
**SOCIAL ECONOMIC AND RELIGIOUS CONDITION OF HARYANA FROM VEDIC PERIOD TO
MEDIEVAL PERIOD**

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The social condition prevailed in this part of the country during the literature deals with the vedic times, because the whole vedic literature deals with the social conditions such as family life, the caste system, marriage, and the position of women, education, amusements and entertainments, foods and drinks, dress and decoration, sanitation etc. and therefore, the vedic literature is too vast to be discussed. We know little about the social conditions of this region after the vedic times and before the Epic period. We are informed that after the great battle of Mahabharata the ladies of the Kurus and came out of the city by putting off their ornaments and dresses. They reached weepind the battle-field with Dhrtarastra where their husband were killed. The citizens like the artisans, the traders, the vaisyas and other also followed them and left the city deserted.

With the death of the Janamejaya Parikshita and the rise of the Abhipratarnas the Kuru realm was divided into many principalities. Great calamities befell the Kurus and the disintegration of the kingdom went to a pace. The prosperity of the realm under Parikshit came to an end and a new social life of the people started with the economic distress. Prince Vrdhadyumna son of Abhipratarnine erred in a sacrifice, when a Brahmana uttered a curse that the result would be the expulsion of the Kurus from Kurukshetra. There occurred a devastation of crops in the Kuru country by Matachi (hail stones) which also enforced migration of some people. Because of the one reason or other, large section of the people, including Brahmanas and the princes, were forced to leave the country and to migrate to the eastern and other parts of India.

Though the centre of the purity, learning and culture moved towards the middle country, from the land of the holy rivers yet the orthodox people retained their cultural standards even upto the age of the Budha. According to the Buddhist literature, because of the favourable climate conditions the people of this region had sound mind and sound body. The life of the people was intellectually so sound that even the Dasa, Karmakaras and servants talked of the Smritis and the ladies too, did not waste their time even on the water wells and the places where they met for weaving and spinning. The Divyavadana inform us that the people of this region were ever delighted who enjoyed the sweet notes of different typers of lutes and songs which were pleasing to the ears and they made use of all kinds of commodities.

But the invasions of the Achaeminions and Alexander the Great which caused exodus movements on the alert. Since the inhabitants of the region were the western people of Aryavarta, they shouldered the responsibility of protect the Aryan culture, at least for some time, till they were subjugated by the foreigners like the Indo-Greeks, the Sakas and Kushanas. The Yaudheyas who fought the foreigners and ousted the Kushanas from the region were powerful nation. The secret of their power was their military acumen and agricultural proficiency. They were known not only for their velour and prosperity but the drummers of Rohtak, who played in their tunes the accompaniment of lutes, with sheets of bronze, attracted numberless people by their folk-music in the bazars of distant Ujjain. They were soon subjugated by the imperial Guptas under whom there became an all around development of Indian culture.

The inroads of Hunas once again disturbed the social life of this region, but under the imperial sway of the Pushpabhuti rulers like Prabhakaravardhana and his son Harshavardhana the region regained its ancient glory and reached the peak of progress. Bana informs us that the people of the country were good-natured and devoted to their duties shunning confusion of castes or cadres. They abhorred false doctrines and avoided sin and sacrilege. They led a life of high ideals and did not know disease or pre-mature death. Yuan-Chwang has also given a description of Sri-Kantha Janapada (Haryana) and its capital Sthanesvara. According to him the people of the Janapada were greatly devoted to magical arts and the majority of them pursued and few tool agriculture, though the soil was rich and fertile. Most of the people Brahmanical sects.

After the death of Harsavardhana, uncertain conditions prevailed, but under the Pratihara rulers this region again attained progress in trade, art and culture. Somadeva has given a graphic picture of the Yaudheya country of Haryana as an ornament of the earth and an abode of good and happy life. The majority of the people consisted of working classes, artisans and peasants who were hospitable and magnanimous. Their villages were clean and near each other. Their ladies were robust and beautiful, wore ornaments, dressed in tight garments and worked in farms. The people respected the Varnasrama dharma. MahakaviPuspadanta has also given a vivid picture of the Yaudheya country which according to him was a heaven on the earth. The citizens were rich and had two and three storey building. Their houses were full of grains.

After the fall of the Pratihara empire the Muslims ransacked or looted this region for about a century and it was Vighraharaja-IV, the Chauhana ruler of Sakambhari, who liberated and purified the Aryavarta from the Mlechchhas (muslims). The Chauhana rulers could shelter the people for a short period and after the defeat of Prithviraja-III in the second battle of Tarain the whole of this region gave way to the Muslims.

