

*Dryland Networks Programme*

ISSUES PAPER

**The Gujars of Uttar Pradesh:  
Neglected "Victims of  
Progress"**

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## I INTRODUCTION

This paper examines the lifestyle of a group of Himalayan nomads and the problems they are currently encountering. It focuses on the relative neglect of Himalayan pastoralists in terms of the development priorities of the Indian government and suggests possible solutions to alleviate their problems.

Section II looks briefly at the different trends in the study of pastoralism and tries to stress the need to examine both ecological and non-ecological factors in such analyses. Section III is an attempt to look at a particular group of Himalayan pastoralists, the Uttar Pradesh Gujars, within the framework set out in Section II. The emphasis is on the importance of environmental resources such as forests, pasture and water and also examines how the Gujars' traditional way of life is being affected by various external factors. A case study of Gujars in the Rajaji National Park is presented. Finally, there is an attempt to incorporate this material into an agenda for more appropriate targeting of government development programmes for pastoral nomads in the hill regions of the country. Some concluding observations are presented in Section IV.

## II PASTORALISM - A BRIEF OVERVIEW

Pastoral production systems demand a detailed knowledge of the environment in order to establish an annual cycle of efficient resource utilisation. Pastoralists are forced to migrate by the need to maintain their source of subsistence-livestock. Their livelihood is based on the utilisation of marginal resources, which typically occur in areas too dry, too elevated, or too steep for

agriculture to be a viable mode of livelihood. Pastoral nomadism in its most pure manifestations is characterised by the absence of agriculture even as supplementary income (Khazanov, 1983).

In general, pastoral nomadism refers to a class of societies categorised on the basis of their productive technology. Essential to this productive technology are two elements. First, the husbandry of ruminant animals (hence, pastoralism), and second, the utilisation of natural grasses as fodder (hence nomadism). The conditions for such an economy in turn require two elements: availability of domestic animals suitable for exploitation, and available pasture lands that are adequate for sustaining flocks or herds. Other economic activities which are adopted are usually accommodated to the demands that animal husbandry makes upon the people.

This sort of model of pastoral nomadism is based on an economic typology. The social order is based on flexibility, in which there is individual as well as collective decision making. Individual decisions are taken with regard to the animals which each family possesses, and collective decisions are required for the communal use of pastures which are not owned by any one family in particular. Ecology is an important determinant of pastoral social organisation, and a focus on ecological factors can be justified. Such an evaluation is not "ecological reductionism", since the recognition of important ecological factors is not the same as asserting that they are the only causes of social organisation and culture.

Another aspect of pastoral social organisation linked with ecology is the "egalitarian" nature of society (contrasted with the more structured hierarchical organisations of many agricultural groups). Gellner, for example asserts

"Nomadic societies know a certain equality and a certain quite conscious aversion for division of labour, that specialisation that Karl Marx abhorred."<sup>1</sup> Further, it is suggested, that the number of livestock per person is critical in determining whether a society will be hierarchical or egalitarian, with a high livestock to human ratio normally being accompanied by a highly egalitarian social structure (Schneider, 1979). The degree of hierarchy also depends on the nature of the resource itself. The more concentrated the resource, the better it can be defended. Livestock; for example, are not easily defensible (they can be stolen, for instance) and, therefore, a high people-livestock ratio is needed on grazing pastures. This leads to cohesiveness and a relatively egalitarian social organisation.

Since the 1970s, there has been a growing sophistication on the part of anthropologists in applying ecological theory to the analysis of human behaviour. There has also been a greater concern with social change, economic development and with the effects of colonial and national governments on "traditional societies". It is recognised that there is enormous variability in herd management strategies, social organisation, land tenure and dependence on agricultural products among pastoral nomads. Pastoralism involves contingent responses to a wide range of variables in the physical and social environment and, therefore, it is difficult to generalise about the nature of pastoralism. Movements of pastoralists may also be affected by political factors such as international boundaries, local government restrictions and the desire to avoid taxes and conscription. Economic factors such as the presence of markets, and the willingness of sedentary pastoralists to lease potential pasture land to nomadic populations, also affect migrations. Thus, we see that ecological,

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<sup>1</sup> Gellner, in the introduction to Khatanzov's *Nomads and the Outside World*, pxi.

economic and political factors all play a role in the movement of pastoral groups.

From this analysis of pastoralism it becomes obvious that although environmental factors are central to the lives of pastoral people (more so than other groups), a number of other considerations must also be taken into account. The most fruitful way of examining pastoral societies would be by adopting a more holistic approach, (Orlove, 1980) drawing on several themes: demography, an examination of environmental problems and the concept of adaptive strategies. This sort of approach will be used while examining the effects of development on the Himalayan pastoralists in the next section.

