

# HISTORY

## Chapter 5: Pastoralists in the Modern World



## Pastoralists in the Modern World

Nomadic pastoralists are people who do not live at one place but move from one place to the other in order to find pastures for their cattle and to earn their living.

### Pastoralists in India

In India, many pastoralist communities move from place to place in order to find pastures for their cattle. These pastoral communities also sell grains, meat, and hides. Some major pastoral communities in the mountains of India are:

#### Gujjar Bakarwals of Jammu and Kashmir

- The Gujjar Bakarwals are herders of goat and sheep. During the winter when the Himalayas are covered with snow, they live in the foothills of the Siwalik ranges. The dry scrubs provide food for their cattle.
- When the summer begins in April, the Gujjar Bakarwals move northwards to the Kashmir valley. As the snow melts, the mountains are covered with lush green grass which provides nutritious forage for their cattle. With the onset of winter, the Gujjar Bakarwals again travel down to the low hills of the Himalayas.

#### Gaddi Shepherds of Himachal Pradesh

- The Gaddi shepherds also follow the same movement as that of the Gujjar Bakarwals. They spend winter with their cattle in the foothills of the Sewali's. When the snow melts, they move northwards into Lahaul and Spiti.
- They then move further to the high mountains in order to find pasturelands for their cattle. They begin retreating in September.



Gaddi shepherds of Himachal Pradesh

### Gujjars in Garhwal and Kumaon

- The Gujjars come down to the dry forested area below the foothills of Garhwal and Kumaon to graze their cattle. During the summer, they go up high to the meadows in the high mountains.
- These pastoral communities make the best use of available pastures in different lands. Whenever the pastures exhausted, they moved to new areas. This movement helped the exhausted pasture lands to recover.

Some pastoral communities in the plains, plateaus and deserts are

### Dhangars in Maharashtra

- The Dhangars are an important pastoral community of Maharashtra. They are shepherds, blanket weavers, and buffalo herders.
- The Dhangars stay in the central plateau in Maharashtra during the monsoon. The rainy season allows them to graze their cattle and harvest bajra sown by them.
- In November, they reach the Konkan region which is a fertile agricultural tract. The farmers in the Konkan welcome them because the cattle of the Dhangars graze on the fields and provide manure to them. Their fields thus become ready for the sowing of rabi crops.
- The Dhangars return to their dry fields on the onset of the monsoon in the Konkan.

### Some Other Communities

**The Goras, the Kurumas and the Kurubas** in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh rear sheep and goat and sell woven blankets. These pastoral communities move from the dry lands to the coastal communities based on the onset of the monsoon. These communities leave the area in the rainy season.

**The Banjaras** are a nomadic group which live in the villages of Rajasthan, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. The Banjaras move with their cattle over long distances in search of pasturelands. They also sell plough cattle and other goods to villagers in exchange for grain and fodder.

**The Raikas** live in the deserts of Rajasthan. Because the desert lands cannot be extensively cultivated, the Raikas combine cultivation with pastoralism. They stay in their villages

during the monsoon as grass is available for their cattle. In October, they move out in search of pasture and water and return to their villages the next year during the monsoon. Different groups of Raikas herd camels, goats and sheep. The pastoralists move from one place to the other based on several factors. They calculate the timings of their movements. They have to

move through different terrains and they establish relations with the farmers while moving. They also combine a range of various activities such as trade, herding and cultivation to make a living.



Raikas mainly live in the deserts of Rajasthan

### Pastoralists under the Colonial Rule

The lives of the pastoralists changed considerably under the colonial rule in the following ways:

- Because the Government wanted to transform all grazing lands into the agricultural lands to increase their revenues, the pastoralist lands were changed to agricultural lands. Thus, the pastoralist lands shrank considerably.
- Various Forest Acts were passed in the nineteenth century. These Acts declared many forests as reserved forests. Further, the pastoralists had to take permission from the Government to graze their cattle in the protected forests. The movements of the pastoral communities were thus restricted, regulated and watched over. They could not spend more than the stipulated number of days which were granted to them in the forests.
- The British administrators were suspicious of nomadic pastoralists. They wanted these communities to settle at one place and take up agriculture. Nomads came to be

regarded as criminals. By the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871, the nomadic communities came to be regarded as criminals.

- The British Government taxed almost every commodity in order to increase its revenues. So, taxes were imposed even on cattle. Pastoralists had to pay taxes on every animal which grazed in the pastures.

The pastoralists coped with the changes. While some reduced the number of cattle which they owned, some discovered new grazing lands. Rich pastoralists brought lands and settled at one place. However, many poor pastoralists got into the vicious cycle of debt and lost their cattle.

