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Philip Carl Salzman

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FROM NOMADS TO DAIRYMEN: TWO GUJARATI CASES

by Philip Carl Salzman

Widespread throughout India are livestock breeding and herding castes, such as the Gujar, the Reika, the Bharawad, the Dhangar, and the Ahir, which have traditionally migrated within or away from their home regions in order to find pasture for their livestock. While the way of life of these pastoral nomads is far from our urban and industrial stereotype of "modern life", these livestock breeders should not be considered merely quaint and backward rural folk, for they are in fact highly effective livestock production specialists with well developed organizational forms and precisely refined adaptive strategies. Nor should India's pastoral castes be viewed as resolutely traditional and custom bound, for pastoralists, like other caste groups, are by no means closed to opportunities in their natural and social environments. Indeed, many pastoral castes have in recent decades responded to attractive socio-economic opportunities by implementing changes in their production organization and by shifting their adaptive strategies and tactics.

The two Bharawad groups discussed here can serve as examples of pastoral castes in contemporary India, and can illustrate two of the ways in which herding caste groups have revised their adaptive strategies, reorganized their economies, and reoriented their life patterns. In these Bharawad cases, there has been a shift from a nomadic and largely subsistence production pattern to the sedentary, primarily market production pattern of the dairyman. We cannot assume that these Bharawad cases are substantively representative of other pastoral herding groups in transition, for some other herding castes have shifted in different directions, such as toward greater nomadism, or toward specialization in traction animals, or toward the production of wool; however, these Bharawad groups can well represent the many and various others processually, in their openness to socio-economic opportunities and their voluntary selection among available courses of change¹.

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Surat is the main city and a dominant influence in south Gujarat. It is well known among students of European expansion as the location of the first British foothold in India. Today Surat boasts a population of half a million, a variety of industries, and a university².

¹ I am grateful to Professors B. S. Baviskar, Donald Attwood, and Richard F. Salisbury, and to Lisa Edelsward, for their constructive comments on earlier drafts of this essay.

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² At the beginning of a visit to India from 16 September through 31 December 1985, I spent three weeks in Surat, Gujarat. This visit to India was part of a large research project on "Cooperative Enterprises and Rural Development" directed by Professor Donald Attwood of McGill University and Professor B. S. Baviskar of Delhi University, and funded by the International Development Research Centre, Ottawa, and Fonds pour la formation de chercheurs et l'aide à la recherche, Quebec. My trip was also partially funded by the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research of McGill University.

Along the Ring Road, heavy with car and truck traffic, on the traditional southern border of the city, near the Majura Gate, are found many signs of a modern, technologically based and consumer oriented society. On the north side of the road is a billboard drawing attention to "The How, Why, and Where of Losing Weight Here There and Everywhere. Sheri Louise Slimming Centre, Behind St. Xavier's School". On the south side of the road, beyond the ruins of the old city wall and on the other side of a wide gully, is the Dr. Sorabji Ghandhy and Dr. Barosh Sorabji Ghandhy College of Engineering and Technology.

Occupying the gully next to Ring Road is what seems to be a shanty town of makeshift huts. A further glance indicates that many of the structures are stables housing buffalo and cattle. Closer inspection suggests that the typical component unit of this settlement is a compound consisting of a small family household and a stable of the family livestock. In fact, the uniformity of the settlement reflects not only the inhabitants' similarity of circumstance but also their purposeful commonality and mutuality; for this is not just a settlement, it is a community: it is a Bharawad caste community defining itself in terms of birth and status; and it is a community of dairymen, pursuing a common livelihood and to a degree cooperating and even acting in concert in production as well as in political, social, and ritual matters³.

Members of this Bharawad community settled in Surat two or three decades ago. Prior to then, they were based in Dhanduka District, Saurashtra, north Gujarat. The largest population of Bharawad is found in Saurashtra, where the caste leader and caste records reside. But Bharawad have for a long time occupied areas to the south of Saurashtra, through central Gujarat to south Gujarat, including Surat and its hinterland, and beyond, into northern Maharashtra. There were other Bharawad settled in Surat prior to the arrival of the Bharawad from Dhanduka District who settled by the Ring Road. These earlier Bharawad residents I call the north Surat Bharawad; they are distinct from the Bharawad of the Ring Road community in south Surat.

