

## Short Answer Questions

---

**Q.1. Who was Mikhail Gorbachev? Was he responsible for the disintegration of the Soviet Union?**

**Ans.** Mikhail Gorbachev was the last President of Soviet Union. It is not appropriate to blame him for the disintegration of Soviet Union because his policies were the reason behind the disintegration of Soviet Union. He introduced economic and political reform policies of 'perestroika' (reconstructing) and 'glasnost' (openness) to remove the dissatisfaction of public. He signed various treaties to stop arms race with the US. He established peace by withdrawing Soviet troops from Afghanistan and Eastern Europe. He helped in unification of Germany and ended the Cold War. It was his political failure that in spite of his efforts, he couldn't avoid disintegration of USSR and was blamed for that.

**Q.2. Mention any three features that distinguish the Soviet economy from that of a capitalist country like the US.**

[NCERT]

**Ans. (i)** Soviet economy abolished the institution of private property and consciously designed a society based on the principles of equality. Land and productive assets were owned and controlled with Soviet States.

**(ii)** On the contrary to capitalist economy, Soviet economy gave primacy to state and institution of the communist party. Russia dominated in every area. People from other regions felt neglected and suppressed.

**(iii)** Unlike capitalist countries, economy of Soviet union was planned and controlled by the state. Private companies, private entrepreneurs, production and distribution were kept away whereas in capitalist country like USA, land and other productive assets, factories, mills, companies, etc. were owned by individuals or group of individuals, companies or capitalists or entrepreneurs. Soviet Union used much of its resources in maintaining a nuclear and military arsenal. Its arms race with the US deprived citizen of their economical and high living standards.

**Q.3. Write any two reasons responsible for disintegration of Soviet Union.**

[CBSE Delhi 2013]

Or

**Clarify any three reasons responsible for the disintegration of Soviet Union.**

[CBSE Delhi 2014]

**Ans.** Political leaders and ideologists have different methodology on the subject of reasons of disintegration of Soviet Union. Soviet Union was disintegrated due to the following reasons:

1. Leaders of Soviet Union guaranteed respected standard of living after Soviet revolution to common citizens, who were unable to manage the square meals during bureaucratic and authoritarian system at the time of establishment of Soviet System. There was an improvement in the standard of living of Soviet citizens after revolution undoubtedly. But the reforms couldn't bring out the improvements to an appropriate level which gave rise to the dissatisfaction amongst citizens.
2. Communist party had an undocked control over Soviet Union. Party failed to accomplish/fulfil the aspirations of public. Public of republics felt neglected and suppressed under the domination of Russia.
3. Soviet Union emerged as a superpower after the Second World War. Due to this, the other superpower America had to compete. Arms race began after the formation of Soviet Union as atomic power in around 1948-49, where richer country like America took a front seat and resources of Soviet Union were wasted in this competition. This affected the way to improve economic life of the people.

**Q.4. Explain any four consequences of Shock Therapy.**

**[CBSE Delhi 2012]**

**Ans.** Main consequences of shock therapy, adopted in 1990 were as follows:

1. **Collapse of Industries:** In Russia, the large state-controlled industrial complex almost collapsed, as about 90 per cent of its industries were put up for sale to private individuals and companies. Since the restructuring was carried out through market forces and not by the government – directed industrial policies, it led to the virtual disappearance of all the industries. This was called 'the largest garage sale in history' as valuable industries were undervalued and sold at throwaway prices.
2. **Collapse of Food Security:** The value of the ruble, the Russian currency, declined dramatically. The rate of inflation was so high that people lost all their savings. The collective farm system disintegrated leaving people without food security, and Russia started to import food.
3. **Social Change:** The old system of social welfare was systematically destroyed. The withdrawal of government subsidies pushed large sections of the people into poverty. The middle classes were pushed to the periphery of society, and the academic and intellectual man power disintegrated or migrated. A mafia emerged in most of these countries and started controlling many economic activities. Privatisation led to new disparities. Post-Soviet states, especially Russia, were

divided between rich and poor regions. Unlike the earlier system, there was now great economic inequality between people.

4. **Insolvency:** As a result of the 'Shock therapy', about 1500 banks and other financial institution went bankrupt in Russia, As a result, the money of 10,000 corporate and private shareholders was lost, along with the money kept in the bank by the customers.

**Q.5. Write any four features that made Soviet System an exemplary model.**

**Ans.** Following are the features of Soviet:

1. Soviet Union had complex communication network. It had vast energy resources including oil, iron and steel.
2. It had complex machinery production system and transport sector that connected its remotest areas with efficiency.
3. It had a domestic consumer industry that produced everything from pins to cars, though their quality did not match that of the western capitalist countries.
4. The Soviet state ensured a minimum standard of living for all citizens and the government subsidised basic necessities including health, education, childcare and other welfare schemes.

**Q.6. Describe the factors that made most of the former Soviet Republics prone to conflicts and threats.**

**[CBSE Delhi 2015]**

**Ans.** Factors that made most of the former Soviet republics prone to conflicts and threats were:

1. There were internal weaknesses of Soviet political and economic institutions, which failed to meet the aspirations of the people.
2. Economic stagnation for many years led to severe shortages of consumer items and a large section of Soviet society began to doubt and question the system and do so openly.
3. The Soviet economy used much of its resources in maintaining a nuclear and military arsenal.
4. The development of its satellite states in eastern Europe and within the Soviet system (the five Central Asian republics in particular). This led to a huge economic burden that the system could not cope up with.
5. They could see the disparities between their system and the systems of the West. After years of being told that the Soviet system was better than Western capitalism, the reality of its backwardness came as a political and psychological shock.
6. The Soviet Union had become stagnant in an administrative and political sense as well.

7. The rise of nationalism and the desire for sovereignty within various republics including Russia and the Baltic republics (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania), Ukraine, Georgia.
8. Nationalist urged and feelings were very much at work throughout the history of the Soviet Union, given the size and diversity and its growing internal problems.
9. Ethnic and religious differences within the Central Asian republics coupled with economic backwardness.