

Chapter 7

Tribes, Nomads and Settled Communities

Q. 1 Match the following:

Garh Garh	khel
Tanda	Chaurasi
Labourer	Caravan
Clan	Garha katanga
Sib Singh	Ahom state
Durgawati	Paik

Ans.:

Garh Garh	Chaurasi
Tanda	Caravan
Labourer	Paik
Clan	khel
Sib Singh	Ahom state
Durgawati	Garha katanga

Q.2 Fill in the blanks:

- (a) The new castes emerging within varnas were called _____.
- (b) _____ were historical works written by the Ahoms.
- (c) The _____ mentions that Garha Katanga had 70,000 villages.
- (d) As tribal states became bigger and stronger, they gave land grants to _____ and _____.

Ans.: (a) The new castes emerging with in varnas were called jatis.

As the economy and the needs of society grew, people with new skills were required. On the basis of their work and their status in the society they were divided in different jatis.

(b) Buranjis were historical works written by the Ahoms.

Buranjis are a class of historical chronicles. The first Buranji was written on the instructions of the first Ahom king Sukaphaa who established the Ahom kingdom in 1228.

(c) The Akbar Nama mentions that Garha Katanga had 70,000 villages.

Akbar Nama is the official chronicle of the reign Akbar, the third Mughal Emperor.

(d) As tribal states became bigger and stronger, they gave land grants to poets and scholars.

In medieval time when tribal states became bigger and stronger, they start giving land grants to poets and scholars.

Q.3 State whether true or false:

(a) Tribal societies had rich oral traditions.

(b) There were no tribal communities in the north-western part of the subcontinent.

(c) The chaurasi in Gond states contained several cities.

(d) The Bhils lived in the north-eastern part of the subcontinent.

Ans.: (a) Tribal societies had rich oral traditions (True)

Tribal people do not have any written records but they do have rich customs and oral traditions which were passed down to each new generation.

(b) There were no tribal communities in the north-western part of the subcontinent (False)

The Balochis were the large and powerful tribe in North-West.

(c) The chaurasi in Gond states contained several cities (False)

A chaurasi in Gond states was a unit of 84 villages.

(d) The Bhils lived in the north-eastern part of the subcontinent (False)

The Bhils were spread across western and central parts of India.

Q.4 What kinds of exchanges took place between nomadic pastoralists and settled agriculturists?

Ans.: Nomadic pastoralists used to move from place to another with their animals, so, they had to exchange pastoral products like wool, ghee, etc. with settled agriculturalists for grain, cloth, utensils and other products.

Let's understand

Q. 5 How was the administration of the Ahom state organized?

Ans.: 1. Ahom state was dependent on forced labour called Paiks.

2. Ahom society was divided into clans called khels. A khel controlled several villages.

3. All adult males served in the army during the war and other times they were engaged in building dams, irrigation or in other public work.
4. People from heavily populated areas were shifted to less populated places and the administration became more centralized in the first half of the seventeenth century.
5. Peasants were assigned land by the village community.

Q.6 What changes took place in varna-based society?

Ans.: Within the varna-based society:

1. Smaller castes called jatis emerged.
2. Many tribes and social groups were taken into cast-based society and given the status of jatis.
3. Jatis, rather than varna, became the basis for organizing society.
4. Artisans, smiths, carpenters and masons were also given the status of separate jati.

Q.7 How did tribal societies change after being organized into a state?

Ans.: After being organized into a state:

1. Tribal societies gradually got divided into unequal social classes called cast system.
2. The leading families joined the ruling class, while the others joined the lower jatis.
3. Some tribes adopted the Islam in North-west frontier.

4. Others who were powerful conflicted with the larger kingdoms and empires.

Let's discuss

Q.8 Were the Banjaras important for the economy?

Ans.: The banjaras were very important for the economy.

1. They were the trader-nomads who used to travel from one place to another for trading purpose.
2. They were used to transport grains to the city market.
3. They helped traders by working as carriers.
4. At the same time they transported food grains for the Mughal army during their campaigns.
5. Sometimes they were hired by the merchants to trade for them in different cities.

Q.9 In what ways was the history of the Gonds different from that of the Ahoms? Were there any similarities?

Ans.: The histories of Ahoms and Gonds were different in the way that:

1. Gonds were completely annexed by the Mughals, while the Ahoms managed to reclaim their independence soon after their annexation.
2. Gonds lived in vast forest region called Gondwana while Ahoms were migrated to Brahmaputra valley.
3. Gonds practiced shifting cultivation and Ahoms didn't.

They were similar in the fact that:

- Both had risen from being small tribal communities to becoming powerful tribal states.
- Both the tribes modelled themselves on other centralized kingdoms.
- Both the tribes had a centralized administration system.