Even while based in Saurashtra, the Bharawad group which later settled on the Ring Road included Surat in its pastoral round. Then, they herded cattle and buffalo and sheep and goats in about equal number, selling ghee (clarified butter) for remuneration. When the dry season came to the more arid north, these pastoralists would migrate to the more humid south, to the vicinity of Surat, where they would graze their animals on agricultural stubble in farming communities. This provided pasturage for their livestock during the most difficult season in the dryer north as well as income in cash from farmers for providing scarce and valuable fertilizer for the agricultural plots. These pastoralists remained south in this manner for two months each year.

There were constraints on remaining in south Gujarat. The small stock, especially the goats, could not tolerate the wet season in the humid south, and were subject to hoof disease. With mixed herds of small and large stock, residence in south Gujarat had to be restricted to the dry season. Thus, in contrast to Bharawad migrating from the north to south Gujarat, other Bharawad based permanently in south Gujarat limited their herds to large stock.

While in Surat, I was the guest of Shanti George at the Centre for Social Studies. For the graciousness of her welcome and the intellectual stimulation she provided, I am most grateful to Shanti George. I wish to thank the Centre for receiving me and making available its facilities.

³ I visited the south Surat Bharawad community three times: once alone, once with Shanti George and with two Centre researchers, Arjun and Ashok, and a third time with Shanti George. While we spoke briefly with several members of the community, most of our time, about five hours altogether, was spent in the home of Raghu Jogubhai Vehuni, having discussions with Raghu and, for part of the time, with his wife. My companions from the Centre acted as interpreters.

In the pre-Surat period, then, the Bharawad from Dhanduka District who eventually settled in the Ring Road community were nomadic, migrating with their livestock as part of the annual round of productive activities. Their nomadic strategy for maximizing the welfare of their livestock and the amount of their income took into account variations in climate, especially rainfall, during different seasons and at different locales, and the effects these differences would have on availability of pasturage and the likelihood of disease, and took into account the activities of other populations, especially the agricultural cycle and the market for animal products, and the consequences of variations in these for their income.

The shift of home base from Dhanduka to Surat led to major changes in adaptation and production. First, three quarters of the group have given up migrating entirely, and settled into a sedentary life. The 140 households making up the Bharawad community in the gully next to the ruins of the old city wall remain there throughout the year. Second, the family herd has changed from a mixed small and large stock profile to a large stock profile, because the small stock do not do well in the wet season. Third, the main productive activity is no longer the making of ghee, but the supplying of milk. This also has an effect upon the herd profile. For one thing, it makes small stock less useful, for goat milk has a very strong taste and a low fat content, and is thus not very saleable, and sheep produce only a small quantity of milk, making them not very profitable. And for another thing, the demand in Surat is for buffalo milk, with its high fat content, so there has been a shift from cows to buffalo.

These changes of residence pattern, herd profile, and economic activity are interrelated. Nomadism and the sale of milk do not go very well together, because nomads do not stay in good proximity to a market, and because milk cannot be stored or transported easily. Ghee is a good product for nomads, because it stores well and is easy to transport, being small in bulk and thus light in weight. Milk, of course, goes bad quickly and easily; whereas ghee remains good over time without special care. Thus ghee, unlike milk, can be carried until a market is reached. Under the constraints of traditional technology, animal husbanders who wish regularly to supply milk for sale must remain in close proximity to their market. This means remaining more or less sedentary. Similarly, if sheep, goats, and cattle migrate well and make good nomadic herds, the wide, ponderous buffalo are better adapted to the stationary rather than the peripatetic life. And buffalo provide more and richer milk, which makes them the animal of choice among milk suppliers in southern Gujarat.

