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# **CONTENTS**

Sr. No.	TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)	Page No.
1.	A STUDY ON GOOD SUGGESTIONS FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH SELF HELP GROUPS	1
	DR. RASHMI RANI AGNIHOTRI H.R & DR. K. S. MALIPATIL	
2.	MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (MSMEs) AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS	5
	(IPRS)	
	DR. BLANCHE R.C.S. MASCARENHAS	
3.	DETERMINANTS OF EXPORT PERFORMANCE MARKET IN ETHIOPIA: IN THE CASE OF	8
	AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS AND MANUFACTURED GOODS	
	DR. GETIE ANDUALEM IMIRU	45
4.	THE INFORMAL ECONOMY IN RURAL COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	15
	NINGIREE DALEEN KAVEZEPA (KASUME) & DR. SHRIPATHI KALLURAYA P.  ROLE OF BANKS IN ECONOMIC GROWTH OF SIKKIM	10
<b>5</b> . <b>6</b> .	KESHAR PRASAD SHARMA & DR. MANESH CHOUBEY	18
	EDUCATION: A TOOL FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT	23
7.	AMANDEEP KAUR  TRENDS AND APPROACHES ON DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP	26
	SEEMA SHOKEEN	26
	MICRO FINANCE INITIATIVES IN RURAL AREA: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SBI OF DAHANU	20
8.	ROAD BRANCH	29
	RAHUL S MOHILE	
9.	AN ANALYSIS OF PRADHAN MANTRI MUDRA YOJANA (PMMY) BENEFICIARIES OF MICRO AND	32
Э.	SMALL ENTERPRISES (MSES) IN INDIA	32
	ASARAF UNNISA L & DR. AMULYA M	
10.	A STUDY ON RISK-RETURN RELATIONSHIP OF TOP 10 COMPANIES FROM FAST MOVING	35
	CONSUMER GOODS (FMCG) AND PHARMACEUTICALS SECTOR LISTED AT NSE INDIA	33
	K RAJATH & PREETHIMOL GOPI	
11.	PUBLIC DEBT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH NEXUS IN INDIA: AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION	43
12.	ATTAHIR BABAJI ABUBAKAR, ALAGIRISWAMY J. & SADIQ IBRAHIM AHMAD	
	THE ANALYSIS OF SPATIAL PRICE DYNAMICS OF PLANTAIN MARKETS IN CAMEROON	49
	TAKA, DIEUDONNÉ	
13.	POPULATION GROWTH, POVERTY AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION IN INDIA	60
	NISHA, RATISH KUMAR & LEKH RAJ	
14.	IMPACT OF KUDUMBASHREE ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: A CASE STUDY IN KANNUR, KERALA	64
	SHILPA NAMBIAR & JYOTHI A N	
<b>15</b> .	HEALTH POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ORGANIZATION AND	72
	MANAGEMENT OF GOVERNMENT HOSPITALS IN KARNATAKA WITH EMPHASIS ON K.R. PET	
	GOVERNMENT HOSPITAL MANDYA DISTRICT, KARNATAKA	
	HARSHITHA R & RAGHUNANDAN M V	
16.	LIVESTOCK AND NOMADIC PASTORALISTS: A LITERATURE REVIEW	77
	ITRAT BUKHARI	
17.	COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF AGRICULTURE PRICE POLICY: WHEAT AND RICE SINCE THE EARLY	80
	1980s	
	PUJA PAL	
<b>18</b> .	INNOVATION SYSTEMS FOR FAMILY FARMING: A STUDY ON ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF ORGANIC	84
	FARMING IN SHIVAMOGGA TALUK	
19.	SHARATH A.M	
	MACROECONOMIC IMPACT OF CRUDE OIL PRICES ON INDIAN ECONOMY	92
	MOHD AFJAL  EVCHANGE DATE VOLATILITY AND NON OIL IMPORT TRADE IN NIGERIA: AN EMPIRICAL	
20.	EXCHANGE RATE VOLATILITY AND NON-OIL IMPORT TRADE IN NIGERIA: AN EMPIRICAL	97
	INVESTIGATION SADIQ IBRAHIM AHMED, MUHAMMAD MANSUR & UMAR USMAN UMAR	
		400
	REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK & DISCLAIMER	102

