CHAPTER V
SOCIAL LIFE

The attempt to describe the central properties of the north Indian villages in 650-1206 A.D. would necessarily take us into an exploration of basic features of the social structure. There are two widely held misconceptions about the north Indian village structure which can easily disposed off, before we enter into a discussion of the basic features. One is a view of the village as composed of a mass of poor tenants, united in opposition to absentee landlords and their local agents. The other is a view of it as a collection of self-sufficient cultivating families. Villages resembling each of these extreme species did exist but they are not typical. In fact, the north Indian village structure has been far more complex. Typically it is a hierarchical system consisting of several groups linked by a network of economic and social relationships. Some of these relationships derived from age old traditions going back to the 5th-6th centuries B.C.; others arose from later economic and social developments that occurred in the 6th and 7th centuries and that produced new and sharp conflicts of interest. At the apex of the social pyramid were the landowners who were far from being a homogeneous group.

There were three broad types of landowners. The first, could trace its origin to the rise of feudalism in India. A second landowning group was composed of non-cultivating owners to whom rents from land were not a primary source of income but a supplement

1. BH Baden-Powell  The Origin and Growth of Village Communities in India, Jodhpur, 1985, Chapter VI.
owners-cultivators. This we examine in the third chapter. All that is to other earnings. And the third were those who were actually necessary to point out here is that it is this basic economic framework that determined the social structure of the north Indian villages in our period.

CASTE AND CLASS

The social organization of Indian rural society in A.D. 650-1206 was based on the caste system. A caste may be defined as "A group of families united by peculiar rules for the observance of ceremonial purity, especially in the matters of diet (food) and marriage". The most striking feature of Hindu society is varnasramadharma. The classes (varṇas) and four stages (Āsarama) in which the law books divide the life of the men. This aspect of Arya-dharma was not conceived as mere conglomeration of four castes, but it was a social synthesis. This organisation has grown a pace with the age and the racial supremacy of Aryans had been converted to a hierarchy of social corporation. It was divided according to the standard of culture attained by each social life. the idea of varṇa emphasised on duties but system of Jati laid much stress on birth and heredity. Heiun Tsang has referred to the same four hereditary castes of Indian society together with their respective occupations.

The four social organisations theoretically existed throughout the country but they were not water tight compartments. New groups were given place in scheme by indigenous explanations. As a result several sub-castes came into existence in the period from 650-1206 A.D.

In the early vedic period society was divided into three major classes - Brāhma (priests), Kṣatra (rulers and warriors) and Visan

1. Vincent Smith, The Oxford History of India, Oxford, 1918, p.34.
The Sudra varna comes into view during the later Vedic period. According to the commonly held view, it was the Dasas and Dasyns of the previous age that become sudras having the lowest status in the scheme of four varnas.

According to Alberuni\(^1\) there were sixteen castes; first four were well known; five semi-untouchables and seven untouchables but the actual number of castes during our period were more than sixteen. Kalhana in Rājatarāṅgini had mentioned that a total of 64 castes assembled during the sacrificial feast arranged by the king\(^2\). The salient features included the ramification of castes during the period under review.

Agriculture played the most important part in the economical and social condition in the rural areas of the north India during the early medieval period (650-1206 AD). Every other occupation depended on agriculture as it was the main source of village economy and the general principle of one profession for one class led to the settlement of many castes at one place. The early medieval period was a period of proliferation and fragmentation. The existing four varnas were split up into many castes and numerous new tribes and castes were annexed to and adjusted within them\(^3\).

The process of proliferation appears to be most striking among the brahmans. Many brahmaṇa castes were named after the type of ritual they practised or the branch of Vedic learning they cultivated, but the most important factor in the immense increase in their castes was the growth of strong localism. In land charters the brahmaṇas are identified by their gotra, by the male ancestor's names by the branch of Vedic learning and by the original home-village from where they come. The Brahmaṇa caste on the whole had been for centuries the nucleus and radiator of the ancient cultural traditions and the expounder of the norms of conduct for the king as well as the people. Inspite of the inroads of the Buddhists, the jains etc. on their status. The Brahmaṇas

2. Raj., Taranga 8, 2406.
continued to command great respect in society owing not only to the claim of their being at the top of the social hierarchy and the traditional sanctity associated with them but also to their austerity, piety and intellectual achievement.

The status of the Brāhmaṇas was traditionally regarded as the highest among the four varṇas.¹ They stood at the head of social organisation and were devoted to learning and self discipline. Disciplined life devoted to idealism was the universal test of this corporation and they were steel frame of the social organisation. The Brāhmaṇas had no force behind except that of character and persuasion. They were expected to lead a life of comparative poverty and follow the vocation of teaching of Dharma.

A large number of them lived according to the ideal pattern of conduct prescribed by Dharmasastra. Some inscriptions of the early medieval period specifically refer to their denotion to the traditional sixfold duty.² They mastered the veda, vedāṇga and other branches of learning. Those learned in the veda (Srottriya) and the acaryas had ever been deemed to be most worthy of the acceptance of gifts. In the context of practigraha some authorities laid special emphasis on that

¹ Pravaraṭāro Lokeśmin Brāhmaṇa in a Sarvavarnanam, KV, p. 79.
from rulers but the orthodox view still regarded it as the lowest among the three means of livelihood. The other two being teaching and sacrificial which were prescribed for a Brāhmaṇa.

The epigraphic evidences are good in number but they do not bring as to a definite conclusion regarding the subject of classification of Brāhmaṇas in the early medieval period. The Brāhmaṇas of the Northern India were broadly divided into five classes expressed by the term Pañch-Gauḍa. Skanda Purāṇa describes ten measure groups of Brāhmaṇas including Pañch-Gauḍa. The other five are Dravidas of the South. But on geographical basis our study consists of only Pañch-Gauḍa which were known by the names of Sāravasvata, Kānyakubja, Utakala, Maithila and Gauḍa Brāhmaṇas. The expression "Pañch-Gauḍa" mentioned in the Rājatarāṅginī was different from the sense in which it is understood in orthodox tradition. It was the collective names of five Brāhmaṇas and not the geographical division of Northern India. There are many adjectives derived from the names of the places of residence origin of Brāhmaṇas donees. Hence on the similar ground Pañch-Gauḍa stands for five classes of Brāhmaṇas hailing from five different localities. Besides the theory of Pañch-Gauḍa, a group of the Brāhmaṇas in modern days are famous by the name of Saryupari. On the similar principle it may be suggested that the name of the

4. Raj. , Taranga IV, 468.
Brahmanas was derived from this area (on the next bank of Saryu river). This area was included in the territory of Gāhaḍā-Vala kings which extended to the western part of Gorakhpur district in U.P.

The inscriptions from Gorakhpur area mention Sarūvāra\(^1\) or Saryūpāra\(^2\) for that region. On the authority of epigraphic evidences, it may be pointed out that this nomenclature of Brāhmaṇa was assumed on the topographical basis and to this day Brāhmaṇas hailing from this area round about Gorakhpur (U.P) are known as Saryūpāri.

The number of Brāhmaṇas performing the priestly function must have been fairly large. But the priestly class by no means homogeneous. There were family priests of kings and feudatories, who had acquired considerable property and prestige on account of their position, and the land grants and other kinds of gift made to them\(^3\). The temple priests\(^4\), though not given a high status in the Brāhmaṇa community, became very influential with the growing vogue of temple worship and emergence of temples as wealthy landlords by receiving generous donations from kings, vassals and other well-to-do persons. The Trisasti-Salakapurusa-Carita of Hemcandra also shows that the priestly class was at times locally organised\(^5\) with the increased popularity of listening to the purāṇas, the Brāhmaṇas who recited them also constituted an important. It is very much true that as teachers the Brāhmaṇas performed a social function of vital importance. Only they were entitled to teach

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2. Kalha Plate of Sadhadeva (E.I., Vol.VII, p.91.).
3. Hindu view of life according to D.S. by K.V.R.Aiyangar, p. 78.
5. Hindu view of life according to D.S. by K.V.R.Aiyangar, p. 78.
the vedas. The agrahara villages and temples were the centres of study. Eminent teachers received grants of villages. But the condition of the general Brähmana teacher was not very well off. From very early times, there were Brähmanas earning their livelihood by teaching alone, but on the other hand, there were many others who took to more than one of the sources of earning wealth recommended for them.

The Agni Purana allows the Brähmanas to take to cultivation trade, cattle rearing and money lending but prohibits them to deal in milk, molasses, salt and meat. The Gauda Purana too testifies to the adoption of agriculture by the Brähmanas. It enjoins that a Brähmana engaged in cultivation should not employ or drive a tired bull. Although, almost every caste (especially the first four) was engaged in the practice of cultivation. The number of Brähmana cultivators may not have been high on account of religious taboo's. The earlier Dharamśāstra prescribe cultivation, cattle rearing and even the use of arms for the Brähmanas in the times of distress. It appears that they took to agriculture during the peace times. This supported by the Brhat Parāśara Samhita, which states that a Brähmana should practice along with his six fold duties.

From very early times the Brähmanas had been divided on the basis of gotra, pravāra and Sākhā which are usually mentioned in the

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2. K.S.S., 49, V.V.151, 153, 154.
4. Ag., 152.2
5. Garuda Purana, 107.6.
7. Manu., 10.82; Yaj., 3.35.
inscriptions of the period. Distinctions were also made on the basis of occupation, learning, moral purity, religion, region or locality, and family. Some of which gave rise to a number of subsections among them.

During the period of the penetration of Muslims and the growth of Islamic power in India, there was the main question of national defence in the society and it was kshatriya caste which maintained the martial ardour and protected the land. In brief, it may be stated that the Brāhmaṇas in this period could not maintain the original position in the society and had to work under the guidance from the Kshatriya ruling chiefs.

In old varṇāśrama system Kshatriya had occupied the second place in order of merit but in the period from 700-1200 A.D. they were next to none and gained prominence in the Hindu society. In the period of struggle for supremacy among Hindu States and during Islamic invasion they always remained in forefront. Though Buddhism effected the martial spirit of the people to some extent but the kshatriyas still maintained the martial ardour and distintegration compelled them to rally round their own hereditary chieftain. From 8th century A.D. onwards we find a new era in north India when fresh (Rājapūta) dynasties arose on the breakdown of Gurjara Pratīhāra empire. The word Rājapūta is frequently mentioned in the inscriptions of this age to denote ruling kshatriya clan. In one of Kalachuri record one kshatriya has been described with the title of "King of twice born"¹ and in another epigraph has been designated as jewel² among Dvijā. These point out the high position of honour for kshatriya in society and they have no less respect than the

1. E.I., Vol. I, P. 41 Vibhirnodvijra j suñder padm molau se gangādhār : (the word dvijaraja has a spun brahmanan and moon)
Brāhmaṇas. On the basis of Smṛtis and statements of Alberuni it is learnt that the Brāhmaṇas were exempted from capital punishment but this privilege was also extended to kshatriya in this period as reported by Alberuni. This exemption from the punishment gives the actual picture of society when kashatriya enjoyed the highest status in the land. It would follow that in actual practice the privilege of kshatriya was by no mean less than those of Brāhmaṇas. It appears that the various Rajput clans arose out of the different strata of indigenous population - kshatriyas, Brāhmaṇas and some Tribes. The Huans figure in the list of thirty six Rājpūt clans. The vaisyāyas and the kshatriyas appear to have very little interest in agriculture during our period. Cultivation was one of the traditional duties of the vaisyāyas. But with the rise of the Śūdra and Brāhmaṇa cultivators the vaisyāyas seem to have been relegated to the background as agriculturists.

