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Title of the Thesis : “*SOCIAL AND CULTURAL LIFE IN
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A B S T R A C T

The thesis entitled ‘ ***Social and Cultural Life in Medieval Mithila (1100-1600 A.D.)*** ’ by Ambika Nand Jha under the able guidance of Prof. Sunita Zaidi deals with the Economic, Social, Cultural and Religious life of medieval Mithila.

The first chapter deals with introduction and the brief political history of Mithila from the popular past. The achievements made by the success of the Karnata, the Oinwara rulers of Mithila during which period we find the great thinkers like Chandeshwar Thakur, his father Vireshwar Thakur and the literary artists like Jyotirishwar Thakur and Vidyapati Thakur who are credited to have shaped the polity and the social life of Tirhut (Mithila) by dint of their scholarly activities.

We find these rulers had a fine equation with the Muslim rulers of the time at Delhi as well as the neighbouring Jaunpur where they had developed a good relationship with the Shirqi Kings.

The second chapter deals with the economy of Mithila. Being an agricultural economy various aspects of agriculture such as quality of soil, seasons and agricultural times, irrigation system, agricultural products, land-revenue system and other taxes, the question of ownership, quantum of revenue, methods of revenue-administration,

revenue assessment, relief to the peasants, trade and commerce, trade routes- both river and road and the industries of Mithila has been dealt.

The chapter three deals with the social and cultural life of medieval Mithila. We find the rigidity factor of the caste-system dominant and prevalent in spite of the fact that its people interact with the people of pan Indian society and are still unable to break the shackles of casteism. The caste- system remains there in spite of successive movements against the system. Jainism, Buddhism and Vaishnavism originated and developed independently in the region of Mithila but ultimately came to be overpowered by the evils of the system. Even the social reformer like Chaitanya and his appeal of *bhakti* (devotion) and love could not remove caste-barriers. Even the advent of Islam and the ultimate subjugation of Mithila in 1324 A.D. could not change the things much.

The fourth chapter deals with education including different patterns of education like Sanskrit learning, vernacular education, Islamic education through Maktab and Madrasa, modes of examination, import of ideas, patronage, literary activities, art and architecture including sculpture, painting, music, dance and drama.

The fifth and the last chapter deals with religion, rites and rituals, festivals and the development of law and jurisprudence in Mithila. We find that in Mithila people practiced all the religious beliefs namely *Shaktism alongwith Tantricism, Vaishnavism and Shaivism*. The development of law and jurisprudence, so to say Hindu jurisprudence, concerns itself and embraces all activities of a man from the moment he conceives in the womb of his mother upto the time of his death. The cycle continues with the birth of his son and so on.

