

CHAPTER-08

Agrarian society and the Mughal empire:-

SUB:- HISTORY

Peasants, zamindar and the state

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Social and economic status of women in village community.

- **Women and men had to work shoulder to shoulder in the agricultural fields.**
- **Men tilled and ploughed, while women sowed, weeded, threshed and winnowed the harvest. Although biases related to women's biological functions did continue.**

- Many artisanal tasks like spinning yarn, sifting and kneading clay for pottery and embroidery were dependent on female labour.
- Women were considered an important resource in agrarian society because they were child bearers in a society dependent on labour.
- Sometimes in rural communities the of bride-price, remarriage for both divorced and widowed women were considered legitimate. Women had the right to inherit property.
- Hindu and Muslim women even inherited zamindaris which they were free to sell or mortgage.

The Zamindars and their Power:

- The zamindars had extensive personal lands termed milkiyat (property) and enjoyed certain social and economic privileges in rural society.
- The zamindars often collected revenue on behalf of the state.
- Most zamindars had fortresses as well as an armed contingent comprising units of cavalry, artillery and infantry. In this period, the relatively 'lower' castes entered the rank of zamindars as zamindaris
- were bought and sold quite briskly.
- Although, there can be little doubt that zamindars were an exploitative class, their relationship with the peasantry had an element of reciprocity, paternalism and patronage.

Forests and Tribes:

- **Forest dwellers known as 'jangli' were those whose livelihood came from the gathering of forest produce, hunting and shifting agriculture.**
- **Sometimes the forest was a subversive place, a place of refuge for troublemakers.**
- **Forest people supplied elephants to the kings.**
- **Hunting was a favourite activity for the kings, sometimes it enabled the emperor to travel extensively in his empire and personally attended the grievances of his subjects.**
- **Forest dwellers supplied honey, bees wax, gum lac, etc.**
- **Like the 'big men' of the village community tribes also had their chieftains.**
- **Many tribal chiefs had become zamindars, some even became kings.**
- **Tribes in the Sind region had armies comprising of 6,000 cavalry and 7,000**

Time line:

- **1526 – Babur defeated Ibrahim Lodi at Panipat and became the first Mughal Emperor.**

- 1530-40 – The first phase of Humayun reign.
- 1540-55 – Humayun was defeated by Sher Shah and exiled at Safavid court.
- 1555-1605 – Humayun regains his lost territories.
- 1556-1605 – Rule of Akbar
- 1605-1627 – Rule of Jahangir
- 1628-1658 – Rule of Shah Jahan
- 1658-1707 – Rule of Aurangzeb
- 1739 – Nadir Shah attacked India and ransacked Delhi
- 1761 – In the third battle of Panipat, Ahmad Shah Abdali defeated the Marathas.
- 1765 – The diwani of Bengal transferred to the East India Company.
- 1857 – The last Mughal ruler, Bahadur Shah II was deposed by the British and exiled to Rangoon.

THE END.