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# LIVESTOCK AND NOMADIC PASTORALISTS: A LITERATURE REVIEW

# ITRAT BUKHARI RESEARCH SCHOLAR DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS UNIVERSITY OF JAMMU JAMMU

#### **ABSTRACT**

Gujjars and Bakarwals constitute a significant proportion of the population of the state. Gujjars and Bakarwals are nomadic in nature and depend on livestock rearing as their main source of livelihood. Nomadic pastoralism is an age-old livelihood option for millions of people of different castes and ethnic groups and makes an important contribution to the economy. It is prominent across the Himalaya where the communities such as Gaddis, Gujjars and Bakarwals practice varying forms of herding, livestock products are the main outputs of these communities. In some developing countries, the livestock sector accounts for 50-80 percent of the GDP. The main diet of Gujjars and Bakarwals consists largely of livestock products, primarily in the form of milk. Nomadic pastoralists refer to herders who depend entirely on the sale and exchange of their animals for their livelihood, pursuing opportunistic and irregular migration routes. Most of the Gujjars and Bakarwals of the state are still practicing nomadic lifestyle. Gujjars and Bakarwals play the prominent role in the economy of Jammu and Kashmir.

#### **KEYWORDS**

nomadic pastoralism, livestock, livestock products, livelihood.

#### INTRODUCTION

astoralism is the primary source of livelihood in many arid and semi-arid regions of the world, especially in central Asia and sub-Saharan Africa (Brown 1971; Goldstein et al. 1990; Homewood and Rodgers 1991; Prins 1992). The term pastoralism sometimes used interchangeably with the term nomadism. Pastoralism reflects a lifestyle based upon maintenance of herds of animals that depend mainly on natural vegetation for their food. This dependence along with migration to water, away from the disease in response to other pressures, determines the seasonal and daily movements of pastoralists (Awogbade, 1991). Pastoralism is an age-old livelihood option for millions of people of different castes and ethnic groups and makes a significant contribution to the economy of the Hindu Kush Himalayas (HKH), both regarding providing employment and income opportunities and in supplying nutrition to the rural poor (Brooks 2006). Pastoral groups are divided into two main groups: nomadic pastoralists and transhumance pastoralists. Transhumance pastoralists are those who have a permanent homestead; and they follow a seasonal migratory pattern that can vary from year to year. Nomadic pastoralists do not have a permanent homestead, and they follow a seasonal migratory pattern that can vary from year to year. Nomadic pastoralists do not have a permanent homestead. The timing, routes and destinations of migrations are determined primarily by the needs of the herd animals for water and fodder. They live directly on the products of their livestock and herds. Livestock makes a multi-faceted contribution to socio-economic development of nomadic people. Pastoral nomads are usually self-

sufficient regarding food and most other necessities (Swift, 1991).). In pastoralism the term nomadic is only used when mobility is high and in irregular patterns; transhumant when there are regular back-and-forth movements between relatively fixed locations; and sedentary for those who stays permanently at one place

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

(Rangnekar 1992).

The nomadic pastoralism emerged as a specialisation from a sedentary Neolithic farming economy that relied on both agriculture and animal husbandry (Barfield, 1993). Chatwin (1987) and Vajnshtein et al. (1978) also support the hypothesis that pastoralism nomadism originated from a settled mixed-farming economy, with the eventual transition among some tribes from the sedentary form of pastoralism to specialised mobile form like nomads. According to Khazanov (1994) and Flannery (1965) pastoralism developed after agriculture and most likely developed as people migrated into areas of low productivity or regions of unreliable rainfall. As a result, these people came to rely on domesticated animals for subsistence instead of agricultural crops as stated by Salzman (2004) and Cummins (2009).

