

Topic: Causes, practices and effects of war

1. Analyze the economic and social results on the civilian population of one of the 20th century war.

1. Introduction:

- Definition of economic results– the economic situation of the civilian such as employment opportunities, conditions at their work place such as wages, during as well as at the end of the war due to disruption caused by the war and the post-war peace treaties
- Definition of social results – changes in the social status of men and women such as change in their roles, change in their job opportunities that could have brought about changes to their status in the society, impact on civilians’ standard of living, acceptance and social status of the civilian combatant when they returned home during as well as the end of the war
- Civilian population – civilians at home front
- One of the 20th century wars – World War 1
- **To a large extent the civilian population experienced adverse economic and social results**

2. Body section, given factor –: economic result

-Students should *discuss the economic impact of WWI on the civilian population*

Shortages Experienced by Civilians during the War

- Powers on both side of the countries tried to disrupt each other’s trade routes, and prevent vital foods and raw materials
- The British naval blockade of the German ports caused desperate food shortages in the home front
- Germany’s use of submarine warfare also subjected British civilians to shortages – in 1917 Britain was reduced to just a few days’ supply of sugar and a week or so of meat
- The average of daily calorie input for a civilian adult dropped from around 1500 in 1915 to below 1000 in winter of 1916-17
- In Britain, the exodus of farm labourers into factories and the military and shortage of farm machinery due to **focus on military production** also contributed to food shortages
- In Germany, by the end of the war, Germany was at the point of economic collapse and there were instances of people eating cats and dogs to survive due to the British naval blockade of the German ports
- Rationing was introduced to improve food conditions for civilians in many countries
- Government control over food for rationing improved nutritional standard – consumption of sugar, grain and butter led to health benefits
- Through price fixing and rationing, the British government managed to prevent the British civilians from suffering as much as other in the other parts of Europe during the war time food shortages

Impact on Industrial Workers

- Due to total mobilization of the economy and resources to fight a total war, there was need for labour to work in the factories to produce the war-related products such as weapons
- Due to conscription, shortage of labour (men) was experienced such in the mines of Britain
- Impact on Livelihood - During the war a family pulled in more than one income, as the mother or an older child found jobs in war industries - better standard of living
- Wartime shortage of labour was believed to have increased the power of the working class, making it more assertive and cohesive
- The governments, such as the British government, was forced to negotiate with trade unions on a more equal basis to accept women into the war-related industries, where shortage of labour was felt
- In the half-century before the war, trade unions had amassed significant power for the workers by carving out small monopolies for individual trades and these protected workers from being undercut by non-union labour
- But under the Terms of the Treasury Agreement of 1915, due to war time needs for labour, most trade unions accepted the principle of dilution, which allowed previously skilled trades to be performed by semi-skilled or non-skilled labour
- This meant that power of trade unions in protecting the skilled workers in their unions was to be diluted as well
- In addition, due to war time needs to manage labour shortage, the government controlled labour – the Treasury Agreement and the Munitions of War Act, passed in 1915, restricted the freedom and power of the workers by introducing compulsory bargaining and prohibitions on the right to strike
- Nevertheless, strikes did continue during the war when there were grievances and cooperation with government was undermined – trade union did find opportunities to exert their power during the war
- The war also stipulated growth in union organization. In 1914, possibly afraid that to be a known member of a union could jeopardize their jobs in what was a largely paternalistic job market, only 4.15 million workers belonged to a union.
- By 1918, that figure had risen to 6.5 million.
- There were more workers under the protection of the unions and the representatives of these men also demanded greater political involvement, indicating that there would be a need for more cooperation between workers and employers as well as the workers and the government
- **Gerard DeGroot argues that positive effects on the industrial workers as well as the women has been grossly exaggerated**
- He argued that the power of the working class was always subjected to trade cycles
- While immediate post-war boom offered opportunities for the newly assertive working class, when the boom turned to bust, the workers were enfeebled
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Impact on Women

- Before the war, women were largely in traditional economic role (e.g. in farms), job scope and social roles like taking care of family, upper class women not working
- Due to the heavy demand for male soldiers, there was shortage of manpower for industries

