

responsibility also. For example, in 1749 an allegation was made against the residents of a village named Ramparsadi for engaging in *chamchori*, the state fined the residents a collective sum of Rs. 101.

Mayank Kumar has suggested that, especially for area governed by Rajput principalities of Rajasthan, state was very meticulously appropriating claims of diverse natural resources, often considered as village commons. We have several evidences when punishment was awarded for cutting green trees. In village Saithal, *pargana* Bahatri, a person was punished for cutting a *neem* tree. Alongside, we have evidences of punishments for cutting *Jamun* trees, etc. Cutting of *babool* trees was also punished. It is important to point out that Peepal and Bad had been worshiped; thus religious considerations must have also led to punishment. However, the punishment was substituted by a cash payment. The fine became part of the state's revenue and religion had no role to play either in the collection or expenditure of this amount.

Furthermore, there are evidence from Amber principality which highlight that the state even punished those who killed animals. The killing of cattle was punished. An *arzdasht* dated *Jeth sudi* 14, 1854 V.S. informs us that when a cow was killed, the culprit was expected to return a cow of gold to the owner of the cow. Pastoralism had been an important component of economy. At the same time, the usefulness of cattle in agricultural production cannot be neglected. We have evidence that even the killing of a monkey was punished. The protection being offered to animals has been pointed out in the context of religious sects. The killing of crocodiles was also punished. (Mayank Kumar, *Monsoon Ecologies: Irrigation, Agriculture and Settlement Patterns in Rajasthan during the Pre-Colonial Period*, Manohar, Delhi, 2013.)

Check Your Progress-1

- 1) Discuss the significance of non-agrarian taxation to understand the character of the State in early modern Rajasthan.

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- 2) What is the significance of right to deliver justice for the power and legitimacy of the rulers?

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12.3 LOCATING RELIGION IN RELATION TO STATE AND SOCIETY

In a major departure from the earlier period, Mughals did not sought legitimacy to rule from the office of Caliph. (**Details have been discussed in Unit-10**) Mughals were borrowing legitimacy through the concept of kingly sainthood. A similar tradition led by

Shattari was gaining ground at least in north India. In writings of Abul Fazl we find a very deliberate attempt to place royalty distinct and above from the lesser mortals. King was described as *Zill-e-Ilahii* or shadow of God, and his genealogy was made very impressive. It is important to recognise that divine origin of kingship was an accepted practice in India. Practices like *Jharokha Darshan*, whereby royalty's divine origin was reiterated was a regular practice in the Mughal Empire. Thus, we find an attempt by the Mughals to relate to the social-cultural practices of Indian subcontinent.

Let us briefly examine process of state formation in Rajasthan and Maratha region to highlight diverse ways through which prevalent religious sensibilities and cultural practices were appropriated by the rulers to establish their legitimacy. Guhilas or Sisodias; the rulers of Mewar called themselves *Diwan* of Eklingji (Lord Shiva). They never claimed themselves to be the rulers of the territory rather worked as deputy of the Lord Shiva. Interestingly, the rulers of Mewar were coronated by the Bhil chief, thus claiming some sort of legitimacy from the subjects. A similar tradition can be seen in the process of state formation in the Bikaner region, where rulers claimed legitimacy through the local deity Karni Mata. It is significant to note the significant role played by local *Charans*-bards in establishing legitimacy through impressive genealogy. Interesting evidences can be seen in the case of fifteenth century Gujarat. (Aparna Kapadia, *In Praise of Kings: Rajputs, Sultans and Poets in Fifteenth-Century Gujarat*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, London, Melbourne, New Delhi, Singapore, 2018).

In the second half of the seventeenth century Shivaji consolidated his position through matrimonial relations. Matrimonial alliances with the established families gradually enhanced the social prestige of his family. Moreover his coronation as Suryavamshi Kshatriya with the help of Gagabhat and other Brahmins of Benaras testifies his efforts to gain social legitimacy through Kshatriya status. He buttressed his claim to kshatriya status with the help of genealogy connecting him with the Indra and titles like *kshatriya kulavatamsa*. This helped him in claiming higher status vis a vis other Maratha families and gradually established his exclusive claim to collect sardeshmukhi.

R. P. Bahuguna has argued that the role of royal public rituals as ideological building blocks of state formation and as sources of legitimation of kingly authority acquired a new dimension in the eighteenth-century. Norbert Peabody argues that the policy of military fiscalism of the Kota state in the eighteenth century was closely linked to a political culture based on active participation of the state in Pushtimargia Vaishnava rituals, image installation and worship, patronage and gift-giving. However problems with subscription to Hindu Kingship emanates from the fact that during early modern times we find great divergence in religious affinities. It is the colonial subjugation of the precolonial regional states of the Marathas and the Rajputs which led to the emergence of full-fledged Hindu kingship under colonial sponsorship and supervision. Susan Bayly has argued that brahmans remained powerful in the regional polities of eighteenth-century India. The political system in most of the regional states of the eighteenth century has been labelled as 'Brahman Raj' by her. (R.P. Bahuguna, 'Religious Festivals as Political Rituals: Kingship and Legitimation in Late Precolonial Rajasthan', in Suraj Bhan Bhardwaj, R. P. Bahuguna and Mayank Kumar, Eds., *Revisiting the History of Medieval Rajasthan: Essays for Prof Dilbagh Singh*, Primus Books, New Delhi, 2017)

