

An Over View Of the Economic Characteristics of the Gujjars And Bakarwals: A Case Study Of The Jammu And Kashmir

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ABSTRACT : *Transhumance is a socio-economic system, based on the activity of man's adaptation to environment in combination with animals in different ecological units on this earth. This system of economy is practiced in the state of Jammu and Kashmir on large scale by the Gujjar and Bakarwals. Their transhumance practice is in the territorial limits of the state from the south of the Pir Panjal range to the mountain pastures lying in the north and north-east of the valley of Kashmir. The community is widely known for the livestock rearing of sheep and goats. Which is the traditional mainstay of their economy and a favourite occupation in the state. They keep large herds of sheep, goats, and a certain number of buffaloes. The area of their activities is roughly a rectangular strip of land formed by a straight line from Kathua to Poonch and a straight line drawn in the north of Kashmir Valley Mountains along the Kishan Ganga valley through the Zanskar range towards further east. In this strip of land, these transhumants plan their activities over space according to set schedules. Transhumance is a continuous process which develops along a temporal scale over an ecologically determined habitat. The cycle is a response to the seasonal rhythm and is, therefore, annual behaviour pattern in its temporal spread.*

KEYWORDS: *Transhumance, Livestocks, Gujjars and Bakarwals*

I. INTRODUCTION:

In this article an attempt has been made to study the economy of the Gujjars and Bakarwals. In the past most of the Gujjars and Bakarwals were transhumants, but now the situation has somewhat different as most of them sedentarized. Usually the expectations of the people in the society of Gujjars and Bakarwals are tied to the flocks of sheep and goats and its products. Because of this fact the flock is the basic means of production in this transhumant society. Each owner usually aims at keeping as many sheep and goats as possible. This urge to build up large flock can be attributed to several factors. According to Khatana (1984), among Gujjars and Bakarwals size of flocks are regarded as wealth and man's social position instead of money or other possession. Further he concluded in his study that more than 90 percent of the Gujjar and Bakarwal households were dependent on the transhumance practice of livestock.. Khatana did his research on the Gujjars and Bakarwals of the Jammu and Kashmir in 1984 before the start of militancy in the state. However, the situation has changed after 1990 as major transhumant routes and pasture lands were blocked due to militancy and unrest in Jammu and Kashmir. Gujjars and Bakarwals faced the major brunt of the disturbances in their normal economic activity. This also affected their cultural moorings. The present study attempts to analyze the changes in the economic characteristics among the Gujjars and Bakarwals. An attempt has also been made to examine the dwindling share of the livestock economy in the total income of the community, cropping pattern, workforce participation rates and contribution of the livestock economy of the Gujjars and Bakarwals in the total income. The data have been collected with the help of detailed primary survey conducted in the appropriately selected villages.

Significance of Livestock Economy in the Jammu and Kashmir: The State of Jammu and Kashmir is ideally suited for rearing of sheep and goats owing to its favourable agro-climatic conditions, rich alpine pastures and host of other natural endowments. Sheep and goat rearing is the core activity of people residing in mountainous terrains of the State. The rich pasturelands in these mountainous terrains have been traditionally used by the inhabitants. These resources have played a vital role in socio- economic upliftment of weaker sections of the society like the Gujjars and Bakarwals. The Gujjars and Bakarwals have adopted the sheep and goat rearing as their primary occupation from times immemorial. In order to utilize the expanses of grazing lands across different territorial areas effectively, the Gujjars and Bakarwals move from summer to winter pasturelands along with their herds and livestock in cyclic manners. However this cyclic movement has been disrupted which has not only affected the livestock economy but has also lead to ecological degradation of pasturelands as the

dropping of live stock a rich source of soil fertility has been reduced. Thus disruption in transhumant mobility has affected the economy and ecology of the region. Goat is one of the earliest food-producing animals domesticated by man. They meet the specific needs of the mankind, particularly by producing clothing through fibre and providing other by-products like pelts, skin etc. Commonly known as "Poor Man's Cow", goats play an important role in improving economic conditions of rural masses dwelling in agriculturally poor lands. Landless labourers and marginal farmers mostly dependent on livestock economy especially rearing of sheeps and goats, as they cannot sustain large animals on their marginal lands. Sheeps and Goats are mainly reared by the Gujjars and Bakarwals in Jammu and Kashmir.

