



# A NOMADIC PASTORALISTS' AGENDA FOR JUST FUTURES

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**ActionAid Association** is an Indian organisation working for social and ecological justice in 24 states and two union territories. Together with supporters, allied organisations, communities, institutions and governments, we strive for equality, fraternity and liberty for all.

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# Contents

Introduction	01
Why Nomadic Pastoralism Must Be Protected and Promoted	03
What Needs to Be Done	04
A Nomadic Pastoralists' Agenda for Just Futures	05
1. Enumeration & Legal Recognition	06
2. Reservation for Nomadic Pastoralist Tribes	07
3. Social Security to the Pastoralists	08
4. Education	08
5. Health Services	09
6. Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)	09
7. Women and Girls	09
8. Banking Services	09
9. Registration and Social Security	10
10. Livelihood and Economic Challenges	10
11. Addressing Social and Cultural Marginalisation	13
12. Securing Mobility	14
13. Land Rights	16
14. Conflict Management	18
15. Livestock Health and Management	19
16. Mitigating the Impact of Climate Change	20
17. Institutional Framework	22



## Introduction

Nomadic pastoralism is amongst the oldest professions on our planet, and it works on social order rooted in cooperation and solidarity, involving caring and sharing. They exemplify a sustainable way of life characterised by mobility, minimal environmental footprint, and a deep respect for nature. Their practices offer valuable lessons in living lightly on the land, emphasising the importance of adaptation, resourcefulness, and harmony with the environment. India has a rich tradition of nomadic pastoralism, with millions of pastoralists managing a significant livestock population, making substantial contributions to the economy and biodiversity conservation. Many nomadic pastoralists now live settled or semi-nomadic lives for economic, social, and environmental reasons. Precise figures are lacking, but an estimated one per cent of India's population, or around 13 million people, are practising pastoralists for whom managing and breeding livestock is a hereditary profession that goes back countless generations.

A significant issue facing the community is the loss of pasture lands. Government of India data presented to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) during the 14th Conference of Parties (COP) held in September 2019 shows that India lost 31 per cent, or 5.65 million hectares (MHA), of grassland area in a decade. The area under grasslands reduced to 12.3 MHA from 18 MHA between 2005 and 2015. According to the report, the country lost around 19 per cent of its common lands during the same period.

With the loss of grasslands and common lands, exacerbated by climate change and inadequate policy support, pastoralists struggle to maintain their herds and way of life. The erosion of common property resources critical for their livelihoods has been a significant blow. Additionally,

encroachments, diversification of land use, and insufficient legal protection further restrict pastoralists' access to and control over pasture commons. The changing climate and increased severity of livestock diseases add to the challenges that impact their livestock and livelihoods. As a result, nomadic pastoralist communities, often marginalised and resource-starved, heavily rely on free grazing and access to common lands for survival.

Loss of pasturelands exacerbates the multifaceted challenges nomadic pastoralists in India face. They face a mixture of social and economic marginalisation combined with stigma and discrimination. Many tribes amongst these communities were designated "criminal" under British Colonial Rule. Thus, nomadic pastoralists are frequently marginalised socially, as their way of life contradicts settled societal norms. Their transient lifestyle and lack of permanent settlements make them outsiders in mainstream society, leading to prejudice and discrimination. They face economic exploitation as they often lack access to resources such as land, education, and healthcare, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation by landowners, intermediaries, and corrupt officials. Lack of identity and recognition further exacerbates their vulnerability and perpetuates their cycle of poverty and marginalisation. Despite efforts to uplift nomadic pastoralists through legislative measures, they often face legal discrimination. Laws governing land tenure, education, and welfare schemes may not adequately address the unique needs of these communities, further marginalising them. Thus, nomadic pastoralist children often face barriers to education due to their transient lifestyle and lack of access to schools. Similarly, limited access to healthcare services exacerbates health disparities within these communities.

The declining market value for pastoralist products such as milk, ghee, wool and meat exacerbate their economic vulnerability. Compounded by the lack of market access and fair prices for livestock and livestock products, nomadic pastoralists struggle to sustain their livelihoods.

Pastoralists who undertake cross-border migration face trouble since the routes have been blocked. For example, the Gilgit Baltistan area between

India and Pakistan has closed, thereby curtailing movement and hindering the grazing pattern of the livestock owned by pastoralists there.

Pastoralist communities are also facing changes within their communities with greater entrenchment of patriarchal values and structures. While traditionally, there had been a more decisive role for women, at least in the economic sphere, where women have a say in the market, in contemporary nomadic pastoral societies, patriarchy is getting entrenched. Women face acute challenges. Child marriage, bride purchase and discontinuation of education, along with patriarchal mindsets within the community and prevalent in society, lead to the double marginalisation of women from nomadic pastoralist communities. Issues of girls' education also remain a pertinent one.