Although cultivation was not recognised as the duty of the kshatriyas, yet there was no express restriction on their practising it. The Parāśrasmṛti lays down that the kshatriyas should worship gods and brāhmaṇas after practising agriculture. This may indicate some check, but is not as hard as in case of the brāhmaṇas. With the adoption of cultivation by the brāhmaṇas themselves the kshatriyas may have easily followed it. But we do not have references to kshatriya cultivators in the literary, epigraphic or other sources of our period.

4. Parāśarasmṛti, 2.18, vide Astsdasasmrtayah, P. 221.
Vaisyas: The third caste in Hindu social order was that of vaisyas who were included in Divija and according to smrtis their main profession were agriculture, rearing of cattle and trade. The vaisyas, who were allotted agriculture as one of their chief professions by sastras, appear to have completely given it up and taken to trade and commerce. The vaisyas were frequently called vanike in the epigraphs of our period (650-1206 A.D.) because mostly they were engaged in trade. Agriculture and rearing of cattle are rarely mentioned in the record of this age. The vaisyas were losing their position among Divija much earlier than our period under review as Baudhāyāna assigns vaisya the status of sudras. They were counted as religiously handicapped in Gītā along with śūdras. This can be confirmed by the account of Alberuni who placed vaisyas and sudras. On the same line, and states that in the case of reciting veda by śūdras and vaisyas their tongues were cut off. This points out that vaisyas had lost their status in society and in actual practice vaisyas were reduced to the level of śūdras though later smṛtis do not give any such statement.

The records of early medieval period contain several references to trade and commerce by the vaisyas, commonly known as vanik. In Prāthiḥāra inscription the vanik has been described as purchasers of articles from different places. Paramāra record states

2. Yaj., I, 118.
5. mām hi partho vyāpaśritya yepisyuh pāpayanayah! striyo vaśyaśtatha śūdrāste pi yānti parām gatim! (Geeta 9, 32).
similar information about vañik who carried trade and supplied essential commodities in the market\(^1\). The guilds of oil men and gardeners could be seen in the documents of 10th and 11th century of Christian era\(^2\). The names of potters, betel sellers and stone cutters are found in the Siyadoni records\(^3\). It appears that there was a great demand for ornaments in the society. The sculptures and icons of this period from 650-1206 A.D. reflects that even the divine images are profusely ornamented. A section of vaiśya was known as brazier\(^4\) and goldsmith\(^5\). The goldsmiths had good business in those days as one goldsmith is said to have purchased house in the market on 99 years lease\(^6\). The economic life of the rural people depended to a certain extent on rural trade done by the vaiśyas.

Śūdras :- Śūdra occupied the last place in Varṇāśrama system who by tradition was regarded low in the society. The smṛti writers are unanimous on the duty of sudra that he should devote his time in the service\(^7\) of Dvija for livelihood. The varṇa system was modified not only by the rise of the various strasta of landed genetry connected with administration but also by the change in the relative position of the vaiśyas and Śūdras. In post-Gupta times the sudras no longer appear mainly as slaves, artisans and agricultural labourers. They take the place of vaiśyas as cultivators. The low lying plains of North India were mainly inhabited by cultivators. They are

7. Mitakshara on yaj. , 1.120; Manu X, 121; Gautam X, 57.
referred to as kṣetrakara¹ and some times kṛṣaka² and karaśaka³ in the land grants of our period. They were also known as kṛṣibala⁴, kṛṣāṇa⁵, kṛṣaka⁶, kṛṣika⁷, kāriśka⁸, kīnāsa⁹, kuṭumbi¹⁰. The use of so many terms for one particular class in diverse literary and epigraphic pieces may suggest its numerical strength and importance. The cultivators living in the village generally belonged to the sudra caste. Hiuen Tsang clearly states that the 'śūdras were agriculturists'¹¹. Kautilya recommends the settlement of villages having mostly 'śūdra cultivators'¹². The 'śūdras appear as share croppers (ārdhīka) in the laws of Manu and yājñavalkya¹³. There was no significant difference between 'śūdras and vaiśyas according to Alberuni¹⁴. They lived in the same village and mixed together in the same house. The saha purāṇa describes the sudra as a giver of grain and householder (grhastha)¹⁵. The Narasimha purāṇa prescribes agriculture for the 'śūdras¹⁶. Thus, in our period, cultivation by the 'śūdras had become a well established fact, although the ancient law-books prescribe service of three higher varnas as their occupation. It is true that the rise of the sudras as farmers had

¹. Most of the Pala, Sena and other land grants of Bengal. Vide I.B., 3, E.I., XII. No.3; ibid, XIV. No.10
². E.I., XXII, NO. 25.1.22.
⁴. A.R.M , 2.419.
⁵. Yaj. 2. 150.
⁷. A.R.M , 2.419.
¹⁰. A.R.M, 2.419.
¹². Śūdrakarsakāprayaḥ...grāman... nivesayediti, Artha., 2.1.3.
¹³. Manu, 4. 253; Yaj., 1.166.
¹⁴. Sachau, i, 101.
taken some shape by the end of the Gupta period\(^1\), but they established themselves as cultivators during the early medieval period.

Sūdras were connected with other three higher castes in intercaste marriages. From the time of Manu, the system was much more flexible. In Anuloma marriage i.e. of males of higher castes with females of lower ones were not uncommon society down to the eighth century A.D. Even orthodox smṛiti and nibandha writers regarded them as legal\(^2\). In other form bride belonged to a higher caste than the bridegroom and such pratiloma was vehemently condemned by smṛti writers\(^3\). In the opinion of Dharmaśāstra the Anuloma and Pratiloma connections between śūdra and higher varṇa were regarded as plentiful source of the origin of mixed caste - many of whom were regarded untouchables. We have no further epigraphic data to add anything regarding the position of śūdra in the society but he was not taken as untouchable. It is difficult to say precisely when sudras were regarded untouchables in the Hindu society as our documents mention sudra and chandala separately.

Cattle, particularly the bullocks, were necessary for cultivation, and hence they were kept in large numbers. Herdsmen was the person assigned to domesticate the animals which were valued for their milk, milk-products, and for cowdung which was used for manure, fuel, daubing the ground and sometimes polishing the mud walls. Every village had its own pasture, and persons, generally of the sudra

2. Baudhayana Dh.Sura II, 2, 3, 30; Gautama (IV, 1); Vasistha Dharmasutra (1, 24); Manu (III, 12-13) and Yaj. (1, 55 and 57).
3. Gautama 12,3 prescribes heavy punishment for a śūdra having sexual intercourse with an Arya woman.
caste\textsuperscript{1}, were employed on wages to tend the cattle throughout the
day. These hired persons were called herdsmen or cowherds
(Paśupāla\textsuperscript{2} or gopāla\textsuperscript{3}, sometimes Gopa\textsuperscript{4} as well). The cattle-owners
handed over their cattle every morning to the herdsmen and the later
returned them to the former in the evening\textsuperscript{5}. Animals were counted
both at the time of handing over and returning\textsuperscript{6}. The village
agricultural labourers were known as pamārās. They were very poor
as it is evident by an incidence that when called by the farmer, the
agricultural labourer comes to the field running, his chest covered
with his two arms and lips shaking on account of cold\textsuperscript{7}. At one
place, the pamārās are represented as looking at their paddy stalks
with pride. When they are requested by hundreds of passersby to
offer some paddy stalks\textsuperscript{8}. Perhaps these formed their wages for
reaping the crops or were the produce of the field leased to them in
regard of wages.

The richer section of the village population employed
domestic servants or attendants generally called prijana. We do not
know who started slavery. Slavery as an institution was prevalent
in our period\textsuperscript{9}. They included both men and women. They spent their
whole life in the service of their masters, as can be inferred from
the use of the term parijanajarati in Harṣacarita\textsuperscript{10}. The other

1. The Geographical Dictionary of Ancient and Medieval India by
   N.L.Dey, 1927, 96.95.  
3. K.P., V. 100. 
4. E.I., IV, No. 34, 1.23. 
5. Yaj., 2. 164; Narada, 6.11, quoted in Viramitrodaya, P. 346. 
7. Saduktikarnamrta, 2.173.4. 
8. Subhasitaratnakosa, V. 297; Sadhuktikarnamrta, 2.171.2. 
10. H.C., P. 57.
subcastes which were compulsory in a village habitat included the potters, barbers, weavers, tailors, carpenters, oilmen, fishermen, washermen, physicians, hunters, dancers, drummers, basket-makers, leather-workers, meat-sellers (butchers) and candalas. The so-called despised caste included the medas, the andhras and the candalas. They held the lowest position among the village population. Though the early smrti writers mention only four varnas but no distinction was made between sudra and Antyaja in their Dharma. Gradually a distinction was made between sudra and chandala and fresh castes were added to the list of untouchables.

The chāndāla who was regarded by smṛti writers as Antyaja (untouchables) perhaps it was synonym for all classes of untouchables in the society. The Pala and Chendala records refer to low castes who were present in the society. It is unfortunate that the dynastic records of early medieval period do not give detailed information in the case of Chāndāla. However, the contemporary Jain and Pali literatures have supplied required information to know the actual position of low castes in Hindu society. According to the vajjayanti the medas were persons who removed nightsoil and urine, killed wild animals and lived by objectionable living. They appear to be most despised and degraded people. They had to live at a considerable distant from the village habitat. One would have expected that once

3. Ibid, 10, 41, Sudranāntu Sadharmāṇaḥ Sarvepiadh majāh Smrtāḥ!
4. Manu IV, 61; yaj. 1, 273, Apasthambā Dh. Sutra 1, 3, 9,9.
8. Mayamata, 9.96; Mānasārā 9.79,80 and 144; vide also Manu, 10.51-56.
these depressed jatis accommodated themselves to settle agrarian life, they might have invoked some form of Sanskritization to rise in the hierarchy and turn into peasants themselves. This actually seems to have happened with Jats whose history we can follow, though with immense gaps, from the seventh century\(^1\). But such cases were exceptions. The two phases, (A.D. 200-600 and C. 600-200) distinguished by Vivekanandh Jha proves that number of untouchables went on increasing by the addition of new castes to the category\(^2\). Excluded from the village and prevented from holding land, the untouchables could never become peasants, they were thus forced to follow the prescribed menial occupations which kept them in the slack seasons so as to be available when needed for work in the field. The peasant, sorely exploited himself, joined in practising the severest repression of the menial labourer. This has surely been one of the fatal tragedies in the Indian social history.

