

SPECIAL LECTURE SERIES 1

The department of History has organized a special lecture series from April 2021. Prof Surajit Gupta, Associate Professor in History, Raja Rammohun Roy Mahavidyalaya delivered a special lecture on "Changes in Society in Early Medieval India" on 9th June 2021 on the google meet platform.

Early Medieval India witnessed a host of changes in the societal structure in comparison to that of the ancient period. The insertion of Brahmana donees into the village community by virtue of land-grants or *Brahmadeyas*, introduced a new element into agrarian relations. Those donees replaced the State regarding rights over water resources, forests, and habitation area, which affected the rights enjoyed by the village community. Judicial rights were also possibly transferred to them.

Increasing pride of birth, and the accompanying self-sufficient village economy, which prevented both spatial and occupational mobility gave rise to great numbers of newer castes and decline of certain older ones. The Kayasthas evolved as a new caste, Rajputs were recognised as Kshatriyss. However, in places like Assam, where non-brahmins also received land-grants, the social discrimination was not so widespread. Brahmins regained their power and were responsible for reinterpreting the regulatory canons of life as laid down by the earlier texts. Brahmins had numerous sub-sections. Brahmins played an important role in the emergence of temple-oriented religion. Vaishyas were almost degraded to the Shudra community. Number of sections of the Shudra community increased. Another caste, lower than the Shudras, were Antyajas. Some tribal groups were absorbed into the fold of caste society. Brahmadeyas functioned as nodes of reciprocal interaction between Brahmanical and tribal religion. Tribal communities were exposed to Brahmanism and Brahmanism too was transformed in the course of its interaction with regional, local and tribal traditions. Position of women was far degraded.

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