UNIV 5 SOCIAL ORGANISATION

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5.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit you will be able to familiarise yourself with the:

- myth of an unchanging and the so-called static Indian society,
- copious and varied literary and epigraphic sources useful for reconstructing the nature of social change,
- varying perspectives on the social set-up ranging between a call for making it more rigid and an all-out cry to question its fundamental bases,
- role of the changing material base in social transformation,
- leading features of the new social ethos, such as the changing position of vaishyas and shudras, rise of a new literate class, multiplication of castes, weakening of varna order and emergence of feudal ranks, and
- increasing evidence for social tensions.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

For almost a century, we have been fed with the falacious colonialist and imperialist notion about the Indian society being static through the millennia. This Unit seeks to show that the Indian social organisation during five hundred years under survey (8th—13th century) was extremely vibrant and responsive to changes taking place in the realms of economy, polity and ideas. The Unit focusses on the essentials of the new social ethos, whose tone was being set by the nature of new land rights and power bases.

5.2 SOURCES FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION OF SOCIETY

There is an extremely wide ranging source material for the reconstruction of social organisation during half a millennium (circa eighth to the thirteenth centuries). These sources comprise both literary and epigraphic notices. Practically all major powers of India are known to us through copious inscriptive data. Though no quantification
has been attempted at an all India level, the number of the post-Gupta inscriptions must run in thousands even on a rough impressionistic assessment. These inscriptions are available in a variety of languages and scripts (See also Unit 7). These records help us in identifying regional and local peculiarities without sacrificing a macro view of the sub-continental scene.

The literary sources are also very varied. It is not merely the writings on dharma shastras in the form of commentaries and other dharma-nibandhas which tell us about the ups and downs in the social system. Even works belonging to the realms of kavyas (poetic works), drama, technical and scientific works as well as treatises and architecture throw enormous light on the post-Gupta developments in the sphere of society. Kalhana’s Rajatarangini, Naishadhiyacharita of Shriharsha, Prabandha Chintamani of Merutunga, Sodhala’s Udaya-Sundari-Katha, Adipurana of Jinamena, the dohas of the Siddhas, Medhatithi’s and Vigyaneshwar’s commentaries on the Manusmriti and Yajnavalkyasmriti respectively, and works such as Manasolasa, Mayamata and Aparajitatapicheha are useful aids for reconstructing the social fabric of India during the period under survey.

5.3 BRAHMANICAL PERSPECTIVE: GROWING RIGIDITY

Coming of mlecchas such as the Hunas, Arabs, Turks, etc. had created a fear psychosis and resulted in a tendency, where the emphasis was on the need to preserve the age-old social order. Shankaracharya, the famous religiophilosophic leader stated that the varna and ashramadharmanas were in a disturbed state. Dhanapala, a writer of the eleventh century, also talks about chaos in the conduct of varna order. Various rulers between the sixth and thirteenth centuries make rather pompous claims about preserving the social order. These are reflected in their inscriptions. Varnashrama-dharma-sthapana, i.e. the establishment of the system of varna and ashrama becomes a frequently used expression in contemporary inscriptions. A twelfth-century work called Manasolasa even mentions varnadhirikarin—an officer responsible for the maintenance of varnas. It needs to be underlined that this trend of closing social ranks, making social system rigid and denouncing all efforts to change the system was largely the concern of Brahmanical law givers and political advisers who had developed vested interests in maintaining a status quo (See also Unit 6). However, it was by no means a universal phenomena.

5.4 VOICES OF DISSENT

The fundamental bases of the caste system were being questioned, specially by non-brahmanical followers. Centuries ago the Buddha had raised doubts about the rationale of castes based on birth. His anger was particularly heaped upon brahmanas. Though these voices could not achieve significant breakthrough in the long run, they did not cease either. Simmering discontent against the brahmanical social order raised its head at regular intervals. No wonder, in Dharmapariksha (eleventh century) Jain Amitatati determined caste on the basis of personal conduct. The caste superiority of the brahmanas was challenged by the Jainas in such works as the Kathakoshprakarana. A satirical work called Latakamelaka mentions a Buddhist monk who denies importance of caste, regards it as baseless and denounces pollution and caste-based segregation. Kshemendra, the literary genius of Kashmir refers to Kula-Jati-darpa (vanity of caste and clan) as a disease of the society for which he himself was a physician. The Padmapurana reveals a conflict of two ideologies—the orthodox one enjoining on the shudra a life of penury, and the heterodox one urging upon him the importance of wealth.

