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### **Phase of Transition (Social Condition):**

The the main reason behind the transition of the ancient Indian society to the medieval Indian society was the the system of land grants. Where on one hand farmers were the owners of land in ancient Indian society and the producing class were categorized as the Vaishyas on the other hand with the onset of early medieval India a new class emerged in the society named as the Zamindars. Now those who received land grants became the actual owners of the land and in this way the producing class began to lag behind in the society and finally took a back seat.

The documents of the land grants proves that those who granted land were most the rulers who inorder to carry out religious rituals and maintain harmony in the society granted lands to the priets or those who carried out religious rituals.

In the 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century a new system emerged out in the society which is termed as the Kaliyuga in the Puranas. During this phase various Varnas refused to carry out the work specified according to their varnas. The lower class noe began to give up their specified occupation and began to adopt the occupation of the higher class inorder to make their place in the category of upper class. In other words they refused to pay taxes and provide free labour. This led to mixing of the varnas also known as the varnashankara.

Therefore, granting land to the priests and the ministers was considered to be the most effective method in order to gain control over this situation. In this system now the land holder had the complete right levying and collecting taxes of the land thus, could suppress the revolts happening in his land easily. The second benefit was now most of the land underwent cultivation. Moreover, the Brahmins settled in the the lands along with different communities and clans and taught them about the vedic culture and Brahmanism.

### **The emergence of Zamindari system:**

In the 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D the system of land grant was prevalent on large scale. Under this system the Brahmins received the tax free land where the rulers use to collect the taxes before. These Brahmins not only levied and collected taxes but also imposed rules on the farmers and the artists. As a result of which the power of ruler began to decrease in the end of the Gupta period. Where on one hand in the Mauryan period the ruler was the supreme head of all the lands of his empire and the taxes were collected by his ministers on the other hand in this era the ruler was losing out lands by granting it on large scale which made him weak gradually.

Where in Mauryan period it is seen that the ministers and officials received salaries as a result of their work similarly in the Gupta period too they received coins as the salaries but the documents after 6<sup>th</sup> century depicts that they received land grants as a results of their services. During the rule of Harshavardhana the  $\frac{3}{4}$ <sup>th</sup> of the royal treasury was given to the ministers as their salaries and  $\frac{1}{4}$ <sup>th</sup> of the royal treasury was used for the welfare of his subjects. The governor, ministers, judicial members were given land grants in order to fulfill their personal needs. Later these ministers became ambitious and ignored the interest of the state over their personal interest. Thus, this way by the end of 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D there was a full-fledged development of zamindari system and the decline of kingship.

### **Transformation in the Varna system:**

In the 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D there occurred few changes in the Varna system of the society. In the northern part of India the Vaishyas were considered as the independent farmers. But the land grants led to the rise of the class of Zamindars between the rulers and the farmers. As a result of which the Vaishyas stepped back to the place of the Shudras in the Varna System. This led to the division of the society broadly in two categories – the Brahmins and the Shudras.

According to the Dharmshashtras the social system was controlled by the Varna system. The society was divided into four Varnas in which the Brahmins were the supreme most in the hierarchy and the Shudras were the lowest. The occupation and the medium of economy of a person was also based on the Varna he belonged to. Where initially every parameter of the society was based on the Varna now it began to be based on the amount of land available with the person.

### **Condition of Women:**

The law books of ancient India gave liberty of Niyoga and widow remarriage to the women but only of lower section. From the very beginning women were denied of right to property. Intercaste marriage was prohibited but Anuloma and Pratiloma marriages were prevalent in the society. Ill practices like polygamy, child marriage and sati system were prevalent in the society. The women of higher class were allowed to receive education. The system of purdah was not completely prevalent among the women of higher class. The widows wore white clothes. The prostitutes were also allowed to live in the towns. Thus, on the social level the condition of women saw its decline. A new system of exploitation of women emerged in the society named as the Devdasi system. The first evidence of Devdasi system was found in an inscription of Ashoka found in the Ramgarh Cave. But this system attained its widespread form during the reign of the Guptas which gradually kept on increasing. Thus, with the passing time the condition of women kept on declining at its rapid pace.

