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# UNIT 1 AGRARIAN AND PASTORAL LIFE OF TRIBALS

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## 1.0 OBJECTIVES

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- To know the human and tribal evolution from historical perspective;
- To familiarize with agrarian and pastoral aspects of tribal life; and
- After having known the agrarian and pastoral aspects of tribal life, to see the tribal life and worldview in close association with nature, land and cattle.

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## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

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The present day understanding about agrarian and pastoral life of tribals has not come out of a blue moon. It has been a gradual process of growth and development over the years. It is also a known fact that many of the traditional communities still hold on to the traditional ways of sustenance and agricultural practices. Many agrarian and pastoral communities live in modern India practicing a very ancient form of pastoral and agrarian ways. Thus tradition and modernity walk hand in hand as far as the agrarian and pastoral life of tribal communities are concerned.

### Historical Evolutions

History is always a fusion of tradition and modernity (contemporary). In history one always finds a connection between the past and present. Therefore the study of tribal agrarian and pastoral life in present will invariably lead us to the historical developments of human and tribal life on earth.

Burton Stein in his 'History of India' states, human communities are thought to have inhabited the Indian subcontinent for 500,000 years, according to stone age sites found scattered between the far south of Kerala and Tamil Nadu and the Soan and Beas river valleys in northern Punjab, and from one coast to the other; estimates of dates for some of these range between 400,000 to 150,000 years ago. So - called 'middle Stone Age' societies appeared between 40,000 and 10,000 years ago, followed by those using microlithic tools, first found around 15,000 years ago. Some microlithic communities overlap the first neolithic communities by around 7000 BCE, and both types of cultures continue to be found in most parts of the subcontinent along with hunting - gathering and nomadic pastoral economies; often their activities have been caught in rock art, such as the examples found at Bhimbetka, in Madhya Pradesh, a middle stone age as well as a microlithic site, and occupied in later times as well. Other late Stone Age sites have also been identified, half of them scattered around the continental portions of the subcontinent and the rest found in various parts of the peninsula, or southern extension.

Around 7,000 BCE neolithic communities began to be founded in the valleys draining the mountains which separated the Indian subcontinent from Afghanistan and continental Asia. Before 4000 BCE, hunter - gatherers had merged into more complex and advanced communities of farmers and artisanal specialists in settlements of circular mud - covered bamboo huts. The earliest known of these are found in Baluchistan, with similar communities appearing shortly after in the Gangetic plain and on the Deccan plateau. There, archaeologists have discovered neolithic assemblages: domesticated cattle, sheep, goats and plants, including rice. These Stone Age cultures merged into Iron Age communities by 1000 BCE, again divided between northern and southern India.

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## 1.2 AGRARIAN AND PASTORAL SETTLEMENTS

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Between 1000 and 500 BCE iron tools and weapons provided the technological foundations for the expansion of agricultural communities over the entire basin of the Ganges. One important consequence of the replacement of copper and bronze implements by stronger iron weapons and tools was the greater ease in removing the forest cover from the banks of the Ganges, so that these fertile lands could be planted. Much of the tree cover was also removed by burning.

The supersession of bronze by iron and pastoralism by sedentary agriculture laid the foundation for a new period of political consolidation beginning around 1000 BCE. Numerous small cities in the Gangetic valley reflect the twin processes of agricultural development and state formation.

The opening of the vast, fertile Gangetic plain to agrarian exploitation can be glimpsed in the post-Harappan archaeological record, to which has been added the rich documentation of human existence. From both come details of settlements by horsemen with iron weapons imposing their rule over other peoples, first in the Punjab and the western Gangetic plain and later over the whole of the plain to the Gangetic delta in Bengal. It has been a gradual change rather than the cataclysm implied by the oft- used term 'Aryan invasion'. Archaeology and the Vedic documents permit two simultaneous changes to be traced, one to a fully settled agrarian economy and the other from clans with a lineage - based society to the more complex social and political forms that have marked all subsequent developments in India and made it distinctive.