The livestock sector (goat, sheep) plays a key role in the food processing industry. Livestock rearing and production of by-products has been a major economic activity of the state. It fulfils the high demand for proteins in food products, there by adding to the nutritional value to food products of its consumers. As a result, there has been a phenomenal growth in the state livestock both in terms of production and consumption. Livestock and livestock products are estimated to make up over half of the total value of agricultural gross output in the industrialized countries, and about a third of the total in the developing countries (Bruinsma 2003). The global importance of livestock and their products is increasing as consumer demand in the developing countries expands with population growth and rising incomes. Livestock is an essential part of the socioeconomic structure of rural India as a source of livelihood and provider of draught power, manure and energy. Over the last three decades livestock production grew faster than the crop sector as a whole and made significant contributions to agricultural growth, which is considered to be an important factor in poverty reduction in most developing countries (Birthal et al, 2006). India has a larger livestock number in the World. India has also the distinction of having the largest number of cattle and buffalo in the World. The contribution of livestock and livestock products to the national economy is continuously increasing. In Jammu and Kashmir livestock plays a crucial role at both the national and household level and has been identified as critical to the overall economic and social development.

II. LIVESTOCK ECONOMY OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

Jammu & Kashmir, a north-western hill state of India, has varied agro-climatic conditions across various regions and based upon this diversity/geographical locations, the state has been divided into three distinct regions, viz. Kashmir region (temperate), Ladakh region (cold arid), and Jammu region (sub-tropical). Each region provides a stable production environment to the particular crop-livestock mix, based upon its setting. While the tranquil and luxurious surroundings have earned the epithet of "Paradise on Earth", for Kashmir, the rich pastureland resource base has made it the "Biomass State". Locally called as "Margs" or "Bahks", in Gojri Language, grasslands or meadowlands are a common feature of Jammu and Kashmir State. These ecosystems have served as potential summer pastures and cattle grazing areas for low lying populace since ages, where people seasonally migrate to the higher alpine areas to graze their livestock. The communities involved are Gujjars and Bakarwals. These pasturelands have been a major resource base for livestock rearing activity. Jammu and Kashmir has a total of 3.4 million livestock population. This accounts 2.05 percent of the total livestock population size of the country. The economic contribution of livestock sector of Jammu and Kashmir was 896.91 crores rupees during the year 2003-04. Out of these Rs. 397 crore was derived from meat, Rs. 411 crore from milk, and Rs. 90 crore from farm yarn and manure. In Jammu and Kashmir, animal husbandry plays a significant role as 0.13 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) of the state is contributed by this sector. The state has a precious wealth of livestock in form of cattle-buffalo, sheep, goats, poultry, etc. The production of Pashmina shawls and other animal products like carpets, shawls and blankets of Kashmir earn handsome foreign exchange for the nation. Therefore livestock industry in the state has vast scope for development rendering quick economic returns. Animal husbandry forms the backbone of the economic structure of the state. Being continuously affected by insurgency and militant activities, most of the districts of Jammu and Kashmir have remained unaltered by the rapid industrialization of the country. Therefore the indigenous traditional occupation of animal husbandry or domestication of animals for commercial purposes continues to form an integral part of the economic structure of the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

A significant proportion of the local inhabitants of Jammu and Kashmir depend on animal husbandry for their livelihood in lower, middle and the higher mountain regions. Animals like sheep, cow, and goat are kept for commercial purposes. The Jammu and Kashmir economy is heavily dependent on animal husbandry. One of the prominent economic sectors of the state, Jammu and Kashmir animal husbandry has contributed immensely to the financial improvement of the state. As per 2007 census, the density of livestock per sq. km of area of Jammu and Kashmir is 101.63 animals while as the human population density as per 2001 census of the state, stands at 100.04/sq. km. While the number of livestock per 1000 of population, for the entire Indian state is 457 animals per 1000 population, the number is more than double for Jammu and Kashmir.

