CHAPTER -1

INTRODUCTION

Ethnography is the study of people in naturally occurring settings or ‘fields’ by methods of data collection, which capture their social meanings and ordinary activities, involving the researcher participating directly in the setting, if not also the activities, in order to collect data in a systematic manner but without meaning being imposed on them externally.


Writing ethnographies in the classic tradition of the founding fathers of anthropology (Malinowski, 1922, 1926; Radcliffe-Brown, 1923; Evans Pritchard, 1940; Boas, 1943) may no longer be a fashionable enterprise. But to say that ethnography is an archaic style of writing stories and if I may be permitted to say, scientific stories of societies, in particular of those societies that had distinct heritage and ethno- history of insurmountable importance is certainly not true. These societies have a legacy that is quintessential to understand survival of civilizations against odds of nature and human invasion. Many of these societies are facing wrath of nature and pressures of industrializing global world. This global world assumes supremacy of knowledge and righteousness pushing several of these civilizations on the verge of extinction. The efficacy of the method of ethnography to salvage lost treasures and to preserve surviving heritage of these societies is beyond dispute. Revival of method of ethnography in the Post-modernist discourse (Geertz, 1963, 1973; Clifford, 1986) in the disciplines of anthropology and sociology in the 21st century encouraged me to undertake this research challenge.

I ventured to study ethnography of the Galesh, people with whom I interacted in my day-to-day life. They were neighbours, people I met in the market almost daily to buy my family’s requirements of milk, meat and butter and more importantly when I started teaching their children in the local school. The paradox was that I seem to know them but at the same time ‘knew nothing about them’. My sociological instinct after years of academic learning was compelling me to explore their lifeway’s from close quarters. I had learnt in my research methodology classes, what is best described
as ‘ignorance about common sense’. Brewer (2000:14) elaborates it as: “—lay people often fix upon explanations derived from common sense knowledge which best suit their personal belief and views, and never work at their explanations, or continually try to improve them. This means that sociology’s explanations have to confront habitual common sense beliefs about phenomena that are often wrong and resistant to change”. It was this curiosity ‘to know’ that I always believed ‘I knew’ that defined my journey to go beyond the observable to get to the ‘thick description’ (Geertz, 1975) to ‘subtle realism’ (Hammersley, 1990, 1992).

Two things that always fascinated me about the Galesh were their unique calendar tradition called Tabri and the movement between their summer (Yeylagh) and winter (Gheslag) homes. One thing that disturbed me were my interactions with my colleagues and friends and growing realization that access to higher and in particular professional education often came with upfront disassociation with their Galesh origins. I use to teach history of Iran to my students and knew that a large number of ancient Iranian civilization comprised of Pastoral nomadic people. If one were to go by folklore then many argued that the first ruler of Pahlavi dynasty was also a Galesh from Mazandaran province (region that became one of my field site-details in chapter - 3) though there was no acknowledgment of his lineage throughout the Pahlavi regime. Iranian public policy encouraged sedentarization of its nomadic population for containing environment degradation and it was also clear to most of us that development compulsions forced many pasturelands to be taken over forcing displacement of its original habitants and creating crisis of rehabilitation and identity among these ancient civilizations. Many families that I came across had been displaced and some of them twice over, first for industrial development and then for dam development or may be for dam development first and then for industrial development in the Alborz mountain region. I realized at the outset that to comprehend the existing reality of this population in a holistic perspective, I will have to search not only their past but will also have to understand the world of Nomads and the compulsions they face not only in Iran but across the world. My voyage started by first documenting the primary understanding of the Galesh in the province of Mazandaran.
The Galesh are the people of the mountains who have adopted the Alborz as their own and have acquainted themselves with every landform and landscape in their quest to provide the best for their flock. The nomadic population settled in the province of Mazandaran in Northern Iran hail their origin from the ethnic stock called Talesh from Gilan province in northern Iran. The province of Gilan lies just west of province of Mazandaran, along the Caspian Sea. There is a county in the province known as Talesh County. Taleshi is a common language spoken in seven cities in north of Iran including Masal city in which it is the exclusive language of the people. It is distinct form of Gilaki spoken by most of the Galesh in my field area. The data suggests cultural similarities with some variations in the almanac practises (discussed in chapter 5 on Galesh calendar) with the difference that the internet search revealed several concerted efforts being made by the Talesh to preserve their language, culture and heritage but none as far as Galesh were concerned.

Galesh were described as “slim people with shapely breasts, narrow waists and white and black faces” according to Sartippour (1975) and Asgari Khanqah (1993). They had carried out research in Qasimabad, Gilan, with a group of French researchers, and described, Galesh people as mostly shepherds living in the countryside. These groups rarely have agricultural lands in villages. If they do they lend it to other villagers on contract. Galesh people comprise the shepherds and cowherds of the mountains of Gilan. Ranchmen living in the plains of Gilan employ these people to take care of their cattle and other livestock during summer. They live in the mountains. Their race is different from that of Gilaks who are thin because of living in a wetland area. Galesh give a part of their livestock products to the owners of the herds and keep the remainder for their work.” The ethnic origins of these people go back to the Gile, Glay, Mard and Kass tribes. The Galesh are scattered over different centres in northern Iran. This kind of life style can be observed among the Talesh of Gilan province and continues to the Turkman Port in Golestan and includes the three provinces of Gilan, Mazandaran and Golestan. The original habitat of these people, who are distinguishable by a particular Galeshi accent, is the mountainous terrain of the central Alborz, i.e. Amlash to Roudsar in Gilan to Chalus, Noshahr and in particular Ramsar in Mazandaran. The people in these areas speak Gilaki language.
Galesh literally means cattleman that is taken from the word ‘Gao-raks’, of Sanskrit origin where, ‘Gao’ means cow and ‘raks’ means to monitor and guard. In Gilan and Mazancaran, the herdsmen are called Galesh. Some Galesh people of Ramsar believe that the word consists of ‘Ga’, which means cattle, ‘Le’ meaning herds and ‘Sh’ meaning breeder. These observations clearly demonstrate the connections that exist between the residents of the Mazandaran province and their linkages with the Galesh and Talesh inhabitants of the Gilan province. It is one community, the ethnicity of which has neither been entirely explored nor adequately documented. The present researcher’s attempt is to document some of the fast fading out and threatened cultural and lifestyle practices of the Galesh. The Galesh a pastoral-nomadic community identified for this study is spread over the Gilan and Mazandaran province of Northern Iran. They represent a transhumance population shifting houses in winter and summer along with their flock of sheep, goat and cattle. These herders may live either in the thick forests or on its periphery or they may choose to reside in the tough, inhospitable terrain of the mountainous province. Their economy and livelihood depends mainly on the herding of sheep, goats and cattle’s etc. However, as they require some grain (maize, wheat, rice, or millet) for theirs and their flocks’ consumption, they indulge in minimal agriculture in marginal low-lying field. They also have an active trade and purchase their necessities in return for clarified butter, meat, or wool. The economy is based on minimal agricultural practices like fodder, grain and vegetable patches along with large-scale herding activities. In recent years besides animal husbandry, many have taken up silk worming, green gardening, wood cutting, honey production and poultry farming besides handicrafts. With the adoption of these relatively newer occupations it became increasingly apparent that those engaged in these activities tended to spend more time being sedentary rather than being on the move all the time. It was further borne out during the fieldwork that a significant number of Galesh families were opting more and more for the relatively greater sedentary lifestyle. Thus, with the newer trends in adoption of occupation some of them moved very little between their summer and winter abodes, while several continued to reside at one location only.