Additionally, women's contributions are not sufficiently recognised and acknowledged. Rural women in pastoral communities often encounter significant challenges due to restrictions within their societies, such as limitations on property ownership and involvement in decision-making. Women's contributions remain overlooked despite their invaluable contributions to the economy, biodiversity conservation, livestock production, soil fertility, and indigenous knowledge.

## **Why Nomadic Pastoralism Must Be Protected and Promoted**

Promoting and protecting the rights of nomadic pastoralists is essential not only for the well-being of a significantly large segment of India's people but such efforts is also beneficial for cultural diversity, sustainable development, social justice and environmental protection.

Pastoralism is a healthy, viable system essential for sustaining millions of our people who otherwise, given the situation of employment worldwide, are likely to join a large pool of precarious wage labour. Nomadic pastoralism offers practitioners a dignified way of life and sustains our planet. Some studies estimate that the livestock sector comprises 4.5% of India's GDP, with about two-thirds deriving from pastoral production.



Pastoral people are ecological defenders, conserving our bio-diversities. Their cattle convert native vegetation directly into food without the intermediate stage of cultivation. They help in cross-pollination and farming practices in a symbiotic relationship. Their regular migration ensures the dynamic use of resources, selection of breeds and symbiotic linkages with farmers.

Deeply rooted in cultural continuity, pastoralism is an identity and a source of proud dignity to pastoralists, not reducible merely to profession and source of income. This way of life has been home to diverse and evolving cultural traditions and knowledge. Nomadic pastoralism works on social order rooted in cooperation and solidarity involving caring and sharing and a more decisive role and autonomy for women, at least in the economic sphere, where women control the market. These values are eroding and need to be revived and encouraged to emerge more strongly as feminist solidarity economies that are ecologically wise.

## **What Needs to Be Done**

ActionAid Association has worked with pastoral communities for decades, first as part of its engagement with tribal communities and later as a focused engagement with their unique challenges. In 2014, we published "Crisis of Commons", with the study results emerging from conversations with 500 households across Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab and Rajasthan. In 2017, we made public the results of conversations we had with children of nomads to put forward an agenda of action to protect and promote the rights of children from nomadic communities. During the COVID-19 lockdown, we studied its impact on the lives of pastoralists across Punjab, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat, and Rajasthan. In 2023, we published the findings of an action research study into the effects of extreme weather events on the Gujjar community's livelihoods and their capacity to adapt to climate change in Himachal Pradesh, India.

Over the past years, initiatives by the current Honourable Union Minister Sh. Parshottam Rupala of the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry

and Dairying are welcome steps in recognising the challenges faced by pastoral communities and the various proposed measures to address the same. The announcement and formation of a Pastoral Cell to help build enabling policies for the community is also noteworthy in the steps taken towards this end.

## **A Nomadic Pastoralists' Agenda for Just Futures**

"A Nomadic Pastoralists' Agenda for Just Futures" emerges from a fresh set of conversations amongst the communities with the active participation of community leaders and community members informed by ActionAid Association's long engagement with the community and the issues they face. In August 2023, a two-day zonal convention on "Rights of the Pastoral Community" was held at Ranchi in collaboration with SAMVAD, a grassroots civil society organisation. In February 2024, in partnership with the Rajasthan Raika Vikas Sanghathan, an organisation of nomadic pastoralists, ActionAid Association organised a two-day national convention in Jaipur, with the participation of leaders of pastoral nomadic communities from 15 states, to address the pressing issues affecting nomadic pastoralist communities across India.

A Nomadic Pastoralists' Agenda for Just Futures emphasises the need for reforms to address the challenges and build brighter futures for India's nomadic and semi-nomadic pastoralist communities. These include securing land tenure rights and ensuring access to common lands, given the absence of enumeration and legal recognition of their mobility and settlements. Particular reservation is sought for nomadic pastoral communities to address their social and cultural marginalisation with inclusion. Additionally, the agenda advocates for ensuring social security, addressing livelihood and economic challenges, and recognising the vital role of women in pastoralism. The agenda also focuses on conflict management, livestock health and management, and securing pastoral mobility. Moreover, the agenda highlights the importance of institutional frameworks for addressing these issues and stresses the impact of climate change on pastoralist communities, calling for measures to protect pasturelands and mitigate these impacts.