What brought on this transformation from nomad to sedentary, from rural to urban, from mixed herd pastoralist to buffalo husbanding dairyman? At least one part of the answer lies in the expectation of making a better living and having a higher standard of living. These Bharawad report that their livelihood is now more secure, that they have a greater income, and that their standard of living has improved. It is now possible, for example, to enjoy the comforts of material possessions. This was less possible during the earlier nomadic annual cycle because of paucity of income and the difficulty of transporting material possessions. In the south Surat Bharawad community, each household sports several string cots, chests for clothes, and an impressive array of pots, pans, and serving dishes, along with rows of food and cooking supplies containers. And a substantial if modest income, stable in its dependability, provides security in the provision of foodstuffs, clothes, minor medicines, and other daily necessities. These Bharawad view their current way of life as a significant improvement over the previous pattern.

The south Surat Bharawad make their living by raising buffalo and selling buffalo milk to residents of Surat. The land they occupy, the gully next to the Ring Road, belongs to the municipality, and they have no rights of tenure. Their settlement is thus insecure, subject to periodic threats of eviction, and provides no sure base in future years. But the location is very convenient for access to their urban customers, and so the Bharawad contemplate displacement to a more distant, if more rural, locale with little equinimity.

The nuclear family operates as an economic enterprise. The herds are family herds and labour is provided primarily by the nuclear family. Labour is not sold between families or outside the community, because "only people without work of their own will work for others". Available labour is invested to expand the family herd. There is also reciprocal labour cooperation between brothers and close relatives and between neighbors, so that, for example, if someone leaves the community on a trip, others will help to look after his animals. And there are labour activities undertaken in concert, as when a group of men go off together to gather grass or hay.

The provision of fodder for the stationary buffalo is a major concern and activity of the south Surat Bharawad. This, of course, signals the close of pastoralism, which is the grazing of livestock on natural pasture. The Bharawad dairymen have standing permission to cut grass on the nearby College and Hospital campuses. Various other arrangements with farmers and other land owners give them access to cut and carry away grass. They also purchase oil cakes for fodder.

Herds are built in various ways. Raghu Jogubhai Vehuni has eleven adult buffalo. Two were raised from calves, nine purchased from Muslim traders. The cost was 5000 rupees each, with a ten percent down payment and periodic installments. Payment draws from milk sales, but sometimes resort to a money lender is required. Over the past three years, Raghu's herd has expanded through natural reproduction. This year one calf had dropped and two more were on the way. The year before two male and one female calves were brought to term but did not survive the year. Two females dropped the year before remain. They will be ready to reproduce and to begin providing milk in their fifth year. Male calves are customarily kept for one year and given some milk, then are sent to the animal shelter, but not to the butcher, for "calves are like our children".

It has not been possible to get external financial support to build herds or to expand. Banks will not give loans because they will not accept livestock as security. Government agencies have so far been unwilling to help because the south Surat Bharawad are classified as "urban cattle keepers", and the government wishes to discourage urban cattle keeping. In times of need, the Bharawad women pawn their bulky ivory bracelets and their silver and gold jewelery, in the hope that these can be reclaimed in better times.

Each individual family head acts as an independent dairyman, supplying his own list of customers. Bharawad dairymen can be seen throughout the city making their rounds on bicycles, motorcycles, scooters, and carts, all with appended milk containers. They do two rounds of home deliveries each day. The buffalo produce around four litres of milk in the morning and in the afternoon, so there is close coordination of the milkings and the delivery rounds. There is competition between Bharawad dairymen and other pastoral castes, such as the Rubari, and with Banias. Between Bharawad dairymen, there is no direct competition, and interference with the customers of other Bharawad is avoided.

These Bharawad settled by the Ring Road are socially inward looking and endogamous in marriage pattern. They thus function as an autonomous caste group. They marry among themselves in the south Surat Ring Road community and do not marry the north Surat Bharawad, stating as justification that north Surat Bharawad eat meat and drink alcohol. The Bharawad of the Ring Road settlement characterize themselves as being completely vegetarian and as abstaining from alcohol. It is widely agreed that the Bharawad in general are a "clean caste" of the middle or lower middle level.