### III HIMALAYAN PASTORALISTS

There are many pastoral groups in the Indian subcontinent (and especially in the Himalayas) about whom there is little or no quantitative or ecological information. The accounts that exist are usually descriptive,<sup>2</sup> highlighting the lifestyle of the nomads rather than presenting a thorough analysis of the current problems they are facing. Most research on pastoralism concentrates on the arid and semi-arid regions of Africa and the Middle-East, where ecological conditions and socio-political constraints are quite different from those of the Himalayan nomads. India, in fact, can be cited as an example of a country where the study of nomadic groups is not particularly organised, extensive, or popular and where development planning and policy has paid little attention to nomadic peoples. One of the reasons for this is that the Himalayan nomads,

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<sup>2</sup> For instance, look at Shasbi (1979), Ahuja (1981), Phillimore (1984), Hasan (1986), Nossie (1991).



unlike the pastoral nomads of the arid and semi-arid regions of the world, often climb to great heights and isolated parts of the Himalayas where there is little or no other human habitation. This has made a systematic and detailed account of them difficult to achieve.<sup>3</sup> This section highlights some problems that the Himalayan nomads (in particular the Gujars) are facing, and suggests possible ways of resolving their difficulties.

### The Gujars - A General Background

There are several pastoral nomadic groups in the Himalayas such as the Labulis, Gaddis, Kolas, Kinnauris and Gujars. The Gujars are the most numerous in the Himalayan region. This section focuses on the Gujars, especially those located in the north-west state of Uttar Pradesh (U.P.) in India. The other two northern states in which the Gujars are found are Himachal Pradesh (H.P.) and Jammu and Kashmir (see map below).



<sup>3</sup> Pastoral nomads in the Apdes and the Swiss Alps also migrate to pastures in the mountains but do not go as far or as high up as the Himalayan nomads. Information about them is, thus, better documented (Rhoades and Thompson, 1975).

While some authors have linked the word Gujar with the present day state of Gujarat in India, others claim that the Gujars are probably of foreign origin associating them with pastoral nomads from Central Asia who came into India during the 5th or 6th century AD.

Today, the Gujars of the Himalayas are transhumant pastoralists,<sup>4</sup> who herd water buffalo between high Himalayan pastures in the hot season (May-September) and the lower foothills in the cool season (October-April). They spend 5 months in the hills, 5-6 months in the plains and 1 or 2 months migrating. They do not own any land. While migrating to and from the mountains the Gujars usually follow traditional routes. Thus, they are familiar with prevailing conditions and well acquainted with the topography of the region. Some Gujars travel along hill rivers where fodder and water are available in abundance, and this often serves as a cheap and convenient route. However, most Gujars prefer to stay within close proximity of metalled roads and towns for sale of their milk products. Traversing the same route year after year, the Gujars have established links with the *banias* (or merchants) who sell their milk and *ghee* (clarified butter) to shopkeepers (Chace, 1979; Ahuja, 1981; Hasan, 1986).

In the hills, the Gujars graze their cattle in Protected Forests by paying a nominal fee of about Rs. 8 per buffalo to the Forest Department.<sup>5</sup> Since the cost of grazing cattle is minimal, they can generate substantial surpluses. The money saved is used partly during their stay in the hills and partly while migrating. In the plains, permits are issued to the Gujars by the Forest

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<sup>4</sup> Transhumance is a migratory movement among pastoral people but is distinct from permanent migration since it obeys a kind of rhythm that does not involve entire uprooting of the population.

<sup>5</sup> Figures are for 1980-81, reported in Hasan (1986).

Department for the use of its forests for grazing. Since the days of the British, the Indian government has followed a system of levying a grazing fee in the government forests in order to regulate the number of animals.<sup>6</sup>

The control by forest officials over the Gujars' activities began with the reservation of forests by the British foresters, when they introduced forest Working Plans and conservation zones in the latter half of the nineteenth century.<sup>7</sup> In the Siwalik forests, the winter grazing areas of the UP. Gujars, the forest Working Plans attempted to control pastoralist use of fodder resources within the overall context of the utilisation of the forest resource. Thus, the Gujars were given permits for lopping branches and for grazing a prescribed number of buffaloes. Restraint on the number of water buffalo, the nature of exploitation, and the position of *deras* (Gujar settlements) have been features of pastoralist control since then (Clark, Seville and Watts, 1986). Permits were first issued in the Siwalik forests in 1909 and are issued even today.