## 1. Enumeration & Legal Recognition

There is a lack of systematic enumeration or census of nomadic pastoralist communities in India. This absence of accurate demographic data makes it challenging to design and implement policies that effectively address the needs of these communities. Without proper enumeration, it becomes difficult to assess the scale of issues faced by pastoralists, such as access to grazing lands, migration patterns, and economic contributions. As a result, their needs and contributions often remain invisible in national planning and policy-making processes. The absence of specific National legislation that recognises and protects the rights of nomadic pastoralists exacerbates their vulnerability. Without legal recognition, pastoralists often find themselves at the mercy of local authorities and landowners, facing security threats and harassment. They may be denied access to traditional grazing routes or face eviction from their lands without due process. The lack of legal protection also means that their traditional livelihoods and ways of life are not adequately safeguarded against the pressures of modernisation and land use changes.

### 1.1. Enumeration

- 1.1.1. We should conduct a special census and enumerate pastoral nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes to ensure accurate data collection and representation.
- 1.1.2. Particular focus should be given to pastoral nomadic groups in the upcoming census and caste census, prioritising the issuing of unique identification numbers (UID) and other government identity cards to facilitate their access to services.
- 1.1.3. The district administration must proactively issue caste certificates, birth certificates, and death certificates to members of the nomadic community to ensure their access to essential services and entitlements. A Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled Tribe (ST) or Other Backward Caste (OBC) certificate is vital for nomadic pastoralists to receive entitlements similar to those provided to SCs, STs, or OBCs, highlighting the need for efficient documentation processes.

- 1.1.4. Particular attention should be given to pastoral communities due to their geographical isolation, ensuring they are not overlooked during the documentation and entitlement processes.
- 1.1.5. The Government should implement programs to simplify acquiring essential identification documents, such as birth certificates, ration cards, and Aadhar cards, for nomadic pastoral communities. Additionally, pastoralists who migrate should be issued special identity cards to facilitate mobility and access to services.
- 1.2. Legal Recognition
  - 1.2.1. We should ensure the implementation of legislative measures to safeguard the security of migratory communities, particularly during migration. These groups should also be eligible for the protections afforded by the Atrocities Act, similar to those enjoyed by SC and ST communities. Additionally, we should ensure legal recognition and protection is extended to nomadic pastoralists, pasturelands, and migration routes under this legislation.
  - 1.2.2. Formal legal acknowledgement of pastoralism as a valid land use and animal production system should be established in National and State legislations. This acknowledgement should clearly state that pastoralism is an appropriate, productive, and sustainable use of pasture lands.
  - 1.2.3. The law should include provisions affirming pastoralists' right to move with their livestock within and across districts, states, and national borders to access pastures, water, and other resources without unnecessary hindrance.
  - 1.2.4. The legislation should protect pastoralists' rights to access essential resources for their livelihood, including grazing lands, water sources, and other strategic livestock husbandry resources.

## **2. Reservation for Nomadic Pastoralist Tribes**

- 2.1. Nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes have been historically marginalised and neglected communities in India. Despite various government initiatives, nomadic communities continue to

face discrimination and exclusion in multiple aspects of life. To address this issue, we demand a new category for nomadic tribes with a separate four to five per cent quota to ensure particular reservations for them as citizens of Socially and Educationally Backward Classes.

- 2.2. There should be a reservation in higher education institutes, colleges, and universities for students from nomadic pastoralist communities to an extent of four to five per cent.

### **3. Social Security to the Pastoralists**

Increased government budget allocations and expenditures in social services and infrastructure, such as education, healthcare, and transportation facilities, should be ensured in areas where nomadic pastoralists frequent.

### **4. Education**

- 4.1. We should make special efforts to provide education for children of nomadic pastoral communities through residential and mobile schools.
- 4.2. A focused drive is needed to ensure the enrolment and retention of girl children in schools and hostels.
- 4.3. Provision of residential schools for children (above Class V – Class XII), with separate residential schools for girls.
- 4.4. We should provide scholarships for children of nomadic pastoralists in schools and higher education.
- 4.5. We should ensure that concessional loans and skill development programs are provided for nomadic pastoral communities through the National Scheduled Castes/Tribes Finance and Development Corporation and the National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation.
- 4.6. We should provide NGOs running awareness campaigns and vocational training centres for pastoral nomads with financial assistance to ensure the sustainability of such interventions.

## 5. Health Services

State Governments should introduce mobile dispensaries to provide health services to nomadic pastoral communities, ensuring accessibility.

## 6. Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)

Balwadis, anganwadis, creches, and other services provided under ICDS should be made available on a priority basis for nomadic pastoral communities, and outreach programmes should ensure access.