**FOOD AND DRINKS**

References in the smrtis and general literature of the period under review do not indicate any noticeable change in regard to food and drinks\(^3\). The hankavatra sutra\(^4\) gives in a list of approved foods, the names of sali (rice), wheat and barley, pulses of three kinds, clarified butter, oil, molasses as well as raw and coarse sugar. The food preparation was relishing due to the mixture of ghee and other tasteful spices. In Nalanda record we find a description of Anna (rice) being

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2. Ibid, Essays in Indian History, PP 131.
4. Lankavatara Sutra, PP.250
mix up with curd and ghee\(^1\). Mahabrihi was one of the best known variety of rice mentioned by Charaka in the list of principle kind of rice (Nidana Sthana IV.6). Even Rājatarāṅginī praises the Sali rice grown in Kashmir\(^2\) and the variety survived for a thousand years. Generally wheat and rice were separately prepared in ghee as the principle article of diet, to be presented before the deity i.e. for offering. This kind of preparation is mentioned in an inscription from Rājapūtāṇa where measured quantity of wheat and rice were cooked with fixed quantity of ghee. The record says\(^3\) that two sei of wheat flour required eight kalasa of ghee for preparing Navivedya\(^4\). From the topography of the royal records it appears that wheat, rice and barley were cultivated in the Ganges Valley, Malva and Central India. Sugar cane has been mentioned in several inscriptions along with other cereals consumed by the people\(^5\). Thus it is clear that sugar also formed a part of diet in that age. Cow's milk\(^6\) and curd\(^7\) are not frequently mentioned in the list of food stuffs; so it may be suggested that probably these formed a portion of meal of upper class of the society. Milk, sugar and rice also constituted Havis for the manes\(^8\). Similar was the case of ghee which was not the substance of food for low class people. The Smrtikara Angiran has proposed milk, curd and ghee for higher section while considering the comparative nature of their

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3. Here Sei, Kalasa, mani and Payali were measures of capacity. (Minga) pulse and rice along with wheat were measured Godhhum Sei-Sei Packgrhat ka 8 Naviredhy Munga mani, Chasa Payali-2.
7. E.I., Vol. XX, P. 44.
digestion. Apasthamba (Chapter VIII) Vedavyas (Chapter III) and others have discussed this problem of food in society, where the discussion centres round the meal of Brahmanas and kshatriyas. Other castes have no restriction over diet, i.e. Sudras and Antyaja could take whatever they liked.

The inscriptions of our period supply further information about the various spices that were used in the diet. A 10th century A.D. record mentions merchants trading in salt, pepper, ginger and vegetables which were collectively called Kirana. Thus it is clear that spices were mixed up to make the food more tasteful and they were used along with ghee and oil for the preparation of the vegetables, fish and meat. The study of the dynastic epigraphs shows that oil formed a staple article for food. The oil pressing business is often mentioned in the records, which contain the gift of one palika of oil from oil mill or two palik on every kuñhmaka (leather oil vessel) of oil sold. The references to oil industries show that this article was in great demand in the society.

The general survey of land grants reveals a kind of secret in the dietary of the higher section of the people mostly Brāhmaṇas. In case of Agrāhāra villages while specifying the details of gifts the word samatsyakara is mentioned in many of the records of Gāhaḍavāla dynasty and the same word is mentioned even in a Buddhist record of Govind Chandra Deva. Similar reference is also

1. Paya dadhi tu māsena sāṃmāsena ghṛtām tathā.
2. Apathamba Smriti 8/5. Anām pyajyana saṃyuktamasdha māsena īryati, payastu dadhi māsena ghṛtām tathā.
7 Sahet- Mahet record (E.I., XI, P. 24).
found in a Pala document of Devapala but the word is Samatyasah. It appears that this word is not without significance and may be explained in the way that the donee was authorised to use the fish in the ponds situated in the area gifted to Brāhmaṇas. The presence of fisheries in the Agrahara villages may suggest that the Brāhmaṇas (donee) use the fish in their diet, though rarely or on some occasions. In the case of meat it was a discarded object of food for Brāhmaṇas as stated in Smrtis. In one of the epigraphs from Rājapūtana an indirect reference of meat eating has been found where chāhamāna ruler Alahanadeva prohibited the animal slaughter on specific days. Alberuni did not notice the eating of meat by Brāhmaṇas. He has stated that people has desire for meat but law applied to Brāhmaṇas only because they were the guardians of religion. The animal allowed for killing were sheep, goat, hare, fish, buffalo, water and land birds while cow, horse, mule, camel, elephant, parrots, etc. were forbidden. The above account points out that the practice of meat eating was common in the people except Brāhmaṇas in early medieval society. But Alberuni's statement cannot be taken too literaly. A new plate of Bhoja preserved in the Indore Museum does refer too the killing of animals for the purpose of feeding learned Brahmnas. Thus on the basis of epigraphas of Chahamana king Alhanadeva and king Boja of Dhara, it may be conjectured that Brāhmaṇas of Rajaputana were taking meat now and then, while kshastrīya enjoyed it after hunting. Except vedavyasa.
there was no such sanction in Smrti literature for such action. Alberuni also testified to the fact that the people had desire for meat and gives list of the animals to be killed for that purpose.  

Wine was a common drink in the age from 650-1205 A.D. and the inscriptions of this period contain sufficient references to this effect. The three kind of drinks were in the form of wine (Madhupāna), liquor (Somarasa) and Tody (Rasarati). As regards the first drink Brāhmaṇa refrained from drinking wine which was a principal drink for the other castes. The Jodhpur inscription tells us in an indirect manner that during 9th century A.D. in Rajaputana the kshatriyas were accustomed to drink wine. We know that the Pratihara king Harischandra married two wives - one Brāhmaṇa girl and second kshatriya girl named Bhadra. The sons born to this kshatriya lady have been described as wine drinkers.

The same is supported by the statement of Arab traveller that Brahamana did not take wine but kshatriyas were used to that. The second inscription of the same family i.e. Gwalior inscription of Gurjara Pratihara king Bhoja confirms the earlier document. It goes a step further and relates that women of the family tasted wine and became merry. Thus for kshatriya class perhaps wine was popular drink and the Brāhmaṇas did not use that. A small inscription dated 725 A.D. from the same area (Ajmer region) states that Brāhmaṇa drank liquor (Somarasa) but the preparation of this liquor has not been narrated. Some kind of liquor was distilled out of Madhūka flower as good many grants refer to the donation of the

village with Madhūka trees. The record of Govinda Chandra Deva informs the same thing. It is doubtful whether the juice derived from Madhuka flowers was called somarasa which we know in the present day being distilled for use as wine. The whole discussion brings to a conclusion that either the Brāhmaṇa donee used some kind of liquor though not in the form of wine or sold Madhuka for distillation. Kalachuri record of Jaya Singh mentions the drinking of toddy by the people in general. The word Rasvati has been used for the Palm-juice in that epigraph which is a favourite drink to this day in lower society.

The use of liquor by the people does not indicate that there was no check on the use of the drink and it was welcomed in the society. The Smrti writers absolutely discard the use of intoxicating drink by the Brāhmaṇas.

DRESS AND ORNAMENTS

As in ancient times, in our period (650-1206 A.D.), also the Indians wore lengths of cloth (dhotis) draped around the body and over the shoulders, and fastened with a belt and pins. The lower garment was called paridhana and the upper, uttariya, which was draped shawl wise over the shoulders. The females by nature are lovers of beauty, so they try to dress themselves nicely and used cosmetics to increase the beauty of the body. Though the inscriptions are silent on this point but sculptures, images and paintings of this age have much to say about this subject. The detailed study of early medieval images shows that clothing represent the costumes of the people in general. The clothes required to be given to sun god points out that male used to have

dhoti and a scarf attached to upper portion of the body. The Arab traveller Sulaiman (9th Century A.D.) testifies to the fact that people used to fasten a cloth to the waist and put on an upper garment. In the case of the god Manjusri, the artist have shown lower garment falling below the knee and upper garment like a scarf, encircling the breast with two ends flowing.

The evidences available from the artistic specimens show that normally woman also required two garments during this period. The dhoti in which the sculpture clothed the dieties, was probably shorter than the present day standard dhoti of 5 yards length. In Bagh frescoes (7th to 8th century A.D) we find a realistic view of life (as the paintings are more human depicting the life of the time) and there the figure of the male has been short dhoti like lungi. In pre-muslim period the standard appears to be nearer 3 yards and this short dhoti of male may be seen in all figures of the gods. In the case of female perhaps it was about one or two inch above the ankle. In the case of female dress the sculptural evidences are not quite clear and partly seems to be conflicting whether upper part of sari covered the breast of the ladies as we find in the present day. In most of the cases generally the sari is seen covering the lower portion only. This fact becomes more clear when we carefully examine the manner of wearing the the sari by the ladies. The sari in those days was not like the modern sari (i.e.

1. Iconography in Dacca Museum, P.159, Pl.1, LVIII
2. Nadvi- Arab aur Bhart ka Sambhanda, P. 27.
3. Iconography Dacca Museum Pl VII (a) and Medieval India Sculpture, PL.VIII.
5. Iconography of Dacca Museum, Pl. XXIX, XXXI, XXVI and XXXVI in earlier period also Samudra Gupta is represented with similar clothes on his lyrist type of coin.
going round the waist like petticoat and some part covers the upper portion) but that appears to have been of a different nature. In Bagh frescoes the females have green upper garment and striped under garment. The sari was not like a petticoat and the standing figure gives the most satisfactory result of the style of dress. Sari does not cover the front like flat piece but goes round the legs and exhibits their contours. Both the ends are tucked up and fastened behind like a kachha.

The sari having thus been finished at the waist, it remains to be seen how, the upper part of body was covered. Cunningham thought that nudity conveyed no sense of indecency in India prior to the advent of Muslims. So women in sculptures, images and paintings appear to be very scantily dressed. It can not be argued that the upper portion of women is bare because the sculptures were not skilful enough to show the same sari covering both the upper and lower parts of the body. Though bodices were not inconceivable in higher society but examples are rare in the female figures during early medieval period. The Bagh frescoes only depict female wearing short sleeved white bodice. In short it may be stated that wearing of clothes below the navel was universal among male and female. The uttariya was used by members of both sexes now and then. Sometime it is in the shape of narrow long piece of cloth

1. Iconography of Dacca Museum, Pl. XIV XVIII, XXI, XXIII, XLIX, LI, LIII and LIV. (Even in modern days female of the Punjab Rajaputana's, Gujarata states have two pieces of dress. Probably one piece sari appears to be foreign.
2. Tree and serpent worship, PP. 102-3.
3. At Sanchi and Bharhuta ladies are seen wearing an upper garment. I Gupta coins some times the upper garment covers the entire portion the women. (Stupa of Barhuta Pl. XXIII 3: Cat. of Gupta coins Bay Hoard Pl. XLV)
4. Bagh Caves, Pl. F.
covering fully the left breast and leaving the right partially uncovered.

As regards the nature of cloth it may be suggested that people knew the colouring of sari and designs of clothings. On the authority of Hiuen Tsang it is gathered that in 7th century A.D. king and wealthy people used rich dresses and this clothing of the people was made of silk, linen and fine wool. A reference in the Rājatarāṅginī also proves to this fact that fluttering silk was used in early medieval Kashmir. In the area of Takka (area between Sind and Beas) people wore glossy white clothing made of the silk and those of kanyakubja were dressed in glossy silk. Some other writers also mention similar clothes which were exported from India to the western countries of Asia. Thus we find that cotton and silken clothing were generally used in this period.

The view that art of sewing was unknown to Hindus before the advent of muslim does not hold good in the period under review. Inspite of earlier references of the process of sewing in the Regveda and later literatures, we find that blouses or jackets were in vogue in the plain of Northern India. Itsing informs that shirts and trousers were common in Kashmir and Punjab during 7th century A.D. In Bagh Cave paintings ladies have been represented with colourful sari and jackets, but such examples are not many. Hence it appears that in our period, the fashion of wearing blouse was not popular or sculpturists knowingly deprived the female figures with this feature.

