

# **NATURE OF SOCIAL DIVISION IN DIFFERENT GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS OF INDIA DURING MEDIEVAL PERIOD**

**Dr. Aziz ur Rehman<sup>1\*</sup>, Shivani Verma<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1\*</sup>Ph. D AMU Aligarh. Email.rehmanaziz01@gm ail.com, Mob. 9858250780

<sup>2</sup>M. Sc, NET Jammu University. E-mail vermashivani2008@gmail.com

**\*Corresponding Author:** Dr. Aziz ur Rehman

\*Ph. D AMU Aligarh. Email.rehmanaziz01@gm ail.com, Mob. 9858250780

Social division among the Indians is one of the important features which continue in full swing from Centuries and no one challenges this. However during Medieval time the Baghati and Sufi culture oppose this division and tried to develop a harmonious society. In this paper I tried to analyze the nature of social division in India from various scholars and the accounts of foreign travelers. There was a great difference in the society of epic age and Vedic age as in the earlier the caste system less developed than later. The changes in the society are going on, cities were developing all over India, law and order maintenance organization came into being, learning places, develop where discussion on soul, god, next world were held and agriculture was developing.

After many centuries living in peaceful atmosphere in the fertile plains of Ganga Yamuna doab Indian decide to develop their civilization, cultivate science, art and knowledge and develop social and religious institutions and get divided into four castes. The type of social system known as caste system involves interdependence on each other. It was persistent inequality in supremacy prize and subordination in one way a worldwide fact. In the beginning in spite of division all live together in the same towns. It just seems to be division of work among each other and it was no such rigid as it was in present time and one can find these references in the early literature of Hinduism. Actually devised for harmonious running of the society as a solitary unit but with the time it became strict and rigid and given religious tinge.

The caste system has been the most deep rooted and one of the unique features of Indian society which was not found anywhere. This system was divided from four main to sub castes due to influx of foreigners and intermarriage. Race seems to be the basis of it in the beginning from Aryas and Dasyus. This system extends into sub castes by inter-castes marriages and entering of non-Aryans and tribal into Vedic religion and. Sutarakaras faced many problems to form a rigid caste system. Four varnas came into being from primeval being, from mouth the Brahmans, arms Kshatriyas, thighs Vaishyas and from foot Shudras. It prevailed in Indian society from very earlier time and the first reference of castes and four varnas found in prushasukta the tenth mandala of of Rigved. These varnas are born respectively from the mouth, arms, thighs, and feet of primeval being Brahma (purusa).

Social institutions of India draw the attention of early Muslims immigrants because such institutes not exist anywhere in the world. According to Alberuni name of their castes varnas that is colours and from lineage basis they call them jataka that is birth and the castes earlier are four. He mentions that the king divides their subjects into different classes and orders and tried to gain their benefits by inter mixture and disorder. Thus they separate the people from intercourse and create separate classes and punish who tried to challenge them.

Magasthense was the first foreigner who informed the world about the division of Indian society on the basis of occupation and existence of relations and job within the same occupations. Both Indian and foreign writers used the term caste originally from Portuguese to describe the prevalent social order. Magasthense mentioned seven castes prevailed in India, the philosophers and the counselors' caste was the Brahmans whose task was to study the religion and give services to the rulers. His husbandmen, shepherds, and artisans were the Vaishyas and Shudras and the soldier caste was the Kshatriyas. The reference of Rajputs did not found in Kitab ul Hind of Alberuni however there are more chances that they belong to the Kshatriyas of Alberuni.

Kshatriyas are second in social division and their aim was to govern the country and protect the frontiers and the Vaishyas and Shudras are lower in hierarchy and the duty of

Vaishyas was to breed cattle, agriculture and do business by own or for the Brahmans and Shudras are the servant of the upper castes. Vaishyas and the Shudras were not allowed to gain the knowledge of Vedas and if found guilty their tongue was cut off.

There are some castes that did not fall even under the four varnas known as Antayaja. They were not recognized and fall in the category of their profession and guilds namely, fuller, shoemaker, juggler, basket and shield maker, sailor, fisherman, hunter, weavers they all live near the towns of first four castes but outside.

The lowest castes were Hudi, Doma, Chandela, and Badhatu. These people were assigned to do menial work like cleaning of the streets, villages and other services. Treatment to them was like that they are illegal-born people and outcasts. Forbidden to enter within the walls of the city and enter after the notice and on certain fixed time and occasions.