### The Gujars of Uttar Pradesh

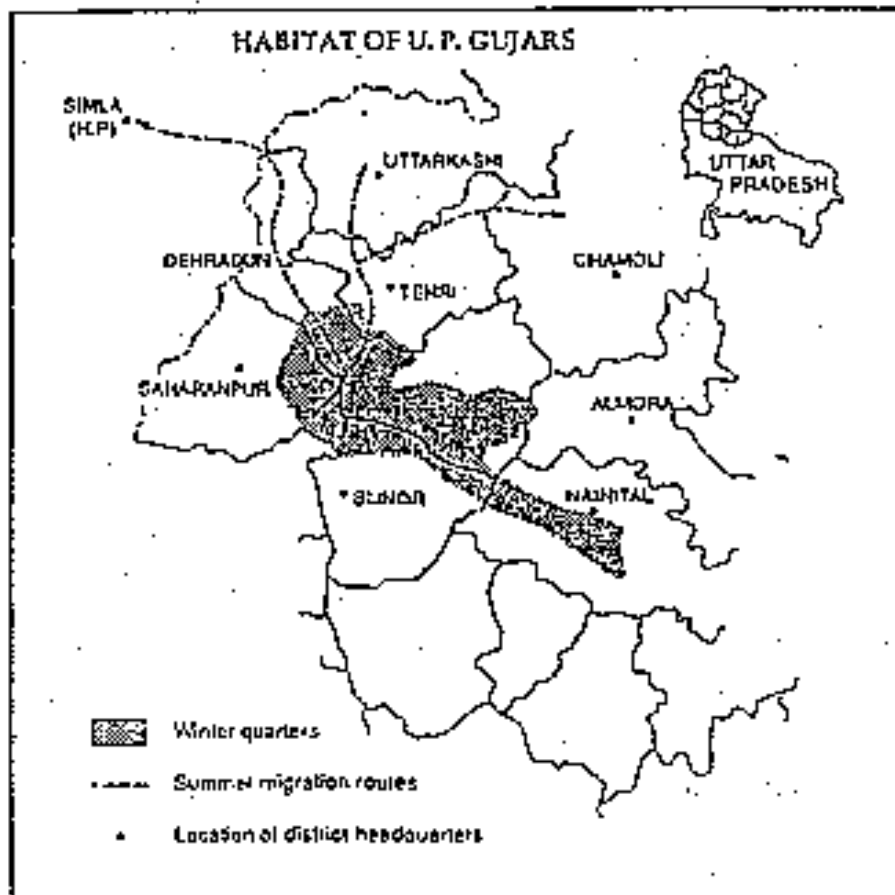
The economy of the Gujars in the Himalayas is mainly dependent on the herds they possess. Animals and animal products are the main constituents of their economy. Their nomadism is not random but focused around temporary centres and directly concerned with the availability of fodder and pasture for their animals. The uniqueness of these Gujars, like some of the other Himalayan

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<sup>6</sup> For instance, in 1822 the grazing tax in the Himalayan region was 19 paise per buffalo (Atkinson, 1824).

<sup>7</sup> Chhatrapati Singh (1986) argues that historically forest dwellers have not owned forests in the modern legal sense, but have had occupancy rights. However these rights were not recognised by the British government under the Forest Act of 1878. After Independence, the Indian government did not make any attempt to grant rights to traditional users, and retained State control over forests. Singh argues that this arrangement contradicts Articles 39 (b) and (c) of the Indian Constitution which seek equitable distribution of land and resources.

nomads, is that they have their summer pastures as high up as 10,000-13,000 feet and, unlike pastoralists in the Andes (Rhoades and Thompson, 1975), the entire family is involved in the summer migrations. Also unlike in the Andes, these Gujars are "pure pastoralists" and do not practice agriculture.



Some U.P. Gujars have stopped migrating to the hills in the summer, and instead move from forest to forest where they are given temporary lands. They are not allowed to settle in one place as permits are issued for grazing and lopping for different forests at different times of the year. While hill migration still accounts for a majority of the movement of the families surveyed, the number who migrate to other areas in the plains is not insubstantial. This sort of constant movement unsettles the Gujars and they say they would prefer to reside permanently in one place, although very few have been able to do so. Only a few Gujars of Bijnor District, for example, possess pucca houses, and

are leading a settled life because they have acquired ownership of land, but this has largely been on their own initiative without external support from the government or the Forest Department (Hasan, 1986; Mathur, 1991).

The need to focus on the U.P. Gujars is important as information about them is scanty. They have also been overlooked in terms of development priorities and benefits provided by the government. For example, the Gujars of Kashmir are included in the lists of Other Backward Classes (OBC) and the state government has taken a number of measures for their development including the setting up of an Advisory Board for Gujars. Similarly, the H.P. Gujars are included in the list for Scheduled Tribes<sup>8</sup> (ST) but the U.P. Gujars are included in neither category.

