

Tribes, Nomads and Settled Communities

Introduction

During the medieval period, Indian society included **tribes, nomadic groups, and settled communities**. These groups had different lifestyles, occupations, and cultures. While some people lived in permanent villages and towns, others moved from one place to another in search of food, water, or grazing land. This chapter explains their way of life and their contribution to society.

Tribes

Who Were the Tribes?

Tribes were groups of people who lived together and shared a common culture, language, traditions, and customs.

Characteristics of Tribes:

- Lived in forests, hills, and remote areas.
- Depended on farming, hunting, fishing, and gathering forest products.
- Had their own social and political systems.
- Followed their traditional customs and beliefs.

Examples include the **Gonds, Bhils, Santhals, Ahoms, and Gakkhars**.

Nomads

Nomadic Communities

Nomads were people who moved from one place to another instead of living permanently in one place.

They moved in search of:

- Grazing land for animals.
- Water and food.
- Trade and business opportunities.

Some nomads were traders, shepherds, craftsmen, or entertainers.

Settled Communities

Permanent Settlements

Settled communities lived permanently in villages and towns.

Their main occupations included:

- Agriculture.
- Animal husbandry.
- Trade.
- Handicrafts and other professions.

Permanent settlements helped in the development of towns, markets, and kingdoms.

Tribal Society

Social Life

Each tribe had its own leader who looked after the welfare of the people.

Important features:

- Strong family and community bonds.
 - Equal participation in daily activities.
 - Respect for nature and forests.
 - Festivals and traditions formed an important part of life.
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Changes During the Medieval Period

Growth and Development

Many tribes gradually adopted agriculture and became settled farmers.

Some tribal chiefs became powerful rulers and established kingdoms.

Examples include:

- **The Gonds** established Gond kingdoms in central India.
- **The Ahoms** built a strong kingdom in Assam.

These developments changed the political and social structure of medieval India.

Importance of Tribes and Nomads

Contribution to Society

Tribal and nomadic communities contributed by:

- Protecting forests and natural resources.
- Promoting trade between different regions.
- Preserving unique cultures and traditions.
- Supporting agriculture and animal husbandry.

Their lifestyle added diversity to Indian society.

Key Points

- Tribes shared a common culture and lived mostly in forests and hills.
 - Nomads moved from one place to another for livelihood.
 - Settled communities lived permanently in villages and towns.
 - Many tribes later became farmers and rulers.
 - Tribal societies contributed to India's cultural and economic development.
 - Diversity in lifestyles enriched medieval Indian society.
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Chapter Summary

The chapter explains the lives of tribes, nomads, and settled communities during the medieval period. These groups followed different ways of life based on their occupations and surroundings. Over time, many tribal communities adopted agriculture and established kingdoms, while nomadic groups contributed to trade and transportation. Together, they played an important role in shaping India's history and culture.