Castes were further divided into sub castes and determined by the type of occupation one had adopted, which with the time became so rude and strict that it would compulsory for every person to adopt his father's occupation, trade or dealing which by their own like state and ethnicity. Even start knowing each other by the profession, when they meet each other whether you are goldsmith, barber, merchant, grocer, fisherman in this way they identify one another. They did not give their daughter goods for household maintenance but only jewelry and payment of the expenditure in their marriage. The sons are the owners of their wealth and property. This was the system of social division in Goa among the Hindus.

The population of Malabar divided into eighteen castes. They were so much strictest in their caste customs they even forbade to touch each other and every one of them had separate idols, temples, and customs. If anyone violates the caste arrangements he was either put to death or outset from his inheritance. Although they were divided into number of castes, but the fundamental and most important aspects polytheism and idolatry was practiced by all of them, in spite of diverse customs and manners. Vijayanagar kingdom people were divided into three main classes each of them had a separate role in the society.

The important are aristocrats' soldiers of highest rank and rest are fighting men who are polygamous and their properties goes to their sons left the hereditary occupation for adopting the new even it was lucrative was considered as a sin.

The most dangerous thing in the social system during earlier medieval India was the sense of physical pollution (chut). Everything falls in the category of impurity strives and there was no way to gain purity. This principal of Brahmanism was against the laws of nature. The soldiers who were captured by the Muslim army when return to their society and religion were purified by fasting, buried in cow dung and prevented from taking the milk of cow. But it was not accepted by the Brahmins and they say they were not readmitted in the society and religious fold. If a Brahmin eats in the house of a shudra he was expelled from the caste and family. The caste system drained the individual values and hit the sentiments of individuality and deprived of the personality. It refuses the admission of individual nature his universal values to express his ambitions and work for his personal interest. The caste principle badly impacts the dignity of man as man. Caste system was very impermeable institution of the society and proved a setback for the feeling of same citizenship weakened the society and Turkish military action become strong.

Professor Habib remarks about the caste system "Such a policy, may or may not, have been necessary in the period of Rigved. But in the eleventh century in the generation of Alberuni, Avcena and sultan Mahmud it was stupid, mad and suicidal and Brahmins themselves a rationalistic and highly enlightened group were destined to pay a terrible price for the most unpardonable of social sins. The weak social system which also affects the political and economic set up of the country made easy for Ghori to conquer and established Muslim state. But his great general ship and military advancement was not ignored. Sense of equality and social harmony the religious rights which unite the Muslims like one family. The real cause for the success of the Turkish was the social system of Indians in which a special class for fighting developed and rest of all keep watching the defeat of their rulers. Caste system was a blow to the efficiency of Rajputs.

Defeat of Indians from the hands of Turks also attributed by some scholars to caste and religious prejudices as the spirit of oneness was shattered by these restrictions. If the Indian jointly faced the Turks it was not possible for them to take an inch of Indian soil. It was not a conquest but a turnover of public opinion. This change was waiting from long time and it was just a blow for it. The circumstances created by the development of caste system deprived the sense of citizenship and the loyalty to the country.

Caste system was fatal for the efficiency of Rajputs state as fighting was fixed to a specific caste and tribes. If the Rajputs caught in the hands of Muslims they were rejected by their own society, though physically alive but theologically and socially dead and for this fear large number of males and females turns into ashes by jouhar.

Indians believed that their laws were derived from Risis and under any situation were not liable to be change or replaced. When the shariat and Smritis laws came opposite to each other the city worker of India preferred Shariat. The new cities developed from Lahore to Lakhnauti allowed the workers, artisans and menial workers without any restriction and sultans allowed them to live within the walls of cities.

The lower classes fully cooperates the Muslims as they got maximum opportunities and improved social status. Economic conditions were not the single reason for conversion of low classes but other factors too contributed.

The caste system also influenced the Muslim and they were divided into Shaikh Syeds Pathan and usually preferred to marry within their own groups. In social area the weight of Hinduism on Islam has nowhere left a more distinct mark than in the formation of caste distinctions, which signify the social status as obviously as they do in Hindu society.

Indians in the beginning treated Muslim as Malechas a status lower than that of Shudras. Their all extremism was directed against foreigner and call them Malechas impure and prohibit any relation with them like inter marriage, sitting, eating and drinking with them due to fear of impurity. Manusmitri calls the Turks, Greeks and Persians as people of low origin so it hinders the Indians to travel in foreign countries and thus import and export was mainly in the hands of foreigners resulted in increase in number of foreign population and development of new castes. During sixteenth century caste system was the chief base of social organization of south India. The rulers of Vijayanagar too consider it was their responsibility to protect Varnasramadharma.