### Pastoralism in Africa

In Africa, at present, more than 22 million of African population depend on pastoral activity for earning their livelihood. Some pastoral communities are the Bedouins, Maasai, Somali, Turkana, and Berbers. Members of these communities raise their cattle for selling milk, wool and hides. They also combine pastoral activities with cultivation.

#### The Maasai Pastoralists

The Maasai pastoralists mainly live in East Africa. They mostly inhabit the parts of Tanzania and Kenya. The following problems have been faced by the Maasai pastoralists:

- The Maasai pastoralists face continuous problems of grazing lands. European imperial powers divided Maasailand between England and Germany. The grazing lands were taken over by the colonists. Thus, the Maasai lost more than half of their grazing lands.
- The British Government encouraged local farming communities to expand cultivation. Thus, the pastoral lands were changed to agricultural fields.
- Large patches of pastoral lands were also changed to reserves such as Maasai Mara and Samburu National Park. The entry of the Maasai was restricted in these reserves.
- This created pressure on small pieces of land where the pastoralists grazed their cattle. Fodder always remained in short supply.
- Many other pastoral communities in Africa also faced such problems. The exhaustion of pasturelands affected the lives of their cattle. The pastoral communities were not allowed to move into other territories without valid permits.

- Pastoralists were also not allowed to enter the markets in the white areas.
- Dying of pastures and restrictions imposed on the movements of Maasai pastoralists led to a steep decline in the number of cattle, sheep and goats owned by Maasai pastoralists.



Women of the Maasai community of Kenya

### Division of the Maasai Communities

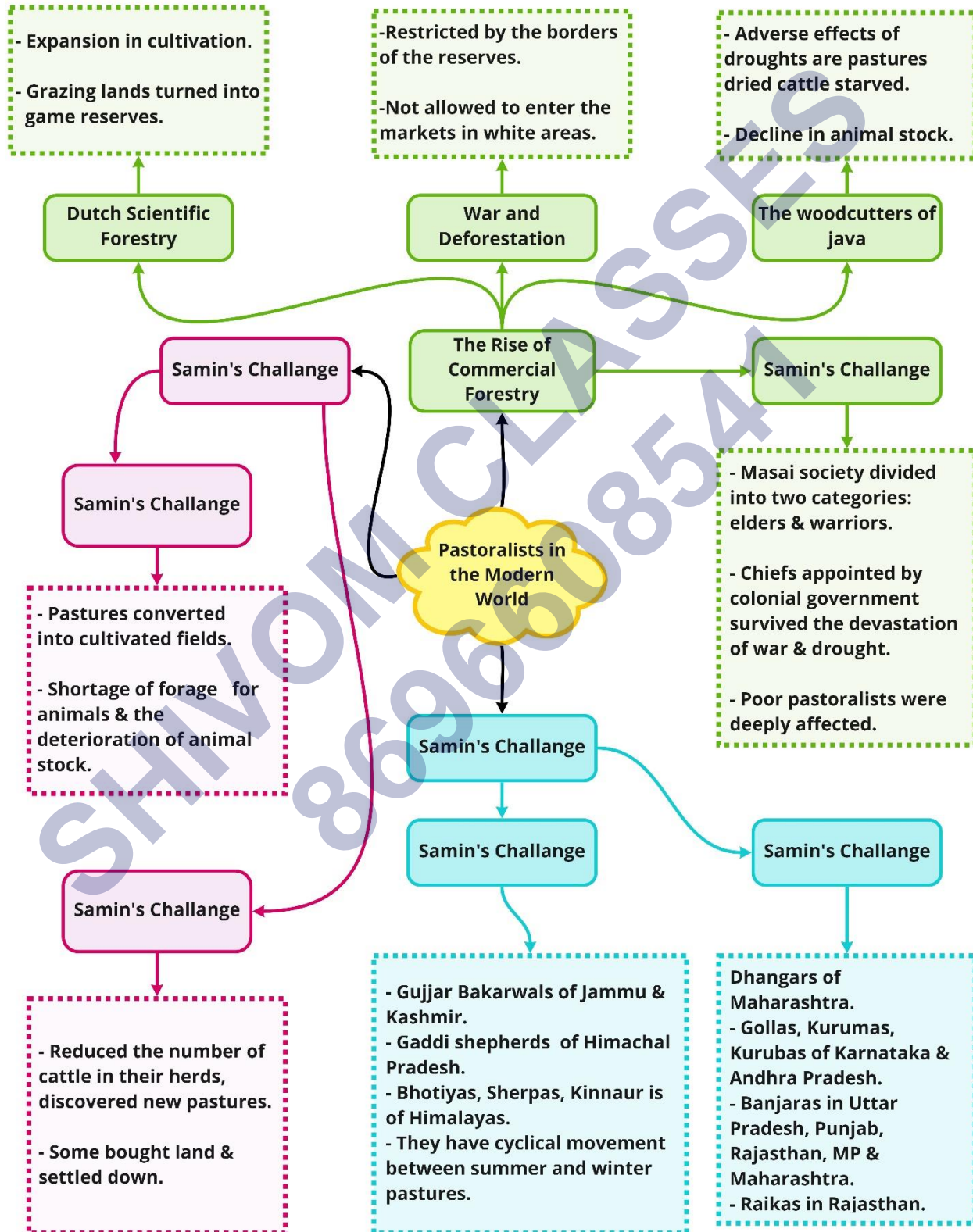
- In the pre-colonial period, the Maasai society was divided into two social categories—the elders and the warriors. While the elders looked after the administration of the clan, the warriors were responsible for the protection of the tribe.
- The Maasai warriors also conducted organised cattle raids.
- The British appointed chiefs of the different sub-groups of Maasai who were responsible for maintaining the administration of the state.
- The British also imposed various restrictions on raiding and warfare. This affected the authority of the elders and the warriors.
- The chiefs appointed by the British accumulated wealth over time. They began to lend money, started trading and settled in towns. The families of the chiefs stayed behind in the villages to look after cattle. This helped them to survive droughts and famines.
- However, the poor pastoralists had no money and only their cattle to live on. During