1. Bagh Caves, Pl. LXIII and LXIV in case of dancing girls the entire portion from neck to ankles is covered with full dress. They are seen covering their breast with bodices or blouses (Bagh Caves E).
2. Bagh Caves all plates.
5. Nadvi, Arab aur Bharat Ka Sambandh, PP. 54-58.
6. Itsing, P. 68.
The fashion of dressing the hair were many and graceful. A detailed study of the paintings and sculptures of our period will be an eye opener to the ladies of the present generation and it will be clear that those fashions still survive in the society. The idea of the arrangement of hair and decoration can be better seen in the original than described. The best fashion of hair dressing in those days can be seen in Orissan sculptures (now in National Museum, New Delhi) and in all cases the hair are fastned in a knot on the back behind\(^1\). It becomes more graceful and varied by adding some pedding and ornaments. Some ladies used to arrange the hair in gradually receding tiers or in two artistic bundles hanging on either side of the head. The Pehva Prasasti of Mahendrapala describes\(^2\) that the feudatory Purnaraja was the cause of the curly hairs of the wives of the enemies becoming strait\(^3\). The sculptures also helps us to know about the arrangement of hair by males. Generally curly hairs are seen falling lower down\(^4\). Besides this male had beared and moustache as seen by Sulaiman in his journey to India during 9th century A.D\(^5\) The both were shaved on the death of a relation\(^6\) but it is not clear whether there was a fashion to grow the beard and moustache or not\(^7\). The ladies of early medieval period were very fond of lipstick\(^8\) (Red colouring of lips). The Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang observed that Indian ladies staining their teeth with red

1. Eastern Indian School of Medieval Sculpture, Pl. L (all).
4. Eastern Indian School of Medieval Sculpture, P. XXXVI(b).
6. Ibid, P. 27.
7. Matsya Purana, Ch. 231, Raviḥ Kāryaśubha Smasruḥ Sindurāśu ma Suprabhaḥ!
or black objects\textsuperscript{1}. The custom of reddening and darkening were prevalent in Assam and it was taken as the process of beautification of faces\textsuperscript{2}. It may be suggested that reddening was probably done by the betel which was used\textsuperscript{3} by the women in the society.

One of the symbols of Saubhagya was the use of bangles in the part of the wrist. This portion of the body usually have bangles and ornaments both at one and the same time, but one of the medieval sculptures shows that ladies were fond of large number of bangles occupying the wrist and lower part of their hands\textsuperscript{4}. The last and the least important was the application of black Collyrium (kajal) to the eyes of the females. It was also the sign of the Saubhagya because the widows of the foes had given up the application of collyrium as there was no left for an amorous play\textsuperscript{5}.

The women of early medieval period had a very simple taste of dress but she had a very fabulous taste of ornaments. The females were fond of wearing brilliant and artistic ornaments which may be regarded as the natural consequence of the prosperous condition of the society. The ornaments of varied types and most of them are still surviving in the present day society.

Rings (Mudra) were used on fingures and bracelets (Kankāṇa)were used alongwith bangles. Ear lobes (Kuṇḍala) pierced and hanging down were universally wored by both males and females and the designs were very graceful. Necklaces (Hara) worn by the

\textsuperscript{1} Watters, Vol. I, P. 151.
\textsuperscript{2} Yogini Tantra, Pt. II Chapter IX, V, 15.
\textsuperscript{3} Siyadoni inscription refers to the Samgha of betel makers (E.I., Vol. I) and its sale in market.
\textsuperscript{4} Eastern Indian School of Medieval Sculpture, Pl. L.
\textsuperscript{5} E.I., XXVI, P. 254(V-2), Kalachuri record (12th century A.D.) and Nagar inscription of Dhanika (Bharata Kaumudi Pt.I,P.274)
male and female form an interesting study and they were prepared of gold and precious stones reaching down to the chest. The bracelets and waist bands are still common in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Bengal. In modern days the nosering is important for female, which a bride used to get at the time of marriage, but it is conspicuous by its absence in the sculptures and paintings of our period.

MEANS OF RECREATION AND AMUSEMENTS

The life of the villagers during the early mediaeval period was full of hard work and all sorts of natural calamities such as draughts, floods, epidemics etc. but despite of all these problems, the villagers had their ways of celebrating certain things and those celebrations must have afforded some diversion to the villagers from their day to day life. Music and dance accompanied marriage and even ordinary occasions. Drums were sounded while the marriage parties proceeded to the house of the bride. Sometimes the village ladies amused them selves with songs at the time of pounding rice. A sort of drama called buddhantaka, which was full of dances and songs, was current among the people. Presence of pumpkin lute proves to some extent that it was associated with the village folk. The women of the doma caste performed dancing feats. Thus, music and dance afforded much recreation to the people besides feasts, festivals and certain rituals.

Hunting also provided a good diversion to the dwellers of

1. Pahadapur images and plaques have different kinds of earings at necklace (Archaeological Survey Memoir No. 55 P. 54).
2. Bauddhagana au daha, Song No. 19, P. 33.
3. Saduktikarnamrta - 5.1.3, 2.118.3
5. Ibid, Song No. 10, P. 19.
the hilly and forest villages. Appearance of hares in village areas sometimes attracted the notice of the people, and they ran after them making loud noise and hurling clads, sticks, axes, sickles, spades, poles, etc. The Āryāśaptāṣṭī has several references to angling which may have been a sort of recreation. The Harsacarita refers to the Suka (parrot) and the Sarika (maina) relieving the brāhmaṇa teachers by reciting the lessons to the students at Pṛtikuta, the native village of Baṇa. This shows that these two birds were pets in the village households. The people living in forest villages domesticated wild cats, mongoose, salijata, jataka etc. All these birds and animals must have provided some amusement to the villagers. According to a verse of yogesvara, bull-fight was also a source of amusement to the villagers. Moreover, people them selves with mutual conversation, news about royal court, memories of the past games of childhood, and narration of stories about persons of old. An inscription that story-telling was popular in the eastern countries. Recitation of the Purāṇas, especially in the villages of the brāhmaṇas, was a good past time. A out doorgame called vikarsana, which means pulling one another by force, and niyuddha, wrestling or fighting with arms. The one who lost had to carry the winner on his back. All these games are still played by the village boys in North India. According to kṛṣiparsāra, raising of banks or mounds with dust on the paths by boys, which again is a favourite game of the village children.
Dice-playing, chessplaying\(^1\) and gambling\(^2\) were some of the known indoor games but it is difficult to ascertain whether these were played in villages. These days we find that dice-playing is a part of marriage rituals in several villages and it enjoys the sanctity of tradition and custom. This may point to its practice in the villages in our period too.

CUSTOMS AND MANNERS

The fragmentation of social life which is the outstanding characteristic of Hindu organization has had one result, the consequence of which it is impossible to exaggerate. It negatived the principle of social obedience except within the limited sphere of the joint family and the subcaste and thereby prevented the growth of a feeling of social solidarity. The principle of authority on which national and social organization is erected has, therefore, been absent all the time in the past. Hindu life consequently developed as a wild and unregulated growth. Every type of custom however, poisonous, came to be tolerated and received sanction under the cover of religion\(^3\). The use of human flesh in worship, Sati\(^4\) (Burning widow)\(^5\), marriage before puberty\(^6\) and dedication of women to the temples and other equally obnoxious customs which were prevalent in different parts of North India during the early medieval period (650-1205 A.D.).

1. Bauddhagana au daha, Song No. 12 of Krsnapada, P. 22.
In fact orthodox Hindu attitude to such practices never widely prevalent and limited always to certain areas and communities was that if people considered such practices as sanctioned by religion, it was not anyone's duty to interfere with them. The Kapalika worship, and the more extravagant forms of the tantrism were considered by conservative opinion as being as orthodox as the performance of Saññhya (daily prayer, or worship at a temple).

The negligence of state and religious authority may have been the cause behind the customs took the place of religion and arrogated to itself through pseudo-sacred writings the character of divine ordinances. Till the East India Company, through the agitation of Ram Mohan Roy, took up the question of Sati, there was no instance of exercise of state authority for the purpose of prohibiting anti-social customs. The case of Sati is particularly interesting. The epigraphic records of early medieval period do not throw much on the practice of Sati but Smriti laws of Post Gupta period urge the widow to sacrifice herself on her husband's pyre. Such as Sankha, Angras and Harita are definite on this point. It was not, as European critics fondly believe, a very widely prevalent practice. It was not practised anywhere in south India. In north India also it seems to have been confined to royal and noble families and in their case also the practice was rarely followed except the self immolation by a Brahmān widow, still the Smritis of Gupta age prescribed life of vows and strict celibacy for widow and allow

2. The three quoted by Vijnaneswar on Yaj., 1.86.
her to inherit her husband's property. In the case of Brāhmaṇa widow, Vedavyas recommends it an alternative course. The Arab travellers also refer to the practice of Sati in Hindu society. The merchant Sulaiman states that the queen's cast themselves upon the pili and burn themselves when the corpse of the king is burnt. It was left for them to choose whether they will do or not, but Alberuni's statement on this point is clear and according to him the queens had to burn themselves whether they wished it or not. We do not get any reference regarding Sati practice in the rural area during the period under review - poor economical conditions and the desire to look after the children left by one's dead husband may have been the factors that forced a widow to leave a life of misery and discomfrts. Further some references found in the dynastic inscription reveals that this practice of Sati was mostly confined to royal families only. An inscription from Devali (Jodhpur) refers to cases of Sati of Rājapūta queens. This shows that the practice of Sati was observed in Madhyadēśa and Rājapūtana. The inscriptions of the dynasties and the account of the contemporary foreign travellers no where refer to widow remarriage. In case of Brāhmaṇa widow Smṛiti writer is in favour of sacrificing her body on her husband's pyre.

1. Parasar, IV, 31, VriddhaHarita IX, 205 and Vriddha Vishnu etc. quoted by Vijnaneswara onyaj.II,135-6 (widow's right to husband property) yaj ch. II PP.287-298.
2. Vadavyas 2, 53.
8. Vedavyas, 2, 53
evidence is definite and against the remarriage of the widow. So it may be presumed that such kind of remarriage of widow was getting unpopular in this period though not completely forbidden.

In the Yama Smriti we find "a widow should enter fire with the dead body of her husband or wear herself out by ascetism with the hair-shorn". When there was a ban on widow's remarriage, and when she had no means of livelihood, no child to be looked after in such circumstances if a widow was given an alternative and a way out it was only the Sati rite which in most cases, she accepted willingly and happily. To many it may have come as a relief, though no doubt, it was difficult of realization. It was not easy and certainly not easier than the saintly life which she was supposed to lead if she chose to live after her husband's death.

Divorce was known in earlier ages. But in later times when the elasticity of society vanished and orthodoxy gained ground this practice fell into abeyance by the 11th century. Remarriage of widows too, which was prevalent in earlier ages, became out of date by our period. The testimony of Kṣemendra shows that the prohibition of remarriage began to be extended to child widows also. Devanna Bhaṭṭa (12th C) stated that the texts

2. Saroj Gulati - Women and Society, Northern India in the 11th and 12th Centuries, p. 111.
sanctioning remarriage in such cases had no applicability in his age. It, no doubt, reflects the extent of narrow-mindedness in this respect. In the Kathāshritsāgra there is a reference to woman marrying eleven times since every time her husband died soon after the marriage. Though we find a reference to the remarriage of a widow but her children could not have the same status as the children of the vaiśya from her first wife and probably this also proved a check on widow-remarriage. The children of a Punarbhū (The remarried widow) were not looked upon equal in rank with those of a non-widow. Though a widow could get a husband, her children could not get a father. She could be a mother to her step-children but her second husband could not be legal father to her children from the first husband.