**References:**

1. R. C. Dutt, edited by A.V. Williams Jackson, History of India from Earliest Times to the Sixth Century B.C.
2. Published by Grolier Society London 1906. Vol. i, p144.
3. Ibid., p.134.
4. David G. Mandelbaum, Society in India continuity and Change, Published by University of California 1970. Vol.i.p.6.
5. Habib and Nizami, A Comprehensive History of India, People Publishing House New Delhi vol.v 1970. vol.i. p.134.
6. R. C. Dutt, p. 138.
7. S. C. Raychoudhary, Social Cultural and Economic History of India, Published by Surjeet Publication, Printed by Kapoor Printing Pahar Ganj New Delhi 1978. p.56.
8. Brijender Nath Sharma, Social and Cultural Life of Northern India, Published by Abhinav Publications Houz Khas New Delhi, Printed by Indra Printers, Esplanade Road Delhi, 1972. p. 8.
9. R. C. Dutt, Vol.i p. 230.
10. David G. Mandelbaum, vol. i pp.22,3.
11. Yusuf Hussain, Hussain, Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture, Published by Asia Publishing House, Printed Bandukwala at British India press Bombay, 1957. p.117.
12. Alberuni, kitab ul Hind, Eng. tr. by. C. Edward Sachau, Published for Oriental Translation Fund of Great Britain and Ireland, Printed by William. H. Allen and Co. London 1879. vol. i.p.100-1.
13. Alberuni, vol.i. pp.99-100.
14. David G. Mandelbaum, vol. i P.3.
15. R. C. Dutt, Vol.i p. 234.
16. Habib and Nizami, vol. v, p.132.
17. Alberuni, Eng. tr. by, Sachau vol. I, p.136.
18. Ibid., p.125.
19. Ibid., p.101.
20. Ibid., p.101,2.
21. John Huyghen Van Linschoten, Eng. tr. by, Arthur Coke Burnell, The Voyage Of John Huyghen Van Linschoten To The East Indies, published by J. Jetley for Asian Educational Services New Delhi, vol,i p.231.
22. Duarte Barbosa, The Book Of Duarte Barbosa Eng. tr. by, Mansel Longworth Dames Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, Madras,1989, vol.ii.p.7.
23. Abdur Razzaq, Eng. tr. by, R.H. Major, India In The fifteenth Century, Printed For The Hakluyt Society,1857. p.17.
24. Barbosa, vol.i, pp.212,3.
25. Alberuni, Eng. tr. by, Sachau vol. i. p.109.
26. Alberuni, Eng. tr. by, Sachau vol. i. p.162,3.
27. A. L. Alstekar, The state and Govt in Ancient India, Published and printed by Motilal Banarsi Das seventh edition 2016.p. 12.
28. Habib and Nizami, vol. v, pp.134, 135.
29. Ibid., p.180.
30. Jadunath Sarkar, Military History of India, Published by M.C. Sarkar and sons Pvt. Printed by G. C. Ray at Narayana printing Press B. C Chatterjee street Calcutta 1960. P. 26. <sup>30</sup>. Ibid.,
31. K. A. Nizami, Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century, Published by Department of History Aligarh, Printed by, Caxton Press New Delhi 1961. p.80.
32. Muhammad Habib, Introduction to revised edition of Elliot and Dowson, The History of India vol.ii. p.52. 33
33. K. A. Nizami, p.67.
34. B. K. Majumdar, The Military System of Ancient India, Published by, Firma K. L. Mukhopadhy, Printed by V.N. Batachariya, 1955. p.19.
35. K. A. Nizami, pp.80,1.
36. Alberuni sacahu, vol.i.pp.106,7.
37. Muhammad Habib, Introduction, p.52.
38. K. A. Nizami, p.85.

39. Yusuf Hussain, p.118.
40. Ibid., p.119.
41. S. C. Raychoudhary, p.11.
42. S. C. Raychoudhary p.57.
43. Ibid., p.56.
44. Habib and Nizami, vol. v, pp.138,9.
45. Burten Stein, New Cambridge History of India Vijayanagar, Published by Orient Longman, Cambridge University Press.p.102.
46. T. V. Mahalingham Administrative and social life under Vijayanagar, Published by Madras University Historical Series, Printed by Manorama Press Madras 1975. p.18.