The empirical picture of present day Galesh in Mazandarn province that I surveyed is somewhat different from Rabinou’s description of 1951. Most of the people surveyed in the sample were cattle breeders and many did farming on lands.
close to their Gheslaqh. Only few of them had the resources to hire shepherds to take care of their flock. Making any racial distinction of the community was considered inappropriate as detailed study of various other pastoral nomadic communities and settled tribes brought the realization that the present day Galesh did not come from any kind of pure racial stock. Migration to Mazandaran province because of its climate, geographical location and fertility of soil brought large number of tribes to come and settle here (details in chapter 2). There were frequent intermarriages and intermingling of populations. These populations retained their diverse identities in their socio-cultural fabric and in the case of Galesh it was the unique tradition of Calendar and different dialect that gave them a district sense of identity.

In this thesis it will be this sense of socio-cultural individuality of the community that will be the substance of their discernable identity. Effort is made to comprehend theoretical proposition of Burridge (1979) and its extension by Barth that in order to comprehend vitality of a society, one should look at an individual actor as a ‘source’ and ‘guaranantor’ of ensuing social processes (social perseverance/resilience) rather than the existing social system. There is also the alternate approach of ‘methodological collectivism’ that assumes the position that cultural development and social transition often occurs ‘independent of individual consciousness” –a perspective strengthened in the writings of Derrida (1974), and Bourdieu (1977) or one may say in the post-modernist/post-structuralist scholarship. I have tried to understand the Galesh by drawing synergies from both these approaches. These two approaches complement each other rather than oppose each other as many would want to contend. A shepherd often moves alone with his herd and his desire to continue in the occupation is often a matter of personal choice but then there are dynamics of ecology and development that define his pathway and his resilience and are beyond his conscious control.

The Galesh have preserved their tradition through word of mouth (oral tradition) for posterity in the musical language and pathos of the shepherd. Evolving from the hunting gathering hordes, these pastoralists were the first to domesticate animals and use them for obtaining various edible and other products. The milk products, the meat products as also the hides of the animals were a great source of income for these shepherds. Many of these nomadic people developed dual residential
mode and as stated earlier this was one of the reasons for my curiosity to know more about them. The dual mode of residence was the necessity to provide rich pastureland for their flock of sheep. Experts on nomadic mode of production have often argued that 'spatial mobility is regularly employed as a survival strategy' (Goldschmidt, 1981; cited in Dyson-Hudson and Dyson-Hudson, 1980). If this is accepted as the motivation for regular mobility then Galesh certainly adapted to this necessary condition for survival. Cows—the domestic cattle were kept in winter homes through the year. The Gao (cow) provides milk for domestic consumptions and also provides economic sustenance to women and children in their humble winter homes. These nomads have lived a simple yet tough life and have acquired a strong sense of communitarian consciousness, visible in collective economic activities in Kelum- (the major hub for nurturing young lambs and for producing milk products for commercial purposes (details in chapter-4). Most men move to summer homes except those left in-charge of Kelum and provide support to women and children in their winter homes.

There is strong evidence to suggest that nomadic people of the region are in transition mode. It was mentioned at the outset, my disappointment on realization that many o: my friends are now refusing to trace their descent to their Galesh lineage because of pressures of urban associations. There are paradoxical questions of 'loss of ethnic identity' and also the tangible symptoms of attempts at revival of that 'identity'. Large sections of the native Galesh families have settled as rice cultivators and few of them persist with their native mode of production sometimes by hiring shepherds on wage employment to take care of their herds. Iran has a successful literacy campaign that has created avenues for alternative employment for these pastoral nomadic communities. Another factor contributing to the transition is that most of their Gheslag are close to cities and many of these areas are now part of the urban complex that provides opportunities for transition to a much greater extent, in comparison to those that continue to reside in remote areas. It is important to mention here that both the province of Gilan and Mazandaran are regarded as most modern provinces in Iran. Mazandaran is surrounded by mountains and receives water from various rivers and mountain torrents and was urbanized nearly 5000 years ago. This probably explains the reason for more than 50% of the respondents reporting to be located in urban area.
A sizable section of my respondents continued with their customary vocation but it must be stressed that majority of them were living in extreme poverty. Many scholars have predicted the transition of nomadic communities to other livelihoods because of additional types of land use in the face of climate change, human population growth, and globalization (Barth, 1961; Homewood et al., 2001). Added factors were changing grasslands, varying pastoral social systems, problems concerning their herds of animals etc. Presently, there have been several developmental issues that have impacted to a large extent on the lives of nomads and pastoralists the world over and especially in Iran. The geographical location of Galesh compounded their adversity. One of the important questions addressed in this thesis is the challenge of sedentarization that the Galesh in Mazandaran province are facing. To locate this challenge, it is imperative to examine the various facets of nomadism as understood in the domain of anthropology and in the larger purview of territorial state structures and political compulsions. It is essential to assert here that this study examines these constructs from the perspective of the people and interprets data taking into consideration ‘respondent’s reflexivity’, setting aside individual subjectivity in favour of retaining originality of people’s discourse.

**Pastoral Proliferation**

All over the world the wanderers have always known the traditional pathways they are to take during their sustained search for greener, healthier pastures for their flock in all kinds of terrain. The natural resources were their innate friends and stars—the quintessential geographical markers. It was with the help of these markers that the nomads changed their places from spring to summer to autumn to winter. It was this curiosity that made Talesh and Galesh evolve their own calendars and also explains the title of the thesis “Allied in Time, Space, Culture and Ethno-Science: Ethnographic profile of Galesh community of Mazandaran province in Northern Iran”. It was much before that the western or the so-called modern science made its essentiality known; that these children of nature evolved their own ethno-scientific explanations to comprehend the complexities of the environment around them. They were constantly in liaison with the natural elements for giving to their cattle and sheep the best they could, while subsisting on the most frugal of meals through the harsh winter months. For every shepherd the well being of his herd was uppermost and this
is reflected in the many songs, idioms and proverbs found in many of the ancient languages of the world\textsuperscript{1}. Nomads and nomadic way of life has for century’s goaded curiosity of researchers from various disciplines. Anthropology has always had a special tryst with these communities that constitute one of the most balanced ecological arms of nature. Part of this fascination is due to the fact that when mobility and livestock dependence coincide, they create complexities that are often difficult to disentangle. Presenting an overarching summation, Blench (2001: 6) in a review article on \textit{Pastoralism in the New Millennium} had following to state:

\begin{quote}
By some paradox, anthropologists and social theorists have conducted a prolonged love affair with pastoralism, at time seeing it as an inevitable stage in the growth of civilization or perversely caricaturing it as an anarchic institution ready to pull down that same civilization. Planners have denigrated the mobility characteristic of pastoral society and novelists have romanticized the wanderings of these same nomads. Development experts, remarking the enormous passing herds, first saw pastoral systems as rich in potential and later castigated pastoralist as vulnerable and unable to invest in development. To all this, pastoralists have remained largely indifferent, since a certain scepticism towards the scheme and caprices of the external world is an almost inevitable product of the independent image they have of themselves.
\end{quote}

Blench’s dramatic observations pose some uncomfortable questions to a fresh researcher on the subject. I want to remind myself that the community of pastoral called \textit{Calesh} are not surreal but real human being, and I have lived in their vicinity for sometime, and have seen them transit and was concerned to see that some of them were deliberately distancing themselves from their heritage and origin. The question was obvious to me-why be it happening? Every researcher starts with some interrogation marks. For this exploratory research the obvious questions that occurred were:

\begin{itemize}
\item Why educated \textit{Galesh} in my neighbourhood and many of those living in the urban areas were distancing themselves from their cultural and ethnic origins?
\item What is the history and chronometry of preparing a \textit{Tabri} Calendar and to what extent do present day members of the community follow that calendar?
\item How is \textit{Tabri} Calendar related to \textit{Dylami} calendar of the \textit{Talesh} and with other popular almanac practises in Iran?
\end{itemize}
❖ Why do they move their home from winter (Gheslaqh) to summer (Yeylaq) residence and in what way it facilitates the primary mode of production followed by them?
❖ Was life of Galesh living in the urban areas different from those living in the rural and remote villages?
❖ What changes do political global pressures on the indigenous socio-political conditions of Galesh community bring about?
❖ How do Galesh respond to external pressures?
❖ What efforts have been made in the past to record their rich cultural heritage and in what way this study can help document it for future work?

