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## UNIT 2 NOMADIC

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### Structure

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Who are the nomads?
- 2.3 History of nomadism in India
- 2.4 Types of nomads in India
- 2.5 The nomadic tribes of India: their typology
  - 2.5.1 Pastoral nomads or animal husbanders of India
    - 2.5.1.1 BHARWAD
    - 2.5.1.2 RABARI
    - 2.5.1.3 BAKARWAL
    - 2.5.1.4 GUJJAR
    - 2.5.1.5 CHANGPA
    - 2.5.1.6 GADDIS
    - 2.5.1.7 BROQPA
  - 2.5.2 Hunter-gatherer/foragers
  - 2.5.3 Peripatetics
    - 2.5.3.1 Banjara/ Lambadi
    - 2.5.3.2 Gaduliya Lohar
    - 2.5.3.3 Birhor
    - 2.5.3.4 Beda
- 2.6 Nomads today
- 2.7 Let us sum up
- 2.8 Activity
- 2.9 References and further reading
- 2.10 Glossary
- 2.11 Check your progress: possible answers

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## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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After reading this Unit you will be able to:

- get an idea about who the nomads are;
- learn about their types with detailed and specific examples; and
- understand the present status of the Nomadic tribes of India.

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## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

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Structurally this Unit is divided into three main sections. The first section of the Unit starts with a description of the characteristics of nomads followed by a

short historical background of nomadism in India in the second section. This is followed by the enumeration of the types of nomads in India with specific details of each type and their way of life in the third and fourth section respectively.

In the fifth section of the Unit we have discussed the present status of the Nomadic tribes of India.

As you go through the Unit, you will get a glimpse of those Indian tribes who follow the nomadic way of life and map the routes they move on for their survival. Hope you enjoy reading the unit.

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## 2.2 WHO ARE THE NOMADS?

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According to sociologists, South Asia has the world's largest nomadic population. In India, roughly seven percent of the population is nomadic. They thus constitute a substantial portion of our population.

*However, who are the nomads?* Nomads are communities on the move which have set up home whenever and wherever they stopped. The Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland in their work 'Notes and Queries on Anthropology' describe nomads as "those dependant principally on hunting or collecting for their food supplies, having no permanent abodes." The Encyclopedia of Social Sciences (Vol 11 & 12) defines nomadism as "involving the repeated shifting for subsistence and undirected wandering, but is focused around temporary centres of operation, stability of which depended upon food supply and the state of technical advance. It assumes different forms, according to methods of obtaining food, topographic and climatic conditions."

But nomadism is much more than just being on the move. The mobility of these groups is an essential economic strategy and the central focus point to the very nature of their profession. According to sociologists, before the advent of transportation and communication, mobile groups served as useful adjuncts to sedentary societies often providing essential services to the sedentary communities. As occupational groups of hunters, trappers, blacksmiths, basket weavers and entertainers like puppeteers, acrobats, fortune-tellers, singers and dancers, the nomads shared a symbiotic relationship with settled people.

Nomads profess a wide variety of livelihoods. Each one occupy a particular socio-economic niche, fulfilling a specific need of village or sedentary communities. For instance, the Ghatiya Jogis or the makers of grinding stones for household use, the Nandiwallahs whose cattle provided manure, the Hakkipikkis of southern India who made a living from hunting or selling wild animals or the Vaidus or traditional healers who made medicines from forest plants. Again the lohars or the blacksmiths arrive at the beginning of the agricultural season to repair and sell agricultural tools and implements while pastoral groups, like the Rabaris, are allowed to build temporary shelters on agricultural lands where the dung from their livestock helps fertilise the fields. The Banjaras were the mobile meat transporters. They would herd cattle in large numbers from Rajasthan to Uttar Pradesh, to the slaughterhouses.

