

Chapter-2

American Struggle for Independence

The beginning of modern era in the world history is associated with many events. The discovery of new sea routes in the 15th century by European countries is also included in them. Its goal was to develop new commercial ways so that the economy of European countries might be enriched by trade and commerce. In order to achieve that, Columbus discovered American continent in 1492. Again Amerigo Vespucci told us comprehensively about this large mainland. Gradually European countries established their colonies in this region. France and England mainly established their supremacy in the North America.

At that very time, new political veins were being expanded in Europe and ideas like individual freedom, protest against despotic power, equality and fraternity were being popular among people especially among intellectuals. Geographical distance of American colonies from England and ideological difference of inhabitants gradually created such a circumstances that England and its colonies really came on separate edges. The changing economic situation of that time also increased conflicts between both. Gradually colony dwellers came forward to get rid of the supremacy of England.

Reason :

American struggle for independence is an important event in the world history. It has the following reasons:

- 1. Lack of political autonomy in colonies:** There were mostly Englishmen in American colonies who saw only English parliamentary system and laws. So they wanted that type of democratic system in their colonies while the British ruler was against it. The Governors of Colonies were nominated by the King of

England. They were endowed with many privileges but were not responsible to colony dwellers. As a result there was always a situation of conflict. The colony dwellers were not considered able to govern so they were very dissatisfied.

2. Geographical distance: There was a great distance between England and America. They both were situated at different edges of Atlantic Ocean. Since there was lack of the means of transportation and communication that time, the British government was unable to have effective control over colonies. So the colony dwellers got benefit during freedom struggle.

3. Conflict between religions and social system: There was conflict between American colony and England on religious and social levels. On the one hand the Britishers followed Anglican view and believed in the supremacy of the church, on the other hand the American people have faith in puritan ideology. Having suffered religious harassment, the Protestants and the Puritans took shelter in America leaving England. They were inspired by the feeling of struggle and freedom from the very beginning and many times they demonstrated their military capacity. That is the reason that the Americans did not want to be associated with their motherland. British society was based on feudal and aristocratic system whereas American society was based on equality and democratic system. Thus there was religious and social equality in America which helped them strongly in freedom struggle.

4. Effect of seven-year war : A seven-year war was waged between England and France from 1756 to 1763. Before this war the colony dwellers were strongly associated with England because they were unable to save themselves from the French in Canada. But in this war France was defeated And they came out of fear. Now the only aim of the colony dwellers was to

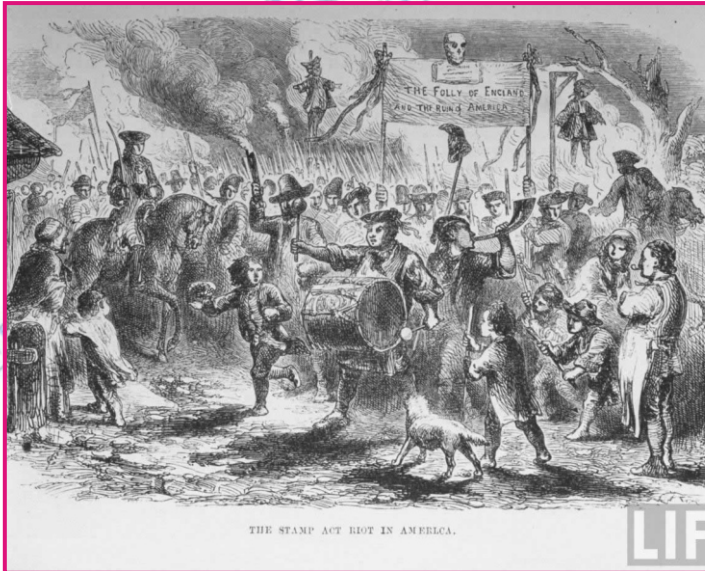
Reasons of American Struggle for Independence

- Lack of political autonomy in colonies
- Geographical distance
- Conflict between religions and social system
- Effect of seven-year war
- Anti-development economic policy
- Objectionable taxes
- The role of writers and preachers
- Despotic policy of George the Third
- Immediate reason Boston Tea Party

dispossess England. Prof. Pollard commented on this war. "The defeat of France provoked the Americans' desire of freedom."