### 1.3 AGRICULTURAL SETTLEMENTS

Later on came agriculture and human beings settled down along rivers to grow crops. An agrarian way of life is more congenial for individual ownership of wealth that in this context was land and cattle. And once the qualities of individual greed and self-seeking were born there was no going back for them. In an agricultural society man's wealth grew phenomenally, as compared to what it was earlier, and along with the growth of settled agriculture were developed professions like plough-making, pottery, chariot-building, etc.

A significant and far-reaching shift in human subsistence and lifestyle was to be brought about in areas where crop farming and cultivation were first developed: the previous reliance on an essentially nomadic hunter-gatherer subsistence technique or pastoral transhumance was at first supplemented, and then increasingly replaced by, a reliance upon the foods produced from cultivated lands. These developments are also believed to have greatly encouraged the growth of settlements, since it may be supposed that the increased need to spend more time and labor in tending crop fields required more localized dwellings. This trend would continue into the Bronze Age, eventually giving rise to towns, and later cities and states whose larger populations could be sustained by the increased productivity from cultivated lands. One potential benefit of the development and increasing sophistication of farming technology was the possibility of producing surplus crop yields, in other words, food supplies in excess of the immediate needs of the community. Surpluses could be stored for later use, or possibly traded for other necessities or luxuries. Agricultural life afforded securities that pastoral life could not, and sedentary farming populations grew faster than nomadic communities.

However, early farmers were also adversely affected in times of famine, such as may be caused by drought or pests. In instances where agriculture had become the predominant way of life, the sensitivity to these shortages could be particularly acute; affecting agrarian populations to an extent that otherwise may not have been routinely experienced by prior hunter-gatherer communities. Nevertheless, agrarian communities generally proved successful, and their growth and the expansion of territory under cultivation continued.

#### Check Your Progress I

**Note:** Use the space provided for your answers.

- 1) What is the historical evolution of human communities in Indian subcontinent?

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- 2) How did the agrarian and pastoral communities evolve?

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## 1.4 PHILOSOPHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

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Agricultural cycles, crops, celebrations and human life coincide with the nature and cycle of the seasons. The Tribals of Central India especially the Gonds, Santals, Hos, Uraons, Mundas, Kharias have similar type of socio-cultural practice that coincides with the agricultural and natural cycle. These feasts and festivals are the results of their long experience of relating with the land, water, forest and supernatural forces.

The agrarian tribal communities identified their existence in relation to land, forest and ecological ambience, for their meaningful living. They saw their life cycle coinciding with the agricultural cycle throughout the year. Thus they intuned their life, celebrations, meaning system and philosophy of life based on the natural phenomena.

### **Socio-cultural celebrations (Feasts and Festivals) of Adivasis in the Agrarian Communities**

Feasts and celebrations in the tribal world are beautiful fusion of tribal work, worship and celebration. They involve the whole village community. These feasts are seasonal celebrations which are closely linked to agricultural operations and as such they reflect the harmony that exists between the tribe, nature and their religion. Celebration of these feasts help them to make a smooth transition at every stage in the annual cycle of its simple economic pursuits, such as food gathering, hunting, cattle tending and agriculture. These feasts are celebrated to share in life and prosperity in the perspective of the harmoniously ordered cosmological whole, with the cosmic elements and God. The main feasts celebrated chiefly by the *adivasis* of Chotanagpur tribal regions are-