Further, the U.P. Gujars are being rejected and prevented from migrating by both settled farmers in the hills, as well as the forest officials in the plains. The representatives of the hill people complain that repeated trampling by the passage of Gujar cattle is destroying their land. However, a report published by conservation experts (Clark, Seville and Watts, 1986) has revealed that the maximum damage done in the hills is by goats owned locally by the villagers.<sup>9</sup>

If some of the Gujars now want to settle, it is because of increasing hardships involved in migrating, especially because of tightening of forest rules and the hostility of hill residents living along the Gujar transhumance route. The Gujars, however, are traditionally not accustomed to the heat of the plains,

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<sup>8</sup> The Indian constitution includes special provision for the protection of the Scheduled Tribe population comprising about 7% of the total population of the country. Article 46 of the constitution enjoins the State to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections in particular scheduled tribes and protect them from injustice.

<sup>9</sup> This view is also stated by the Centre for Science and Environment, India (CSE, 1985).

which compounds other problems like shortage of water and fodder in the summer. Most families are sceptical about resettlement schemes put forward by the government, and prefer to migrate to the hills.

Attitudes of the Gujars towards settlement in the plains on a permanent basis would probably be more positive if the government and the Forest Department were more sympathetic to their needs and worked out a resettlement plan that suited them. Instead, the rehabilitation of the U.P. Gujars has a chequered history of half measures bogged down by legalities and vested interests working against the Gujars. Schemes are often launched without adequate thought and preparation. For instance, in one initiative of the U.P. government and the Forest Department, 400 Gujar families were to be rehabilitated in the Patri range of the Siwalik forest Division. While on paper this scheme seemed acceptable (since adequate land was being provided), ultimately it was not possible for the Gujars to settle (Hasan, 1986; Panwar, 1988). The package was not acceptable to the Gujars because, although there was land, there were no irrigation facilities to cultivate the land. Also, there were no provisions for stall feeding in the scheme; yet, the Gujars were to be prevented from using the forest for fodder.

The other problem not adequately tackled by rehabilitation schemes, is the sale of milk and milk products of the Gujar cattle. In the plains the Gujars sell milk to the *bantias* who collect the milk from the Gujars' settlements in the forest. The *bantias* also function as money lenders. The Gujars are tied to regular *bantias* and are exploited by them as they are unable to sell milk at market rates (Ahuji, 1981; Hasan, 1986). The rehabilitation schemes have not tried to rectify this problem; one solution could be a cooperative milk scheme whereby the Gujars can sell milk at rates profitable to them and not be in a perpetual

state of debt (see Table 1). The Gujars' reliance on money lenders is primarily because they have no access to government loans. One of the criteria for getting these loans is evidence of a permanent address; this clearly excludes the Gujars as they are migratory people, and lack a place of permanent settlement.

**Table 1 - Indebtedness**  
(source: Hasan, 1986, p.114)

Name of range	No. of surveyed families	No. of borrowing families	% of indebted families	Average loan outstanding per borrowing (in Rs.)
Mohand	53	53	100	5434
Dhaulkhand	11	11	100	7000
Badkala	2	2	100	2000
Ranipur	5	5	100	3700
Asarori	7	7	100	6000
Motichur	26	7	26.9	2429
Lacchiwala	3	-	-	-
Chandi	31	31	100	8097
Sabargarh	19	18	94.7	6482
Laldhang	3	2	66.7	6000
Gohri	52	52	100	3125
Barkot	9	3	33.3	1333
<b>Total</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>85.1</b>	<b>5165</b>

Thus, while on the one hand, the U.P. Gujars are suffering because of hostility to their continuing migration by the Forest Department and representatives of the hill people, on the other, there is no well thought out scheme which is sensitive to their needs.

Schemes that are acceptable to the Gujars need to be implemented. A Gujar Tribal Welfare Committee was set up in 1979 by the U.P. government, but the Gujars complain that it has not been able to achieve any results and resolutions passed at different sittings have not been implemented. The Gujars' main grudge is that all arguments in support of preservation and development of the forest are intended to refuse them their demands for access, but when it is a question of industry or a township to be set up, tracts of forest are placed at the disposal of outsiders who mercilessly destroy forest wealth.<sup>10</sup> Before suggesting possible solutions to assist the Gujars, it is worth examining a particular case study involving the interaction of one group of U.P. Gujars and the Forest Department, and the nature of government decision making in this context.

