



"From Pastoralists to Modern Times: Analyzing the Socio-Economic Transformations and Livelihood Diversification among the Dhangar Community in Maharashtra"

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Abstract:

The Dhangar community in Maharashtra, has a long history as traditional pastoralists, known for their expertise in animal husbandry and herding practices. However, in recent times, the community has witnessed significant socio-economic transformations, driven by various internal and external factors. This research paper focus into the complexities of these transformations, exploring the socio-economic condition of the Dhangar community in Maharashtra and the diversification of livelihood strategies in response to changing circumstances.

The study employs a quantitative approach, the quantitative data collection techniques. household surveys were conducted in diverse Dhangar settlements across Satara district of Maharashtra. The research examines key indicators such as income levels, education, access to government schemes, and infrastructural facilities to comprehend the overall socio-economic status of the community.

Findings reveal that the Dhangar community is grappling with several challenges, including land tenure issues, marginalization, and limited access to essential resources and services. As traditional pastoral practices face mounting pressures from modernization and climate change, many Dhangar households have diversified their livelihood activities. This diversification includes engagement in agriculture, non-agricultural occupations, wage labor, and small-scale businesses, aiming to reduce their dependence on traditional pastoralism.

This research paper contributes valuable insights into understanding the transformation of a traditional pastoralist community and their socio-economic condition.

Key Words: - Socio-economic Condition, Traditional pastoralist, Livelihood, Government Schemes.



Introduction:

The Dhangar community, an indigenous group with deep historical roots in Maharashtra, has long been a significant constituent of the region's socio-economic fabric. Their traditional livelihoods, primarily centered around nomadic pastoralism, have undergone noteworthy transformations over the years. This study delves into the intricate dynamics that shape the socio-economic landscape of the Dhangar community, with a primary focus on understanding the evolving livelihood patterns and their diversification in response to changing circumstances.

Historically, the Dhangar community's way of life revolved around nomadic pastoralism, a practice characterized by the rearing of sheep and goats. This occupation provided not only a source of sustenance but also an integral part of their cultural identity (Smith & Johnson, 2020; Agrawal & Sharma, 2021). However, as societal, economic, and environmental factors evolved, this traditional practice has encountered significant shifts. These shifts, ranging from settling down in one place to exploring alternative livelihoods, have given rise to a complex set of socio-economic adaptations (Patel & Desai, 2018; Kumar & Gupta, 2019).

Livelihood diversification, a critical facet of this study, reflects the changing aspirations of the Dhangar community. It is essential to understand the driving forces behind this diversification, including economic opportunities, market dynamics, and shifts in educational attainment (Reddy & Rao, 2017; Mahadev & Chavan, 2019). Moreover, the accessibility and impact of government schemes aimed at supporting marginalized communities, such as the Dhangars, play a pivotal role in shaping their socio-economic trajectory (Rajendra et al., 2018; Kamble & Patil, 2020).

This research paper seeks to shed light on the socio-economic condition of the Dhangar community in Maharashtra and understand the complexities of their livelihood diversification in the face of modern challenges. The transformation from pastoralists to engaging in a range of occupations reflects their resilience and adaptability to changing circumstances. By exploring these shifts in socio-economic dynamics, we aim to contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by the Dhangar community in contemporary Maharashtra.



The choice of the Dhangar community as the focal point of this study is not merely due to their historical significance, but also because their experiences resonate with those of many marginalized and indigenous groups across the country. Understanding the socio-economic realities of the Dhangar community provides critical insights into broader issues of rural development, social justice, and cultural preservation.

The mixed-method approach employed in this research offers a nuanced analysis of the community's socio-economic status. Combining interviews, focus group discussions, and household surveys, we delve deep into the lives of Dhangar families living in diverse settlements across Maharashtra. Through this approach, we aim to capture the multifaceted dimensions of their livelihood strategies, the challenges they encounter, and the factors influencing their decisions.

