

Nature of Villages in Ancient India

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ABSTRACT

The town has been the turn of organization in India. Its significance was normally exceptionally perfect during a time when correspondence were slow and industrialization obscure. Town had a somewhat immaterial influence in antiquated Indian life, the Vedic songs much of the time prey for the thriving of town, yet seldom for that of towns and urban communities. While depicting the thriving of a realm, the huge number of prosperous towns remembered for it, however are out and out absent to the presence of towns and urban areas that may thrived in it. In the Vedic age, states were little and this situation further upgraded the significance of the town. In later times, in any event, when realms turned out to be enormous, there was no adjustment of the circumstance, in light of the fact that the town was the regular turn of organization in a country society. In current times, lead representatives frequently assemble a gathering of authorities to examine significant inquiry of managerial strategy. There is no question that town were the genuine focuses of public activity and significant units in the nation's economy.

KEYWORDS: Society, Literary Sources, Village Council, Myth and Reality, Economic Relationship

INTRODUCTION

India has a rich cultural heritage. The progress of man in the past is the subject matter of history. In order to understand the present India we have to trace back its roots in Ancient India. However, to reconstruct its history is a difficult task for the historians. Especially difficulty faced in the matter of types and nature of sources. In order to study the life of Indian people in the past, we have to rely on different sources of Indian history. Although there is an absence of any historical chronicle, it does not mean that Indians lacked in historical sense. The information derived from literary sources and corroborated by archaeological evidence helps us to form a complete picture of our ancient times. The sources for the reconstruction of ancient Indian history can be studied under three broad headings namely (1) Literary sources (2) Archaeological sources and (3) Accounts of the Foreign historians and travellers.

SOURCES OF ANCIENT INDIAN HISTORY- Availability and decipherment' are two limitations regarding the sources of Ancient Indian History. Those were the British administrative officers who, for their administrative needs, first paid attention to

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Ancient Indian history. Like, Sir William Jones (judge), in 1784, founded 'Asiatic Society of Bengal', for learning, understanding and publishing sources of Ancient Indian History. Then, after the formation of Archaeological Survey of India in 1861, search for archaeological sources get legal-momentum. Then, after the discovery of Indus civilization in 1922, boosted love for ancient Indian history among Indians. Then, until now, various types of sources are coming forth and their interpretation is becoming more challenging job for the historians of Ancient India. This chapter will analyze the importance of various sources for the reconstruction of Ancient Indian History.

In addition to their five committees there was a general committee of supervision known as Annual committee only experience and elders, who had previously served another committees were eligible for the membership of the body. The numbers and functions of the sub committees naturally varied according to the needs and circumstance of each village and land survey is disclosed by on record its function must have been survey and clasiy lands and

see to it that the government's assessment was fair and equitable. A temple committee is referred to in another. Some agrahara villages had their own colleges; they had probably an education committee. The village assemblies had developed a regular council in Bihar, Rajputana, Central India,

Maharashtra and Karnataka at least in the Gupta period and post Gupta period. In the south India in case of climates like famines, they used to raise a public loan by Moral aging the common lands at least in Cholas age.



Fig.1 Ancient Indian History

MYTH AND REALITY-

With regard to Indian village we have a lot of myths, let us look at those beliefs and their realities in detail. India's village can be traced far back in history which creates a sense of timelessness and continuity. The Arthashastra (400 BCE-200AD) provides us with a classification of the king's duties related to the administrative affairs of the village. In the medieval times Al Biruni's Kitab al Hind (early eleventh century) gives us an account of the caste occupation based organisation in the village. British colonial administrative view of India was based on the category of 'village'. The perspective developed and forwarded was that India was primarily composed of villages which were self- sufficient and independent. The writings of James Mill and Charles Metcalfe and their notion of the Indian village community influenced the later scholars of Indian village.



Fig.2 Myth & Reality

VILLAGE AS A SOCIAL UNIT-

Village social life is organized around caste, kinship, economy, politics and religion. People’s social lives are mostly confined to their villages, their livelihoods and lives revolve around the rural environment and resources. The village is thus a point of prestige and personal identity. Along with caste, class or locality, village provides an important source of identity to its residents. At the same time the village is not an isolated unit, fairs, festivals and other celebrations required village to connect ritually with the wider world. In case of North Indian villages, the practice of village exogamy links the village in kinship and affinal relationships to other villages. According to Srinivas, an insult to one’s village had to be avenged like an insult to oneself, one’s wife, or one’s family.



Fig.3 Village as a social unit

Little Traditions-

Any study of the religion of Indian village show double processes working simultaneously between the religious beliefs and practices of the village and the wider Indian civilization. McKim Marriott, takes the concepts of ‘great tradition’ and ‘little tradition’ from Robert Redfield (1955) and has given the terms universalisation (elements of village culture being incorporated into a wider regional or even larger society) and parochialization (cultural elements of a pan Indian nature filtering down to the village level through various modes of communication such as story-telling and folk drama) respectively to refer to the two aspects of this double process of interaction between the little and great traditions.

