



**Workshop on**  
**Rangeland Management for Sustainable Rural Development**  
**July 29 -31, 2024**  
**Venue: SKICC, Srinagar, UT of Jammu and Kashmir, India**

***Organized by***  
*Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Jammu and Kashmir*

***In collaboration with***  
*Regional IYRP Support Group of South Asia (RISG-SA)*  
*National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)*

**Workshop Proceedings**

A three-day workshop on 'Rangeland Management for Sustainable Rural Development' was organized by the Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Jammu and Kashmir in collaboration with Regional IYRP Support Group of South Asia (RISG-SA) and NABARD at Sher-e-Kashmir International Convention Centre (SKICC), Srinagar between 29 and 31 July 2024. This workshop aimed to harness ongoing government programmes and schemes from various states to promote sustainable management of rangelands. The workshop was attended by 137 participants, which included officials from the Central Government and different line departments of Jammu and Kashmir like the Forest, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry, and Agriculture among others; faculty members and students of varying academic institutions especially SKUAST-Kashmir, University of Kashmir, pastoralists across the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand and Gujarat, different NGOs, researchers, and volunteers, besides participants from organizer institutions. 30 FPO representatives supported by NABARD participated in the workshop. The workshop focused on the United Nations General Assembly's designation of 2026 as the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP). India has supported and co-sponsored the UNGA Resolution on IYRP (2022), which aims to raise awareness about the importance of rangelands and pastoralists for food security, the economy, the environment, and cultural heritage. The goal is to promote scientific conservation and management of rangelands and ensure sustainable livelihoods for pastoralists through community participation. The workshop aligned with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), marking 2026 as a transformative year for rangelands, pastoralists, and global environmental health. The workshop was compered by **Dr. Kanchan Negi** from Uttarakhand.

The inaugural session was chaired by **Shri Suresh Gupta**, Principal Secretary of Culture and Principal Chief of Conservative Forests & HoFF, Jammu & Kashmir, **Dr. Shahid Iqbal Choudhary**, Secretary, Dept. of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, **Shri P. Vivekanandan**, Chair, RISG-SA, **Dr. Ravindra S. Gavali**, Professor and Head, Centre for Natural Resource Management, Climate Change & Disaster Management, National Institute for Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, **Dr. Ravinder Yadav**, Director, National Rainfed Area Authority, Govt. of India. During the inaugural session, Principal Secretary Culture **Shri Suresh Gupta**, who also serves as the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & Head of Forest Force (HoFF), Jammu & Kashmir, emphasized the need for a collaborative approach involving government agencies, scientific institutions, local communities, and NGOs. This collaboration is crucial for the effective implementation of rangeland management strategies, he said. In his address, Shri Suresh Gupta highlighted the rich biodiversity and extensive rangelands in Jammu & Kashmir, particularly in the alpine and subalpine zones. He noted that rangelands cover 4.32% of the total geographical area of Jammu & Kashmir, including 3.53% in Jammu and 13.22% in Kashmir. These areas, totaling 9,59,500 hectares, are essential for local livelihoods, supporting pastoralism, agriculture, medicinal plant harvesting, and tourism.



*Inaugural session*

Secretary, Dept. of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, **Dr. Shahid Iqbal Choudhary**, underscored the historical significance of rangelands and their role in sustaining unique civilizations worldwide. He expressed hope that the workshop would explore both the economic and cultural values of rangelands and develop a roadmap for best practices based on discussions from various states. **Dr. Smruti Smita Mohapatra**, member of RISG-SA, Jammu, presented the workshop's agenda, objectives, priorities, and expected outcomes. **Shri P. Vivekanandan**, Chair of RISG-SA, delivered a special address on the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP) 2026 along with the principles of rangeland management, while **Dr. Ravindra S. Gavali** from NIRDPR, Hyderabad, provided insights into MGNREGA and integrated watershed development which also benefits not only for poverty alleviation but also Rangeland Development. A special address by **Shri Chowdhary Mohammad Iqbal**, Director of Agriculture Production & Farmers Welfare, Kashmir was made. **Dr. Pedro M.**