This research paper is organized into several sections. Following this introduction, the subsequent sections will present a comprehensive review of relevant literature, exploring the historical context of the Dhangar community, their traditional pastoral practices, and the socio-economic transformations they have undergone in recent times. The research methodology section will detail the data collection process, sampling techniques, and analytical tools used in the study.

Subsequently, the findings section has present an in-depth analysis of the socio-economic indicators, including income levels, education, healthcare access, and infrastructural facilities, which collectively reflect the well-being of the Dhangar community. Additionally, the paper will examine the patterns and implications of livelihood diversification among the Dhangars and the role of governmental policies and initiatives in influencing their socio-economic conditions. The concluding section has summarized the key findings, emphasizing the resilience of the Dhangar community and their cultural identity in the face of modern challenges. Furthermore, is propose evidence-based recommendations to foster sustainable development and social inclusion, ensuring the well-being of the Dhangar community while preserving their unique cultural heritage. In essence, this research paper endeavors to contribute to the body of knowledge on the socio-economic realities of the Dhangar community in Maharashtra, offering valuable insights into the wider discourse of rural development, cultural preservation, and inclusive growth in contemporary India.



Objectives:

- To understand the socio-economic status of the Dhangar community of Maharashtra state.
- To comprehensively trace the historical evolution of livelihoods within the Dhangar community in Maharashtra.
- To comprehensively analyze the shift in livelihood patterns within the Dhangar community of Maharashtra.

Research Question:

- What is the socio-economic status of the Dhangar community in Maharashtra state?
- How has the livelihood evolution unfolded historically within the Dhangar community in Maharashtra?
- What are the key shifts in livelihood patterns observed within the Dhangar community in Maharashtra, and how have they been comprehensively analyzed?

Methodology:

Research Methods:

The study has adopted a mixed-methods approach, which refers to the integration of quantitative and qualitative research within a single project. By combining both quantitative and qualitative research methods, the study aims to comprehensively examine the community's situation during drought and its ensuing consequences.

Research Designs:

Due to the unavailability of existing literature on this particular community, an exploratory research design was employed to delve into the livelihood issues of the community in the context of drought. This approach was chosen to facilitate a thorough exploration and understanding of the community's circumstances, making it highly suitable for the study.

Universe:

The scope of this study encompasses the Dhangar community residing in the drought-prone region of Satara district.



Sampling:

The selection of villages was purposive, targeting areas with a significant Dhangar population. From these villages, participants were chosen based on their traditional migratory routes. For the household survey, convenience sampling was used to select study participants, and those willing to participate were also selected using a convenience sampling method.

Tools of Data Collections:

In-depth interviews

The data collection process involved conducting in-depth interviews with two distinct groups of respondents, namely the Dhangar (shepherd) population (both traditional and settled) and the villagers along the migratory route. An interview guide was employed to structure these interviews, addressing various aspects of their livelihoods.

Furthermore, an interview schedule was utilized to gather data pertaining to the socio-economic profile of the respondents and evaluate the state's response to the livelihood challenges faced by the Dhangars.

FGDs:

Data collection from the study participants was conducted through focus group discussions (FGDs) utilizing the FGD guide. This approach facilitated gathering information in a group setting, specifically addressing the drought-associated vulnerabilities of the respondents.

Sources of data

Primary sources

Primary data was collected from the members of the Dhangar Community and key informants from the selected study villages who are knowledgeable about the community's situation.