- 1) **Phaggu/Phagua:-** *Phagua* feast is celebrated on the full Moon day of *Phalgun* (February-March). *Phaggu* is related with hunting and food gathering. It is the New Year Day for the Uraons and a few other tribal communities in central India. '*Sikar Candi*' (a deity for hunting) is propitiated for a good hunt. *Phaggu* is symbolic celebration of end of evil and the beginning of a new life. The heap of the thatched grass is set on fire and the *Pahan* cuts the branch, saying, "Let all sickness and suffering of the past year pass away like this severed branch." Only after celebrating *Phaggu* the *adivasis* of Chotanagpur can start gathering new leaves, flowers, fruits, roots and start ploughing and manuring their fields.
- 2) **Sarhul/Xaddi:-** On the Full Moon day of *Cait* (March-April) *Sarhul* is Celebrated by the entire tribal groups of Chotanagpur (CNP) with the aim of securing good rain, good harvest and general well being of all. It is the greatest annual feast for the Uraons, Mundas, Kharias and Hos. It is also New Year Day for the Kharias, Hos and Santals. On this day all the spirits are propitiated at the *Sarna* (sacred grove). Another purpose of celebrating *Sarhul* is to secure favours from the spirits, malevolent or benevolent. *Sarhul* is the most important feast of the Chotanagpur tribals. This feast is celebrated when the *Sal/sarjom* (sorea robusta) tree is in full blossom. The *Sarhul* offering is made at *Sarna* which is considered as the dwelling place of *Chala Paccho* or *Sarna Budhia*. On this day special honour is given to the spirit *Chala Paccho* because according to some myth this spirit is

the spirit of a widow at whose house *Dharmes* himself stayed when he came to destroy the *Asurs* (evil doers) in the form of a sore-filled boy. This feast is also observed as a marriage between the sky and the earth. Only after marriage the earth is supposed to grow new vegetation. On this occasion special prayer is offered to the Supreme Being (*Dharmes*, *Singbonga*, *Ponomosor*, *Chando Baba*, *Marang Buru*) as the following, “Here below are the punches, *Dharmes* is above. O Father you are above we are below. You have eyes, we do not see. You know all, we are totally ignorant. Whether knowingly or unknowingly we have offended the spirits, restrain them. Overlook our mistakes.”

- 3) ***Dhanbuni (first sowing of the seeds):*** It is the symbolic inauguration of the sowing of the seeds when the people pray to their ancestors and Creator God to get abundant blessings on their forthcoming crops in the year.
- 4) ***Hariari (Bangari/Batauli):***- In the month of *Asar Pahan/Naigas/Kalo/Naeke* prays to the Creator God for blessings over green plants and for their protection from all harm.
- 5) ***Kadleta/Kadlota***- On the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the Lunar Month of *Bhado* (Aug.-Sept), this feast is celebrated to ensure the protection of the crops not only from birds, beasts and insects but also from the ‘evil mouth and evil eyes’ of the wicked people. During this feast the village deities and Supreme Being are offered sacrifices in order that they may protect the standing crop from all harms. ***Dandakatta*** sacrifice is offered to the Creator God and His blessings are invoked upon the crops with the following prayer - “*May the crops ripe and come out well; and may we reap a full harvest and may nothing untoward happen.*”
- 6) ***Karam***:- *Karam* is celebrated on the 11<sup>th</sup> day of the Lunar Month of *Bhado* (Aug-Sept).- *Karam* is celebrated to ensure the protection of the standing crops in the fields, for the welfare of the offspring and for the young maidens who are preparing themselves for marriage in near future. This feast is very symbolic celebration of the young tribal maidens who grow to a marriageable age and are ready to bear children as the crop is ready to sprout. This feast shows another beautiful correlation between nature and human beings. Symbolizing productivity and fecundity the young maidens themselves stand for the good of the tribe as they always did in the past.
- 7) ***Nayakhani/Tusgo/Jom Nawa/Neodem***:- The celebration of *Nayakhani* starts from the New Moon Day onwards in the Lunar Month of *Kunwar* (September-October). On this day tribals take the first fruits of the year. They also venerate the ancestors for giving the gift of life, land and art of cultivation. This feast shows the living inter communion between the living members and the community of ancestors.
- 8) ***Sohrai/Sohrae***:- *Sohrai* is celebrated on the eve of the New Moon day in *Katik* (October-November). This feast is celebrated to show special respect and gratitude to the cattle. Cattle is a great help for ploughing and for many other agricultural activities. Thus cattle, crop and children are highly given priority in tribal life and world. *Gorea* spirit (cowshed spirit) is propitiated on this day.