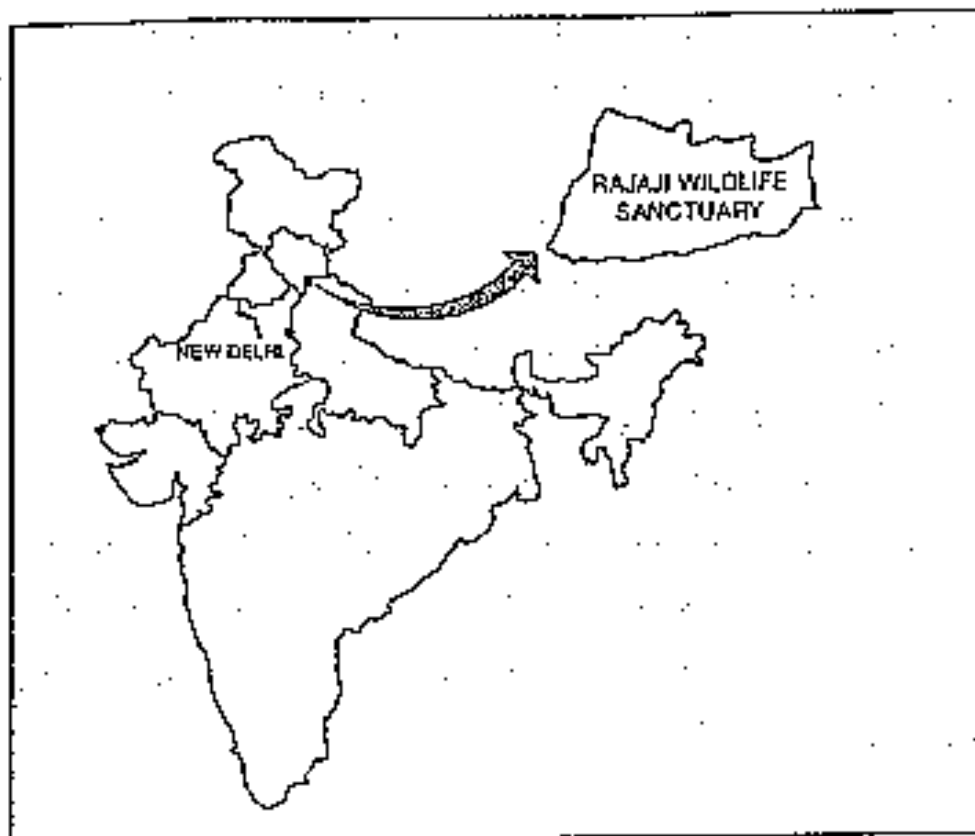
#### Rajaji National Park - A Case Study

One of the forest tracts where the U.P. Gujars have traditionally had their winter grazing and dwelling area is now part of the Rajaji National Park, an area of 247 sq. km (100 sq. miles) located on the southern slopes of the Siwalik hills close to the town of Dehra Dun in U.P. The Rajaji sanctuary is a hilly and undulating forested area with dense tree growth, scrub and grass. According to Ghosh (1992), the sanctuary was used as a summer pasture by Gujar groups from H.P., especially from the Chamba region. They established temporary settlements in the region and began to claim grazing rights. Their settlements and rights gradually acquired recognition, but are now under threat because of the reservation of the area for conservation purposes.

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<sup>10</sup> Thoughts of the Gujars revealed to A. Hasan during the course of field research. These accusations are borne out by Bahuguna (1989), who points out that the Star Paper Mill at Saharanpur in U.P. is allotted 45,000 volume tonnes of firewood every year from the U.P. hills.





In 1983, this area was declared by the U.P. Wildlife Board as a National Park under the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972. The Act states "A sanctuary or National Park can be declared by notification if it is on an area of adequate ecological, floral, geomorphological, natural or zoological significance and has to be protected for the purpose of protecting, propagating or developing wildlife or its environment" (Negi, 1983). However, none of these objectives explicitly mention the people living in and around the sanctuary or National Park. This may be acceptable where there is no human population, but for a sanctuary like Rajaji, which the Gujars have traditionally used as their summer grazing grounds, a different and more people-oriented approach needs to be taken. There are several other areas in India that have been declared National Parks (for example, Kanha in Madhya Pradesh and Ranthambore in Rajasthan). In Ranthambore, there was widespread resentment by the local people living in the Park as they were suddenly prevented from grazing their cattle in the forests.

However, their grazing rights were subsequently reinstated by the Forest Department on insistence by the state government (Berkmuller, 1990).<sup>11</sup>

Following the declaration of Rajaji as a National Park, one of the first objectives of the Forest Department and Wildlife Board, was the eviction of the Gujars from the forest. There were basically three main arguments for the immediate need to evict the Gujars: (1) It was alleged that the Gujars were doing unprecedented damage to the forest by their lopping operations; (2) The presence of the Gujars in Rajaji was disturbing other wildlife in the forest; and (3) There was a need to maintain the Rajaji sanctuary as a 'corridor link' in order to protect the depleted Asian elephant population in the region (Mathur, 1991; Panwar, 1990).

While the Forest Department and the Wildlife Board have argued that the Gujars are the cause of extensive environmental damage in Rajaji, a detailed survey conducted by three conservation experts Clark, Sevill and Watts (1986) in Rajaji itself reveals contradictory results. The report demonstrates that - (1) Allegations that the Gujars are totally destroying the forest are exaggerated; (2) The presence of the Gujars in the forest does not appear to disturb other wildlife in the Park; and (3) Other factors need to be taken into consideration when accounting for environmental damage and disturbance to the wildlife in the Park.

