

Q. Poverty along with oppression prevalent in the ancient regime was responsible for the French Revolution. Do you agree?

Ans → French Revolution - The period (1789 - 1799) marked as a turning point in the history of humankind as it put an end to the medieval monarchical absolutism, feudal laws and social inequality.

Yes, I agree with the given statement.

1. Social Causes - Society was divided into three estates namely Clergy, Nobility and Middleclass. - Based on Inequality

- The first two classes were most privileged classes and were exempted from tax payments. They controlled most of the administrative posts and all the high ranking posts in the army. Their life was characterised by extravagance and luxury

- Poorer sections in these top estates blamed the richer members of their class for their misery.

- The Third Estate (farmers, Peasants and workers) formed majority of the population. They were burdened with excessive taxes and had no political and social rights. Soon they began to clash with the nobles.

2. Economic Causes - Participation of France in American War of Independence - crisis became more unbearable.

- National debt had increased beyond the limit.

- National Expenditure > National Income.

- Stage of bankruptcy - Government borrowings from internal and external sources.

- Faulty system of taxation - The Third Estate was overburdened with the taxes.

- Food shortage - Destruction of crops in 1787
• Poor food production • Inflation • Hardships of 3rd estate intensified.

Political Causes : France was ruled by a dynasty called House of Bourbon - believed in political absolutism.

- Divine Right Theory - that they were representatives of God and were answerable only to God.
- Weak Administrator - Louis XVI - most incompetent ruler, this led to anarchy, his wife Marie Antoinette took the major decisions, she was ignorant of the sufferings of the French people. she did not allow financial reforms to take place.
- Government agencies failed to deliver services to the people.
- Engagement in diplomatic & military conflicts with other countries to divert the attention of people.
- The Third Estate demanded equality in taxation.

Conclusion : The French Revolution influenced many countries like Italy and Germany. The legacy of French Revolution i.e. Liberty, Equality and Fraternity became the basis for democratic movements. Indian Reformists like Raja Ram Mohan Roy etc. were inspired by these ideals of the French Revolution.