Livestock population in the state was 9.8 million, of which nearly two-thirds was cattle and one-third was sheep population (Livestock Census, 2003). The livestock showed a diverse scenario across different regions; in the Kashmir region livestock population reduced by 0.3 million during 1992 to 2003, and it increased significantly in the Jammu region and Ladakh region. Although, the composition of cattle has been changing in favour of milch animals largely due to increasing mechanization of agricultural operations, the maintenance of a sufficient number of draught animals, buffaloes, sheep, goats and equines for various purposes has been a tradition (Birthal and Taneja, 2006). The variation in distribution and composition of livestock was examined to understand the dynamics of livestock population in the three regions of Jammu & Kashmir and has been discussed under the following sections.

Livestock Population 1950-2011

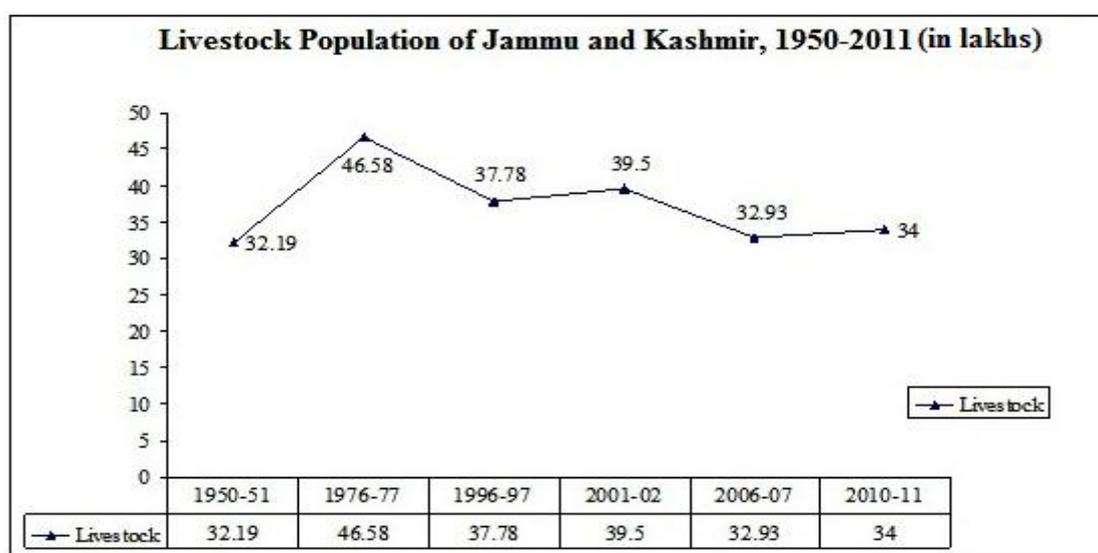
The livestock population, especially of sheeps and goats animals, has decreased in Jammu and Kashmir. The rapid decline in livestock populations can be attributed to a combination of factors including the Political instability in the region, shift towards sedentarisation of the nomads, drought, land use change and competition for water and forage among others. In the frequent drought years, forage and water become limiting to livestock, hence their populations decline either through the effects of reduced reproduction, starvation-induced mortality or migrations. The drastic change in vegetation cover due to severe lack of available moisture resulted in massive loss of livestock over the years in the state.

Livestock Population of the Jammu and Kashmir, 1950-2011 (in lakhs)

	1950-51	1976-77	1996-97	2001-02	2006-07	2010-11
Livestock Population	32.19	46.58	37.78	39.5	32.93	34.00

Source: Livestock Census, Jammu and Kashmir

In the year 1951 the total livestock population of Jammu Kashmir was 32.19 lakhs, in the year 1977 it increased up to 46.58 lakhs shown in the table 3.1. After this period the livestock economy shattered to some extent, after the start of militancy in the state in 1989 the livestock population keeps declining it declined up to 37.78 lakhs in 1997. In the year 2002, it increased to 39.5 lakhs. Again it declined to 32.93 lakhs in 2007. Whereas in 2011 it reached up to 34 lakhs in the state. So here we can say that nineties was the baseline from where the livestock population keep declining due to disturbed conditions in the state of Jammu and Kashmir.



