

Sherpa People: A Simple Fact Sheet

Grade 7 Geography



Who Are the Sherpas?

- The Sherpa people live in the Solu-Khumbu district in Nepal, near Mount Everest.
- The name "Sherpa" means "people from the East", as they originally came from Tibet.
- They settled in Nepal around the 16th century.

Traditional Life

- Farming: They grow crops suited for high altitudes, like potatoes, barley, and buckwheat.
- Trade: They used to trade with Tibet, bringing in yaks, salt, and dried meat, but this stopped after China took control of Tibet in the 1950s.

Tourism & Mountaineering

- Tourism is important for jobs and income.
- Sherpas are famous climbers and often work as mountain guides and porters for people climbing Everest.
- They help carry heavy loads and navigate dangerous paths in high altitudes.
- However, working as a porter can be dangerous, with risks like cold temperatures, altitude sickness, and injuries.

Sherpa Culture

- Sherpa culture is linked to Tibetan Buddhism.
- They have unique myths, stories, and religious traditions.

- Tengboche Monastery is an important place for Sherpa religion and culture.
- Women have taken on more responsibilities in farming and home life, especially as men work in tourism.

Environmental & Social Challenges

- Tourism brings both benefits and problems.
 - Good: More jobs and money.
 - Bad: Pollution, impact on traditions, and risks for workers.
- Some Sherpas have adapted well to tourism without losing their culture.

Porters in Nepal

- Many porters are poor farmers from lower areas, not just Sherpas.
- Some carry heavy loads in freezing temperatures, which is very dangerous.
- Organizations like the International Porters Protection Group (IPPG) help protect porters and improve their working conditions.

Conclusion

The Sherpa people are resilient, hardworking, and an important part of Nepal's culture and tourism. They have gained international respect for their role in mountaineering while facing both opportunities and challenges in their modern life.