Transhumance describes regular herd movements between fixed points in function of the seasonal availability of pastures. Transhumant pastoralists mostly have a permanent homestead and practice herd splitting. Agro-pastoralists are sedentarized groups who engage in a mix of crop production and (usually smaller size) livestock herds (Blench, 2001). Pastoralism is often seen as an outdated way of living and a form of land use which is unviable and even irrational (HPG, 2006; Oxfam, 2008).

Pastoralists can be defined as households that gain more than 50 percent of their income from livestock on unimproved pastures, while agro-pastoralists would be households that gain more than 50 percent from cultivation (Markakis 2004). While mobile pastoralists rely heavily on dairy and livestock products, agropastoralists depend on both livestock and agricultural products. Livestock products are the main outputs of grazing lands and this sector continue to be the fastest growing agricultural subsector throughout the world. In some developing countries, the livestock sector accounts for 50–80 percent of GDP (World Bank, 2007). According to Watson et, al. (2000) the pastoralists as a production system has the greatest potential to meet the subsistence needs of humans, maintain ecosystem health and minimise the negative impacts of climate change through proper grazing managements in arid and semi-arid areas. According to Spore (2008) and Rodriguez (2008) many farmers will diversify their agricultural activities to livestock-keeping. According to Birthal et al. (2002), Livestock is a significant source of income and employment for this section of the society and also helps in alleviating poverty and smoothening of the income distribution. A recent study by Yakob and Catley (2010) reveals that pastoral areas not only meet most of the domestic demand for meat but are also export most of the suppliers of livestock.

Most of the pastoral Gujjars are still practising transhumance and migrate with their livestock between summer and winter pastures. The winter camps are dispersed in the state forests of the Shiwaliks, foothills to the eastern Himalayas (Gooch, 1992). Pastoralists keep more than one species of livestock, they can generate an extensive variety of livestock products and make better use of the available forage in different seasons, even in times of crisis. Migration of people with their livestock proceeds between previously embarked sites, which become more or less regular seasonal encampments or bases (ICMOD 1996; Mishra 1997). Depending on their migratory pattern behaviour and engagement with other non-pastoralist economic activities the pastoralists can be classified (Baxter, 1993). Pastoralists contribute to the national economy by producing red meat, milk, and wool. According to Sharma, et al. (2003) pastoralism has made a tremendous contribution to the economic system of the developing countries in providing employment opportunities as well as income and in providing the requisite amount of nutrition to the poor people. But the fact remains that pastoralism as an economic system is constantly being threatened by various government policies instead they are providing various services to the country.

The World Initiative for Sustainable Pastoralism (WISP, 2007) divides the values to be gained from pastoralist systems into two categories i.e. direct values and indirect values. Direct values include products such as milk, fibre (wool), meat, and hides. Other values include employment, transport, knowledge, and skills. Indirect values include the benefits of agricultural inputs such as manure and products that complement pastoral production from rangelands including honey and medicinal plants. They also include services from good rangeland management like biodiversity conservation and wildlife tourism.

Swift (1986) and Sikana et al. (1993) studies revealed that the primary requirements for pastoralist production are livestock, labour, and access to key grazing land and water resources. Most Common and favourable terms of trade for pastoral production against grain make it viable for people to make a living by selling milk or meat from even relatively low herd numbers. According to Galaty and Johnson (1990), the pastoral production involves a relationship between factors of land, livestock and labour, in this equation, livestock-a capital good serve as a technology for transforming otherwise indigestible cellulose into consumable products.

Sheep are not only raised for meat but also for the wool economy at regional and national level. The migratory pattern adapted by specialist pastoral communities involves their connection to reliable wool markets in distant communities (Rathore 1993).