**Herrera**, a Spanish ecologist and consultant on Drylands and Pastoralism and author of the UNCCD GLO Thematic Report on Rangelands and Pastoralism, addressed the workshop virtually, sharing his expertise and insights on rangelands and pastoralism. A documentary on the rangelands of Jammu & Kashmir was showcased by the Department of Rural Development & Panchayati Raja, Jammu & Kashmir. The vote of thanks was given by **Shri Waseem Raja**, JKAS, Additional Secretary to Govt., Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Jammu & Kashmir. The cultural programme in the evening on the Dal cruise was followed by a sumptuous dinner at the Char Chinar on the Dal Lake.

The second day was marked by three sessions based on three sub-themes. The first session of the day titled '**Status of Rangelands and Restoration and Management with MGNREGA/CSR Programmes**' was chaired by **Dr. Ravindra S. Gavali**, Centre for Natural Resource Management, Climate Change & Disaster Mitigation, National Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Hyderabad. **Dr. Smruti Smita Mohapatra**, member of RISG-SA, Jammu was the rapporteur of the session. Dr. Ravindra S. Gavali presented on 'Enhancing Environmental Benefits, and Rural Livelihood through MGNREGA: Learnings and Future Strategies.'



**Prof. (Dr.) Syed Naseem ul Zafar Geelani**, Head, Division of Social & Basic Sciences, Faculty of Forestry, SKUAST-Kashmir spoke about the status of grasslands and challenges in Jammu & Kashmir. **Shri Ramesh Bhatti**, Sahjeevan, Gujarat highlighted the historic initiative by the Dept of Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Ministry of Fishery, Animal Husbandry &



Dairying under Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Govt. of India to enumerate pastoral livestock separately under the 21st Livestock Census for the first time in the country. **Mrs Bandana Sambyal**, Foundation for Ecological Security, Rajasthan shared the context of Rajasthan in ecological restoration and conservation of land and water resources under MGNREGA and CSR programmes while sharing the ground story of Hastinapur village, Kotri block, Bhilwara district.

The second session of the second day ‘**Community Management of Rangelands**’ was chaired by **Dr. D.K. Sadana**, Principal Scientist (Retd), NBAGR, Karnal, and co-chaired by **Shri S. Senthil Kumar**, IFS, Additional PCCF (Planning and Projects), Jammu & Kashmir & Nodal Officer (FCA). **Dr. Ravia Gupta**, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Journalism & Media Studies, University of Jammu was the rapporteur of the session. Dr. D K Sadana shared a case study on Shashi, a labourer turned pastoralist in Himachal Pradesh. **Mrs Megha Sheth** from the South Asia Pastoral Alliance (SAPA) presented the best practices of rangeland management of member countries - India, Afghanistan, and Nepal considering IYRP 2026. SAPA is in the process of preparing the charter of demands prepared by young pastoralists from South Asian countries, including the climate rights for vulnerable communities. Mrs Sheth highlighted the grassroots realities from a South Asian perspective, such as common land restoration techniques with the cultivation of local grasses through pastoralist women groups in Gujarat, province-wise youth organization initiatives in Afghanistan to secure the livelihood and economic security of the pastoralist community through Green Forces and household practices in Nepal.



Two award-winning case studies reported to SEVA on the increase in the number of local draught Kangayam cattle breed in Korangadu pasture land in Tamil Nadu and the role of

