



Workshop Proceedings
Pastoralism in Jammu and Kashmir: Issues, Challenges and the Way Forward
31st July-1st August 2023
Venue: SKICC, Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir

Organised by:

*Ministry of Tribal Affairs and the Tribal Research Institute, Jammu and Kashmir
ICAR-Indian Grassland and Fodder Research Institute, Regional Research Station, Srinagar
Regional IYRP Support Group of South Asia (RISG-SA)*

Workshop Proceedings

A two-day workshop on '*Pastoralism in Jammu and Kashmir: Issues, Challenges, and the Way Forward*' was organized jointly by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and the Tribal Research Institute, Jammu and Kashmir, ICAR-Indian Grassland and Fodder Research Institute, Regional Research Station, Srinagar, and Regional IYRP Support Group of South Asia (RISG-SA) during 31st July-1st August 2023 at Sher-e-Kashmir International Convention Centre, Srinagar. The workshop was attended by more than 200 participants, which included officials from different line departments of Jammu and Kashmir like the forest department, animal husbandry department, sheep husbandry department, and agriculture department among others; faculty members and students of different research institutions especially SKUAST-Kashmir, University of Kashmir, ICAR-Central Institute of Temperate Horticulture, Srinagar, ICAR-National Institute of Agricultural Economics and Policy Research, New Delhi, pastoralists across the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, different NGOs and volunteers, besides participants from organizer institutions.



Hon'ble Lt. governor Jammu and Kashmir, Shri Manoj Sinha ji and other dignitaries during the inaugural session



A local pastoralist Farooq Khan Gujjar, sharing his thoughts during the workshop

The workshop was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Lt. Governor, Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir Shri Manoj Sinha ji. At the outset, an overview of Pastoralism in Jammu and Kashmir was provided by Dr. Shahid Iqbal Choudhary, Secretary to the Government, Tribal Affairs Department, J&K. Introduction about the International Year for Rangeland and Pastoralists was done by P. Vivekananda, Co-Chair South Asia, IYRP Support Group. Special addresses regarding the different aspects of pastoralism in Jammu and Kashmir were given by Dr. Roshan Jaggi, PCCF, J&K, and Prof. Nasir A. Ganai, Vice Chancellor, SKUAST Kashmir. The program was facilitated by Dr. Abdul Khabir, Deputy Director, TRI, Jammu and Kashmir, and Rashmi Singh, member of IYRP South Asia Support Group, and Chair Rangeland and Biodiversity IYRP- Global Working Group.

In the inaugural address Hon'ble Lt. Governor, Shri Manoj Sinha ji mentioned that pastoralism is one of the oldest professions in the world. Nomadic livestock plays an important role in the business and livelihood of the communities and it is deeply connected with heritage, culture, traditional knowledge, and co-existence with nature. He mentioned that he considers the pastoral community as protectors of forests and climate warriors. They certainly play a significant role in maintaining biodiversity, climate change mitigation and contribute to growth and food security. His opinion coincides well with the objective of IYRP 2026, which has been declared by UNGA on 15th March 2022.

Presentations were made by eminent speakers including Dr. Anita Sharma (Shiv Nadar University) on Gujjar and Bakkarwals of Jammu and Kashmir: Past, Present and Future; Dr. Ovee Thorat (Independent Researcher) on the Ethnographic view of Bakkarwal lives in Jammu and Kashmir; Preet Sharma and Padma Dolker (WWF, India- Ladakh office) on Understanding Pastoralism and Wildlife relations; and Dr. Suheel Ahmad (ICAR- IGFR Srinagar) on Ethno-botany, ethno-veterinary practices and Himalayan pastoralism. Three presentations were made by the members of the pastoralist communities including Gujjar, Bakkarwals, and Chopans; these members were Ghulam Mohiuddin Chopan, Taraiq Ahmad Chopan, Dr. Shahid Sulaiman, and Farooq Khan Gujjar respectively. The session was summarised by Dr. Khem Chand, Principal Scientist, ICAR-National Institute of Agricultural Economics and Policy Research, New Delhi.



Organising team with Hon'ble Lt. Governor, Jammu and Kashmir, Shri Manoj Sinha ji and other dignitaries at SKICC, Srinagar

Group discussions on three themes including Rangeland Ecology and Wildlife, Pastoral Livelihoods and Alternatives, and Culture and Conservation were held in three subgroups with participants involving a variety of stakeholders, researchers, and pastoralists. A summary of the workshop was presented by the team members and a vote of thanks was made by Dr. Sheikh Ghulam Rasool.

On the 2nd day, (1st August 2023), a field visit was conducted to interact with the Bakkarwal and Gujjar community members at Shirmal, sub-alpine pastures at Goripathri (Sedow), Heerpora, and Dubjan areas of Shopian district. The team interacted with the officials of mobile veterinary clinics of the Sheep Husbandry Department of Jammu & Kashmir at Dubjan. The team also visited a Gujjar and Bakkarwal hostel, run by the Tribal Research Institute, situated on the banks of River Rambiarra at Shirmal, district Shopian.



Interaction of the workshop organising team, experts and other delegates with local pastoralists in District Shopian, Jammu and Kashmir

Based on the two-day workshop the following recommendations are suggested for future actions to help improve the pastoral livelihoods and rangeland health in Jammu and Kashmir.