ECONOMIC CONDITION:

The economic condition life of the Vedic Aryans was mainly based on the professions and vocations adopted by the four main varnas i.e. the Brahmana, dedicated themselves to officiating at sacrificing and preserving the sacred hymnology of the Aryans, the Ksatriyas had taken to the fighting profession; the Vaisyas took to agriculture, cattle breeding and other variouscrafts and the Sudras engaged in menial services of all kinds. But agriculture and cattle-breeding seem to have been the main profession and the source of income of the majority of the people throughout ancient India. Traditionally, immense agricultural pursuits have been assigned to king Kuru, who ploughed the field of Kurukshetra with plough-share of gold drawn by the Nandi of Siva.

At the time of Buddha, the economic conditions of the region seems to have been fairly good. In Kurudesa, the city of Thullakotthita in which the king named Korabyalived , was prosperous and full of every kind of wealth and produce. It got its name because the houses of the people were full of wealth. Another well known city for its wealth was Rohitaka (Rohtak), mentioned in the Divyavadana. Accoding to this work the people of Rohitaka were prosperous, happy and sufficient in food.

This region as the land of plentiful grains and immense riches. Nakula, the Pandava, set out from KhandevaPrastha for the west and assailed the mountainous city called Rohitaka (Rohtak), which was delightful, prosperous and full of wealth and kine. The Badhudhanyaka territory mentioned in the Mahabharata and identical with Rohtak seems to have got its name because of its ample wealth. The legends on a large number of Yaudheya coins read, (a) YaudheyanamBahudhanyak and (b) BahudhanaYaudheya which are surely a proof of the prosperity of the Yaudheyas. A seal obtained from the ruins of Naurangabad (Bhiwani district)

bears the inscription, 'RaipatiYaudheyaJanapadaPrakrtanaka Nagara". Which means (the seal) of the capital or chief city of the YaudheyaJanapada, the mistress of wealth and prosperity. The discovery of the coins of the Yaudheyas and the Kushanas from the various places in this region i.e. Naurangabad, Tosham, Bhiwani, etc. shows that even the common masses of the countryside knew the values of transaction of the coined money issued by the government.

From the fall of the Kushanas upto the rise of the imperial Pratiharas of Kannauj, the evidences of the transaction of coined money are quite meagre, but according to the literary sources, the economic condition of this region during that time was fairly good.

According to Bana, SrikanthaJanapada had wide fields of sugar-cane, paddy, moong, wheat etc, on all sides. The herds of cows, buffalos and other animals moved in the Jungles, barns were full of high heaps of harvests. Like Bana, Yaun-Chwang has also given a glowing description of Srikantha-Janapada and its capital Sthanesvara. According to the Chinese pilgrim the rich families spent money in extravagance. The people were greatly devoted to magic, arts, trade and farming.

Examples of the enormous wealth of the rich people of this region are met with in the literature and the inscriptions. While relating to the romantic episode of the marriage of Pratapaditya, the king of Kasmira (later half of 7th cen. A.D.), with Narendra prabha, previously the wife of Nona, a vanik from Rauhitaka (Rohtak), Kalhana states that once the king invited this vanik at his court who stayed there for a day. The other day when the vanik got up, the king asked how he spent the night. The vanik replied that the soot from the lamp had caused him headache. The king once invited in turn by the vanik stayed at the residence of the host where he saw at night lamps formed of jewels. The king was astonished by the extravagance of the vanik. Another example of a well renowned wealthy person of Haryana is found in Kaman inscription from Rajasthan. In this inscription a merchant named Vajrata is said to have made valuable donations in favour of the temple of god Siva at Kaman (district Bharatpur). This merchant was probably the same person, who is mentioned in an undated inscription of Mahendrapala from Pehowa as the descendant of Raja Jaula of the Tomara family.

The accounts of Somadeva and Puspadantagive us a vivid picture of the economic condition of this region from the 8th century to 11th century A.D. The villages of the Yaudheya country or the region under review were full of cattle-wealth cows, buffaloes, goats, sheep, camels and horses. The fields yielded such bouncing harvests that the farmers were unable to thrash and stock them properly. They had to pay heavy taxes but bore without demur. Their houses were always full of all kinds of wealth. Even they had two or more storied buildings. The above picture depicted in the literature is fully attested by the discovery of mountainous mounds of early medieval times spread all over the region.

The Rigvedic allusions to the Aryans, their belief in celestial, Atmospheric, and Terrestrial gods, and their mode of sacrifices were over-shadowed and out-ridged by the upanisadic religious thought and philosophy, which in turn gave birth to Buddhism, Jainism and other religious sects. It is well known that the region of Haryana had been the abode of the vedic religion and culture, and the Brahmanical religious rituals and dogmas sprang up and flourished here. But no archaeological evidence has yet come forth to enable us to know the form of religion that existed here in the pre-Mauryan times.

