

Subsistence Crisis

Subsistence Crisis means an extreme situation where basic means of livelihood are endangered. It is a crisis caused by economic factors generally, and particularly by rising food prices, which threaten the survival of human beings. During the Old Regime in France, subsistence crisis occurred frequently. There were several reasons responsible for this.

- Increase in population. The population of France rose from 23 million in 1718 to 28 million in 1789.
- Increase in demand of foodgrains.
- Food production could not keep pace with the increasing demands so the prices of foodgrains increased. Price of bread which was the staple diet of the majority of people, rose rapidly.
- Most workers were employed as labourers on fixed wages. But wages did not keep pace with rise in prices.
- Bad harvest or drought or hailstorm made the food crisis worse.
- The gap between the rich and the poor widened.
- Due to high taxes, poor did not have stocks for the lean season or bad times.