droughts, they almost lost everything. They then moved to the towns in search of work. Many of them got regular work in road and building construction.

- The division of the Maasai communities into the rich and the poor and the disturbing of the traditional differences based on age were two social changes which occurred in the Maasai communities during the colonial rule.

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Chapter-5: Pastoralists in the Modern World





## Important Questions

### Multiple Choice Questions:

Question 1. In Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh the dry plateau was covered with stone and grass inhabited by:

- (a) Cattle herders
- (b) Goat herders
- (c) Sheep herders
- (d) Camel herders

Question 2. Who were Gollas?

- (a) Cattle herded tribe of dry central plateau region.
- (b) Sheep herded tribe of dry central plateau region.
- (c) Camel herded tribe of dry central plateau region.
- (d) Goat herded tribe of dry central plateau region.

Question 3. Banjaras are well-known groups of graziers and found in the villages of:

- (i) Madhya Pradesh (ii) Punjab (iii) Rajasthan (iv) Uttar Pradesh (v) Maharashtra (vi) Haryana
- (a) (i), (v), (vi)
  - (b) (ii), (v), (vi)
  - (c) (i), (ii), (iii), (v)
  - (d) (iv), (v), (vi)

Question 4. Which of the following is the immediate impact of the colonial rule on the life of the pastoralists?

- (a) Their grazing ground increased
- (b) They were paid rent free land
- (c) Their agriculture stock increased
- (d) Their grazing ground shrunked and their agricultural stock, trade and crafts were adversely affected.

Question 5. The colonial Government in India in 1871 enacted an Act. Name it.

- (a) Forest Conservation Act
- (b) The Criminal Tribal Act
- (c) The Scientific Forestry

(d) The Tribal Act

Question 6. Nomads are the people:

- (a) who do not live at one place but move from one to another to earn their living.
- (b) who temporary shift from one place to another.
- (c) who live at one place and move from place to place to earn their living.
- (d) who are very brave.

Question 7. Which tribe did not evolve pastoral activity in South Africa?

- (a) Massai
- (b) Gonds
- (c) Boran
- (d) Turkene

Question 8. Which tribe combined cultivators with pastoralism in India?

- (a) Raikas
- (b) Maru
- (c) Gujjars
- (d) Gaddi

Question 9. What is referred as Bhabar?

- (a) A wet forest area below the foothills of Garhwal and Kumaun.
- (b) A moderate area having plenty of vegetation.
- (c) A dry area which is sparsely populated.
- (d) A dry forest area below the foothills of Garhwal and Kamaun.

Question 10. Gaddi Shepherds came down from the high meadow in:

- (a) September
- (b) February
- (c) October
- (d) Mid of October.

Question 11. For what Maru tribe is well known?

- (a) For plantation agriculture
- (b) For sheep rearing
- (c) For camel herding

(d) For cyclic seasonal movement

Question 12. The population of Dhangars pastoral community in Maharashtra is about:

- (a) 467500
- (b) 476500
- (c) 476500
- (d) 467000

Question 13. The Maru Raikas herded.....?

- (a) Camels
- (b) Sheep
- (c) Goats
- (d) All

Question 14. The Banjaras were not found in ....?

