CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

An accurate definition of the term "Feudalism," is practically impossible because feudal usages often varied not only from country to country but from king to king and from period to period. It would be inaccurate to limit its implications to politics, economics and social institutions, for all institutions were embraced in its totality. Since the feudal institutional range was so inclusive and at the same time so divergent, it eludes systematic definition. There are as many definitions of the term 'Feudalism' as there are scholars who have already worked or still working on this subject. So, only arbitrary definition is possible for this term.

The objective féodal is (relating to the fief) and the French substantive feodalité, used in the restricted sense of a quality, peculiar to a fief, date the first from the Middle Ages, the second probably from the sixteenth century. But it was not before the eighteenth century that the custom arose of using for the designation of a whole system of social organisation either compound expressions like feudal regime, government or system or, a little later
abstract substantives such as féodalité or feudalism. German scholars in general have adopted Lehnwesen from Lehn, the German equivalent of fief. The extension of the use of a word derived from a particular institution, the fief, which can scarcely be considered the central and only significant institution of feudalism to characterise the social regime prevailing widely during the Middle Ages in the West and more particularly from the tenth to the thirteenth centuries in the greater part of Western and Central Europe is mainly attributable to the influence of Montesquieu.¹ While the term ‘Feudal’ is derived from the Latin word ‘Feodālis’² which means pertaining to a feud on fief, indicative of the nature of a feud which is synonymous with the fee, the term ‘feudalism’ comes from the French word Féodal,³ which means fiefs or fee and refers to the military organisation. Consequently the term feudalism has come to be applied to a mode of social organisation that may recur in diverse forms in differing periods and environments. Medieval European Feudalism nevertheless remains the model of all feudal system as well as the best known ones.

However, in the broader sense, the essential characteristics of European feudalism include a weak king, powerful nobility, serfdom, manor, knighthood,
land and peasantry. The peasantry, widespread use of the service tenement, the supremacy of a class of specialised warriors, ties of obedience and protection which bind man to man, within the warrior class, assume the distinctive form called vassalage and fragmentation of authority. Thus it generally implies a means of holding land by the simplest form and one strong man and many weak ones joined together to hold and worked on a large tract of land in order to protect their lives and property from the barbarian raids and the social classification becomes the main theme in the history of feudalism, that history must inevitably concern itself with the masses of people below and outside the system of military fiefs. Thus, there is established a hierarchical structure between the top and the bottom in the west. The Western scholars differ in their approach to its actual meaning. While some attach importance to its being military fiefs, the Marxists emphasise class domination and exploitation of peasants by land lords. In fact, there have been two schools of thought about feudalism. Montesquieu considered the establishment in Europe of "Feudal Law" a phenomenon Sui-generis an event occurring once in the world and destined perhaps never to occur again. The other is explained by Voltaire that "it is not an event, it is a very old form which with
differences in the working, subsists in three quarters of the hemisphere. Following the latter school, a number of scholars have taken feudalism to mean no more than "every fragmentation of political authority" and even "the encroachment of economic power on public life. To combat this tendency of importing vagueness in the concept of feudalism it would be necessary to formulate and crystalize its precise condition in terms of a particular set up, and a definite system of socio-economic relationship having a clear cut legal frame work even if it means an inclining towards the view of Montesquieu.

In order to understand feudalism better it is essential to have look into the definitions given by Western scholars. M.M. Postan states that feudalism is merely a name for the legal or customary principles embodied in the *feudum* as the universal principle of military organisation. J.W. Thompson states that "feudalism was primarily a system of government, the typical medieval system of government whose chief characteristic was the exercise by large landowners of king rights formerly exercised by the monarch, the inseparable association, in other words, of landownership with powers of government." H. Mitter’s suggests that the term feudalism is a general term
which describes a form of social organisation found in many different ages and different parts of the world. To make a difference some Indian scholars are of the opinion that this system was prevalent in early India. D. Mukherjee suggests that 'feudalism generally implies a system of holding land by means of military tenure, and hence it involves a kind of military service.' But R. S. Sharma is of the opinion that the military obligation is not an essential condition of feudalism, the essence of feudalism is the dependence of the tillers of land on the king or the state in respect of land. Niharranjan Ray thinks that by the term feudalism one should not understand military obligations exclusively there are various obligations, such as, (1) military (2) political and (3) Economic. So he suggests rightly that the obligations differs from country to country, e.g. the French from the Dutch, the German from the British, the British from the Russian, but the basis, in all the cases is the land. D.C. Sircar suggests that the central principle of feudalism was the holding of land in return for services. The king was regarded as the holder of all land, much of which he let out to his barons or tenants in chief who, in return for the property, agreed to perform certain services and to make some payments and supplies. Thus in Indian context the term
'feudalism' denotes a socio-political system based upon the rural economy characterized by dispersal of power in a variety of semi-independent domains, the domains being staged as fiefs held on condition of the performance of service. The fundamental features of feudalism in early India were viz, king, landed aristocracy, slavery, forced labour, ties of obedience, and fragmentation of the royal authority etc.

However, the Marxist writing on Indian history began with Karl Marx himself, his influence on Indian historical writing cannot be traced back earlier than the forties of the present century. India is a large country with utmost diversity of natural environment, means of production, not in the means of development, can one think of an overall homogeneity in the oldest times. European parallels therefore may not always be useful in reconstructing the history of India where the course of developments was different in many ways. While in the four theoretical schemes of modes of production such as, Asiatic, Ancient, Feudal and Modern bourgeois there seems to be nothing that prevented the Asiatic from evolving into the feudal. Karl Marx excluded the feudal mode of production from Indian history. He pointed out that the Asiatic Mode of production, a mode based on domestic union of
agriculture and industry and on the village self sufficiency system, presided over by an oriental despot supplying irrigational water, a mode involving both communal ownership and communal tillage of land, was eternally self perpetuating. He states that India was gifted with the negative capacity of not being able to make history. But he did not explain exactly how and why India came to possess this negative capacity. He mentions that "Indian society had no history at all, atleast no known history.\textsuperscript{16} He left no room for feudalism in India. He made the Asiatic Mode of Production stretch out from times immeorial to the times when Marx was writing about India and British were presumably carrying out several agricultural and social revolutions in India. Marx in capital itself specifically excluded Japan and conceded "purely feudal organisation of landed property" and equivalence with "European Middle Ages" to it.\textsuperscript{17} Thus, the use of the term 'Asiatic' was not merely a terminological error but it was a misconception more profound and substantial unsatisfactory and even misleading.

In order to explain the phenomenon of "Oriental Despotism" there are often expressed divergent views on their relative importance. Even so there seems even through Marx's idea of Asiatic Mode of
Production, the concept of a society characterised by tribal communal ownership of land and a self sustaining economy based on an agricultural handicrafts Connubium and hence marked by a "Stagnatory" and vegetative life "and a tremendous staying power." The most influential theory on the nature of the early Indian state and one which has held the field for many decades is that of "Oriental Despotism", with its variants and among these the Asiatic Mode of Production. Oriental land ownership differs completely from the European feudalism as a result of its bureaucratic character. First of all, many of the concrete ways in which landed property arose in relation to the paramount property of the state is also known in feudal Europe. But irrespective of how the feudal monopoly of land arose, its realisation create the sources of benefit for the landlord, the later relegated to serfdom, i.e. he becomes the feudal chief. In India, the Brāhmaṇas who made the prediction of the seasonal supplies of water, were the residents of the villages. On the other hand in Ancient Egypt the science and technology relating to the control of the water lay in the hands of the priestly astronomers who were the direct agencies of the state. The labour of ditch digging and dam building for irrigation system was provided by the agricultural producers, whether in India, China, Burma,
etc. The centralisations of the management of water control is by no means a feature common to all, it is not a specific and determining characteristic of the Asiatic Mode of Production.\textsuperscript{20}

There is a widely held opinion that the Asiatic Mode of Production and 'Oriental Despotism' are connected with social phenomenon. The despotism in the Orient is sometimes accounted for the fiction that the suzerain was the owner of all land in his realm, and sometimes by the fiction that the state was the sole centralised power whereby the water was controlled and managed, the water control being a necessary condition for agriculture in Asiatic Mode of Production.\textsuperscript{21} The notion of the "Unchangeableness of Asiatic societies" and of the Oriental Despotism, both derived from the concept of Asiatic Mode of Production, have however, been challenged by Indian scholars. The myth of the millenary stagnation of the early Indian society has been only exploded by D.D. Kosambi, R.S. Sharma and many others. They do not accept the scheme implicit in the proof particular to the Marxist theory. Now it is proved that the concept of Asiatic Mode of Production does not correspond to the early Indian situation which is marked by the existence of private property in land of a ruling class around the king which expropriated
the surplus from the people. Thus, systematic studies of the archaeological material likewise, have proved the existence of many towns and several phases of urbanisation have been postulated in different parts of the country. All this lead to a rejection of the theory of the Asiatic Mode of Production.

However, D.C. Sircar is not inclined to accept feudalism in Ancient Indian History. He is of the opinion that landlordism has been confused with feudalism. He further argues that in the feudal system of Europe, the king was regarded as the holder of all the land of the kingdom, much of the land being let out by him to the barons or tenants in chief who in return for the land, agreed to perform certain services for the king and were under the obligation of making some payments and supplied on occasions. They had usually to provide the king with specified number of soliders in time of war. The majority of the numerous charters discovered all over the country record grants of land to gods and Brähmans without stipulating any obligation of the donees to the donors. The donees were exempted from all kinds of obligations including the supply of unpaid labour. He shows awareness of the regional variation, but he is not worried by temporal differences. He lumps together as many as
fifty nine obligations imposed on the villagers whose lands were granted to the beneficiaries,²⁵ as if they existed throughout the period of his study. Sircar’s exercise is based on the wrong assumption that the pattern of land granted till recent time, continued to be the same. He mentions that “early Indian rulers sometimes granted jāgīrs for the maintenance of their officers and dependents.”²⁶ He qualifies this point by adding that these were not under the feudal type of obligation but he does not care to mention their nature. The D.C Sircar is of the opinion that there was no real dearth of coins in the market. A large number of kings and others agencies of the postgupta period issued coins which have been discovered in all parts of the country. But he admits that many of the rulers and ruling families of the ancient and medieval ages do not appear to have issued coins.²⁷ The term ‘Ancient’ and ‘Medieval’ do not conveys any meaning or differences to Sircar. No land grants seem to have been made by the Śakas and the Kuśāṇa.²⁸ The land grants which are recorded in epigraphic souces, started with the Sātavāhanas and the Śakas of Western India were first confined to a small area in Mahārastra. Later they spread to Andhra Paradesh and generally all over the country. In literary records we find evidence of land grants in Brāhmaṇa or later Vedic period
onwards.

However, B.N. Datta’s work, *Studies in Indian Social Polity*, which deals mainly with the origin and growth of caste and he devotes small sections of class struggle in ancient India and to the growth of feudalism, the latter theme is assigned a separate chapter in *Dialectics of Land Economics in India* (Calcutta; 1952). But the best representative of the Marxist historiography in India is D.D. Kosambi. His working entitled *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, (Bombay; 1956) which surveys the course of Indian History from the earliest time till the British Conquest and his another work *Culture and Civilization of Ancient Indian in Historical Outline*. (London;1965) which deals with topics ranging from the prehistory to the long process of emergent of feudalism and few papers on this subject in various journals. Kosambi does not show any procurstean adherence to slavery, feudal capitalism scheme. He suggests that slaves were specially house slaves and chattel slavery was completely denied for production.29 But the denial of the existence of slavery in Ancient India has been questioned by D.R. Chanana’s *Slavery in Ancient India*, (Delhi; 1960) is a major contribution to our knowledge of the origin, extent and nature of slavery in Ancient
India. The author argues that dasa-Kammakaras are engaged in all kinds of productive work. In support of his argument, he referred to the Buddhist literature wherein the slave Mode of Production is stated. Thus one cannot rule out the existence of slaves, engaged in economic production, as is evident from his critical analysis of the Buddhist and some other texts. R.S. Sharma admits that slavery was an institution of considerable importance and played role in economic production in Mauryan time, he characterised Ancient Indian society as a Vaiśya-Śūdra and not a slave society. Thus we cannot deny the slave mode of production in early Indian economy. Kosambi’s total rejection of the slave mode of production during the Vedic period seems to be true when the number of slaves was very small. But we cannot rule out completely the possibility of slave engaged in economic production from the Buddhist period onwards as it is evident in the early texts.

However, Kosambi attempts to distinguish two processes in the development of feudalism, feudalism "from above" and feudalism "from below." When the kings began to transfer their subordinate chiefs who thus came into direct relation with peasantry, a process he terms "feudalism from above." It reached an advanced
stage of development during the Gupta and the post gupta periods. He postulates the theory that at a later stage "a class of landlords developed within the village between the state and the peasantry gradually to wield armed power on the local population" - a process he calls "feudalism from below"\textsuperscript{32} but it would be wrong to suppose that a class of landowners from above the peasantry did not emerge until the later century of the first century of the first millennium A.D. We come to know from the Yājñāvalka Smṛti that land was assigned to the cultivator by the landowner and not by the king\textsuperscript{33} Thus, the law giver makes it clear that the Svāmī (the land owner) formed an intermediate stage between the Rājā (king) and the actual tiller of the land.\textsuperscript{34}

In recent years several scholars have made contributions to early Indian Feudalism. But R.S. Sharma's \textit{Indian Feudalism} (Calcutta; 1965) is the only monograph. It deals with the origin of Indian feudalism (AD 300-750) which he develops with the help of Indian Polity and economy and rest of the chapters deal with the studies of the feudal polity and economy under Palas, Pratiharas, Rāṣṭrakuṭas and Delhi sultanate. He covers a period of about nine centuries, and mainly dealing with the political and economic aspects of
His work was the first attempt to cover the entire period, and it is evident that the work cannot be a totally of a specialised nature. But we should bear in mind that he presents a lot of informations coming from his analytical assessment. But no system, such as, a social, economic and political system could take its rise on a fixed date. It must be preceded by a long evolutionary process of socio-economic and political changes leading to the development of circumstances suitable for it to come about. In fact he was handicapped by dearth of material and therefore, he could not throw much light on all aspects of feudalism. This, of course, does not mean that there was no feudal stage in Indian history. Sharma believes in keeping his options open even in historiography. He has suggested may alternative centuries for the beginning of feudalism in India, ranging from 2nd and Ist centuries B.C to 3rd or 4th centuries A.D. But he hastens to add that there was paucity of coins and trade languished during the Gupta and the post Gupta periods. At the same time he has attempted to show the evolution of feudalism in earlier period when trade was certainly in a flourishing condition over a considerable period. While the "Indo-Bactorians and especially the Kuśāṇas issued a considerable number of copper coins which were evidently in common use in the
Panjab, and occasionally are found even as far East as Buxar in Bihār. What then is the meaning of feudalism being connected with trade? His view relating to the origin of feudalism with issuance of land grants to temples, and monasteries in 2nd century A.D. But he admits that the villages were granted to the Brāhmaṇas in the pre Mauryan period by the rulers of Kośala and Magadha. He qualifies this point by mentioning that they do no mention the abandonment of any administrative right by the donors. Thus it is not necessary to fulfil all the conditions which are important to European feudalism, or European structure. In spite of basic same ness in some of its features it must be admitted that there had been enough local variations. A thorough scientific examination of literary and epigraphic data may enlighten us about the relationship subsisting in the country between the producer and the owner as well as between different stages of administrative political hierarchy. Thus, there is scope for further research of the socio economic and political factors of the earlier period. Romila Thapar leaves several escape avenues open for herself. On the one hand she has guarded herself by asserting that, "Indian Feudalism did not emphasise the economic contract to the same degree as certain types of European Feudalism." On the other hand she has
kept the door open by acceptance of the orthodox literal Marxians position, by asserting that the villages were self sufficient and did not produce any surplus. She mentions that large merchant guilds distributed goods through elaborate net works and brought these goods to places of manufacture. She suggests that the use of the term feudalism has been contested, since the type of feudalism in India was not identical with the feudal system in other parts of the world, but the basic requisits of feudal system were present in India. This indicates the presence of feudal elements in early Indian history. She is quite uncertain about the mode of production which prevailed in Indian History. It is not clear whether she means anything more by feudalism than the induction of intermediaries in the politico-military apparatus.

B.N.S. Yadava has repeatedly referred to the Western Europe for making a comparison and added great details to Sharma's work studying Northern India in the early medieval period, particularly during the 12th century. Sharma could not trace foreign invasions of India. But he mentions that "it is hypothetical whether they had any Central Asian parallels and whether like the German invasion in Europe, the penetrations provided any external stimulus to the
growth of feudalism. But Yadava has made up this deficiency by drawing attention to the Barbarians, particularly the Huna, invasion in India, which shattered the Gupta empire and contributed to the rise of feudalism. He has established considerable similarity in the features of Indian and European feudalism. It is not possible to agree with all the suggestions made by him in establishing the similarity between Indian and European feudalism. Harbans Mukhiā has rightly brought out the difference between the condition pertaining in early mediaeval India and those in Medieval Europe. He argues that the nature of forced labour in India of which there is considerable evidence throughout her history—is in its very essence different from the one in Europe, for in India it was very rarely used for purposes of production. But he admits that "forced labour in India remained by and large an incidental manifestation of the ruling class, political and administrative power than a part of the process of production." Also the process of production in India did not create an acute scarcity of labour, enserfment of the peasant therefore was hardly necessary. It is not as if the ruling class or the state in India was more compassionate to the primary producer than the feudal lords or the Medieval State in Europe, it resorted even to enslavement of the
peasants and the artisans. With a high quantum of agrarian surplus available in the form of land revenue etc., to the state which formed the chief instrument of exploitation because of high fertility of land and low subsistence level of the peasant. But the richness of soil and the use of relatively efficient tools and techniques, the land labour rate and agricultural productivity could obviously not have been the same in all the unit of the local agrarian economy which however became more prevalent afterwards. Thus the particular form of economy with its corresponding political structure called forth such relation as may be called feudal. However, on the whole these factors did not circumscribe the manifestation, level and scope of feudality in India.

Thus this study leaves us sufficient scope or room for further work on the subject which is important to political, social and economic life. It is indeed a controversial topic on which divergent views are often expressed by scholars, no doubt they throw illuminating light on the subject. But still there is need of further research on this subject. It is pretty well known that there is a wide variety of opinions and theories about the system known to have existed in Europe during the Middle Ages. It is unnecessary to
argue how far the characteristics of European feudalism agree with those of India, under different environment different human societies responded differently and gave rise to dissimilar phenomenon in course of the evolution of society.

However, Kosambi's pioneer works on Indian feudalism earned for him the title of Father of Indian feudalism. In his much acclamied work An Introduction to the Study of Indian History he devoted two chapters on feudalism. This work of Kosambi inspired and encouraged many scholars for further research on the subject. Although most of them follow his model of feudalism they differ from him on many grounds. Kosambi in his effort to established and delineate feudalism in India followed unhesitantly and unregrettably, the marxist theory of historical materialism, even if the theory fall short of adequacies to cope with Indian situation. To cite but one example, he emphatically asserts that the slaves in Ancient India were not employed for economic production. An assertion which is most disputable these days. Some scholars like D.R. Chanana, an author of a book Slavery in Ancient India and R.S. Sharma and many other are reluctant to accept his view.
We have observed that Indian scholars working on Indian feudalism follow two methods, one group following marxist model, says that India like European society passed through the same phase, in the course of its socio-economic and political evolution and many event has material cause, without material base event would occur. Feudalism has too drawn its vigour from material base or from material base of economic history. At the same time we have another group of scholars who have unstinted faith on political forces. According to them it is not economic factor rather political exigencies, which brings about transformation in the existing social structure. They substantiate their argument by proving that dynastic tussle and political fragmentations created a class of elite, who could only be content with having grants and thus political insecurity generated a feeling which could take India to feudalism.

Further, to some scholars, the term feudalism appears to be anathema. For them feudalism is a foreign concept and by no way relevant and applicable to Indian situation. It was unnecessarily imported into India for no cause. They draw their references form the fact that the European social model which is called feudalism was not existent in India. However, a
close analysis of European feudalism with that of India established that they were similar in the main, although not one in the prototype of other. Our effort here is to display same basic features of feudalism if seen closely can show distinctive features, and these can be sufficiently taken to differentiate itself from the preceding social structure. We all agree that Indian feudalism cannot be a replica of Western feudal system and cannot be taken as such. European feudalism originated, grew and got maturity in an entirely distinct socio-economic and political milieu and its geographical factors shaped its social structure and India’s had its own. Thus there is further scope for impartial study of the subject.
NOTES & REFERENCES


But, consequently the term 'feudalism' has come to be applied to a mode of social organisation that may recur in diverse forms in different periods and environments. Medieval European feudalism nevertheless remains the model of all feudal systems as well as the best known. As a matter of fact the social type that is called 'feudalism' was born in European condition peculiar to the society from which it sprang. "Since feudal society did not stamp itself upon a clean state, but evolved little through the slow adaption and modifications of older usages, it is not difficult to discover in its traces of earlier systems of organisation. But these elements were borrowed from very diverse environments. Vocabulary itself" (ibem.). J.F.Burns argues that "it is impossible to gather it up into a perfectly exact picture, or indeed to make
any general statement about it which would not be in contradiction to several particular cases". He further states that the term "feudalism is derived from the medieval Latin word *feodum, fevum or feudom* donated cattle. The *fehu* and the Latin *pecunia* (from which comes the English "pecuniary" have the same connotations in Medieval Europe (New York), pp. 452-53.


5. Ibid., p.Xiii.

6. Ibem.


11. H. Mitteis, (tr.) H.F. Orton, *The State in the Middle Ages* (New York), 1975, p. 19. T.C. Mendenhall and B.D. Henning think that the disintegration of the Carolingian Empire after 814 left Western Europe without strong central government. In the ensuing chaos men were forced to seek a new form of rule to supply the needs of the individual particularly the need for protection which are normally provided by the Central Government. The form eventually involved was called feudal system or feudalism. *Ideas and Institutions in European History (800-1715)* (New York), 1949, p. 3.


13. Ibid., p. 43. R. S. Sharma, adds that self sufficiency in a country's economy is an essential condition of feudalism. Lallangi Gopal, suggests that there is no uniform system of feudalism, and we can use the term even if all the condition of feudalism are non satisfied (ibid., p. 42).

14. Ibid., p. 43.


16. Karl Marx and F. Engels, *On Colonialism* (Moscow), New Delhi, p. 34. n.d.

The notion of "the unchangeableness of Asiatic Societies" and that of the Oriental Despotism, both derived from the concept of Asiatic Mode of Production, have however, been seriously questioned by Indian scholars. D.N.Jha, states that the myth of millenary stagnation of early Indian society has been ably exploded by D.D.Kosambi and R.S.Sharma who mark definite stages in its development till the beginning of feudalism from about the middle of the first millennium." Neither of them accept the scheme implicit in the Asiatic Mode of Production which would appear inadequate and invalid if subjected to the modes of proof particular to the Marxist theory. The concept of Asiatic Mode of Production does not correspond to the early Indian situation which is marked by the existence of private property in land and of a ruling class around the king which expropriated the surplus from the masses. Systematic studies of the archaeological
material, likewise, have proved the existence of many towns, and several phases of urbanisation have been postulated in different part of the country. All this led to a rejection of the Asiatic Mode of Production paradigm the Indian Marxist scholars, who have tried to apply the basic tenets of historical materialism to the study of early Indian social formation. (Ibid., pp. 26-27).


21. Ibem.


Sircar states that there was no feudalism in India. He argues that the King's ownership of all land was only theoretical and that the king had to purchase land under permanent tenants in order to
obtain proprietary right over it. The land grants show that land was granted to gods or Brāhmaṇas without stipulating any obligation of the donees to the doners. The priestly class was evidently unsuitable for rendering any services of feudal type. Besides, the donees were exempted from all kinds of exemptions including the supply of forced labour. The object of the land-grant was only to gain religious merit and there is no mention of obligation of the feudal type in such records. The successors of the donees of full holdings were allowed to enjoy them without any more payment to the kings on their overlords. Moreover, in the feudal system of Europe the man who held land from another was regarded as the subordinate of the latter but in India the Brāhmaṇa donees were never considered to be socially inferior to the king." in Land System and Feudalism--- op.cit., pp.57-58.


24. Ibid., p. 58.
25. Ibid., pp. 21-23, we will discuss fiftynine obligation in detail in separate chapter entitled as Suzerain-vassal relations.


27. Ibid., p.34.

28. H.B.Luder, A List of Brahmi Inscriptions From the Earliest Times Exception of these of Aśoka (Vārānasi), 1973, No.112.


Sharma argues that the Gupta emperors, other than Kumāra gupta, issued only a few copper coins and cowries formed the common medium of exchange, the comparative rarity of Gupta copper coins shows that money economy was becoming weaker at this time. He further states that misuse of coins in post-Gupta was growing, and the religious endowments which were made in cash by the princes and individuals in the first two centuries of the Christian era were now partly replaced by grant of land. In the earlier period the Sātavāhana rullers made a few land grants but no such grant can be attributed to the Kuśāṇas in whose dominions as well as those the Sātavāhana cash grants were made to the guilds of artisans and merchants for using them for religious purposes. But, in the post-Harṣa period hardly any coin can be ascribed with certainty to only ruling house. (Ibem.).

The King granted the revenue from varying proportions of land to his officers or selected holders, who were the equivalent of vassals elsewhere. The tendency from the seventh century onwards of granting land in lieu of cash salaries intensified the feudal process. The work of cultivation was carried out by peasants, generally *Sudras*, who in effect were almost tied to the land and who handed over a fixed share of their produce to the landowner. The feudatories could hire out their assigned land to cultivators, from whom they collected the revenue agreed upon. Part of the revenue from the land they sent to the king. Out of the revenue retained by the vassal he was expected to maintain the feudal levies which, underlying his oath of loyalty to his king, he was in duty bound to furnish for the king's service." (Ibem.).

40. Ibid., pp. 207-209.

41. Ibid., pp. 241-242.

171-72.

43. R. S. Sharma, Indian Feudalism, op.cit., p. 127.


46. Ibem.,

Mukhia argues that certain specific features of Indian agrarian history would, perhaps, be clearly enough established, even though only a small segment of it has been studied. The fertility of Indian soil in general appears to have been for higher than if Europe till as late as the nineteenth century. Nature, on the other hand, permitted the Indian peasant to subsist at a much lower level of resources than his European counterpart. Secondly, and in part conditioned by the factor, the Indian agrarian history has been characterized predominantly by free peasantry (in the economic rather than in the legal sense (Ibem.).

47. Ibem.
48. Ibid., p. 258.

H. Mukhia suggests that "a wide range of social formation have existed in world prior to their subjection to the universality of capitalism and this range cannot be exhausted with the concepts of feudalism and the Asiatic Mode of Production."