## 2.3 HISTORY OF NOMADISM IN INDIA

Nomadism was the principal survival strategy since the pre-Neolithic times. Foraging activities were predominant in order to get a constant supply of food. With the advent of the Neolithic period, domestication of plants and animals began and this paved the way for sedentarisation. Around this period, agriculture was introduced which coexisted with the existing pastoralist and foraging activities for a long time. Among the findings at the Harappan sites, evidences of a rudimentary form of agriculture as well as the procurement of meat through hunting were found. This indicated that either sections of the population were foragers or else they depended on the neighbouring foraging groups for the supply of meat. Such symbiotic relationships grew up between the sedentists and the foragers during the Harappan period. In most parts of the country, instead of a unilineal development from nomadism to sedentism both coexisted. During the Mesolithic period interaction took place between the foragers, agriculturists and the urban centres.

In the early Vedic age, the society was predominantly pastoral and nomadic to a large extent. As evident from the *Rig Vedic* hymns, the main source of wealth were the cattle. Eventually settlers on the west bank of the river Yamuna were largely pastoral and those on the Ganga-Yamuna Doab, agriculturists. Again in the south, foraging and herding were important subsistence patterns along with agriculture.

Throughout the whole millenia, exchange and trade existed between nomadic foragers, mobile herders, farmers and the urban settlers. Trade relations to far off places like the present day Afghanistan existed since the Indus Valley civilisation.

Ancient literature as well as oral narratives mentions the presence of many peripatetic professions like itinerant minstrels, dancers and dramatists. Oral traditions refer to traditions of camel raid, the cowherd God complex, and so on. Oral narratives relate the story of the God *Murukan* of the south who had two wives; one of divine origin and the other belonging to a hill tribe called 'Kuravas'. The camel herding system of the Rabaris found mention in the *Ain-e-Akbari* for the Rabaris offering their services as couriers during the Mughal period. They were paid in grain and cash for their services. Bharwad oral traditions indicates that the cattle breeders merged together about nine hundred years ago and moved towards the south following the Islamic invasion. The Gaddi traditon believes that the pastoralists migrated to the north from the plains as a result of Aurangzeb's alleged persecution of the Hindus. According to Bharwad and Rabari myths, all animal husbanders were created by the divine couple, Shiva and/or Parvati. Some of the agro-pastoral communities like the Abhiras find mention in the Mahabharata as robbers and highway men.

Sedentary agriculture was unknown in the northern part of the country including Punjab and Haryana till the early part of the nineteenth century till the Bagris, Jats and the Rajput occupied this region and practiced sedentary agriculture.

The legacy of the peripatetic communities is well placed in history. For instance, the Banjaras were mentioned by Ptolemy and Mohammad Kasim Ferishta. The Killekyatha, the leather picture story telling tradition of Mysore dates back to the sixteenth century.

Many oral narratives among the nomadic communities perceive their nomadism as a misery and attribute this to some curse. For example, the Hakkipikki of south India believe their ancestor to be cursed by “Sita Mata”, the Gaduliya Lohars by “Kalka Mata”. The curses of these divine figures are held to be responsible for their present misery resulting from leading an unsedentary life while at the same time they value and treasure the freedom of their mobile life pattern.

The colonial period brought about drastic changes in nomadic movements. Nomadism was regarded by the British as ‘backward’ and seen as ‘wandering without any definite goal or destination’ and the nomads were looked upon as uncontrollable and criminal. This was aggravated after the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 where nomadic pastoralists like the Bhatti, Pachada and Rangars were part of the Mutiny.

It was the colonial period which brought about significant changes for the nomads. With crime being defined and constructed to suit colonial policy, many groups were labeled as criminals. The British legislation of the late nineteenth century defined criminal tribes, named them, and fixed their places of residence, their traditional occupation and their area of jurisdiction and mobility. Furthermore, new forest regulations of post-1860s deprived numerous pastoralists of grazing land, and most foragers lost free access to forests. The construction of canals, roads and the laying of railway lines led to a complete disruption of migration patterns of many nomadic groups during the late 19th Century.