Monpa tribes in Dungkharpa Welfare Society in the development of grasslands and yak and local livestock breeds in Arunachal Pradesh using indigenous knowledge was presented by **Shri P. Vivekanandan**, Chair, RISG-SA. **Dr. Sheikh Ghulam Rasool**, School for Rural Development & Environment, FRC – Jammu & Kashmir raised his concern that exotic species of fruits and vegetables will not sustain in a particular climate like Srinagar, therefore local varieties of fruits and vegetables that are on the verge of extinction need to be grown and marketed well. He spoke about the Tosamaidan movement in Kashmir and the need to contain overtourism in the Kashmir valley. He mentioned that 12, 450 ha covering many villages in different districts have claimed Community Forest Rights under FRA 2006. **Shri Isabhai Meran Mutva**, a Sindhi Maldhari from Gujarat spoke about the role of Banni Pashu Uccherak Maldhari Sangathan in empowering pastoralists and ensuring the preservation and prosperity of the Banni grasslands. **Shri Ameer Hamza van Gujjar** from Van Gujjar Tribal Yuva Sanghatan, Uttarakhand described the close relationship of Van Gujjar pastoralists, Gojri buffaloes, and forest protection in the protection of the livestock breeds and revitalization of the rangelands. **Shri Ritesh Pokar** from Sahjeevan, Gujarat emphasized the bio-char-based carbon credit programme in the Banni grasslands in Gujarat as a collaborative effort for ecological and economic revitalization in Kutch and Saurashtra. ‘Seasonal livestock movement and nomadic migration in Jammu & Kashmir – The present scenario and way ahead’ was jointly presented by **Dr. Arshdeep Singh**, IFS, Conservator of Forests, South Kashmir, and **Shri Mudasir Mehmood**, SFS, Deputy Conservator of Forests, Jammu & Kashmir Forest Department. They were helpless when the Gram Sabha could not pass a resolution to favour migratory pastoralists under claims of community forest rights under the Forest Rights Act (FRA) 2006. However the forest department achieved obtaining 41,180 kanals of land issued to 7937 community titles. **Shri Shahid Saleem**, co-founder of Himalayan Pastoral Trust and a student from Kashmir University presented his ongoing PhD work on ‘Action Plan and Strategy for Regeneration of Rangelands in Lal Marg and Mohand Marg. He stressed the need for digging three waterholes in the migratory route of pastoralists.

Post lunch, the final and valedictory session on ‘**Sustainable Rural Development through Rangeland and Pastoral System: Group Discussion and Presentations**’ was chaired by **Dr. Ravinder Yadav**, Director, National Rainfed Area Authority, New Delhi. **Dr. Smruti Smita Mohapatra**, member of RISG-SA, Jammu was the rapporteur of the session. Dr. Ravinder Yadav shared his learnings from the convergence model developed in reviving traditional pasture routes under the FAO-NRAA Technical Cooperation Project (TCP) in dry and arid parts of India. Later **Dr. Shahid Iqbal Choudhary**, Secretary, Dept. of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj joined the open discussion with the participants.



**Ms Burmaa Dashbal**, the CEO of the Mongolian National Federation of Pasture User Groups virtually made a presentation on IYRP 2026 with three focussed roles in three clusters viz. Kashmere wool, meat, and leather processing for premium marketing which was followed by a discussion. The way forward was suggested by **Dr. Ravinder Yadav** and **Shri P. Vivekanandan**. Overall, the sixteen presentations from the three technical sessions on the second day of the workshop were loaded, meaningful, and thorough, as mentioned by **Shri Waseem Raja**, JKAS, Additional Secretary to Govt., Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Jammu & Kashmir in his concluding remarks.



### *Valedictory session*

On the final day, delegates interacted with local nomadic people and pastoralists in Hajin, Panchayat Halqa Gulistan, Pulwama district in south Kashmir. This interaction provided a



platform for understanding the challenges faced by these communities and exploring sustainable management practices in the Upper Dachigam National Park and Tral Wildlife Sanctuary. The delegation, accompanied by Director, RDD Kashmir, Joint Director RDD, Kashmir, Additional Secretary RDD, and ACD Pulwama, offered expertise on conservation and economic improvement strategies for pastoralists.



