

Ques:- The anti-colonial struggles in west Africa were led by the new elites of western educated Africans. Elucidate.

Ans:- The post-Second World War era witnessed fast-track course of decolonization in Asia and Africa. The process of decolonization in Africa started a bit late and it continued for nearly more than two decades.

When we observe the process of the liberation of colonies we find that the pace and the timing of the liberation of colonies were decided by the nature of leadership in a colony, the nature of relationship between the colony and the metropolitan state, the status of the white settlers in the colony and also by the quantum of the stake the metropolitan state had in the colony.

The nature of leadership appeared to be a bit different in West Africa. In this region there emerged a middle class which was the product of the colonial rule. Some of them were like English educated Indian leaders. While some others were the product of missionary schools. Some African intellectuals were associated even with lower government jobs under the British and the French government. Some Africans even moved to western countries in order to get higher education. Apart from that, some black intellectuals of West Africa came in touch with the Black movement in USA. All these elements formed the part of modern intelligentsia which promoted the cause of liberation through constitutional methods.

The pioneer of decolonization in West Africa was Ghana's Kwame Nkruma who was greatly influenced even by the liberation movement in India. It was a British colony and its liberation was thought to be reasonably safe. There were no white settlers whose racial privileges needed special protection. This process followed even in other countries of West Africa such as Senegal, Zambia, Guinea Bissau, Sierra Lean, Mauritania etc. The case of Algeria seemed to be exceptional where France had a greater stake in the colony. So, it took the form of a military conflict.

In this way in West Africa rise of a western educated intelligentsia gave a new turn to the national movement.