An eleventh century work focuses on social ranks and divisions based not on birth but on occupations. While the priests of different religions are called hypocrites, the second broad social classification of householders takes note of the following six categories:
- the highest included chakravartins,
- the high ones comprised the feudal elite,
- the middle ones included traders, moneylenders, possessors of cows, buffaloes, camels, horses, etc.
- small businessmen and petty cultivators,
- the degraded ones such as the members of guilds off artisans and craftsmen, and
- the highly degraded included chandalas and others following ignoble occupations such as killing of birds and animals.

It is obvious that this social categorisation takes note of economic factors in the determination of social status. Even if such attempts were not aiming at a more egalitarian society than the one espoused and buttressed by the brahmanical interest; even if such categorisations show their biases and prejudices, it needs to be highlighted that such reconstructions were evidently more rational.

## 5.5 CHANGING MATERIAL BASE AND THE NEW SOCIAL ORDER

The aforesaid review of broad but conflicting trends shows that the social organisation was in a flux and far from being harmonious. Indeed, it could not have been so, particularly in view of the momentous changes taking place in the economic structure of the sub-continent. The mechanics of the social system is difficult to comprehend if the improving economic conditions of a sizeable number of lower classes are ignored. One single factor which seems to have set the tone of the post-Gupta society, specially from the eighth-century, was the ever growing phenomenon of land grants (See also Unit 1.2.1). Its impact on the agrarian expansion changed the entire social outlook. This was coupled with:

- a fillip to tendencies of localisation,
- its bearing on fluctuations in the urban setting,
- its nexus with the monetary system,
- its role in increasing social and economic immobility and subjection of peasantry and non-agricultural toiling workers, and
- the resultant hierarchy of ruling landed aristocracy (See also Block-1, Unit 1-4 and Block 3, Unit 9.3.4).

A new social ethos was in the making. It was shown above that the new trends in Indian economy were conducive to feudal formation. In the realm of political organisation too, as will be discussed in Block 3, a great majority of power centres were marked by feudal tendencies based on graded land rights. No wonder, the social landscape could not escape the domineering impact of the fast pace of economic changes outlined above. The resultant social changes demolish the myth of an unchanging and static social organisation of India which was propagated by colonialist and imperialist historians. Regrettably, even nationalist historians too did not question such assumptions. More recent writings, specially of the last three decades, have rightly focussed on the dynamism and vibrancy of the Indian social fabric by highlighting its interlinks with changing economic patterns.

**Check Your Progress 1**

1) List the sources which throw light on the social reconstruction between eighth and thirteenth centuries.
2) Which of the following statements are right(√) or wrong(×)?
   i) The foundational bases of the caste system were questioned during the period 8th—13th century A.D.
   ii) The social structure remained static.
   iii) The varna system was in a disturbed state.
   iv) An eleventh century literary work bases social rank divisions on occupations rather than birth.

3) Discuss in about ten lines the voices of dissent raised against the varna order.

5.6 THE NEW SOCIAL ETHOS

The post-eighth century social organisation which seems to have prevailed till at least the establishment of the Turkish political power in the thirteenth century, was marked by:

- modifications in the varna system such as the transformation of shudras into cultivators thereby bringing them closer to the vaishyas,
- newly founded brahmanical order in Bengal and South India wherein the intermediary varnas were absent, and finally, rise of the new literate class struggling for a place in the varna order,
- phenomenal increase in the rise of new mixed castes,
- unequal distribution of land and military power, which, in turn, accounts for the emergence of feudal ranks cutting across varna distinctions, and
- increasing evidence of social tensions.