## 7. Women and Girls

- 7.1. Particular interventions should be carried out to prevent child marriage and bride purchase.
- 7.2. Pastoral nomadic women should be given priority in loans, training, asset building, land distribution, etc., to ensure their inclusion.
- 7.3. Particular attention should be paid to the girl child's health, education, and protection, ensuring their well-being.
- 7.4. Women's access to information and new ideas must be facilitated by encouraging the sharing experiences and methods among women's organisations.
- 7.5. Encourage women's economic empowerment through various means such as training, suitable technology, financial support, and networking opportunities through locally administered credit programs.
- 7.6. Support women in running small businesses by building awareness and understanding of value chains and ways of accessing markets. Ensure that these credit programs are easily accessible to women, do not subject them to additional risks, and include measures for managing any unavoidable dangers.

## 8. Banking Services

- 8.1. We should ensure that banks and post offices evolve simple guidelines for opening bank accounts for members of nomadic pastoral communities, ensuring access to banking services.

- 8.2. Banks must be advised to set an appropriate percentage of priority sector lending for pastoral communities.
- 8.3. The Department of Financial Services should add pastoral nomadic communities as a distinct category in the weaker sections eligible for priority sector lending, ensuring their financial inclusion.

## **9. Registration and Social Security**

- 9.1. All pastoralists should be registered within their origin panchayat at the source.
- 9.2. We should ensure that nomadic pastoralists' livestock is recorded in the villages and panchayat village registers.
- 9.3. Nomadic pastoralists should have access to all social security schemes meant for the universal population and marginalised groups, including education facilities, health services, Public Distribution Services (PDS), ICDS, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna (PMAY), etc.
- 9.4. Access to all social security schemes should be maintained during migration through mobile education for children and health services for pastoral communities and their livestock.
- 9.5. Claims should be processed in the panchayat where they are registered, even if any mishap occurs along migratory routes.

## **10. Livelihood and Economic Challenges**

Nomadic pastoralists in India face a myriad of livelihood and economic challenges that threaten their traditional way of life. The declining market value for pastoralist products such as milk, ghee, wool and meat exacerbates their economic vulnerability. Compounded by the lack of market access and fair prices for livestock and livestock products, nomadic pastoralists struggle to sustain their livelihoods. Limited income opportunities have forced many to migrate towards daily wage labour, further distancing them from their ancestral practices. Additionally, the compensation system for livestock is skewed, with small animals like goats receiving minimal compensation that is not adequate for their buying price. These economic challenges undermine the financial stability of

nomadic pastoralist communities and threaten the preservation of their cultural heritage and traditional practices.

- 10.1. New National programmes and schemes should be introduced and implemented, and ongoing ones should be strengthened to ensure better livelihood opportunities for pastoral nomadic communities.
- 10.2. Access to markets, veterinary services, and other essential resources should be ensured for nomadic pastoralist communities.
- 10.3. Pastoral groups involved in dairy farming and milk production should be given opportunities for representation in local dairy unions.
- 10.4. The minimum support price mechanism can be extended to wool procurement, and we can ensure an appropriate formula is devised for which committees at different levels can be formed comprising members from the nomadic pastoralist community. These committees could determine a minimum support price for livestock products like milk, wool, and meat. This price should cover production costs and ensure a reasonable profit for the pastoralists.
- 10.5. We should mandate State agencies and federations to procure livestock products at or above the minimum support price. This will ensure that pastoralists receive a fair price for their products and are protected from market fluctuations.
- 10.6. Assist pastoralist communities in establishing marketing connections, including linking them with buyers, providing market information access, and offering training in marketing strategies to improve their bargaining power and market presence.
- 10.7. Include wool cutting as a supported activity under the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) scheme. This would provide financial and technical assistance to pastoralists engaged in wool cutting, helping to improve the quality and value of their wool products.



- 10.8. Revive the Wool and Milk Federation in each State to provide a structured platform for the marketing and distributing of wool and milk products. The federation can also play a role in quality control, price stabilisation, and advocacy for the interests of pastoralists in the dairy and wool sectors.
- 10.9. Import duty on wool from other countries can be imposed to protect pastoral communities.
- 10.10.A Special Pastoral Nomadic Communities Sub-Plan should be adopted in both Union and State budgets to empower the socio-economic conditions of the pastoral nomadic communities, with proper safeguards to prevent diversion or underutilisation of funds.
- 10.11. A comprehensive fodder policy must be drafted, considering the concerns of migratory pastoral groups and their requirements.
- 10.12.Sufficient budget provisions should be made for developing markets and trade favourable to pastoral nomadism, including creating backward and forward linkages supporting the pastoral economy.
- 10.13.Budget provision and expenditure should be expanded in developing animal health services, including training and skills in animal health and production, to enhance the productivity and sustainability of pastoral systems.
- 10.14. Priority should be given to providing training and skills development in processing animal products and handicrafts to add value to pastoral products and diversify income sources for pastoralist communities.
- 10.15.A more sustainable and inclusive approach to development planning should be taken, integrating the interests of nomadic pastoral communities and recognising the long-term economic benefits of supporting pastoral systems.
- 10.16.The traditional knowledge of pastoral nomadic communities on flora and plant life in forests can be utilised for species

conservation and forest conservation, as well as for collecting minor forest produce by the Government.