The area used by each Gujar family was carefully identified by the researchers. Each family has the exclusive use of an area of the forest for grazing, lopping,

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<sup>11</sup> It should be noted that inhabitants of the Ranthambore and Kanha sanctuaries had settled populations, unlike the Rajaji National Park. This has implications for their relative ability to affect the political process. One would expect mobile populations like the Gujars to be less influential.

and watering, assigned by the Forest Department. One of the interesting facts brought out by the report is that the Gujars are banned from lopping *Sal* (*Shorea Robusta*), a timber tree that dominated the forests in the Siwaliks and the Rajaji National Park. There are also a number of other tree species not used as fodder due to unpalatability or toxicity and these, combined with *Sal*, mean that 60% of the trees are actually not used by the Gujars for lopping. Further, the Forest Department demarcates boundaries within which the Gujars are allowed to lop branches. While instances of illegal lopping and of Gujar groups straying away from the given boundaries have been reported by the forest guards (Hasan, 1986) the conservationists conducting the study claimed it was not done on a large scale or regular basis.

The report reveals that all the blame for the destruction of the forest and disturbance of wild animals should not be put on the Gujars, and other factors need to be considered. For example, they have reported that the Forest Department marks dry, malformed and uprooted timber for removal by the U.P. Forest Corporation. This extraction of timber causes a great deal of disturbance, especially because of truckloads of timber leaving the sanctuary daily.

Other users further increase the burden on the ecosystem. There is a particular grass known as *Bhabar* grass, which is abundant on the steep slopes of the sanctuary. The U.P. Forest Corporation hires Nepali grass cutters and contracts out transport of the harvested grass to local camel owners. Villages living near the forest are also given grazing rights in the areas south of the sanctuary. However, it was observed that their animals were frequently grazed within the sanctuary, and villagers were allowed to collect fodder from the forest area.

One of the main accusations launched against the Gujars is that their lopping of trees kills the tree. However, it has been observed that the Gujars, while lopping off smaller branches, always leave the leading shoot on each main branch, thus preventing the tree from dying. The conservation team also reported wild animals moving around freely near the Gujar settlement on many occasions, which suggests that the animals were not unduly disturbed by the presence of the pastoralists. In addition, fodder lopped by the Gujars served as an extra food source for the deer (Clark, Seville and Watts, 1986).

However, there is a problem with regard to the Gujars who have stopped migrating. While over 60% (Hasan 1986; Clark, Seville and Watts, 1986) still migrate, the remaining Gujars continue to occupy the sanctuary in the summer months putting additional pressure on it. This situation has been made worse by the Forest Department, who have closed some neighbouring forest blocks, thereby increasing the density of livestock in the sanctuary and leading to problems of overgrazing.

The Forestry Department, in its administration of the Rajaji Wildlife sanctuary, has a priority to preserve the forest, and appears to subscribe to the mainstream view that pastoralists are to blame for its destruction. While Gujar activities, therefore, have been severely curtailed in Rajaji, there has been no sincere attempt by the state government or the Forest Department to provide the Gujars with a satisfactory resettlement plan. Considering that the Gujars have had traditional rights in the Park and have been migrating there since the 1890s, there is a need for a more sympathetic and reasonable approach to be taken by both the Forest Department and the U.P. state government.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Singh (1986) asserts (p. 38) that "... the real issue with forest dwellers is not compensation but the recognition of rights, for once their rights are recognised their entitlement to compensation becomes obvious...".

It is clear that the Gujars are not solely responsible for environmental damage in Rajaji, and that the combined activities of the grass cutters, camels and cattle of villagers need also to be taken into account. However, it is alleged that the revenue earned from the sale of grass and timber is much more of a priority for the Forest Department than the plight of the Gujars.<sup>13</sup>

The state government in U.P. has left the responsibility of the Gujars' welfare to the Forest Department, which has not been particularly responsive to their needs. However, the Forest Policy of 1988 (GOI, 1988) envisages people's involvement in the development and protection of forests. It sees the need for forest communities to be motivated, and to identify themselves with the development and protection of forests from which they derive benefits.

In the larger scheme of things, one needs to see whether development programmes in India are indeed compatible with pastoralist welfare and development and, if not, what steps can be taken to improve their situation. The Gujars in U.P. have been discriminated against by not having been incorporated in either the Scheduled Tribes or Other Backward Classes lists. In addition, the Gujars have been deprived of the benefits of other big government projects such as the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), the Integrated Tribal Development Project, the Minimum Needs Programme and the Wage Employment Programme, to name a few (Mahajan, 1991). While these programmes have reached other tribal groups in India, the Himalayan pastoralists have been left out. One of the predominant reasons for the Gujars being excluded from programmes such as these is their migratory nature. For example, the IRDP is linked to receiving credit from banks, but

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<sup>13</sup> This argument has been put forward by a number of authors who are critical of the forest bureaucracy in India, including Commander (1986), Singh (1986) and Gadgil (1991).

the Gujars usually have no access to banks, as they are migratory people without a permanent place of residence.

