
Chapter – 07 History

Tribes, Nomads and Settled Communities

- During the Medieval Age, several social, economic and political development took place.
 - The Indian society was divided on the basis varnas. During the medieval period, gap between the rich and poor increased.
 - There were, however, several communities which did not follow rules laid down by the Brahmins. Thesej included the tribes, nomads and settled communities.
 - **Tribal Societies:**
 - (i) Tribes are people who do not follow norms laid down by society.
 - (ii) Most of the tribes were dependant on agriculture. Others were herders or hunter-gatherers.
 - (iii) Tribers were even nomadic and moved from one place to another.
 - (iv) There were even clashes between tribes and powerful caste-based societies.
 - (v) Contemporary historians and travelers from medieval India hardly give any information about the tribes.
 - (vi) Some of the powerful tribes were Khokhar tribe in Punjab; Langahs and Arghuns in Multan; Gaddis in the Himalayas; Kolis and Berads of Gujarat; Gonds of Chhattisgarh, Bhil tribe in Central India, etc.
 - **Pastoral Nomads:**
 - (i) The pastoral nomads moved from one place to another with their herd of animals.
 - (ii) They survived on milk products and exchanged ghee, wool, etc. with farmers for grains, cloth, utensils, etc.
 - (iii) The most important trader nomads were Banjaras. Their caravan was called 'tanda'. Sultan Alauddin Khalji used Banjaras to move grain to the city markets.
 - (iv) Pastoral tribes thus, basically reared and sold animals like horses and cattle to the prosperous people.
 - **Changes in Caste Structure of India:**
 - (i) In the fields of trade and agriculture, there emerged multi-caste population in many villages on account of the spread of Islam.
 - (ii) Sufi and Bhakti movement preached equality between different castes and religious groups.
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(iii) Inter-caste marriages started between Rajputs and Muslim nobles.

(iv) With the growth of economy, new jatis and varnas emerged.

(v) Many tribes became part of ruling changes.

- **The Gonds:**

(i) Gonds were sometimes referred to by their tribal dialect, Gondi. They practice shifting cultivation.

(ii) The Gonds rose when Delhi Sultanate declined.

(iii) The Gond kingdom in Gondwana in southeastern Madhya Pradesh was founded in the 15th century.

- **Ahoms:**

(i) The Ahom tribe is traced to some tribes living in south-east Asia who had travelled over land through the forests of Assam.

(ii) The religion and culture of Assam is a fusion of the local traditions and of migrant tribes.

(iii) The Ahoms belonged to a warrior class and built roads and irrigation systems even before establishing their rule.

(iv) The Ahoms formed the new kingdom by suppressing the older political system of Bhuiyans.