During the 11th and 12th centuries A.D. we find that a widow was not to remarry. She was either to become a Sati or if she had infants or was an expecting mother, then she was to look after her born or unborn children and remain a life-long widow. In the Kathasaritsāgra the child of a widow describes his birth and the torture which his mother had to suffer after his father's death. Another important custom that existed during our period was the marriage before puberty. Among social institutions marriage was most important Samaskara and the rules relating to marriage, formulated in the older Smrītas were not materially altered during the period under review, but there was a growing tendency to

1. S.C. of Devanna Bhaṭṭā, PP.221.
lower the marriageable age of girls. It appears from the statement of Hiuen Tsang that the marriage within the same caste was preferred. The marriageable age for both sexes had varied considerably from age to age and also from caste to caste. There was no special age limit on men regarding marriage. The age for marriage of girls has been the most debatable subject for the Smrti writers of early medieval period. According to Dharmasāstra writers declare that the father or guardian incur the sin of destroying the embryo at the appearance of menses of girls and they go to hell as long as she is unmarried. Smrti writers (650-1200A.D.) began to encourage pre-puberty marriage at the age of 10 or 8 years. On account of this religious sentiment the early age of girl for marriage was recommended by Smrti writers in the period under review. They began to encourage marriages much before the time of puberty. It should not be extended beyond the age of ten became the suitable age for marriage as the as Gauri was fit to be married. The pre-puberty marriage was also stated by Alberuni who has stated that the Hindus arranged the marriage of their sons at a very early age. It may be inferred that the pre-puberty marriage of girls was observed among the Brāhmaṇa who were guided by Smrti laws, but it was not compulsory for all.

3. Baudhayan Dh.s(IV, 1.12); yaj, I, 64,Angiras 125-126.
5. Brhatiyam, 3, 21-22, She was called Gaun fit for marriage.
Intercaste marriage was not encouraged\(^1\) and the marriage within the same caste was preferred\(^2\). The custom of polygamy was a common feature with the ruling families in early medieval period of North India. There are numerous references of the kings marrying two or more than two women\(^3\). The royal documents refer to many cases of polygamy but it was not the case with the rural people. The motive behind this kind of marriage was to beget sons. If a person could not get a son from his first wife, he was permitted to take another wife for this purpose\(^4\). If she also fails, he could marry a third and so on\(^5\). A girl of the upper three castes, viz., Brāhmaṇ, Ksatriya and Vaiśya - could not earn her livelihood and was dependent on a husband. These are the three castes where polygamy was more prevalent. Since a woman was dependent on her husband financially, she could not prevent him from marrying more than one woman. Even if a woman gave birth to sons, a man could marry more than one wife\(^6\) provided he gave maintenance to the superseded wives. Thus on the basis of Smṛti writers on the subject of polygamy it may be inferred that in our period polygamy was not uncommon though not encouraged by the society. The custom of cremation also differed from time to time and religion to religion. But generally the village cremation grounds of North India during the period under review lay at some distance outside the habitat generally towards

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1. Konography of Buddist and Brahm. Sculpture in Dacca Museum Pl. XLVIII. S.Kramrisch - Pala and Sena Sculpture Figure No. 41.
5. Manu Smriti IX; 80-81, Yaj.1, 73. .
6. Ibid, IX, 36
the North. The Dharmasāstra rules prescribe abultion of the dead body before it is placed on the pyre, that is why proximity to water is an important consideration for the selection of cremation site. The khalimpur plate of Dharamapala states that the funeral rites (Parakrama) of the village - Palitaka were performed on an island. Since the village was surrounded by a river it seems that cremation ground was situated on some kind of diara. Places of cremation in the present day village indicate little change in the nature of cremation sites in North India.

MARRIAGE

According to Hindu theory, the separation of sexes was nature's necessity for completing the process of creation. The Hindu conception of the creation was dual, half-man, half-woman. Both sexes were divine, and each had its part to play in the cosmic drama. The sex distinction was not found only at the human level but in the entire universe - Purush and Prakriti. The devas had their devis; the Trinity of the Hindu pantheon had their consorts - Parvati (Shiva), Lakshmi (Vishnu), and Saraswati (Brahma). This was regarded as dual manifestation of one life - one Being. Marriage was, therefore, a medium for bringing together the two, review lay at some distance outside the habitat generally towards distinct halves of life - man and woman. Theoretically, husband and wife were not two separate entities capable of division, but two halves constituting an entire, single, organic

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1. Mayamata, V. 98.
3. E.I., IV, NO. 34, 1.41.
whole. It was in their wholeness that perfect humanity could manifest itself; there was no conflict between the sexes, for both found their completion in each other. The marriage was much more than a biological necessity; it was a sacrament, based on psychic unity of the two parts, and it could not be easily repudiated. As Manu put it: "A man receives his wife from the Gods, he is linked with her from the past." The two comrades joined in wedlock were to aid each other in their lives' travail. No ritual or sacrament was considered valid without the participation of one's wife or husband.

It was held that nature had imprinted on the physical and psychical make-up of woman the functions she was to discharge in her life. She typified the grace and the strength of emotion, the depth of love, as man typified intellect. When the two were united in marriage intellect gave the directing force, and emotion supplied the impulsive power, and the two together resulted in right action. The two thus blinded together, worked as a perfect whole and gave the ideal of human type towards which humanity could aspire. Anything that destroyed unity, that separated man and his wife in life and interest, that drew them apart and ranged them in competition with each other was fatal to social solidarity and progress. It was for this reason that family (product of marriage) and not individual who per se is incomplete was considered as the basic social institution.

1. Manu IX, 56.
2. PH Valavalkara, Hindu Social Institutions, Baroda, 1942, Chapter 3.
Traditionally, eight types of marriages were recognized: (a) Brahma (marriage of duly doweried girl to a man of the same class); (b) Daiva (when a householder gives a daughter to a sacrificial priest as part of his fee); (c) Arsa (where in place of dowry, there is a token bride-price of a cow and a bull); (d) Pratapatya (where there is no dowry by the girl's father and no bride-price by the husband); (e) Gandharva (clandestine marriage by the consent of the two parties, solemnized merely by plighting troth); (f) Asura (marriage by purchase); (g) Raksasa (marriage by capture); and Paisach (the seduction of a girl while asleep, mentally deranged or drunk - which can scarcely be called marriage at all).

Of these eight forms, the first four were generally approved and permissible to Brahmans and they were indissoluble. Gandharva marriage was held in respect and was allowed to the lower three varnas. Asura marriage, generally disfavoured, is allowed by Arthaśāstra. The Raksasa marriage was practised by Kshatriyas, a famous example being the capture of Sanjugta, daughter of Jai Chandra of Kannauj, by Prithviraj Chauhan of Delhi in the 12th century. Paisach marriage was universally reprobated. A special form of the Gandharva marriage was the svayamvara or "self-choice of husband". In ancient times more than one form of svayamvara was practised. Princess Sāvītrī toured the country in her chariot in search of a mate, until

1. Manu, Ch. 3, Shalok, 21.
3. Ibid.
4. Manu , I, 11, 12, quoted in G.K, h. 38.
she discovered Satyavant, the woodcutter's son. Damayanti choose her husband, Nala, at a great ceremony. Rama won Sita after a great contest involving breaking of a bow, and Draupdi was won by Arjun after a great archery contest. In the 11th century A.D., Vikramaditya VI, the great Chalukya king obtained his brides by this method. The swayamvara was normally concluded by the performance of the rites of religious marriages.

While the girl of a lower order could marry a boy of a higher order (anuloma), the girl of a higher order could not marry the boy of a lowr order (pratiloma). In early times, inter-varna marriages were freely practised so that even the pratiloma marriage did not evoke any horror in society. But in the period 650-1206 A.D., vigorous attempts were made to discourage all intercaste marriages. It began to be argued that for the discharge of debt to ancestors, svarna marriage was necessary. According to Lakshmidhara, the Sudra wife of an upper caste could never become Sahadharmini but such marriages were known in early medieval India.

Though there has always existed a gap between theory and practice and the law books themselves are regarded as mainly recommendatory or at most directory, and not mandatory, yet the rules contained in them and also in the Puranas reflect the prevailing trend in actual life. "Formerly a Hindu", remarked Alberuni in the 11th century, "could marry a woman of his caste or lower caste but in our times a Brāhmaṇ never marries a woman except one from his own caste." This shows that by the 11th century the

regular asavarna marriages became out of fashion among the Brāhmaṇs. The other communities also may have tried to follow suit. A principle of connubiality among their co-religionists began to be recommended by the Jains also.

As for the status of the progeny of the anuloma marriages, a change occurred in the 8th-9th centuries. The earlier view was that the offspring of the union of a man with a woman belonging to the varna next below his own, belonged to the varna of the father. But later, Devala held the view that only the progeny of a Brahman male and a Kshtriya female, and of a Kshtriya male and a Vaishya female became such savarnas.\(^1\) Still later, Haradatta in the 12th century laid down that only the offspring of a Brahman male and a Kshtriya female was called svarna.\(^2\) As regards the progeny of the pratiloma marriages it was held that the offspring were like Sudras and even when their parents were twice-born (dvija) they were not entitled to Upanayana and other samskaras of the dvijas.\(^3\)

The age of marriage for a boy was the early twenties. Marriage had three main purposes - promotion of religion by the performance of household sacrifices; progeny which could ensure happy old life and a happy after-life; and rati or sexual pleasure. The parents arranged marriages, in most cases, although in some cases the boy and the girl could decide to marry. The couple were usually of the same caste, but of

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1. Vyavahara-kanda of the K.K., PP.812.
different gotras and pravaras. While in early times it was usual for the girls to be fully adult before marriages, the Śrautis recommended that while a husband should be at least twenty and a girl should be married immediately after puberty. The general view was that the ideal marriage was one in which the bride was one third of the age of the groom — thus a man of twenty-five should marry a girl of eight.¹

Monogamy was the normal rule of ordinary life. But among the aristocracy, and other rich families, polygamy was fairly common and kings generally kept large harems². In such cases, the first wife had to be svarna; others could be taken from other varnas in the anuloma order³. The Manasollasa (II, 1810-16 A.D.) advises the king to have subsidiary wives from Vaiśya and Śūdra castes, so that the queen should be of Kshatriya caste and other wives should be only for his enjoyment. But there were cases such as Jayamati, the wife of Kashmir King Uccala (1101-11 A.D.) who was a Vaiśya, attaining the status of queen-consort⁴. Some kings also disregarded the rules of the prohibited degrees of marriage.

According to Alberuni, early marriages had become common in the Hindu society by the 11th century.⁵ The normal age of a Brāhmaṇ bride was twelve⁶. Kṣemendra refers to child-widows⁷. The reasons for the development of child-marriages cannot be given with certainty. As Basham says:

1. Kāmasūtra, Ch.III, Shalok 1,2.
3. Brahmapurāṇa, quoted in Grahasthakanda of the K.K., PP.44.
5. Sachu, II P.154.
7. -----balavidhavanam - Kālavilasa of Kṣemendra.
Some have suggested that the fear of marauding Muslims encouraged parents to marry their daughters in childhood and to confine their wives more strictly in their homes; but both these customs existed in pre-Muslim times, so this cannot be the only reason. It may in part be due to the growing religious insistence on the necessity of progeny, but this was strong at all times. The sexuality of the Indian character may have played some part in it. A woman was thought to be naturally libidinous; an unmarried girl attaining puberty\(^1\) would proceed to find a lover, however, strictly her parents guarded her; once she had lost her virginity she would become unmarriageable and the parents would have the choice of the disgrace and expense of maintaining an unmarried daughter indefinitely, or the even greater disgrace of casting her out to become a beggar or a prostitute. From the point of view of her parents a daughter was a serious economic liability, and this may have encouraged the custom\(^2\).

