

THE SHEPHERDS OF KOH-I-SULAIMAN IN BALOCHISTAN

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Book Review

It is a universal truth that wherever mountains are the shepherds is also there. But in case of our homeland Balochistan one can easily say that in fact domestication of animals was first time made some ten thousand years old Neolithic archaeological site at Mehargarh at the foothills of Bolan in Balochistan. The area has further distinction that the first shepherd or shepherdess in the human history in the south Asia was also born at the same place. Hence, Shepherded and mountains of Balochistan are more familiar to each other in compare to the other parts of the world. In the nomadic life shepherd is the backbone of the economy of the society, the life circle of the people revolves around him.

Geographically, Balochistan is the extension of famous Iranian plateau having famous barren mountain ranges, and intermountain valleys and plains. Due to importance of this righteous and sacred profession Balochistan can easily be called first land of shepherds or shepherd's land.

The book under discussion is the work which is enlarge version of Dr. Nek Buzdar's doctoral thesis is a comprehensive study of the life style and routine life of the Baloch tribes living in the Koh-i-Sulaiman or Sulaiman mountain

The book entitled Shepherds of Koh-i-Sulaiman is an informative book having first hand information about the Shepherds of Balochistan in general and Shepherds of Koh-i-Suleman in particular. The author himself has remained a part of that nomadic life and still feels himself among those. Hence, he has provided details in depth about the nomadic and tribal life in the area.

The author of this book admits the fact that despite having rich exploited and unexploited natural resources, within Pakistan the people of Balochistan are among the least developed, economically, the least literature and the most deprived of the basic necessities of life. The traditional

economy of the province pursuits of animal raising, dry farming and subsistence fishing still provide a living to the majority of the population.

The book spread over 122 pages contains eight chapters. In the first and introductory chapter the author discusses land and geography of Balochistan in general and glimpses of the life in typical Sulemainian villages, social institutions, resource use incentives and productivity etc. In the second and third chapters of the book the author has narrated the literature review, data collection, theoretical models used, institutional behavioral model, conservation-economic behavioral model and analytical techniques. In the fourth chapter he has analyzed in detail a theoretical analysis of relationship between social institutions and rangeland productivity in the Balochistan in general and Sulaiman Range in particular. In family system he says that marriages generally take place between members of the same tribe and between close kin preferably first cousins and only rarely between the members of the different tribes. In the same chapter he has mentioned the difference between traditional institutions, use rates and productivity and non traditional institutions affecting use and productivity. In the fifth chapter of the book a theoretical analysis of relationships between economic forces and rangeland productivity, with special reference to the interest rates and credit system, taxes and contributions, income levels and interest rates, expenditure on basic necessities of life etc. The sixth and very important chapter of the book is an empirical analysis of relationships between institutions, economic forces and productivity. In this chapter the author has produced in detail stocking rates and its relationship with carrying capacity animal productivity and economic productivity. The seventh chapter is about local survey responses to questions of range productivity. The eighth and last chapter of the book comprises of the conclusion of the study, and the author's recommendations.

In his concluding remarks the author has described that he has tried to answer the following whether the tribal social institutions influenced an individual animal raiser's behaviour towards resource use or stocking rates?
 (ii) Whether the economic forces influenced animal raiser's behaviour towards resource use? (iii) Whether different levels of resources utilization/stocking rates influenced the forage, animal and economic productivity of the rangelands?

In the book references to the original sources of the examples are accurate and exact, especially when it comes to the works published by the foreign authors. The reference books quoted in the bibliography are authentic on the subject but one can ask for a more exact examples referred in the books and journals published in Pakistan.

In his recommendations, about institutions, the author has recommended that new institutions may be developed on the basis of those traditional concepts of cooperation and constraints which have made the system viable for such a long period of time. One main reason behind overstocking and overgrazing is that no employment opportunities other than in animal shepherding business exist in that tribal area of Koh I Sulaiman. The best solution to overcome water shortage in Balochistan in general and Koh I Suleman in particular seems to be construction of small dams to store rain water for drinking and irrigation purposes. He further recommends for cultivation of fast growing and drought resistant varieties of grasses and vegetation. In education sector reforms he says that economic growth and prosperity in the Sulaiman mountain region and in the rest of Balochistan cannot be achieved without radically reforming failed education system in the province. He further suggests that a system of free and compulsory elementary education should be introduced with immediate effect. An incentive system should be introduced in which those poor parents who send their children to the schools should be paid compensations. The teachers in the province should be paid salaries at par with the doctors and engineers.

Hence, this booklet is a socio-economic profile of Koh-i-Suleman, but provides reasonable data about socio economic conditions of the entire Balochistan. The efforts of the author need appreciation not only by the Baloch writers and intellectuals but also by the academic and research circles of the province. The book not only provides first hand information and data about Koh I Sulaiman but also is an authentic reference book on the subject.

Finally I would like to appreciate efforts of the author for his scholarly work which is a very thorough and valuable study of a specific subject on the socio-economic factors of Balochistan. The work presented in the book shows that the author masters both the social life in the province and economic conditions of Balochistan. The data collection and its scholarly analysis make the book a high scholarly publication and a reference book for the future scholars on the subject. The author treats the huge material at his disposal with great accuracy, and this makes the book a high reliable and very readable contribution to social and economical studies on Balochistan.