As is well known, each caste "community", as it is usually glossed in Indian English, has its own customs, rules, styles, procedures, rituals, and organization. Each caste is thus like a separate culture, or at least subculture, distinct from the others, and to a degree defining its identity in terms of these differences. In this respect, we can view castes rather as ethnic groups. The Bharawad are distinct from other castes in many ways, and this is no less true at the most obvious level of appearance. Women wear loose skirts and open back chest coverings decorated with embroidery and mirror work, are

tattooed on arms and face, and sport bulky ivory bracelets. Men cut their hair short with one long strand flowing from high on the back of their heads and wear gold rings in the top of their ears. The Bharawad appearance is one that we might characterize as illustrating rural folk decoration, and would be so seen by urban folk from Surat. Bharawad dress and decoration contrasts markedly with the sari or shirt and trousers now normal in Surat. Dress is seen as an important cultural diacritic in this group, and Bharawad who set aside traditional dress for urban wear are seen as moving away from the community.

There is an ideology in this Bharawad group stressing solidarity among members. And there is a sense that living together in a community, such as theirs, reinforces solidarity. There is, at least in some mild way, a feeling of collective responsibility. If, for example, a community member is threatened by an outsider, all rush to his aid. Internal community conflicts are mediated by a group of recognised elders, some six or seven men being designated as leaders among the south Surat Bharawad.

Few of these Bharawad have had much schooling. Only a handful have completed primary school and of those hardly any went on to secondary school. Nor are the Bharawad assiduous in sending their children to school, for the labour of children is much needed in maintaining and supporting the herds and in dairy operations. In some households, elder children are directed to household production while younger children are sent to school. But over all, there is a feeling that the caste group is improving itself. One educated dairyman noted a refinement of language through contact with "superior" customers.

Viewing these various residential, economic, social, and political aspects of the south Surat Bharawad, it is difficult not to notice the strong segmentary nature of their grouping. That is, these Bharawad appear to be a cohesive unit, separate and distinct from other units, defining themselves partially in terms of opposition to those other units. The commonality of custom and style unites members of the group and distinguishes them from outsiders. This is reinforced by their unitary and exclusive residential block. The south Surat Bharawad maintain through endogamy a strong sense of who belongs and who does not belong to the group. Their construing of descent and history provides a distinct identity imbued with a tone of inevitability. The solidarity of group members is demonstrated in the resolution of internal conflicts and in collective action against external threat. In the contemporary context, and perhaps especially in the urban milieu, castes such as the Bharawad appear to have strong segmentary tendencies unameliorated by the countervailing conventional interdependencies with other caste groups which were perhaps more prevalent in earlier times and more rural settings. That this seems to be true of the south Surat Bharawad is testimony to the fact that even an economically specialized caste group can operate as an ethnic action group little inhibited by customary relationships within a wider caste system of customary reciprocities and embedded obligations. If this assessment is correct, it supports the position of Kolenda (1984) that even while the caste system of conventional interdependencies withers, castes as units maintain their strength.

The continuing cohesion of the south Surat Bharawad indicates that their transformation--from nomadic to sedentary residence pattern, from rural to urban setting, from generalized to specialized livestock husbandry, from subsistence to market orientation, and from pastoralism to dairy production--is not a result of social disintegration, cultural assimilation, economic exploitation, or political oppression, but is a result of voluntary, opportunistic responses to attractive possibilities in the natural and social environments (Salzman 1980). The transformation of this Bharawad group is an example of grass roots change, responses by ordinary people to changing conditions, actions by ordinary people on their own behalf, without guidance or assistance from "above", from Government planning, administration or financing, without encouragement from public or private agencies, and even in the face of opposition by the authorities or segments of the public.

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A somewhat contrasting case of the transformation of pastoralists is found in the Bharawad of Umarpada Village, Mangrol Taluka, Surat District⁴. These Bharawad are native to south Gujarat; prior to their recent settlement in Umarpada Village, they lived in camps in the forests of south Gujarat, grazing their cattle in the vicinity, and from time to time migrating to new areas and setting up new camps.