Saiva, Vaisnava, Saurya and various other Brahmanical sects seem to have flourished here since time immemorial of Saivism, the coins of the Kushanas on which Siva is shown standing with his vehicle Nandi, a terracotta head of Trinetra Siva from Agroha and a terracotta figurine-mould of Siva from Sirsa are the earliest archaeological evidences which show that it

was, certainly respected and adopted by the Kushana rulers and the general masses knew it through the art of terracotta even.

The Yaudheyas who ousted the powerful Kushanas from this region worshipped Karttikeya, the generalissimo of gods. The Mahabharata and the Mahamayuri refer to the tutelary deity of Rauhitaka or Yaudheya country, as Karttikeya. The legend of a large number of silver and copper coins of the Yaudheyas, of about second century A.D., reads “YaudheyaBhagavataSvaminobrahmanya, devasyaKumarasya”. On this particular variety of silver coins the deity i.e. Karttikeya is introduced on the obverse with all his six heads and on the reverse is shown the goddess variously identified with Sasthi, Krittika and Lakshmi. The Yaudheyas seem to have worshipped their deity till late as they are mentioned as the devotees of Karttikeya in YasastilakaChampu of Somadeva of about 10th A.D.

The goddess is mainly known through the sculptural and terracotta art in this region from about 6th cen. A.D. to c.1200 A.D. which shows that the Sakti of the goddess was well established and the people worshipped her.

Numerous sculptures of the god Visnu in various forms and belonging to right from the 1st century A.D. onwards have been found throughout the region under review. His representation in human form, riding his vehicle garuda, Adivaraha, Vamanavatara, Sesasayi, Narasimha, Trivikram and Sthanaka with weapons in four hands show that the god Visnu was worshipped in various forms in this region.

An inscription from Tosham (Bhiwani) of about the end of the 4th or the beginning of the 5th century A.D. records “the making, by an Acharya named Somotrata of two reservoirs and a house (temple) for the use of the god Visnu under the name of Bhagavat or the divine one. Another inscription on a four named Sankarsana image of Visnu from Delhi states that the image of the god was installed by a merchant of Rohitaka (Rohtak) in samvat 1204 (A.D. 1147). An undated inscription of the time of Mahendrapala, the Pratihara ruler, speaks of the Tomara chiefs, the descendants of Raja Jaula, who constructed a triple-temple of Visnu at Pehowa. The above evidences show that Vaisnavism flourished in this region throughout the ages.

We are informed that the famous Buddha Bhiksuni Nanduttara who was born in Kammasadamma city of Kurudesra before entering the Buddhist fold, first attained Nirgrantha Pravrajya. This probably shows then Jainism was prevalent in Kurudesra at the time of Buddha.

For a number of succeeding centuries till the beginning of the Chauhana rule of Sakambhari, Jainism seems to have been in abeyance in this region. It was during the 10th to 13th cen. A.D. that Jainism again flourished here. Many sculptures of the Jain deities, fragmentary as well as complete and architectural pieces of 10th to 12th cen. A.D. have been found from various places. Apart from archeological evidences we gather a good picture of the revival of Jainism under the leadership of Jinavallabha, the great monk of Hansi.

Haribhadra Suri (c.700-770 A.D.), a learned Brahmana of Chitor made a landmark in opposing the chaityavasins and followed the teaching of his new creed, vidhi-marga, to the fullest, in letter as well as spirit, without caring in the least about popular prejudices and patronage. The great Acharyas like Udyotana Suri, Siddharsi Suri, Jinesvara Suri and Abhayadeva Suri actually made the creed i.e. vidhi-marga of Haribhadra Suri into a living force and the followers of this new creed were known as Kharataras.

Vidhi-marga which gained popularity in the central and western parts of India entered the region of Haryana in the name of Vidhi-chaitya under the leadership of Jinavallabha who leaving all his proprietary rights in the matha at Asika (Hansi), dedicated his life to the work.

Jinavallabha chose Rajasthan and Haryana as the sphere of his missionary activity where he had to face a number of difficulties. Jinadatta Suri informs us that the task before Jinavallabha was not easy because the people preferred to stick to their old dogmas and teachers. They tried to defame him by adopting mean methods. They captured the vidhi-chaityas founded by him, sometimes using the influence of the local rulers. Undaunted by these difficulties Jinavallabha succeeded in establishing various reformed temples (vidhi-chaityas) in Rajasthan and Haryana. The rules to be observed at the Jain temple (vidhi-chaitya) were as follow. "Here are followed no rites of those who go against the sutras. None ever bathes here at night. It is not the property of the Sadhus. Women do not get admission here at night. There is no insistence on the privileges of castes and sub-castes. The worshippers here are given no tambula (betel leaves). Such are the rules of a vidhi-chaitya". Jinavallabha wrote a number of books to serve as a sound basis of anti-chaityavasa propaganda. Thus with the sound footing provided by the efforts of Jinavallabha the vidhichaityas seem to have flourished in this region till the establishment of Muslim rule over this region and even later.

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