



## Livestock Economy of Nomadic Gujjars: A Case Study of Udhampur District of J&K

### KEYWORDS

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**ABSTRACT** Livestock production is an integral part of J&K economy and plays a vital role in the state economy. At present, livestock contributes about 41 percent to the agricultural sector and 12.20% in the NSDP for 2007-08 at current prices. 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 Gujjars who have been a nomadic tribe in the state of J&K, animal husbandry is their main occupation. They are mostly nomads in the state and are roaming from one place to another for the search of pastures for their animals. Generally, their cattle are considered to be of poor quality, uneconomical and a burden on land. We have conducted this study in order to assess the Gujjars bovine economy in the J&K state. For this we have used secondary as well as primary data. For secondary data, books, reports, journals, web sites etc we have explored. For primary data, a comprehensive survey of 100 households of nomadic Gujjars was conducted in Udhampur district of J&K. In this paper we have found that Gujjars are rearing local breed and possessing surplus animals. There is acute shortage of fodder especially green nutritious fodder, which is the major cause of low productivity of the livestock. The available fodder is not only insufficient but also poor in nutritive value; as a result, the productivity of the animals is very low. And due to this bovine economy is almost uneconomical for them. In this paper it is suggested to improve the livestock economy of Gujjars, they must get adequate supply of feed and fodder, adequate animals' health facilities, improved genetic or breeding system, marketing facilities etc.

### Introduction

Livestock sector plays a critical role in the welfare of India's rural population. Contrary to many developed countries, where less than 3 per cent of the population is engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry, nearly 70 per cent of the population in India is dependent on agriculture (mainly crop production and livestock rearing) (17th Livestock Census, 2003). As per provisional estimates of 18th livestock census 2007, total livestock population in the State has increased from 98.99 lakh in 2003 to 104.73 lakhs in 2007, registering an increase of 5.8%. The number of livestock per 1000 of human population as per livestock census 2007 was 882 animals while as at all India level the number was only 457, as per livestock census 2003 (Epilogue, 2011).

Livestock production is an integral part of J&K economy and plays a vital role in the state economy. The latest live stock census (2003) reveals that the state has a contribution of 2% in the total live stock of the country. Live stock per hundred of population in the state is 93 animals as against only 46 animals in the country (17th Livestock Census, 2003). At present, livestock contributes about 41 percent to the agricultural sector and 12.20% in the NSDP for 2007-08 at current prices (SDPJ&K, 2009). 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 (Koundal, 2012).

The Gujjars who have been a nomadic tribe in the state of J&K, animal husbandry is their main occupation and their contribution to state GDP is very significant. Though, few of them become sedentary and own cultivable lands but still possess a few buffaloes and other animals. Their economy is revolving around their animals and they are mainly dependent on animal husbandry activity (Koundal, 2012). They are mostly nomads in the state and are roaming from one place to another for the search of pastures for their animals. Generally, their cattle are considered to

be of poor quality, uneconomical and a burden on land. We have conducted this study in order to assess the Gujjars bovine economy in the J&K state.

Generally, the Indian cattle are considered to be of poor quality, uneconomical and a burden on land (Chaktavarti, 1984). In order to assess Gujjars animal husbandry activity, this study has been conducted with the following objectives.

### Objectives

1. To enumerate the number and quality of the nomadic Gujjars livestock.
2. To evaluate the productivity of their animals.
3. To find out the causes responsible for the low productivity and efficiency of Nomadic Gujjars livestock.
4. To suggest measure to improve the productivity and efficiency of livestock.

### Hypothesis

The pure bovine economy of the Gujjars is uneconomical for them because of large numbers and poor quality of their livestock.

### Research Methodology

For this study, researcher has conducted a survey using stratified sampling technique in Udhampur district of J&K. From this district, 100 nomadic Gujjars households selected. Similarly, secondary data and information are also collected from different published and unpublished sources.