## **11. Addressing Social and Cultural Marginalisation**

Nomadic pastoralist communities in India face significant social and cultural marginalisation, manifesting in their neglect within policy and legal frameworks. This exclusion not only undermines their traditional livelihoods but also leads to a loss of cultural identity and traditional practices that have been sustained over generations. The marginalisation is deepened by women's limited representation and voice within these communities, who play a crucial role in pastoralism yet are often overlooked in decision-making processes. This lack of inclusion and recognition exacerbates the challenges faced by pastoralist communities, threatening the continuity of their way of life and the rich cultural heritage they represent. The erosion of their cultural practices and the diminished role of women highlight the need for more inclusive policies that acknowledge and support the unique contributions and needs of nomadic pastoralists.

- 11.1. The cultural rights of nomadic pastoralist communities, including language, traditions, and heritage, should be recognised and protected.
- 11.2. We need to ensure the legal recognition and protection of the right of pastoral communities to cultural self-determination, allowing them to practice their livelihoods and maintain their traditional practices consistent with global and regional human rights conventions.
- 11.3. Policy and legal incentives must be established to support preserving and promoting pastoralist culture, including traditional practices, languages, and heritage sites.
- 11.4. Efforts should be made to document and preserve nomadic pastoralists' unique cultural practices and knowledge systems.
- 11.5. We need to ensure the legal protections for the traditional knowledge of pastoralists, including indigenous practices related to animal husbandry, natural resource management, and ecological sustainability.

- 11.6. We should promote mobility networks not just in spatial terms but also as part of a sociocultural system, informing the law's process, design, and substantive content.
- 11.7. We must establish cultural exchange programs that facilitate the sharing of knowledge and practices between pastoralist communities and other groups, fostering mutual understanding and respect.
- 11.8. The relevant departments of the Government should support cultural events and festivals that celebrate and promote the social and cultural identity of pastoralist communities.
- 11.9. Ensure institutional support for research and documentation initiatives that record and study pastoralism's social and cultural aspects, contributing to understanding and ensuring enduring vitality to pastoralist heritage.
- 11.10. Document traditional knowledge of pastoralists, including their traditional knowledge concerning land use and animals.
- 11.11. The different languages of the pastoralists should be recognised and preserved.

## **12. Securing Mobility**

Mobility is integral to pastoralist livelihoods' sustainability, resilience, and cultural vitality. Recognising and supporting the mobility rights of pastoralist communities is essential for promoting their well-being, conserving natural resources, and achieving sustainable development goals. Various developmental projects (highways, railway lines, setting up of solar plants, etc.) and creating protected areas for forest and wildlife conservation result in massive mobility restrictions for pastoral communities. The challenges are compounded by the fact that the migratory routes transcend state boundaries, and even within the state boundaries, crossing over the districts /panchayat boundaries creates another set of challenges for accessing grazing lands and other services. In light of this, the following proposals are made to ease the difficulties these communities face.

- 12.1. Nomadic pastoralists should be guaranteed secure mobility for seasonal migration with their livestock, protected through

- appropriate legislation, including legal recognition of their rights to unhindered access to land areas, resources, and livestock corridors, especially in areas with competing land uses such as crop farming.
- 12.2. The Government should ensure the safety and protection of nomadic pastoralists during their migratory journeys through designated routes and resting points, including allocating a national helpline call number for addressing any kind of risk/crisis.
  - 12.3. The State and its concerned departments should facilitate participatory planning processes involving all actors associated with pastoral mobility, including pastoralists, to ensure their participation and to understand the spatial and temporal dynamics of mobility.
  - 12.4. Bans on grazing in sanctuaries, reserved forest areas, grasslands, and other areas should be reviewed, with new management plans made in consultation with nomadic pastoralist communities.
  - 12.5. Appropriate laws should be adopted that recognise local resource-sharing arrangements and allow for the negotiation of access rights, reflecting the variability and flexibility needed in nomadic pastoral systems.
  - 12.6. Legal protection should be established against the forceful alienation or conversion of land to uses incompatible with nomadic pastoralism, ensuring that economic, ecological, and social aspects are considered before replacing or limiting pastoral land use.
  - 12.7. Environmental impact assessments should be executed before approving developments or concessions that may hamper nomadic pastoral mobility or restrict access to pastoral resources.
  - 12.8. Appropriate provision for buffer zones and transit corridors for livestock and wild animals should be safeguarded to ensure safe and sustainable mobility.

