



Editor's Note: Why is the Pastures-Pastoralism Nexus Critical?

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Dear Readers,

Pasturelands are the most ancient sources of subsistence economy in human history. Pastoral communities, especially nomadic pastoralists, are considered some of the most sustainable societies in the world. Normally, pasturelands are chiefly owned or controlled by governments and under communal tenures of agro-pastoral communities with custodianship of local governance institutions. In large number of developed countries a substantial area of pasturelands has been privatized and managed by ranchers. Despite awareness of the critical roles of pasturelands in sustaining livelihoods of pastoralists and ecological safeguarding, pasturelands have felt the pressure of habitat fragmentation, land use change, industrialization, enclosure, privatization, militarization, and ecosystem devastation. The recent phenomenon of land grabbing has also affected the remaining pasturelands and dependent pastoralism. Gradually, pasturelands are being converted into other land uses or enclosed for exclusive uses under various national laws or policies. Worldwide, there is a common trend of governing bodies increasingly declaring pasturelands unproductive, waste or under-productive lands and term the pastoralist lifestyles outdated and obsolete. Thereafter, with the help of weak rangeland or pastures related laws/policies and by using powerful land acquisition or conversion laws/policies, countries either have given up massive rangeland territories to other forms of land uses or enclosed tenures or have restricted/ circumvented the grazing activities of pastoralist herders. Thus, by changing land use criteria, the results have been the exclusion of indigenous herder communities, fragmentation of habitats, militarization of territories, and enclosure of pasturelands. This has affected the sustainability of both rangeland ecosystem services and viable pastoralism and transhumance.

It is believed that subsistence pastoralism is a sustainable strategy of livelihood and ecosystem conservation in the pasturelands. Very few studies have been undertaken to demonstrate that the nomadic pastoralist way (on pasturelands) of livestock production with hardly any economic investment produces some of the most nutritive foods as well as other sustainable products. Unfortunately, such products have not been desirably priced in modern markets, and the nomadic grazing (which is helpful to biodiversity, not detrimental) is perceived by ecologists and policy makers as a threat to conservation. The deep ecologists and green missionaries had/have advocated against grazing in natural ecosystems, especially in protected areas. Hence, pastoralists as well as the rangeland ecosystems have suffered as a result. Fading fast all over the world, the (most sustainable) livelihoods and lifestyles of nomadic pastoralists can, therefore, only sustain/conservate the rangeland commons, which are most productive ecosystems on planet (even more productive than forests).

Resilience of indigenous pastoralist communities to the changing environments – ecological, economic and political – has great potential to protecting and conserving the rangeland landscapes or waterscapes. Varied aspects of pastoralists' resilience have been documented mostly in context of climate change. However, resilience of nomadic pastoralists particularly needs to be studied in respect to drying water sources, changing vegetation composition, reducing fodder resources, degrading rangeland ecosystem, changing political or policy environment, militarization of pasturelands, and alike. Of course, the scientific studies of pastoralists' resilience and adaptation abilities would contribute to inclusive policy processes or reform meant for landscape conservation and management.

International journal, *Pastures & Pastoralism*, is dedicated to the complex issues raised above and faced by the pastoralist communities across the world. We seek a cooperation of every one and all.