- 9) **Khalihani:-** (Lunar month of *Aghan*, Nov.-Dec). It is the last agricultural feast of the *adivasis*. Prayers and sacrifices are offered in thanksgiving to *Dharmes/Singbonga*, and the threshing of the crops begins. The village spirits are offered sacrifices for being favourable during the agricultural operations. Blood sacrifice is offered to the spirits and to the Supreme Being.
- 10) **Maghe:-** Maghe is celebrated on the 4<sup>th</sup> day in the lunar month of *Magh* (January-February). This feast is celebrated to give honour to the house-servants who help the tribals in all sorts of agricultural operations throughout the year.

All these annual feasts of tribals are intimately linked with the annual agricultural cycle and are centered around 'the good of family, the good of the clan and the good of the tribe which is their highest good.' The details of celebrations and number of feasts may differ from community to community but the meaning system behind all the celebration is the same. Tribals commonly share the same type of worldview with regard to Supreme Being, spirits, agricultural cycle, ancestors, human and nature.

### Check Your Progress II

**Note:** Use the space provided for your answers.

- 1) What are the different feasts the agrarian tribal community celebrates round the year?

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- 2) What is the relationship between tribals, land, nature and celebrations?

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## 1.5 PASTORAL TRIBAL COMMUNITIES

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Pastoral tribal communities trace back their historical link to the days of Mehrgarh in Afghanistan. The human communities as they moved towards the Indian subcontinent, they bifurcated principally into two communities, one agrarian and another pastoral. However most of the anthropologists are of the opinion that human societies are most often organized according to their primary means of subsistence. They have identified hunter-gatherer societies, nomadic pastoral societies, horticulturalist or simple farming societies, and intensive agricultural societies. These are also called as civilizations.

Pastoralism is a slightly more efficient form of subsistence than the hunter-gatherer societies. Rather than searching for food on a daily basis, members of



a pastoral society rely on domesticated herd animals to meet their food. Pastoralists live a nomadic life, moving their herds from one pasture to another. Because their food supply is far more reliable, pastoral societies can support larger populations. Since there are food surpluses, fewer people are needed to produce food.

### **Definition of Pastoralism**

Pastoralism is a form of subsistence. In the pastoralism the 'Pastoral societies are' defined as 'those that have a disproportionate subsistence emphasis on herding domesticated livestock.' It is like many other forms of subsistence like-horticulture, agrarian or industrial. The most important defining criterion of pastoralism perhaps is the organization of community life around the needs of the herds. Typical herding societies are "nomadic." People live in portable tents or temporary structures and move considerable distances from pasture to pasture according to the dictates of ecological circumstances and the needs of the beasts.

Pastoral societies are theoretically important because they exhibit non-progressive evolution. At the same time this society is capable of teaching other human communities how to adjust their life style according to the changing ecological circumstances. Pastoral societies played an important role during the agrarian era and illustrate some important ecological/evolutionary processes. Evolutionists of the progressivist (orthogenetic) type, who believe that evolution has some inevitable tendency in the direction of more complex and probably morally superior societies, are inclined to downplay pastoral societies because they tend to contradict with the inevitability of progress and change.

In India the pastoralists can be identified in the most arid parts of the Thar Desert on the Indo-Pakistan border and the sub-alpine and alpine zones above 3200 meters in the Himalayas, which can only be utilized seasonally by means of pastoral strategies. But in most parts of India, pastoral and agrarian land use strategies are spatially integrated and interdependent activities pursued within the same landscape. Besides breeding their own livestock, pastoralists also take care of the animals of other communities, fulfilling the role of village cowherd.

Geographically, nomadic pastoralism is most prevalent in the drylands of western India (Thar Desert) and on the Deccan Plateau, as well as in the mountainous regions of North India (Himalayas). Types of livestock kept in mobile pastoral systems include buffaloes, sheep, goats, camels, cattle, donkeys, yaks and even ducks are raised under transhumant conditions. But there are also more sedentary forms of pastoralism, represented, for instance, by the buffalo breeding of Todas in the Ghat region of Southern India.

