



Transition From Ancient Society To Medieval Society : A Review

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Abstract

The central factor that eventually transformed ancient Indian society into a medieval society was the practice of land grants. The brahmanas were granted villages free from taxes which were collected by the king from the villages. In addition, the beneficiaries were given the right to govern the people living in the donated villages. Royal control was eroded through the payment of government officials by land grants. There is a distinct evolution of the landlordism and devolution of the central state authority by the seventh century. The important change in the agrarian economy is noted. The decline of trade led to the decay of towns. There was an increasing divine hierarchy in post-Gupta times. The Bhakti cult spread throughout India. Bhakti meant that people made all kinds of offerings to the god in return for which they received the prasada or the favour of the god.

Keywords: medieval society, land grants, central state authority, landlordism, agrarian economy, decline of trade, decay of towns, divine hierarchy, Bhakti cult

Introduction

For the sake of the convenience of study history has been divided into three – the ancient, medieval and modern periods. Of course we do not have any date or even a century to demarcate these periods. The concept of ancient, medieval and modern is amorphous. It varies according to regions. Still there are characteristic features of these epochs. The accepted demarcations of ancient, medieval and modern world are a Europe centric one. The fall of Western Roman Empire in AD 476 is considered to be the end of ancient period and beginning of the middle ages. The eastern Roman Empire continued to exist for about a thousand years more and the fall of the eastern Roman Empire in 1453, following the conquest of Constantinople by the Turks is considered to be the end of the medieval period and the beginning of modern period. The general features of the transition from ancient to medieval world the decline of ancient empire decline of trade and urban centres, development of feudal land relations growth of regional kingdoms in the West, emergence of new empires in the Eastern, etc.

