

Q

Discuss the causes of French Revolution (CSS-2025)

A

CAUSES OF FRENCH REVOLUTION

INTRODUCTION

Give numbering to headings. Add quotation in Introduction.

History has witnessed a number of events which shaped the history. French Revolution is one such event that changed the course of European history. The revolution was not a consequence of a single cause rather a number of factors contributed to French revolution. These factors can be mainly grouped under ideological evolution as a consequence of enlightenment era, economic problems in French society, social structure of French society and political factors. All these factors contributed to French Revolution, the event that proved to be a precursor of modern European history.

A paragraph on background?

CAUSES OF FRENCH REVOLUTION

Following

at major events of French Revolution.

ENLIGHTENMENT IDEAS MADE PEOPLE THINK CRITICALLY

The era of

Social
Political
Economic
Literary

Enlightenment and ideas proposed in that era proved to be instrumental in French Revolution.

These ideas challenged the prevailing political, economic and religious beliefs of that time. The invention of press machine and translation of English literature to French added fuel to the fire.

ENLIGHTENMENT AND CRITIQUE ON RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

The enlightenment philosophers challenged the religious beliefs of French society. Religion provided the legitimacy to monarch through divine right theory.

(i) David Hume

David Hume was against the all sorts of organized religion. Any religion based on miracles was an ultimate deception as per David Hume. He considered this as a product of fear by primitive human beings.

(iii) Voltaire

"I may disapprove what you say, but I will defend to my death, your right to say it." Voltaire

Voltaire also challenged the prevailing religious beliefs. He was against the abductions and political crimes committed by Church-King nexus. He personally convinced Louis XV. to face the prisoners, imprisoned on political grounds.

ENLIGHTENMENT IDEAS CHALLENGED THE POLITICAL SYSTEM - ABSOLUTE MONARCHY

Precailing political system of France was absolute Monarchy, based of theory of divine kingship. This was challenged by following philosophes

(ii) Thomas Hobbes and theory of Divine Kingship

Thomas Hobbes' theory of social contract challenged the prevailing political system based on theory of Divine kingship. He advocated absolute monarchy but not on bases of divine kingship but

on bases of social contract between king and the governed. He advocate the Leviathan, an absolute monarch to control the small monsters.

(ii) Role of Ideas propagated by Thomas Hobbes John Locke

Lock gave the concept of constitutional monarchy. He advocated the concept of popular sovereignty - the idea that power belongs to the people. He was first person to advocate Revolution if Monarch is not able to fulfill his duties. He also advocated the idea of life, liberty, property. This became the bases of American and then French Revolution.

(iii) Role of Rousseau - The man behind French Revolution

"Man is born free but everywhere he is in chain"

- opening statement of his Social Contract

Finally, the Rousseau became the person, whose ideas ignited the French Revolution. He was a

big advocate of Direct democracy and general will.

ECONOMIC FACTORS AS CAUSE OF FRENCH REVOLUTION

(i) UNJUST TAXES - SALT TAX AND REVOLUTION

One major cause of French revolution was unjust taxes. There were a number of taxes on basic necessities. For example, salt tax in France, was one of the taxes which aggravated the French grievances.

(ii) DISCRIMINATION IN TAXES

Similarly, there was a discrimination in context of tax paying.

a - King owned the land but was exempted from taxes.

b - Nobility owned the land but were not imposed on nobels.

c - Church didn't pay the tax, rather collected the tax on name of religion.

d - Third & Estate paid most of taxes though no had no privileges.

3- Social Hierarchy of French society - Provided a foundation for Revolution

French society was divided in 3- Estates as

(i) First Estate - This represented clergy. They were privileged class and didn't pay tax rather imposed religious tax.

(ii) - Second Estate - This represented the nobles. They were people in royal court, military and civil bureaucracy. They were also privileged and didn't pay tax.

(iii) Third - Estate - This was a vast class and included the commoners. This class paid the taxes but were unprivileged. They included people ranging from peasants to merchants.

4) Political Factors and French Revolution

(i) Discriminated voting rights of three Estates

All the 3- Estates were given only one vote each. There was no vote by

had system. This was unjust and discriminatory as the First and second estate were combined 2% while third estate made 98% of population.

First Estate + Second Estate vs Third Estate

(1%)	(98%)
2 votes	1 vote

A paragraph on impact of the French Revolution

ESTATE GENERAL MET SINCE 1614

The estate

assembly of general had not met since 1614. This was another factor which shows that political system was run by an absolute monarchy. When meeting of Estate general was called in 1789, it became a cause of French Revolution.

CONCLUSION

So, it can be concluded that multiple factors were responsible to aggravate the situations which lead to French Revolution. These factors ultimately led to French Revolution of 1789, which was a remarkable event as

it shaped European history for next 300 years.

Causes of FR

Ideas



challenged political
order

challenged
religion
Belief

Economic
Problems

Anti-discriminatory
Taxes

Salt Tax

Political
problems

Discrimination
Voting
right

Dysfunctional
estate
structure

collapse of Divine
right Theory

No taxation
For clergy
Nobility

Grievances of
commoners

Revolution in
France