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Traditional rangeland management systems in chitral

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Introduction Chitral , a district of the NWFP of Pakistan , situated in the remote region of Hindu Kush on Afghanistan border . Grazing lands of Chitral cover some 373 ,600 ha , comprising 269 ,400 ha of alpine and sub alpine scrub , 46 ,600 ha of alpine pastures , and 57 ,600 ha of low-yield subtropical and temperate grazing land . The entire area under forests (70 ,045 ha) is also grazed (IUCN , 2003) . Grazing lands in Chitral are predominantly used for livestock , fuel-wood , medicinal plants and construction materials etc . . At the same time , these are very important watersheds for irrigation and a number of big dams and reservoirs in the plains of Pakistan . In Chitral , this important resource is being managed by well rooted traditional utilization systems namely (1) Nomadic Herdsmen (2) Phazhal System (3) Ann Wal (4) Auri and (5) Adrakh committee . These components of the system have been adopted by the communities according to the culture , geographic location , affordability and community based systems .

Traditional rangeland management systems Major traditional rangelands Management systems exist in Chitral are (1) **Nomadic herdsmen (gujars)** : The nomadic herdsmen are originally migratory livestock owners now settled . During summer , Gujars , occasionally men alone may take the livestock of the certain household to higher pasture in addition to their own . While in pasture , they graze the livestock , protect them from the predators , milk the goats and prepare butter , ghee , and cheese . A portion of this is given to the livestock owners and the rest consumed or sold ; (2) **Phazhal system** Phazals are local men or boys who work as shepherds taking up the livestock to higher pastures during summer season . They graze the livestock all the day and protect them from predators during the night (Faizi , 1999) ; (3) **Ann wal** In some of the village this is usually done in summer month , when the livestock's are in the high pasture . Ann walli is usually done for cattle to protect them from predators if risk exist , otherwise the people left the animal in the pasture for two or three month without any care for free grazing (Ali , 2002) ; (4) **Auri** : is a committee consists of twelve persons , selected by the villagers for one-year . The committee has full power and authority for one year to decide any type of case ranging from a simple to complex . The Auri has the authority to punish , who violate the rule , mostly the punishment are given on the violation of the rule made for the conservation of the natural resource . (5) **Adrakh committee** : It's a body exists in every village ; this committee is consisting of the experienced hunter , old Phazal and those who knows the pasture . It's an informal committee of the people ; it is customary way of managing the high pasture . The decision of the committee is documented nominally , but their decision is followed and respected by the villagers .

Changes , causes and consequences The state had supported and sheltered these indigenous practices . Pastures were protected and natural resources were properly managed largely because these practices were based on the communities' indigenous knowledge and on time-tested community-based methods . After the merger of Chitral with Pakistan in 1969 , the government took a more direct hand in regulating natural resources , posting government functionaries and setting up new departments to ensure the new rules would be followed . The communities were initially not consulted nor were their views considered in the formulation of new policies , which were totally alien to most of the communities . They did not feel that these policies truly belonged to them and they rarely followed the new rules , the rationale of which they did not fully understand . The new policies and the discontinuance of traditional management systems created a gap between the state-which now had full control over the resources-and the custodians and users of the pastures-which now had a vague sense of their role .

Conclusions Old and time honored grazing systems still exist in some areas of the district , which need to be revived and promoted before they die out . Moreover , improved and sustainable grazing systems can be built on these traditional systems with slight and convincing modifications in consonant with local culture and traditions for smooth implementation and for better adoptability by the communities . The real improvement in the current situation cannot be made until the communities themselves manage the grazing lands under proper grazing systems .

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