

THE THREE ORDERS

Time period - 9th - 16th Century

Background - Roman Empire Collapsed
- Italy, Spain and France were occupied by Germanic people from eastern and central Europe.

- Land became an important factor of social organisation.
- Christianity survived the collapse of Rome.
- The church became a major landholder and political power in Europe

Three Orders
(Three Social Categories)

- Christian Priests
- landowning nobles
- peasants

AN INTRODUCTION TO FEUDALISM

Feudalism: A social system in which people worked and fought for a person who owned land and received land and protection in return.

• Feudalism is derived from the German word 'fued' which means 'a piece of land'.

• In Economic sense, feudalism refers to a kind of agricultural production which is based on the relationship between lords and peasants.

Ex. 1) Medieval France

2. England

3. Southern Italy



Peasant

- Peasants cultivated their own land as well as that of the lord.
- Performed labour services for the lord

Lord



- Lords provided military protection.
- They had extensive judicial control over peasants.

Thus, feudalism went beyond the economic to cover the social and political aspects of life as well.

FRANCE AND ENGLAND

Present day France



- Gaul was a province of the Roman Empire. It had:
- two extensive coastlines
 - forests
 - mountain ranges
 - long rivers
 - large tracts of plains suited to agriculture.

* The Franks, a Germanic tribe named it 'France'.
• From 6th century, this kingdom was ruled by Frankish/
French kings, who were Christians.

• Island of England-Scotland was conquered by a duke from the French province of Normandy.

Early History of France

481	Clovis becomes king of the Franks.
486	Clovis and the Franks begin the conquest of northern Gaul.
✓ 496	Clovis and the Franks convert to Christianity.
714	Charles Martel becomes mayor of the palace.
751	Martel's son Pepin deposes the Frankish ruler, becomes king and establishes a dynasty. Wars of conquest double the size of his kingdom.
768	Pepin succeeded by his son Charlemagne/Charles the Great.
✓ 800	Pope Leo III crowns Charlemagne as Holy Roman Emperor.
840 ONWARDS	Raids by Vikings from Norway.

THE THREE ORDERS

• French priest believed in the concept that people were members of one of the three 'orders', depending on their work. (कर्म के आधार पर)

Following were the three Orders :

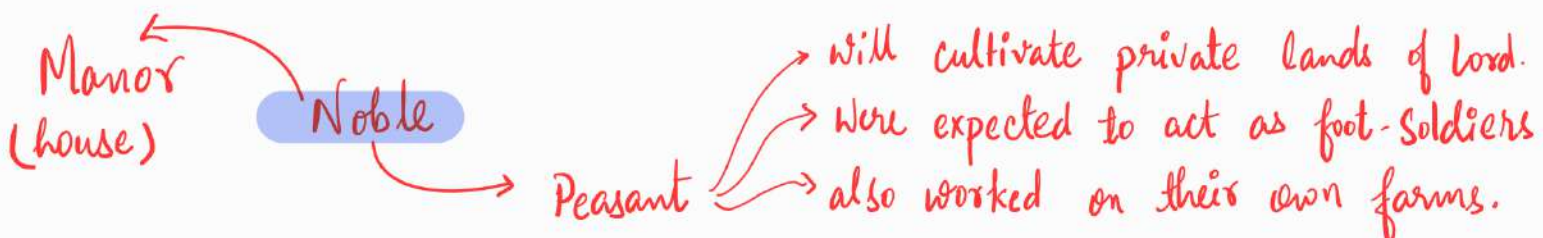
- the clergy
- the nobility
- the peasantry

THE SECOND ORDER: THE NOBILITY

- The **nobility** ^{→ controlled land} had a central role in social process.
- Vassalage: It is a relationship between a lord and a vassal, where the vassal owes loyalty and service to the lord in exchange for protection or land.



- A nobleman accepted the king as his seigneur (senior).
- A vassal and his master exchanged vows on the Bible in a church during the ceremony, where the vassal received a written charter / staff / clod of earth as a symbol of the land being granted to him by his master.
- The noble enjoyed a privileged status. They had **absolute control** over their property. They had their own troops called '**feudal levies**'. Nobles had their own **courts of Justice**. A noble can even **coin their own money**.



THE MANORIAL ESTATE

- A lord has his own manor (house).
- He also controlled villages.
- A small manorial estate could contain a dozen families while larger estates might include fifty or sixty.
- Almost everything needed for daily life was found on the estate. For eg:
 - grains grown in the fields
 - Carpenters, blacksmiths, stonemason etc were there to look after the needs of lord.
 - women spun and wove fabric.
 - Children worked in the lord's wine presses.
 - presence of woodlands and forests
 - Church
 - Castle for defence.

Note: The manor could not be completely self-sufficient as salt, millstones and metalware had to be obtained from outside sources.

Things such as rich furnishings, musical instruments and ornaments were also not locally produced.

THE KNIGHTS

Knights were well trained and heavily armed soldiers who fought for noblemen, such as kings, in exchange for land and status.





How knights came into the scene?

- From 9th century, there were frequent localised wars in Europe.
- Peasant-soldiers were not sufficient, as they were not trained soldiers.
- Knights were professional soldiers
- Knights were linked to the lords, just as the lords were linked to the king. [the vassalage system]
- The lords gave the knight a piece of land (fief), that can be inherited, and promised to protect it.
- A fief could be anything between 1000 and 2000 acres or more, including a house for the knight and his family, a church, a watermill, a wine-press etc.
- In exchange, the knight paid his lord a regular fee and promised to fight for him in war.
- A knight might serve more than one lord, but his foremost loyalty was to his own lord.

Minstrels: They travelled from manor to manor, singing songs which told stories about brave kings and knights.

Many manors had balcony (minstrel's gallery) above the large hall where the people of the manor gathered for meals.



THE FIRST ORDER: THE CLERGY



clergy

क्लर्जि

noun

the people who perform religious ceremonies in the Christian church

ईसाई चर्च का पुरोहित-वर्ग



- The Catholic Church was a very powerful institution which did not depend on the king.
- They had their own laws, owned lands, could levy taxes.

Q. Who can become a priest?

Ans. Everyone could not become a priest.

a) Serfs were banned.

b) Physically challenged were banned.

c) Women could not become priests.

d) Those who become priests could not marry.

- The church was entitled to a tenth share of what peasants produced over the course of one year, called a 'tithe'.
- Money also came in the form of endowments made by the rich.
- The Church followed the practice of feudal culture such as kneeling while praying, the use of the term 'Lord' for god etc.

MONKS

- Monks prefer to live isolated lives in 'abbeys' (religious communities) or monasteries.

- Two such monasteries were St. Benedict (Italy 529) and Cluny (Burgundy 910).
- Monks took vows to remain in the abbey for the rest of their lives.
- They spent their time in prayers, study and manual labour (farming).
- This life was open to both men and women. Men became **Monk** and women **nuns**.
- Generally, all abbeys were single sex communities.
- Monks and Nuns did not marry.
- Later monasteries grew to communities with large buildings and landed estates, with attached schools/colleges and hospitals.
- Abbess Hildegard developed the practice of community singing of prayers in church.

Friars: some groups of monks who chose not to be based in a monastery but to move from place to place, preaching to the people and living on charity.

THE CHURCH AND SOCIETY

- Christmas and Easter became important dates from the 4th century.
25th Dec — Christ's birth
- Easter marked the crucifixion of Christ and his rising from the dead. Its date is not fixed as it's dated by lunar calendar.
- Overworked peasants welcomed 'holy days'/holidays because they were not expected to work then.