These were simple queries that I posed to myself without any sense of ‘othering’ or placing these communities on any evolutionary matrix or wanting to examine often ‘imaginary histories’ that may have labelled them as ‘anarchist’. The fact that many of these people were moving out of customary economic enterprise and settling down was intriguing but it was not framed in political or development context. This research was planned as a preliminary enquiry into their ethno-history and recording their ethnography as stated in the beginning in a classic anthropological style. This was deemed important, as there were few written records available of the community. It was imperative that before starting this exploratory research, one arrives at basic understanding of nomadism and its growth in the past.

The Classification and Origins of Nomadic Pastoralism

Earliest evidence to pastoral Nomadism according to Blench (1997:18) comes from 2nd millennium BC. He cites Cribb (1991:10) to say that the “earliest literary references to people who would appear to be pastoralist are the Amorites, who herded cattle, sheep goats and donkeys in the Near East in the first half of the second millennium BC”. Then comes evidence from China. The Hsia dynasty in China (2205-1766BC) records the Ch’iang nomads believed to be ancestors of present day Tibetans, engaged in the craft of weaving fine wool (Miller & Craig, 1997: 58 cf. Blench, 2001). To these accounts are added references from Heredotes notes on Central Asia and Russian scholars account of Scythians, Sauromations, the Saka, the
Siberian Scythians and the Mongols, reported in the work of Davis –Kimball, Bashilov & Yablonsky (1995). Archaeological and Osteometric evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa and Northeast Africa have tried to trace the origins of pastoralism in that part of the world as far back as 9000bp to 6000bp. Blench (1997) believes that some of the earliest forms of Pastoralism reported may not be related to domestication and breeding of species but may be evidence of management of wild animals like the reindeer pastoralism as was the case in some parts of the subarctic. Archaeological evidence indicates that the processes of domestication of plants and animals occurred in conjunction, and that the earliest food producers practiced mixed farming (Flannery, 1965, 1969; Hole, Flannery, and Neely, 1969; Reed, 1971). Historically speaking, pastoral nomadism was best described as a “specialized offshoot of agriculture that developed along the dry margins of rainfall cultivation” (Johnson, 1996 p. 267-295) Masanov (1995) classifies Nomads by the economy type subdividing them into the Eurasian horse-breeders, Afro-Asian camel-breeders, East-African pastoralists, northern reindeer-breeders and mountain yak- or llama-breeders (Khazarov, 1984; Barfield, 1993). One could also classify the nomads by the extent of mobility and large quantity of herds that they commanded. A number of developmental schemes were created on the basis of this criterion.

Murdock and Provost (1973) aimed at determining a criterion of the complex nomadic society. They chose ten of the most significant criteria of the cultural complexity from their collective point of view. These criteria have been delineated as follows:

1. Writing and records,
2. Fixity of residence,
3. Agriculture,
4. Urbanization,
5. Technological specialization,
6. Land transport,
7. Money or financial strength,
8. Density of population,
9. Political integration, and
10. Social stratification.
In this scheme the nomadic pastoralists were seen to occupy the lower middle complexity scores. Classifying these groups Murdock provost (ibid) delineated the characteristics of pastoralists people as those whose livelihood depends mainly on the raising of domestic animals including cattle, camels, goats, sheep, yaks, horses, and donkeys, which are used for milk, meat, wool, hides, transport, and trade; in addition, many pastoralists cultivate crops or have long-standing trading relations with agricultural neighbours. Swift (1984) defines pastoralists as populations deriving at least 50% of their livelihood from domestic livestock. Pastoralists occupy savanas, arid deserts, high plateaus, or sub-arctic forests and tundra where rain-fed agriculture is difficult or impossible. Barfield (1993) traced the distribution and organization of pastoralists in an arc from East African cattle herders (including Maasai, Nuer, and Turkana), to North African and Arabian camel herders (Tuareg, Bedouin, and Beja), Middle Eastern sheep and goat pastoralists (Baluch, Basseri, Turkmen), Himalayan yak herders (Tibetan Drokba), horse nomads of the Central Asian steppes (Mongols, Kazakhs), and reindeer pastoralists of Siberian and Scandinavian forests. In addition, we find Fulani cattle pastoralists in the grasslands of Africa’s western Sahel, camel herders in India’s Rajasthan, and camelid keepers (alpaca, vicuna, and llama) in South America highlands (Galaty and Johnson, 1990).

Specialized nomadic pastoralism, which requires grain inputs from external sources, apparently was a later development. Chroniclers of Nomadic pastoralism have enquired into questions of origin of pastoralism and trying to figure out the selective pressures, which led to such specialization? Persisting with this line of enquiry they also asked ‘when did it occur in relation to other events’; ‘why did it not occur sooner’; and ‘why did it occur where it did’? And to these the question of its perseverance was added notwithstanding the advantage of a diversified resource base.

There are also debates distinguishing rangeland from grassland, while discussing pasturelands. Ecologists believe that nearly 18-23% of earth’s landmass comprises of rangeland. It is often argued, “rangeland is a broader term than grassland, including regions where woody vegetation is dominant; moreover it is common in texts describing land from the point of view of livestock production”(ibid:21). There are contentious issues with regard to the social and biological construction of grassland (Bourliere, 1983; Coupland, 1993 cf. Blench,
1997). It is argued that grasslands are human creations and become natural, once these have been in use for a long time. The terms are used interchangeably and often overlap and in this thesis also there is no distinction made in its use. It acquires importance because the nature of pastureland determines the kind of species that the herder will domesticate. Blench has created a master table for the pastoral populations of the world and the species they are herding (refer to table No 1 in appendix). The following table excerpted from the master table shows various groups engaged in pastoral nomadism in Iran and its immediate neighbours:

**Table 1.1: Near East and West Asia**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phylum</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Main Pastoral Species</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indo-European</td>
<td>Baxtyari</td>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>Sheep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pashtun</td>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>Sheep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uzbek</td>
<td>Uzbekistan, Iran</td>
<td>Sheep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lur</td>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>Sheep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zuri</td>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>Sheep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sadat</td>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>Sheep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Baluch</td>
<td>Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran</td>
<td>Sheep, camels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arab</td>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>Sheep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taheri</td>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>Sheep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kurd</td>
<td>Iran, Iraq, Turkey</td>
<td>Sheep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shahsevan</td>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>Sheep</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Roger Blench [2001]: Pastoralists in the new millennium pp 79-82

* Digard (1981:30) suggests that Buffaloes were traditionally not part of the Iranian Pastoral stock. These were included and that too rarely probably due to the influence of migrations of Zott Gypsies in the eighth century. Galesh also do not include Buffaloes in their herds but the important point is that this table makes no mention of either Talesh or Galesh.

