

# Tribes, Nomads And Settled Communities

## 1. Match the following:

- garh – khel  
tanda – chaurasi  
labourer – caravan  
clan – Garha Katanga  
Sib Singh – Ahom State  
Durgawati – paik

### Answer:

- garh – khel  
tanda – paik  
labourer – caravan  
clan – chaurasi  
Sib Singh – Ahom State  
Durgawati – Garha Katanga

## 2. Fill in the blanks:

- (a) The new castes emerging within vamas 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..... ..

Answer: (a) jatis

(b) Buraryis

(c) Akbar Nama

(d) temples, Brahmanas.

## 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 sub-continent.

Answer: (a)–T, (b)–F, (c)–F, (d)–F.

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

**Answer:** The nomadic pastoralists exchanged wool, ghee, etc. with settled agriculturists for grain, cloth, utensils and other products.

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

**Answer:** The Ahom state depended upon forced labour. Those forced to work for the state were known as paiks.

A census of the population was taken. Each village had to send a number of paiks by rotation. People of densely populated areas were shifted to thinly populated areas. Ahom clans were thus broken up. By the first half of the 17th century the administration became quite centralised.

## 6. What changes took place in vama-based society?

**Answer:** The following changes took place in vama-based society:

- Smaller castes or jatis emerged within vamas.
- On the other hand, many tribes and social groups were taken into caste-based society and given the status of jatis.
- Specialised artisans such as smiths, carpenters and masons were also recognised as separate jatis by the Brahmanas.
- Jatis rather than vama became the basis for organising society.
- Among the Kshatriyas, new Rajput clans became powerful.
- Many tribes became part of the caste system. But only the leading tribal families could join the ruling class. A large majority joined the lower jatis of caste society.
- Many dominant tribes of Punjab, Sind and the North-West Frontier had adopted Islam. They continued to reject the caste-system.

## 7. How did tribal societies change after being organised into a state?

**Answer:** The emergence of large states changed the nature of tribal societies. We can understand this with the help of two examples—the Gond society and the Ahom society.

1. **The Gond Society.** Their basically equal society gradually got divided into unequal social classes. Brahmanas received land grants from the Gond rajas and became more influential. The Gond chiefs now wished to be recognised as Rajputs. So, Aman Das, the Gond raja of Garha Katanga, assumed the title of 'Sangram Shah'.
2. **The Ahom Society.** The Ahoms built a large state which brought many changes in the Ahom society. The influence of Brahmanas increased. Temples and Brahmanas were granted land by the king. In the reign of Sib Singh, Hinduism became the predominant religion. But the Ahom Kings did not completely give up their traditional beliefs after adopting Hinduism.

## 8. Were the Banjaras important for the economy?

**Answer:** The Banjaras were very important for the economy. They were trader-nomads and controlled trade and commerce. They played an important role in transporting grain to the city markets. They usually bought grain where it was cheaply available and carried it to places where it was dearer. From there, they again reloaded their oxen with anything that could be profitably sold in other places.

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

**Answer:** The history of the Gonds was different from that of the Ahoms in the following ways:

- The Gonds lived in a vast forested region called Gondwana. The Ahoms migrated to the Brahmaputra valley from present-day Myanmar in the 13th century.
- The Gonds practised shifting cultivation. The Ahoms did not practise this type of cultivation.
- The Gond society was not as much developed as the Ahom's. The Ahoms built a large state by using firearms. They could even make high quality gunpowder and cannons.
- The Ahom society was very sophisticated. Poets and scholars were given land grants. Theatre was encouraged. We do not find these things in the Gond society.

There were many similarities between the Gonds and Ahoms:

- Both were capable of building large states.
- Both had to face Mughal attack. Despite their brave defence, both were defeated by the Mughals.
- Both of them granted land to the Brahmanas, who became very influential.
- We find the administration centralised in the history of the Gonds as well as the Ahoms.

10. Plot the location of the tribes mentioned in this chapter on a map. For any two, discuss whether their mode of livelihood was suited to the geography and the environment of the area where they lived.

Answer: Several tribes live in different parts of India. See the map given below



These tribes settled temporarily at the places which suited them as per their need and livelihood. Whenever, they found the environment or their mode of living unfavourable, they migrated to other suitable places.