Altekar suggests that the custom of sati had become a force behind this practice, for the parents thought of getting their daughters settled before their leaving the world\(^3\).

Although in earlier ages, divorce was known by the 11th century, orthodoxy knocked out social flexibility and divorce vanished\(^4\). Remarriages of widows, which was prevalent in earlier ages, was banned so that even the child-widows could not remarry by the 10th century. Even Niyoga was forbidden\(^5\). However, a model

1. Yaj., 1 64, Angiras, 125-125.
2. Manu. Ch. 9, Shalok 90, 93.
3. Altekar, Position of Women etc. p. 71, 143, 147.
4. Ibid., pp. 97 ff.
document in the Lekhapaddhati\(^1\) (p. 52) dissolution of marriage was not quite uncommon among the lower sections of society. The Rajatarangini\(^2\) informs us that the mother of king Chandrapida was a divorcee bania woman, which shows that it was prevalent to some extent among the Vaishyas also. The practice of the remarriage of widows too was not unknown among them. The mother of Vastupala and Tejapala was a child-widow whom their father Asaraja had married\(^3\). However, the general attitude of the orthodox superior class against such a marriage is reflected in the Trisastisalakapuru sacharitra of Hemachandra\(^4\).

As for sexual relations, the literature of Hindu India, both religious and secular, is full of sexual allusions, sexual symbolism, and passages of frank eroticism. The preoccupation with such themes increased in the Middle ages, when the process of cosmic creation was figured as the union of god and goddess, and figures of closely embracing couples (maithuna) were carved on the walls of temples. Some religious sects even introduced ritual intercourse as part of their cult, and a potent aid to salvation. But the exaggerated sexual religiosity of the later Middle Ages was only an expression of the vigorous sexuality which was to be found in Indian social life at all times. Sexual activity was indeed a positive religious duty - the husband must have intercourse with his wife within a period of eight days at the close of every menstruation.

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1. Lekhapatdhati, p 52.
The Indian passion for classification, though it did not result in the emergence of experimental science, led to the development of rather pedantic schools on many aspects of human activity, including sexual relations. On this topic a number of textbooks survive, the most important and early of which is the Kamasūtra, attributed to the sage Vatsyāyana, and written in the early centuries of the Christian era, or perhaps in the Gupta period.

POSITION OF WOMEN

One of the major problems of Hindu Social life is the position accorded to women in the Hindu joint family because nothing is recorded on the stones regarding the position of women in the Hindu society during the period under review. Basically Hindu Social system proceeds on the assumption that the daughter never belonged to it. A girl born into a family is, according to old thinkers, like an ornament held in pawn to be surrendered to the rightful owner when he demands it. Yaska' Nirukta declares. "They give away to others the female childern. There exist dana, Vikrava and atisarga of the female but not of the male". Dana means gift, Vikrava means sale, and atisagra means abandonment. Durgacharya, the commentator explains these three methods of the disposal of daughters as giving away in marriage (dana), as acceptance of payment for marriage (vikrava) and freedom to choose (atisagra). The persistence of the tradition of the female child being unwelcome in the Hindu family, would show that Yaska's three methods of disposal of daughters were not merely theoretical but a description

1. Artha. 23.2.
3. Atharvaveda (iii), 23.3.3.
and rationalization of the customs which the society of his time accepted which, without gloss, meant gift, sale or abandonment of the female child. In fact, the theory of the Hindu family does not contemplate daughters except as children. Every girl was presumed to marry and join some other family group as a wife where her rights though limited were defined. But as a daughter\(^1\) she has no rights and could have no rights in a Hindu family. This conception of the daughter being held in trust for her legitimate owner posed no serious problem so long as there was child marriage\(^2\) and in fact compulsory marriage of all women in orthodox Hindu Society.

The epigraphic records do not mention anything of female education in our period. In whole society female education received great setback mostly due to early marriage of girls. The general education was necessary in the society to acquaint the women with system of household works and religious function performed with their husbands. The chastity and obedience of wife have been impressed by the law givers of this age and Katayana\(^3\) declares that she must be devoted to her husband. The wife must not live apart, must minister to her husband and lead a chaste life\(^4\). According to the ascetic view, women were the source of moral and spiritual degradation.\(^5\) In the writings of Ksemendra, they are considered to fragile and of weak moral fibre. The Upanayana of women had already fallen obeyance\(^6\), and they stood bracketed with sudras. But

2. Yaj., I, 64; Baudhayan Dh.S. (IV, 1.12)
4. Vedavyas II, 1.8, 19, 20, 27 and 34.
the tantra which had big hold in life, specially in rural life in our period glorified woman and considered her to be the direct manifestation of divine energy (shakti). The Latakamelaka of shankhadhara says that in the rural areas where all sorts of orthodoxy prevailed, the position of illiterate woman vis-a-vis their husbands was law. But the Vikramankadevacharita says that in the urban areas, where liberal values, prevailed, women were educated and respected. Due to Buddhist tradition, in Kashmir they enjoyed greater freedom so that the queens like Sugandha and Didda (who died in 1003 A.D) became successful administrators in the 10th-11th centuries. The Rajatarangini also refers to the heroic achievements of Chuḍḍā (1136-37 AD) and of Silla, such was the dominance of males in the society that the penances, through which a guilty wife had to go to regain her social and spiritual purity and then only she was restorted to all her rights. Echoing the liberal views of other Dharamasastra writers Vedavyasa, Atri and Devala declare that a woman becoming pregnant by connection or by force with a man of other varna remains impure till her delivery and next period when she regains her purity.

The proprietary right of woman had been recognized from the early times. She was entitled to a separate property called stridhana, over which she could exercise more or less absolute control in normal times. The scope of stridhana has been

1. Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. XII.
2. Latakamelaka, Act I pp. 6-7.
3. Vikramankadevacharita XVIII.
5. Ibid, VIII, 1136-3.
6. Vedavyas, chap, II.
8. Devala, 53 and 54.
10. Yaj., II, 143; Vyavahara-kanda of the K.K., P. 685.
discussed elaborately and also widened in the Mitaksara and the Dayabhaga. In spite of marked difference of opinion on this issue, the engrossing attention of the law givers to a certain extent we find greater recognition of their share in the family also.\(^1\)

The fate of widows has ever been miserable in Hindu society, especially of those of tender age. The right of inheritance in respect of the widows, though recognized in a restricted sense by the Dayabhaga and the Mitaksara, which determined to a large extent the practice in this respect in the succeeding centuries, does not appear, as we gather from the Kumarapalapratibodha\(^2\) and the Maharaja Parajava\(^3\) to have been in general vogue at least in rural Gujarat and Rajasthan in our age.

The inscriptions of the dynasties and the account of the contemporary foreign travellers no where refer to widow remarriage. In case of Brahmana widow Smrti writer is in favour of sacrificing her body on her husband's pyre.\(^4\) Hiuen Tsang's evidence is definit and against the remarriage of the widow.\(^5\) So it may be presumed that such kind of remarriage of widow was getting unpopular in this period though not absolutely forbidden.

The barbarous custom of sati\(^6\) or widow burning also began to gain ground from the 7th century onwards. In the History of Kashmir, from the 10th to the 12th century, there are many instances of Sati in royal families.\(^7\) In Northern India the custom appears to have been more prevalent in the North-Western part and the regions of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. Due to lack of evidences we could not state anything percisely whether that evil practice was in

\(^1\) Kumarapala - Pratibodha, P. 48.
\(^2\) Ibid., P. 48.
\(^3\) Moharaja-Parajaya, Act III
\(^4\) Vedavyas, 2, 53.
\(^6\) Altekar, op. cit., pp. 148-149
\(^7\) Raj., V. 226-27, VII, 481, 724, 858, 1488-90; VIII, 448, 1140, 1447.
existence in common or it had existed at all the ascetic ideal and the theory of Karma may be said the custom of widow-burning was foreign to Indian soil and that it was introduced here by the Scythians. It became largely prevalent among the kshatriya royal families and in the late medieval age Rajas than became its stronghold.

Ancient India contained one class of women who were not bound by the rules and restrictions which limited the freedom of the high class wife. These were the prostitutes. These were poor and cheap prostitutes, who would end their days in beggary, or as menials and work women; but the typical prostitute of literature was beautiful, accomplished, and wealthy enjoying a position of fame and honour comparable to that of the Aspasians and Phrynes of Classical Greece. Again we could not say with any degree of exactitude how far the general theories determined the actual existence of prostitutes in rural areas of the period under review.

Village women enjoyed some sexual freedom. The Āryāsaptaśatī observes that young maidens keeping watch over matured paddy crops in the fields indulged in coition with young passerby. It further adds that at times a beautiful young farmer girl attracted several village youths towards her, and they loitered near her house. Sometimes the village girls enjoyed the company of their lovers inside the hemp fields, wearing the matching cloth to the yellow colour of the hemp flowers to avoid to be seen. Again the same work states that the beautiful circular hip of a young lady

3. Ibid, V. 423.
4. Ibid, V. 476.
sprang sensation among the village youths. Sometimes farmer ladies had sexual intercourse with the younger brothers of their husbands on small heaps of paddy straw.

In the end it cannot be said with any degree of conviction how far the general theories determined the actual position of women in the family of rural areas of North India during the early medieval period (650-1205 A.D).

FAMILY AS THE BASIC UNIT

In the social structure of the Indian village, the family has always occupied a place of capital importance in that it not only exercises primary economic functions but it is also an agency of socialization, social control and religious rituals. Closely associated with varṇadharma, in fact, standing as a corollary of it, is the concept of ashramadharma which aims at a schematic division of life into four stages. The term ashrama is derived from the root shrama to exert oneself. It means, therefore, both the place where one exerts oneself and also the mode of exertion. The term, therefore signifies a stage in the journey of life.

The scheme of four stages of life evolved gradually in answer to certain ritual, social and spiritual needs. The earlier literature refers only to the first three - viz., brāhmacharya (studentship), grihastha (householder), and vanaprastha (hermit) and possibly the fourth and the last, sanyasa (complete renunciation) was introduced into the general scheme of life at a later stage. Normally, a man is supposed to pass

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1.Arya, V.346.
2.Ibid, V.302.
3.Manu, Ch.2, Shalok 243, 249.
through all the four stages in the order in which they are listed. As a man has to fulfil certain obligations and duties towards his own self and towards society, he should do so at the proper time and in the proper manner. These duties are designated as the rinas or debts: (a) the debt to the rishis or sages; (b) the debt due to one's ancestors (pitras); and (c) the debt due to the gods (devas). These debts are properly discharged by a study of the scriptures during the period of brahmacharya, by raising a family during grihastashrama, and by offering sacrifices according to one's capacity during one's life as a hermit (vanaprastha). At the end, comes moksha or liberation from samsara (existence) which is the aim of complete renunciation or sanyasa.