Pastoralists occupy savannahs’, arid deserts, high plateaus, or sub-arctic forests and tundra where rain-fed agriculture is difficult or impossible. Barfield (1993) traced the distribution and organization of pastoralists in an arc from East African cattle herders (including Maasai, Nuer, and Turkana), to North African and Arabian camel herders (Tuareg, Bedouin, and Beja), Middle Eastern sheep and goat pastoralists (Baluch, Basseri, Turkmen), Himalayan yak herders (Tibetan Drokba),
horse nomads of the Central Asian steppes (Mongols, Kazakhs), and reindeer pastoralists of Siberian and Scandinavian forests. In addition, there are Fulani cattle pastoralists in the grasslands of Africa’s western Sahel, camel herders in India’s Rajasthan, and camel keepers (alpaca, vicuna, and llama) in South America highlands (Galaty and Johnson, 1990). These scholars have also specified that pastoral nomadism acquire diverse forms in different parts of the world. Nomadic habitats, political formations, the kind of animal’s herded, social and economic organizations, seasonal locations, patterns of displacement and trading mechanism and agricultural practise (wherever present) acquire different hues and unique styles.

Pastoralists have a long-term flexibility derived from their ability to exploit patchy resources. It has often been observed that the more ‘nomadic’ pastoralists are, better equipped they are to survive climatic catastrophes such as blizzards and droughts (Gallais, 1984). They are also able to switch species (as Jordanian Bedu have switched almost entirely from camels to sheep in the period 1970-1995), and can shift from one form of trade completely as was done by Fulle in the Igbo areas of Nigeria by completely shifting from dairying to meat production or even entirely out of pastoralism for a period (Dupire, 1970; Benoit, 1979; Blench, 1994).

Kradin (1992) has rightly pointed out that we have a long road to travel to be able to locate the exact contours of development of nomadism in the context of the world history. Kradin in a review of theoretical epochs in the history of anthropology that tried to analyse pastoralism virtually covers the entire spectrum of these approaches prior to the contributions made by the modernist and then the post-modernist. These paradigms include the evolutionary school starting with the assumptions of classical unilinear theory, then neo-evolutionism and followed by Marxism (Gellner, 1988, Sanderson, 1990, 1999; Green, 1992, Claessen, 2000, Carneiro, 2003 etc.). Explanations of Nomadism were also taken up by the multilinear theories of (Steward, Julian, 1955; Bondarenko, 2003; Korotayev, 1991; Korotayev, et al., 2000), civilization theory (Toynbee, 1948; Weskott, 1970; Melko, 1995; Sanderson, 1995 etc.) and world-system approaches (Wallerstein, 1974; Chase-Dunn, Hall, 1997 etc.). There have been several paradigm shifts in the theoretical approaches adopted over the years by various anthropologists. For the purpose of this thesis, attention will be focused on paradigm of social perseverance and adaptation given the
fact of Nomadic ability to adjust to both ecological and social variations. However, it is important to understand these paradigm shifts in the context of Iranian pastoralism.

The Iranian Pastoralists

Iranian Ecology is most suited to Pastoralism. The one time thriving generations of Galesh and other nomadic peoples of Iran are evidence that the ecological preconditions for the development of mountain nomadism are ideal in Iran. The arid core of the country, the deserts of the Dast-e-Kavir and the Dast-e-Lut, are surrounded by high mountains: the Zagros to the West, culminating in the Zardeh Kuh (over 4,500m high), the Alborz and the Khorasan ranges to the North with Damavand (5,670m) as the highest elevation of the country, and the less pronounced Makran ranges along the Gulf coast. To the East, the volcanoes of the Kuh-e-Bazman (3490m) and Kuh-e-Taftan (over 4,000m) provide formidable summer pastures. Intra-montane basins, foothills, and piedmonts of these and other mountain ranges of Iran are mostly semi-arid natural steppes with little agricultural but sometimes considerable pastoral potential, and ideal environments for originally lush winter pastures, have recently been transformed into wheat fields of a sedentary peasantry community.

In fact animal husbandry and pastoralism in the mountain belt of Iran and its highlands finds its sustainable and lucrative ecological basis in very specific environmental conditions.

1. The high sub-alpine meadows and grasslands of the Zagros and the Alborz, of Kopet-Dag, or the many isolated mountain massifs of central Iran are snow covered in winter and spring.

2. Long winters of the steep and rough terrain besides the spatial remoteness of many of these areas cannot economically support a large settled permanent population nor allow for sustainable agriculture.

Even to this day evident forms of nomadism characterize most parts of the country; it is especially the Zagros range and its foothills that have been the centre of Iranian mountain nomadism for millennia. Altogether, only about 15 percent of Iran’s territory of circa 1.6 million square kilometres is considered to be potentially useful
for agriculture. The areas of land that are suitable for forestry and pasture are likewise limited. They are, moreover, so vulnerable that even a slight interference in the unstable ecosystem may cause devastating consequences, such as the destruction of vegetation, water and wind erosion, and gully ing that often result in desertification as well. In contrast to Iran’s limited and hardly expandable resources for agriculture, forestry, and animal husbandry there is a rapidly growing population. In other words, the ecology of the natural environment is increasingly in conflict with the needs and demands of sustainable eco-system. Scholars and historians have documented Nomadism in Iran for a long time. Written evidence indicates that until 1500AD there was unrest, plundering, relentless fighting and pillaging by tribal of the Zagros heights. Nomadism in Iran before 1500AD has been under tremendous pressure since the Safavid period. The massive translocation and resettlement of tribes, either in their entirety or majority, has been a continuous process (Perry, 1975 and Tapper, 1979). One of the early documentary evidences is that of Kunke (1991) that describes the pastoral nomadic tribes and their emigrational patterns during the reign of Shah Osayn (r. 1694-1722). The manuscript is dated at about 1800 AD. The text refers to the period of differentiation between nomads of Iranian origin and nomadic tribes that had been settled in Iran before the 16th century. Nomadic confederations included those of the Kord and the Lor; having four major tribes namely, Fili, Lak, Zand, Bakhtiari, and Mamasani and comprising over 6 million families (Kunke, 1991). Turks, like the Afsar and the Shahsevan (Sahsevan), and Arabs formed the non-Iranian parts of these original nomadic hordes.

Iran’s rich cultural heritage and ethnic diversity and several evidences from ancient times have had Pre-historians bring forth the opinion that Indo-Iranian tribes had moved from their Central Asian settlements to their present location around 4000-3000 BC. Several recent archaeological and anthropological explorations in Central Asia make it closer to 2500 or 2000 BC. Many of the experts on Iran have argued that the Indo-Iranian settlement known earlier as Iran-Vij was rooted in the term Aerianem-Vaejou in the Avesta. According to some, however, it represents some half mythical place, the location of which has been a sustained entity of controversy. The estimated location has been taken by certain scholars to be from Northern Caucasus to the western shore of Lake Aral (Kharazm). Then there are also the Oxus Rivers. Historians also argue that the Indo-Iranians themselves were later divided into two
major sections, the Indians and the Iranians. Of these the Indians continued further into Northern India and finally settled there. Historical evidence also suggests that the original Iranians were divided into three major tribes that were again sub-divided into several sub-tribes. These tribes dominated various parts of the Iranian Plateau which were:

- **Maad (Medians)**: Central and North-Western parts
- **Paars (Persians)**: In South and South-Western parts
- **Parthav (Parthians)**: North-Eastern and eastern parts

Historical records have it that during the second millennium B.C., successive Indo-European (Aryan) invaders broke through into the Iranian plateau, either from the Caucasus, or through Central Asia. Those who settled in Iran were divided into tribes that were distinguished from each other by their different dialects. The most famous of these tribes were the Persians (Pars), and the Medes (Maad). The Persians eventually settled in the province of Fars and in the Bakhtiari Mountains, while the Medes occupied the Hamedan plain. The overall situation of Iran’s nomadic population in the second half of the 19th century was characterized by the widespread existence of nomadic tribes with major military power and tribal territories which were not under the control of the Qajar rulers. The mid-19th century saw social changes in Iran, which resulted in disintegration of the nomads and their culture. The development of the Bakhtiari, the biggest confederation in the 19th and 20th centuries, was typical of the mountain nomadism in Iran. It highlighted the potential problems and constraints of pastoral nomadism and their successive ecological impact on the environment.