- (a) Punjab
- (b) Delhi
- (c) Rajasthan
- (d) Maharashtra

Question 15. The warriors consisted of \_\_\_\_?

- (a) Elder people
- (b) Younger people
- (c) Children
- (d) Healthy people

### Very Short:

1. Name the regions of the cyclic movement of Kurumas and Kurubas.
2. Which Pastoralist nomads live in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh?
3. Why were the British officials suspicious of the nomadic people? Give one reason..
4. How did the Gaddis earn their livelihood?
5. What are bugyals?
6. Who are Gujjar Bakarwals?
7. What is Bhabhar?
8. Who were Bhotiyas, Sherpas and Kinnauris?

9. Name the most important pastoral community of Maharashtra
10. Why were the Dhangars welcomed by the Konkani peasants?

### Short Questions:

1. Explain any three factors that the pastoral groups have to consider to sustain their life.?
2. Explain any three different livelihood practices adopted by the pastoralists in the 20th century, as they left their traditional occupations.
3. Give one example to explain why the pastoralists have been compelled to change their movement in modern times.
4. Who are Gujjar Bakarwals of Jammu and Kashmir? Name their winter and summer grounds. Why did they go to these places?
5. Write about the life style of the Gujjars of Kangra.
6. Who were Dhangars? What were their occupations? Why were they continuously on the move?
7. Discuss the various restrictions imposed on pastoral groups in Africa.

### Long Questions:

1. Who are pastoral nomads? Describe any four features of them?
2. In which two social categories was the Maasai society divided in pre-colonial times? In what way
3. Which parts of the African continent are inhabited by the pastoralists? What are the different types of activities they are involved in?
4. How did the pastoralists cope with the changes in new times
5. Why were wasteland rules enacted in various parts of the country?

### Answer Key:

### MCQ:

1. (c) Sheep herders
2. (a) Cattle herded tribe of dry central plateau region.
3. (c) (i), (ii), (iii), (v)
4. (d) Their grazing ground shrunked and their agricultural stock, trade and crafts were adversely affected.
5. (b) The Criminal Tribal Act

6. (a) who do not live at one place but move from one to another to earn their living.
7. (b) Gonds
8. (a) Raikas
9. (d) A dry forest area below the foothills of Garhwal and Kamaun.
- 10.(a) September
- 11.(c) For camel herding
- 12.(d) 467000
- 13.(a) Camels
- 14.(b) Delhi
- 15.(b) Younger people

### Very Short Answer:

1. The Kurumas and Kurubas lived in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. In the dry season they moved near the coast and left when the rains came.
2. The pastoralist nomads who lived in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh were:
  - (a) The Gollas.
  - (b) Kurumas and Kurubas.
3. The British officials were suspicious of the nomadic people because they distrusted mobile craftsmen and traders who sold their goods in villages, and pastoralists who changed their places or residence every season. They were considered as criminals.
4. They sold milk, ghee and other products.
5. Bugyals are vast natural pastures on the high mountains, about 12,000 feet. After April the entire mountainside is covered with a variety of grasses, roots and herbs. By monsoon these pastures are covered with thick vegetation and wild flowers.
6. Gujjar Bakarwals of Jammu and Kashmir are herders of goat and sheep.
7. It is a dry forested area in the foothills of Garwhal and Kumaun.
8. They were the pastoral communities of the Himalayas.
9. Dhangars were an important pastoral community of Maharashtra.
10. After the kharif crops were harvested, the field had to be fertilised for the rabi crops. Dhangar flocks manured the fields and fed on the stubble. Dhangars were also given supplies of rice which they supplied to the plateau where grain was scarce.

### Short Answer:

**Ans: 1.** The three factors which the pastoral groups have to consider to sustain their life are:

- (a) They have to judge how long the herds could stay at one place and know where they could find water and pastures.
- (b) They had to calculate the timing of their movement and had to move through different territories.
- (c) They had to set up relationship with the farmers, on the way, so that herds could graze in the harvested fields and manure the soil. They combined number of activities like cultivation, herding, and trade to sustain themselves.

**Ans: 2.** Three livelihood practices adopted by the pastoralists in the 20th century were as follows:

- (a) Richer pastoralists started buying land and settling down, giving up their nomadic life.
- (b) Some became settled peasants cultivating land.
- (c) Others took to trading.

**Ans: 3.** The pastoralists have been compelled to change their movement in modern times. After 1947, the camel and sheep herding Raikas could no longer move into Sindh and graze their animals on the banks of Indus. The new political boundaries between Indian & Pakistan stopped their movement. In recent years, they have been migrating to Haryana where sheep could graze on agricultural land, after harvests are cut.

