

NCERT Solutions for Class 9 Social Science

History : Chapter 8 Clothing : A Social History

Activities

Question 1 Imagine you are the 14-year-old child of a trader. Write a paragraph on what you feel about the sumptuary laws in France.

Answer The sumptuary laws in France are aimed at controlling the behaviour of those considered socially inferior by the aristocracy. These laws prevented individuals from the lower strata of society, like my trading family, from wearing certain clothes, consuming certain foods and beverages, and hunting game in certain areas.

These laws have been in existence in France for 500 years. They do not want us enjoy our lives, even if we have the money to do so. This has also reduced our customers, as we are able to sell the good things to only a limited number of people. So, now my father is trying to sell the expensive goods in other European countries by exporting them.

Question 2. Can you think of any expectations of proper and improper dress which exist today? Give examples of two forms of clothing which would be considered disrespectful in certain places but acceptable in others.

Answer : The quality and applicability of dresses on various occasions and at various locations make them acceptable or disrespectful. Our expectations of a dress would be that it should be comfortable and not hampering movement, cover the body adequately so it does not appear indecent and that it should cover us against any adverse weather conditions like intense heat, freezing cold and so on.

Forms of clothing which may be considered acceptable or disrespectful in different situations can be as follows

1. A pyjama – kurta will be acceptable if worn at home, but will not suit a dress for a modern office job, where western style dress will be more suitable.
2. If a lawyer is arguing a case in Court and attends it wearing Jeans and T-shirt, it will be considered disrespectful to the Court. However, if the lawyer is attending a picnic with his family and friends with the same Jeans and T-shirt, it will be considered appropriate.

Questions :



Question 1. Explain the reasons for the changes in clothing patterns and materials in the 18th century.

Answer : Changes in clothing patterns and materials in the 18th century took place due to events like the French Revolution, which ended the restrictions imposed by the sumptuary laws.

Due to colonialism, different cultures came into contact with each other and were in turn influenced by each other's cultures dress styles. Thus, changes took place in the clothing patterns.

Trade with India brought the beautiful and easy to maintain Indian chintzes within the reach of Europeans.

Question 2. What were the sumptuary laws in France?

Answer : In medieval Europe, dress codes were sometimes imposed upon members of different layers of the society through actual laws which were spelt out in some detail.

From about 1294 to the time of the French Revolution in 1789, the people of France were expected to strictly follow what were known as 'sumptuary laws'.

The sumptuary laws tried to control the behaviour of those considered social inferior, preventing them from wearing certain clothes, consuming, certain food and beverages and hunting game in certain areas.

In France, the items of clothing a person could purchase per year was regulated not only by income but also by social rank. The material to be used for clothing was also legally prescribed.

Only royalty (the ruling class) could wear expensive material like ermine and fur or silk and brocade.

The lower classes could not clothe themselves with materials that were associated with the aristocracy.

Question 3. Give any two examples of the ways in which European dress codes were different from Indian dress codes.

Answer



European Dress Code

1. Europeans used to wear hats which were removed before social superiors as a sign of respect
2. The dress code In Europe was influenced by apersons economic and social status.

Indian Dress Code

1. Indians used to wear trubans to protect them from the heal. It was a symbol of respect and could not be removed at will.
2. The dress code in India was influenced andfollowed by the caste system.

Question 4. In 1805, a British official Benjamin Heyne, listed the manufactures of Bangalore which included the following

- Women's cloth of different musters and names
- Coarse chintz
- Muslins
- Silk clothes

Of this list, which kind of cloth would have definitely fallen out of use in the early 1800's and why?

Answer : In the early 1800s, the East India Company was exporting a large quantity of silk clothes, coarse chintz and muslin to England, as such clothes were not available 'n England or even in Europe. Due to this, such cloth material became expensive in India and so they fell out of use Also, western clothes were influencing the men in Indian society and they were adopting to the mill-made clothes quickly. Trus further led to reduction in use of silk, coarse chintz and muslin.

Question 5. Suggest reasons why women in 19th century India were obliged to continue wearing traditional Indian dress even when men switched over to more convenient Western clothing. What does this show about the position of women in society?

Answer

In the 19th century, Indian men SWitched over to more convenient Western clothing but wornen were obliged to continue wearing traditiona. Indian dress because they were bound by the traditions, customs and social values of India. Indian society was a patriarchal society or a male dominated society and women were supposed to uphold the family honour and wear traditional clothes. This implies that the women were constcered inferior to men In Indian society.



Question 6. Winston Churchill described Mahatma Gandhi as ‘Seditious Middle Temple Lawyer’ now ‘posing as a half naked fakir’.

What provoked such a comment and what does it tell you about the symbolic strength of Mahatma Gandhi’s dress?

Answer : Winston Churchill described Mahatma Gandhi as a ‘Seditious Middle Temple Lawyer’ now ‘posing as a half naked fakir’ because Mahatma Gandhi adopted the dress of the poorest Indian. He started to wear a short dhoti without a shirt, which he even wore when he went to England for the Round Table Conference in 1931.

He wanted to identify himself with the poor common man of India, to support Swadeshi Movement and encourage boycott of British goods to show resistance to the British. Discarding of Western clothing and adoption of the simple dhoti and sometimes a chadder served as a symbolic weapon against British rule.

Question 7. Why did Mahatma Gandhi’s dream of clothing the nation in khadi appeal only to some sections of Indians?

Answer : Mahatma Gandhi’s dream of clothing the nation in khadi appealed only to some sections of Indian because

1. Those who had been deprived of proper dress by caste norms for centuries were attracted to Western dress styles and other nationalists such Babashaheb Ambedkar never gave up his western style suit.
2. Earlier, many dalits and other so called subordinate classes were prevented from dressing like upper castes: Woman of the Shanar caste were not allowed to cover their upper body parts or use umbrellas, wear shoes or golden ornaments. They now started experimenting and wearing Western clothes and did not favour khadi.
3. Khadi was expensive and the poor could not afford it.
4. Khadi was usually white and in India white clothes are worn when there is a death. Widows wear white saris and the dead body is covered with a white cloth. So khadi was not worn by many people.
5. Khadi was very costly to buy and most people could not make it home. So, the poor people could not wear khadi.