



Mains Practice Question

Q. What were the circumstances leading up to the American War of Independence? Explain (150 Words)

30 May, 2022 GS Paper 1 History

Approach

- Briefly talk about the significance of American War of Independence
- Enumerate various events leading up to the American Revolution such as Seven Years War, Granville measures, Boston Tea Party etc.

Answer

The American War of Independence culminated in the freedom of the American colonies and laid the foundation of the first democratic government with a written constitution in the world. It introduced new political, social and economic structure in the United States of America.

It was not only a war against the colonial domination of England but was also fought against aristocracy and reactionary elements.

Circumstances leading up to the American War of Independence:

- **Seven Years War:** End of the Seven Years War in 1763 and the transfer of Canada from France to England removed the fear of French attack from the minds of the Americans. They could now fully focus on countering the British adversities.
- **Granville Measures:** British PM Granville passed a series of Acts which affected the interests of the American colonies such as The Sugar Act of 1764, The Stamp Act of 1765, The Quartering Act etc. These measures were severely opposed by the colonists. They raised the slogan "No Taxation without Representation" thus insisting for the American representation in the English Parliament.
- **Townshend Laws:** British minister Townshend imposed new taxes on glass, paper, tea, paints, etc in 1767. The Americans protested these measures and boycotted British goods. The protest led to the killing of five Americans by British soldiers which came to be known as the Boston Massacre.
- **Boston Tea Party:** In 1773, a new Tea Act was passed imposing a tax on import of tea which was protested by Americans. A group of Americans dressed as Red Indians climbed on the ships and threw away the tea bundles into the sea at the Boston harbour. This event was known as the Boston Tea Party.
- **Philadelphia Congress:** In 1774 and 1775 representatives of American colonies met twice at Philadelphia. They appealed to the British King to remove restrictions on industries and trade and not to impose any taxes without their consent which was rejected by the British monarch. As a last attempt, an Olive Branch Petition was sent to the British King George III, who rejected it. Thus American colonists decided to unite in their fight against the British.
- **Declaration of Independence:** A pamphlet named "Common Sense" began to be circulated in the colonies which attacked the idea of hereditary monarchy and advocated democratic government. The pamphlet inculcated the fighting spirit among the Americans. Ultimately On 4th July 1776, the American Declaration of Independence was adopted by the Continental Congress. The declaration included the ideals of human freedom in it and laid emphasis on the unalienable rights of men namely, "Life, Liberty and Pursuit of Happiness".

The war which started in 1775 finally ended in 1781 where British troops under the command of General Cornwallis surrendered to Commander in Chief Washington at Yorktown. The war finally came to an end by the Treaty of Paris in 1783.

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