5.6.1 Emergence of Shudras as Cultivators

The expansion of the rural space and agricultural activities had been responsible for changes in notions about persons entitled to undertake these. The law books of the post-Gupta centuries include agriculture in the samanya-dharma (common occupation) of all the varnas. The smriti of Parashar further emphasizes that in addition to their traditional sixfold duties (studying, teaching, sacrificing, officiating as sacrificer to help others, acceptance of gifts from a worthy person of three higher varnas and making of gifts), the brahmanas could also be associated with agricultural activities, preferably through labour of shudras. It was also enjoined upon brahmanas that in order to avoid any kind of sin, they should show proper treatment to oxen and offer certain fixed quantities of corn to King, Gods and fellow brahmanas.

Surely, such formalities indicate that very significant dent was being made in the brahmanical social order and the varna norms were being sought to be redefined. A major indicator of this effort was the bridging of the gap between the vaishyas and the shudras. While this trend makes it beginnings in the early centuries of the Christian era, it is significant that in the post-Gupta centuries the vaishyas practically lose their identity as a peasant caste. The famous Chinese traveller of the early
seventh century, Hsuan-Tsang, mentions shudras as agriculturists. Al-biruni, who came to India alongwith Mahmud Ghaznavi in the first quarter of the eleventh century, also notes the absence of any difference between the vaishyas and shudras. The Skanda Purana talks about the pitiable conditions of the vaishyas. By the eleventh century they came to be treated with the shudras, both ritually and legally. Al-biruni, for example, says that both vaishyas and shudras were punished with amputation of the tongue for reciting the vedic texts. There were certain shudras who were called bhoyjana, i.e. food prepared by whom could be taken even by brahmanas. Many Tantric and Siddha teachers were shudras performing works of fishermen, leather workers, washermen, blacksmiths, etc. A text of the eighth century states that thousands of mixed castes were produced as a result of marriages between vaishya women and men of lower castes. There is also a mention of anashtrita shudras (shudras who were not dependent) who were well-to-do and sometimes became members of the local administrative committees and even made their way into the ruling aristocracy.

Such achievements of shudras were, of course, rather rare. Dependent peasants, ploughmen and artisans were greatly needed to strengthen the early medieval economic and political set-up characterized by a relatively self-sufficient local economy and the emergence of a dominant class of rural aristocracy. Such a need was being fulfilled by the approximation of the vaishyas and shudras. This happened despite persistence of brahmanism orthodoxy reflected in the attitude of Parashar who threatened the shudras abandoning their duty of serving the dvijas with the dire consequence of hell. Even some orthodox sections of the jainas had developed the notion that the shudras were not eligible for religious initiation.

5.6.2 Absence of Intermediary Varnas in Bengal and South India

The aforesaid tendency of removing distinctions between the vaishyas and shudras resulted in the emergence of a social order typified by an absence of intermediary varnas in Bengal and South India. The new brahmanical order in these areas provided mainly for brahmanas and shudras. This may have been partly due to the influence of non-brahmanical religions in these regions. However, the nature of the progress of brahmanism also contributed to this development. It was not a case of mass migration of violent Sanskrit speaking people. There was considerable intermingling and acculturation. Tribal and non-brahmanical population in the peripheral regions were admitted to the brahmanical system as shudras. Many early medieval texts provide long lists of aboriginal forest tribes who had been instrumental in the rise of political powers. From the ninth to the thirteenth centuries almost all powers fought Abhiras. The Brahmacaitavarta Purana, which is attributed to Bengal of the thirteenth century, refers to such tribal people as like Agaris, Ambashtas, Bhillas, Chandilas, Kaunchas etc, who were accommodated as shudras in the brahmanical order. This is true of the Abhiras as well as far as the Deccan was concerned.