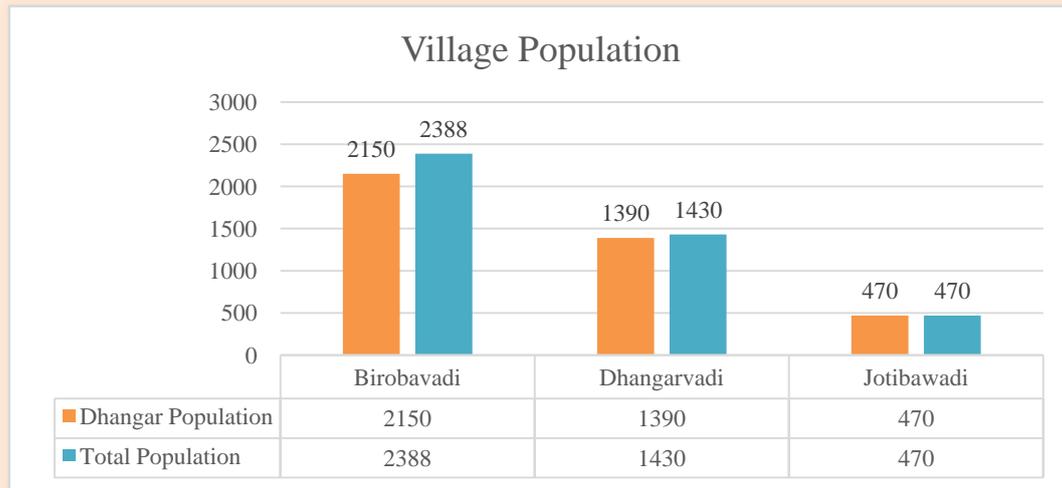
Secondary sources

Secondary data was collected from books, journal articles, newspaper reports, official documents, etc.

Discussion:

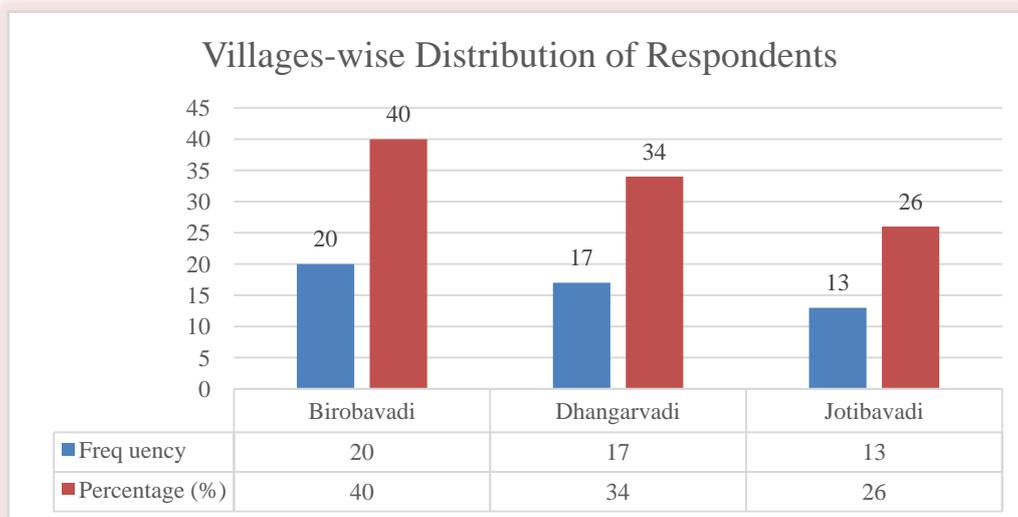
The paper discuss the respondents' socio-economic background, such as age, sex, education, marital status, landholding, occupation, annual income from all the sources, type of house, family type and family assets, and livestock holding.

Village Population:



The above graph shows the population distribution of Dhangars across different villages. It is evident from the data that all the selected villages have a predominant Dhangar population. Among these villages, Jotibavadi stands out with the highest concentration of Dhangars, it has 100% of the total population.