In the mid 1970s, agents of the Surat District Co-operative Milk Producers' Union Limited, headquartered at Sumul Dairy in Surat City, the major cooperative dairy organization in south Gujarat, were searching for new sources of milk to satisfy a high market demand. These Sumul milk procurement officers saw possibilities in the forest dwelling Bharawad, who were of interest because they were already milk producers. But nomadic pastoralists provide serious logistical problems for a centrally organized milk collection system, as their movements preclude reliable contact with milk collectors and thus make impossible dependable supply of milk from the nomadic producers to the dairy.

From the point of view of the Dairy, spatial stability of the milk supplier is a necessity. The Bharawad were excellent prospects as husbanders and pastoralists, but their nomadism blocked the fruition of their potential. How could the problem be solved? Prior to this time, Bharawad occasionally took their milk by train to Surat in order to sell it, an arduous and not especially lucrative strategy. The Sumul agents had a different idea: if only the Bharawad would settle down in one place, their new spatial stability would make possible regular and reliable supply of milk and would thus allow their inclusion in the Sumul milk collection network⁵.

At this time, there were only three families of Bharawad settled in Umarpada Village. In one of these families, there was a bright young man who was hired by Sumul Dairy as a local organizer. The job of this organizer was to encourage Bharawad nomads to settle. As a Bharawad himself, he was able to act as an intermediary between the Bharawad forest dwelling nomads and Sumul Dairy agents, taking the agents to forest camps and introducing them to the nomads.

What could the Dairy do to induce the Bharawad to settle? The Dairy was able to offer a stable and good market for milk. It also would provide various husbandry support supplies and services. The Dairy was thus offering a better income to the Bharawad. And the Dairy went one step farther: it provided an attractive locale for settlement, this locale being Umarpada Village, an agricultural community with established facilities. The agents of the Dairy had managed to convince the Umarpada Panchayat to provide land for Bharawad houses and cattle pens.

⁴ While I was staying at the Centre for Social Studies in Surat, the management of the Surat District Co-operative Milk Producers' Union Headquarters at Sumul Dairy kindly agreed to arrange a visit to Umarpada and an introduction to the Bharawad. I was accompanied by Mr. Patel, Assistant Manager, Milk Procurement, Sumul Dairy, and by Ashok, a researcher from the Centre for Social Studies, who graciously agreed to translate for me. We were driven in a Union automobile by a Union driver, and were welcomed formally by the Bharawad with a small ceremony in which I was draped with flowers and presented an auspicious coconut. A couple of dozen Bharawad hung around and answered questions for most of the four hours of interviewing, but many drifted off toward the end of the discussion. Throughout the discussion, my main informant was Mahijibhai Vagabhai, Secretary of the Umarpada Milk Cooperative Society.

⁵ The need for a milk supplier to be spatially stable is a need defined by the Surat District Co-operative Milk Producers' Union. There are cases of nomadic pastoralists being included in milk collection networks. It is known generally and was known by the Umarpada Bharawad that regular collection of milk from nomadic groups by private merchants was well and widely established in Saurashtra, especially around Bhuj. (Also referred to in George 1985:12.)

Bharawad families settled in twos and threes through the second half of the 1970s, so that by 1979 there were twenty Bharawad families resident in Umarpada. At that point, a local dairy cooperative society was established, instituting a formal connection with the central Sumul Dairy. Then 45 more Bharawad families settled en masse, making a total of 68 Bharawad families. The co-op society elected a council and chairman, and hired as secretary of the society the young village man who had been the organizer.

Today we find 65 of these Bharawad families occupying a more or less contiguous area of Umarpada Village, each family with a fairly spacious compound including a substantial house of wood and thatch and a large permanent cowshed. These families are totally sedentary. In addition, there are three Bharawad families of the original 68 which use the village as a home base in a nomadic annual cycle, staying three months in Umarpada and moving into the forest for the other nine months.

The Umarpada continue to raise cattle, as they did when they were nomadic. Each family has a small herd, the average being about seven cows. The Bharawad cattle are grazed as one herd in the nearby forest. The herd is taken out and supervised by members of three or four families, this responsibility rotating among the Bharawad families on a daily basis. Husbandry and milking are the responsibility of the individual family, and each household herd requires daily attention. Milk is collected daily by drivers of the Surat District Co-operative Milk Producers' Union and taken to Sumul Dairy in Surat City⁶.

