



UNIQUE STUDY POINT

Chapter 7 Tribes, Nomads and Settled Communities

Question 1: Match the following:

Garh	khel
tanda	chaurasi
labourer	caravan
clan	Garha Katanga
Sib Singh	Ahom state
Durgawati	paik

Answer:

Garh	chaurasi
tanda	caravan
labourer	paik
clan	khel
Sib Singh	Ahom state
Durgawati	Garha Katanga

Question 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 _____

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

- (b) **Buranjis** were historical works written by the Ahoms.
- (c) The **Akbar Nama** mentions that Garha Katanga had 70,000 villages.
- (d) As tribal states became bigger and stronger, they gave land grants to **poets** and **scholars**.

Question 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.

Answer:

- (a) True
- (b) False
- (c) False
- (d) False

Question 4: What kinds of exchanges took place between nomadic pastoralists and settled agriculturists?

Answer: Nomadic pastoralists exchanged wool, ghee, etc. with settled agriculturalists for grain, cloth, utensils and other products.

Question 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 called paiks. A census of the population was taken. Each village had to send a number of paiks by rotation.

People from heavily populated areas were shifted to less populated areas. Ahom clans broke up and the administration became more centralized.

Ahom society was divided into clans or khels. A khel often controlled several villages. The peasant was given land by his village community and even the king could not take it away without the community's consent.

Question 6: What changes took place in varna-based society?

Answer: Within the varna-based society, smaller castes called jatis emerged. Jatis, rather than varna, became the basis for organizing society.

- Many tribes and social groups were taken into caste-based society and given the status of jatis. Specialised artisans – smiths, carpenters and masons – were also recognised as separate jatis by the Brahmanas.
- The rise of jatis led to unequal social order and greater divide between castes.
- Varnas helped identify people with specialized skills and formalized labor.

Question 7: How did tribal societies change after being organized into a state?

Answer: After being organized into a state, the following changes occurred for tribal societies:

- They became a part of the caste system with the help of the Brahmanas.
- The leading tribal families became a part of ruling classes and the majority of them merged into lower jatis of the caste system.
- Many dominant tribes of Punjab, Sind and the North-West Frontier had adopted Islam quite early. They continued to reject the caste system.
- The unequal social order, prescribed by orthodox Hinduism, was not widely accepted in these areas.
- Some of the tribes such as the Ahoms, became very powerful and conflicted with larger kingdoms.

Question 8: Were the Banjaras important for the economy?

Answer: The Banjaras were very important for the economy.

- They were the most important trader-nomads.
- They helped traders by working as carriers. For example, Sultan Alauddin Khalji used the Banjaras to transport grain to the city markets. Emperor Jahangir wrote in his memoirs that 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.

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

Answer: The similarities between the history of the Gonds and the Ahoms were:

- Both were tribes that grew in power.
- Both tribes had centralized administration. Both tribes were divided into clans or jatis.

The differences between the history of the Gonds and the Ahoms were:

- The histories of Gonds and Ahoms were different in that while the Gonds were completely annexed by the Mughals, the Ahoms managed to reclaim their independence soon after their annexation.
- Gonds practised "shifting cultivation" while the Ahoms did not.
- Gonds lived in a vast forested region called Gondwana; the Ahoms migrated to the Brahmaputra valley from present-day Myanmar.

Extra Questions

Very Short Answer Questions

1. What are tribes?

Answer: Tribes are people who do not follow laid down norms of society. Members of each tribe were united by kinship bond.

2. How do we know about tribes in this age?

Answer: Whatever we know about them is through their rich customs and oral traditions which passed on from one generation to than other. Modern historians use contemporary oral tradition to write about tribal societies.

3. Who were Gonds? Where are they found?

Answer: Gonds are sometimes referred to by their tribal dialect, Gondi. They practised shifting cultivation. Even today they live in the territory spread over modern day Madhya Pradesh, eastern Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Northern Andhra Pradesh and Western Orissa.

4. Who was Durgawati?

Answer: Durgawati was the daughter of Chandel rajput Raja of Mahoba, Salbahan. She got married to Gond raja Dalpat. Dalpat was the son of gond raja Aman Das.

5. Give a brief note about administration of Gond kingdom.

Answer: The kingdom of gond was very organised. Kingdom was divided into garhs. Each garh was controlled by a particular gond clan. This garh further divided into units of 84 villages called chaurasi and chaurasi divided into Barhots, which were made up of 12 villages.

Short Answer Questions

1. What did Peter Mundy write about pastoral nomads?

Answer: (i) Peter Mundy, an English trader of early 17th century, who came to India wrote that he met a tanda of Banjaras with 14,000 oxen.