- 12.9. The importance of recognising and supporting the social relationships that govern access to resources and self-organised mobility among resource users should be emphasised.
- 12.10. The integration of local practices and institutions in decision-making and conflict-resolution processes should be ensured, respecting the role of customary systems in managing pastoral mobility.
- 12.11. The effective participation of pastoralists in decision-making processes should be ensured whenever developments that restrict mobility are considered.
- 12.12. There is a need for a law that provides pastoralists with overarching security from violence and atrocities, similar to the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, with robust measures taken against cases of violence such as robbing pastoralists of their livestock or mob lynching. The movements of the pastoralists should be marked, and such places used as resting points should not be used for any other developmental activities.

### **13. Land Rights**

Land rights and access present significant challenges for nomadic pastoralists in India, as decreasing pasturelands exacerbate their struggle to maintain traditional livelihoods. The conversion of land for industrial, agricultural, and residential purposes has led to a drastic reduction in available grazing areas, directly impacting the sustainability of nomadic pastoralist practices. Furthermore, there is a conspicuous lack of recognition and legal rights over traditional grazing lands, which are essential for the livelihood of livestock-dependent communities. This situation is compounded by the encroachment of common lands, further diminishing the grazing areas that pastoralists have historically depended upon. Without secure access to and legal rights over these lands, nomadic pastoralists face increased vulnerability, threatening their way of life and the ecological balance of these regions.

- 13.1. Provide legal protections to ensure nomadic pastoralists are not displaced from their lands and that their rights to use land for grazing and cultivation are safeguarded.

- 13.2. Recognise and legally affirm the rights of pastoralists over traditional grazing lands (Gauchar, etc), which are crucial for their livelihoods. This recognition should include clear documentation and mapping these areas to prevent disputes and encroachments.
- 13.3. Implement measures to protect commonlands from encroachment and conversion, ensuring pastoralists retain access to vital grazing areas. This includes enforcing existing laws and possibly enacting new regulations to safeguard these lands from being repurposed for other uses.
- 13.4. Establish institutional processes that consider pastoralism's spatial and operational needs in planning development, land use, and natural resource management at all levels (local, regional, and national). This includes integrating pastoral needs into the zoning and planning process of pasture land.
- 13.5. Develop policies that balance the needs of pastoralists with other users of pasture lands, ensuring that limitations on mobility are only imposed when necessary for accommodating and coexisting with different land and natural resource uses.
- 13.6. In cases where land conversion is unavoidable, ensure that pastoralists are adequately compensated and provided with alternative grazing areas or rehabilitation support to sustain their livelihoods. This approach should be part of a broader strategy to balance development needs with promoting pastoralist practices.
- 13.7. Provide targeted support to pastoralist communities, including access to veterinary services, water resources, and market opportunities for their livestock products. This support should enhance the sustainability and resilience of their traditional livelihoods in the face of diminishing pasturelands.
- 13.8. Involve pastoralist communities in the decision-making processes related to land use, natural resource management, and development planning. Their input is essential to ensure that policies and actions are culturally sensitive, environmentally sustainable, and supportive of their traditional way of life.

- 13.9. Any encroachment or diversion of pasturelands for non-pastoralist activities shall be prohibited, and strict penalties shall be imposed for violations.
- 13.10. Recognise and tackle the disparities in accessing land and land ownership, which is crucial for empowering pastoral women. These initiatives should differentiate between women's and girls' legal and practical rights to use land and own it outright.
- 13.11. Drives for planting exotic species of trees should be avoided. Instead, grasses and shrubs growing traditionally, especially along the routes of the pastoralists, should be cultivated, and such plantation drive should be implemented. Likewise, initiatives should be taken under MGNREGA for such plantation drives.