The Gujars have also been neglected by voluntary organisations. For example, tribals in the states of Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh facing eviction due to the building of the Narmada Dam have received tremendous support from voluntary organisations. By contrast, with the Gujars, there is a conspicuous lack of any such attention or voluntary help. The reason for their lack of involvement, is probably to do with the Gujars' migratory nature. The Gujars live in inaccessible areas, their summer pastures are at heights unreachable by metalled roads. The problem therefore is, that whereas with a settled group of people a voluntary group can monitor the lifestyle more easily, with pastoralists very few people are committed enough to climb up to the heights the Gujars do, and observe at first hand the difficulties encountered along the way. Until efforts are made by the government, and voluntary organisations to conduct a thorough survey of the lifestyle of the Gujars, it will be difficult to come up with any workable solutions for them. Only a joint effort and an explicitly "people-oriented" approach can hope to alleviate the problems facing the Gujars.

### Some Suggestions

There is a need to target welfare programmes for the Gujars with two options in mind; specifically - (1) Continuation of migration by the Gujars; and (2) Settlement of the Gujars in the plains.

## 1. Continuation of migration

Given that Gujars migrate every year and the U.P. government has not decided upon a proper resettlement plan, there is a need to improve conditions for the Gujars in the hills. Steps that could be initiated include:

(a) To observe the migration patterns of the U.P. Gujars with the help of voluntary organisations. This would be necessary to get a clear picture of routes taken, towns along the way, fodder and water needs and problems encountered by the Gujars on their difficult one and a half month migration.

(b) The Gujars have traditionally been migrating to the mountains since the 1890s and have been using pasture land for grazing their cattle. It is only recently that villagers in the hills have extended their agricultural activities to these pastures and are claiming it as their land (Bahuguna, 1989). A committee needs to be set up by the government with representatives of both sides to reach some sort of a settlement. This is necessary since evidence has shown that the Gujars use each pasture area only for 405 days while migrating, so claims that the Gujars are doing extensive damage are unfounded (Hasan, 1986; Clark, Seville and Watts, 1986; Bahuguna, 1989). Also, goats belonging to the villagers in the hills often do much more long term damage than the Gujar buffaloes. Once again, the solution that needs to be worked out must bear in mind the Gujars' customary rights.

(c) Though some Gujars take fairly remote routes and migrate along rivers, most Gujars prefer to stay within the proximity of a town. This is necessary for the sale of their milk and milk products. Along routes traditionally followed, and at convenient points, facilities for water, fodder, veterinary aid

(by the state Animal Husbandry Department) and marketing of milk should be provided.<sup>14</sup> Since the Gujars pass through the same towns every year at approximately the same time each year, a scheme for the marketing of milk in towns during that period needs to be devised by the government. The scheme should aim at eliminating the middlemen who prevent the Gujars from selling milk at market rates.

(d) Some groups of U.P. Gujars who migrate to the summer pastures of H.P. come under the jurisdiction of two state governments. As a result, there is need for cooperation between the governments and some sort of joint programme for the welfare of the Gujars.

(e) The Forest Department in the hills also claims that the Gujars are destroying the forests. Instead of totally preventing the Gujars from using the forest, a *scheme could be devised to make provisions for rotational grazing in certain selected parts of the forest.*

## 2. Resettlement in the plains

Resettlement of the Gujars in the plains should be voluntary and not forced upon all the groups. With regard to resettlement schemes themselves, any scheme to resettle the Gujars will need to have representatives of the Gujar

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<sup>14</sup> The state government in Jammu and Kashmir provides the Gujars with mobile veterinary clinics at certain points along their migratory routes (Aluja, 1981).



community acting in conjunction with the state government and voluntary organisations.<sup>15</sup>

While planning resettlement schemes, the government would do well to learn from the experience of other states which have been successful in their attempts to settle nomads. Experience from Jammu and Kashmir has shown that the choice of location is crucial in any resettlement scheme. For example, in one scheme, land was given to the Gujars for cultivation of fodder but in the absence of irrigation facilities and inadequate knowledge of cultivation, the Gujars took to migrating again. On the other hand, in another scheme the Gujars were given land near the outskirts of a town and were allowed by the Forest Department, within limits, to use the forest for grazing. This resulted in the successful settlement of Gujars (Ahuja, 1981). Thus, resettlement schemes must consider settling Gujars near forests wherever possible, with access permitted to the forest on a controlled basis. Denial of the use of forests could result in illegal "poaching" of wood and fodder. Where it is not possible to settle Gujars on the outskirts of forests, it would be preferable to provide the Gujars with communal grazing lands or special fodder areas developed by the state government. This is important as one of the reasons for rejection of the scheme at Patri was that the Gujars were not satisfied with individual plots of land. It would be easier to set up common fodder areas as the Gujars are used to communal grazing.