Villages-wise distribution of respondents



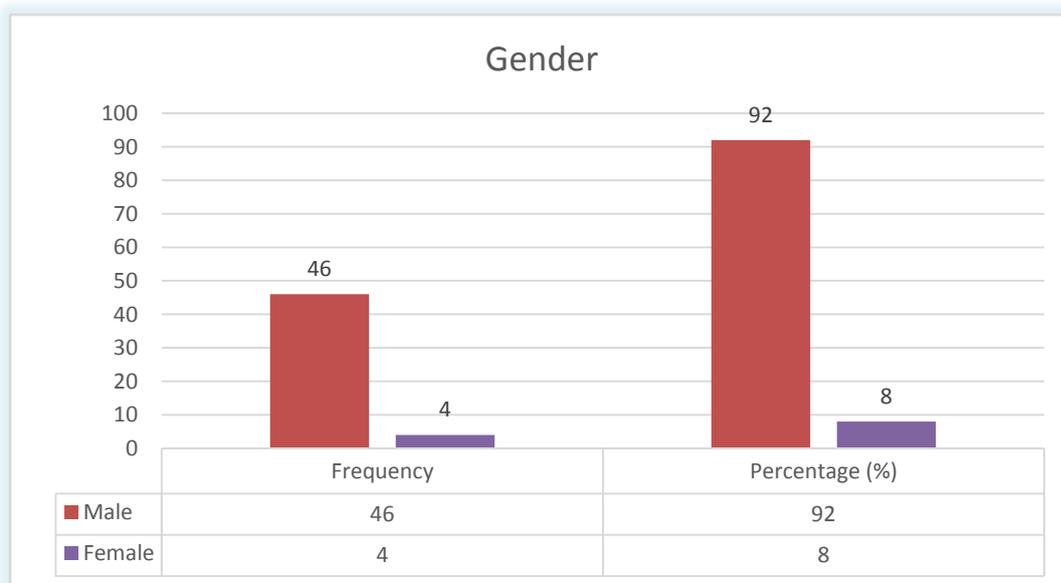


The above graph presents the distribution of respondents across various villages. The data reveals that 40 percent of the respondents participated from Birobavadi village, while 34 percent of respondents were from Dhangarvadi, and 26 percent hailed from Jotibavadi village. It is evident that most of the respondents were drawn from Birobavadi village.

Socio-economic profile of the community

The Dhangars have been a part of our land for a very long time. They used to move around with their sheep, taking care of them. They live in places with lots of hills and mountains and not much rain. They have a tradition of roaming from place to place and mostly living on their own. Because of their way of moving, they face a lot of problems, which make it hard for them to have good jobs and education. Also, because they don't stay in one place all the time, they don't have a strong group that looks after their needs. But now, things are starting to change. Some people in the Dhangar community are choosing to live in one place. This is happening because their ancestors had some land, and now they are growing crops and farming. The whole community seems to be in the middle of a change when we think about how they are growing and getting better.

Sex-wise distribution of respondents



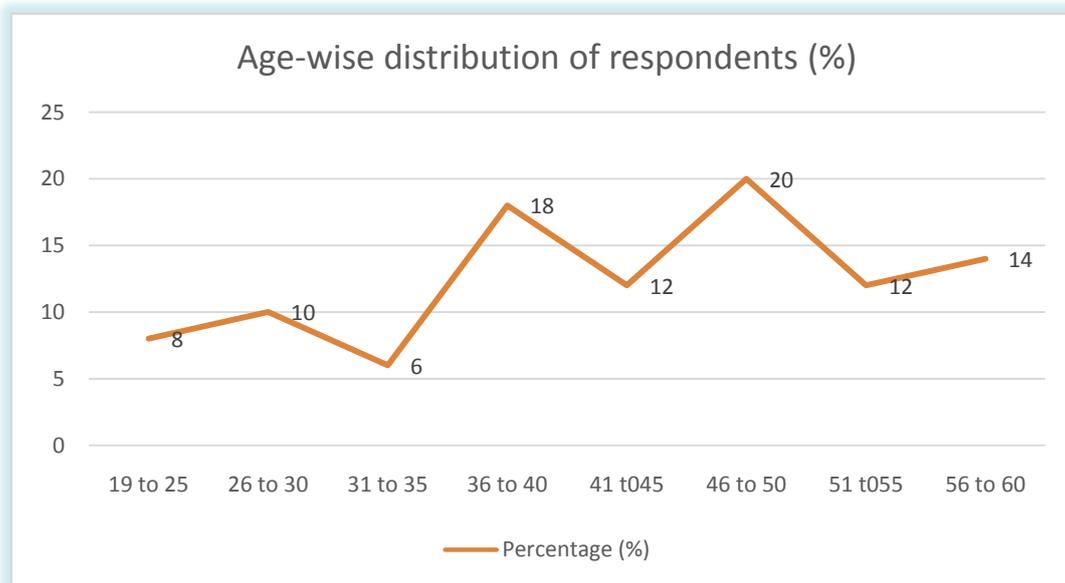
In above graph, we can observe that the majority of the respondents chosen for the study are males, accounting for 92 percent (N=46), while females make up 8 percent (N=4) of the



respondents. This indicates a lower representation of women in the sample. This disparity poses a limitation to the study and also highlights an area for potential future research. This gender imbalance can be attributed to the influence of male-headed families imposing traditional roles and restrictions on women. Consequently, a significant number of women displayed hesitancy when approached for interviews.

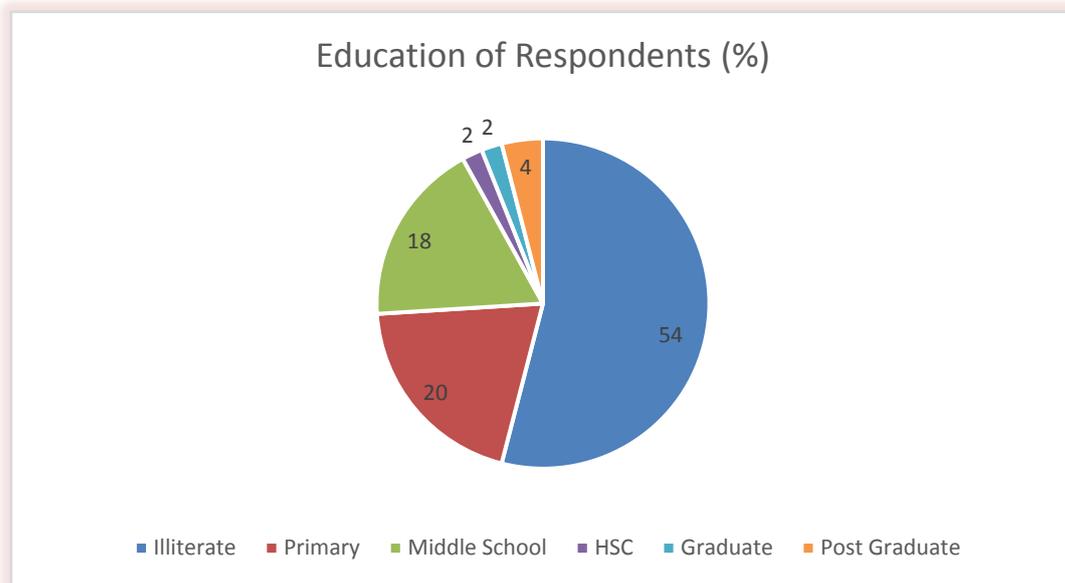
In terms of religion and clan, all the respondents included in the sample are part of the Hindu faith and belong to the Hatkar clan within the Dhangar community.

Age-wise distribution of respondents



As depicted in above graph, within the chosen sample, approximately 20 percent of respondents fall within the age range of 46 to 50 years. Conversely, a smaller proportion, namely 6 percent, belongs to the age group of 31 to 35 years. Additionally, the data presented in the table indicates that the majority of respondents come from the age bracket of 36 to 60 years. This suggests that the younger generation is relatively less engaged in the occupation of sheep rearing, mainly due to their preference for and involvement in alternative economic activities.

Education of respondents



Education plays a pivotal role in shaping the overall progress of any community. However, the Dhangar community's educational attainment is noticeably limited, as evidenced by the information presented in the above graph. It illustrates that a significant majority, constituting 54 percent (N=27) of the respondents, lack formal education. In contrast, 20 percent (N=10) of respondents have completed their primary education, and a mere 4 percent (N=2) have achieved postgraduate education. This data indicates a prominent participation of individuals with limited or no education in the occupation of sheep rearing, in contrast to the more educated segment of the population.