*Interaction of the workshop organizing team, experts, and other delegates with local pastoralists in Pulwama district, Jammu and Kashmir*

Thus, the workshop has brought together diverse participants, including experts, heads, and officers from Jammu & Kashmir and other states, researchers, scholars, and students. The workshop included an inaugural ceremony, technical sessions (including the participation of experts online from Spain and Mongolia), and field visits. The workshop was covered extensively across both the print and digital media in Jammu & Kashmir.

## Overall Recommendations

Important outcomes of the workshop highlighting the best practices in rangeland management in other states, and countries, and spreading awareness on various government schemes to address existing gaps leading to the protection and regeneration of rangelands with the participation of all stakeholders including CSR programmes of corporates. The recommendations are shown below:

- Define rangeland from the Indian perspective.
- Geo marking, tagging, and notifying the rangelands.
- Spreading awareness and activities that are allowed on rangelands.
- Clear objectives for land restoration strategy.
- Land management ownership and its execution (community and Departments) considering the Forest Rights Act (FRA) 2006 and local Biodiversity Act 2002 rights.
- People's Biodiversity register should be carried out and must get approved.
- Baseline survey and documentation of traditional knowledge including rain & its pattern, ground changes, vegetation, medicinal plants, usage suitability, and dry spells, etc to manage and make future programmes for rangelands.
- New technology and new priorities like climate resilience are to be added for rangeland management initiatives.
- Aligning ongoing and future programmes to manage such initiatives.
- Community-driven approach should be adopted to drive the change and government departments should be facilitators so that the optimal benefits of govt. schemes are availed by communities.
- Youth and women-based programmes should be adopted to set the base rules in rangeland management.
- Focus on product innovation to open new livelihood avenues for pastoralists and rangeland user communities
- Propagation and sharing of success stories by giving inputs to the policymakers.
- Emphasising the use of the Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) to strengthen the capacities of institutions for rural local governance by considering sustainable solutions for local problems.
- For policy change, evidence-based documents are needed to influence public policy data.
- Creation of Self-Help Groups and tribal cells for rural development.
- There is tremendous potential for organic farming in Jammu & Kashmir. To preserve and ensure a safe food value chain, there is also a need to check pesticide use for cash crops farming.
- Local communities that depend upon forests or rangelands are to be regulated and sustainable management of resources is promoted by making users groups with local rules set by themselves.
- Data deficiency is a major problem in supporting Pastoralism. Geolocation of pastoralists, mobile numbers, and other specific information must be maintained to record clear migration routes. So eco-tourism is the way forward.
- Creation of fodder banks and green Seva awards at local and national levels.
- Planning process with the help of a bio-economic approach will enhance income under rural development policy.
- Developing and spreading the use of micro-weather technology for forecasting purposes to carry out smooth migrations.



- Emphasis on the adoption of Atal Bhujal Yojana for improving groundwater management in states.
- Use of AI in agriculture should be emphasized.
- Seed banking must be promoted.
- Need to create a capacity-building fund.
- Research proposal must be based on SDGs and action-oriented.
- Revenue generation by selling grass.
- Emphasis on common land policy which is prevailing only in Jammu & Kashmir.
- Adoption of water harvesting structures.
- Recognition of Chopans as Scheduled Tribes.

