6. The Three Orders

1. Describe two features of early feudal society in France.

Answer:

(i)In the feudal society, the peasants cultivated their own land as well as that of the lord. The peasants performed labour services for the lords, who in exchange provided military protection.

(ii)French priests believed in the concept that people were members of one of the three 'orders', depending on their work. Priests placed themselves in the first order, nobles in the second order and peasants, free and unfree groups in the third order.

2. How did long-term changes in population levels affect economy and society in Europe?

Answer:

1. Expansion in agriculture resulted in the growth of population, trade and towns. Europe's population increased from 42 million in 1000 to 73 million in 1300.
2. Surplus food production increased lifespan. Many new cities emerged. They became important trade and commercial centers. The bigger towns had populations of about 30,000.
3. Peasants sold their surplus grain in the cities and bought tools and cloth.

3. Why did knights become a distinct group, and when did they decline?

Answer:

1. From the ninth century, frequent localized wars in Europe demanded good cavalry because the amateur peasant-soldiers could not provide better defence.
2. A new section of people, the knights, provided the cavalry. They were linked to the lords who were under the control of the king.
3. The lord gave the knight a piece of land (called 'fief') and promised to protect it.
4. The knights declined when the feudal order started declining.

4. What was the function of medieval monasteries?

Answer:

1. Apart from the Church, deeply religious Christians chose to live isolated lives, in contrast to clerics who lived amongst people in towns and villages.
2. They lived in religious communities called abbeys or monasteries; they were built in places very far from human habitation.

Answer in a short essay

5. Imagine and describe a day in the life of a craftsman in a medieval French town.

Answer:

1. Craftsmen played vital role in the feudal economic order. The basis of economic organisation was the guild. Each craft was organised into a guild, which controlled the quality of the crafts, its price and its sale.
2. 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.
3. In France, by the twelfth century, commerce and crafts began to grow.
4. Earlier, craftsmen used to travel from manor to manor; now they found it easier to settle in one place where goods could be produced and traded for food.

6. Compare the conditions of life for a French serf and a Roman slave.

Answer:

Conditions of French serf:

1. Serfs cultivated plots of land that belonged to the lord. Much of the produce from this was taken away by the lord.
2. They also had to work on the land which belonged *exclusively* to the lord.
3. They were paid no wages and could not leave the estate without the lord's permission. The lord controlled the serfs in every way.
4. Serfs could use only their lord's mill to grind their flour, his oven to bake their bread, and his winepresses to distil wine and beer.
5. The lord could decide whom a serf should marry, or gave his blessing to the serf's choice, but on payment of a fee.
6. When the towns and cities emerged, many serfs craving to be free ran away and hid in towns. If a serf could stay for one year and one day without getting caught by his lord, he would become a free man.

Conditions of Roman slaves:

1. Slavery was an institution deeply rooted in the Roman Empire. During the rule of Augustus, there were still 3 million slaves in a total Italian population of 7.5 million.
2. In the Roman Empire, slaves were an investment; they were used as living-tools for services and labour. The Roman upper classes were brutal towards their slaves.
3. When there was a shortage of slaves, the users of slave labour turned to slave breeding- the practice of encouraging female slaves and their partners to have more children, who could be used as slaves in future.