The agrarian system with special emphasis on cash crop production was given priority for the influx of imperial revenue which resulted in the shrinkage of the pastures of the nomads.

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## 2.4 TYPES OF NOMADS IN INDIA

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At present the nomadic groups in India can be divided into three sub-types. They are:

### I) Pastoral nomads or animal husbanders

Communities within this group depend primarily on livestock. The basic strategy of their mobility is to feed their herds. The distance covered and its frequency of movement and the numbers of persons involved vary from community to community and sometimes even within communities.

### II) Hunter-gatherers/foragers

The economic strategy of the communities within this group involves hunting including fishing, gathering and collecting. They have little or no access to cultivable land. Since they have to depend on nature for the supply of food which is not evenly distributed, mobility of varying extents is required.

### III) Peripatetics

Peripatetic communities are non-food producing endogamous group dependant on the sale of goods and/or hereditarily acquired specialized services to their sedentary and/or nomadic clients. The extent of mobility depends on the nature of goods and/or services offered. Some communities of this group may possess a permanent home, may have a herd and might even forage to some extent.

**Check your progress 1**

**Note:** 1) Your answers should be around thirty words each  
2) You may check your answers with the possible answers given at the end of this Unit.

1) Who are the Nomads?

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2) What was the status of the Nomads during the colonial rule in India?

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3) What are the different types of Nomads in India? Cite Examples.

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**2.5 THE NOMADIC TRIBES OF INDIA: THEIR TYPOLOGY**

The nomadic tribes found in India are of several types which are discussed below.

**2.5.1 Pastoral nomads or animal husbanders of India**

Pastoral nomads of India include the Bharwad, Rabaris, Bakarwals, Gujjar, Changpa and the Gaddis.

**2.5.1.1 Bharwad**

The Bharwads or Ahirs, as they are referred to in South Gujarat are one of the shepherd communities of the hot arid belt of Western India. They are also referred to as the Gadarias by R.E. Enthoven in his book “The Tribes and Castes of Bombay”. The term Bharwad seems to be a modified form of the Gujarati word *badawad*. *Bada* connotes sheep whereas *wada* means compound. It is used to refer to those people who possessed compounds with sheep in them. *Badawad* came to be pronounced as Bharwad in the course of time.

A legend narrates that they migrated with Lord Krishna from Brindavan to Mathura and then to Dwaraka from where they spread over the entire region of Saurashtra. Some even went up to Mewar in Rajasthan. It is said that the Bharwads are of the same caste as the Mehers to whom Lord Krishna's foster father Nand Meher belonged to.

With a total population of 1619 (2001 Census), the Bharwad community is divided into two endogamous divisions- Mota Bhai and Nana Bhai which again are divided into innumerable clans.

Traditionally, the Bharwads were goat, buffalo, sheep and cattle herders who follow a seasonal north-south migratory route. They used to move down for a couple of months during the dry season to the more humid southern areas. They move with their personal belongings and as they move and build temporary settlements on their way. They have permanent residences in the villages where the women, children and the old people live as the men live from one pasture to another.

They sell dairy products especially ghee, wool and animal hair. They keep their livestock in enclosures made of thorny hedges or specially constructed cattle sheds called *kodhiya*. Possession of cattle is the index of the social status of a Bharwad family. It is the nucleus of their community life.

The Bharwads maintain cordial socio-economic relations with the sedentary agricultural communities except with the Bhangi, Chamar, Mochi and few others.

According to the 1981 Census, about 65 percent of the Bharwad followed the traditional occupation of animal husbandry while the rest have gradually started taking up other occupation like agricultural and non-agricultural labour. A few are even engaged in marginal cultivation.

### 2.5.1.2 Rabaris

As we move through Gujarat and Rajasthan, we come across one of the largest clusters of nomadic pastoralists called the Rabaris. This is infact an ethnonymic term including various components like Bhopa, Raika, Dewasi, Mogha, Vishotar, Sinai, etc. Their total population is 15417 (2001 Census).