11. Find out about present-day government policies towards tribal populations and organise a discussion about these.

Answer: Present-day government policies towards tribal populations are very positive.

- Education is being spread in the tribal areas.
- Facilities like roads, water, electricity have been increased.
- The government is doing actively for the overall upliftment of the tribal populations.
- The government has enforced reservation for them in government jobs. This policy of the government has helped the tribal people in many ways. They are now joining the mainstream of the society.
- The government is also determined to protect their cultural and social traditions.

**12. Find out more about present-day nomadic pastoral groups in the sub-continent.**

**Answer:** What animals do they keep? Which are the areas frequented by these groups? Ans.  
Present-day nomadic pastoral groups in the sub-continent are – Gaddi shepherds living in the western Himalayas, Gujjar Bakarwals, living in Jammu & Kashmir, Banjaras living in Rajasthan. These nomadic people keep sheep, goats and camels. They frequently visit Kumaon region of Uttarakhand, Jammu & Kashmir and Rajasthan.

**VERY SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS**

**1. How did the castes of entertainers earn their livelihood?**

**Answer:** They earned their livelihood by performing in different towns and villages.

**2. Which tribe was very influential in Punjab during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries?**

**[V. Imp.]**

**Answer:** The Khokhar tribe was very influential in Punjab during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries

**3. Name the tribe which was powerful in the north-west.**

**Answer:** Balochis

**4. Name any two tribes which lived in the extreme South**

**Answer:** Vetsars and Maravars

**5. Who were specialised artisans?**

**Answer:** Smiths, carpenters and masons were specialised artisans

**6. Who controlled garh?**

**Answer:** A Gond clan usually controlled the garh

**7. What made the Brahmanas more influential in the Gond Society? [V. Imp.]**

**Answer:** The Gond raja began to grant land to the Brahmanas. This made them influential.

**8. Who was Aman Das?**

**Answer:** He was the Gond raja of Garha Katanga.

**9. Who was Durgaivaii?**

**Answer:** She was the daughter of Salbahan, the Chandel Rajput raja of Mahoba. She got married to Dalpat, the son of the Gond raja Aman Das.

**10. When did the Mughal forces attack Garha Katanga?**

**Answer:** The Mughal forces attacked Garha Katanga in 1565.

**11. What made Garha Katanga a rich state? [V. Imp.]**

**Answer:** Garha Katanga earned huge wealth by trapping and exporting wild elephants to other kingdoms. This made it a rich state.

**12. Name the items which the Mughals captured by defeating the Goods.**

**Answer:** Precious coins and elephants.

**13. Who introduced new methods of rice cultivation?**

**Answer:** The Ahoms introduced new methods of rice cultivation.

**14. When did the Mughals attack the Ahom kingdom?**

**Answer:** The Mughals attacked the Ahom kingdom in 1662.

**15. What do present-day historians use to write tribal histories? [V. Imp.]**

**Answer:** They use oral traditions and rich customs of the tribal people to write their (tribals') histories.

**Short Answer Type Questions**

**1. Mention some special features of tribal societies. [Imp.]**

**Answer:** Some special features of tribal societies are :

- They did not follow the social rules and rituals which the Brahmanas prescribed.
- They were not divided into many unequal classes.
- Members of the society were united by kinship bonds.

**2. How did the tribal people earn their livelihood? [V. Imp.]**

**Answer:** The main occupation of the tribal people was agriculture. But there were also hunter-gatherers or herders. Most often they combined these activities to make full use of the natural resources of the area in which they lived. Some tribes were nomadic moving from one place to another.

A tribal group controlled land and pastures jointly, and divided these amongst household as per its own rules

**3. Write a short note on Bcuyaras'.**

**Answer:** The Banjaras were important trader nomads. They usually moved in caravan known as tanda. A tanda contained as many as 6 or 7 hundred persons. They carried their wives and children along with them. They owned their oxen. They bought grain where it was cheaply available and carried it to places where it was dearer. From there, they again reloaded their oxen with anything that could be profitably sold in other places. The Banjaras did not travel more than 6 or 7 miles a day. They preferred cool weather. After unloading their oxen, they freed them to graze

**4. How did Sultan Alauddin Khalji and the Mughals use the Bcuyaras?**

**Answer:** Sultan Alauddin Khalji used the Banjaras to transport grain to the city markets. Under the Mughals the Banjaras carried grain on their bullocks from different areas and sold it in towns. They transported food grain for the Mughal army during military campaigns

**5. Write a brief note on the administrative system of the Gond Kingdom. [V. Imp.]**

**Answer:** The Gond Kingdom was divided into garhs. Each garh was controlled by a particular Gond clan. This was further divided into units of 84 villages called chaurasi. The chaurasi was subdivided into barhots which were made up of 12 villages each.