5. Anti-development economic policy: A great conflict arose due to economic reasons. The basic concept of colonialism is that the ruling country has right to exploit the colony economically and utilize its resources. On the other hand, the concept of free trade was developing in which the control over trade by the state was opposed. According to this concept the colony dwellers did not like the interference of England in their trade and other activities. So the developing middle class in colonies wanted the end of the aristocratic rule by England.

6. Objectionable taxes : England had to face a great loss in the seven-year war. So as compensation, the then prime Minister Granville passed stamp act in 1765. According to this act, it was mandatory to fix a stamp of 20 shilling on all the court papers, newspapers etc. This act raised a great fury among colony dwellers and they decided to boycott the goods imported from Britain. In 1767 the British parliament imposed taxes on all the consumer items. These items were paper, glass, tea and varnish.



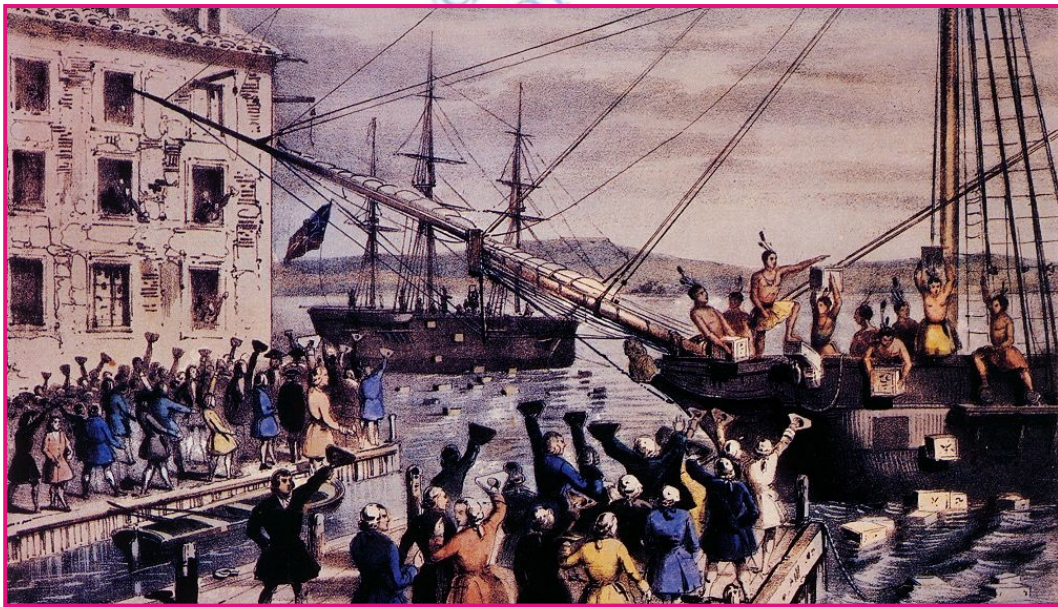
Protest against Stamp Act

The colony dwellers raised their strong voices against these taxes and Samuel Adams littered a slogan - "No representation, No taxes." To oppose the action of British government, the colony dwellers established organisations like 'the sons of freedom' and 'the daughters of freedom.'

7. The role of writers and preachers (Propagandist) : The writers and preachers played a great role in awakening the feelings of freedom. In 1776, Thomas Paine published a magazine 'Common Sense'. It effectively and excitedly advocated the necessity of independence. It opposed monarchy strongly. Thomas Jefferson supported the right to rebel and encouraged their desire of freedom.

8. Despotic policy of George the Third : The British ruler, George the third, adopted despotic policy for American colony. This policy was not popular even in England. He believed in the doctrine of individual ruling while the power of the council of ministers began to increase in England. The irresponsible ways of George the third ruined the possibilities of peaceful solution of the crisis aroused in colonies which became an important factor of freedom struggle.

9. Immediate reason Boston Tea Party: According to tea act in 1773, East India Company got the monopoly of exporting tea leaf from India to America. The colony dwellers opposed it very strongly. When the ship loaded



Incident of Boston Tea Party

with tea leaf reached the Boston harbour of America, some of the citizen cladding like tribes (Ped Indian) rode the ship and threw the tea boxes into the sea. So the British government imposed commercial ban on the Boston harbour and pushed the American colony into the fire of rebel.