The Rabaris claim descent from their mythical ancestor, Sambal who was the creation of Lord Shiva. He was assigned to take care of the divine camel of the Lord. Gradually when his family grew in size, Lord Shiva asked him to leave and live as *Rahabri* or 'the one who lives outside'. The origin of the word *Rebari* can be traced to the Persian *Rehbar* which means guide. They came to be named so as they had intimate knowledge of the topography of the area.

R.E. Enthoven in his book "The Tribes and Castes of Bombay" has opined that the Rabaris were originally the natives of Baluchistan who have migrated to Gujarat through Sind and Marwar. The Rabaris believe that their forefathers lived in Dwaraka and Brindavan from where they have migrated to Jaisalmer in Rajasthan. At present they are distributed in the arid and semi-arid districts of Mehasena, Surat, Ahmedabad, Baroda and Sabarkantha.

The Rabaris are traditionally cowherds and milkmen who migrate with the livestock for more than two-thirds of the year. Women and children often

accompany the men but otherwise they reside in their permanent dwellings in Rajasthan and Gujarat. They sell milk and milk products either to the other communities of the vicinity or at the market. Gradually few of them have become marginal farmers and combine nomadic pastoralism during the dry season and agriculture during the rainy season with their usual activities.

### 2.5.1.3 Bakarwal

As we move further towards the north of India we find yet another pastoral nomadic community, the Bakarwal or Bakharwal. They are based in the Pir Panjal and Himalayan mountains of South Asia. They are mainly goatherds and shepherds. Etymologically the word *Bakarwal* is derived from the Hindi/Urdu/Punjabi/Kashmiri/Dogri terms, *Bakri* or *Bakar* meaning “goat or sheep”, and *Wal* meaning “one who takes care of”. Essentially, the name “Bakarwal” implies “high-altitude goatherds or shepherds”. They herd Kaghani goats and sheep while some wealthier Bakarwals amongst them keep cows, buffaloes and even possess land.

With a total population of 60,724 (2001 Census) the Bakarwals are spread throughout the northern part of the Himalayan Range. This includes the states of Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab in India. In Pakistan, Bakarwals are found in the hilly northern parts of Punjab (Pakistan) as well as parts of the North West Frontier Province.

The Bakarwals consider the Jammu region to be their original homeland in India since their ancestors emigrated from the valleys of Allai and Kunhar now in Pakistan some hundred and fifty years back. In Jammu and Kashmir, they are found in all three regions of the state including Jammu (comprising the districts of Jammu, Kathua, Udhampur, Poonch, Rajouri and Doda), the Kashmir Valley (comprising the districts of Srinagar, Baramulla, Kupwara, Pulwama, Budgam and Anantnag) and Ladakh (comprising the district of Ladakh and Kargil).

The Bakarwals are primarily dependant on their livestock. They sell livestock and with the rise in the demand for meat in the Kashmir Valley over the past decades, the Bakarwals have commanded a profitable business. They also sell milk, wool and the hides of animals. They not only own livestock but also rear the livestock of others on contract.

Bakarwals lead a tough life in the high-altitude meadows of the Himalayas and the Pir-Panjal. They move high into the mountains, above the tree-line, from one mountain to the other in search of pastures for their Kaghani goats and sheep leaving their women and children behind securely in their permanent settlements in the valleys. Their to and fro cyclic journey with their herds lasts about eight to nine months, commencing at the advent of the summer season around April when they start proceeding to the hills and concluding with their climbing down after the monsoon season around August. During the whole journey, they stay at familiar places on their way for a fortnight till the surrounding pastures are exhausted and move ahead in search of greener meadows. They generally travel in groups but sometimes they may go alone depending on the size of the flock. They are usually accompanied by their dogs, the famous Bhotia or Bakarwal dogs and their pack animals including horses and mules.

During the summer, they move from one meadow to the other for which they have to pay grazing taxes to the Forest Department. During this season, the

Bakarwals supplement their income by transporting pilgrims to the shrine at Amarnath.