Ramanathaswamy dealing with the career of a Sena King of Bengal in the twelfth century speaks of the reordering of the social order. The King raised the position of the Kaivartas, potters, blacksmiths, garlandmakers while the goldsmiths and trader-brahmanas were degraded. In the region of another Sena King (Lakshmana Sena), a writer says in connection with the unfurling ceremony of traders' banner called Shakradhivas: "O where are the traders who once held you aloft. You are now being used as plough or animal post." Vallalasena's degrading of trading brahmanas can also be favourably compared with allusions to nishad brahmanas (aboriginal priests making their way into the brahmanas fold) who got recognised as brahmanas but were assigned low status in the society. In South India, a Shaiva brahmana teacher called Basava preached religious equality of men and women. The tendency to eliminate intermediary varnas is also noticeable in the status of scribes. The Kayasthas, Karanas, Lehekhas and lipikaras are classed as shudras. Same was true of gavundas (modern day Gowdas in Karnataka) in medieval Deccan.

5.6.3 Rise of a New Literate Class

The phenomenon of land grants involved land transactions, keeping of ownership records and maintenance of measurement statistics. This meant a class of specialists or gandhis, who knew how to perform these activities, were needed. This led to the rise of a new class of literate gandhis who wrote the records involved in the grants. These gandhis would have been of low status and of aboriginal origin.
of writers and record keepers. Though the first kayastha is mentioned in Gupta inscriptions from Bengal, the post-Gupta inscriptions are full of references to a great variety of people involved in record keeping activities. Apart from kayasthas, these included karanas, karanikas, pustapala, lekhaka, divira, aksharachanchu, dharmalekhin, akshapatalika, etc. Though these scribes were being recruited from different varnas, later they got crystallized into distinct castes with attendant marriage restrictions. From the ninth century we hear of a large number of kayastha families such as Valabha, Ganda, Mathur, Kataria, Shrivastavaya, Negam, etc. The use of Kula and Varnsha with kayastha from the eleventh century and terms such as jati and gati with kayastha from 12th-13th century show that the emergence of the kayastha caste was evident. Individual kayasthas began to play leading role in learning and literature. Tathagatarkshita of Orissa who belonged to a family of physicians by profession and kayastha by caste, was a reputed professor of Tantras in the Vikramashilla University (in Bihar) in the twelfth century.

5.6.4 Phenomenal Increase in the Rise of New Mixed Castes

This is one of the most distinctive features of social changes during the centuries under reference. The Brahmavarna Purana dictum deshabheda (difference based on regions/territories) leads to differences in castes. A village named Brihat-Chhattivanna (inhabited by 36 varnas) is mentioned in a tenth century inscription from Bengal. No varna seemed to have remained homogeneous and got fragmented on account of territorial affiliations, purity of gotras and pursuance of specific crafts, professions and vocations:

i) Amongst Brahmanas: The multiplication of castes as a phenomenon appears to be most pronounced among brahmanas. As already mentioned, they were no longer confined to their traditional sixfold duties. Apart from occupying high governmental positions such as those of ministers, purohitas, judges, etc. they had also started performing military functions. For example, the senapati of Prithviraj Chauhan was a brahmana named Skanda and another brahmana named Rak was leading the army of a ruler of Sapadalalaksha (in Rajasthan). Inscriptions from Pehoa and Siyadoni and dated in ninth-tenth century mention brahmanas as horse dealers and betel sellers. The eleventh century Kashmiri writer Kshemendra mentions brahmanas performing functions of artisans, dancers and indulging in the sale of wine, butter-milk, salt, etc. Functional distinction of brahmanas is reflected in such titles as:

Shrotriya, pandita, maharaja-pandita, dikshit, yajnik, pathaka, upadhyaya, thakkura, agnihotri, etc.

Mitakshara, the famous commentary on the Smriti of Yagyavalkya speaks of the ten-fold gradation of brahmanas ranging between Deva (who is a professor, and devoted to religion and shastras) and Chandal, who does not perform sandhya three times a day. In between were the shudrabrahmanas who lived by profession of arms and temple priests.