Along with the continued commitment to animal husbandry and to dairy production, the Bharawad have expanded into other realms of economic activity. Some have opened small shops, some have leased agricultural land and are cultivating, and some have taken government jobs. These activities are supplementary or complementary to dairy production, which is universally maintained among Bharawad families. However, the different supplementary occupations taken up by Bharawad differentiate them from one another, provide them with different experience and interests, and chart potentially different courses for members of a community previously similar in occupation and opportunity. Furthermore, this pastoral continuity amidst change has not been tested across generations. For the first time, Bharawad children are in school, and the consequences of schooling for their future occupations and professions can be little more than matters for speculation. Whether it is a forewarning that Bharawad school

⁶ The Umarpada Bharawad have continued raising cattle, as they did when they lived in the forest, unlike the south Surat Bharawad, who switched from cattle to buffalo on the grounds that buffalo milk was more in demand by their customers. Why, then, did the Umarpada Bharawad not switch to raising buffalo, as they are now selling milk as their main dairy product and are selling in the same market as the south Surat Bharawad?

Could it be that the difference between the two groups is that the south Surat Bharawad are selling directly to the consumer and are responding to the preferences and demands of their customers, whereas the Umarpada Bharawad are part of the Surat District Co-operative Milk Producers' Union and are supplying milk to the Union's Sumul Dairy in Surat City, and so it is the preferences and requirements of Sumul Dairy that the Umarpada need to satisfy? It has been argued by well informed researchers that a preference for and an emphasis upon zebu and mixed breed cattle is common in large, modern, centralized dairy operations. As Shanti George (1985: 13, Note 4) puts it, an "important aspect of dairy breeding in India is the neglect of the buffalo as the country's premier milch animal, neglect that results from Operation Flood's concentration on cross-breeding the zebu, ..."

Other factors which--alone, in combination, or in conjunction with Sumul Dairy influences--might militate in favour of continuing the breeding of cattle in Umarpada are (1) a preference among the Bharawad for a known and well understood species, and (2) a preference for mobile livestock which can be easily herded to pasture in the forests surrounding the village.

children have switched away from the distinctive Bharawad dress to more standardized clothes will only become evident in the future.

Whatever the future changes among the Umarpada Bharawad, they have already gone through a major transformation--from a forest to a village setting, from a nomadic to a settled residence pattern, from subsistence to market orientation, and from specialized primary production to economic and occupational diversification. Continuity is seen in the maintenance of cattle herds and in the pasturing of the herds on the natural vegetation of the forest.

This transformation was not initiated by the Bharawad nomadic pastoralists residing in the forests of south Gujarat. Rather, it was initiated by agents of the Surat District Co-operative Milk Producers' Union. It was through their persistent and substantial inducements that the Bharawad were--slowly and reluctantly--persuaded to settle in Umarpada Village. To be sure, Umarpada Bharawad sedentarization was voluntary, and in no sense imposed. At the same time, we must acknowledge that without external impetus, the Bharawad may well have continued their nomadic existence in the forest, at least for the foreseeable future.

The Surat District Co-operative Milk Producers' Union has not pursued additional initiatives to sedentarize pastoral nomads. The reasons for this are not clear. There are other Bharawad groups--said to have originated in Maharashtra--camping in the forests of south Gujarat. And there are groups from other pastoral castes, such as the Rubari/Reika, in the area. Perhaps the effort involved was too great. And it is known that there has been some decline of demand in relation to supply, so perhaps there is no current need to expand the Federation's milk procurement network.

The Secretary of the Umarpada Milk Cooperative Society would like the Union to continue its efforts to settle Bharawad pastoral nomads. Being a Bharawad, he has the interests of his people at heart; and he has a vision of the future and the necessary courses of action for successful adaptation. In the Secretary's view, those who remain nomadic are not facing the future or the changes that are part of life all around. He argues that government surveys showing that nomads prefer their current way of life and wish to continue are testing only the ignorance of current opinion, for the nomads have not tried settled life and do not realize how superior it is. Among other things, settled life gives the Bharawad more political clout, because they can vote regularly and thus gain weight that they have never had in the past. The Secretary believes that, although some of the older Bharawad in Umarpada have never really taken to village life and would just as leave return to the forest, the younger members of the community agree that settled life is superior. The remaining nomads of the forest should, he feels, be extended the benefits that the Umarpada Bharawad enjoy⁷.