### Results and Discussion

#### Educational Level of the Nomadic Gujjars:

Table 1 shows the demographic information of the selected households. In Udhampur district, out of total sampled male population of 323, 69.97% were illiterates. In case of female population of 301 in the sample, 85.71 % were found illiterate. Over all literacy level was 22.44 % was found in the district. The important things which we have

noticed in the sample district id that very few females are educated as compare to male. Secondly, no one has gone

for higher education after getting the matric level education.

**Table-1, Literacy and Educational Level**

Educational level	Udhampur District					
	Male	% age	Female	% age	Total	% age
Illiteracy	225	69.97	258	85.71	484	77.56
Literacy (Traditional)	7	2.17	2	0.66	9	1.44
Primary	39	12.07	23	7.64	62	9.94
Middle	21	6.50	10	3.32	31	4.97
Matric	21	6.50	8	2.66	29	4.65
Higher Secondary	6	1.86			6	0.96
Graduation & Above	2	0.62			2	0.32
Diploma	1	0.31			1	0.16
Grand Total	323	100	301	100	624	100

**Note: Percentage with respect to total population of sample households**  
**Source: Survey Data**

**Types of land holdings:**

Type of land holdings of the farmers is being presented in Table-2. Majority of the Gujjars are land less (68 %). Those who are possessing land confer the fact that the size of land holding is very small and most of them are uneconomic holdings. Secondly, those who have no land they are possessing maximum she buffaloes as their sources of livelihood.

**Table-2, Types of Land Holding**

Size of land Holding (In Kanal)	Udhampur		
	No. of HHs	Size of land Holding (Kanal)	Number of Livestock holdings (Buffalos)
Land Less	68	0	770
0-2K	7	15	53
2-4K	5	24	111
4-6K	4	31	52
Above 6K	16	202	79
Total	100	272	1065

**Source: Survey Data**

**Animal resource:**

They mostly reared local breed of buffalo. It has been found that maximum buffaloes (35.67) are possessed by those households who are keeping more than 15 buffaloes followed by 10-15 (15 animals per households), 5-10 ( 6.04 buffaloes per household) and less than 5 categories household who are having the lowest number of animals (2.43). It shows that on an average each household is possessing 10.65 buffaloes in the sample district.

**Table-3, Animal Resource**

No. of Buffaloes	Udhampur		
	HHs	Total Buffalo	Average Buffalo
Nil	-	-	-
Less than 5	40	97	2.43

No. of Buffaloes	Udhampur		
	HHs	Total Buffalo	Average Buffalo
5-10	27	163	6.04
10-15	18	270	15
More than 15	15	535	35.67
Total	100	1065	10.65

**Source: Survey Data**

**Milch and Dry animal:**

The percentage of milch and dry animals to total animals in area under study is shown in the table. On the whole, the ratio of milch animals to the dry animals in the study area is 63.76 : 36.24 or 3: 2. It means that the milch animals out number the dry animals in the field area of study.

**Table-4, Milch and Dry Animal**

No. of Milch and Dry Buffaloes	Udhampur		
	Milch	Dry	Total Buffalo
Nil	-	-	-
Less than 5	64 (65.98%)	33 (34.02%)	97 (100%)
5-10	109 (66.88%)	54 (33.12%)	163 (100%)
10-15	146 (54.07%)	124 (45.93%)	270 (100%)
More than 15	360 (67.29%)	175 (32.71%)	535 (100%)
Total	679 (63.76%)	386 (36.24%)	1065 (100%)

**Source: Survey Data**

**Economics of milk production:**

An attempt was made to calculate the economics of milk production of local buffalo. Tabular analysis was carried out on various aspects of economics of milk production and results were presented.

**Production traits of milk animals:**

For a local buffalo average age at 1st calving was 50

months, lactation length 352 days, dry period 252 days, inter-calving period 604 days and milk production was 3.84 liters.