In 1909 AD two thirds of the Bakhtiari lived as nomads in the western foothills of the Zagros. Central Zagros had less than 10 per cent of the population, which was sedentary (Military Report on South-West Persia). Due to famines in 1816 AD and 1865 AD and epidemics between 1830 AD and 1870 AD, and absence of basic medical services, the population at Zagros remained stable. It was generally recorded that the hygienic conditions and nutritional situation of villagers were generally worse than those of the nomads (Durand, 1902: 140; Sackville-West, 1928: 89). The major reason for the decline of Bakhtiari nomadism was their conflict with the Iranian government. They were an important militant force until the 1930s, and
controlled the significant trade routes between the Persian Gulf and Isfahan. The Bakhtiari had distinctive tribal identity that conflicted with the national Iranian identity that the government had tried to establish since the beginning of the 20th century. Rich oilfields were located in the Garmsir of the Bakhtiari territory and had been acquired by the British in 1905, and the Bakhtiari khans received a small percentage of the profit (Garthwaite, 1983). Since the Iranian government was interested in gaining full control and power over oil exploration and extraction, both Shah Reza (r. 1926-41) and his son and successor, Shah Mohammad Reza (r. 1941-79) made several attempts to destroy the nomads' livelihood, and the existence of nomads was officially negated during the Pahlavi era. In the year 1900, only about 10 million people populated the country; fifty years later, this number had increased to about 17.5 million. Since the end of World War II the population has grown by leaps and bounds to about 80 million in 2014. The median age of the population is about 27.8 years placing a large population seeking independent employment opportunities. At the same time, both the absolute numbers of nomads and their percentage with regard to the total population of Iran has greatly decreased. While it is difficult to give exact estimates because of the traditionally unverifiable number of nomads, in the late 1960s the nomads were estimated to comprise 10-15 % of the country’s total population, that is about 2-4 million people but now it can with best approximate possible could be around 5% and the population under study is not even separately listed in census (The demographic details in Chapter-2).

Discussing the kind of studies that are pursued in the region Blench (2001: 19) writes:

“Between Eastern turkey and northwest India lies a region very imperfectly known. The South of Iran is rich in pastoral groups usually specialised in sheep and these are described in a number of monographs from the epoch of the Shah (e.g. Barth, 1961; Bates, 1973; Irons, 1975; Digard, 1981; Barfield, 1981; Black-Michaud, 1986). Since the Iranian revolution, all scholarly field study appears to have disappeared.”

Blench’s observations that after 1980, there were no field studies on pastoral Nomadic people is an overstatement. There are several studies but the local scholars are now writing them (Beck, 1980, 81; Kelari, 2012; Garthwaite, G., 1983; Gharakhalou, Mehdi, 1996), my own field work is an extension of the same tradition. Salzman has brought out two volumes on Iran in 2002.
Most of the earlier studies of pastoralist populations demonstrated a close correlation between the amount of labour available in a household and the amount of productivity in the form of animal’s herded (Barth, 1961; Irons, 1969; Bates, 1973). The attraction of the nomadic pastoral alternative was definitely stronger wherever irrigated agriculture was difficult to sustain massive human and animal population.

Nomadism and Political Formations

The nomadologists looking for classifying these communities on the basis of political configurations identify usually the decentralized and centralized states (Markov, 1976; König, 1981) and use two theories that of conflict and integration to explain these formations. The conflict or control theories focused on the origin of statehood and its internal dynamics. The context for it happens to be the relations between exploitation, class struggle, war and interethnic predominance. On the other hand the integrative theories emphasized solidarity and economic integration to demonstrate the superiority of the state system (Fried, 1967; Service, 1975; Claessen and Skalnik, 1978; 1981; Cohen and Service, 1978; Haas, 1982; 1995; Gailey and Patterson, 1988; Pavlenko, 1989 etc.).

The nomadic populations have many times united into large political formations and created great empires that have subsequently disintegrated. However, what needs to be looked closely at is the phenomenon of what proved to be some of the pressures that provoked such extreme measures where the nomads had to take up arms against an established ruling order. Barfield (1991) and Hall (1997) held that whenever and wherever Nomads formed empires, it happened only after these pastoral nomadic communities were able to either get support from the settled groups, or they appropriated their wealth and formed hegemonic empires. Several anthropologists have argued that this phase which was decidedly very controversial and in certain ways is responsible, for modern nation states formulating what may be termed as ‘anti-nomadic pastoral policies’ was the last phase on an evolutionary scale (Barfield, 1991, 1992; Hall, 1997). Experts opine that the Central Asian steppe nomads did not independently evolve beyond this stage of integration. There was an insurmountable barrier that was determined by the rigid ecological conditions of the arid steppe environment. This view of nomadic societies has been shared by a majority of scholars working on nomadic populations (Lattimore, 1940; Bacon, 1958;
Krader, 1963; Khazanov, 1998, 1984; Markov, 1976; Kradin, 1992; Masanov, 1995 etc.). The details of contours of political formations of pastoral nomadic populations are discussed in chapter three of the present thesis.

One of the theoretical formulations that determine the epistemological and paradigmatic content of the present work is the theory of adaptation. It was admitted at the outset that pastoral nomadic communities show remarkable flexibility. It is this flexibility that endows the ability to survive against all out efforts of annihilation at times. To be able to present validity of these arguments, it is important that one takes a detailed view on what adaptation implies for pastoral nomadic communities.

**Pastoral Nomadism and Adaptation**

Specialists on Nomadic pastoralism believe that nomadism evolved in regions that had low population density and extensive rangelands and some estimates suggest that there are approximately 20 million pastoral households across the world (Blench, 1997). Efforts are made to classify nomads into categories of Nomads, semi, Nomads, Transhumant and more recently agro-pastoral nomads (details discussed in chapter 3). These categories basically define the occupational character of these populations.

Salzman (1971: 197) is of the opinion that, “ideal typical conceptualization of pastoral nomadism, as represented in such distinctions as “pure nomads”, “semi-nomads”, and “transhumant” so distorts through oversimplification and misrepresentation as to be less than useful. The appropriate questions to be asked about “pastoral nomads” deal with logically independent dimensions, which vary, in degree, along each continuum. Our task, of course, is to refer empirically, rather than on an *a priori* “logical basis”, the various positions on the different dimensions”. Salzman’s observations are of critical importance to this work as in the writing of this work, appropriateness of these comments was strikingly visible. Nomadologist concur that pastoral nomads keep changing their occupational style of functioning depending on the circumstances. Blench (1997) concurs with Salzmann’s observations reasoning that “pastoralist are by their nature flexible and opportunistic and can rapidly switch management systems as well as operating multiple systems in one over all productive enterprise”.

