**Causes of French Revolution: Economic, Political, and Social Causes**

**Directions: For each cause for revolution, determine if it is an economic, political, or social cause. Then pick out 4-5 examples of why it is that cause.**

During the eighteen the Century France was the center of autocratic monarchy. The French Monarchs had unlimited power and they declared themselves as the “Representative of God”.

The French Revolution is coming...

**Cause for Revolution:**

Louis XIV was the exponent of this view. The French Monarchs engaged themselves in luxurious and extravagance at the royal court of Versailles. They enjoyed unlimited power. By the Letter de Catchet, they arrested any person at any time and imprisoned them. They paid no attention towards their subjects.

Louis XIV (1643-1715) of the Bourbon Dynasty was a powerful monarch. He was an efficient, hard-working and confident ruler. He participated in many wars. Louis XIV’s concept of unlimited royal power is revealed by his famous remarks, “I am the State”.

Louis XV (1715-1774) succeeded Louis XIV He was a ‘butterfly monarch’. His defective foreign policy weakened the economic condition of France. Louis XV fought the Seven Years War against England which brought nothing for France. France became bankrupt due to over expenditure in wars and luxury. He realised it later on. Before his death he cried-‘After me the Deluge’.

After Louis XV, Louis XVI (1774-1793) ascended the throne of France. During that period, the economic condition of France became weak. Louis XVI was an innocent and simple man. But he was influenced by his queen Marie Antoinette who always interfered in the state affairs.

Out of frustration he uttered-“Oh! What a burden of mine and they have taught me nothing.” Marie Antoinette was the daughter of Marie Theresa, the Austrian Empress. She always felt proud as she was the daughter of Austrian Empress. She always enjoyed luxurious and extravagant life. She sowed seed of the French Revolution. Thus, the autocratic monarchy, defective administration, extravagant expenditure formed the political cause of the French Revolution.

**Cause for Revolution:**

The Social condition of France during the eighteenth century was very miserable. The then French Society was divided into three classes— the Clergy, Nobles and Common People.

The Clergy belonged to the First Estate. The Clergy was sub­divided into two groups i.e. the higher clergy and the lower clergy. The higher clergy occupied the top position in the society. They managed the churches, monasteries and educational institutions of France. They did not pay any tax to the monarch.

They exploited the common people in various ways. The higher clergy lived in the midst of scandalous luxury and extravagance. The common people had a strong hatred towards the higher clergy. On the other hand, the lower clergy served the people in true sense of the term and they lived a very miserable life.

The Nobility was regarded as the Second Estate in the French Society. They also did not pay any tax to the king. The Nobility was also sub divided into two groups-the Court nobles and the provincial nobles. The court nobles lived in pomp and luxury. They did not pay any heed towards the problems of the common people of their areas.

On the other hand, the provincial nobles paid their attention towards the problems of the people. But they did not enjoy the same privileges as the Court nobles enjoyed. The Third Estate formed a heterogeneous class. The farmers, cobblers, sweepers and other lower classes belonged to this class. The condition of the farmers was very miserable.

They paid the taxes like Taille, Tithe and Gable. In spite of this, the clergies and the nobles employed them in their fields in curve. The Bourgeoisie formed the top most group of the Third Estate. The doctors, lawyers, teachers, businessmen, writers and philosophers belonged to this class. They had the wealth and social status. But the French Monarch, influenced by the clergies and nobles, ranked them as the Third Estate.

So they influenced the people for revolution. They aroused the common people about their rights. Thus, the common people became rebellious. The lower Clergies and the provincial nobles also joined their hands with the common people along with the bourgeoisie. So the French Revolution is also known as the ‘Bourgeoisie Revolution’.

**Cause for Revolution:**

The economic condition of France formed another cause for the outbreak of the French Revolution. The economic condition of France became poor due to the foreign wars of Louis XIV, the seven years War of Louis XV and other expensive wars. During the reign period of Louis XVI, the royal treasury became empty as extravagant expenses of his queen Marie Antoinette.

To get rid of this condition, Louis XVI appointed Turgot as his Finance Minister in 1774. Turgot tried to minimize the expenditure of the royal court. He also advised the king to impose taxes on every classes of the society. But due to the interference of Queen Marie Antoinette, Louis XVI dismissed Turgot.

Then Necker was appointed as the Finance Minister in 1776. He published a report on the income and expenditure of the State in order to arouse the people. But he was also dismissed by the king.The next person who was appointed by the King as the Finance Minister of France in 1783 was Callone. He adapted the policy of borrowing in order to meet the expenditure of the royal court. But due to this policy, the national debt of France increased from 300,000,000 to 600,000,000 Franks only in three years.

Then Callone proposed to impose taxes on all the classes. But he was dismissed by the king. In this situation, the king at last summoned the States General. The economic instability formed one of the most important causes of the French Revolution.