSES

1. THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

SUMMARY

1. French society during the late Eighteenth Century-

- (i) French society in the eighteenth century was part of the feudal system. French society was divided into three estates—
 - (i) Clergy
 - (ii) Nobility
 - (iii) Merchants, servants, labour etc.
- (ii) First two categories were freed from paying taxes. Only the people of third estate had to pay tax.
- (iii) A tax tithe levied by the church, comprising one-tenth of the agricultural produce.
- (iv) All members of the third estate had to pay taxes to the state. These included a direct tax, called *taille*.

1.1. The struggle to Survive-

Due to increasing population of France, increasing demand for food grains, increase in food items, low wages etc. increased the gap between the poor and the rich. Due to outbreak of drought and hail, the fall of yield led to a subsistence crisis.

1.2. A Growing Middle class Envisages and kind to Privileges-

The eighteenth century witnessed the emergence of social groups, termed the middle class. In addition to merchants and manufacturers, the third estate included professions such as lawyers or administrative officials. The ideas envisaging a society based on freedom and equal laws and opportunities were put forward by philosophers such as John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau. The American constitution and its guarantee of individual rights was an important example for political thinkers in France. The news that Louis XVI planned to impose further taxes to be able to meet the expenses of the state generated anger and protest against the system of privileges.

2. The Outbreak of the Revolution-

- (i) On 5 May 1789, Louis XVI called together an assembly of the Estates General to pass the proposals for new taxes.
- (ii) The first and second estates sent 300 representatives each, who were seated in rows facing each other on two sides, while the 600 members of the third estate had to stand at the back.
- (iii) Voting in the Estates General in the past had been conducted according to the principle that each estate had one vote.

- (iv) This time too Louis XVI was determined to continue the same practice. But the members of the third estate demanded that voting now be conducted by the assembly as a whole, where each member would have one vote.
- (v) When the king rejected the proposal, members of the third estate walked out of the assembly in protest. On 20 June 1789, they assembled in the hall of an indoor tennis court in the grounds of Versailles and declared themselves as National Assembly.
- (vi) The public was also agitated due to inflation. At the same time, the king ordered troops to move into Paris. On 14 July 1789, the agitated crowd stormed and destroyed the Bastille.
- (vii) Finally, Louis XVI gave recognition to the national assembly and accepted the principle that his powers would from now on be checked by a constitution. On the night of 4 August 1789 the Assembly passed a decree abolishing the feudal system of obligations and taxes. Members of the clergy too were forced to give up their privileges. Tithes were abolished and lands owned by the church were confiscated.

2.1. France Becomes a Constitutional Monarchy-

In 1791, the National Assembly completed the drafts of the constitution and main object was to limit the powers of the monarch. These powers instead of being concentrated in the hands of one person, were now separated and assigned to different institutions—The Legislature Executive and Judiciary. The Constitution of 1791 vested the power to make laws in the National Assembly. The Constitution began with Declaration of the rights of Man and Citizen but all citizens were not given right to vote.

3. France Abolishes Monarchy and Becomes a Republic-

- (i) Large sections of the population were convinced that the revolution had to be carried further, as the Constitution of 1791 gave political rights only to the richer sections of society.
- (ii) Political clubs became an important rallying point for people who wished to discuss government policies and plan their own forms of action.
- (iii) The most successful of those club was that of the Jacobins.
- (iv) The members of the Jacobin club belonged mainly to the less prosperous sections of society.
- (v) Their leader was Maximilian Robespierre.
- (vi) A large group among the Jacobins decided to wear long striped trousers similar to those worn by dock workers.
- (vii) These Jacobins came to be known as the sans-culottes, literally meaning those without knee breeches.
- (viii) In the summer of 1792 the Jacobins planned an insurrection of a large number of Parisians who were angered by the short supplies and high prices of food.
- (ix) Later the Assembly voted to imprison the royal family. Elections were held from now on all men of 21 years and above, regardless of wealth, got the right to vote.
- (x) The newly elected assembly was called the convention. On 21 September, 1792 it abolished the monarchy and declared France a republic.

3.1. The Reign of Terror-

The period from 1793 to 1794 is referred to as the 'Reign of Terror'. Robespierre followed a policy of severe control and punishment.

- Finally, he was convicted by a court in July 1794, arrested and on the next day sent to the guillotine.

3.2. A directory Rules France-

The fall of the Jacobin government allowed the wealthier middle classes to seize power; denied the vote to non-propertied sections of society. It provided for two elected legislative councils, which then appointed a Directory, an executive made up of five members. Due to the directors and the legislative councils clashing, the political instability of the Directory paved the way for the rise of a military dictator-Napoleon Bonaparte.

4. Did Women have a Revolution?

Women were active participants from the very beginning in the events which brought about so many important changes in French society. Women were disappointed that the constitution of 1791 reduced them to passive citizens. Women could now train for jobs, could become artists or run small businesses. It was finally in 1946 that women in France won the right to vote.