Source: Source: Livestock Census, Jammu and Kashmir

III. DISTRIBUTION OF LIVESTOCK

The distribution of livestock across the district wise in Jammu and Kashmir is shown in tables and diagrams. Barring a few exceptions, the share of each district in livestock has shown a significant change during the years of 1992, 2003 and 2007, though variation in concentration of livestock across various districts is clearly visible. A higher proportion of livestock population (20.6 percent, 18.3 percent and 19.6 percent) in

1992, 2003 and 2007 was concentrated in the Rajouri district. Whereas Poonch district has (15.1 percent, 16.2 percent and 15.9 percent) livestock population in 1992, 2003 and 2007 respectively. The share of these two districts in the livestock population has increased except 1992-2003. In Jammu region, the districts of Udhampur, Doda, Kathua, Poonch and Rajouri accounted for a higher proportion of the total livestock population in the state owing to their natural niches and availability of pastures. Yet surprisingly, the share of Kashmir in the livestock population in the state had declined due to militancy. The distribution of livestock across districts of Kashmir region revealed that Baramulla and Anantnag had a higher share as compared to other districts in this region. The Ladakh region registered enhancement in the share of livestock owing to suitability of climate and altitudinal location. The goats yield highly-priced fine wool called “pashmina”, which encourages more of their population in the Ladakh region.

Concentration of the Livestock (Sheeps & Goats) in Jammu and Kashmir (in Percent)

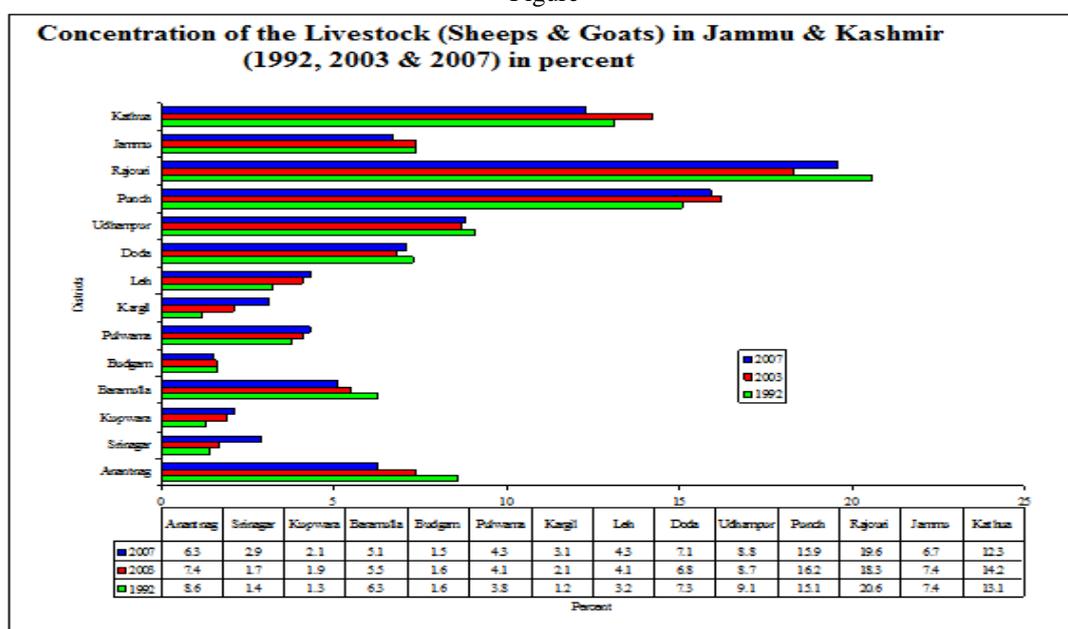
Districts	1992	2003	2007
Anantnag	8.6	7.4	6.3
Srinagar	1.4	1.7	2.9
Kupwara	1.3	1.9	2.1
Baramulla	6.3	5.5	5.1
Budgam	1.6	1.6	1.5
Pulwama	3.8	4.1	4.3
Kargil	1.2	2.1	3.1
Leh	3.2	4.1	4.3
Doda	7.3	6.8	7.1
Udhampur	9.1	8.7	8.8
Punch	15.1	16.2	15.9
Rajouri	20.6	18.3	19.6
Jammu	7.4	7.4	6.7
Kathua	13.1	14.2	12.3
Total	36,87,937	39,76,328	32,08,734

