

Documentation and quantification of a long distance migratory sheep husbandry system in Southern Rajasthan (Pali District), India

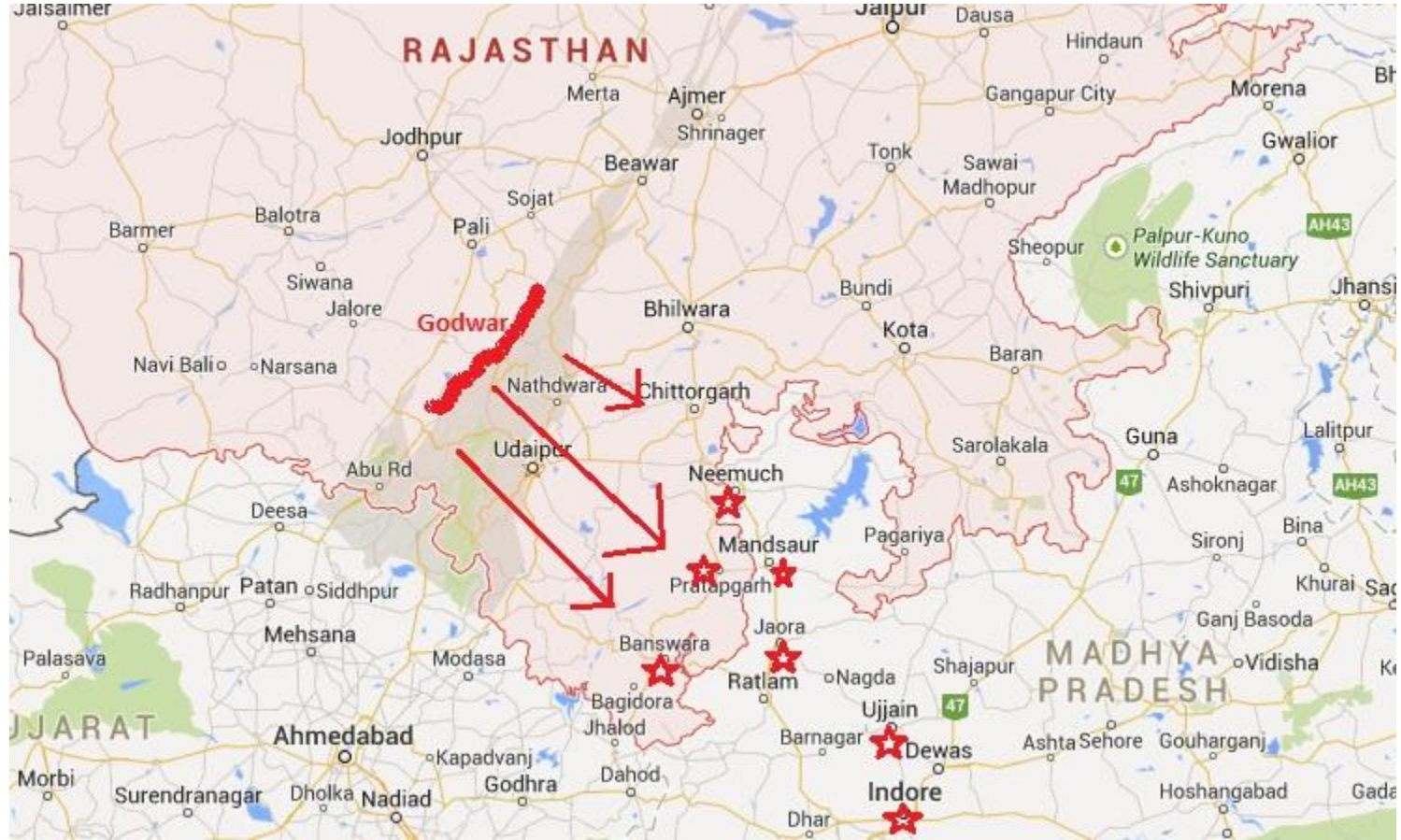


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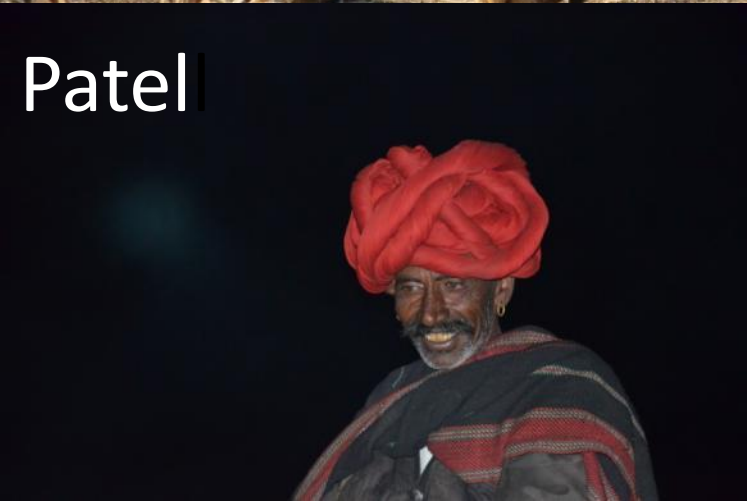
Purpose

- To understand the migratory shepherding system of Rajasthan (opportunities and threats)
- To document the current status of nomadic sheep production
- To quantify the economic contribution of shepherds from a circumscribed area of Rajasthan

Migratory shepherds from Godwar area (Desuri and Bali Tehsils of Pali District



Dera=herding group
composed of 6-20 dolri



Methodology

- Field visits
- Focus Group Discussions
- Structured interviews (questionnaires)
- Meetings at LPPS campus
- Sample Size: 20 *dera* (approx. 200 families) or 2.5% of sheep of Pali district

**Feeding on waste and providing
organic manure**



Meat output of sample area

- Min. 40 deras with an average of 3500 ewes= ca. 140,000 ewes.
- These produce ca. 30,000 saleable male lambs@ Rs. 2500= Rs. 75,000,000,
- 11kg liveweight for a 2-3 months old lamb= 330,000 kg live weight
- With a dressing percentage of around 50%, this would mean 165,000 kg of meat from lambs
- All this meat would have been produced without any use of non-renewable resources (fertilizer, tractor fuel, transportation of feed, etc.).
- Based on average weight and carcass percentage of Sonadi sheep as reported by Acharya

This field is fertilized and the Raika have saved the owner significant amounts of artificial fertilizer, besides increasing crop yield.



Besides meat and dung, milk is also an important product for household consumption and sale (during part of the year)





