



## The French Revolution

Q1. Give a brief account of slave trade in France.

Ans. The colonies in the Caribbean - Martinique, Guadeloupe and San Domingo - were important suppliers of commodities such as tobacco, indigo, sugar and coffee. But the reluctance of Europeans to go and work in distant and unfamiliar lands meant a shortage of labour on the plantations. So this was met by a triangular slave trade between Europe, Africa and the Americas. The slave trade began in the seventeenth century. French merchants sailed from the ports of Bordeaux or Nantes to the African coast, where they bought slaves from local chieftains. Branded and shackled, the slaves were packed tightly into ships for the three-month long voyage across the Atlantic to the Caribbean. There they were sold to plantation owners. The exploitation of slave labour made it possible to meet the growing demand in European markets for sugar, coffee, and indigo.

Q2. Describe the law introduced in France by Revolutionary Government to improve the lives of women.

Ans. The Society of Revolutionary and Republican Women was the most famous of them. One of their main demands was that women enjoy the same political rights as men.

In the early years, the revolutionary government did introduce laws that helped improve the lives of women.

i. Schooling was made compulsory for all girls.

ii. Their fathers could no longer force them into marriage against their will. Marriage was made into a contract entered into freely and registered under civil law.

iii. Divorce was made legal, and could be applied for by both women and men.

iv. Women could now train for jobs, could become artists or run small businesses.