Divisions within the brahmana varna were also caused by territorial affiliations. In North India we hear of Sarasvat, Kanyakubha, Maithi, Ganda and Utka brahmanas. In Gujarat and Rajasthan they were identified in terms of their mula (original place of habitation) and divided into Modha, Udichya, Nagara, etc. By the late medieval times, the brahmanas were split into about 180 musas. There were also the feelings of superiority. While there was a phenomenal migration of brahmanas, certain regions were considered to be papadeshas (inipious regions). These included Saurashtra, Sindh and Dakshinapath.

ii) Amongst Kshatriyas: The ranks of kshatriyas also swelled in the post-eighth century. Numerous works give varying lists of 36 clans of Rajputs in northern India alone. They arose out of different strata of population—kshatriyas, brahmanas, some other tribes including even the original ones and also out of the ranks of foreign invaders who settled here and got assimilated into the Indian social system. While the traditional notion invested the kshatriya varna as a whole with functions of rulership, the ideologues were never opposed to recognising in many cases the non-kshatriya rulers as kshatriyas. It is said that from among the captured “respectable men were enrolled among the Shekhavat
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and the Wadhela tribes of Rajputs whilst the lower kinds were allotted to castes of Kolis, Khantas and Mers”. That there was a conscious attempt to give exalted genealogies to rulers in many parts of India has been discussed in details below (See Units 10.4, 11.4.3 and 12). Some of the new kshatriyas were called Samskara-Varjita, i.e. they were deprived of ritualistic rites. This may be taken as a coverup for their admission to the brahmanical social order through inferior rites.

iii) Amongst Vaishyas and Shudras: The process of caste proliferation did not leave the vaishyas and shudras untouched. While these two broad varnas, as seen above (Unit 5.6.1), were clearly coming closer to each other, there is an equally unmistakable evidence of jatis (castes). Like the brahmanas, the vaishyas too were being identified with regional affiliations. Thus, we account for vaishyas called Shrimal’s, Palliwals, Nagar, Disawats, etc. No less striking is the heterogeneity of the Shudras who had been performing multifarious functions. They were agricultural labourers, petty peasants, artisans, craftsmen, servants and attendants. The Brahma Vaivarta Purana lists as many as one hundred castes of shudras. In their case too, these sub-divisions were based on regional and territorial affiliations. In addition, shudra castes were also emerging which were related to a specific process of industrial working, e.g. Padukakrit, Charmakra (makers of shoes, leather workers), etc. Crystallization of crafts into castes was a complementary phenomenon. It seems that napita, modaka, tambulika, suvarnakara, sutakara, malakara, etc. emerged as castes out of various crafts. These castes increased with the growth of ruling aristocracy and their dependence is reflected in their characterization as ashrita. Their subjection and immobility is indicated in the transfer of trading guilds (called shrenis or prakritis) to brahmana donees. An inscription of 1000 A.D, belonging to Yadava mahasamanta Bhillama-II defines the donated village as comprising eighteen guilds. Incidentally, these guilds also functioned as castes.

Check Your Progress 2
1) List the six duties of brahmanas.

2) What led to the increase in the rise of new mixed castes? Answer in about ten lines.

3) Which of the following statements are right or wrong? Mark (√) or (×).
   i) During eighth to thirteenth centuries varna norms were being redefined.
   ii) The intermediary varnas were present in Bengal and South India.
   iii) An unequal distribution of land and military power accounted for the growth of feudal ranks cutting across varna distinctions.
   iv) The famous Chinese traveller Hsuan-Tsang mentions shudras as agriculturists.
5.7 LAND DISTRIBUTION, FEUDAL RANKS AND Varna Distinctions

