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## Chapter – 07 History

### Tribes, Nomads and Settled Communities

- During the Medieval Age, several social, economic and political development took place.
  - The Indian society was divided on the basis varnas. During the medieval period, gap between the rich and poor increased.
  - There were, however, several communities which did not follow rules laid down by the Brahmins. These included the tribes, nomads and settled communities.
  - **Tribal Societies:**
    - (i) Tribes are people who do not follow norms laid down by society.
    - (ii) Most of the tribes were dependant on agriculture. Others were herders or hunter-gatherers.
    - (iii) Tribes were even nomadic and moved from one place to another.
    - (iv) There were even clashes between tribes and powerful caste-based societies.
    - (v) Contemporary historians and travelers from medieval India hardly give any information about the tribes.
    - (vi) Some of the powerful tribes were Khokhar tribe in Punjab; Langahs and Arghuns in Multan; Gaddis in the Himalayas; Kolis and Berads of Gujarat; Gonds of Chhattisgarh, Bhil tribe in Central India, etc.
  - **Pastoral Nomads:**
    - (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 farmers for grains, cloth, utensils, etc.
    - (iii) The most important trader nomads were Banjaras. Their caravan was called 'tanda'. Sultan Alauddin Khalji used Banjaras to move grain to the city markets.
    - (iv) Pastoral tribes thus, basically reared and sold animals like horses and cattle to the prosperous people.
  - **Changes in Caste Structure of India:**
    - (i) In the fields of trade and agriculture, there emerged multi-caste population in many villages on account of the spread of Islam.
    - (ii) Sufi and Bhakti movement preached equality between different castes and religious groups.
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- (iii) Inter-caste marriages started between Rajputs and Muslim nobles.
  - (iv) With the growth of economy, new jatis and varnas emerged.
  - (v) Many tribes became part of ruling changes.

- **The Gonds:**

- (i) Gonds were sometimes referred to by their tribal dialect, Gondi. They practice shifting cultivation.
- (ii) The Gonds rose when Delhi Sultanate declined.
- (iii) The Gond kingdom in Gondwana in southeastern Madhya Pradesh was founded in the 15th century.

- **Ahoms:**

- (i) The Ahom tribe is traced to some tribes living in south-east Asia who had travelled over land through the forests of Assam.
  - (ii) The religion and culture of Assam is a fusion of the local traditions and of migrant tribes.
  - (iii) The Ahoms belonged to a warrior class and built roads and irrigation systems even before establishing their rule.
  - (iv) The Ahoms formed the new kingdom by suppressing the older political system of Bhuiyans.
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