As the Bakarwals live in the geo-politically sensitive areas of Jammu and Kashmir, they have been affected to a great extent economically, politically and socially and a lot of their migratory routes have been restricted.

Religiously, the Bakarwals belong to the Sunni sect of Islam. Socially they are an endogamous community. Parallel and cross-cousin marriages, junior levirate and junior sororate are practised.

#### 2.5.1.4 Gujjar

Another pastoral nomadic community with whom the Bakarwals share intimate and even inter-marital relations is the Gujjar. In India, Gujjar populations are found mainly in Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, western Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, northern Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra. According to the 2001 Census of India, Gujjar is the most populous scheduled tribe in J&K, having a population of 763,806. Around 99.3 per cent population of Gujjar and Bakarwal in J&K follow Islam. In Himachal Pradesh they number 35,538.

In Jammu & Kashmir, the concentration of Gujjars is observed in the districts of Rajouri and Poonch, followed by, Anantnag, Udhampur and Doda districts. It is believed that Gujjars migrated to Jammu and Kashmir from Gujarat (via Rajasthan) and Hazara district of the North Western Frontier Province.

The Gujjars and the Bakarwals in Jammu and Kashmir were notified as the Scheduled Tribes vide the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Amendment) Act, 1991.

As already mentioned, the Gujjars are a semi nomadic pastoral community who used to herd animals like sheep, goats and buffalo. They transmigrate from the lowland plains in the winter to the upper ranges of the Himachal Pradesh during the summer season. Their main job is to keep sheep, goats and buffalo and sell their milk products.

However, to go hand in hand with the demands of the changing situations, many of the Gujjars have at present taken up various other occupations like porters or pony men for the tourists who go for trekking in the Himachal Mountains. The origin of these Gujjar tribes also is quite interesting. According to some, during the time of Hun invasions, these Gujjar tribes came down to the northern part of Indian sub-continent. Another school of thought has assumed that the Gujjars are the descendants of the nomadic Khazar tribes.

#### 2.5.1.5 Changpa

In their language *chang* means north and *thang* means plains. As their name suggests, the Changpa inhabit the extreme north of the country in the Changthang plateau of Ladakh of Jammu and Kashmir. The area is about 30,000 square kilometers at an average of 15,000 feet between the Himalayas and the Korakaram range. It is affected by the most adverse climatic condition of extreme cold. Yet the nomadic Changpa have made it their home and here they herd the pashmina goats and yaks.



The nomadic group among the Changpas is known as the Phalpa while the sedentary group is called the Fangpa. They number 5038 (2001 Census).

#### **2.5.1.6 Gaddis**

The Gaddis inhabit the snowy ranges of Dhaula Dhar and Pir Panjal areas of Himachal Pradesh. Here they number 92,569 (2001 Census).

They are pastoral nomads even though they have their permanent habitation in the villages near the base of the valleys. Generally the young go up with their flocks of sheep and goats to the high pastures during the summer season. They sell raw wool and woolen goods.

Eventually the Gaddis have taken to agriculture as their primary means of livelihood even though they practice pastoralism as a subsidiary occupation. Today, many of them have also taken up high ranking jobs in government and private organizations and other white collar jobs.

#### **2.5.1.7 Broqpa**

The Broqpas reside in the Dha-Hanu valley in Ladakh. They speak an archaic Shina language belonging to the Dardic branch of the Indo-Aryan language family. There are small Brokpa communities in east Bhutan. They are the followers of the Bon religion. In Bhutan the Broqpas have embraced Buddhism, although Bön rituals still survive.

The Broqpa society is stratified into Sheikhs (priestly class), Rom or Raj Ram (ruling class), Shin (peasant) and the Doms (artisans).

Pastoralism blended with trade activities is the traditional means of livelihood of the Broqpas. It has gradually been replaced by agricultural activity. The total population is 51,957 (2001 Census).