- In Britain, it was in 1915 that serious recruitment of women into industries began
- Many women played a major role in key industries like munitions, engineering and transport – rose among from 3.5 million to 5 million during WW1 - by 1917, one in four war workers were female
- Women had non-traditional economic role and job scope such as working in munitions factories and clerical role was predominantly a male occupation before the war but due to wartime shortages women became clerks and secretaries
- In Britain 113,000 women joined the Women's Land Army which was set up in 1917, to provide a workforce to run the farms.
- Many members of the land army came from the middle and upper classes of society, who previously had not been in the work force
- In the post-war western world, the enormous increase in business activity led to an increase of need for women in the position of secretaries, typists and clerks who were trained during their wartime employment
- Women were also employed as teachers, in the retail trade and in the newer light industries
- The experience of working outside the home during war time benefitted them in the post-war period
- **However, opposition was faced in recruiting women to work in the industries due to the patriarchal society**
- In Britain, there had to be negotiations between the government and the trade unions to reach agreement to allow women to enter the 'men's jobs' – power the trade unions exercised
- Even when there was an agreement, there was little enthusiasm from employers and trade unions for women entering the workforce
- While working in these industries during the war, women did not receive equal wages, their wages remained low, although it was higher than traditional women's work, as they were considered as unskilled workers
- It was agreed between the government and the trade union that women's entry into workforce was to be only a temporary arrangement and that the women would not be trained up as a 'fully skilled tradesmen' so as to ensure that women remains temporary workers in the workforce and in these industries
- Wages would therefore be continuously low
- Without recognition as skilled workers, these women were denied the real source of power in the labour hierarchy
- Women were therefore temporary cheap labour during the war
- Furthermore, women who entered the war production industry were almost all working class and most already had jobs – waged labour was nothing new for them
- Only the type of jobs they performed were different and found better pay and more secure employment in war industry as compared to other industries of previous employment before the war
- Women would continue to work as clerks and secretaries in the post-war period but because men did not want to return to these jobs after the war which became to be seen as a 'women's work' and thus lower in status – these women were also paid lesser
- Hence, there was no positive change in how women, her role and status, were viewed by the patriarchal society and there was no greater gender equality both during and after the war

3. Body section, given factor –: social result

-Students should *discuss the social impact of WWI on the civilian population*

Civilians as Combatants

- Trench Warfare/Attritional Warfare: More men were needed at the war front
- Civilians experienced compulsory conscription in all the countries: In Britain, conscription was introduced by 1916
- New forms of killing were experienced by the soldiers (poison gas, submarine attacks and etc)
- Large number of men were killed, permanently blinded or disabled -
- 8 million soldiers died, 21 million soldiers were wounded
- In France, 20% of those between the ages of 20 and 40 in 1914 were killed
- The British lost 600000 and suffered 1 ½ million wounded
- The loss among the young and educated middle class males were very severe – in Britain it became common to talk of a ‘lost generation’
- Loss of faith in being virtuous due to all the lost and pain suffered during the war - sense of loss for morale
- the casualties were a significant financial burden on the post-war state
- Psychological Trauma – shell shock, war poets like Wilfred Owen chronicled the move from enthusiasm for war to despair and from romantic idealism of war to cynicism
- With physical and psychological effects, these soldiers difficulty faced in returning to normal life (such as finding jobs) in the post-war period and there was a sense of disillusionment with the world they were living in

Civilians as Casualties

- WW1 saw many atrocities inflicted on the population as a whole - 6 million civilians died
- The Lusitania, which was sunk by a German submarine in 1915 was a passenger vessel - 1192 killed
- Air raids such as that conducted by the German’s Zeppelin airships were on London, the Midlands and the East Coasts which killed several hundred civilians.
- Air raids were no longer limited to legitimate military and industrial targets but also destroyed homes and hospitals to affect civilians’ morale for the war and war efforts.
- As WW1, was war between industrialized societies and not just between armies, a total war, everything and everyone, servicemen and civilian alike, became legitimate targets
- Although, the civilian casualty rate would be much higher during WWII, The international law that was aimed at protecting the civilians during war by making it illegal to attack civilian targets had thus failed during WWI and the casualty rate would be even higher during WWII
- The strategy of targeting civilians and not differentiating between civilian and combatants as targets during WWI would be the beginning for the escalation of such attacks on civilians as experienced during WWII – example the atomic bomb attacks