THE THIRD ORDER : PEASANTS , FREE AND UNFREE

- Cultivators were of two kinds
 - free peasants
 - serfs (to serve)
- Free peasants
 - held their farms as tenants of the lord.
 - men had to render military service (at least 40/year)
 - families had to set aside certain days of the week when they would go to the lord's estate and work there.
 - additionally they could be required to do other unpaid labour services like digging ditches, gathering firewood, building fences, repairing roads and buildings.
 - women and children helped in the fields, spun thread, wove cloth, made candles and pressed grapes to prepare wine for the lord's use.
- Kings sometimes imposed one direct tax [taille] on peasants]
- Serfs
 - they cultivated plots of land which belonged to the lord.
 - they received no wages for this.
 - they could not leave the estate without the lord's permission.
 - they could use only their lord's mill, oven and winepresses.
 - The lord could decide whom a serf should marry, or might give his blessing to the serf's choice, but on payment of a fee.

ENGLAND

- Feudalism developed in England from the eleventh century.

History

- The Angles and Saxons, from central Europe, had settled in England in the 6th century.
- England's name is a variant of 'Angle land'.
- From 11th century, France and England were often at war because of disputes over territory and trade.
- The lords became the chief tenants of the king and were obliged to supply knights to the king.

FACTORS AFFECTING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS

THE ENVIRONMENT

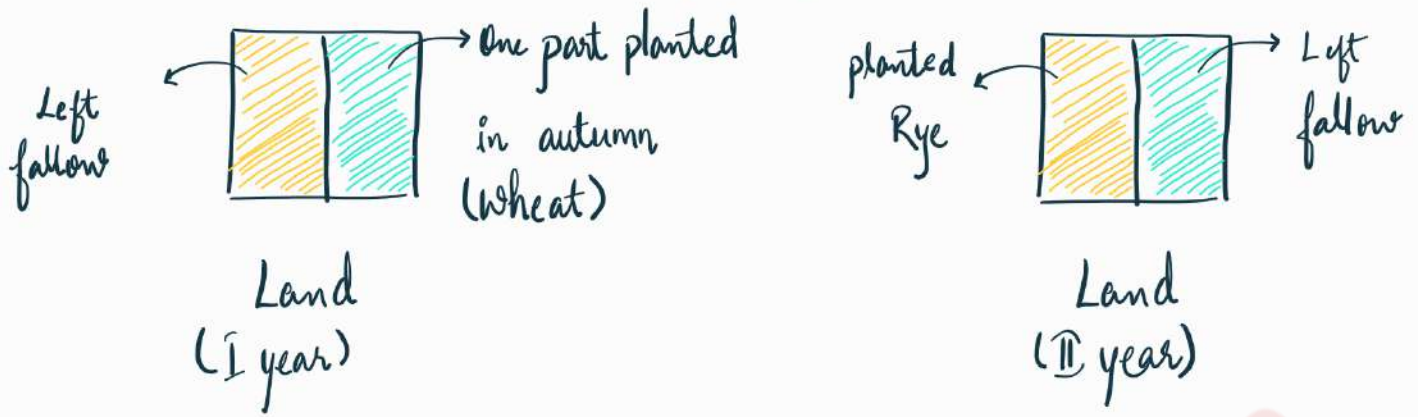
- Europe was mostly covered with vast forest during 5th-10th centuries. Thus the land available for agriculture was limited.
- Europe was undergoing an intensely cold climate in this period which led to shortened growing season for crops and reduced yields from agriculture.
- From the eleventh century, Europe entered a warm phase.
- With increase in average temperature, peasants had a longer growing season and the soil could be more easily ploughed.
- This made expansion of the area under cultivation possible.



LAND USE

- Initially, agriculture was very primitive.
- Wooden plough was drawn by a team of oxen. This could only scratch the surface of the earth and was therefore very labour intensive.

- An ineffective method of crop rotation was in use.



- This system slowly deteriorated the soil and famines were common. Making life difficult for the poor.
- To maximise profits lords forced peasants to bring all the land in manorial estate under cultivation.
- Agriculture was very labour intensive. The peasant resorted to passive resistance against this oppression.
- They spent more time cultivating their own fields and kept much of the product for themselves.
- They avoided performing unpaid extra services.
- At times they came into conflicts with the lords over pasture and forest lands.