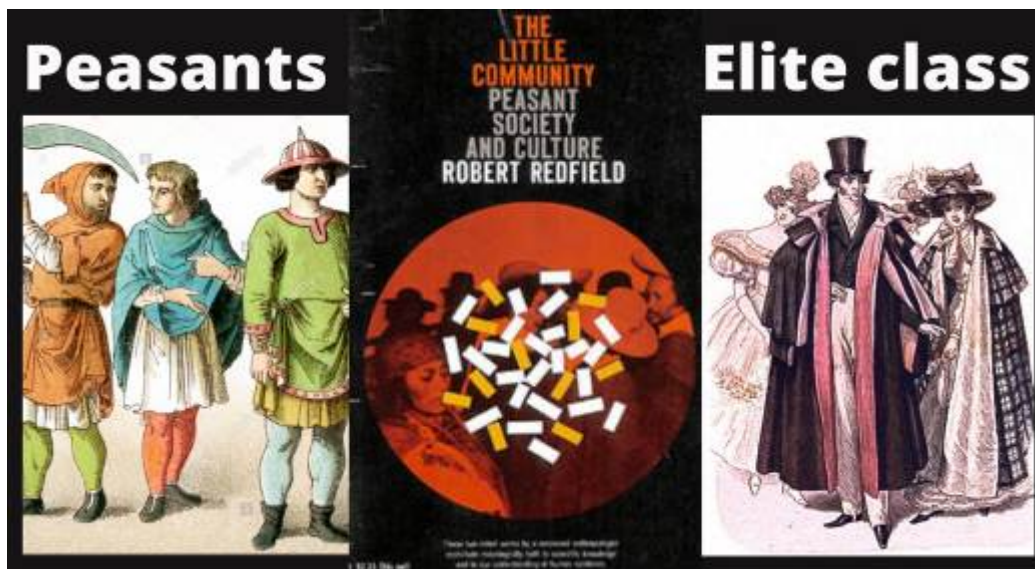


Fig.4 Little Tradition

ECONOMIC UNIT-

Indian village as an economic self-sufficient unit was a long held myth. Even for Marx, Indian village represented a different kind of economic system — the Asiatic mode of production — which combined agriculture with production. The distinctiveness of the system, he believed also contributed to the unchanging and stifling character of society. For him, colonialism leading to class based stratification would bring positive changes for Indian society. The impression that the village in pre-British India was economically self-sufficient was created by the existence of the jajmani system (relationship of reciprocity of economic exchange between landlords and peasants over generations), where payment was in kind/ grains (absence of monetisation), and the poor communications which limited the flow of goods.



Fig.5 Economic Unit

ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP-

Village markets that are to be distinguished from capitalist markets not only serve an economic purpose but also political, recreational and social purposes. The weekly markets or Haats that exist all over rural India from ancient times form major links with neighbouring villages and towns. They are important nodes for drawing in goods not available locally including, silver and gold which were essential for weddings in rural India. The annual camel fair in Pushkar, is an example of a rural market that has existed from times immemorial. The institution of weekly markets are cultural institutions with significance beyond mere economic exchange and still prevail even though considerable improvements in transport and communication have made towns with regular markets accessible to villagers.

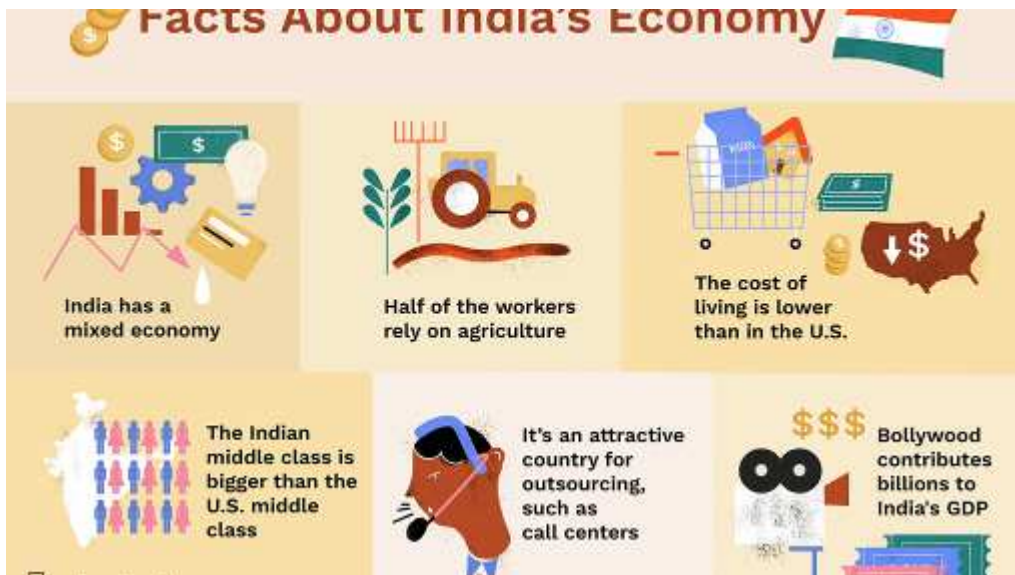


Fig.6 Economic Relationship

CONCLUSION-

To concentrate on Indian history in a far reaching way one needs to rely upon abstract as well as archeological sources which assist us with shaping a total image of the old times. The data given by artistic texts assuming verified by archeological remaining parts assists the history specialist with working on the size of authentic credibility and unwavering quality of truth. India has a rich social legacy and Ancient India is a brilliant age in Indian history. Be that as it may, as we travel once more into the past, we experienced extraordinary absence of composed sources to recreate its set of experiences. For grasping India before the start of proficiency and to figure out life-methods of everyday person, and to date deductively, such archeological remaining parts help us a ton. The settlement of the town debates was one of the main elements of the town gathering. The hypothesis of a few early authors that the town committee of panchayat owed their legal powers to winning insurgency. It is most critical that the focal government practiced just an incredible management and command over the town congregations and their gatherings.

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