According to Goldstein and Beall (1990), the nomadic, semi-nomadic and transhumant pastoralist societies have lifestyles that revolve mainly around their livestock. The main diet of pastoral peoples consists mainly of livestock products, primarily in the form of milk. Hence keeping female livestock is important for this reason. But seasonal fluctuations of rainfall greatly affect the availability of milk, particularly during the dry season when it becomes scarce. According to Aggarwal et al., (2003) The majority of pastoralists consume milk and produce a range of dairy products, yet marketing of those goods is often limited or restricted. In Rajasthan, India, camel milk is a by-product of camel breeding which is traditionally consumed by herdsmen (especially on migration) and by their families. Pastoralist institutions in India recently mounted a successful legal challenge to the prohibition of camel milk sales. With increasing commoditization of camel milk, and weakening of cultural taboos on the selling of camel milk, he income generated from milk sales can exceed the returns from selling the young male offspring. According to Bolwig et al., (2007) the livestock sector is growing faster than any other agricultural sub sector internationally, nationally as well as regionally. Changthang nomads represent one of the last great examples of a nomadic pastoral way of life which was once common in many regions of the world. According to Beck (1980), Little (1985) and Rao (1995) the future of pastoralist populations is far from certain. While nomadic or mobile livestock herding has been a successful food production system in arid lands, the problems of population growth, competition for land with other pastoralists, farmers, commercial estates, game parks, and urban areas are increasingly preventing pastoral producers from traditional mobility and flexibility necessary to survive.

According to Aggarwal (1999); Gooch (1992) and Fratkin (1997) the main nomadic groups in India are the Raikas in Rajasthan, the Gujjars in Gujarat and the Bakarwals in Jammu and Kashmir, these groups are largely transhumant or semi-sedentary pastoralists. According to Fratkin (1997), there are many migratory communities in this region one of them is goat and sheep herding community known as Bakarwals of Jammu and Kashmir; the other one is buffalo herding community known as Gujjars in Kashmir. Gujjars and Bakarwals are the pastoral nomads of Jammu and Kashmir. Their origin is much questionable. According to 1931 census of India, Gujjars are inhabited in eight provinces besides Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, North West provinces and other areas along the Himalayas.

The Gujjar and Bakarwals of Jammu and Kashmir -they are pastoral nomads who move in groups called 'Kafila'. Gujjars and Bakarwals constitute a significant proportion of the population of the state Jammu and Kashmir. They are nomadic in character, and nomadic pastoralists are those communities that rely on mobile livestock as a livelihood source (Carney 1999). Most of the pastoralists in the state lie in Jammu, Rajouri, Udhampur, Poonch, Uri, Ganderbal, Anantnag, Daksum and Kandi areas of Jammu and Kashmir State. The houses of Gujjars and Bakarwals are locally known as kothas and bandis. It is a mud-house against the slope of a hillock. The majority of the pastoralists are followers of Islam in the region except a few who have settled in Bimber, Mirpur and Rajouri. Gujjars and Bakarwals are well-known for their hard work and gentle nature. They are also known for their traditional tribal songs and the simple tribal pattern that they weave into their clothes. They have subsistence type of economy, and they try to produce everything they need in their daily life.

#### CONCLUSION

In most countries, nomadic pastoralism is on the decline, because of government interventions and a myriad of other factors restricting mobility (Kavoori, 1992). Pastoralists are very knowledgeable about livestock, their behaviour, feeding habits and production characteristics, and the methods used in the selection of breeding stock are comparable with those recommended by animal scientists (Rangnekar 1992). According to Nauman and Madariaga (2003) and Nori et al. (2005) pastoral community is one of the most politically and economically marginalised in many societies. This is the reason why the customary rangelands and transit routes are shrinking in the face of spreading cultivations, intensive cattle production, mining, oil extraction etc. Nomad people are threatened by climate change, lengthy droughts and desertification.

According to Beck (1980), Little (1985) and Rao (1995) the future of pastoralist populations is far from certain. While nomadic or mobile livestock herding has been a successful food production system in arid lands, the problems of population growth, competition for land with other pastoralists, farmers, commercial estates, game parks, and urban areas are increasingly preventing pastoral producers from traditional mobility and flexibility necessary to survive.

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