## 14. Conflict Management

Through the course of migration, crossing various administrative boundaries, the pastoral communities land into disputes/conflicts with the host communities without a protective legislative framework that safeguards the interests of nomadic pastoralist communities. The communities report instances of violence and, many a time, robbing them of their livestock. Such instances require strong measures with legal backing for conflict resolution as proposed below:

- 14.1. A robust dispute resolution system should be established to address conflicts related to land, resources, and rights involving nomadic pastoralist communities. This ensures that these systems provide the first line of action for conflict management and dispute resolution.
- 14.2. Special provisions should be made to protect members of nomadic pastoralist communities from any form of discrimination, harassment, or violence and to ensure that policies, programs, and projects impacting pastoralism and pastoral mobility are conflict-sensitive and designed to cause no harm.
- 14.3. Conflict resolution mechanisms should be established that are accessible and affordable to all members of nomadic pastoralist

communities, including women, young people, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups, in terms of location, language, and procedures.

- 14.4. The decentralisation of conflict resolution mechanisms and the integration of traditional systems of pastoralists and other land users should be ensured, enhancing collaboration and cooperation between nomadic pastoralists and other producers.
- 14.5. The active involvement of pastoralist communities in designing, implementing, and monitoring conflict management and dispute resolution mechanisms should be promoted to ensure their relevance and effectiveness.
- 14.6. Legal support and assistance should be provided to pastoralists in navigating conflict resolution mechanisms and understanding their rights and obligations within the legal framework.

## **15. Livestock Health and Management**

Livestock health and management are critical concerns for nomadic pastoralists, who rely heavily on their animals for their livelihoods. In many rural areas, veterinary services and infrastructure are inadequate, making it challenging for pastoralists to access essential healthcare for their livestock. This situation is compounded by the limited availability of healthcare facilities tailored explicitly for animals, which are crucial for preventing and treating diseases. Moreover, there has been a gradual loss of traditional knowledge related to animal husbandry and breeding practices, which has historically been passed down through generations. This erosion of indigenous wisdom further hampers the ability of pastoralists to manage their livestock effectively, thereby impacting their productivity and sustainability

Ensure the establishment and expansion of veterinary services in rural areas to provide pastoralists with easy access to healthcare for their livestock, including mobile veterinary clinics in remote areas.

- 15.1. Construct well-equipped veterinary hospitals and clinics in regions with high populations of nomadic pastoralist communities,



staffed with trained veterinarians and equipped with necessary medical supplies.

- 15.2. Implement insurance schemes that cover various risks associated with pastoralism, including accidental death, disease outbreaks, and livestock theft.
- 15.3. Provide training programs for pastoralists on modern animal husbandry techniques, disease management, and breeding practices to complement their traditional knowledge.
- 15.4. Initiate efforts to document, preserve, and integrate indigenous knowledge of animal husbandry and breeding practices into modern livestock management strategies.
- 15.5. Offer subsidies or financial assistance for veterinary services to make them more affordable for nomadic pastoralist communities.
- 15.6. Increase investment in research and development to improve livestock breeds, develop vaccines for common diseases, and enhance overall animal health management practices in pastoralist communities.
- 15.7. Create dedicated animal healthcare centres in pastoral areas equipped with livestock diagnosis, treatment, and vaccination facilities.
- 15.8. Ensure the availability of quality animal feed and nutritional supplements at subsidised rates to maintain the health and productivity of livestock.

## **16. Mitigating the Impact of Climate Change**

Nomadic pastoralists are increasingly confronted with environmental challenges threatening their traditional way of life. Climate change has profoundly impacted their conventional migration patterns and the availability of grazing lands, disrupting the delicate balance between pastoralism and the natural environment. Additionally, land-use changes have led to a significant loss of biodiversity and natural habitats, further straining the resources upon which nomadic pastoralists depend. These

environmental shifts challenge adapting traditional practices to modern ecological conservation efforts. The ability of pastoralists to sustain their livelihoods is directly linked to the health of the ecosystems they inhabit, making it imperative to integrate their knowledge and practices into broader environmental conservation strategies to ensure the resilience of both pastoralist communities and the ecosystems they steward.

- 16.1. Nomadic pastoralists should be recognised as frontline ecological defenders contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation, and their perspectives and concerns should be incorporated into climate change policies and decision-making processes through meaningful dialogue and consultation.
- 16.2. The Government should urgently conduct a comprehensive assessment of the impact of climate change on the lives of nomadic pastoral communities to determine the nature and extent of damage caused, and based on the appraisal, suitable measures should be taken to mitigate the negative impact of climate change on these communities and ensure their well-being.
- 16.3. Measures should be taken to assess, compensate, and address climate change-induced loss and damages faced by nomadic pastoralist communities, including the implementation of a comprehensive policy framework for addressing loss and damage caused by climate change, providing financial and other forms of support to help the community recover from the impacts of climate change such as loss of livestock, reduction in pastures, displacement, and establishing a loss and damage framework to account for any deaths that occur due to climate change impacts such as heatwaves and cold waves.
- 16.4. Initiatives should be taken to enhance the climate resilience of pastoral systems, such as early warning systems, drought-resistant breeds, sustainable pasture and grazing land management practices, promoting sustainable livelihood practices, providing access to clean energy, and creating climate-resilient infrastructure.