NEW AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGY



- Eleventh century brought with it several technological changes.
 - heavy iron tipped plough replaced the basic wooden ploughs, this enabled them to better utilise the nutrients from the soil.
 - Shoulder-harness replaced the neck-harness.
 - iron horseshoes came into use which prevented foot decay.
 - more water powered and wind powered mills were set up.
 - peasants switch from two-field to a three field system.

- All these changes doubled the food availability.
- With increase in production in each unit the average size of a peasant's farm shrank from ≈ 100 acres to 20-30 acres by 13th century.
- This gave the peasants time for other activities.
- Economic transactions were becoming more and more money based, which led to the weakening of feudalism.

A FOURTH ORDER? NEW TOWNS AND TOWNSPEOPLE

- Population growth

42 million in 1000	→	62 million in 1200	→	73 million in 1300
	+20 million (200 yrs)		+11 million (100 years)	
- Life expectancy grew by 10 years than eighth century.
- With population, towns began to grow again. This was supported by periodic fairs and small marketing centres.
- In other places, towns grew around large castles, bishops' estates, or large churches.
- Towns offered the prospect of paid work and freedom from the control of lord.
- If a serf could stay for one year and one day without his lord discovering him, he would become a free man.



- Guilds came into operation, a guild is an association which controlled the quality of the product, its price and its sale.
- The Guild-hall was a feature of every town. It was a building for ceremonial functions, and where the heads of all the guilds met formally.
- New trade routes with West Asia were also developing during 11th century.
- As the number of towns grew and trade continued to expand, town merchant became rich and powerful, and rivalled the power of the nobility.

(In France)

CATHEDRAL-TOWNS

- were the large churches, which belonged to monasteries.
- different groups of people contributed to the construction with their own labour, materials or money.
- As they were being built, the area around the Cathedrals became more populated and later they became pilgrimage centre. Thus, small towns developed around them.
- Structure :- These were designed in such a way that one can hear the voice of the priest and monk's songs from a great distance.
 - Stained glass was used for windows which narrated the stories in the Bible through pictures.

THE CRISIS OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

Factors which slowed down Europe's economic expansion were :-

1) Northern Europe again entered in the cold phase after 300 years.

- Seasons for growing crops were reduced by a month
- Intensive ploughing had exhausted the soil.
- The shortage of pasture reduced the number of cattle.
- Severe famines hit Europe between 1315 and 1317.

2) Trade was hit by a severe shortage of metal money.

3) Bubonic plague infection (the 'Black Death') came along with the ships from distant countries.

- the epidemic kill around 20% of the population of Europe.

Results :- Major shortage of labour.

- Serious imbalances were created between agriculture and manufacture.
- Prices of agricultural goods dropped. (fewer buyers)
- Wage rates increased

SOCIAL UNREST

- The income of lords was badly hit.
- Lords tried to give up the money - contracts they had entered into and revive labour services.
- Peasants violently opposed this.
- These rebellions were ruthlessly crushed.
- Despite the severe repression, the sheer intensity of peasants opposition ensured that the old feudal relations could not be reimposed.

POLITICAL CHANGES

• European kings strengthened their military and financial power. (15th and 16th century).

• France Louis XI
Austria Maximilian
England Henry VII
Spain Ferdinand } the new monarchs

- they started the process of organising standing armies, a permanent bureaucracy and national taxation.
- The dissolution of the feudal system of lordship and vassalage, and the slow rate of economic growth had given the opportunity to kings to increase their control over their subjects.
- By increasing taxes, monarchs got enough revenues to support larger armies and expansion of territories.
- The nobility managed a tactical shift in order to ensure their survival, they quickly transformed themselves into loyalists.
- Money became an important way in which non-aristocratic elements like merchants and bankers could gain access to the court.
- Today, France has a republican form of government and England has a monarchy. This is because of the different directions that the histories of the two countries took after the 17th century.



The End

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