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ABSTRACT

The society in India, whether in north or south was always heterogeneous in character. It was divided vertically as well as horizontally. The vertical division was based over purity of blood, family affiliation, status in administration and placement in the court. This was a universal phenomenon and existed all through the medieval period in India and elsewhere.

KEY WORDS: Social condition, purity of blood, family affiliation, society.

INTRODUCTION :

The vertical division, which played a key role in the social structural changes, was based on religion, sect, caste and creed.

During the early period of the Muslim rule in north India, we do come across an under current in society, which was created due to the fear of conversion. Indian society was known to have surprising ability to absorb the foreigners to such an extent that after a generation or two they would loose their identity. The Muslim rulers and their followers were aware of this. On the other hand the non-Muslims in India knew well about the conversions, which took place where the Muslims entered as conquerors. It was for this reason that both guarded their identity with all the possible care. During the early medieval period, we even come across, the rule of



certain sultans like Balban, Alauddin Khilji and Firoz Shah Tughluq, who openly adopted the policy of intolerance to suppress their non-Muslim subjects.

It was in this atmosphere, that the Sufis among the Muslims and Bhakti Saints among the non-Muslims played an important role. They both valued the worth of social unification pushing aside the religious identity .

A. Caste and Class:

The Bahmani society was heterogeneous composed of Hindus, Brahmins, Lingayats, Jains,

Muslims, Marathas, Christians and Jews .

In the Bahmani kingdom the Marathas dominated in the north-west, the Lingayats, Jains and other Hindu communities dwelt in the south. The Muslim communities Afaquis and Deccanis formed the ruling class, hence their population concentrated in the capital, its suburbs and big and small towns of the paraganahs. In the surrounding villages of the capital and big towns converted Muslims might have dwelt in with their Hindu brethren. Other than the capital and big towns, in the villages the Muslims structures like Mosques, Dargah (tombs or shrines of Sufi saints) Idgahs can be seen. In the exterior and far off region these structures are seldom seen. The Brahmins belonged to religious and administrative class, therefore found in every town and village of the kingdom.

B. Social Life:

In the capitals, the remains of royal palaces and mansions of the grandees which we see today give us an idea of the way in which royalty and aristocracy lived. Nikitin says "The noble men's are rich and live in luxury". They had fine furniture and praperics with many servants to wait on them and to cater to their comforts. They maintained a generous table at which viands of many kinds were provided. Isami gives us the description of a feast arranged for the Sultan which gives information about the diet of the rich and well-to-do. "It was eight part of the day when the trumpets announced that the banquet was ready. Silk tapestries were spread and table-cloths laid. Learned and unlearned bread was kept ready. Various items of salad were there, green and crisp.

Dress:

The ordinary dress of the non-Muslims was a dhoti and an Uttariya, a length of material to cover the upper part of the body. A tunic and a turban or a skull cap was used in public, though shastris and pandits often retained their two piece dress for all purposes. Chappals were the common footwear. The dress of the women was the sari and bodice. For ceremonial occasion's rich silk and brocade materials were used. Other textile items of domestic use were the bed sheets and rough woolen blankets or kambals. The richer classes used quilts and fine blankets during the cold season. The dress of the poorer classes was nothing more than a piece of cloth round the loins and the women also were scantily dressed. The temperature and hot climate of the Deccan did not require heavy clothings. The dress of the Hindu aristocracy came to be modeled after the costume of their Muslim brethren.

C. Amusement:

The sports and pastimes of the different classes of people, the inscriptions do not give us many authentic accounts of a detailed nature. The people during Bahmani period took part in hunting, and a ball game on horseback, much like polo, is said to have been the favourite game.

For the amusement of the monarch and their court fights between animals and wrestling matches took place, racing, cock and ram fights were the pastimes of common people, besides the festivals and fairs of which there was no lack. Then there were peripatetic entertainers like the snake charmer and troupes of acrobatic performers whose visits furnished much genuine amusement at very little cost, picnics and folk dances offered other means of diversion.

D. Fairs and Festivals:

The religious life of the people of Bahmani in Deccan centered round the mosques, tombs and temples. Every village had its patron deity and towns and cities boasted of many temples dedicated to a god of the Hindu pantheon. Some places had acquired sanctity over the ages and had developed into

centres of pilgrimage.

It is interesting that five of the twelve sacred Jyotirlingas of India were in the Bahmani kingdom. They are Bhima Shankar, Grishneshwar (at Verul or Ellora), Trimbakeshwar, Anudhya Naganata and Parli Vaijanath. The last is described as a Maha Kshetra in the Gurucharitra. Pandharpur had a special place in the hearts of both Kannada and Marathi people as the seat of Vithoba. Ghangapur had become a sacred place and pilgrim centre in the middle of the fifteenth century with Dattatreya as its presiding deity.

Position of Women:

The family was a close-knit unit, the elders conducting its affairs. In Yadava times the system of joint family, though a general rule, shows a few exceptions where grown up sons setup separate establishments. Sometimes, for economic convenience, brothers had separate households, but they were considered members of one family by the village. All the members of a family, though separated, joined as a rule in religious performances and annual ceremonial offerings. Vidyaneshwar Yati's Mitakshara was the manual in use to conduct and decide all questions of succession, property, etc.

Sufism:

Karnataka is one of the most important southern states of India. It has gained prominence politically, socio-economically, philosophically and in many other ways. It is a meeting place of many religious philosophers and a melting point helping to achieve the synthesis of the teaching of many religious reforms. Sufism is a mystic religion. Sufi saints are the followers of ALLAH and the practice of peace, benevolence and tolerance. They propagated a religion based on the concept of love, the love with the fellow being and the love with the ultimate or the creator. Sufi saints and Sufism are an existing reality in Indian socio-religious fold and it has contributed for a healthy and amicable social order. It has lead to a new social set-up full of values, and discipline.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that since pre-historic time frequent and successive waves of changes swept over the great Bodo community. Till the reign of Bhaskar Varman and even to much later the Bodos maintained the pride and glory of their culture, language and religion. Elements of Hindu culture and civilization started to penetrate in the social structure of Bodos with the extension of Buddhism from the time of Bhaskar Varman. Then successive waves of Hinduism came, like tantricism, Saktoism, Saivism and lastly in the form of Vaisnavism. The entry of Hinduism to Bodo society was not an easy in an unrestricted way. In order to gain stronghold over the Kirata-Bodos Hinduism had to compromise with the socio-cultural conditions of the time. Hinduism swept over the entire geographical area inhabited by Pre-historic Kirata-Bodo people. After the waves of Hinduisation, came the waves of Islamisation with liberal, egalitarian and humanitarian ideals. Successive waves of changes swept way the structural and functional systems of the Bodo society and eliminating their socio-cultural identity and transforming demographic boundary of the Bodos to a limited jurisdiction.

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