The first two stages centre around "family". In the first stage a person acquires concentration by controlling his instincts and impulses so that he may be able to dedicate himself to the pursuit of learning. This is the formative period of life in which a man must equip himself for the proper discharge of his social responsibilities. It begins after upanayana (ceremony of investiture with the sacred thread performed any time during the 8th -12th year). After this, the child becomes a student and dwelt in the house of a teacher, living a life of poverty and purity, and devoting himself to a study of his religion and other mundane subjects. This lasts upto 25 years of age, at the end of which comes

1. Kewal Motwani refers to the discharge of five debts; (a) to the ancient teachers and the guides of the race by proper study and a life of the spirit; (b) to the gods by appropriate acts of devotion and ritual; (c) to the ancestors by feeding and caring for the poor and the sick; (d) to the nature-elements by tending and proper care of the vegetable and animal kingdoms; and (e) humanity by caring for the younger generation. India; A Synthesis of Cultures, Bombay, 1947, p. 151.
2. Manu, Ch. 6, Shalok 90.
the ceremony of Samayartana (home coming). Then begins the second stage - grihastashrama - when he enters life and begins to share his social obligations. He must now marry, beget children and earn money (artha). He lived as a householder up to the age of fifty when his hair turned gray and wrinkles appeared on the skin and he turns a hermit. He left home and lived in a hermitage in the vana (forest) along with his wife, leading a life of few wants, receiving alms, offering sacrifices, studying the scriptures. This lasts from the age of 50 to 75 years, when he became a sanyasin, living alone and homeless and in quest of salvation.¹

These four ashramas reveal a view of life that is of great significance in our understanding of the spirit of life in India. They rest on the principle that all life is a preparation for salvation, and hence, must be properly organized both for individual and social welfare. They are so designed as to facilitate the realization of the four ideals of life - dharma, artha, kama and moksha. As Gokhale puts it:

In the first phase a man is expected to learn all about the spiritual and cultural traditions of his people by which the continuity of the cultural tradition is ensured through education of the young. During the second stage the economic, biological and cultural demands of society and life are met. In the third stage, he is expected to rise above mundane interests and in the fourth he actively strives for the realization of the supreme end of all life, salvation. The ashramas, aimed at

¹ Manu, Ch.6, Shalok 1.3, 'Mahabharata' Shantiparva, 4,24
the fullest development of the individual and the social group in which he lived and of which he was a part. The two traditions which they subserve are those of dharma (social preservation and growth) and yajnya (the moulding of human personality in such a manner as to eliminate friction and aid individual development through the spirit of sacrifice). During the first stage society is called upon to receive and educate the individual in his cultural heritage; in the second, he is expected to fulfil his obligations to society by playing his proper economic and social role; the third stage becomes an experience in contemplative and reflective enrichment and the last is spent in search of the infinite. The first, is, therefore, the stage of man learning, the second of man acting, the third of man contemplating and the last of man realizing. By regulating the growth of the human personality and fixing the obligations of the individual towards his society and vice versa the ashramas significantly contributed to the continuance and enrichment of the cultural traditions of the country by preserving stability of life without arresting individual and spiritual progress.

These ashramas were formulated during the Brāhmaṇa Age and were already a familiar institution during the time of Paninī (5th century B.C). Kautilya and the Dharmaśastras lay down elaborate rules about the dharma of the ashramas. Theoretically they were meant to be observed by the Brāhmaṇs, the Kshatriyas and the

1. B.G. Gokhale, Indian thought through the ages; A study of some Dominant concept, Bombay PP. 37-89.
3. V. S. Agarwal, India as known to Panin, Lucknow, 1953, P. 81.
4. Artha, P. 47. Also see Vishvadharmaśstra, XXVIII-XXXIII.
Vaishyas only, though it is doubtful if the practice of their strict observance ever extended on any significant scale to castes other than the Brahmans. In them also, only a small number may have rigidly followed the rules in all the details and complexity, and only a very small section must have gone on to the third and fourth stages after the age of the Upanishads.

In rural India, few people could understand or explain the social philosophy that lies behind this system of ashramas, but its essence reached them for countless generations through oral tradition, and the teachings of numerous saint-poets and it became ingrained in their thought-pattern and value-structure. In any case, even the life of the rural house-holder was influenced by the concept of the dharma of the varnas and ashramas through the ages as is indicated by notices of conditions in the country in the inscriptions and historical records and observations of foreign travellers.

In rural life of the period 650-1206 A.D. the emphasis was not so much on education or Brahmacharya, as it was on the Grihasthashrama. Marriage was regarded as natural and necessary. Sex indulgence among children was socially disapproved. Only morons and cripples remained single. Although it was rare for people to renounce their home and property in old age, old men and women excessively attached to material goods came in for a good deal of criticism such as: "Will they carry their wealth with them to the other world when they die?" In this sense, even

without understanding the subtitle of the ashrama system, the essence of the philosophy of the ashramas can be said to have permeated the life and thought of the medieval Hindu villagers. And in the period 650-1206 A.D., even the village Muslims began to share these social attitudes with their Hindu neighbours with converse to Islam, they might have changed their religious faith, but in the socio-cultural spheres of life, they continued to have more or less the same basic attitudes as the Hindus.

To the villagers, the necessity of both marriage and family was self-evident. The family line, therefore, had to be continued and a male heir must be left. A condemned bachelor (past the marriage age) was an object of pity, and a couple without a son was unhappy. In some cases, sons of relatives were adopted but in many more, childlessness and inability to produce a male child on the part of a woman often lead to a polygynous household. A male child must make a ceremonial offering of water to the spirits of his deceased parents and ancestors, without which their souls would wander in unrest. Even the Sudras and the untouchables and semi-tribal groups had this ritual in a modified form. The Muslims neither have this belief nor any attendant ritual but they also shared with the Hindus the sentiment against barren women.

As in ancient India, in our period also, the family was a joint one - that is to say, a close link was maintained between brothers, uncles, cousins, and nephews, who often lived under one

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roof or group of roofs and who owned the immovable property of the line in common. Like the European and Semitic family, it was patriarchal and patrilinear. The father was the head of the house and administrator of the joint property. The medieval, Indian rural family included grand-parents, parents, children, grand-children, uncles and their descendants and various collaterals on the male side. It included adopted children, domestic servants and clients, and in some Brahman families a few students also. The joint family, rather than the individual, was the unit of the social system, and therefore, the population of a given region was generally estimated in families, rather than in individual heads. The bonds of family were such that relationships within the group were often blurred or lost sight of, for instance a son would commonly refer to all his father's wives as his mothers. The group was held together by shraddha - the rite of commemoration of the ancestors, at which balls of rice, pinda, were offered.

The joint family, however, was nothing more than the survival of the primitive familial community which before the conception of society had dawned on man created round itself walls of blood relationship and economic identity. It subordinated the individual to the group (family), provided him with a code of morals, with duties and obligations and modified his "enlightened selfishness" by the ties of family. That it was a great step from primitive life to civilization would easily be granted. It provided an organized life, by establishing a

principle of social obedience. At all times, the central difficulty of civilization has been the establishment of a principle of obedience, receiving universal acceptance as just and natural, and to which the people will subordinate their wills. In primitive and savage societies this was provided by the loyalty to the tribe which was enforced by tabus and manas.

The social effects of this two-faced institution, the caste and the joint family, have been disastrous. Primarily, it has tended to sub-divide the social organism in such a way as to make the units smaller and smaller and unrelated to the general society. Thus it denies the entire theory of community and bases the organization of Hindu life on the opposite principle of disintegration and division. From the point of view of the joint family and the sub-caste, the Hindus are no more than an inchoate mass of small units, not only unrelated to each other, but incapable of being related to each other as no marriage is permitted between them and social relations are rendered difficult as a result of interdictions on food. Secondly, the system enshrines and upholds the principle of inequality as each sub-caste considers itself superior to most if not to all other sub-castes. Thirdly, this twin institution bases itself on and in consequence emphasises at every turn the principle of segregation and exclusiveness. The sub-caste would cease to exist if inter-marriage and inter-dining were extended beyond its frontiers. Naturally, therefore, the whole power of the

institutions is turned against any attempt to break down the restrictions of food and marriage. No wonder that Tagore was moved to speak of Hindu social organizations as walls which shut out "the sunshine of thought and the breath of life," and an outside observer, to speak in terms of bitterness as follows: The high metaphysics of the Upanishads and the ethics of the Gita have been reduced to mere words by the tyranny of caste. Emphasizing the unity of the whole world, animate and inanimate, India has yet fostered a social system which has divided her children into watertight compartments, divided them from one another, generation to generation for endless centuries. It has exposed her to foreign conquests which have left her poor and weak and worst of all she has become the home of untouchability and unapproachability which have branded her with the curse of Cain.¹

There can be no denying that the organization of Hindu life on the basis of the sub-caste or the joint family extinguishes the social sense, the feeling of obligation to a social whole and thereby renders the conception of a unified Hindu society impossible.

INTER-PERSONAL RELATIONS

According to the traditional norms of society, a husband in the medieval rural areas was supposed to be an authoritarian figure who demanded and received unquestioned

¹ Prof. AR Wadia, Contemporary Indian Philosophy, p. 368.
obedience of his wife and children, in return for providing them security. The ideal for a man was to take all major decisions in consultation with his wife and grown-up children, specially the sons but the final say in all matters related to the family rested with the husband. The wife and children would touch his feet in the morning. The wife washed the husband's clothes and ate the leavings in his plate. Whatever the provocation she would not answer him back. But this was only in theory. In practice, the husband was not that dominant or authoritarian. The quality of inter-personal relations between husband and wife changed as they left one stage of life and entered another. In the beginning of the married life, the husband was not supposed to show any major concern for his newly married wife, and he continued to work under the direction of his father or elder brother, while the wife carried out the instructions of her mother-in-law. They hardly had an opportunity to meet and talk during the day and when they did meet in the night, possibly in a separate room or apartment, the proximity of the parents' room did not allow them the liberty of engaging in audible love-play or even of talking freely; they could only whisper. The cultural pattern demanded that the wife must resist the initial advances of her husband for several nights. After 10-15 days, she becomes more cooperative and sex began to dominate their lives. They now met more often but did not discuss household

2. Katyayan, V. 885-37; Vedavyas II, 1, 8, 19, 20, 27 and 34.
3. SC Dube, p. 142.
6. Banddthagana, PP. 19, 32 and 33 (Song Nos. 10, 18 and 19).
affairs which fell within the domain of the pater-familias or the mother-in-law. The young wife even if she was troubled by her mother-in-law did not complain to her husband about her discomforts. The husband pretended to ignore his wife for fear of being ridiculed as hen-pecked husband. But when gradually, tensions mounted and he was simultaneously pressed from the side of his mother against his wife, and from the side of his wife against his mother, the husband would often scold his wife and support his mother, only to advise his wife later in the night that all this was only a drama, a mock-scolding meant only to satisfy his old mother. But then the wife reported to her husband about the maltreatment inflicted on her by his mother and sisters. When the going became difficult, the husband and wife seceded from the parental family to set up an independent household of their own. And with this, the nature of husband-wife relationships underwent a definite change and the two became free to run their own affairs, with the husband becoming the head of the family and the wife running the household and managing the economy.