On September 1774, the representatives of 13 colonies organised a continental conference in Philadelphia in which it was decided to oppose the British rules and boycott the trade. The first battle between the British army and company dwellers broke out on 18 April, 1775 in Lexington. After that the second continental conference was held in Philadelphia on July 4, 1776. In this conference, 'the manifesto of Freedom' prepared by Tomas Jefferson was issued and George Washington was appointed General of American colony.



George Washington



Announcement of American Independence

Thus began the American struggle for freedom and it ended on February 3, 1783 by Paris treaty, the constitution of America was formed in 1787 and came in action in 1789. George Washington was nominated the first President of America.

Effects:

American independence struggle is considered to be the line of demarcation in the world history. Its immediate and far reaching implications are remarkable:

1. The British possession of colony of very high value was no more in the possession of Britain and a powerful nation as United States of America came into existence beyond the Atlantic ocean and influenced all the world.
2. American freedom struggle was a revolt against the ban on trade and commerce. So it strengthened the theory of 'Laissez faire' by Adam Smith.
3. George the third and his ministers were blamed for the defeat of England and as a result:
 - a. The dream of George the Third of becoming a dictator was dashed off.
 - b. The Council of ministers of Lord North was dismissed and a liberal council of Ministers was appointed.
 - c. Several steps for reformation in England were taken up very shortly. As
 - i. The parliament of Ireland became nearly free (1782)
 - ii. Catholic Irish people got the right to vote (1793).
 - iii. The Irish parliament was associated with Westminster Parliament.
4. American freedom struggle influenced France too. The French army under the leadership of La Fayette took part in this struggle. When they came back to their motherland they tried to awaken the people against the despotic monarchy. On the other hand the economy of France was badly affected.

5. The participation of people in politics came into practice.
6. The people got religious and internal freedom and the basic freedom was accepted through fundamental rights.
7. The first written constitution came into force in America in 1789 by which the women got the right of property and succession laws were made judicious.
8. America was declared a democratic country and Minsters Quirk's theory 'the separation of powers' was accepted.
9. The right of adults to vote did not come into action and the women were kept deprived of the right to vote. The right to vote was based on property which was not judicious.
10. The United States of America emerged as a new nation for the first time where written constitution, theory of the separation of powers, theory of secularism and the theory of individual freedom were considered as at the fundamental principles of political system. These theories were expanded in Europe also and the French revolution in 1789 adopted them as guiding principles and established them across the world.

Impact of Industrialization

During American Freedom Struggle, the industrial revolution from West Europe was permeating into American society. So there emerged immense possibilities of economic development. There also developed a new work culture; several industries and factories were established. Raw materials to be used in these factories were already available. As a result of industrialisation, the agriculture sector also got encouragement and support of the economic sector and so registered unprecedented success that helped in the emergence of the USA as a strong and powerful developed nation.

The reasons for the failure of England

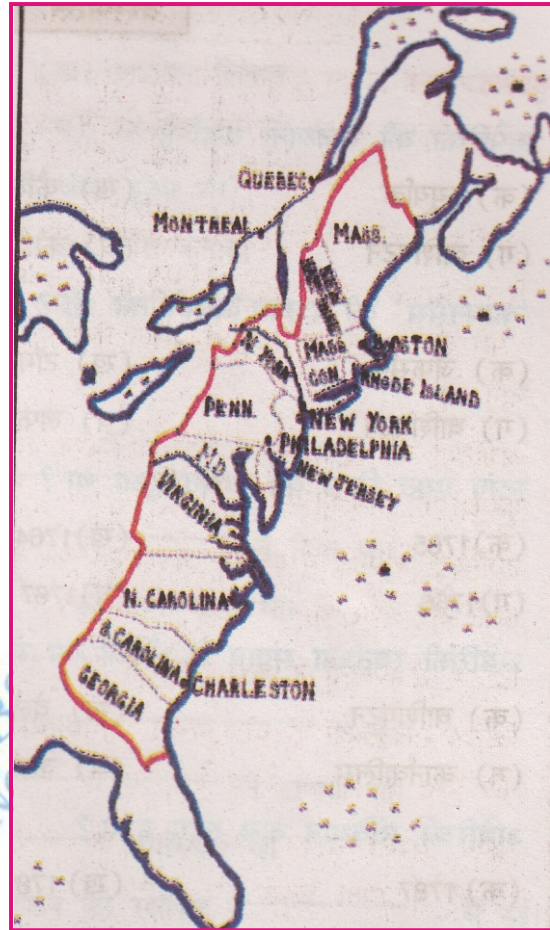
Though England was a powerful nation and had several colonies around the world, it had to face defeat in American freedom struggle. The followings are the cause of its failure:

1. American colonies were situated at a distance of 300 miles beyond the Atlantic Ocean. So it was not easy to send military forces and food items there in time. The British army, on the other hand, were not familiar with the geography of American region.
2. The American power was underestimated and most of the British took it only as a civil war.
3. The inhabitants of the colony were united and filled with zeal. They were ready to cross any limit for their freedom.
4. The British generals made some strategic mistakes.
5. There was some severe disagreement among the British politicians. Due to the policy of rigidity of George the third, the able and experienced leaders kept themselves aloof from the government.
6. Britain remained deprived of foreign support while American colonies got the full external support. France in particular provided military and financial support to the inhabitants of colonies.
7. America had a capable leader like George Washington who defeated the English army with a great patience, courage and skill.

Table - 1

America's 13 Colonies

1. New Hampshire
2. Massachusetts
3. Rhode Island
4. Connecticut
5. New York
6. New Jersey
7. Pennsylvania
8. Delaware
9. Maryland
10. Virginia
11. North Carolina
12. South Carolina
13. Georgia



EXERCISE

I. Objective type questions:

1. Where is the capital of the United States of America?
(a) New York (b) California
(c) Washington (d) None of these
2. Who wrote 'Common sense'?
(a) Jefferson (b) Tomas pain
(c) Washington (d) Lafayette
3. When was the Stamp Act passed?
(a) 1765 (b) 1764
(c) 1766 (d) 1767
4. Who was the British General in American freedom struggle?
(a) Washington (b) Valles Ely
(c) Cornwallis (d) Curzon
5. When did the constitution of the USA come into force?
(a) 1787 (b) 1789
(c) 1791 (d) 1793
6. In which country was the written constitution first promulgated?
(a) England (b) France
(c) America (d) Spain
7. By which treaty did the American freedom struggle get acceptance?
(a) The treaty of Paris (b) The treaty Villafranca
(c) The treaty of Newly (d) The treaty of Sevres
8. Who was the American General in American freedom struggle?
(a) Granville (b) Jefferson
(c) Lafayette (d) Washington

9. Who was the first president of the United States of America?
 (a) George Washington (b) Abraham Lincoln
 (c) Roosevelt (d) Al Gore
10. Which two countries were indulged in the seven-year war?
 (a) Britain-America (b) France Canada
 (c) Britain France (d) America Canada

II. Fill in the blanks:

1. _____ gave the theory of 'Lasses Fare'?
2. _____ propounded the theory of the 'Separation of powers'?
3. General Lafayette was a resident of _____.
4. George the third was the _____ of England.
5. The secular stage was first established in _____.
6. _____ discovered the new world (America).
7. The British had _____ colonies in America.
8. Modern democratic rule was first established in _____.
9. The immediate reason of American freedom struggle was _____.
10. _____ wrote the 'Rights of Man'.

III. Pick out the right/wrong statement and put a tick (✓) or cross (x) mark in the box given alongside.

1. George Washington was the first president of the USA ☐
2. America is situated in Europe continent ☐
3. During American freedom struggle, the organisation Named 'the son and daughter of freedom' emerged ☐
4. Columbus did not discover America. ☐
5. France was with England in American freedom struggle. ☐
6. Jefferson prepared the manifesto of American freedom. ☐
7. Stamp Act was passed in the time of Granville. ☐

- IV. Answer in about 10 words.
- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| (1) Democracy | (2) Fundamental right | (3) Franchise |
| (4) Colony | (5) Monarchy | |

V. Short answer type question:

1. Why was America or 'The New World' discovered?
2. The discovery of New World proved a ban for England. How?
3. The theory of 'Laissez Faire' motivated the colony dwellers for revolution. How?
4. How can you say that American freedom struggle left an impact on France?
5. Did the result of American freedom struggle leave impact on colonial world?

VI. Long answer question:

1. Discuss the three main reasons of American freedom struggle.
2. How has American freedom struggle motivated the world democratically?
3. Examine the results of American freedom struggle critically.
4. What are the reasons of the defeat of the British in American freedom struggle?