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Given these observation attempts to classify Galesh into fixed compartments was counterproductive. These were overlapping categories. Historically, Galesh are classified as ‘transhumance’ given their regular movement between ‘fixed points’ that is between their winter homes (Gheslaqh) and summer homes (Yeylaq). The field data showed that a significant number of respondents, now prefer to spend most of their time in their winter homes that are closer to the plain areas. They do practise agro-pastoralism and some of them only keep cows now and not sheep or goats. Many others are not doing herding but are in the business of buying and selling goats for meat and one of the respondents actually had a Butcher shop. This brings issues of adaptation of pastoral people into focus.

Galvin (2009:187) argues, “People are constantly adapting, often incrementally but sometimes quickly, to new opportunities for and constraints on their livelihoods”. This question was probed through the thesis, given the fact that the grassland of these people was changing, land use and land tenure was not as per the customary Tabri calendar but was decided by the laws promulgated for controlling entry of the Pastoral people into pasture area. There were several other drivers from within, higher education of Galesh children is pushing them into formal sector jobs, and younger generation’s preference for luxurious life style of the cities propels them to come out of the pastoral system voluntarily. Sometimes elder Galesh return to their native habitats but prefer to stay in the plain areas and pursue with their traditional occupation. With challenges of adaptation also comes a possibility of vulnerability that makes these people susceptible to harm due to ‘exposure to some perturbations’ (Turner, 2001). Factors that may be responsible for these trepidations can be political economy, climate change, development challenges, population growth, wildlife conflict, conservation policies and sometimes even subsidy support strategies (Galvin, 2009; Biersack & Greenberg, 2006; Redman, 1999).

One of the important things to factor in the understanding of Nomadism and its vicissitudes is the change in the nature of landholdings. Pasturelands all over the world were common resource (Sanford, 1983; Franking et al., 1999, McCabe, 1990, Behnke & Scoones, 1993) but with the amendment in land tenure system and individual allotment of landholding, the entire nature of relationship between individuals and community and their relations with the land and nature too changes.
Grazing rights and permits for grazing in the yeylaq are still based on the concept of community holdings with the difference that the land is not owned directly by the community but is given to them for a limited time by the state. Anthropological opinion suggests that it is fragmentation, “porosity, impermanence, and continual social/political renegotiation” that pastoralists embrace (Turner, 1996, p 22 cf. Galvin, 2009).

**Pastoral Sedentarization**

One of the issues hotly contested in the context of nomadic populations is the question of their gradual sedentarization. It is believed by most scholars that invariably this happens under political and ecological pressures but some others argue that it happens most of the time voluntarily. Anthropologists working on Pastoral-nomadic communities have argued that in numerous situations, sedentary lifestyle is not a collective pursuit but often a small group for different reasons may opt out of the group and adapt a sedentary way of life (Thornton et al., 2006, Burn Silver et al., 2008). The process is slow but occurs over a period of time making many believe that it has happened at one time.

There is a cyclical movement among pastoral cultures that defines diverse trends of complexity (Chase-Dunn and Hall, 1997; Hall, 2001). Academic debates on land use systems among pastoral people have been subject of intense debates from the beginning of 20th century (Evans-Pritchard, 1940, Gulliver, 1955, Stenning, 1959). Sedentarization processes successively changed stock, social capital and institutions. Numerous livelihood changes occur among pastoralists, but perhaps the most prevalent now are diversification into agriculture and intensification of livestock production (Homewood et al., 2001, Little et al., 2001, Burn Silver et al., 2008). Given these arguments, many scholars contend that this has given rise to one of the important paradoxes of the millennium especially pertaining to pastoralism, which is that pastoralism needs security to safeguard its own flexibility. It was said in the beginning that early descriptions of pastoral described them as wonderers-free moving spirits that could not be controlled. The narrative gets dislodged when one scrutinizes the causes of this emanating paradox that now argues for providing security to the nomads. Impetus to this debate is added when eminent scholars like Asad (1979) believe that nation state and colonial pressures in countries that were colonized at one
time or the other ought to be factored in to comprehend the story of Pastoral flexibility and vulnerability.

Sedentarization attracts both poor and wealthy herders. The wealthy settle family members opportunistically, whereas the poor usually do not have a choice. Poor herders move to towns owing to loss of livestock and a hope that work is available in towns (McPeak & Little, 2005). For the better-off pastoralists, sedentarization does not necessarily reflect a full-time departure from pastoralism, nor does it always jeopardize pastoral production (McPeak & Little, 2005). As human populations rise and land is cultivated, sedentarization also leads to increased human-wildlife conflicts owing to competition over increasingly scarce resources (Chatty & Colester, 2002, Western, 1997). The wildlife–pastoral nomadic conflicts are often cited as one of the crucial reasons for settling pastoral people. Wildlife activists and political agencies come together to ban mobility and reason for a settled life way for these communities. Intervention agencies often create umbrella strategies and completely ignore empirical reality of different regions, putting aside indigenous practises and nature of human-animal relations in their respective environs.

An important difference between Asian and African pastoral situations is their political economy: Inner Mongolia (China), Mongolia, and Kazakhstan experienced widespread sedentarization and collectivization under socialist regimes. In these socialist (China) and formerly socialist countries (Mongolia, Kazakhstan), pastoral lands were managed collectively or by the state, which made significant contributions in terms of fodder, veterinary care, transportation, and marketing in these regions. When collectivization in Mongolia and the former Soviet republics ended abruptly in 1991 (and less abruptly but no less significantly in western China with economic liberalization), pastoral populations found themselves adrift in the globalized sea of increasing commoditization and privatization of the livestock economy. These are similar conditions that African pastoralists have endured for the past several decades. In Iran: was the regime of Reza Shah that insisted on sedentarization (Alighapo) of pastoral nomadic communities and one of the reasons was fear of solidarity and rebellion that these communities may pose to the regime. Efforts were made to move people out of the forest range and settle them in the plains.
Environmental concerns have been uppermost when framing the newer systems of interface among pastoralists and semi-sedentarized populations. Once the environment has been fragmented, the only way for it to support pastoralists and their livestock is to increase economic and policy inputs (Galvin et al., 2001, Hobbs et al., 2008). “When the grassland is fragmented, the grassland’s interdependent spatial units become disconnected thus compartmentalizing important parts of ecosystem function” (Hobbs et al., 2008). The result is a reduction in scale over which human management takes place. Thus, economic policy, and other inputs are needed to maintain pastoral viability.

It is necessary to assume that the natural state of pastoral systems is one of change and that we can never really assess its state of adaption. Change is often unpredictable, systems ought to be managed for flexibility rather than maintaining stability so that they can respond to changes in way that keep the system functioning (Nelson et al., 2007). Universal measures curtail not only individual’s ability to innovate but restrict the nature of adaptive measures. “Adaptive capacity is the suite of mechanisms that a society possesses to cope with change. Pastoral management or governance over natural resource use encompasses the core of pastoral adaptive capacity, which includes formal and informal institutions. Adaptations can occur at multiple scales and, what may be adapting today in response to a perceived change may not be the case tomorrow” (Nelson et al., 2007). Most writings on the subject have taken gradual change from pastoral nomadism to sedentarization as the core adaptive process (Wittfogel, Feng, 1949; Tamura, 1974; Pletneva, 1982; Khazanov, 1984; Kradin, 1992; 2002; Barfield, 2000 etc.).