Social Impact of Peace Treaties at the end of WWI

- Post-war treaties redefined territorial boundaries and the population that would be living in these territories based on the principal of self-determinism

- As self-determinism could not be granted to all fairly, the lost of territory and its population experienced by one country would mean that that group of civilians could be living under foreign rule – 6 million Germans were living under foreign rule
- Germany lost territories South Tyrol, which had German and Italian speaking people to Italy – the Germans there were not granted self-determinism and were thus under foreign rule which would cause ethnic and political strife
- States like Poland which had access to Danzig, a German territory, would face ethnic strife between the Polish people and the Germans
- Hence, the social peace and stability was affected for millions of civilians as there was lack of self-determination

Impact on the Social Status of Women

Women at the war front

- Due to the unexpected longer war that had to be fought and the attrition warfare of WW1, more men were needed to be released from duties and responsibilities in the home front to be at the front line
- In Britain, a Voluntary Aid Detachments, Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, the Women's Royal Air Force, and etc
- The Great War women were enlisted into Auxiliary Armies
- The women also became truck and ambulance drivers as more and more of the men were called to the front line.
- However, these roles had limited impact on the status of women
- The women were largely employed for unglamorous tasks on the lines of communication, cooking and catering, storekeeping, clerical work, telephony and administration, printing, motor vehicle maintenance.
- generally non-combatant duties like clerical and nursing
- No desire for women combatants in Europe due to patriarchal and chauvinistic beliefs of the society – no change in mindset for greater gender equality

Women at the home front

- Many women played a major role in key industries like munitions, engineering and transport and in non-combatant roles during the war
- Women in Russia, Austria, Britain, Germany, Poland and America gained suffrage as recognition of their contributions during the war
- Women had been demanding political equality since the 19th century, but it was the Great War which finally persuaded a grateful government to give women the vote
- The war also brought about changes in the fashion sense of women in Europe that expressed a sense of freedom
- Before the Great War, the women had worn their hair long, dressed elaborately and had several layers of clothing.
- In the post-war period, the women had short cropped hair like the boys, wore their skirts shorter and shorter and dressed skimpily that it worried the textile manufacturers and moralists.
- The most liberated women of the 1920s were known as 'flappers' – in their short haircuts and slim, boyish figures they were asserting their independence through the changed fashion sense and the right to enjoy the company of men without falling into the subservience of the Victorian age

- There was more ease in their relations with the other gender and the world at large
- Fashion, manners and sexual morals among young women seemed to reflect their new found freedom in the post-war period
- Women, employed in huge numbers during the war because of the shortage of civilian male workers, resented attempts to return them to restricted prewar lives.

Impact on Culture

- The mood of the 1920s was set by the experience of the Great War in many of the Western industrialized countries
- Millions of young men had been uprooted from the farms and towns in which they otherwise have spent the rest of their lives.
- War time experiences and losses, inevitably, made these young men question the old assumptions when they returned to their homes
- Established authorities of Church and State, which had condoned and prolonged the war, were under criticism
- Among artists and intellectuals, the urge to ‘make things new’, which has been stimulated at the beginning of the century, revived with new vigour after the war; in art, architecture, poetry, music, it was another age of the ‘avant-garde’
- Due to war defeats and war-time losses, there was a passionate and violent rejection of the bourgeoisie values of the regimes that existed before the war
- The 1920s became a decade of self-conscious modernism especially in defeated countries like Germany and Russia
- In painting, music and architecture, the most creative work of arts could be seen in defeated Germany and Russia as these countries were ready to turn their back on the past and embrace new forms as therapy for the devastation they have experienced
- Germany took a leading role as a sympathetic home for the avant-garde
- Surrealism, as way of realm of unconscious and the irrational, was practised by artists, became the dominant way of the 1920s. It grew out of Dadaism.
- Dadaism was, however, a negative, nihilistic movement; such a revolt against rationality was especially popular in post-war Germany.
- The United States was relatively conservative in aesthetic matters. American newspapers were virulent in their mockery of modernism in music and art.
- Britain and France too lagged behind in this area
- It was as if the victor nations were content to dust off their old institutions while others devastated and traumatized by defeat and revolution, embraced new forms in their art and culture

Conclusion: