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Understanding the continuity and change in the Social Historiography of Haryana (600 AD to 1200 AD)

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Abstract

The present paper is an attempt to present the social milieu of 600 AD to 1200 AD of Haryana. The paper delve into the various aspects of social institutions of that time, the focus is to understand the vexed question and intricate patterns of social relations of that time, it primarily draws its inferences from the socio-institutional structure around the institutions of caste, family and patriarchy. The paper discusses the prevalence of social stratification of the society and traces the changes in the family as an institution.

Keywords: Social institutions, caste system, social historiography of Haryana, family and kinship

Introduction

Social institutions are a manifestation of interaction between the members of a group that lead to emergence of normatively, which in long run get crystallized and take the shapes of institutions. Human interact with each other and with their social milieu and this system of interaction create patterns of relation of roles performed by Individuals which leads to social order. A larger endorsement of norms leads to institutional structure of the Society. Social institutions have their functionality as they emerge out of social need of a particular time and space. Every social belief has a Spatio-temporal dimension attached to it and plays a larger role in shaping the belief. Therefore the objective of this research paper is to delineate and trace the social conditions of that time. The paper looks into historiography and evolved different paradigms and transitional shifts in the social conditions of that time.

The paper has an avowed objective of looking into the perplexing social questions by reconstruction through *Indological*, content analysis. Social historiography often extols social institutions, traditions and collective norms of that time. This paper tries to look into the intricacies of the then institutions and their evolution in terms of continuity and change. The society in Haryana is a cluster of different castes and religions, but the majority of people residing includes Hindus and Sikhs. However, Muslims and Christianity were considered as a minority in the state. Each leader invading the region had a profound influence on the societal structure of Haryana (Avari 2007) ^[1]. A social hierarchy is followed in the societies of Haryana during the period of 600-1200 AD. Moreover, Hiuen-Tsang, a Chinese traveller, visited the kingdom of Harshavardhana and identified that the society in this region exhibits a caste system. A cluster of mixed and sub-caste was recognized by him during his visit. The society was also comprised of people who were untouchables and out-castes. From this period, women were considered a minor part of society, and men held an inferior position (Babu 2020) ^[2]. During 600 AD, the dominance of Brahmanism was encountered along with the decline of Buddhism. The people living in the society also practised Vaishnavism, Jainism and Shaivism. The people belonging to the lower classes earned through cultivation and agriculture. Before 600 AD, the society in Haryana was referred to as Vaisya Sudra society because of the slavery activities performed in the region. The region of Haryana became aware of the caste system present in the system and worked to adapt themselves to its rigidity. During the Vardhan Dynasty, there was four main caste system followed by the people. Due to this, the Varnas were further divided into another caste which increased the strength of the society. These four occupational groups included people from Brahmins and the priest, Kshatriyas, also termed as the warrior class, Vaishyas

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who produced goods for the society and lastly, the Sudras, which included labourers and dark-skinned people.

This formed a flexible system in the society of Haryana, and each one worked to help others grow and prosper. The Brahmins provided education, Kshatriya protected the people, Vaishya worked for trade, and Shudra served the people. This period is referred to as a semi-feudal system divided into different Varnas. Art, culture and education flourished and an interest developed towards learning. Despite this flourished period, women still suffered a lower position, and widows were not allowed to remarriage. Sati and dowry were also common in society during this period (Shaik and Uma 2017) ^[21]. During 600 AD, a rise of Jainism and Buddhism occurred, which led to religious crises and the suffering of the common man. A rigid society was formed during this period where people had restrictions over food, marriage and drinks. After the death of Harshavardhana, the prominence of Gujara Parithara occurred, during this period, the state was divided into bhuktis, and several mandals were associated with each bhuktis, and each Mandal had cities and numerous villages. The empire was divided into the unit for the ease of administration. Moreover, during this phase, each society had an elder called the Manhattan, who was assigned to look into the administration of the village. This administration was quite effective and protected the region from Arab attacks. Society and its people felt secured during this phase because of the efficient administration. However, the caste system was also common during this period, and the people from every caste were further divided into several classes. Amongst the Brahmins, Chaturvedi and Bhatta groups were common. The classes in the society included Savakufira, Kataria, Brahman, Labla, Sudaria and Vandalia. King was chosen from the Savakufira class. Kshatriya and Kataria classes are considered as same. Likewise, Sudarias and Sudra were the same and were focused on doing cattle rearing and farming. Basuria class served the other class people; Sandila worked for Chandlas, and Lahuda were constituted as a low tribe.

During the 7th century, the Vedic period maintained that the prime role of women in society was to look after their house and were given lower positions. During this period, Hinduism became ritualistic, and the predominance of the caste system was seen. The societies were reformed, and the Hindu language and religion were boosted with the fall of Buddhism. Buddhism considered Sanskrit as their sacred language and imposed it on the Hindus living in Haryana. However, during the rise of Buddhism, the agricultural economy accelerated, and people used animal-drawn ploughs for farming. Conversely, a transition was observed in the society as people shifted to settled village communities from nomadic pastoralism (Balkrishna *et al.*, 2019) ^[3]. During 800 AD, agriculture became prominent, and the introduction of migration and cattle dominated, which were all associated with wealth and prosperity. The shift from the dark phase to a brighter one began at this age. During the Rigvedic period, women status became important, and they were given the right to education, weaving, attending the political assembly and were given the right to choose Swayamvara.

From 900 AD, the Chola Dynasty influenced the societal structure of Haryana. Their ruling system was different from the other successors. During their rule, the King was the administrator's head, and the form of rule was Monarchical

and hereditary. Since people lived in villages, therefore the Cholas categorized villages into 3 groups. For the first societal group, the land was given to all caste, and the King was paid all the taxes that come in the form of land revenues. The second group comprised of Brahmins, and their village was named Agrahara Village (Ramesh 2018) ^[6]. These people, due to their high standard, were exempted from tax-paying. The third village group was called Devadana, where the village had to donate the revenues into the temple as Devadana meant Village given to God. Additionally, social life flourished, and the caste system was robust. In this period, Brahmins were highly honoured, but the value of women remained deteriorated. The importance of temples grew as all the political, cultural and economic activities occurred at the temple. During this period, society enjoyed varying traditions, painting, dancing, sculptures and music.

Objectives

To look into the social institution's emergence crystallization, continuity and change

To understand the social institutional structure and its intricate links to the different strata of the society

To analyze the caste, family structure and quality of life in an integrated manner

Study Area

Understanding of Space and chronology is one of the most important aspects to solve a historical vexed question. This paper is delimited to the present day Haryana and it focuses on 600 AD to 1200 AD. Haryana in the modern sense Haryana is a state in India located in the North Central part and is bounded to Punjab from the Northwest and Himanchal Pradesh and Uttarakhand from the Northeast. Chandigarh is considered the capital city of Haryana. Haryana has a long history since the Indus valley civilization and human presence in the state dating back to 100,000 years. The history comprises the Vedic period after the Indus valley civilization referred to as the era of Janpadas that later evolved into Mahajanpadas. However, during the 7th century, *i.e.*, 600AD, the period is referred to as the pre-Islamic Hindu-Buddhist era. King Harshvardhana established his capital which was ruled till the 12th century, *i.e.*, 1200 AD. The period between 600AD to 1200 AD is termed as an early medieval period in the history of India. Haryana, during this period, moved from a dark phase to a bright one excelling themselves in art, language and literature. The change of rulers from Harshavardhana in 606 AD to the rule of the Tomara dynasty from the 8th-12th century leads to historical pieces that are significant for the state of India. However, in terms of geographical region, Haryana was not recognized before the 12th century, and the Tomara ruled them from Delhi when India was invaded by the Ghaznavids from the Northwest. Despite the identification of the region, the state came into being in 1966, separated from the state of Punjab. This paper is an attempt to do a historiographical social review of Haryana, dated from 600 AD to 1200 AD. The significance of this era is that there are many social, religious and caste changes that appeared during this time frame. Each invader supported different practices, which marks the social history of the region. Due to this remarkable history, Haryana holds a significant position in India.

This paper adopts critical and synthetic approach to the problem in question and deconstructs the social conditions of that time. It particularly utilize the content analysis and deductive route of explanation.

Results and Discussion

This paper looks into the social milieu and the intricate web of patterns of relation in the social institutional structure of Haryana of that time. Considering the social life, India has various aspects; from the diversity in religion to class, ethnicity and linguistic, an immense variety is established in the country. A multifaceted society is found in the country with complexities in the cultural themes, which further improve the social harmony. The society in Haryana is a cluster of different castes and religions, but the majority of people residing includes Hindus and Sikhs. However, Muslims and Christianity were considered as a minority in the state. Each leader invading the region had a profound influence on the societal structure of Haryana (Avari 2007)^[1]. A social hierarchy is followed in the societies of Haryana during the period of 600-1200 AD. The origin of the caste system in society, its culminating effects increased on society. On the origin of the caste there are diverse views, vantage points western schools, ethnographer carry a different viewpoint whereas Indian scholars has altogether different view. Nesfield considered it as phenomenon emanating from the specialization of occupation on the basis of hereditary. Hutton (1946)^[24] criticized all the available views and tries to establish a causality and determinants of the origin of caste system, he gives nearly fifteen causes of the origin *i.e.* belief in magic, totemic, isolation etc. Kausambi look at the origin of caste from the Marxist view point and Majumdar and Ghurye sees it a contestation of Aryan and Dravidian culture. Through this, the Haryana society gradually developed into accepting the rigidity of the caste system. Hence, during the Gupta rule in the 6th century, the growth of the caste system increased rapidly and with rigidity (Stargardt, 2020)^[25]. Similarly, it can be observed that during the Gupta period, the caste system in the region was institutionalized and continued in the future unchanged. In addition, during the 647 and 648 AD rule of Harsh increased throughout the region, resulting in minimizing the differences among the society. As per the Harshacharita, it is also considered that the predominant caste is the region comprised of the lower castes due to agriculture and cultivation. Additionally, during the 8th century, the caste system was disturbed due to the growth of other religious followers, such as Muslims. Muslims focusing on social equality and religious advocacy impacted the caste system present in the society. Additionally, the expansion of Muslim rulers and emperors in the region during the 8th century influenced the caste system in the region, resulting in limiting the expansion of the caste system and its adoption. However, it can also be stated that without the rigid caste system in the region, the Hindu civilization would have faced issues and challenges in surviving the attack and expansion of other religions and cultures (Singh, 2015)^[26]. During the 10th century, the caste system in the region and society comprised of seven castes that have been divided from the main four castes systems. The key feature of the era included the proliferation and fragmentation of the castes, in which the Varnas were spited into more castes and tribes to increase the strength of the society and its culture. The highest caste referred to

Subkutria, followed by Brahma and Kataria. In the era, activities and rules have been distributed among the castes, such as Kataria having to follow the rule of not drinking more than three cups of wine. More regulations were established, such as Brahma not giving their daughters in marriage to Kataria, while sons can be married. Additionally, the fourth caste comprised of Sedaris, followed by the caste of Baisura, Sandalia, and Lahud (Jogdand *et al.*, 2016)^[22]. Moreover, Brahmans lived in Haryana in small numbers during the 9th century and were divided into three sub-castes; Gotra, Parvata, and Sakha.

The era can be considered to be the rise of the Brahmans due to the sub-castes created in the times. Similarly, the caste was also divided into sub-castes based on regions, as Brahmans belonging to Rajputana were referred to as Sakadvipi and Magha (Mosse, 2015)^[23]. Additionally, the Kataria caste is comprised of Rajputs and the Jats. The Rajputs emerged during the 7th and 8th centuries, and by the 12th century, the caste had been able to establish its prominence in the Haryana region. The colonization in the 7th century resulted in the emergence of the Rajputs in the region, which also derived the power and authority of the caste. At the same time, Jats have been working in cooperation with the Rajputs in protecting their land and resources by opting for activities in agriculture and cultivation (Agarwal & Levien, 2020)^[27]. Furthermore, Khap Panchayats were created by the Jats that have held a strong position in the Haryana society, which comprises of older men from the caste. It determines the rules and regulations to be followed by people living in Haryana, along with the traders and travellers. The system is observed to have its creation dating back to 600AD. Such systems enabled expanding the implementation and adoption of the caste system in the region, as each caste established its own Panchayats, disregarding the ones of other castes in the society (Hindustan Times, 2010). Moreover, the Vaisyas gained their significance during the 9th and 13th centuries, but due to their high dependence on the Rajputs, the caste faced a decline in terms of its expansion and power. Similarly, the Sudras during the 7th century took an active part in the agriculture and labour activities, which later reduced due to the increasing expansion and power of other castes (Parshad & Dangi, 2014)^[28]. During the period between 600 AD to 1200 AD, several changes appeared considering the social practices adopted by the people. These changes are due to the difference in leadership. People were usually involved in pastoralism and farming allowing to engage in other occupation, thus performing a lively trade. The rulers of that time used the marriage ways for making alliances and for gaining more power. This was considered a political marriage at that time for gaining the command of Kingdoms. Inter-marriages were allowed in the ruling era and also the marriage with the foreigners. Even in Haryana, inter-caste marriages are found. In the earlier times, women were also considered as someone else's property, and it was not considered good that unmarried women should not be kept at home. It was considered the parent's duty to married her daughter and the daughter was considered temporary and meant for the man the daughter would marry. The main duty of married women in the ancient times of India was to serve the husband and his family (Jois, 2015)^[15]. In conclusion we can say the society was rudimentary, traditional and social practices were

backward looking the status of women was jeopardizing due the institution of patriarchy.

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