- 16.5. We should allocate sufficient resources and funds to implement climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies for the nomadic pastoral communities, ensuring that the support is provided promptly and transparently.

## **17. Institutional Framework**

The pastoral communities' challenges are compounded by the absence of a single-window institutional mechanism to address their issues. The Pastoral Cell formed by the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying is an essential step in this direction; however, its roles and responsibilities must also be detailed. The communities are classified/categorised under different listings across States (Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribes), preventing uniform applicability of protective mechanisms for them. Just as national commissions exist for other vulnerable communities (Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes), similar institutional mechanisms and setting up welfare boards across States will help provide a single window institutional mechanism to safeguard the interest of nomadic pastoral communities. The following are proposed in this regard.

- 17.1. A National Grazing and Nomadic Pastoral Communities Policy should be formulated to facilitate and regulate nomadic pastoral communities' sustainable use of grasslands and pasture commons.
- 17.2. Institutional mechanisms should be established at National, State, and Local levels to facilitate the participation of nomadic pastoralist communities in decision-making processes related to land and resource management.
- 17.3. The institutional framework for managing pastoral mobility should include strong and effective representation of pastoral nomadic communities or operate in close consultation with representative organisations of pastoralists and other land users.
- 17.4. The institution should receive technical support from government departments responsible for livestock management, land-use development, and environment and natural resource management and have clear linkages to administrative authorities at local and national levels.

- 17.5. Institutional support capacity development for nomadic pastoral civil society organisations should be ensured to enable them to play their roles effectively in the management of pastoral mobility.
- 17.6. The devolution of authority for managing Nomad Pastoral mobility to the local level should be ensured, involving customary institutions of pastoralist communities where they exist.
- 17.7. In the absence of traditional institutions, associations should be established that adequately represent nomadic pastoralist community members and other productive systems and land-user groups.
- 17.8. The institutional framework should incorporate the indigenous knowledge of pastoralists and integrate customary and community-based management principles.
- 17.9. The involvement of all relevant departments of Government in addressing challenges to pastoral nomadic communities and pastoral mobility should be ensured, mainstreaming support for pastoral mobility across governance, economic development, livestock development, and environment management sectors.
- 17.10. Institutional recognition of the strategic value of pastoral mobility concerning food security, nature conservation, climate change adaptation, and human rights and socio-economic development aspects of pastoralism should be ensured.
- 17.11. The implementing institution should be responsible for determining the schedule and timing of mobility in consultation with nomadic pastoralist communities and other stakeholders, considering climate variability.
- 17.12. Strict implementation of coordination mechanisms, both horizontally across different departments at State and National Governments and vertically between all three levels of administration, including Panchayats, are needed to ensure mobility of nomadic pastoral communities.
- 17.13. The transhumance (the practice of moving livestock from one grazing ground to another in a seasonal cycle) calendar, specifying

the maximum periods that livestock will spend in each locality, should be communicated to pastoralists in an appropriate form.

- 17.14. A statutory commission should be established in each State to address the needs and concerns of nomadic pastoralist communities specifically. This commission should coordinate with a department dedicated to nomadic pastoralist affairs. The department would be responsible for implementing policies, programs, and initiatives that support the socio-economic development of pastoralists, protect their rights, and ensure sustainable management of pastoral resources.
- 17.15. Any decision-making committee or commission related to nomadic pastoralist affairs must include adequate representation from the pastoralist community. This will ensure that their perspectives, needs, and traditional knowledge are considered in the decision-making process. Representation can be achieved through direct participation of pastoralist leaders, community representatives, or experts who deeply understand pastoralist issues.
- 17.16. Each State should establish separate welfare boards for nomadic pastoralist communities. These boards would focus on the welfare and development of pastoralist communities, addressing issues such as healthcare, education, social security, and access to resources. The welfare boards should work closely with the statutory commission and the separate departments to effectively coordinate efforts and implement programs.
- 17.17. For transnational pastoralism, it is recommended that we engage with neighbouring countries to collaborate to offer seasonal routes and safe travel for pastoralists who undertake transnational migration.
- 17.18. Pastoralists should be involved in the discussions to establish guidelines for transnational pastoralism and issues related to disease control, trade, etc. A participatory approach to forming guidelines will ensure ownership and better compliance.