### **2.5.2 Hunter-gatherers/ foragers**

The tribes who depend primarily on food collecting and hunting including fishing belong to this category. They depend on the existence of wild roots, fruits and other palatable items. The hunters and gatherers exercise little or no control over the vegetation and animals on which they depend. They have to accommodate and adjust themselves to the seasonal and annual fluctuations in resources that are spread over wide areas. This involves distinctive technological and social adaptations. The technology that foragers employ is limited in terms of the amount of energy harnessed, but it is indigenous in concept and resourceful in finding solutions to the problems of living on scattered and variable resources.

Hunting and gathering societies have the inclination to live in small, semi-nomadic bands which expand and contract according to the seasons and are finely adjusted to the availability of resources in different places at different times. This is due to the reason that the environment they subsist on cannot support a large concentration of people on a daily basis. The resulting bands have neither permanent structure, exclusive rights to territory or resources, nor formal leadership.

The forest is the main resource. Typically, men hunt and women gather singly or in groups. Women are especially adept at digging roots whereas honey collection is generally done by the men. The hunting-gathering/ foraging tribes use indigenous implements like digging sticks, knives, traps and various baskets to collect.

Interestingly the hunting-gathering/ foraging tribes share some or all of what they obtain with other members of the band. As a result, few go hungry if others have adequate food and no one has to work all day everyday. Sharing is important feature in a hunting-gathering/ foraging economy.

Some of the hunting-gathering/ foraging tribes of India include the Chenchus, Challa Yanadi, Malaya Pandaram/ Hill Pandaram, Cholanaickan, Great Andamanese, Hakkipikkis.

These hunting-gathering/ foraging tribes of India will be dealt in details in the following Unit (Course 4: Block 2: Unit 3)

### **2.5.3 Peripatetics**

As already stated, peripatetic communities are non-food producing endogamous group dependant on the sale of goods and/or hereditarily acquired specialized services to their sedentary and/or nomadic clients. The extent of mobility depends on the nature of goods and/or services offered. Some communities of this group may possess a permanent home, may have a herd and might even forage to some extent.

Some of the peripatetic tribes of India are as follows;

#### **2.5.3.1 Banjaras/ Lambadi**

The Banjaras are the largest nomadic group in India with a long history. They are known by different names in different parts of India like Brinjara, Boipari, Laman, Lambani/ Lambadi, Sugali, Sukali and also known as Lambadi or Lambani.

According to some authorities, the actual Banjara lineage goes back to some 2000 years. They are said to be the descendants of the Roma gypsies of Europe who migrated to India through the rugged mountains of Afghanistan and finally settled down in Rajasthan. The colourful stream of the Banjaras began to travel down to the South in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Many of their families and pack bullocks crossed the Vindhya and reached the Deccan following the invasion by the armies of Aurangzeb. In the eighteenth century the Banjaras worked as transporters for the Maratha rulers of Satara, the Peshwas of Poona, the Nizam of Hyderabad and the British during the Mysore and Maratha wars. They sold grain to the armies of Lord Cornwallis besides helping Comte de Bussy with stores and cattle. They even acted as spies for the British later switching over to help Tipu Sultan.

The Lambadis are the main division of the Banjaras. They are a scheduled tribe residing in Andhra Pradesh. An estimated five million live in Andhra Pradesh. The rest live in the states of Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan. They speak Lambadi or Lambani which stem from Indo-Aryan language family whereas Telegu is their second language.

The Lambadis are divided into four patrilineal clans- Rathod, Ramhar, Chauhan and Vadatyia. Consanguineous marriage is common and the post-marriage residence is patrilocal.

The Banjara were historically nomadic, keeping cattle, trading salt, grains and other food stuff and transporting goods. Most of these people now have settled down to farming and various types of wage labour. However, their habits of living in isolated groups away from other, which was a characteristic of their nomadic days, still persist.

Their unique dress, heritage, customs and language distinguish them from the majority population and they maintain a separate lifestyle. The banjara gypsies love storytelling, music, songs and dance. Men play drums and women dance in a circle chanting to the rhythmic beat.