**Paradigm Shift: Changed Pastoral Premise**

There was decidedly a paradigm shift as nomadic societies moved from various kinds of nomadic activities to a form of agro-pastoralism or settled as agriculturists either on their traditional landholdings or the land provided by the states as part of various resettlement schemes. The changed global scenario also brought about changes in pastoral social and environmental systems, which have in turn been impacted. Ojima & Chuluun (2008) talk about various livelihood changes with the herders increasingly settling down all over the world with the shift to a free-market
economy. These changes have also made them susceptible and scholars on nomadism have defined it as nomadic vulnerability to changed circumstances.

The converse of adaptation is vulnerability, which can be defined as the degree to which a system or some part of a social system is likely to experience harm due to exposure to some perturbation (Turner et al., 2003). Both climate and the political economy can contribute to differential exposure (Biersack & Greenberg, 2006). Pastoral management strategies, which may have worked under intact grassland, may or may not be sufficient under fragmentation. Sedentarization among pastoralists has been caused by many factors.

Fratkin (2004) found that the Ariaal, Rendille, Borana, and Samburu of northern Kenya have increasingly settled in or near towns. Factors pushing herders out of the pastoral sector include population growth, loss of land, droughts, and livestock raiding. Services provided by towns, including schools, hospitals, famine relief, and economic opportunities such as petty wage jobs, and the veritable pull of people into towns. Take for example the traditional social and political organizations of Basseri were the product of a particular socio-ecological environment characterized by simple technology, dependency on herding, seasonal migration in search of pasture, lack of fortifications, lack of protection and insecure social milieu. However, the forces of modernization, including the introduction of modern technology and the establishment of modern state, changed that socio-ecological environment which in turn caused social and political changes among the pastoral nomads.

On the contrary studies from Sudan showed that whenever the potential for reinvestment in the agricultural sector decreased most of the individuals would end up diverting their capital to the more lucrative nomadic pastoral sector even though it entailed a marked shift in the ethnic identity of a people (Haaland, 1969). The processes in the recent context and particularly in the case of Galesh have certainly reversed. Galesh are now moving from their pastoral-nomadic lifestyle to more sedentary agricultural production. Nevertheless, there are some places where the traditional institutions have re-emerged (Ojima & Chuluun, 2008); but most others are not able to sustain their heritage (Bruun, 2006). This occurrence has led to sedentarization near riparian areas where resources are available year round. Since 2000, a new settlement pattern has been emerging.
Previous studies on Iranian mobility patterns into agriculture have also differed. Anthropological accounts of Middle Eastern and North African societies have emphasized the movement of individuals into and out of the pastoral production system. As stated earlier Barth stressed the importance of movement of both wealthy and poor out of the pastoral production system among the Basseri of Iran. In contrast, Beck found that wealthy Qashqa'i tend to remain within the pastoral nomadic sector where they employ the poor as shepherds. Although this once was the means by which a poor man could become an independent herd owner, the increase in the value of sheep and the low wages paid to shepherds has closed this opportunity for economic mobility (Amanolahi, 2003). Irons found that since ethnicity and mode of production do not coincide among the Yomut of Iran – there are both pastoral Yomut groups (Churwa) and Yomut who are primarily agriculturalists (Chomur) – people who fail in the pastoral system can choose either to remain with pastoral relatives and work as shepherds or to move in with agricultural relatives (Amanolahi, 2003).

Anthropologists and Nomadologists have often debated the factors that are responsible for the survival of Nomadism in the 21st century and the factors that contribute to its present formations in different parts of the world. Blench (2001) presented a comprehensive summary of these factors in the following tables:

Table 1.2: Key Factors Shaping Twenty First Century Pastoralism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Modern veterinary medicine</td>
<td>Increases in productivity and greatly enlarged herds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern weapons</td>
<td>Major decline in predator threats, increasingly violent ethnic conflict and high levels of insecurity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enclaving</td>
<td>Collapse of traditional ‘safety-nets’ in terms of long-distance migration in periods of climatic extremes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International pressure for hygiene in slaughtering and dairying</td>
<td>Declining market for pastoralist products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Declining prestige of dairy products</td>
<td>Terms of trade running constantly against pastoral livelihoods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World market in livestock products</td>
<td>Governments import cheap meat, milk etc. to satisfy urban demand at expense of pastoral sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological interference by the state</td>
<td>Inappropriate social and management strategies adopted and maintained by a combination of subsidised inputs and implied violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative calls on pastoral labour</td>
<td>Pressure for children to go to school and younger people to earn cash outside the pastoral economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern transportation infrastructure</td>
<td>Replaces systems where transport is a major element of economic production (llamas, horses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction of high-input, high-output exotic breeds</td>
<td>Makes pastoralists dependent on effective infrastructure where input supply is irregular, creating periodic crises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency relief, restocking and rehabilitation programmes</td>
<td>Keeps non-viable households in pastoral areas, thereby accelerating the cycle of deficits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation lobby</td>
<td>Pressure to turn previously pastoral land over to reserved wildlife/biodiversity regions with corresponding hard currency income from tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encroachment on rangeland</td>
<td>Rangeland is being eliminated through the use of politically attractive but often uneconomic irrigation systems</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Blench, Roger (2001): Pastoralists in the new millennium)

Blench’s profound summation of various factors will find echo in every chapter of the present thesis. The agency of the state is virtually redefining the future of these communities across the globe. There are several pressures coming from the non-state sector arrive at a middle path but very few pastoral populations are able to sustain themselves against heavy odds.
The model of comparing social interactions between pastoralists and their neighbours follows ecological, economic, and historical criteria. From an ecological viewpoint of resource usage, these relationships may be characterized as competitive (herder-herder, herder-farmer), symbiotic (herder-farmer, herder-hunter, herder-town), or predator-prey (herder-herder, herder-hunter, herder-farmer). From the viewpoint of history and political economy, these relations might emphasize trade and mutual cooperation on the one hand, or competition and political domination on the other. However, livestock production will probably continue to exist as long as humans demand their products, and as long as livestock pastoralism offers a secure existence to human populations living in arid grasslands, deserts, and tundra regions of the world. Current changes, including rapid commoditization, competition for grazing resources, human and livestock population growth, environmental degradation, and political turmoil and insecurity, will continue to threaten pastoralists and their well being and security. To this end, pastoralists will continue to maintain, develop, and protect relations with their neighbours, who are an indispensable component of the world that pastoralists inhabit. Urbanization has provided new opportunities for the tribesmen. Many of the respondents in this study have migrated to urban centres including Marvdasht, Shiraz and Jahrom, during the past several decades.

There is growing recognition that nomadic pastoral societies are not isolated, but are parts of states and involved in the world economic system. This is amply reflected in the literature of the 1970s. Orlove’s (1982) study includes a discussion of how the world market and the marketing system for both sheep and alpaca wool has affected for example Andean pastoralists in southern Peru. Many of the recent studies stressing the influences of the actions of national governments on the spatial and social organization of Middle Eastern nomadic pastoral societies provide significant insights into the impacts of paradigm shift. Others include Oberling’s (1974) historical account of the Qashqa’i of Iran and Pastner’s (1971) description of how inclusion of the Makhran region of southwestern Pakistan into the state system [the Khanate of Khalat and later the British Raj] strengthened the traditional Makhran elite by granting them the additional status of “wardens of the March” and making them revenue collectors in regions which the central government found difficult to control (Amanolahi, 2003).
Modern education, modern systems of schooling have contributed significantly to the process of socio-political changes among the Galesh and other tribal communities of Iran. First, modern education affected the way of thinking of the young tribal boys and girls and increased their awareness of the social environment. Second, modern education as a means of social mobility, has provided new opportunities for the young people to improve their social status. The new generation not only questions, but also rejected the tribal political hierarchy, which is based on archaic system and obsolete social and political relationships. The modern schooling has created a gap between the tribal chiefs and the younger generation whose way of thinking is significantly different from their parents’ traditional world outlook.