Source: Livestock Census of Jammu and Kashmir, 1992,2003 and 2007

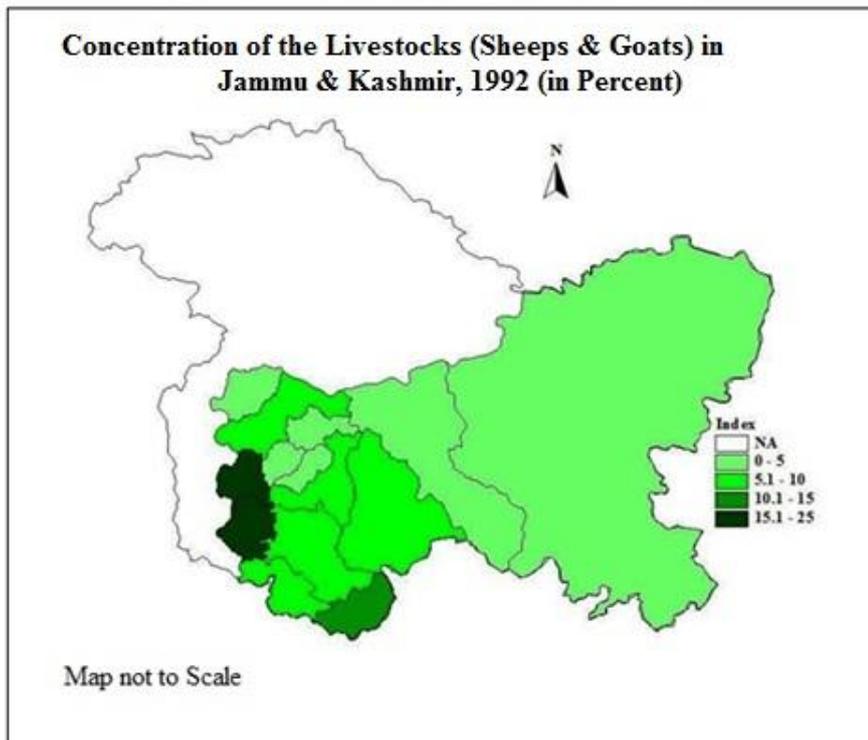
Growth of the Livestock (Sheeps and Goats)

The growth of the livestock is shown in the table 3.3, revealed that livestock growth in the state increased except in the few districts where livestock growth rate was negative. The livestock growth rate exhibited a considerable variation across the districts. The growth trends in population of sheeps and goats showed a consistent pattern. Livestock population increased in all the districts, except in the Kashmir region, which showed a decline. Within the Jammu region, the districts of Rajouri, Udhampur and Poonch registered a positive growth in the livestock population.

