

**Class 12 History**  
**Part-I: CHAPTER 3**  
**Kinship Caste and class**  
**Date :-11/07/21**

**Key concepts in nutshell**

- Many rules and different practices were followed by the people.
- Very often families were part of larger networks of people we define as relatives. Blood relations can be defined in many different ways.
- Manusmriti is considered the most important Dharma Sutra and Dharmashastra. It was compiled between 200 BCE and 200 CE. This laid down rules governing social life.
- During Mahabharata age gotras were considered very important by higher varna of societies.
- Social differences prevailed and integration took place within the framework of caste system.
- According to the sutras only Kshatriyas could be a king.
- The original version of Mahabharata is in Sanskrit.
- It contains vivid descriptions of battles, forests, palaces and settlements.

**Finding out about families**

1. Family varies in terms of numbers of members, their relationship with one another as well as the kinds of activities they share.
2. People belonging to the same family share food and other resources, and live, work and perform rituals together.
3. Families are usually parts of larger networks of people defined as relatives, or to use a more technical term, kinfolk.
4. While familial ties are often regarded as “natural” and based on blood, they are defined in many ways.
5. Historians also investigate and analyse attitudes towards family and kinship.

**The ideal of patriliney**

- Patriliney means tracing descent from father to son, grandson and so on.
  - Matriliney is the term used when descent is traced through the mother.
1. The concern with patriliney was not unique to ruling families. It is evident in mantras in ritual texts such as the Rigveda.

2. It is possible that these attitudes were shared by wealthy men and those who claimed high status, including Brahmanas.

### **Early Societies: In detail**

#### **The Critical Edition of the Mahabharata**

1. One of the most ambitious projects of scholarship began in 1919, under the leadership of a noted Indian Sanskritist, V.S. Sukthankar. A team comprising dozens of scholars initiated the task of preparing a critical edition of the Mahabharata, a colossal epic running in its present form into over 100,000 verses with depictions of a wide range of social categories and situations.
2. It was composed over a period of about 1,000 years (c. 500 BCE onwards), and some of the stories it contains may have been in circulation even earlier. The central story is about two sets of warring cousins. The text also contains sections laying down norms of behaviour for various social groups.
3. The critical edition meant collecting Sanskrit manuscripts of the text, written in a variety of scripts, from different parts of the country. The team worked out a method of comparing verses from each manuscript. The project took 47 years to complete.
4. There were several common elements in the Sanskrit versions of the story, Also there were enormous regional variations in the ways in which the text had been transmitted over the centuries, which reflect complex processes that shaped early (and later) social histories.