Indian Feudalism

Feudalism in India originations the era of post-Mauryan, especially after the Gupta dynasty. Certain political and administrative developments resulted in feudal state institutions. Some gave land to Brahmin and Buddhist monks and civil servants for military and administrative services. These financial offers meant the transfer of all sources of income and establishment of police and administrative functions, creating feudalism.

- In the medieval era, feudalism was the prevailing socioeconomic structure. In this arrangement, the peasants were required to reside on their lord's property and to pay him respect, labor, and a share of the product in exchange for military protection.
- The nobility held lands from the Crown in payment for military service, and vassals were tenants of the nobles.

Feudal System In India

When referring to the feudatory rulers of the Gupta era, the name "Samantha" (neighbor) first appeared. The captured districts resumed independence due to the weak enforcement of power, and some important administrative positions became hereditary. The decentralization of power was the primary aspect of feudalism in Europe and the Indian subcontinent.
Feudal lords in India were required to give the overlord a small portion of their income and soldiers. Indian feudalism is frequently linked to the following concepts:

- Sardar
- Jagirdar
- Ghatwals
- Deshmukh
- Taluqdar
- Zamindar
- Chaudary

Characteristics of Post-Mauryan Indian Feudalism

Feudalism in India was defined by a class of landowners and a class of subject peasants who lived in a mostly agrarian economy, characterized by a drop in trade and urbanization as well as a sharp decline in the use of metal money.
The characteristics of Indian Feudalism are:

- **Vassalage:** This was the relationship of personal dependence and loyalty between the Lord and his vassals.
- **Hierarchy of feudal lords:** Various titles represent the position and power within the rank of feudal lords.
- **Hereditary administrative status:** Weak and unstable power enforcement led to the restoration of independence, and some high administrative statuses became hereditary.
- **Decentralization:** Samanthas were given land instead of salary, and they continued to own the territory, calling themselves vassals of the ruler.
- **Regressive taxation system:** The working class was exploited by collecting proper and improper taxes, fixed and non-fixed taxes along pensions.
- **Wealth was not shared equally:** It was assumed that wealth was not shared equally, as some were destined to land and others were destined to enjoy the fruits of production.

- **Fragmentation of social composition:** Caste has been divided into several other castes and subcastes.
- **Manorial System:** The landowner grants land to an individual who performs various services, including working on the lord's land, in exchange for the land.

Impact of Feudalism in India

The main impacts of Indian Feudalism in the early Middle Ages were:

- **Political decentralization:** The seeds of decentralization sown in the form of land grants were vibrantly decentralized, consisting of semi-autonomous rulers, Samanthas, Mahasamantas, and Rajpurushas.
- **The establishment of new land brokers:** The emergence of land brokers, the dominant social group that owned the land and did not exist in the early historical era, is associated with land grant practices that began in Saatavahana.
- **Changes in farming relations:** Free Vaishya peasants dominated the farming structure of the early historic Indian and Shudra labor services. However, since the 6th century AD, farmers have retained the land assigned to beneficiaries because they were told not to leave the villages assigned to them or move to duty-free villages. This has led to population immobility and isolation from other parts of the world. The profound effect included developing local customs, languages, and rituals.

Indian Feudalism and European Feudalism

The Difference between Indian Feudalism and European Feudalism are discussed below:

Indian Feudalism	European Feudalism
Caste-based divisions of Indian feudalism included Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras.	Class divisions in European feudalism included nobility, clergy, and commoners.
Indian kings issued grants to collect taxes and surplus.	In order to cultivate their land, feudal lords in Western Europe granted land to their serfs.

- Contrary to European feudalism, few power institutions were exempt from paying taxes.
- Different ecological conditions also influenced the nature of social structure and dynamics, which is why there are differences between feudalism in Europe and India.