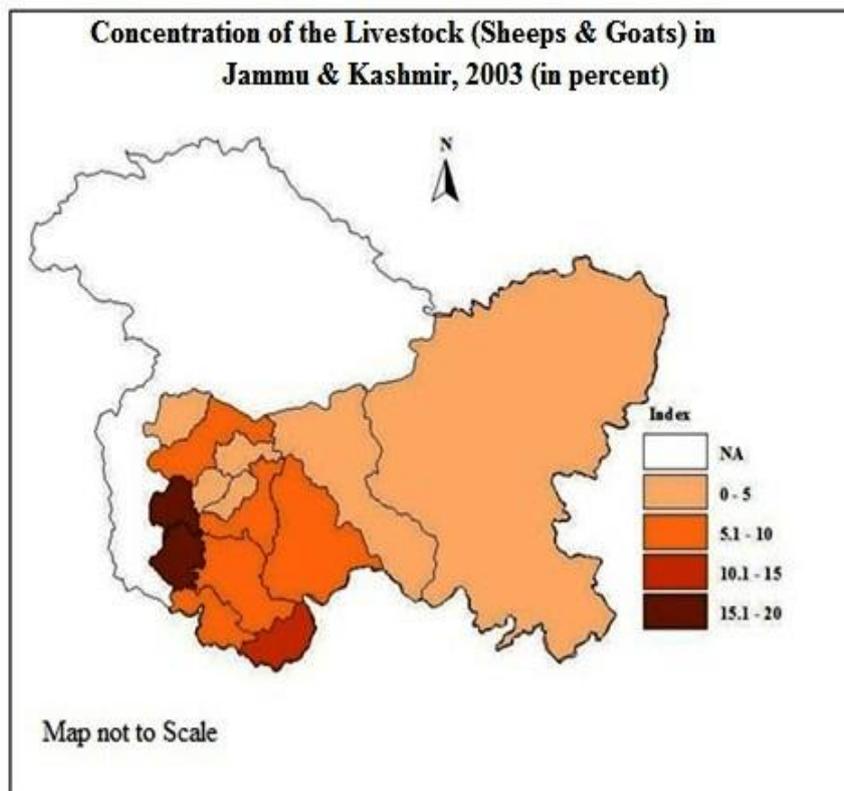
Figure



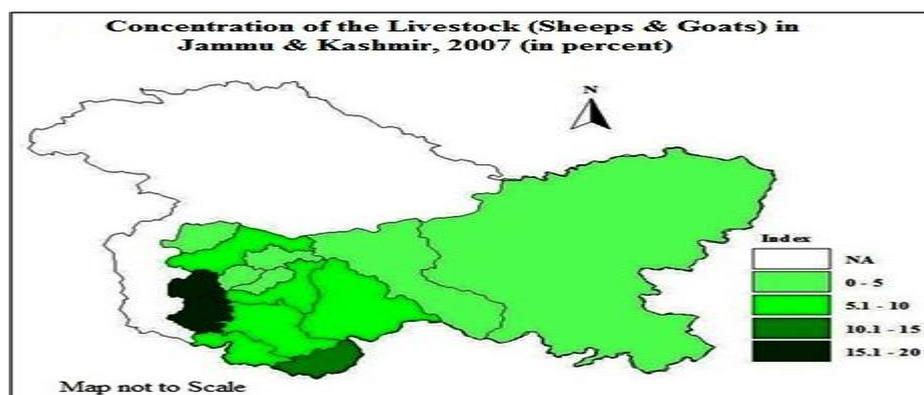
Source: Livestock Census of Jammu and Kashmir, 1992, 2003 & 2007



Source: Livestock Census, (1992)



Source: Livestock Census, (2003)



Source: Livestock Census, (2007)

Growth Rate of the Livestock (Sheeps & Goats) in Jammu & Kashmir (1992-2003 & 2003-2007)

Districts	1992-2003	2003-2007	Annual Growth Rate 1992-2003	Annual Growth Rate 2003-2007
Anantnag	-1.7	-2.3	-0.2	-0.6
Baramulla	4.3	5.1	0.4	1.3
Budgam	2.1	3.4	0.2	0.9
Kupwara	-5.7	-4.5	-0.5	-1.1
Pulwama	-6.2	-7.2	-0.6	-1.8
Srinagar	1.2	2.5	0.1	0.6
Kargil	2.2	4.1	0.2	1.0
Leh	2.3	3.9	0.2	1.0
Doda	3	4.1	0.3	1.0
Jammu	-1.3	-0.7	-0.1	-0.2
Kathua	-2.4	-3.5	-0.2	-0.9
Poonch	12.2	13.1	1.1	3.3
Rajouri	14.3	15.4	1.3	3.9
Udhampur	4.2	6.7	0.4	1.7

