

## FEUDALISM

Feudalism was a kind of socio-political organisation which arose in medieval Europe and was based on land tenure given by the Lord to the Vassals, who served their masters in various ways. In other words, feudalism was a part of the feudal society where the subordinate subjects showed loyalty to their Lords and obtained from them a piece of land there by serving their master, in various ways seeking protection from them for their life and property.

### Origin

The origin of feudalism was not sudden. This situation arose in Egypt after the end of the 'Old Kingdom'. Ancient Greece witnessed this situation during the 'Age of Homer'. This system prevailed in Roman Society in which the weaker section appealed to the rich people to save them from peril and showed allegiance to their masters.

This system was reflected through the procedure of Comitatus. In this system the young fighters

engaged themselves in the service of a powerful leader and performed their duty as per the instruction of that leader. In fifth Century A.D. feudalism appeared in the Frankish Kingdom where a bond was created between the ruler and his supporters.

With the expansion of the Frankish Kingdom, feudalism spread to Italy, Spain, Germany and other Countries. Feudalism exerted its influence in the entire medieval Europe.

### The Basic Principles of Feudalism

Feudalism was based on certain principles. In medieval Europe, the weak and innocent people needed the help of a powerful man. The king was very weak. He could not save his subjects from the plunders of the foreign invaders. So, the common people turned to strong and powerful leaders who were mostly the descendants of the Dukes, Counts and Margraves to make their life and property safe.

The protector was variously known as the 'Lord',

'Liege Lord', 'Suzerain' or 'Seignior'. The people who sought his protection were called the 'Vassals' or 'Liege-men'. The Lord gave back the plot of land known as Tier to his vassal. In some places, instead of the word 'fief, the word 'Feud' was used from which the term 'Feudalism' was derived.

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