12.4 CONTRADICTORY TRENDS

Relations between State, religion and society have always been very dynamic. Political considerations, economic situation, social conditions are by definition have been very

vibrant and interactions between these factors at times appear contradictory. Therefore, it is not always easy and advisable to generalize over a long period of time or over a large territory. Satish Chandra has examined the Mughal religious policy under Aurengzeb and pointed out the contradictory tendencies. If on one hand Aurengzeb is seen as religious bigot who was against Hindus as seen in his policy to re-impose Jaziya. Then on the other hand we find proliferation of 'Hindus' in the Mughal nobility. Similarly, there are evidences that Mughal rulers, even Aurengzeb offered land revenue grants to temples and also that of demolition of temples under his regime. As discussed in **Unit 13- Architecture**, the Varanasi Vishwanath Temple was commissioned by Raja Todar Mal in c.1595, however, this temple was destroyed by Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb in 1669 CE and the Mathura temples were destroyed at his orders in 1670 CE. In Jahangir's reign two large temples were commissioned by Bir Singh Deo of Bundelkhand, one at his capital Orchha (Chaturbhuj Temple) and the other at Mathura. The Chaturbhuj Temple was later desecrated by the Mughal Emperor Shahjahan and the Mathura temple was destroyed at the orders of Aurangzeb as noted above.

12.5 COMPOSITE SOCIAL MILIEU

The relationships between State, religion and society are best captured in the nature of religious-political discourses of the contemporary times. It is interesting to note that the texts like *Dabistan-i Mazahib* (**See Unit 1 for more details**) were written and were in circulation it is a clear testimony to the fact that culture was composite. Hindus were extensively writing in Persian which means language was not the identity marker as it is seen today.

Moreover it is important to appreciate that the binaries of religious divide were not clearly defined especially if we examine character of social milieu. Non-Muslims especially Hindus were liberally inducted into administration of a Muslim state similarly in the army and administration of Shivaji there were several Muslim officials. Same is the case with the Rajput rulers where several Muslims were working on important positions. Similar tendencies are reflected in the composition of Mughal nobility where Hindus were placed on important positions. Hindus working in the administration were well aware of the nuances of Persian.

You must have noticed in Unit number 17 as well as in **Unit number 1** along with elaboration in the course **BHIC 109 and 107**, that the cultural divide was not religious. *Akhlaq* tradition was being extensively followed by the non Muslims as well. Composite culture is most particularly visible in the case of *Munshis* and *Kayasthas* who were well conversant not only with the Persian language but also with the court etiquette and manners. These courtly culture and manners in itself were very cosmopolitan in orientation and captured the true meaning of composite culture.

Mughal rulers were frequent visitor to the sufis and sants and discussed variety of issues. Dara Sukoh while returning from Kandhar, after a very humiliating defeat, visited Baba Lal at Dhyampur. His visit to Baba Lal and conversation with him has been recorded and were in circulation in the Mughal public sphere. Dara Sukoh is generally considered to be predisposed towards religious discourses, and thus may appear exception, however it is important to note that there is a long tradition of rulers visiting and interacting with the sants cutting across religious and sectarian divide. "Consulting with spiritual divines of all kinds had been a longstanding Timurid

tradition, one maintained by all of Dârâ’s Mughal ancestors. Mohammad Tughlaq’s (r. 1325-51) close association with the celebrated Jaina monk Jinaprabha Suri being only the most conspicuous. (Husain, pp. 311-39) Closer to Dârâ’s own time, Akbar had made a special visit to the Sikh Guru Arjun in 1598 (Grewal, p. 55) and both Akbar and Jahângir had famously met numerous times with a *gosain* hermit by the name of Jadrup, whose understanding of mystical precepts so impressed Jahângir that he became convinced that *tasavvof* and Vedanta were in fact the same science (Jahângir, p. 209) Shah Jahân, too, often surrounded himself with mystical consultants, and while he might have been inclined more toward “proper” Sufi s, his court was awash in mystically-inclined Hindus like Chandar Bhân Brahman, not to mention various Hindu astrologers and other divines with whom he consulted almost daily. Indeed, throughout this entire period Sanskrit and Braj intellectuals like Siddhichandra, Keshavdâs, and Jagannâthapanditarâja were continuous fixtures at the Mughal imperial court, as well as the subimperial courts of various nobles. (Busch 2006, and forthcoming; Pollock 2001a, 2001b).” (Rajeev Kinra, “Infantilizing Bâbâ Dârâ: The Cultural Memory of Dârâ Shekuh and the Mughal Public Sphere,” *Journal of Persianate Studies*, Vol. 2, 2009, pp. 165– 193.)

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) State, religion and society function in a very complex manner. Examine with reference to 16-18 century states in India.

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- 1) What do you understand by composite social milieu? Substantiate your answer with appropriate examples from 16-18 century India.

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12.4 LET US SUM UP

We can sum up the relationship between state, religion and society by suggesting that the complexity needs elaboration and due recognition for the diverse traditions is must for better comprehension. State or religion or society is a not a monolithic entities and are neither static, therefore we must accord due recognition to the changing dynamics. Moving beyond court chronicles and British Colonial historiography and investigations of cultural ethos makes us understand the existence of a very rich and diverse cultural traditions. Contestations for political patronage among followers of different religions in their attempts to propagate their sectarian discourses were important facet of the society. Political authorities were also consulting sufis and saints, cutting across religions and sectarian divide, was a regular feature.

12.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) See Sub-section 12.2.1
- 2) See Section 12.2.2

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) See Sub-section 12.3
- 2) See Section 12.5

Recommended Readings

Bahuguna, R.P. 2017. 'Religious Festivals as Political Rituals: Kingship and Legitimation in Late Precolonial Rajasthan', in Suraj Bhan Bhardwaj, R. P Bahuguna and Mayank Kumar, Eds., *Revisiting the History of Medieval Rajasthan: Essays for Prof Dilbagh Singh*. New Delhi: Primus Books.

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