

MODULE 2

HISTORY

The French Revolution

France Becomes a Constitutional Monarchy

- Limited powers to monarch.
- Powers to make laws by National Assembly (indirectly elected)

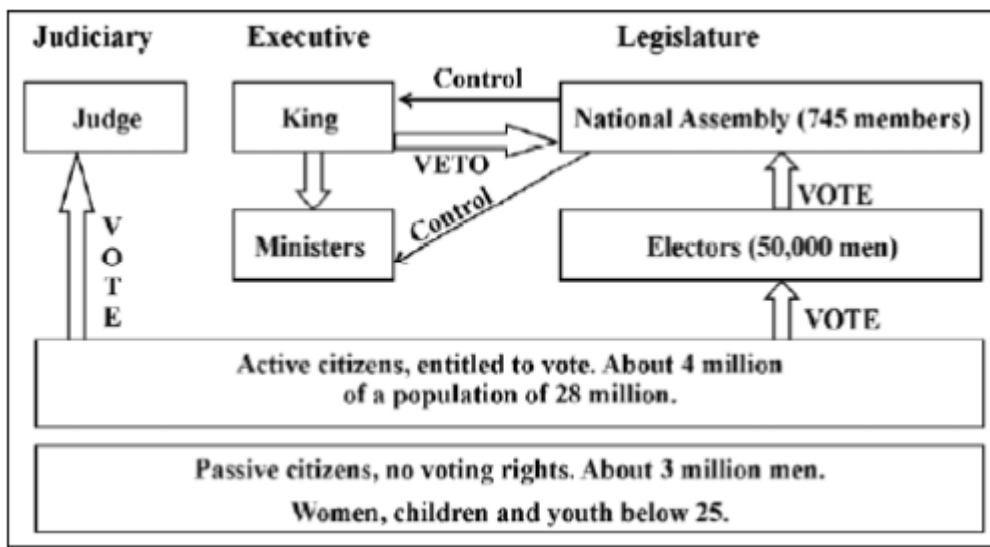


Fig: The Political system under the Constitution of 1791.

- Constitutional Monarchy was divided into 3:
 - Judiciary
 - Executive
 - Legislative
- There were two kinds of citizens-
 - Active- who were voting (only 4 million out of 28 million)
 - Passive- No voting rights (around 3 million)

Who could vote?

Only men above 25 yrs. of age who paid taxes equal to at least 3 days of a labourer's wage were given the status of active citizens, i.e., they were entitled to vote.

- To qualify as an elector and then as a member of the Assembly, a man had to belong to the highest bracket of tax payers.
- The revolutionary journalist Jean-Paul Marat commented in his newspaper L'Ami du peuple (Friends of people) – explained how wealth influence laws.
- The constitution began with a Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen.
- Rights such as the right to life, freedom of speech, freedom of opinion, equality before law, were established as 'natural and inalienable' rights i.e. they belonged to each human being by birth and could not be taken away.
- It was the duty of the state to protect each citizen's natural rights.

The Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizen

- Men are born and remain free and equal in rights.
- The aim of every political association is the preservation of the natural and inalienable rights of man; these are liberty, property, security and resistance to oppression.
- The source of all sovereignty resides in the nation; no group or individual may exercise authority that does not come from the people.
- Liberty consists of the power to do whatever is not injurious to others.

- The law has the right to forbid only actions that are injurious to society.
- Law is the expression of the general will. All citizens have the right to participate in its formation, personally or through their representatives. All citizens are equal before it.
- No man may be accused, arrested or detained, except in cases determined by the law.
- Every citizen may speak, write and print freely; he must take responsibility for the abuse of such liberty in cases determined by the law.
- For the maintenance of the public force and for the expenses of administration a common tax is indispensable; it must be assessed equally on all citizens in proportion to their means.
- Since property is a sacred and inviolable right, no one may be deprived of it, unless a legally established public necessity requires it. In that case a just compensation must be given in advance.

Political Symbols

- **Broken Chain**- act of becoming free
- **Bundle of rods**- strength lies in unity
- **Eye with triangle radiating light**- rays of sun drive away clouds of ignorance
- **Sceptre**- symbol of royal power
- **Snake biting its tail to form ring**- ring has no beginning or end (symbol of eternity)
- **Blue-white-red**: national colours of France
- **Red Phrygian cap**- cap worn by slaves on becoming free
- **Winged Woman**- personification of law
- **Law Tablet**- law is same for all and all are equal before law.

France Abolishes Monarchy and Becomes a Republic

- Louis XVI signed secret negotiations with Prussia.
- But in 1792, National Assembly raised war against Prussia and Austria- many people joined army.
- Patriotic songs they sang was the Marseillaise, composed by the poet Roget de L'Isle.
- It was sung for the first time by volunteers from Marseilles as they marched into Paris and so got its name.
- Marseillaise is now National Anthem of France.
- Losses and economic difficulties cropped in.
- Men were at fronts and women were earning living and looking after families.
- Many clubs were formed- major was Jacobins (after St. Jacob in Paris)

Jacobins- included small shopkeepers, artisans such as shoemakers, pastry cooks, watch-makers, printers, as well as servants and daily wage workers with leader named Maximillian Robespierre.

They wore long striped trousers which was different from knee breeches of fashionable section.

Jacobins were called as sans- culottes, literally meaning, 'those without knee breeches' along with red cap which symbolised liberty.

- Jacobins along with Parisians stormed Palace of Tuileries and held king as hostage for many hours.
- Later the Assembly voted to imprison the royal family. Elections were held.
- From now on all men of 21 yrs. and above, despite of wealth, got the right to vote.

- The newly elected assembly was called the Convention.
- On 21 September 1792 it abolished the monarchy and declared France a republic (people elect govt and there is no hereditary monarchy).
- Louis XVI was sentenced to death on charge of treason on 21 January 1793- executed publicly at Place de la Concorde.
- Same happened with Queen Marie Antoinette shortly.

USEFUL LINKS:

<http://ncert.nic.in/textbook/textbook.htm?iess3=1-5>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HPtBAu17FHI&feature=youtu.be>

Self-Assessment Questions

1. Who was the editor of the newspaper called L'Ami du peuple (The friend of the people)?
2. Who was the leader of the Jacobin club?
3. Who abolished monarchy in France and declared it a republic and when?
4. Who wrote the National Anthem of France?
5. Name the following symbols:
 - a. Royal Power
 - b. Eternity
6. Based on the French Constitution of 1791, who were known as "active citizens"?

