



FACULTY OF JURIDICAL SCIENCES

COURSE: B.A.LL.B. 1st Semester

SUBJECT: HISTORY - I

SUBJECT CODE: BAL 102

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Lecture-22



Kinship, Caste and Class

Social Differentiation

Family

The family was the basic unit of social organisation in ancient India. The family at that time was usually a joint family in which brothers, uncles, cousins, nephews, etc. lived under one roof as one group and were closely linked with each other.

They even owned immovable property in-common. In addition to the blood relations the ancient Indian family also included adopted children, servants, domestic serfs etc. The family of a Brahman included a number of students as well.

The rite of saraddha played an important part in binding the members from the common ancestors. At the time of the performance of this rite the sons, grandsons and great-grandsons of the deceased were present, which naturally bound them together and proved to be a potent, force in keeping the family united.

Usually the eldest male member was the head of the house and administered joint property. However in Kerala the headship rested with the eldest female member. The head of the family usually enjoyed very extensive powers.

He could behave in most arbitrary manner except in so far his authority was restricted by the sacred law and custom. We have a number of legends stating that the father enjoyed the power of life and death over their sons and sacrificed them. However this is not confirmed by other sources. In fact Kautaliya in his Arthashastra looks on the killing of a son among the most heinous forms of murder.

MCQ

Q1. Which of the following statements is incorrect regarding the ideal of patriliney?

- A. Patriliney had existed prior to the composition of the epic; the central story of the Mahabharata reinforced the idea that it was valuable.
- B. The concern with patriliney was not unique to ruling families which is evident in mantras in ritual texts such as the Mahabharata.
- C. Under patriliney, sons could claim the resources (including the throne in the case of kings) of their fathers when the latter died.
- D. Most ruling dynasties (c. sixth century BCE onwards) claimed to follow the patriliney system, although there were variations in practice: sometimes there were no sons, in some situations brothers succeeded one another, sometimes other kinsmen claimed the throne, and, in very exceptional circumstances, women such as Prabhavati Gupta exercised power.

Q2. Which one of the following language was used by the earliest ordinary people?

- A. Hindi
- B. Prakrit
- C. Sanskrit
- D. Urdu

Q3. The earliest inscriptions were written on which of the following materials?

- A. Paper
- B. Stones
- C. Soft surfaces
- D. Non-metallic surfaces

Q4. What type of the animals eaten by the earliest people can be traced through the study of:

- A. bones of animals found
- B. the regions where the evidence of settlements have been found
- C. tools used by them
- D. pots used by them

Q5. The process of understanding the inscription of the past known as the:

- A. Archaeology
- B. Topography
- C. Paleontology
- D. Decipherment