**6. Write in brief about Rani DurgawatL**

**Answer:** Rani Durgawati was married to Dalpat, the son of the Gond raja of Garha Katanga, Aman Das. Dalpat, however, died early. After his death, Rani Durgawati, being very capable, began to rule on behalf of her five-year-old son, Bir Narain. She extended her kingdom veiy soon. In 1565, when the Mughal forces under Asaf Khan attacked Garha Katanga, she put up a strong resistance. Finally, she was defeated. But she did not surrender, Instead she preferred to die.

### **7. Who were the Ahoms? How did they build a large state? [Imp.]**

**Answer:** The Ahoms were the tribal people who migrated to the Brahmaputra valley from present-day Myanmar in the 13th century. They created a new state by suppressing the older political system of the bhuiyans i.e. landlords. During the 16th century, they annexed the kingdoms of the Chhutiyas in 1523 and of Koch- Hajo in 1581. They also subjugated many other tribes. In this way, the Ahoms built a large state and for this they used firearms as early as 1530s.

### **Long Answer Type Questions**

#### **1. Give a brief account of the tribal people found in different parts of the subcontinent [V. Imp.]**

**Answer:** Tribal people were found in almost every region of the sub-continent. In Punjab, the Khokhar tribe was influential during the 13th and 14th centuries. Later, the Gakkhars became more important. In Multan and Sind, the Langahs and Arghuns dominated extensive regions. The Balochis were another large and powerful tribe in the north-west. In the western Himalayas, the Gaddi Shepherds lived. The Nagas, Ahoms and many others lived in the distant north-eastern part of the subcontinent. In many areas of present-day Bihar and Jharkhand, Chero Chiefdoms had emerged by the 12th century. However, they were subdued by the Mughals. The Mundas and Santals were other important tribes that lived in these states and also in Orissa and Bengal. The Kolis, Berads and numerous others lived in the Maharashtra highlands, Karnataka and Gujarat. Further there were large tribal populations of Koragas, Vetars, Maravars and many others in South. The Bhils were spread across western and central India. By the late 16th century many of them had become settled agriculturists and some even zamindars. Many Bhil clans, nevertheless, remained hunter-gatherers. The Gonds were found in large numbers across the present-day states of Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh.

#### **2. What do you know about the Ahom Society? [Imp.]**

**Answer:** Ahom society was divided into clans or Khels. There were very few castes of artisans, so artisans in the Ahom areas came from the nearby kingdoms. Kheloften controlled several villages. The peasant was given land by his village community. Even the king could not take it away without the community's consent. The Ahoms worshipped their own tribal gods. But during the first half of the 17 century Brahmanas achieved great influence which gave rise to Hinduism. In the reign of Sib Singh Hinduism became a predominant religion. However, the Ahom kings remained stick to their traditional beliefs to some extent even after adopting Hinduism. Ahom society was very sophisticated. Poets and scholars were given land grants. Theatre was encouraged

#### **3. How did the nomadic pastoralists earn their living? [V. Imp.]**

**Answer:** Nomadic pastoralists kept on moving from place to place with their animals. They lived on milk and other pastoral products. They also exchanged items like wool, ghee, etc. with settled agriculturists for grain, cloth, utensils and other products. They bought and sold these goods as they moved from one place to another, transporting them on their animals. The Banjaras were trader-nomads who bought grain where it was cheaply available and carried it to places where it was dearer. From there, they again reloaded their oxen with anything that could be profitably sold in other places. Thus, they played an important role in connecting India to the outside world. Many pastoral tribes reared and sold animals, such as cattle and horses, to the wealthy people. Different castes of petty pedlars travelled from village to village. They made and sold wares like ropes, reeds, etc. Sometimes mendicants acted as wandering merchants. There were also castes of entertainers who earned their living by performing in different towns and villages.