Scholars working on the Basseri and the Qashqa’i have reported about the former chiefs complaining about the impact of “tribal school” on their relationship with their fellow tribesmen. They counted the modern education as one of the major factors responsible for deteriorating the ancestral social ties within the tribal societies of the country. Modern schooling has enhanced the migration of the educated tribal boys and girls to urban centres.

Tradition and modernity; social and cultural perseverance and ability to adapt will determine the future of Galesh as it has done for several other pastoral nomadic communities. It is with this understanding, following propositions and objectives for the study are defined.

Research Proposition

The present research is designed in the qualitative tradition. Statistical indicators were used only to collect demographic information and to augment or analyze data collected with the help of qualitative tools. Data generation and analysis proceeded as simultaneous processes. There were some research propositions listed at the outset and were continuously examined in the field.

- Sedentary activity is mostly an individualized pursuit and not a collective activity.
- Some individuals or families in the Galesh Pastoral community balance sedentary activities with traditional pastoral-nomadic lifestyle.
Pressures to evict forestland and their ancestral homes are resisted by the Galesh.

Change in the frequency and pattern and style of economic and nomadic activities are at times voluntary but mostly compulsive.

State plays a crucial role in the perseverance and continuation of pastoral mode of life style as it involves large revenue generation.

Nationalization of pasturelands has impacted pastoral-nomadic activities of Galesh.

Habitat is the essential determinant of nomadic and pastoral strategy.

Survival of traditional annual calendar practices is related to adaptation to ecology.

Women are pivotal to the continuance of the present life style of Galesh.

City and space are being re-configured by the younger men of the community.

Space and time equations are re-drafted as per the individual needs within the broader confines of the community.

Ethno-science and Chronometric practices are resisting pressures of western science and near universal western calendar practices.

Galesh culture and traditions and habitats are threatened because of development activities and construction of a large dam on their pasturelands.

**Objectives of the Research**

Galesh community is different from various other pastoral and pastoral-Nomadic communities of Iran in several ways. Some of these distinguishing attributes include many cultural attributes, practise of chronometry that resembles only almanac of Talesh of Gilan province in some ways, resilience to sustain their native traditions in the face of challenges of displacement and voluntary impulse of youngsters to move away. Each of these attributes had to be augmented from an anthropological perspective. With this purposive intent some of the upfront objectives of the study are:
➢ To trace out the culture and traditional activities of Galesh community with a focus to document rites de passages as far as possible in its entirety i.e. ritual, ceremonies etc.

➢ To comprehend linkages between economic activities and rituals and festivals of Galesh people.

➢ To understand life cycle of Galesh people in relation to their calendar.

➢ To study the impact of technological revolution and its influence on different generations of Galesh community.

➢ To explore dependency equations between pastoral economy, culture and ecology of Galesh community and their environment.

➢ To examine on-going processes of social transformations within the context of time and space.

➢ To what extent literacy has penetrated the community and its impact on the survival of traditional cultural practices.

➢ To look into various development programmes, legislations and policy measures that the state may have initiated for the community and people’s response to it.

➢ To examine the extent of sedentarization of the sample population and its impact on Galesh identity.

Chapter Scheme

Social Science research is not designed with the idea of producing a standardized document because all social science research using qualitative methods is located in a context. The idea is to “produce a coherent and illuminating description of and perspective on a situation that is based on and consistent with detailed study of that situation” (Schofield 1993: 202). The present study generated data from fifty villages located in different field sites within the province of Mazandran. The context was the people, the community of Galesh that inhabited a section of these sites. More than 400 household interviews were conducted. Data generated on these four hundred households was tabulated to collect basic demographic profile of the population. From
these four hundred household heads, One hundred and fifty in-depth interviews were held to generate detailed narratives and case studies from different sites. Organizing a vast body of literature and field data in a systematic framework of chapters is one of the most demanding tasks of writing research. After lot of brainstorming and keeping logic of enquiry in perspective, the thesis was divided in eight chapters’.

The first chapter- Introduction in the classic tradition of research introduces the problem, the research population and as detailed above examines epistemological and paradigmatic issues, while attempting to comprehend the empirical dimensions of pastoralism world wide and in particular in Iran. Research questions, objectives of research and research propositions are described in this chapter.

Chapter two-titled Reconnoitring field site-Mazandaran Province in Iran-The Locale reconstructs the field site-the province of Mazandaran in Iran. Attempt is made to capture its history, its cultural and ethnic diversity in particular of the pastoral communities living in the vicinity of research population of the Galesh. In the last section of the chapter methodology used for generating data and demographic description of the research population is presented. Chapter three details the Review of Literature. Effort is made to examine feasible body of literature on this vastly researched area. Focus was on comprehending numerous facets of pastoral studies in particular with reference to Iran. To understand the issues relating pastoralism in its entirety in a holistic perspective inference were drawn from pastoral studies made in other parts of the world and discussion on interventions pursued by them was also incorporated. Chapter Four-Serendipity of Survival: Economy of Galesh reconstructs the various delineations of the Galesh economy from the primary narratives of the respondents. The pastoral economy of each pastoral community has several unique features. Details of these characteristics are captured in this chapter keeping the respondent reflexivity and narrative intact using as far as possible in the Gilaki dialect. It also discusses changes that are coming in their economy either voluntarily or because of policy changes and pressures of sedentarization.

Chapter Five - Allied in Time –the ethno Science of Calendar making among the Galesh is critical to this thesis as it documents unique tradition of calendar making that continues to sustain itself and defines the pastoral cycle, mobility patterns of this transhumance population and continues to have ceremonial and ritual importance for
every member of the ethnicity including those that are voluntarily adapting urban life ways and are experiencing rupture with their heritage and pastoral nomadic ways of their ascending generations.

Chapter Six - Culture, Customs, Festivals and Mythology of Galesh delineates vital features of Galesh culture that serves as identity markers establishing distinct sense of cultural identity of these people. Ethnic dress, language, proverbs, orthodoxies and myths provide a sense of belonging that gets further institutionalized in rituals and festivals. The chapter also includes a brief discussion on status of woman in Galesh society.

Chapter seven - Compulsions of ‘Development’ and Crisis of Galesh Survival centres on the altered aspects of the Galesh lifestyle with special regard to their animals and their transportation, controls on pastureland, displacement due to dam development and proliferation of industries on grasslands. The chapter essentially deliberates on compulsion of development and crisis of Galesh survival. Narratives generated from the field in the form of case studies are incorporated to assert people’s perception.

Chapter eight sums up the arguments and narratives linking it to way forward to facilitate people’s voices and to locate it in the context of policy framework. There are several possibilities by which a middle path can be identified that protects rich heritage of this vibrant community and provides space to the state to manoeuvre its objectives.

Notes:

1. Galesh has a rich repository of idioms and proverbs. The Galesh dialect is slowly confining its rich vocabulary to history. Its versatility and ability to innovate is getting restricted because fewer people are conversing in it. Given the importance of preserving these precious jewels of an important dialect, that many argue has a repository of written text, that I have not been able access, I decided to document these proverbs. Some of them are used in the text of the thesis in different chapters but others are given in the appendix.