The studies of the post-Gupta economic and political structures (Blocks 1 and 3 respectively) have taken due note of newly emerged graded land rights. The hierarchy of officials and vassals (See also Unit 9.4) also shows the impact of unequal distribution of land. The multifarious functions of vassals and officials (See Unit 9.5), show among other features a strong predilection of military obligations. The nature of power dispersal and its links with the structure of land distribution were bound to influence the social set-up as well. One very significant dimension of this impact was the emergence of feudal ranks cutting across varna distinctions. Constituting the ruling aristocracy was no longer the monopoly of kshatriyas. That the feudal ranks were open to all varnas is clear in the Mansara (a text on architecture) when it lays down that everybody irrespective of his varna could get the two lower military ranks in the feudal hierarchy: prabhu and astragrahins. Although lowest in rank, the astragrahin was entitled to have 500 horses, 5000 elephants, 50,000 soldiers, 5000 women attendants and one queen. We do not have to take these figures literally but surely, the text is an important indicator of varna distinctions getting a rude shock by new distribution of land and power. Further, the titles such as thakur, raut, nayaka, etc. were not confined to kshatriyas or Rajputs. These were also conferred on kayasthas and other castes who were granted land and who served in army. Kulluka’s commentary on the Smriti of Manu mentions the tendency of bigger merchants joining the ranks of the ruling landed aristocracy. In Kashmir, rajanaka, a little of high honour literally meaning “nearly a king”, got closely associated with the brahmanas and later on it became a family name in the form of razdan.

Feudal titles were also bestowed upon artisans. For example, the Deopara inscription of Vijayasena tells us that Shulapani; who was the head of artisans of Varendra (in West Bengal), held the title ranaka.

The symbols and insignia of social identity amongst feudal rank holders were also related to landed possessions. Badges of honour, fly whisk, umbrella, horses, elephants, palanquins, acquisition of pancha-mahashabda (See also Unit 9.6), etc. depended on the specific place in the feudal hierarchy. To illustrate, chakravarthi and mahasamantas were permitted to erect the chief gate (sinhadvar) which could not be done by lesser vassals. The provision of varying sizes of houses for different grades of vassals and officials was also the product of the impact of unequal holdings.

5.8 INCREASING SOCIAL TENSIONS

Though various modifications were taking place and developments were happening which cut across varna distinctions, nevertheless, the pace of social changes in the post-eighth centuries was far from being an agent of harmonious and egalitarian set-up. The manifestations of social tensions were too many.

A society which was based on an unequal distribution of bases of economic power was bound to be iniquitous. Though the shudras were rising in their status but untouchability was very much part of the social fabric. A fairly large number of shudras appear to have been the actual workers, whether on land or in industry, working for their feudal overlords, notwithstanding the few and rare examples of anashrita shudras. Pursuit of the so-called impure occupations, being guilty of prohibited acts, adherence to heretical acts and physical impurities were major factors for the growth of untouchability. The Brihad Naraadiya Purana reveals the beginnings of the exclusion of the shudras from places of worship. The chandalas and dombas were to carry sticks by striking which they made themselves known so that people could avoid touching them. When Vastupala was the governor of Cambay, he constructed platforms and thus stopped the promiscuous mingling of all castes in shops where curd was sold. Though the brahmanical lawgivers were showing their concern for the proprietary rights of women, specially on stridhan, it was also an age when the barbarous practice of sati seems to have made a real beginning. King Harsha’s mother performing it even before the death of her husband.
Prabhakanarandhhe, is a classic example. It is mentioned in the Harshacharita of Banabhatta. The Rajatarangini comprising chronicle of Kashmir also refers to the performance of sati in royal families. The archaeological evidence is to be seen in the numerous sati-satta plaques found in both North and South India.