**Ans: 4.** Gujjar Bakarwals of Jammu and Kashmir are herders of goat and sheep. They move between their winter and summer grounds. In winters when the ground is covered with snow, they live with their herds in the Siwalik range. The herds feed on the dry scrub forests, By April, they start moving to their summer grazing grounds. After crossing the Pir Panjal passes they reach the Kashmir valley. With the onset of summer, the snow has melted, and the valley is covered with variety of flowers and grasses. They provide nutritious forage for the animals. By the end of September they come back to their winter homes in the Siwalik.

**Ans: 5.** The Gujjar cattle herders live in Garhwal and Kumaon. In the winter, they come to the dry forest of the Bhabhar and go up to the high meadows-the bugyals-in summer. Gujjars are exclusively a pastoralist tribe in the hills, where they do not cultivate anything. Buffaloes are the main wealth of the Gujjars. They live near the boundary of the forests and the mainstay of their existence is the sale of milk, ghee and other products. The men graze the cattle. The women go -to the markets every morning, with little earthen pots filled with milk, butter milk and ghee. During the hot weather they move their herds to the upper ranges where the buffaloes enjoy the weather.

**Ans: 6.** The Dhangars were an important pastoral community of Maharashtra. Most of them were shepherds, some were blanket weavers and others were buffalo herders. They were continuously on the move in search of pasture for their cattle.

**Ans: 7.** (a) The various pastoral groups were forced to live in special reserves. They were not allowed to move their stock without special permits which were not easy to get. Those who

defied the rules were severely punished.

- (b) Pastoralists were not allowed to enter the markets area of the whites.
- (c) In many regions, they were prohibited from participating in any trading activity.

Thus, the restrictions imposed on the pastoralists adversely affected their pastoral and trading activities.

### Long Answer:

**Ans: 1.** Pastoral nomads are people who do not live at one place but move from one area to another to earn their living. They depend on livestock rearing, they move with their cattle and other animals. The four features of pastoral nomads are as follows.

- (a) Pastoral nomads had to adjust to seasonal changes and make best use of available pastures in different places. When the pastureland was exhausted they moved to a different place where pastures are available.
- (b) Cold and snow are not the only factors which defined their seasonal movement. In dry season they moved to coastal areas and left when the rain came.
- (c) They set up a relationship with farmers, so that the herds could graze in harvested fields and manure the soil.
- (d) They combine a range of different occupations – cultivation, trade and herding to earn their living. For example, the Gollas, Kurumas and Kurubas herded cattle, cultivated small patches of land and also engaged in a variety of petty trades.

**Ans: 2.** The Massai society was divided into two social groups in pre-colonial times – elders and warriors. The elders were the ruling group and met in periodic councils to decide on the affairs of the community and settle disputes. The warriors consisted of young people, responsible for the protection of the tribe. They defended the community and organised cattle raids. Raiding was an important activity in a society where cattle was wealth. It was the way through which different pastoral groups asserted their superiority.

The British introduced a number of measures which changed the lives of the Maasai. The chiefs of different sub-groups were appointed to look after the affairs of the tribe. Restrictions were imposed on raiding and warfare. So, the traditional authority of both the elders and warriors changed dramatically. The difference based on age, between elders and warriors broke down, and a new distinction was developed between the rich and poor pastoralists.

The chiefs appointed by the colonial government became rich overtime. They had regular income with which they purchased land, goods, animals and also get involved in trade. But the poor pastoralists worked as charcoal, burners or work in road or building construction or did odd jobs.

**Ans: 3.** Most of the pastoralists in Africa lived in semi-arid grasslands or arid deserts where

rain-fed agriculture is difficult.

The pastoralists are involved in different type of activities like they rear cattle, camels, goats, sheep and donkeys; and sell milk, meat, animal skin and wool. Some also earn through trade and transport, others combine pastoral activity with agriculture, still others do a variety of odd jobs to supplement their meagre and uncertain earnings from pastoralism.

**Ans: 4.** Pastoralists managed to cope with the changes in many ways.

- (a) Some pastoralists reduced the number of cattle because there were not enough pastures to feed large numbers. When pastureland in one place was closed to them, they changed the direction of their movement and combined pastoral activity with other forms of trade.
- (b) Some pastoralists found new pastures.
- (c) They exert political pressure on the government for relief, subsidy and other forms of support and demand a right in the management of forests and water resources.
- (d) Some rich pastoralists gave up their nomadic habits, purchased land and started leading a settled life.
- (e) Some became settled peasants cultivating land. Some borrowed money from the moneylenders to survive.

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