

Meta data of E- Content

| S.N. | AREA OF META DATA | |
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| 1. | Theme | Tribal Society |
| 2. | Subject | History |
| 3. | Linkage of theme with chapter | Tribe Nomads and Settled Communities |
| 4. | Class/ Level | Class VII, Our Pasts Part II |
| 5. | Objective | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To make the students aware about the lifestyle of tribal communities • To create awareness about changing nature of tribal society |
| 6. | Description | <p>A tribe is a group of distinct people, dependent on their land for their livelihood, who are largely self-sufficient, and not integrated into the national society. A large number of political, social and economic developments occurred over a period of time during the medieval period. However, hardly any change took place in the social structure of the society because different kinds of societies evolved differently.</p> <p>Between the 8th and the 12th centuries AD, Indian society continued to follow the Vedic practice of dividing people into varnas or castes on the basis of birth. But the varna system had now become more complex and rigid. A number of new jatis or sub-castes had emerged within the four varnas, backgrounds and the work they did. The status of the jatis was not fixed, but varied from place to place. Most rulers accepted this caste-based division of society. Among the different social groups, the Brahmanas enjoyed a high status. The society underwent many changes during the medieval period. There were two types of societies. One was caste-based society in which people were divided into high or low caste, according to their birth. There was a huge gap between the high and low caste groups. The other was the tribal society which did not follow the caste rules laid down by the Brahmanas. Tribal societies were more equal in nature.</p> |

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| | | <p>The tribal people did not keep written records. They preserved their customs and traditions orally. These were passed from one generation to the next by word of mouth only. The tribal people did not easily let outsiders into their areas of habitation. The tribal people generally lived in remote areas such as dense forests, hills, mountains and deserts, which were extremely difficult to reach. As a result, outsiders hardly had any contact with them. It was due to their isolation that the tribals were able to evolve and preserve their distinct culture. With time, tribal groups were exposed to new cultures. As a result, they slowly began to change their isolated lifestyle. Many of them began to lead a settled life and adopted better methods of agriculture.</p> <p>Many tribal customs, ceremonies and gods also became part of the existing culture. During medieval period, some tribes became dominant. Those that controlled the key trade routes and forest resources became very powerful. The Mughals tried to extract either taxes or services from these tribal people. The Gonds and Ahoms were two tribal groups who established powerful kingdoms.</p> |
| 7. | Key Words | Nomads, customs, isolation, Preserve, Remote, Habitation, Territory, Ceremony |
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TRIBAL COMMUNITIES



Tribe of Meghalaya



Tribe of Madhya Pradesh

The society underwent many changes during the medieval period. There were two types of societies. One was the caste-based in which people were divided into high or low caste, according to their birth. There was a huge gap between the high and low caste groups. The other was the tribal society which did not follow the caste rules laid down by the Brahmanas. A tribe is a group of people, usually staying in jungle areas, in a small locality, absolutely illiterate poor, hardly clad in clothes, usually dark and frail, fully living in their own community, whose marriage always takes place among themselves, engaged in hunting and searching for roots, shoots and fruits as their veg food and roasted animals as non-veg food, completely oblivious of the country's political and economic condition, resisting all efforts of development and have a strong dislike for strangers and educated modern community. Tribal societies were more equal in nature. Most of the tribal people were nomads. They moved about with their animals. When the supply of food for these animals got exhausted in an area, they moved to another area. They exchanged milk, honey, wool, ghee and so on with the settled agriculturalists for grain and various other products. They can be called nomadic or travelling traders. They travelled with their families in big groups. Contemporary records tell us that they transported grain from villages to towns on bullock carts. They also reared and sold animals such as horses and cattle to people of the towns they visited. Tribals make up 8.6% of India's population or 104 million according to 2011 census, and a large percentage of Nepalese population. They comprise a substantial indigenous minority of the population of India and Nepal.



OCCUPATIONS OF TRIBAL PEOPLE

The tribal people were engaged in agriculture, herding and hunting-gathering. They depended on the natural resources of the region they lived in. Some tribes settled down in an area permanently, while others led a nomadic lifestyle and moved from one place to another. Settled agriculturalists remained few in number. There were also people following other professions who travelled from place to place, selling their goods or entertaining people with songs and folk tales.

MAJOR TRIBAL GROUPS OF INDIA

In the North-west, the Baluchi tribe was powerful. In Punjab, the Khokhars and the Ghakkars were the main tribes. In the western parts were the Bhils and the Kolis. In Central India, the Gonds controlled large territories. Towards the east, the Cheros, Mundas, Santhals, Khasis, Nagas and Ahoms were the main tribal groups. The Todas, Koragas, Maravars, Badagas and Vetars were the main tribes in the south.

STRUCTURES AND FEATURES OF A TRIBAL SOCIETY

A tribal society is a primitive society which lived in early period of human history but can be found in large number of groups in all countries including India. There has not been any change of tribes in their belief, life style and religion which prevent them from mixing with any outsider or educated community whom they greatly dislike. Tribal people live within nature and absolutely clean environment and this determines their economic activity which consists of hunting small animals and look for food like roots and wild fruits. They have their own social functions and festivals where they sing and dance in characteristic body movements in the same dress by girls, the males playing on musical gadgets like drums, metallic gongs, flutes etc. They hardly have any transaction because nobody has any currency or coins and do not have any knowledge and experience of organizing market. The life style of tribal society is primitive, and depends entirely on their characteristic ways of non-monetary transacted life. The families live within themselves, without knowing about their neighbors in the country who are educated, developed, move in cars, have modern dress etc whom they hate and consider them enemy. The domestic division of labor depends only on age and sex. They have strong sense of unity and any stranger is attacked with bows and arrows.



THINK ABOUT IT:

We know very little about the tribal societies and groups of medieval period. Why?

We know very little about the tribal societies because of several reasons:

The tribal people did not keep written records. They preserved their customs and traditions orally. These were passed from one generation to the next by word of mouth only. The tribal people did not easily let outsiders into their areas of habitation. The tribal people generally lived in remote areas such as dense forests, hills, mountains, and deserts, which were extremely difficult to reach. As a result, outsiders hardly had any contact with them. It was due to their isolation that the tribals were able to evolve and preserve their distinct culture.



CHANGING NATURE OF TRIBAL SOCIETY

With time, tribal groups were exposed to new cultures. As a result, they slowly began to change their isolated lifestyle. Many of them began to lead a settled life and adopted better methods of agriculture. Many tribal customs, ceremonies and gods also became part of the existing culture. During medieval period, some tribes became dominant. Those that controlled the key trade routes and forest resources became very powerful. The Mughals tried to extract either taxes or services from these tribal people. The Gonds and Ahoms were two tribal groups who established powerful kingdoms.

STUDENTS' ACTIVITY



THINK ABOUT IT

1. Caste- based society was different from a tribal society. Comment.
2. Why do we know less about the tribal societies of the medieval period?
3. Explain the occupations of tribal groups.
4. How did the tribal societies change their nature with time?
5. What kind of inhibitions do you think tribals have regarding outsiders?

URLs

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