### **Pastoralist communities in India**

There are various types of pastoralist communities across India with a vast difference at times. The Himalayan pastoralists are different from their counterparts in the Southern and Western part of the country. Some of the main pastoralist communities in India are- Ahirs, Bhutia, Gujjar, Ghosi, Ranghar of North India, Baghelmainly, Muslim Gaddi, Gaderiain in UP and MP, Bakarwal found in Jammu and Kashmir, Bharwad, Maldhari, Charan, Rabari, Raika in Gujarat and Rajasthan, Bodla, Chisti, Wattu found in Pakistan and Punjab, Dhargar found in Maharashtra and MP, Gaddi, Kinnauras of Himachal Pradesh, Gvala in Bangladesh, Kuruba, Kurma, Todas found in South India ,

Sherpas in Nepal etc. The majority of them are connected with particular livestock species by their myth of origin, tracing their descent to an ancestor who was created by God for the purpose of taking care of these animals. For instance, the Raika/Rebari are linked to the camel, the Charan in Gujarat are associated with cattle, and the Bharvad keep mostly small stock. Based on this heritage, these pastoralists are endowed with a special sense of responsibility for the welfare of their livestock. Among the pastoral communities many communities fall under the Hindu caste structure.

### **Socio-economic Conditions of the Pastoralists**

Pastoralists are viewed as poor people in the Indian context. In government records, publications and documents, pastoralists are regarded as marginalized, backward and poor populations. The dispersed population, remote habitations, cultural uniqueness, low literacy rates and migratory lifestyles have contributed to this perception of the state. In the Himalayas, they are a low priority group and there has been no conscious attempt by the state or any other institution to assess their poverty status. There could be the following reasons for low priority-

- The socio-economic status of pastoralists in Himalayas is seriously under-documented.
- Their mobility and ownership of unconventional property assets, i.e. animals have made it difficult to assess their poverty status with the help of existing poverty indicators.
- The only method to assess poverty status of Himalayan pastoralists would be through physically culling out from the district census data and compare it with the existing poverty indicators.

In the Western dry lands the pastoralists are placed in a respectable position in comparison with the lower caste groups in the region. Thus they rank far above the untouchable castes. However, they are commonly believed to represent the most backward and conservative social group in the region.

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## **1.6 PASTORALIST CONFOUND PROGRESSIVISM**

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In social evolutionary thinking, the nomadic lifestyle has traditionally been treated as less civilized, less productive and more degrading than a settled lifestyle. This cultural bias is clearly manifested in many of the colonial, historical and governmental documents and seems to have many policy level implications for the Himalayan pastoralists. Pastoralists continue to be treated as a problem for administrators in terms of collecting taxes or controlling the population or even to plan any developmental programmes. Due to the problem of their cultural stereotyping, small population and migratory lifestyle, the Himalayan pastoralists are ignored in the various policy-level decisions. Non-participation and ignorance of their due rights and status in the Indian state have seriously marginalized these communities. Their political marginalization is also visible across all the Himalayan states where most of the pastoral groups are not vocal about their concerns. Besides the above mentioned problems other major threats to livelihood faced by the pastoralist groups in Himalayas are- (a) reduced pastures and (b) disturbed migration routes.



In the Western Region too the pastoralists are facing serious threat to their livelihood. The pastures have considerably decreased and the forests are declared prohibited area from grazing. Thus shrinking of grazing area is the most serious threatening problem in the Western region. The pastoralists become the victim of agriculturally centered development strategies of the government. The expansion of irrigated agriculture, expansion of cultivation into former wastelands, land reservation for military base, Wild Life Sanctuaries, expansion of urbanization and industrialization are making the pastoral way of life more difficult. However, the secluded and nomadic society has something important to teach to the rest of the human community.

### **Environmentally Specialized Societies**

Pastoralism was for a long time a very successful adaptation to grassland and desert. The existence of extensive tracts of temperate grassland, subtropical desert, or tropical savanna, combined with the technology of animal husbandry, lead to the development of pastoral societies that compete and very effectively with more “advanced” agrarian societies for these open country environments, despite being considerably more “primitive” in terms of complexity of social and political organization.