The Raika are astute breeders, continuously experimenting for the most suitable genotype. They paid 20,000 Rs for this ram (“Baradi”) as a lamb

Results

The main threats are not drought or unproductive animals, but:

- Theft (shepherds demand arms to protect themselves to being attacked almost nightly)
- Population pressure and “development” (construction of buildings, roads, fencing, etc)
- Disease takes a major toll and no animal health care is provided or available

From all perspectives – local livelihoods, livestock production, as well as continued soil fertility – it is adamant and urgent that the migratory sheep pastoralists are not squeezed out and that sufficient space for them is retained in the crop cycle!

This system is not backward, but **ecological** and, in that sense, **modern**.



Conclusions I

- Shepherds do not need support with breeding – they make their own experiments to develop best possible genotype. (There is thus hardly any rationale for establishing “elite herds” at govt. research institutes)
- Instead, there is urgent need for **long-term land use planning** to ensure space and place for nomadic shepherds in the crop cycle.

Conclusions II

- Security is essential for the nomads and for their herds
- Better access to animal health care need to be urgently addressed.
- In order to achieve this, government urgently needs to engage in a multistakeholder dialogue with shepherds, farmers, local authorities and scientists to ensure its survival into an ecological future!

Acknowledgments

- Misereor and IIED (International Institute for Environment and Development) for financial support
- RLN (Rain-fed Livestock Network) for guidance
- Raika shepherds