The altercations periodically occurred even now, the wife alleging improvidence, spendthrift habits, excessive drinking, gambling and extra-marital intrigues against the husband to her neglect, and the husband complaining against a nagging, ever vigilant wife, obstructing his freedom. The wife

1. Iravati Karve, *Kingship Organisation in India*, p. 72.
4. *Saduktikarnamrta*, 2.84.1; *Aryasaptasati*, v. 446.
then used the threat of returning to her parental home, and
sometimes neglected the children and household chores as a
protest. The husband sometimes suspected his wife's illicit
affairs with a lover and passing on money and ornaments and
clothes to her brothers and sisters. And thus life dragged on,
without of course, a divorce. The wife in a village family did
not have any appreciable freedom unless she became the mother of
two or three children, preferably sons. The "family prestige"
and "good name" of the family were considerations which prevented
altercations from assuming the shape of scandals.\(^1\) If the
situation went beyond control, the husband could turn out the
wife and even marry another girl or keep a mistress. The mother-
in-law would often instigate her son to treat his wife as a pair of
shoes to be discarded if the shoe pinches. But this sort of thing
was an exception. If the wife was tactful, she could manage
her husband and keep him under restraint.\(^2\) The ideal wife was
one who had a pleasant disposition, healthy, good looking and
tactful, keeping the household in perfect order and managing the
children. The ideal husband was one who was sturdy, handsome,
courageous, a money-earner, and one who kept the family free from
wants and was himself not given to excesses.

The nature of the parent-children relationship changed with the
age and status of the children. Once the sons and daughters entered
the phase of youth and adulthood, the tone of the relationship
changed. The son was always held as an asset, a

\(^1\) S.C.Dube, p. 144.
\(^2\) Mitaksara, P. 83.
daughter as a liability\(^1\). Care of a daughter was regarded as "watering a neighbour's tree" - "one takes all the trouble with it but its fruit goes to someone else"\(^2\). During adolescence, the girls drew themselves closer to the mother and occupied themselves mainly with feminine pursuits; the boys continued to maintain close and intimate relations with the mother, but her authority over them gradually diminished. While the father watched the development of his sons, the mother sought to train her daughters to be good wives\(^3\).

After marriage of the girls, they maintained a somewhat intimate contact with the parental home for a couple of years, but gradually they got absorbed in the affairs of their own homes and could join the parents only on ceremonial occasions or weddings or deaths.

In the village families, generally the aged, dependent parents received reasonable attention for a son failing in his duty with his parents invited social disapproval and a bad name\(^4\).

The disputes between the daughter-in-law on the one hand, and the mother-in-law and sisters-in-law, on the other was quite frequent but they were petty and rarely, if ever, reached a breaking point. Gradually, the daughter-in-law got adjusted with the ways and traditions of her parents-in-law by working harder, by observing caution, by talking less and less about her parents or family, by reacting more soberly to the jibes and taunts of the

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(1) Vishnu Smrti, XV 44-46; Banabhatta Kadambari, P 67(2)  
(2) I.Karve, Kingship Organisation in India, P. 48.  
(3) S.C.Dube, P. 150.  
mother-in-law or the sisters-in-law, and by showing respectful regards to her father-in-law and brothers-in-law.

The relationship between brothers or sisters or between brothers, on the one hand, and sisters, on the other, was based on the principle of mutual "love and help", with the elder ones exercising some control and authority on the younger ones. The girls helped the mother in domestic chores, while the boys helped the father in his business or agriculture. Whenever there was a quarrel amongst them, invariably the elder was admonished. In some families the girls received harsh treatment but the boys were treated as favoured ones. But, normally, in cultured families, the treatment was equal.

Grandparents loved their grand-children who were supposed to have been spoiled by their love and affection. Wishing grand-children and being in turn amused by them was the favourite time of the grandparents. Uncles and aunts were treated by children at par with the father and mother. Between the respective parents-in-law of a husband and wife, relations were formal.

EDUCATION

While the princely order was provided with the best possible education in the cities. The picture was, however, different in the case of the rural people during the period under review. The general mass illiterate. Education was limited to a few persons of

(1) Iravati Karne, Kingship Oranisation in India, P 67
(2) SC Dube, pp. 156 ff.
(3) Likhita Smrti V. 53 (Cf Smrtinamasamuccuyah, P. 153 ed. by Vinayaka Gansa Apte).
(4) SC Dube, P. 158.
the higher caste. The lower class people possessed some technical knowledge of arts and crafts, which helped them to earn their livings.

The records of this period (650-1205 A.D.) inform that brāhmaṇas devoted their times in pursuit of knowledge and more or less habituated to adopt teaching profession. They played an important part in the village organisation. They were expected to impart education and to interpret the law and literature books. Bana speaks of pupils, studying at the homes of the brāhmaṇ teachers (Upadhyaya) in his native village. According to the smrtikaras, the study of veda, offering sacrifice and giving gifts are said to have enjoyed by Divija, but teaching of veda, officiating at the sacrifices and recieving gifts are the privileges of the brāhmaṇas. Many references are witness to this and the records describe brāhmaṇas as scholars of Veda and Vedanga. These go to show that the formost duty of Brāhmaṇa was to pursue the vedic study and this was accomplished by them. Having completed their study, brāhmaṇas took the profession of a teacher. This may suggest that in the village settlements, the scholarly brāhmaṇas, in general were centres of learning but they had no seperate place for holding classes. The Kathāsaritsāgara speaks of a brāhmaṇa engaged in teaching some students under a banyan (Vata) tree in a village in western India, but we do not get any such references of open air schools in the villages of north India.

1. I.B., III, No.116, 1.21; E.I., XII, No.8, 1.36; J.B.O.R.S.
   LXIX, Pt, I, PP.66 ff.,1.38.
2. H.C., pp 44, 45
The teacher was held in high esteem; honour from society was the best reward he could receive for the service he rendered. His self-imposed material poverty and vast fund of knowledge ensured his independence of thought and action. The state gave financial aid to education, but left it free. This arrangement made the teacher secure from any control by the state or by the moneyed people. The aristocratic and well-to-do families engaged private tutors to impart primary education to children. But the ordinary people sent their children to mathas where they were taught reading, writing and arithmetic and elementary knowledge of mantaras. The media of primary education were the Apabhramas or the vernaculars.

Smrti writers has mentioned that gifts given to a brahmana (by caste) to a srotiya (brahmana learned in veda) or Acharya and to the one who has completely mastered all the vedas were granted gifts according to their qualifications. Thus it is evident that learned brāhmaṇas while following the profession of the teacher (Acharya) were given gifts by the different kings and the elite group.

Brāhmaṇas had to perform many types of duties at the same period of time due to which their lives became somewhat multidimensional. They had to work as priests (Pūrohita) in the 1.E.I., Vol. XIII, P. 283-292; I.A., Vol. XVII, P. 226. 2.Yaj., I,P 100.
6.Daksa II,P.28; Vedavayas, IV.P. 42.
temples, as astrologers. As general of army (Senapati), as agriculturists. This extra load of work could have been the main reason of the negligence of the general education for the general village people. Pursuit for money was also the another reason of deviation from the traditional system that profession of teaching vedas could not have brought sufficient money to brāhmaṇas, hence they took the work of priest (Purohita).

Mathas were primarily intended for the instruction of the pupils and laity by some great teachers in the tenents or in some branch of learning as grammar and astronomy etc. In Rajatarangini, Matha is defined as a place where students reside. In Kashmir a King donated all his wealth to Matha where people were taught. It was built near a temple. This shows that temples and mathas have been complementary in the period under review. King Avantivarmana of Kashmir appointed Ramata Upadhyaya to the post of Expounder of grammar in a temple.

Buddhist monasteries were noted for imparring general education and the villages have monasteries may been seats of learning. The ancient tradition of gurukulas lingered on in our period 650-1206 A.D. also. With the spread of Buddhism, the viharas had become the centres of education. As the time passed, education came to be organised by Viharas, mathas and temples. In a jain matha the sons of layman and even orphans received education. In

the Hasyachudamani of Vatsaraja we find a Bhagovata Acharya teaching in a matha, and the Desopadesha of Kṣemendra refers to Gauda student, gone to Kashmir for study. The agrahara villages granted to brāhmaṇas for their maintenance also become centres of education¹.

It may, further be noted that villages in north India had no college of the types found at the village settlements of Salotigi². Vaghli³ and Patra⁴ in South Western India during the 10th, 11th and 12th centuries.

Some sort of technical training was imparted to artisans in the villages perhaps the families of the carpenters, blacksmiths, potters, weavers, oilmen, goldsmiths, basket makers, shoe makers, barbers, washerman, salt makers, sculptures, etc. trained their young ones by initiating them into their trades. But the upper class people did not take any interest in these professional crafts.

Agriculture being the pivotal in the village economy, most of the population was engaged in agriculture. Villagers led a cooperative life. The general principle of one profession for one class encouraged mutual dependence of the people practical education in the form of the types of work they did was practiced year after year. Inheritance of the work was the base of this system. The peasants appear to have wide knowledge of agriculture. They knew each and every aspect related to agriculture. This they

2. E.I., IV.No.6
3. Ibid, II, No.16.
did not learnt at any agricultural school or college but by constant observation and practice\(^1\).

The farmers were familiar to astronomy as well. They could make forcasts about rain or draught. According to the Krsiparasara, the agriculturists were aware of weather forcasts as well. Blowing of wind from the north or west was indicative of rain and that from the east or south signifies draught. Absence of wind meant to no rainfall and if the wind was fitful, than was to be irregular\(^2\). If there was rainfall or rainy weather in the month of Pausa (December-Jan) heavy rain was expected in the seventh month\(^3\). Cloudy sky in the bright half of Pausa was indicative of heavy rainfall in the year\(^4\).

In the end it could be inferred that the course of studies sketched above, evidently meant for higher intellectuals classes, appears to be sufficiently comprehensive, it was not less so far the agricultural and merchantile class. A different course of study was prescribed for them even in the early period, based on the needs of their work, the requirements of an agriculturist were limited to farming only. The general mass was illiterate. Education was the privilege of higher castes only. The lower class people had some technical skills of arts and carfts, through which they earned their livings. The farmers were traditionally trained in the art of cultivation and they knew certain agricultural aphorisms dealing with forcasts, about rain or draught.

\(^1\) K.P. , V.53
\(^2\) Ibid., V.31.
\(^3\) Ibid, V.35.
\(^4\) Ibid, V.36.
Many superstitious beliefs\textsuperscript{1} and practices stood hurdles in the way of their attaining rational knowledge, but things based on deep observation and long experience probably contained some element of truth. The life of the rural people was quite detached and self-centred.

In the preceding pages the endeavour has been made to describe the salient features of the rural social organisation of north India during the early medieval period. The society was divided in many subcastes and ramification of the castes was a special feature of the social system in the period under review. The hierarchy of Brahmanas due to changed atmosphere and disturbed condition had to adapt themselves to circumstances and many of them migrated to comparatively peaceful areas for livelihood.

The period witnessed the rise of kshatriya caste because the brahmanas could not maintain the original position in the society and had to seek guidance from the kshatriya's. The kshatriya's and vaisyas had little interest in cultivation and it was left to sudras to do the bulk of cultivation. The decline of vaisyas and rise of sudras as cultivators was also another salient feature of the period. The condition of the untouchables was horrible as they were not allowed to mix with other castes.

Some sort of customs and manners were practised: - (The use of human flesh in worship, sati (burning widow), marriage before puberty). Remarriage of widow was not encouraged. Although intercaste marriages were prevalent but within the same caste was preferred.

\textsuperscript{1}K.P., V.94; V.95, VV.103-104; V.141, 144, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 161, 162.
In the social structure of the Indian village, the family occupied the central place. Observance of the four ashramas was practised. Joint family system was very common.