

History Chapter – 5 Pastoralists in the Modern World

Q.1. Describe the life of Dhangars of Maharashtra

Ans.

1. The Dhangar shepherds stay in the central plateau of Maharashtra during the monsoon. By October, they harvest their *bajra* and move west to Konkan. The Dhangar flocks manure the fields and feed on stubble.
2. The Konkani peasants give them rice which they take to the plateau as grain is scarce there. With the onset of monsoon they leave Konkan and return to the dry plateau.

Q.2. How did the life of pastoralists change under the colonial rule?

Ans. Under colonial rule, the life of pastoralists changed dramatically. Their grazing grounds shrank, their movements were regulated and they had to pay more revenue. Their agricultural stock declined and their trade and crafts were adversely affected.

Q.3. How did the Forest Acts change the life of pastoralists?

Ans.

1. Forest Acts were enacted to protect and preserve forests for timber which was of commercial importance. These Acts changed the life of pastoralists.
2. They were now prevented from entering many forests that had earlier provided valuable forage for their cattle.
3. They were issued permits which monitored their entry into and exit from forests. They could not stay in the forests as much as they liked because the permit specified the number of days and hours they could spend in the forests. The permit ruled their lives .

Q.4. How did the pastoralists cope with the changes in production during the colonial period?

Ans.

1. Under colonial rule the life of the pastoralists changed completely. Their grazing grounds became less, their movements were regulated, the revenues they had to pay increased, their trade and crafts and agricultural produce declined.
2. The pastoralists adjusted with these changes. They reduced the number of cattle in their herds. They discovered new pastures. Some bought land and began to lead a settled life. Some poor peasants borrowed money to survive.
3. In due course of time they lost their cattle and sheep and became labourers.

Q.5 'In Maasailand, as elsewhere in Africa, not all pastoralists were equally affected by the changes in the colonial period.' Explain.

Ans.1. In Maasailand, as elsewhere in Africa, not all pastoralists were equally affected by the changes in the colonial period. In pre-colonial times, Maasai society was divided into elders and warriors.

2. To administer the affairs of Maasai, the British appointed chiefs who were made responsible for the affairs of the people. These chiefs often accumulated wealth with which they could buy animals, goods and land.

3. They lent money to poor neighbours who needed to pay taxes. Many of them began living in cities and became involved in trade. Their wives and children stayed back in villages to look after animals. These chiefs managed to survive the devastation of war and drought. They had both pastoral and non-pastoral income. But the poor pastoralists who depended only on their livestock did not have resources to tide over bad times. In times of war and famines, they lost nearly everything and had to look for work in towns.

Q.6. Describe the social organisation of the Maasai tribe in the pre-colonial times. What changes occurred in Maasai community during colonial period?

Ans. 1. the Maasai society was divided into two social categories – elders and warriors. The elders formed the ruling group and the warriors were responsible for the protection of the tribe.

2. They were assertive, aggressive and brave but were subject to the authority of the elders. They proved their manliness by conducting raids and participating in wars. Raiding was important in a society where cattle were wealth.

3. The Maasai lost about 60% of their pre-colonial lands. Pasture lands were turned into cultivated fields and Maasai were confined to an arid zone with uncertain rainfall and poor pastures. 4. They could not move over vast areas in search of pastures. It affected both their pastoral and trading activities as they were not only deprived of land but of all forms of trade

Q.7 What were the views of the British officials about nomadic people? Mention two provisions of the Criminal Tribes Act.

Ans. 1. British officials were suspicious of nomadic people. They distrusted mobile craftsmen and traders who hawked their goods in villages, pastoralists who changed their residence every season.

2. The colonial government wanted to rule over a settled population. Under the Criminal Tribes Act, the nomadic people were considered criminals by nature and birth and many communities of craftsmen, traders and pastoralists were classified as Criminal Tribes.

3. These communities were restricted to living in notified village settlements and were not allowed to move without a permit.

Q.8. Describe the life of pastoralists inhabiting the mountains of India.

Ans. 1. The Gujjar Bakarwals of Jammu and Kashmir, the Gaddi shepherds of Himachal Pradesh, the Gujjar cattle herders of Garhwal and Kumaon, the Bhotiyas, the Sherpas and Kinnauris move annually between their summer and winter grazing grounds governed by the cycle of seasonal movements.

2. They adjust their movements to seasonal changes and make effective use of available pastures in different places. When pastures are exhausted or unstable in one place they move their herds to new areas.

Q. 9. Discuss the factors on which the life of pastoralists depend.

Ans. Pastoralists live in small villages, in plateaus, in deserts or near the skirt of the woods. They cultivate a small piece of land, Keep herds of cattle, flocks of sheep and goats or herds of camels. They move between their summer and winter pastures with their herds, selling plough cattle and their things to farmers and getting grain and rice,

selling milk and ghee, animal skin and wool. The pastoral life is sustained by the knowledge of:

- 1)How long to stay in one area
- 2)How to find food and water for their herds
- 3)How to assess the timing of their movement
- 4)Their ability to set up relationship with farmers.

Q.10 Explain any four laws which were introduced by the colonial government in India which changed the lives of pastoralists.

Ans. (i) from the mid-nineteenth century, Wasteland Rules were enacted in various parts of the country. By these rules uncultivated lands were taken over and given to selected individuals.

(ii) By the mid-nineteenth century, various Forest Acts were also enacted in different provinces. Through these Acts some forests which produced valuable timber like *deodar* or *sal* were declared 'Reserved'. No pastoralist was allowed access to these forests. Other forests were classified as 'protected'.

(iii) In 1871, the colonial government in India passed the 'Criminal Tribes Act'. By this Act, many communities of craftsmen, traders and pastoralists were classified as Criminal Tribes. They were stated to be criminal by nature and birth. Once this Act came into force, these communities were expected to live only in notified village settlements.

(iv) To expand its revenue income, the colonial government looked for every possible source of taxation. So tax was imposed on land, on canal water, on salt, on trade goods, and even on animals (the Grazing Tax).

Q.11. Give two examples to illustrate how the pastoral nomads adjust to seasonal changes and make effective use of available pastures in different places.

Ans. (1) The Gaddi shepherds of Himachal Pradesh are a good example. They spend their winter in the low hills of the Sivalik range. Their cattle graze in the scrub forests.

2. As summer approaches (i.e. sometime in April) they move north to Lahul and Spiti. They stay there with their cattle. Some of them even move to higher altitudes as the snow melts. As the summer ends by September they begin their return journey.

3. Their return journey is interrupted in the villages of Lahul and Spiti where they reap their summer harvest and sow their winter crop. They then go down to the Sivalik hills where they stay for the winter. Next April their journey to the north begins again.

1. The Gujjar Bakarwals of Jammu and Kashmir also follow the same pattern. During winters they stay in the low Sivalik hills with their herds. The dry scrub forests provide fodder for their cattle. As summer approaches (i.e. by April) they gather for their journey to the valley of Kashmir.

2. They cross the Pir Panjal passes and reach the lush green mountain side. They stay here with their cattle till winter approaches (i.e. by September).