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⁷ Whether sedentarization best serves the needs of the Bharawad and of the wider society is not a matter on which there is universal agreement. (On the Gujarat case, see Shanti George 1985: 12; on the general issue, see Galaty, Aronson, and Salzman 1981.) Similarly controversial is the role of large, centralized dairies modeled on the Amul pattern and the effects of their operations under the national Operation Flood policies. One point at issue is the extent of benefits received by the rural primary milk producers. (For a general critical assessment, see Shanti George 1985a.) The relevance of this controversy to the discussion here is in relation to the relative merits of the Amul pattern dairies, such as Sumul, as the engine of change for pastoral nomads such as the Bharawad.

The cases of the south Surat Bharawad and the Umarpada Bharawad illustrate two patterns of shift from nomadic to sedentary residence, and from subsistence to market oriented dairying. Among the south Surat Bharawad, these changes were self initiated without external encouragement, and were played out with further changes, from small stock and cattle husbandry to buffalo husbandry and from pastoralism to fodder feeding. The Umarpada Bharawad had taken up their new pattern of life in response to encouragement and inducements from the Surat District Co-operative Milk Producers' Union, but as part of their new life continued to herd cattle and continued to graze them on the natural pasture of the forest. The south Surat Bharawad are now urban dwelling dairymen, individually selling their milk directly to consumers. The Umarpada are village dwelling dairymen, selling their milk wholesale through the Producers' Union to Sumul Dairy.

The patterns of change seen in these two Bharawad cases, and the processes that underly them, processes of shifting ecological and social constraints and opportunities and of assessing these shifts and choosing courses of action, can be found in other groups in Gujarat and elsewhere in India. But the shift from nomadic pastoralism to sedentary dairying is far from universal in India. Other cases show other patterns of change.

Livestock breeding castes of western Rajasthan, such as the Reika and the Sindhi, and those of eastern Rajasthan, such as the Gujar, have, for example, over the past decades become more rather than less nomadic and pastoral. These sheep breeders are migrating longer and farther, staying away for greater lengths of time and going to more distant points than ever. The problem is not that they do not have villages to reside in, for they are all village based and have been so traditionally. They would like nothing better than to remain resident in their villages, grazing their livestock in the vicinity. The problem is that scarcity of water and pasture near their villages and in their districts and regions--a consequence of periodic droughts, the decline in available pasture due to expanded agriculture, forest reserves, and urban areas, and the explosion in livestock numbers--drives them away from their villages and districts, even to other states in search of nourishment for their animals. The increased nomadism of many Rajasthani livestock breeding castes is thus an involution of increasing effort to compensate for declining resources in the hope of maintaining a threatened standard of living and way of life (Salzman 1986).

There are obviously a multitude of different livestock raising groups in India, and a myriad of divergent ecological and social contexts in which they operate. It is inevitable that these groups will exhibit a wide range of courses of change. Thus it would be inappropriate to make any substantive policy recommendations about such a general and abstract category as pastoral nomads in India. But I think we are on firm ground joining Shanti George (1985) in asserting that Indian pastoral nomads are a valuable national resource, and that their skill, knowledge, and organization, if encouraged and facilitated rather than belittled and obstructed, could benefit their communities and the wider society as well as themselves. That Indian pastoral nomads are willing and able to adapt and change is well illustrated by the south Surat and the Umarpada Bharawad. The policy question that must be considered is how best the talents of India's pastoral nomads can be brought to bear on advancing the general interest. But a prerequisite to this consideration is a greater appreciation of the rich potential in the skill, knowledge, and organization of the pastoral nomads.

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Philip Carl Salzman
Department of Anthropology
McGill University
Montreal, Quebec
CANADA