Pastoralists have shown themselves very resilient, they have intact social structures and mechanism for mutual sharing of resources and their livestock also represents an encashable asset. Although odds seem stacked against them there is some hope that with increasing international emphasis on the conservation of biodiversity, pastoralists might be able to benefit from recognition of their role in conserving livestock genetic diversity, valuable indigenous breeds and indigenous knowledge about coping mechanisms for environmental stresses like drought and floods. However based on their thorough understanding of their traditional production systems, indigenous knowledge, traditional strategies and practices, the concerned agencies could empower the pastoralists and maintain their capacity to produce food on marginal lands.

### **Technological Adaptations**

The technology of pastoralism is largely just the animal husbandry component of the prevailing horticultural and agrarian technology, more or less thoroughly shorn of its plant cultivation component. On the level of subsistence, pastoralists are merely farmers who specialize in herding animals like sheep, goats, cattle, horses, llamas, yaks, and so forth. Normally, this specialization includes a good deal of specialized knowledge about animal husbandry, pasture, and land transportation technology, exceeding that of their farming neighbors, but not dramatically. Contrariwise, although many pastoralists also farm, they are generally not the experts as their neighbors are.

Few pastoral people subsist entirely on animal products. Most probably they derive half or more of their calories from plant products. These may derive from growing crops, from trade in animal products with settled agricultural foreigners, by extending services such as caravan operation for pay, by having agricultural slaves or clients, and by raid or threat of raids. The human diet is greatly enriched by eating relatively small amounts of meat and animal fats. Leather, horn, wool, and animals for traction are also valuable. Thus animal specialists are often motivated to trade much of their valuable animal production for grains, crafts and manufactures, luxuries and so forth. Settled peoples often pay tribute

to pastoralists to avoid raids, or pay some pastoralists to protect them from other pastoralists. The role of pastoralists as traders best developed in those places and periods when caravan routes were important.

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## 1.7 SOCIO-POLITICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL UNDERPINNINGS

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The Pastoral societies possess a close economic symbiosis with state level polities. Pastoralists though, are politically not very important but their contributions to the day today human needs are inevitable. The nomadic nature of pastoralism was made use of for transportation of goods and services to other parts of the country. Thus trade and commerce flourished in the remote and difficult places through the free movement of the pastoralists. In the past trade through the pastoralists became an avenue for ideas, and religions like Islam and Christianity to spread across the regions.

Though pastoralism is considered very traditional and outdated means of livelihood in today's competitive world, it has a lasting value and philosophy of life. There are threats of perceptions where pastoralism is considered as a non-sustainable economic process and a greater productive efficiency is assumed for capital and technology-intensive world. Such tendencies can discourage pastoralists way of sustenance and nomadic pastoralism. In the Himalayan regions resources are scanty and pastoralism is seen as traditional and viable means of sustenance in the absence of any other alternative.

The new perspective on pastoral development looks at the relevance and effectiveness of western concepts which have been applied in developing countries. There is now an increased appreciation for the complexity and ecological economic efficacy of traditional pastoral systems. It provides hope that the vast indigenous knowledge herders possess will be better understood and used in designing new interventions. Greater awareness of the need to understand existing pastoral systems should also help ensure that the goals and needs of pastoralists are incorporated into new programmes and the local herders become active participants in the development process.

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## 1.8 LET US SUM UP

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Pastoralism is in crisis globally, both as a result of human-made and natural constraints, and internal and external influences. The existence and problems of pastoralists in India have barely filtered into the consciousness of the general public and policy makers. If there is any awareness at all, then pastoralism is regarded as a way of life that is backward and doomed. It is this attitude that requires change. Pastoralism needs to be given recognition and promoted as a land use strategy that is ecologically and economically appropriate in certain marginal areas and basically has the same value in some areas as cultivation and wildlife conservation in others, besides providing positive reinforcements to them.