(ii) They all carried wheat, rice and even can take their wives and children along with them.

(iii) They were merchants who used to buy grain from where it was cheaply available and sell it to places where it was not available and from there they bought things which could be sold profitably at other places.

(iv) Each tanda had 600-700 persons and travelled 6-7 miles a day.

2. Describe features of tribal societies.

Answer: The features of tribal societies are:

- They did not follow the Brahmanical rules and rituals.
- They were not divided into unequal classes.
- The society united by kniship bonds.

3. What do you know about Ahom society?

Answer: Ahom was divided into clans or kheels. Clan often controlled several villages. The villages community gave land to peasants. They worshipped their own tribal God. Ahom society was very sophisticated.

4. How do Ahoms build a large state?

Answer: Ahom created a state by suppressing the older political system of the bhuiyans (landlords). During the 16th century, they annexed the kingdoms of the chhutiyas in 1523 and of Koch-Hazo in 1581. They also subjugated many other tribes. In this way, they built a large state.

5. Who were Banjaras? Give a brief introduction of Banjaras.

Answer: The Banjaras were Trader nomads of Rajasthan. They usually moved in caravan known as Tanda. A 'Tanda' contains 6 or 7 hundred persons. They carried their wives and children along with them. They bought and sold these goods as they moved from one place to another, transporting them on their animals.

Long Answer Questions

1. How did tribes survive? Why did they enter into conflicts?

Answer: (i) The tribes normally used full natural resources of the area where they lived.

(ii) Tribes were even nomadic and moved from one place to another.

(iii) Tribes usually thrived in the forests, hills and desert areas of the subcontinents.

(iv) There were even clashes between tribes and powerful caste-based societies.

(v) However, at times, these caste-based and tribal societies depended on each other for their diverse needs.

2. Mention the various tribes found in different parts of India.

Answer: The various tribes in India are:

- The Khokhar tribe, which was influential in Punjab in the 13th and 14th century.
- The Balochis were powerful in the north-western part of India and were divided into small clans.
- The Gaddis, the shepherd tribe, was important in the Himalayas.
- The Nagas, Ahoms, etc. were dominant in the most north-eastern parts of the sub-continent.
- The Mundas and Santhals were among the important tribes in Bihar, Orissa and Bengal.
- In South India, there was a large tribal population of Koragas, Vetars and Marawars.
- The Bhil tribe was found in western and central parts of India. While few Bhil clans were hunter gatherers; many of them became agriculturists and zamindars.

3. Examine the changes which occurred in caste structure in India.

Answer: There occurred changes in caste structure on account of the following factors:

- In the fields of trade and agriculture, there emerged multi-caste population in many villages on account of spread of Islam. Some of the powerful non-Brahmin families had also emerged as land owners.
- Emergence of Sufi and Bhakti movement also affected caste system. Both the groups of saints preached equality among different religious and caste groups.
- Intercaste marriages started among Hindus particularly Rajput and Muslim nobles and rulers.
- Specialised artisans—smiths, carpenters and masons were recognised as separate jatis by the Brahmins. Jati system replaced the varna system.
- New Rajput clans emerged among Kshatriyas. These included Chandelas, Chalukyas, Huna, etc.

4. How did Gonds administer their big kingdom?

Answer: (i) The Gonds rose when Delhi sultanate declined.

(ii) There were several clans each having its own ruler.

(iii) The administration of Gonds was centralised.

(iv) Each kingdom was divided into garhs.

(v) Each Garh was controlled by a particular Gond clan.

(vi) It was further divided into 84 villages called Chaurasi.

(vii) The Chaurasi was subdivided into barhots of 12 villages each.

Hots (Higher Order Thinking Skills)

1. How did pastoral nomads survive?

Answer: (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 the farmers for grains, cloth, utensils, etc.

(iii) They bought and sold these goods and then moved from one place to another transporting goods on their animals.

(iv) The Mughal emperor Jahangir wrote that the Banjaras used to collect grains from different areas and sell it in towns.

2. How did Ahoms expand? How did they administer?

Answer: i. The Ahoms formed the new kingdom by suppressing the older political system of Bhuiyans (landlords).

- ii.** They captured the kingdom of Chhutiyas and of Koch-Hajo in the 16th century.
- iii.** They themselves made high quality gunpowder and cannons and used them in the warfare.
- iv.** Mughals, in 1662 under Mir Jumla, defeated the Ahoms.
- v.** The Ahom state depended on forced labour in the form of Paiks.
- vi.** Census was done in the village. Each village had to send paiks on the basis of rotation.
- vii.** All male adults had to serve the army in times of emergency.
- viii.** The Ahom society was divided into khels or clans.
- ix.** A khel controlled several villages.

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