**Table-5, Production Traits of Milk Animals**

District	Age at 1 <sup>st</sup> calving (months)	Lactation length (Days)	Dry Period (days)	Inter calving Period (Days)	Average Milk Yield/ Per day (Liters)
Udhampur	50	352	252	604	3.84

**Table-6, Cost of Maintenance of Buffalo**

District	Feed and Fodder	Medicines	Family Labour	Depreciation of animal	Depreciation of animal shed	Concentrates	Misc Cost	Total Cost
Udhampur	2124.90	70.00	1462.00	1500.00	240.00	5475.00	110.00	10981.90

Source: Survey Data

#### Efficiency of milk production:

The efficiency of any enterprise depends on such combination of resources that are most economical. The profitability of dairying activity of Gujjars depends primarily on the productive traits of the breed maintained. The average lac-

#### Cost of Maintenance of Buffalo (Rs. Per Lactation):

As dairying is a main occupation of the Gujjars in the upper and lower hill areas as well as in plains, it is necessary to find out the expenditure pattern. It is estimated that the cost of maintenance of a buffalo per lactation is Rs. 10981.90. The expenditure incurred on feed and fodder as well as concentrate is highest in all the categories of expenditures. Labor was utilized for looking after the animals, feeding, grazing, cleaning of animal shed and milking of animals.

tation yield per buffalo is 1351.68 liters (352X3.84) during the lactation period Net income from buffalo is 10794.98 as compared to total cost Rs. 10981.90. Overall the input-output ratio is 1:0.98.

**Table-7, Efficiency of Milk Production**

District	Yield (Liter)	Value (Rs.)	Value of Manure	Gross Income	Net Income	Input-Output Ratio
Udhampur	1351.68	21626.88	150	21776.88	10794.98	1:0.98

Source: Survey Data

#### Reasons for low productivity of livestock

##### 1. Shortage & poor quality of feed and fodder resources-

The primary reason for the low productivity of livestock is inadequate availability of feed and fodder. It has been noticed that the quantity and quality of the feed and fodder is very poor in the area because large scale disappearance of grazing lands, pastures and forests. The loss in productivity of grazing land is due to heavy grazing.

##### 2. Quantity and Quality of feed and fodder resources-

The available fodder is not only insufficient but also poor in nutritive value. The natural resources of the Himalaya have been exploited for centuries in an unplanned manner leading to degradation all along. Consequently the livestock productivity is very low

##### 3. Surplus number of livestock-

As mention above on the table, there is a large number of animals in the study area. If there are more cattle than required, or useless cattle, and/or more than that can usually be supported by land, these may be assessed as surplus.

##### 4. Inadequate veterinary service-

The inadequate health coverage is also one of the reasons for low productivity in the region. The most of the doctors are available either in the main towns and cities in the states. Therefore, due to the poor transport and communication and uneasy approach to these centers, the Gujjars living in these hilly areas are unable to make use of these

services.

##### 5. Defective marketing system-

Another cause of low productivity of livestock was the lack of proper marketing facilities. Being nomadic Gujjars are unorganized; as a result of this they are being exploited by the middlemen. In the study it was found that the marketing of Gujjars products was controlled by middlemen or shopkeepers who took away a lion's share of the profit leaving very little incentive for improved production.

##### 6. Poor breed-

Another important cause of low productivity and efficiency of livestock in the study area was poor genetic and breeding system. In the study it was found that they were rearing indigenous breeds and hence were of inferior quality. This indicated that almost whole of the buffaloes in the study area belonged to indigenous breeds and hence the productivity and efficiency was low.

#### Suggestions and Conclusion

In view of this, it is necessary that concrete steps should be taken for improving the quality of livestock so that we can make Gujjars bovine economy economical. For this, a comprehensive policy for improving productivity and efficiency of livestock needs to be formulated for the entire area of the Jammu and Kashmir where emphasis should be laid on: adequate supply of feed and fodder, adequate animals' health facilities, improved genetic or breeding system and proper Marketing facilities in the far - flung areas.

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