5. The Abolition of Slavery-

- One of the most revolutionary social reforms of the Jacobin regime was the abolition of slavery in the French colonies.
- The convention of 1794 legislated to free all slaves in the French overseas possessions. Ten years later, Napoleon reintroduced slavery. Slavery was finally abolished in French colonies in 1848.

6. The Revolution and Everyday life-

In 1789, law that came into effect was the abolition of censorship and the Declaration of the rights of Man and citizen proclaimed freedom of speech and expression to be a natural right. Opposing views of events could be expressed. This brought about many changes in the men, women and children of France.

Conclusion— The ideas of liberty and democratic rights were the most important legacy of the French revolution. These ideas were spread in the nineteenth century in Europe and the feudal systems were abolished.

INTEXT QUESTIONS

Page No. 5

Q. Explain why the artist has portrayed the nobleman as the spider and the peasant as the fly. (See Fig. 3)

- Ans.** (i) The fly wanders, here and there and does hard labour for the food whereas the spider makes the system to trap the fly.
- (ii) Thus the spider does not do any hard labour for the food like the fly.
- (iii) Likewise, the nobleman makes a system where he gets his food due to his system in which a peasant is trapped to bring all eatables for the nobleman.

Page No. 6

Q. Fill in the blank boxes in Fig. 4 with appropriate terms from among the following :
Food riots, scarcity of grain, increased number of deaths, rising food prices, weaker bodies.

Ans.

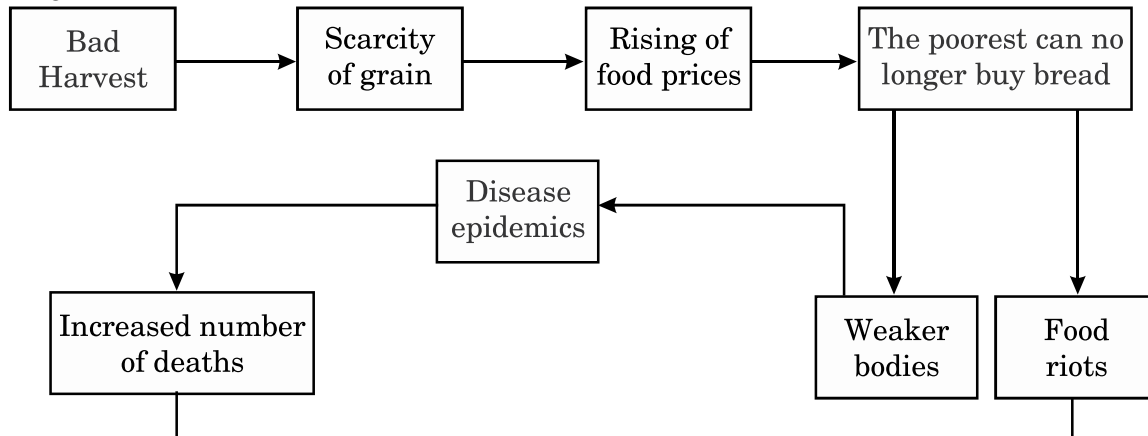


Fig : The course of a subsistence crisis

Page No. 7

Q. An Englishman, Arthur Young, travelled through France during the years from 1787 to 1789 and wrote detailed descriptions of his journeys. He often commented on what he saw.

Ans. 'He who decides to be served and waited upon by slaves, ill-treated slaves at that, must be fully aware that by doing so he is placing his property and his life in a situation which is very different from that he would be in, had he chosen the services of free and well-treated men. And he who chooses to dine to the accompaniment of his victims 'groans, should not complain if during a riot his daughter gets kidnapped or his son's throat is slit.'

- Q. (i) What message is Young trying to convey here?
 (ii) Whom does he mean when he speaks of 'slaves'?
 (iii) Who is he criticising?
 (iv) What dangers does he sense in the situation of 1787?**

Ans. (i) Arthur Young is conveying the message that the Lords were aware of the situation which would be different if they had chosen the services of free men from instead of slaves. The privileged should not complain when they face the consequences of their actions.
 (ii) By slaves, young means to unprivileged or deprived sections. 'Slaves' were the victims of French Social system.
 (iii) He is criticising nobles and the clergies who had made the poor people victims.
 (iv) He points out a sense of danger in the situation of 1787 in which the victim's groans can take the form of riots where lords' families are not safe. He thinks that in the situation of 1787, the underprivileged people can adopt the violent methods.

Page No. 16

Q. (i) Compare the views of Desmoulins and Robespierre. How does each one understand the use of state force? (ii) What does Robespierre mean by the 'war of liberty against tyranny'? (iii) How does Desmoulins perceive liberty?

Ans. (i) Robespierre understood the use of terror for a democratic government in the