

CBSE Class 7 Social Science History Notes Chapter 7: Chapter 7 of the CBSE Class 7 Social Science History textbook talks about the different lifestyles of tribes, nomads, and settled communities in medieval India. Tribes lived in forests, hills, and remote areas, following their own customs and rules. They depended on hunting, gathering, and shifting farming.

Nomads moved from place to place in search of pastures and jobs, playing an important role in trade and cultural exchange. For example, the Banjaras were nomads who transported goods over long distances. Settled communities, on the other hand, lived in one place and focused on farming, crafts, and trade.

The chapter also explains how these groups interacted with each other and changed over time. It shows how the inclusion of tribes and nomads added to the cultural diversity of India and how they adapted to new political and social conditions.

CBSE Class 7 Social Science History Notes Chapter 7 Tribes, Nomads and Settled Communities Overview

These notes are prepared by subject experts from Physics Wallah for CBSE Class 7 Social Science History, Chapter 7: Tribes, Nomads, and Settled Communities. This chapter talks about the different ways people lived in medieval India. It explains how tribes lived in forests and remote areas, following their own customs and rules. They relied on hunting, gathering, and moving their farms from place to place.

The chapter shows how these groups interacted and influenced each other, adding to the rich cultural diversity of India and adapting to new political and social changes.

CBSE Class 7 Social Science History Notes Chapter 7 PDF

The PDF link provided below contains notes for CBSE Class 7 Social Science History, Chapter 7: Tribes, Nomads, and Settled Communities. These notes are made by subject experts from Physics Wallah.

These notes highlight the rich cultural diversity of India and how these groups adapted to changes over time.

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CBSE Class 7 Social Science History Notes Chapter 7 Tribes, Nomads and Settled Communities

Beyond Big Cities: Tribal Societies

In ancient India, there were societies that did not follow the social rules or rituals set by the Brahmanas. These societies were not divided into many unequal classes and were known as tribes. Members of a tribe were connected by family bonds.

Tribes made a living through agriculture, hunting, gathering, or herding. Some tribes combined these activities to use the natural resources around them effectively. Nomadic tribes moved from place to place.

Tribes controlled land and pastures together and divided them among households based on their own rules. Many large tribes lived in forests, hills, deserts, and other hard-to-reach places. They often clashed with more powerful, caste-based societies but managed to keep their freedom and maintain their unique culture.

Despite conflicts, caste-based and tribal societies depended on each other for various needs. This relationship of conflict and dependence led to changes in both types of societies.

Who Were the Tribal People?

Tribal people in ancient India are often mentioned briefly by contemporary historians and travelers, as they did not keep written records. Instead, they preserved their rich customs and oral traditions, which were passed down through generations. Modern historians use these oral traditions to write about tribal histories.

Tribes were present in almost every region of the subcontinent, and their areas of influence varied over time. Powerful tribes controlled large territories. For example, the Khokhar tribe was very influential in Punjab during the 13th and 14th centuries, and later the Gakkhars became more important. Their chief, Kamal Khan Gakkhar, was made a noble (mansabdar) by Emperor Akbar.

In Multan and Sind, the Langahs and Arghuns dominated large regions but were eventually subdued by the Mughals.

The Balochis were a large and powerful tribe in the northwest, divided into many smaller clans under different chiefs. In the western Himalayas, the shepherd tribe of Gaddis lived, while the distant northeastern part of the subcontinent was entirely dominated by tribes such as the Nagas and Ahoms.

In Bihar and Jharkhand, Chero chiefdoms emerged by the 12th century. Akbar's general, Raja Man Singh, attacked and defeated the Cheros in 1591, taking a large amount of booty. However, the Cheros were not entirely subdued until the Mughal forces, under Aurangzeb, captured many of their fortresses. Other important tribes in this region included the Mundas and Santals, who also lived in Orissa and Bengal.

The highlands of Maharashtra and Karnataka were home to tribes such as the Kolis and Berads. The Kolis lived in many areas of Gujarat. Further south, there were large tribal populations of Koragas, Vetars, Maravars, and others.

The Bhils, a large tribe, were spread across western and central India. By the late 16th century, many Bhils had become settled agriculturists and some even became zamindars, although many Bhil clans remained hunter-gatherers.

The Gonds were found in great numbers across the present-day states of Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Andhra Pradesh.

How Nomads and Mobile People Lived

Nomadic pastoralists lived a life on the move, traveling long distances with their animals. They relied on milk and other products from their livestock and exchanged items like wool and ghee with settled farmers for essentials such as grain, cloth, and utensils.

These nomads, like the Banjaras, played a crucial role in trade. They moved goods from one place to another, often using their animals for transportation.

The Banjaras were the most important trader nomads. Their caravans were called "tandas." Sultan Alauddin Khalji used the Banjaras to transport grain to city markets, ensuring a steady supply of food. Emperor Jahangir noted in his memoirs that the Banjaras carried grain on their bullocks from various areas to sell in towns.

During Mughal military campaigns, Banjaras transported food grain for the army. A large army might need up to 100,000 bullocks carrying grain.

