

**SHORT QUESTIONS**

1. What was the condition of women in France before the Revolution?

Or

Evaluate the role of women in France before the Revolution.

Ans. The condition of women prior to the Revolution can be summed up as follows:

- i) Women were not considered to be citizens. They had no representative powers anywhere.
- ii) Women worked primarily as seamstresses, laundresses, sold flowers, fruits and vegetables, or as domestic servants.
- iii) Women's wages were lower than that of men.
- iv) They had to rear the children, do the cooking, fetch water and stand in line for purchasing bread.
- v) Women generally did not have access to education or any form of job training. Only the daughters of wealthier families could get convent education, after which they were married off.

2. Describe the divisions in French society before the French Revolution.

Ans. French society was divided into three categories or estates. They were:

i) First Estate – It consisted of the clergy who were part of the Church. They did not have to pay any taxes.

ii) Second Estate – The nobility formed this group. They included the aristocrats and landlords. Even this group was not paying taxes.

iii) Third Estate - The lowest and the final group had the majority within its folds. Businessmen, merchants, peasants, artisans, workers, teachers, doctors, lawyers, writers, landless labour, servants, etc. were part of this group. These people had no real political rights or representation but had to bear the complete burden of taxation.

3. What is the significance of the 'The Tennis Court Oath' in the French Revolution?

Ans. On 20th June 1789, the representatives of the Third Estate assembled together in the hall of an indoor tennis court at the Versailles Palace grounds and declared

themselves to be the National Assembly of France. They decided to form a Constitution that would curb the autocratic powers of the monarch. Leaders such as Mirabeau and Abbé Sieyès were the leading voices in the National Assembly. This event heralded the beginning of the rise of the oppressed common people against the rule of the privileged classes, which eventually led to the outburst of a full-fledged Revolution in France.

4. What do you understand by the term 'Reign of Terror'?

Ans. From September 1793 to July 1794, France was ruled by a single powerful man named Maximillian Robespierre. His methods were so harsh that about 15000 people were executed under his orders within a short period of time. He followed policies that were very severe and caused terror in the lives of the populace.

Anyone recognised as an 'enemy' of the republic, be it nobles, clergies, members of Robespierre's party or another political party, were arrested and tried by a revolutionary tribunal. Most of them were found guilty and were hence guillotined. Resentment arose once the situation became unbearable and Robespierre was finally



arrested and executed in July, 1794. The 'Reign of Terror' ended with his death.



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