



Mains Practice Question

Q. The birth of the League of Nations on the ruins of the First World War was welcomed. However, it could do little to prevent the Second World War. Examine. (250 words)

13 May, 2022 GS Paper 1 History

Approach

- Briefly talk about the genesis of the League of Nations
- Enumerate few achievements of the League of Nations
- Discuss how the League of Nations failed its mandate
- Conclude suitably

Introduction

The outbreak of the First World War during 1914-18 made the leaders of the world establish an international organisation for preventing future wars. The idea to create a world organization to maintain peace and prevent future wars was given by the American president Woodrow Wilson. His Fourteen Points underlined the creation of a general association of nations.

Body

The league in its initial days did taste some success as it was able to avert possible confrontations between various nations by successfully mediating between them such as:

- The dispute between Sweden and Finland on the ownership of the Aland Islands.
- The frontier dispute between Turkey and Great Britain's mandated territory of Iraq etc

The League, also did a lot of non-political work related to abolishing slavery, supervising and issuing loans for nations, establishing the health organisations, organising technical conferences. It also worked for controlling trafficking in dangerous drugs, peasant reforms, suppression of trade in obscene literature etc.

In spite of its efforts for two decades, the whole world was involved in war again in 1939. The League failed in its main objective of maintaining peace in the world.

There were multiple causes for its failure such as

- First and foremost, major powers like the USA and the USSR were not members of the League of Nations. This was a serious defect.
- There were many states which considered the Treaty of Versailles as a treaty of revenge and were not prepared to ratify the same. By not ratifying the treaty, they refused to be members of the League.
- There was a feeling among the nations that the League of Nations was fully dominated by the victorious countries of World War I especially France and England. The result was that the other states began to doubt about the working of the League of Nations.
- After World War I, situations arose for the rise of dictatorships in Italy, Japan and Germany. Manchurian conquest of Japan, capturing of Abyssinia by Italy and German rearmament could not

be challenged by the League.

- The already weak international organisation was further weakened when nations like Japan, Germany and Italy left the League.
- Small nations lost their faith in the working of the League. They felt that the League of Nations had no power to control the aggressive activities of the big powers.

Conclusion

The birth of the League of Nations on the ruins of the First World War was welcomed. However, the member states of the League did not cooperate. As a result, the League failed in its mission, eventually resulting in the breakout of the Second World War.

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