Moreover, pastoralists make an important contribution to the conservation of biodiversity through their sustainable use of indigenous livestock germplasm. Making planners, policy makers and advisors recognize this situation would mean that a major part of the battle was won. This calls for a change in perspective of the people. The geographical and occupational differences keep them away from the ordinary hustle and bustle of city and people. The pastoralists

essentially occupy different spheres that are very far apart and not at all interconnected. An attempt to reduce the gap and foster a systematic interaction with pastoralist community can create better atmosphere and human interaction where no one is deprived of the social, human and national development. Like the pastoralist community the agrarian states are typically very conservative compared to the modern technologically advanced states. But as far as sustainability and stability, ecological sensitivity and interdependence between human and nature is concerned the agrarian and the pastoralist communities have a lot to teach the rest of the human communities.

Agrarian and Pastoral life of tribal communities have a very long history to hold on. The origin and evolution of such communities can be traced back to the days of human civilizations of pre-Harrappan and Mohen-e-Jodaro era in and around Baluchistan and Mediterranean civilizations. The historical evidences prove that agrarian and pastoral tribal communities have gradually moved towards Indian sub continent of which they became the original inhabitants. Both the agrarian and Pastoralist communities have developed a life style and meaning system most suited to their daily needs and simple understanding. In the course of their symbiotic living with nature the agrarian and pastoralist tribal communities followed the course of nature through land, forest, waters and ecological surroundings. They also saw the Creator and Supreme Being in relation to their experiences of the natural and supernatural forces. Thus both the communities have developed a more sustainable, stable and ecologically more sensitive human living which is based on interdependence between humans, nature and supernatural beings.

### **Check Your Progress III**

**Note:** Use the space provided for your answers.

- 1) What are the positive contributions that the pastoralist community can make?  
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- 2) How politics is connected with the agrarian and pastoral communities?  
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- 3) Why is the study of agrarian and tribal communities important?  
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## 1.9 KEY WORDS

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**Sarna:** *Sarna* means the sacred grove, usually a cluster of *saal* (*sorea robusta*) trees popularly found in the Chotanagpur regions. In every village there is supposed to be a *sarna*, a sacred grove where most of the village deities reside. *Sarna* is actually the dwelling place of the spirit “*Chala Pacchho/Sarna Budhia*” or just *Chala*. Once a year, during “*Sarhul*” celebration, all the spirits are propitiated at *Sarna*, many fowls are offered to different spirits and God the Dharmes is also offered a sacrifice of egg in a separate place. There is a popular belief among the people and according to Van Exem and others that when the tribals were first clearing the forests for cultivation the spirits already residing there were not allowing people to clear the forests. Many people were dying in the mysterious enmity between the spirits and tribals. When they left a cluster of trees in each region the spirits did not trouble people. And they thought this sacred grove is like a safe residing place for the spirits. Thus the idea of *sarna* evolved in each village. Now *Sarna* has become a religious symbol for the tribals of these regions who are traditional worshippers according to their religio-cultural practice. They had no name for their religion and so now they have named their traditional way of worship as *sarna*. And thus the word *Sarna* is now also the name of their religion.

**Dandakatta:** *Dandakatta* sacrifice or ceremony is the central ritual of the Uraons. It is called by different names like- *Palkansan*, *Bhakh katna*, *Bhelwan Phari*, *Danda Rengtana* etc. The word’s meanings slightly differ but the applied meaning is the same i.e. to cut the effects of malicious words and evil eyes caused either by spirits or by human beings. The seven corners or petals are made in a diagrammatic form with three layers of colours: white, grey and black. An egg is placed between a split branch of a poisonous wild cashew nut tree. Some unparched rice is also placed at the centre of the diagram. This diagram is also called the bow of Dharmes the Supreme Being with which he destroyed evil (nly. Sonu Gidh and the silk cotton tree).

**Symbiotic/symbiosis:** It is an interdependent and interrelatedness between different bodies. Here it is meant interdependent and mutual drawing of life form each other between human beings, nature and the Supernatural Beings, where one is meaningless without the other.

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