Pastoral tribes not only reared animals but also sold cattle and horses to wealthy people. Different castes of petty pedlars traveled from village to village, making and selling items like ropes, reeds, straw mats, and coarse sacks. Some wandering merchants, or mendicants, also traveled extensively, while various castes of entertainers performed in towns and villages to earn their livelihood. These nomadic and mobile people were vital to the economy and culture of the regions they traversed.

Changing Society: New Castes and Hierarchies

As the economy and society grew, the demand for people with new skills increased. This led to the emergence of smaller castes, or jatis, within the larger varnas. Even among the Brahmanas, new castes formed. Many tribes and social groups were integrated into caste-based society and given the status of jatis. Skilled artisans such as smiths, carpenters, and masons were recognized as separate jatis by the Brahmanas. Over time, society became organized more by jatis than by varnas.

Among the Kshatriyas, new Rajput clans gained power in the 11th and 12th centuries. These clans, including the Hunas, Chandelas, and Chalukyas, gradually replaced older rulers, particularly in agricultural regions. As a result, a more developed society began to emerge, with rulers using their wealth to build powerful states.

The rise of Rajput clans to positions of power set an example for tribal people. With the support of the Brahmanas, many tribes were incorporated into the caste system. However, only the leading families of these tribes could join the ruling class, while the majority were absorbed into the lower jatis.

In regions like Punjab, Sind, and the North-West Frontier, many dominant tribes adopted Islam early on and continued to reject the caste system. The unequal social order prescribed by orthodox Hinduism was not widely accepted in these areas. The emergence of new states was closely linked to the social changes occurring among tribal people.

A Closer Look: The Gonds

The Gonds inhabited the vast forested region known as Gondwana, which means "country inhabited by Gonds." They practiced shifting cultivation and were divided into numerous smaller clans, each with its own leader called a raja or rai. As the power of the Delhi Sultans declined, larger Gond kingdoms began to dominate the smaller chiefs.

One such kingdom was Garha Katanga, mentioned in the Akbar Nama, which had 70,000 villages. These kingdoms had centralized administrative systems, divided into garhs controlled by specific Gond clans. Each garh was further divided into units of 84 villages called chaurasi, which were subdivided into barhots, consisting of 12 villages each.

The emergence of large states changed the nature of Gond society, leading to the division of what was once an essentially equal society into unequal social classes. Brahmanas gained influence as they received land grants from Gond rajas. Some Gond chiefs sought recognition as Rajputs, adopting titles like Sangram Shah.

One notable figure was Rani Durgawati, who ruled Garha Katanga on behalf of her young son, Bir Narain. Under her rule, the kingdom expanded even further. However, in 1565, Mughal forces attacked Garha Katanga. Rani Durgawati resisted fiercely but was ultimately defeated and chose death over surrender, as did her son.

Despite the fall of Garha Katanga, Gond kingdoms survived for some time, albeit weakened. They later struggled unsuccessfully against stronger opponents like the Bundelas. Garha Katanga, renowned for its wealth earned from trapping and exporting wild elephants, was annexed in part by the Mughals, while the remainder was granted to Chandra Shah, an uncle of Bir Narain.

The Ahoms: Builders of a New State

The Ahoms migrated to the Brahmaputra valley from present-day Myanmar in the 13th century and established their dominance by supplanting the older political system of landlords known as bhuiyans. Over time, they annexed neighboring kingdoms, including those of the Chhutiyas and Koch-Hajo, to build a large state.

Utilizing firearms as early as the 1530s, the Ahoms defended their territory against numerous invasions, notably from the southwest. Despite facing challenges, including a Mughal invasion in 1662 led by Mir Jumla, the direct control of the region by the Mughals proved short-lived.

The Ahom state relied heavily on forced labor, with individuals obligated to serve the state known as paiks. Each village was required to provide a quota of paiks, leading to population shifts and the fragmentation of Ahom clans.

By the first half of the 17th century, the administration became more centralized, with adult males serving in the army and contributing to public works projects. Ahom society was organized into clans, and artisans often hailed from neighboring kingdoms due to the scarcity of artisan castes within Ahom territories.

Originally worshipping tribal gods, the influence of Brahmanas increased over time, with temples and Brahmanas granted land by the king. Under the reign of Sib Singh (1714-1744), Hinduism became the predominant religion, although the Ahom kings maintained elements of their traditional beliefs.

Despite these changes, Ahom society remained sophisticated, with poets and scholars receiving land grants and the encouragement of theater. Historical works known as buranjis, initially written in the Ahom language and later translated into Assamese, offer valuable insights into the history and culture of the Ahom kingdom.

Benefits of CBSE Class 7 Social Science History Notes

Chapter 7

- **Clear Overview:** The notes give a clear summary of the topic "Tribes, Nomads and Settled Communities."
- **Organized Structure:** The notes are well-organized, making it easy to understand the information.
- **Key Concepts Highlighted:** Important points and facts are emphasized for better understanding.
- **Examples Provided:** Examples are given to explain complex topics in a simpler way.
- **Helpful for Exams:** They are useful for exam preparation as they cover essential information.
- **Quick Revision:** Summaries and key takeaways at the end of each section help in quick revision.

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