

## • **Social Cause**

- One of the main factors that led to the French Revolution was the unbalanced social structure of society during the Old Regime.

## • **Economic Cause**

- It was the main reason of the depletion of the treasury of the king.

## • **Political Cause**

- King was a person of Mediocre Intelligence.

## • **Immediate Cause**

- Formation of the Estate General.

## • **Intellectual Cause**

- Influence from the writers.

# The Social cause

- **In France, people were divided into three estates**

- **First Estate**

- *High-ranking members of the Church*
- *Privileged class*

- **Second Estate**

- *Nobility*
- *Privileged class*

- **Third Estate**

- *Everyone else – from peasants in the countryside to wealthy bourgeoisie merchants in the cities*
- *Unprivileged class*



# Economic Cause

- ❑ In 1774, Louis XVI of the Bourbon family of kings ascended the throne of France. He was 20 years old and married to the Austrian princess Marie Antoinette. Upon his accession the new king found an empty treasury. Long years of war had drained the financial resources of France.
- ❑ Added to this was the cost of maintaining an extravagant court at the immense palace of Versailles.
- ❑ Under Louis XVI, France helped the thirteen American colonies to gain their independence from the common enemy, Britain. The war added more than a billion livres to a debt that had already risen to more than 2 billion livres.
- ❑ Lenders who gave the state credit, now began to charge 10 per cent interest on loans. So the French government was obliged to spend an increasing percentage of its budget on interest payments alone. To meet its regular expenses, such as the cost of maintaining an army, the court, running government offices or universities, the state was forced to increase taxes. Yet even this measure would not have sufficed.
- ❑ The Church too extracted its share of taxes called tithes from the peasants, and finally, all members of the third estate had to pay taxes to the state. These included a direct tax, called taille, and a number of indirect taxes which were levied on articles of everyday consumption like salt or tobacco. The burden of financing activities of the state through taxes was borne by the third estate alone, which angered the common People

# Political Cause

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- Louis XVI, the king of France, was a person of mediocre intelligence. He ruled with the help of his empty headed wife 'Marie Antoinette', who appointed a number of her friends and relatives at high posts and kept some of them at pension. These people neither did any work nor they contribute to the National treasury. Instead they took salary from the Royal treasury.
- Louis XVI wanted to increase his territory. And to do so, he had to be engaged in wars which meant that he needed a large army for that purpose. Appointing so many soldiers, required money to pay salaries to them. It depleted the Royal treasury.

As a result, the king was forced to raise the taxes with the consent of the three estates. As the common people had to pay taxes, they became agitated against their monarch - Louis XVI.

# *Immediate Cause*

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- Compelled by Financial bankruptcy, the French Emperor Louis XVI called a meeting of Estate General in 1789. It generated much heat as the members of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Estate were determined to put forth their demand. However, the first two Estates i.e. 'the Clergy' and 'The Nobility' refused to have a joint meeting with the Third Estate. The members of the Third Estate walked of the Assembly.

**Some more causes are:-**

Religious

Wisdom