Source: Livestock Census of Jammu and Kashmir, 1992,2003 and 2007

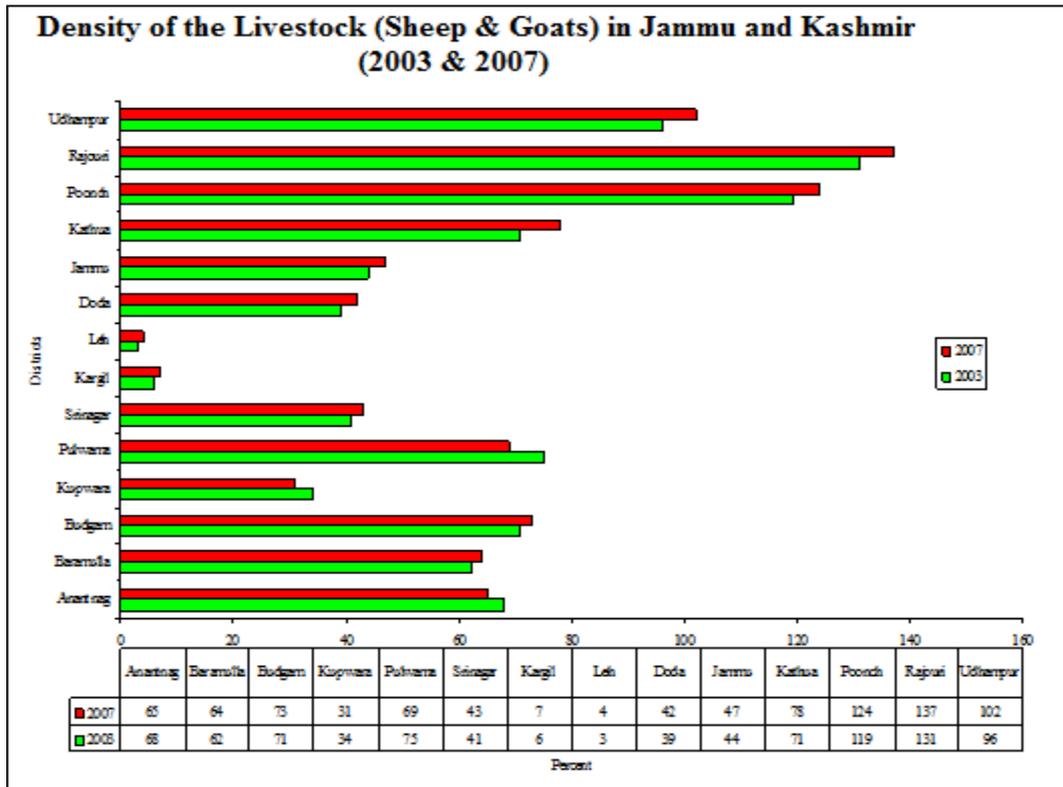
Density of the Livestock (Sheeps and Goats)

The livestock density is shown in the table and diagram revealed that livestock density in the state has increased.

Density of the livestock population (Sheeps & Goats) in Jammu & Kashmir (2003 and 2007) (Density in per sq km of Geographical Area)

Districts	Density	2003	2007
Anantnag	3,984	68	65
Baramulla	4,588	62	64
Budgam	1,371	71	73
Kupwara	2,379	34	31
Pulwama	1,398	75	69
Srinagar	2,228	41	43
Kargil	14,036	6	7
Leh	45,110	3	4
Doda	5,000	39	42
Jammu	3097	44	47
Kathua	22,45	71	78
Poonch	1,674	119	124
Rajouri	2,630	131	137
Udhampur	2,134	96	102

Source: Livestock Census of Jammu and Kashmir, 2003 and 2007



Source: Livestock Census of Jammu & Kashmir, 2003 & 2007

The livestock density exhibited a considerable variation across various districts. Livestock population density has increased in all the districts, except in the Kashmir region, which showed a decline. Within the Jammu region, the district of Jammu, Rajouri, Doda, Kathua and Poonch registered a positive increase in the density of the livestock population from 2003 to 2007.

IV. COLLECTION FROM THE FORESTS

Gujjars and Bakarwals households are invariably dependent on the forests for their one need or the other. They go to the forests for collecting fuel food, leaves for their animals, wild fruits for the household consumption and for market sale as well. One of the most important collections is of the medicinal herbs from the pasture lands like Buti Mali is one of the costliest herbs which is being sold in Srinagar by the Gujjars and Bakarwals. Gujjars and Bakarwals are dependent on the forests in one way or the other. This is clearly revealed from the field survey. While interacting with the nomads it was observed that in case of their animals are loosed during the unseasonable snowfall, hail, rainfall etc. then the only source for them is the forests.

V. CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have discussed the economy of the Gujjars and Bakarwals of the Sample Population and compare it with the Khatana's study of 1984. We find that earlier their major chunk of income comes from livestock but now their sources of income is shifted towards other categories like land resources, labour works, tourism, business, government jobs etc. The land size also increased among the sample population 2011. Herd size declined significantly in the selected samples (2011) of the Gujjars and Bakarwals. So, in short we can conclude that economy of the Gujjars and Bakarwals from the past few years is shifted from the livestock to other occupations. The reason may be Militancy in the Jammu and Kashmir, the impact of urbanization, modernization etc.

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