### **Key Recommendations**

1. Diversion of rangelands, grasslands, and pasturelands in turn being allotted for commercial or tourism purposes in Jammu and Kashmir state and this shall be stopped and included for regeneration of healthy pastureland under various Govt schemes including MGNREGA. Rangeland user groups are to be encouraged like SHGs.
2. The term wasteland or degraded forest must be removed and replaced with specific grassland terms viz. alpine grassland.
3. Tree planting in rangelands under the afforestation program shall be reviewed critically towards playing the multipurpose role of rangelands which provides fodder for animals, fuel wood, and minor forest produce for communities.
4. Under community forest rights claims are to be quickened the nodal agency changed from Forest Department to Tribal Affairs Department and awareness raised on the role of migratory communities and their grazing rights.
5. Common Facility Centres (CFCs) for value addition of processing centres for livestock products viz Kashmiri wool, meat, and leather are to be set up for getting more income for pastoral communities. To make pastoralists relevant in present times, the Pastoral Product Trademark is important and this should be encouraged. (Action: Ministry of Textile and Wool Board).
6. There is a need to document traditional knowledge and culture associated with the management of rangelands including the nutritional value of local grass species, medicinal plants, and awards announced to recognize them annually. (Action: Department of Culture)
7. An Integrated Pastoral Development Plan should be developed for arid regions which is like the watershed approach but covers soil and water conservation at the macro level.
8. A Pastoral Cell in Jammu & Kashmir shall be created under the Department of Animal Husbandry to coordinate various line departments for the protection and regeneration of rangelands while ensuring livelihoods for pastoral communities.
9. The data generated with GIS and the population of local livestock are to be shared with communities while developing a village development plan.
10. To promote organic agriculture penning, using cow dung, manure for preparation of organic inputs, herbal pesticide, and herbal preparations for animals that replace chemical inputs are to be covered under the MGNREGA and SHGs trained under State Rural Livelihood Mission/ Integrated Framing System.

## **Workshop Organizing Team**

### **A. Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Jammu and Kashmir**

1. Dr. Shahid Iqbal Choudhary, Secretary to the Government
2. Shri Wasim Raja, Additional Secretary to the Government

### **B. Regional IYRP Support Group of South Asia (RISG-SA)**

1. Shri P. Vivekanandan, SEVA & Co-Chair, Regional IYRP Support Group of South Asia
2. Dr. Smruti Smita Mohapatra, Member, Regional IYRP Support Group of South Asia, Jammu

### **C. NABARD Regional Office, Jammu and Kashmir, Jammu**

**D.** Dr. Ravia Gupta, Assistant Professor, Department of Journalism & Media Studies, University of Jammu

**E.** Prof. (Dr.) S Naseem ul Zafar Geelani, Head of the Department, Division of Social and Basic Sciences, Faculty of Forestry, SKUAST-Kashmir

## List of Participants

S.no	Name	Designation
1	Sh. Suresh Kumar Gupta, IFS	PCCF & Principal Secretary to the Govt. Culture Department
2	Dr. Shahid Iqbal Choudhary, IAS	Secretary to the Government, Department of RD & PR
3	Shri P. Vivekanandan Perumal	Chair, RISG-SA/ SEVA, Madurai
4	Dr. Ravinder Yadav	Director Rainfed Area Authority, GOI
5	Dr. Ravindra S. Gavali	Professor and Head, CNRM, CC & DM, NIRDPR, Hyderabad
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11	Shri Chowdhary Mohammad Iqbal	Director of Agriculture Production & Farmers Welfare, Kashmir
12	Mr. Mohd Meer Hamza	Van Gujjar Tribal Yuva, Sangathan, Uttarakhand
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14	Shri Ramesh Bhatti	Centre for Pastoralism/ Sahjeevan, Bhuj
15	Mr. Ritesh Pokar	Sahjeevan, Bhuj
16	Dr. Ravia Gupta	Assistant Professor, University of Jammu
17	Dr. Smruti Smita Mohapatra	Member, RISG-SA, Jammu
18	Mrs Megha Sheth	SAPA, Ahmedabad
19	Shri Isha Meran Mutva	Sahjeevan, Bhuj
20	Prof. (Dr.) S Naseem ul Zafar Geelani	SKUAST-K, Srinagar
21	Dr. Sheikh Ghulam Rasool	SRDE, FRC-J&K
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24	Mohammad Mumtaz Ali, JKAS	Director, Jammu
25	Mr. Shabir Hussain Bhat (JKAS)	Director, Kashmir
26	Mr. Sham Lal, JKAS	Director Panchayati Raj, J&K
27	Mr. Rajnish Kumar	CEO IWMP
28	Mr. Umar Khan, JKAS	Director of Finance, J&K
29	Mr. Rajneesh Gupta	COO Himayat
30	Mr. Waseem Raja, JKAS	Additional Secretary/MGNREGA
31	Abdul Hamid Bhat	Joint Director Horticulture, Kashmir
32	Ms. Shafia Naqshbandi	Director, Social Audit
33	Shabir Ahmad Hakak	Assistant Commissioner Development, Baramulla
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35	Ms. Bureeda Majid	Assistant Commissioner Development, Budgam
36	Syed Naseer Ahmad	Assistant Commissioner Development, Kulgam
37	Peerzada Farhat Ahmed	Assistant Commissioner Development, Pulwama
38	Syed Fahim Ahmad Bihaqi	Assistant Commissioner Development, Anantnag