Sectarian rivalries must have caused sufficient tensions in the society. A brahmana who believed in Jainism was considered to be an outcaste. In the Latakamelaka, two brahmanas indulge in the exchange of hot words and charge each other with abrahmany without any rhyme or reason. The parallel between the multiplication of religious sects and that of castes in medieval times is very close. Differences in rituals, food, dress, etc. caused religious splits. For example Buddhism split into 18 sects: The Jainas in Karanataka had as many as seven sects: Karnataka was also the scene of tussle between the Lingayats and Virashaivas. Very often, the religious sects tended to crystallize into castes. Isn’t it an historical irony that the religions whose avowed aim was to abolish caste distinctions and cleavages based on birth were themselves swallowed by the caste system? It is also true that quite often these sectarian tensions were products of the land grant economy. There seems to have been an inevitable competition amongst numerous religious sects—both brahmanical and non-brahmanical, to grab as much land as possible. Indeed, a great majority of religious establishments tended to become landed magnates. For example, some rulers of the post-eighth centuries, such as Avantivarman of the Mattamayara region (possibly a Chalukya prince of central India, near Gwalior) and a Cedi King of Dahala are said to have dedicated their kingdoms to be religious heads of the Shaiva Siddharta school and then apparently ruled as vassals. The movement of a particular sect of the Jainas emerged in the eleventh century in Gujarat and Rajasthan, which was called vidhi-chaitiya. It was a sort of protestant movement aiming at denunciation of greedy and acquisitive Jaina ascetics who were trying to grab land.

The rise of kayasthas, the new literati class, had its own implications as far as social tensions were concerned. This class had clearly emerged as a challenge to the position of brahmanas. The example of kayastha Tathagata-rakshita of Orissa becoming a reputed professor of Tantras in the Vikramashila University has already been cited above (See Sec. 5.6.3). Kshemendra of Kashmir clearly writes that the rise of kayasthas led to loss of economic privileges because kayastha officials hesitated in resuming landgrants to brahmanas. In Kashmir the members of the temple-purohita corporation used to organise prayopavesha (hunger strikes) as a weapon for getting their grievances redressed. As if with a vengeance, the brahmanas in order to reiterate their superiority, often despised kayasthas as shudras.

No less significant were the manifestations of rural tensions. The damara revolts in Kashmir, rebellion of the kaivarattas in the region of Ramapala in Bengal, acts of self-immolation in situations of encroachments on land in Tamil Nadu, appropriation of donated land by shudras in the Pandya territory are indices of distrust against the new landed intermediaries (See also Unit 1.5, Block-1).

Check Your Progress 3
1) Comment on the increasing social tensions in the post-eighth centuries in about 10 lines.
2) Write a note on the emergence of feudal ranks cutting across varna distinctions. Answer in 10 lines.

3) Mention six castes that emerged out of various crafts.

5.9 LET US SUM UP

This survey of social changes during the centuries between eighth and thirteenth centuries highlights the following:

- extremely rich and varied source material for the survey
- the brahmanical perspective with a concern for social rigidity and the need to maintain the varna order,
- questioning of the bases of caste system where an emphasis is put on consideration of economic factors in the determination of social status,
- changing material base and its impact on the emergence of the new social ethos,
- modifications in the varna order, particularly the changing position of the vaishyas and shudras and the disappearances of intermediary varnas, specially in Bengal and South India,
- rise of kayasthas—a new literati class,
- multiplication of castes in all varnas,
- linkage between land distribution and the emergence of feudal ranks and how the later were cutting across varna lines, and finally,
- absence of a harmonious and egalitarian society marked by various sources of tension.

5.10 KEY WORDS

anashrita : independent shudras.
ashrita : dependent shudras.
bhojyanna : those shudras, whose food preparations could be taken by brahmanas.
gavundas : scribes in Karnatakas with landed interests.
kula-jati darpa : vanity of caste and clan.
asrita : dependent shudras.
mula: place of origin of a family Kaste.
papadishas: impious regions.
prakritis: trading guilds.
samskara-varjita: those who were deprived of the rights to perform rituals.
varnadhikarin: officer responsible for the maintenance of varnas.

5.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1
1) Base your answer on Sec. 5.2
2) i) ✓ ii) × iii) ✓ iv) ✓
3) Base your answer on Sec. 5.4

Check Your Progress 2
1) The sixfold duties included studying, teaching, sacrificing etc. See Sub-sec. 5.6.1
2) Refer to Sub-sec. 5.6.4.
3) i) ✓ ii) × iii) ✓ iv) ✓

Check Your Progress 3
1) Base your answer on Sec. 5.8
2) Refer to Sub-sec. 5.7
3) Some of the castes were napiter, modaka, malakara etc. Refer Sub-sec. 5.6.4.