The Banjara are primarily Hindu-Animists with their own gods and goddesses, festivals, and animistic worship practices. They offer goat sacrifices and are also bound by superstitions, fears and witchcraft. Banjara women are easily recognized by their colorful traditional costume with mirrors and coins stitched into their clothing.

### 2.5.3.2 Gaduliya Lohars

Named after their beautiful bullock-carts (gadis) Gaduliya Lohars are nomadic blacksmiths. They are said to have wandered from their homeland of Mewar because of their promise to their 'lord' Maharana Pratap, who was ousted from Chittorgarh by Akbar in 1568. Legends say that the Gaduliya Lohar vowed to re-enter the city only with a victorious Maharana Pratap. Unfortunately the Maharana was killed on the battle field leaving the Lohars unable to return to Chittorgarh. Therefore the Lohars ended up leading a nomadic life. The present-day Gaduliya Lohars are descended from groups which served the Rajput princes, for whose armies they made and serviced weapons.

*Lohar* means smith, and Gaduliya is the name given to the distinctive type of oxcart used by this group. The term Gaduliya Lohar may thus be translated as "wandering smith". The Gaduliya lohar community makes hammers, spoons, chisels and tongs from scrap metal. They are distinct from the sedentary Hindu smiths. In order to avoid conflict with smiths belonging to other castes who were already established in the large centres of population, they decided to take to a nomadic way of life.

In order to cover the great distances involved, it was necessary to adapt the traditional cart of the region and create a model, the gaduliya that would meet their new requirements. The gaduliya is made from kikar (*Acacia Arabica*) wood and is the real centre of family life where all the family belongings are stored.

### 2.5.3.3 Birhor

The Birhors are distributed in the Ranchi, Gumla and Hazaribagh districts of the Chotanagpur plateau of Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa and West Bengal. Their total population is 9639 (2001 Census).

The word Birhor is derived from the words *bir* meaning jungle and *hor* meaning man. Thus Birhor means the people of the jungle. They are a nomadic group

even though most of them have settled down. The Birhor society is divided into two sections- the Uthlus or the wanderers and the Jaghis or the settlers. Marriage takes place through negotiation, mutual consent, exchange and intrusion. Though monogamy is the rule, polygyny is also allowed. Levirate and sororate marriage are prevalent. Bride price is also prevalent. The society is patrilineal.

The chief vocation of the Birhors is rope-making with wild bark fibre and selling ropes thus manufactured. However, they have started cultivating and live a settled way of life.

#### 2.5.3.4 Beda

The Beda, a community of Ladakh in Jammu and Kashmir is partly sedentary and partly nomadic. The nomadic Beda is landless and is not allowed to own land by the dominant communities of the area. They earn their livelihood by begging and giving musical performances on festive occasions by both men and women. They serve the communities of Mon, Gara, Balti, Argon, Ladakhi, and the Muslim Argaons and Baltis with their traditional music. Their total population is 128 (2001 Census).

#### Check your progress 2

**Note:** 1) Your answers should be around thirty words each.

2) You may check your answers with the possible answers given at the end of this Unit.

1) Map the distribution of the Pastoral Nomads in India.

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2) Match the Following

- |               |                |
|---------------|----------------|
| 1) Bharwad    | A) Forager     |
| 2) Changpa    | B) Rope Makers |
| 3) Broqpa     | C) Pastoral    |
| 4) Hakkipikki | D) Oxcart      |
| 5) Gaduliya   | E) Pashmina    |
| 6) Birhor     | F) Ladakh      |

3) Many nomadic groups are lost in the migratory routes below. Can you find them?