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<sup>15</sup> Interestingly, with regard to East African pastoralists, Dyson-Hudson (1991) points out how the pastoralists are merely informed about resettlement schemes, never consulted:

Schemes for resettlement need to be oriented more towards animal husbandry rather than agriculture.<sup>16</sup> This is necessary as the Gujars are more skilled and familiar with animals than with cultivation. Schemes could be oriented towards cooperative dairying and marketing of dairy products.

Pastoral nomads in general can potentially make a vital contribution to the Indian economy. The world's largest dairy development program, Operation Flood is currently under way in India. With 18% of the world's cattle stock, India produces less than 6% of the world's milk, and this untapped potential can be developed (George, 1985). Cooperative dairying schemes are, therefore, one way the Gujars may be settled successfully. Here again, experience from other states where dairy development projects have been successful can be useful. For example, a pastoral nomadic group in Gujarat, the Bharawad, shifted from a nomadic and subsistence production pattern to one of sedentary market production (Salzman, 1987). The Surat District Cooperative Milk Producers Union, a major milk cooperative in Gujarat, was looking for new sources of milk to satisfy high market demand. They decided to tap the supply of milk from the Bharawad nomads, who were selling their produce in Surat through middlemen. The Forest Department allowed the Bharawad to continue to use the forest for grazing even after they were incorporated into the milk cooperative scheme.

The success of the Bharawad scheme was possible because of the substantial inducements provided by the Surat Milk Cooperative. Sedentarisation was voluntary and in no way imposed. In most towns of U.P., there is a high

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<sup>16</sup> For example, attempts to settle the nomadic, cattle-owning Bihars by giving them land to cultivate resulted in failure. They lacked technical skill, and were not mentally prepared to cultivate land (Sarkar, 1990).

demand for milk (Hasan, 1986) and therefore schemes similar to that of Bharawad could be implemented.

#### IV CONCLUSION

Development planning in India has largely been insensitive to the needs of nomadic pastoral people especially those who inhabit the mountainous regions.<sup>17</sup> There is a need to examine the problems of such groups within the overall context of India's developmental philosophy. Efforts to develop the Gujars for example, have been fragmentary and lacked any commitment on the part of the government. Policy needs to be targeted specifically at migratory groups who have hitherto rarely benefited from the broader initiatives undertaken by the Indian government. Though an ecological approach is imperative when dealing with pastoralists (given that their lives are so intricately bound to nature), it is important to avoid examining pastoralists exclusively with this perspective. External factors, such as economic and political influences, play an important part in the lives of pastoral people and programmes must carefully consider schemes which will be acceptable to the people given their traditions and social structure.

Today, nomadic people are entangled in a web of social, political and economic ties with the outside world. They have not been able to avoid new pressures and constraints, often determined by factors largely outside their control. With the growth of industrial technology, world trade, urban and agricultural populations and government bureaucracies, pastoral people are increasingly

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<sup>17</sup> Pastoral nomads account for 6% of India's tribal population but few programmes have started to meet their acute fodder needs (Mendhe, quoted in CSE, 1982).

marginalised at the same time as they are more fully integrated into the wider system.

Substantial and sustained population growth has resulted in unprecedented crowding in many regions. Animal populations have also increased leading to greater competition for scarce resources such as land, pasture and water. Pastoral nomads traditionally could defend themselves and their resources through political and military means. Today these means are lost to them as they have been absorbed within, and subjugated by, relatively powerful states. Unable to determine their own destinies, they are now dependent on the largesse of the State for their survival.

The Himalayan nomads have little political power and have been unable to attract the attention of the State to their needs. On the contrary, the State has expropriated areas traditionally under the control of such people, and diverted them for "development" schemes of various types (wildlife reserves, touristic purposes, or mining for example). Elsewhere, it has acted under pressure from an influential agrarian group or other powerful coalition. Pastoral nomads are particularly vulnerable to this kind of expropriation because of their traditional land use pattern. Their own population is thinly scattered over large areas which are left unoccupied seasonally or over a number of years. That these "unoccupied", or "unused" or "surplus" areas are, in fact, critical to effective pasture management and livestock production is either unknown or considered unimportant to government authorities.

In the final analysis, the Himalayan pastoralists are trapped within a power structure in which their bargaining position is much weaker than that of urban or agricultural populations. As a result the policies of the State and Forest

Department have not addressed their needs. In the short run, a much greater awareness about the problems of the Himalayan pastoralists needs to be created. In the long term, the Indian government will have to make a sincere effort to include migratory persons in its development plans in a more meaningful and committed way.

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