Overall Recommendations:

- Studying the status of pastures and exploring the ways to improve their conditions with immediate attention for the restoration of Sonamarg, Yusmarg Mohanmarg (near Manigam), Lalmarg, Gujjar Dor Dudhi (near border), and Dodhpathri through MGNREGA and other relevant government schemes may be considered.
- Improved documentation of pastureland for an updated classification using GIS and remote sensing tools and techniques are to be undertaken. A special focus should be given to studies exploring rangeland productivity and regeneration amidst the intensive tourism impacts. The status of exotic plants and weeds, and eradication methods also need to be documented.
- Occupancy surveys of a variety of wildlife species need to be carried out in pastures across Jammu and Kashmir, building on the existing work in collaboration with the state and non-governmental organizations and experts working in the domain of wildlife conservation.
- Documentation of existing local community-led management practices and ethno-veterinary practices are to be carried out involving the pastoralists as key stakeholders for wider adoption and knowledge transfer.
- Exploration, identification, and documentation of pastoral cultures and traditional knowledge regarding pastoralism-based livelihood dependency and SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis of pastoralism-based livelihood are to be considered.
- Pastoral census should be initiated with a robust understanding of both pastoralists as well as livestock composition.
- Encourage the conservation and promotion of local livestock breeds among the pastoral communities of Jammu and Kashmir.
- Conservation and management of local fodder genetic resources through explorations and augmentation of fodder availability by promoting indigenous fodder species and top feed resources.
- To ensure inclusion, allow access of children of all the pastoral communities to the Gujjar-Bakkarwal hostels and consider renaming of Gujjar-Bakkarwal Hostels to Tribal Hostels, or set-up a separate Pastoralist hostel for the children of other pastoralist communities.
- Creating community-driven market economies and opportunities for pastoral products including a variety of culturally embedded art and craft products and value addition.
- Improving access to social welfare facilities and services including construction of community halls, distribution of solar lamps, waterproof tarpaulin, and improving drinking water facilities. Also, special attention needs to be given to improved healthcare facilities for pastoralists.

- Promote vaccination and animal health camps according to the seasonality of disease and mobility of the community to ensure protection before summer grazing in Alpine zones.
- Formulating guidelines for participatory management of pasturelands involving all the pastoralists and other stakeholders on the lines of JFM (Joint Forest Management).
- Policy initiatives need to be developed if pasturelands are diverted to non-pasture uses on the lines of CAMPA. There has to be provision of a Compensatory Pasture Management Authority.
- A multi-stakeholder board needs to be framed for Pastoralists and Rangelands involving representatives from all the stakeholders i.e., forest department, sheep husbandry, agriculture, animal husbandry, Tribal Affairs, Universities, IGFR, Pastoralists etc

Key Recommendations:

- The nodal agency for the implementation of Forest Rights Act 2006 should be assigned to the Tribal Affairs departments, as practiced in the rest of the states of India.
- Equal opportunities to the pastoralists (including Chopans) should be given at par with the status of Scheduled Tribes of Jammu and Kashmir.
- Improving the quality of the pastures with a combination of scientific management practices as well as pastoralists' local knowledge, using a variety of methods including rotational grazing, re-seeding with the endemic forage species etc. Forming collaborative efforts with community representatives, ecologists, governmental and non-governmental organisations for crafting pasture management strategies and conservation of locally available fodder species.
- Initiatives should be taken for conserving and preserving the cultural heritage of pastoral communities by creating a separate state-level cell for pastoral communities.
- By recognizing the IYRP 2026, generate data databases on common lands in the public information system to prevent deterioration of rangelands and stop conversion of such lands for other uses.

Workshop Organising Team:

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1. Dr. Shahid Iqbal Choudhary, Secretary to the Government, Tribal Affairs Department, J&K
2. Sh. Mohammad Harun Malik, Secretary in the Tribal Affairs Department, J&K
3. Sh. Musheer Ahmad Mirza, Director, Tribal Affairs Department J&K
4. Sh. Abdul Khabir, Deputy Director, Tribal Research Institute, J&K

B. ICAR-Indian Grassland and Fodder Research Institute

1. Dr. Amaresh Chandra, Director, ICAR-IGFRI Jhansi
2. Dr. Sheeraz Saleem Bhat, Senior Scientist, and Scientist-in-Charge, ICAR-IGFRI, Regional Research Station, Srinagar.
3. Dr. Suheel Ahmad, Senior Scientist, ICAR-IGFRI, Regional Research Station, Srinagar.
4. Dr. Nazim Hamid Mir, Scientist, ICAR-IGFRI, Regional Research Station, Srinagar.

C. Regional IYRP Support Group of South Asia (RISG-SA)

1. Dr. Arun Dixit, IYRP Support Group -South Asia Chair
2. P. Vivekanandan, Co-Chair, Regional IYRP Support Group of South Asia
3. Rashmi Singh, IYRP Support Group -South Asia-Communication Team
4. Dr. Anita Sharma, IYRP Support Group -South Asia-Communication Team
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D. Other Special contributors:

1. Dr. Khem Chand, Principal Scientist, ICAR-NIAP, New Delhi
2. Dr. Shahid Sulaiman, SRDE Srinagar
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5. Dr. Ovee Thorat, Political Ecologist, Srinagar