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56	Raju Mahajan	Mushroom Specialist
57	Pradeep Kumar	Floriculture Development Officer
58	Krishan Kant	Soil Survey Officer
59	Qazi Showkat	Asst. Entomologist
60	Mudasir Shafi	Mushroom Dev. Officer, Srinagar
61	Sheikh Imran	Information Officer
62	Feroz Ahmad Shapoo	Asst. Director Law Enforcement
63	Syed Ishtiyag Ahmad	Seed Production Officer
64	Abdul Hamid Shah	Div. Seed Certification Officer
65	Rattan Lal	Spawn Production Officer
66	Shabir Ahmad Malla	Jr. Scientist Mushroom
67	Mr. Abdul Hamid Malla	RO G-I
68	Mr. Noor-Ul Amin	RO G-I
69	Mr. Riyaz Ahmad Malik	RO G-I
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103	Archo Taslima	B.Sc (1st Year), SKUAST-K	
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105	Bandana Sambyal	FES, Rajasthan	
106	Dr. Ovee Thorat	Srinagar	
107	Zahid Parwaz Choudhary	JKGBYWC	
108	Shri Surinder Singh	DGM, NABARD	
109	Shri Chander	District Development Manager, Rajouri, NABARD	
110	Shri Hanif Aslam	Development Assistant, NABARD	
S. No	Name of the Farmer sponsored by NABARD	Contact Number	Name of the FPO
111	Mushtaq Ahmad Yatoo	9682363819	Pattan Dairy FPO & Zehraan Dairy FPO
112	Imran Ali Bhat	9682667592	
113	Nargis Akhter	9622761704	
114	Zahida Akhter	7889904071	
115	Mohd Hussain Yatoo	9541870782	
116	Anayat Hussain Yatoo	9906336865	
117	Suhail Abbass Yatoo	8493093596	
118	Imtiyaz Ahmad Khan-	6005564500	Bangus Valley FPO
119	Abbas Tariq Pir	7006406530	
120	Bashir Ahmed Bhat-	9682149142	

121	Gh. Mohd War	6005917431	
122	Showkat Ahmad Ganie	9906485490	Yweth Sheep Farmers Producers Company Ltd.
123	Umer Farooq Parray	6005785646	
124	Rashid Yaqoob	9103193429	
125	Nisar Ahmad Naikoo	7006924174	
126	Showkat Ahmad Ganie	7006126077	
127	Mudasir Ahmad Gagroo	7006058625	
128	Mir Saqib Nisar	7006644010	
129	Riyaz ahmad	9622938210	Kashmir Apple Farmers Producer Company Limited
130	Manzoor Ahmad	7006818887	
131	Nisar ahmad bhat	9682114981	
132	Aamir Ahmad Wagay	6005276303	
133	Furkan Qayoom Bhat	9469750781	
134	Shakeel Ahmad Dar	9149849128	
135	Nazir Ahmed	91497830903	The Rajouri Wool Producer (FPO) Co-operative Limited
136	Samundaer Hussain	9797336319	
137	Mohd. Raiz	9596931627	
138	Tanveer Ahmed	9622719575	The Pir Panjal Sheep Breeders Farmer Producer Co-operative Limited, Surankote, Poonch
139	Mohd Rafiq	9596442268	
140	Mukhtar Ahmed	7889789402	