

« Restoring value to grassland : lessons for
practice change »

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Monitoring migratory sheep production in Southern Rajasthan (India)



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LEAGUE FOR
PASTORAL PEOPLES
AND ENDOGENOUS
LIVESTOCK DEVELOPMENT

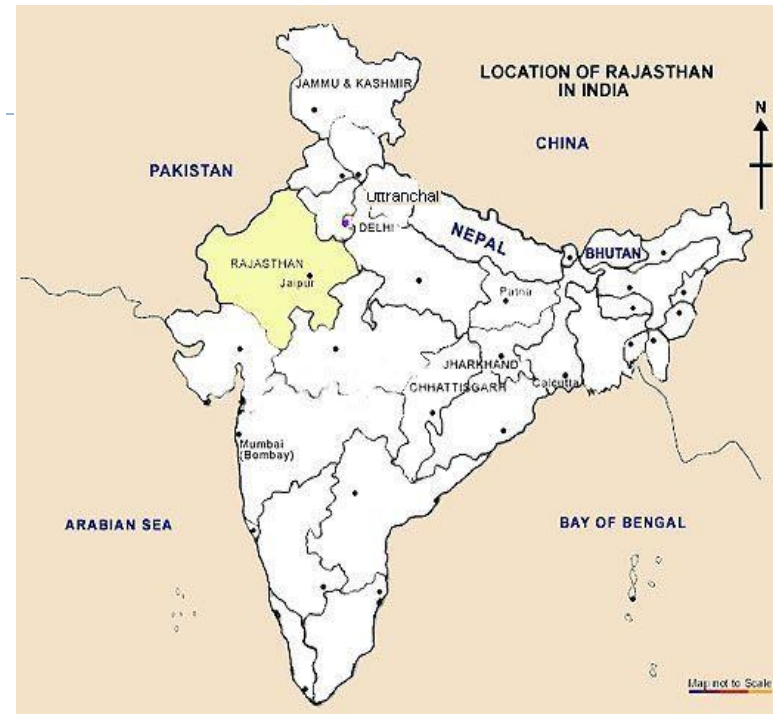
Rajasthan hosts

- ▶ 20-30% of India's sheep and goat population
- ▶ Produces 40% of India's mutton
- ▶ 42% of India's wool.

Eco-system: sub-humid to semi-arid

Sheep Population

- ▶ 1997: 14.5 Million
- ▶ 2003: 10 million
- ▶ 2007: 11 Million
- ▶ 2012: data not yet available



Case overview

Sheep production on common property resources

- ▶ Long distance migration for 9 months out of the year, grazing on and fertilizing fallow fields (conglomerates of 10-20 families owning 3000-5000 sheep)
- ▶ Sedentary herding, depending on Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary (smaller herds, 50-150 sheep)
- ▶ Highly market oriented, as good economic returns are made from both meat and manure. In addition, sheep milk is processed into ghee and thus important on subsistence/dietary grounds.
- ▶ Requires high level of organisation and traditional knowledge; domain of one particular cultural group (Raika/Rebari).



Problems

- ▶ Theft of animals by organised groups and no protection by police and support of local administration
- ▶ No veterinary care
- ▶ No security of access to land
- ▶ No recognition, “backward” and lack of status, even though income is considerable



Two systems – no resource use security



Long-distance migration in large groups



Sedentary herding of small herds around Kumbhalgarh Sanctuary

Both systems are productive and utilize biomass that would otherwise not be used. Both are important for crop fertility. Both are declining rapidly because they receive no policy support.

Research and monitoring

- ▶ Documentation of number of families, sheep and their output, as well as change - based on existing records, as well as focus group discussions and interviews.
- ▶ We are looking for support from other organizations that can help us undertake life-cycle analysis.
- ▶ Analysis of the impact of abandonment of sheep husbandry on
 - ▶ Livelihoods – what alternatives do young people have who give up their hereditary profession?
 - ▶ What is the loss to the national economy in terms of export earnings?
 - ▶ What is the impact on food security?
 - ▶ What is the impact of absence of organic fertilizer on local crop cultivation?



Lessons learnt

- ▶ Excellent systems of grassland management which generate a range of benefits are unraveling because of lack of visibility, lack of knowledge about their outputs, as well as a general disinterest by policy makers. Looking at their multiple benefits, they are of great relevance to the goal of the Agenda to “produce more with less”.
- ▶ We would measure “success around practice change” by the amount of support of the local administration (district collectors, police, animal husbandry department) provide to the migratory systems, as well as by the integration of shepherds as landscape managers into the planned Kumbhalgarh National Park. Another yardstick of success would be recognition of these systems as producers of high value food (meat and ghee).