A	H	M	G	R	Y	E	G	V	A	B	J	I	P
D	B	W	A	F	T	I	S	X	B	R	F	R	L
M	G	A	D	U	L	I	Y	A	L	O	H	A	R
U	U	O	D	X	G	M	N	S	I	Q	P	S	A
S	J	F	I	O	C	H	A	N	G	P	A	P	B
C	J	Q	X	D	Y	E	A	K	C	A	M	Q	A
B	A	K	A	R	W	A	L	W	F	Y	P	A	R
T	R	Z	U	F	Y	I	D	A	B	J	P	R	I

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## 2.6 NOMADS TODAY

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Sociological studies show that the livelihoods of nomads are threatened due to a multiplicity of factors, be it factory made goods, modern means of entertainment, governmental policies, strict wildlife laws, delineation of international boundaries in the post-1947 period and cutting off of many migratory routes, pastures being taken for developmental works by the government, modernisation and increasing conflicts with sedentary villagers, with whom they no longer seem to share a symbiotic relationship.

As a result of the changing times, the value of their occupation had gone down. For instance, people today prefer to buy steel and aluminium goods from the market rather than use the handmade tools that are crafted by the Gaduliya lohars. No one is interested in listening to the narratives of the Bhopas but would rather listen to the radio or watch television. Increasingly, nomadic people are turning to the labour markets or construction sites for jobs.

The reaction of most policy makers and development agencies has been to view nomadic groups as being “under-developed”. The need of their integration with the rest of society has been perceived as an important developmental goal. Many governmental schemes were formulated such as when in the 1960s, the Rajasthan government tried unsuccessfully to provide housing, mobile schools and health centres to the Lohar communities.

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## 2.7 LET US SUM UP

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In this Unit you have read about, who the nomads are, their historical background, the types of nomads in India with specific details of each type and their way of life as well their present status. By this time you must have been able to appreciate the nomadic way of life and map the routes they move on for their survival.

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## 2.8 ACTIVITY

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Look at the map of India and try to trace some of the routes taken by the nomadic tribes during their journey. Try to collect any samples of nomadic songs or stories from libraries or live sources. If there are nomadic communities like the Banjaras living in your neighbourhood try to interact with them and record their songs or stories if you can. Maintain a scrap book of photographs related to nomadic life which you can collect from magazines or newspapers.

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## 2.9 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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- Rao, Aparna & Michael J. Casimir, 2003; Movements of Peoples: Nomads in India in The Oxford India Companion to Sociology and Social Anthropology Edited by Veena Das; Oxford University Press: New Delhi.
- Singh, K.S., 1997; The Scheduled Tribes in People of India; Anthropological Survey of India & Oxford University Press.
- Raghaviah, V. Nomads Bharatiya Adimjati Sevak Sangh.

## 2.10 GLOSSARY

- Agrarian** : Economy based on agriculture.
- Bride price** : Valuables given to the bride's family by the groom or his family.
- Clan** : Unilateral kin group; often exogamous.
- Consanguineous** : A blood related social group in which the relationship may be hypothetical or fictitious.
- Levirate** : The practice of requiring or permitting a man to marry the widow of his brother or another close relative.
- Myth** : A traditional story originating in a preliterate societies dealing with supernatural beings, ancestors and heroes, presenting a primitive view of the world.
- Neolithic** : New Stone Age characterized by the development of agriculture, and making of technically advanced polished stone implements.
- Polygyny** : Marriage in which a man may have more than one wife at the same time.
- Sororate** : A man marrying his wife's sister after the latter's death on a mandatory or permissible basis.
- Symbiotic** : The living together in close association of two dissimilar organisms.

## 2.11 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

### Check your progress 1

- 1) Read Section 2.2
- 2) Read Section 2.3
- 3) Read Section 2.4

### Check your progress 2

- 1) Read Section 2.5.1
- 2) ( 1-C; 2-E; 3-F; 4-A; 5-D; 6-B)

3)

			G							B			
			A							R			
	G	A	D	U	L	I	Y	A	L	O	H	A	R
	U		D							Q			A
	J		I		C	H	A	N	G	P	A		B
	J									A			A
B	A	K	A	R	W	A	L						R
	R												I