

## Class 11

### History Notes

#### Chapter 6

##### The Three Orders

- Western European society was divided into three orders between the ninth and the sixteenth centuries.
- The three orders of the western society include:
  - The Clergy
  - The Nobility and
  - The Peasantry.
- The most important characteristics of the middle age Western European society was the emergence of **feudalism**.
- Two sections of the third order were:
  - Free Peasants
  - Serfs.
- Free peasants had to deposit a fixed land revenue to the lords.
- Most of the Western European society belonged to the serfs. A lot of restrictions were imposed on them while the peasants were free from such restrictions.
- Serfs were denied to offer prayers in the church. They were ill-treated and forced to work nearly 12 to 16 hours a day. • Feudalism is a German word. It stands for land or an estate. It was regarded as the main the pillar of the Medieval European society.

## Explanation:

### 1. THE CLERGY

- Church was a powerful institution. The Pope, the head of the Catholic Church, lived in Rome. Bishops were religious nobility.
- The church played a major role in influencing the Medieval European society.
- They collected the **tithe**, a tax from the peasants.
- Church ceremonies copied several formal feudal customs.
- Some Christians chose to live in isolation in abbeys. ('Abbey' is derived from the **Syriac abba**, meaning father. An abbey was governed by an abbot or an abbess)

### 2. NOBILITY

- The word 'Feudalism' is derived from the German word '**feud**' which means '**a piece of land**'. Feudalism was a division of society that initially developed in medieval France, then in England and southern Italy.
- It was a kind of agricultural production relationship between lords and peasants.
- The nobility had a privileged role in the social process with absolute control over his land. They raised troops that were called '**Feudal Levies**'. The King of France was linked to his people through the system of '**vassalage**'. The King was accepted as **Seigneur**, i.e. lord. The nobility lived in manor houses.
- The cavalry and peasant soldiers were called **knights**. Minstrels and bards toured France, singing tales of brave kings and knights.

### 3. THE PEASANTRY

- Peasants and Serfs were two kinds of cultivators in medieval Europe.
- Free peasants laboured for cultivating the lord's fields to provide labour rent. They paid a **direct tax**, called **taille**, to the king. European monarchs were called New Monarchs.

The Anglo-Saxons had a Great Council, which the king consulted before imposing any tax. This developed into the Parliament, with the House of Lords (its members – the lords and the clergy), and the House of Commons. The English monarch, Charles the First, ruled England from 1629 till 1640 without calling the Parliament.