

ATOMIC ENERGY CENTRAL SCHOOL ,KAKRAPAR

CLASS :VII

SUB : SOCIAL STUDIES (HISTORY)

TRIBES, NOMADS AND SETTLED COMMUNITIES

MODULE-3

The Gonds

The Gonds of vast forested region are called Gondwana—or the “country inhabited by Gonds”. They practised shifting cultivation. The Gond tribe was further divided into much smaller clans. Each clan had its own raja or rai. When the power of the Delhi Sultans was declining, a few large Gond kingdoms began to dominate the smaller Gond chiefs. The Akbar Nama, a history of Akbar’s reign mentions the Gond kingdom of Garha Katanga that had 70,000 villages. The administrative systems of these kingdoms became centralized . The kingdom was divided into garhs. Each garh controlled by a particular Gond clan—further divided into units of 84 villages called chaurasi. The chaurasi was subdivided into barhots made up of 12 villages each. The emergence of large states changed the nature of Gond society. Basically equal society gradually got divided into unequal social classes. Brahmanas received land grants from the Gond rajas—became more influential.

The Gond chiefs wished to be recognised as Rajputs. So, Aman Das, the Gond raja of Garha Katanga, assumed the title of Sangram Shah. His son, Dalpat, married princess Durgawati, the daughter of Salbahan. The Chandel Rajput raja of Mahoba-Dalpat died early. Rani Durgawati was capable—started ruling on behalf of her 5-year-old son, Bir Narain. Under her, the kingdom became even more extensive. In 1565, the Mughal forces under Asaf Khan attacked Garha Katanga. Strong resistance was put up by Rani Durgawati. She was defeated and preferred to die rather than surrender. Her son, too, died fighting.

Garha Katanga a rich state, earned much wealth by trapping and exporting wild elephants to other kingdoms. When the Mughals defeated the Gonds, they captured a huge booty of precious coins and elephants. They annexed part of the kingdom and granted the rest to Chandra Shah, an uncle of Bir Narain. Despite the fall of Garha Katanga, Gond kingdoms survived for some time. They became much weaker and later struggled unsuccessfully against the stronger Bundelas and Marathas.

The Ahoms

The Ahoms migrated to the Brahmaputra valley from present-day Myanmar in the 13th century. They created a new state by suppressing the older political system of the bhuiyans (landlords). During the 16th century they annexed the kingdoms of the Chhutiyas (1523) and of Koch-Hajo (1581) and subjugated many other tribes. The Ahoms built a large state, and for this, they used firearms as early as the 1530s. By the 1660s they could even make high-quality gunpowder and cannons. The Ahoms faced many invasions from the south-west. In 1662, the Mughals under Mir Jumla attacked the Ahom kingdom. Despite their brave defence, they were defeated.

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 shifted to less populated places. Ahom clans were

thus broken up. By the first half of the 17th century, administration became quite centralized . All adult males served in the army during the war. They were also engaged in building dams, irrigation systems and other public works. They also introduced new methods of rice cultivation. Ahom society was divided into clans or khels. There were very few castes of artisans, so artisans in the Ahom areas came from the adjoining kingdoms. A khel controlled several villages. The peasant was given land by his village community. Even the king could not take it away without the community's consent. Originally, the Ahoms worshipped their own tribal gods. During the first half of the 17th century the influence of Brahmanas increased. Temples and Brahmanas were granted land by the king. In the reign of Sib Singh (1714-1744), Hinduism became the predominant religion. Ahom kings did not completely give up their traditional beliefs after adopting Hinduism. The society was very sophisticated. Poets and scholars were given land grants. Theatre was encouraged. Important works of Sanskrit translated into the local language. Historical works, known as buranjis, were written, first in the Ahom language and then in Assamese.