The qualitative insights gathered from in-depth discussions further substantiate this data. Reflecting on the past decade, there has been a positive shift in the community's perspective towards education. Historically, children from the Dhangar community had limited enrollment in schools. However, contemporary changes in their lifestyle, combined with an eagerness to settle down, have led to an increased enrollment of Dhangar children in educational institutions. This transformation is attributed to the community's belief in education as a pathway for both individual and communal advancement. Bhanudas Khupkar, a respondent, aptly conveys this sentiment, stating, "Community members are now interested in providing education to their children; due to drastic change in nomadic lifestyle and eagerness to settle, enrolment of community children into the school has increased." This



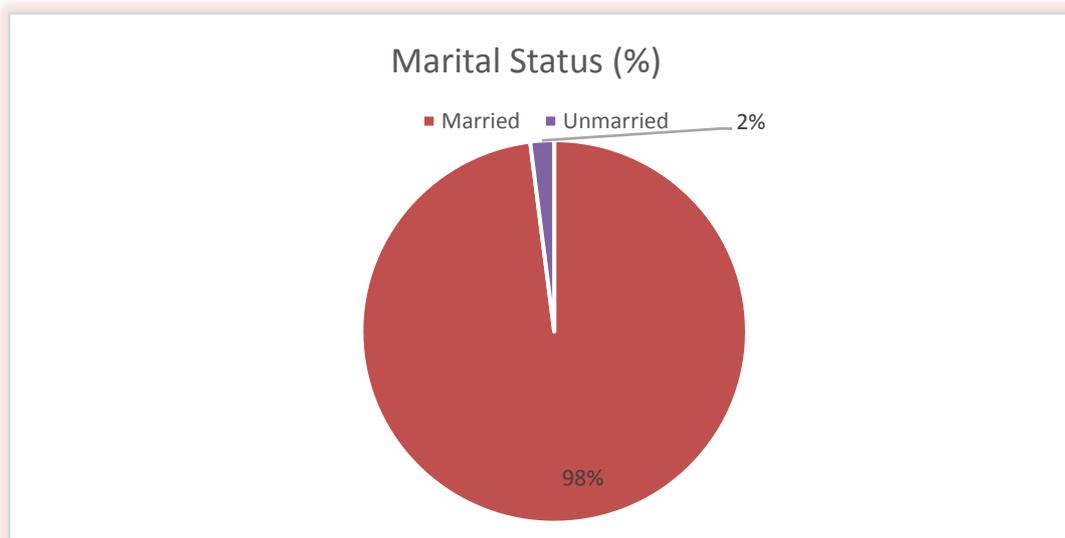
narrative underscores the evolving perspective within the Dhangar community towards education, as well as the shifting factors that influence their educational choices. As the community adapts to changing circumstances, their emphasis on education emerges as a key component in their pursuit of development and improved prospects for future generations.

The scenario of education

Participants shared their experience with the education scenario during the focused group discussion. The following description will help us to understand the scenarios of education:

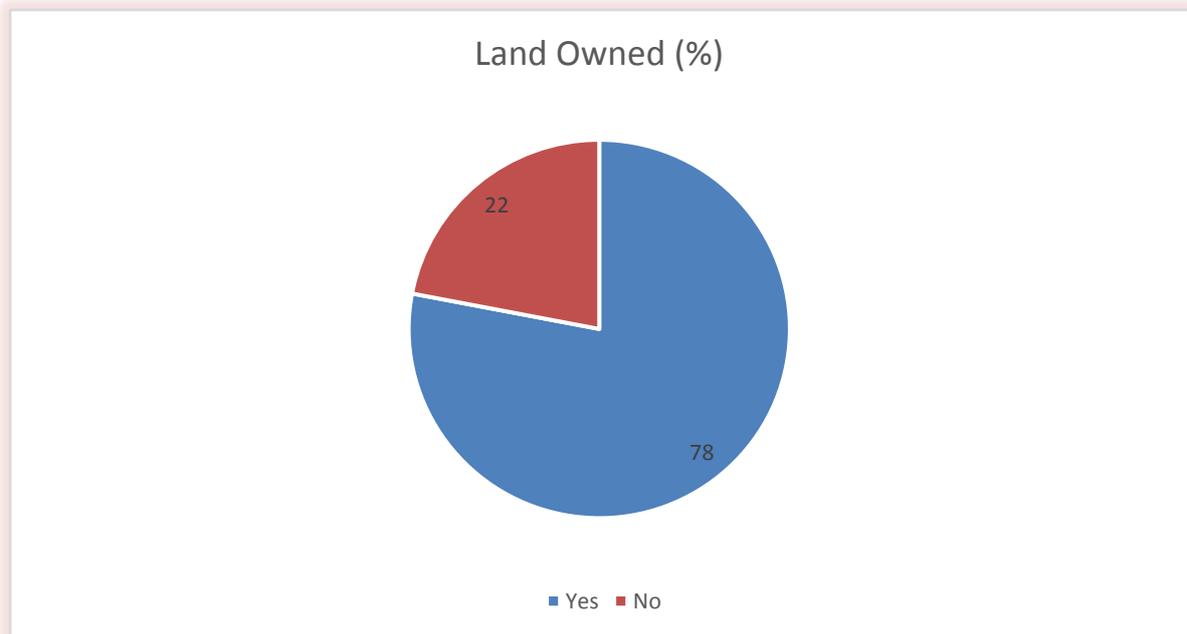
Our ancestors migrated from one place to another place for their livelihood. They migrated with their children. Therefore, children get the proper education. The government announced many educational schemes for children, but this community's children have not taken the scheme's benefits because of their traditional lifestyle. The government announced Right to Education (RTE) schemes to help children take free education up to the 8th standard class. But because of the conventional life of Dhangar, children do not benefit from this scheme. Settled Dhangar children have enrolled in Zilla Parishad school, but parents are unaware of this scheme.

Distribution of respondents according to their marital status



The marital status of the respondents is depicted in the graph above. Among the participants, 98 percent (N=49) are married, while a sole respondent, accounting for 2 percent, is unmarried.

Land owned

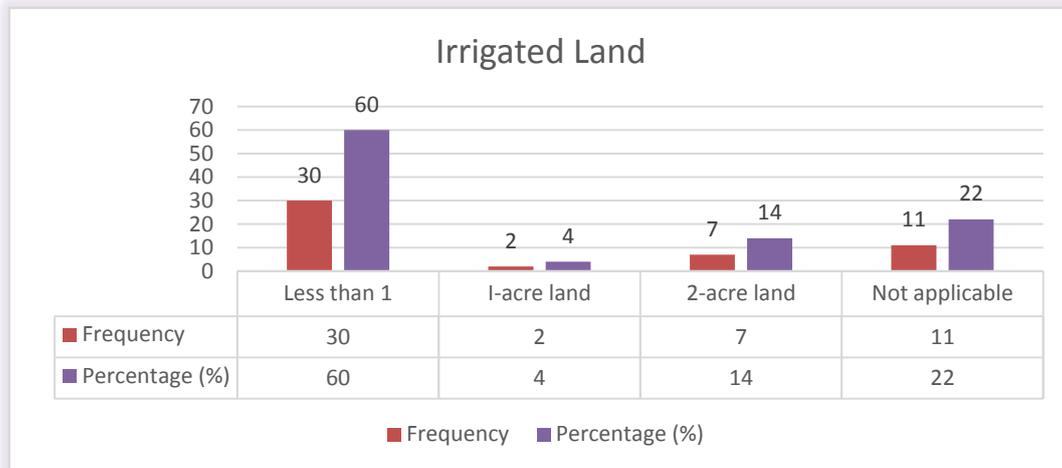


In the villages, the community members have possessed land for generations. This landownership tradition dates back to their forefathers' era. The land itself is characterized by stony terrain, lacking irrigation and largely subjected to arid climatic conditions. Regrettably, the productivity of this land is limited. Complicating matters further, the community lacks a stable water source for irrigation purposes. Notably, a notable portion, approximately 22 percent, of the community members do not own any land.

For a comprehensive understanding of the landholding situation, the subsequent narrative elaborates on the intricacies surrounding this aspect:

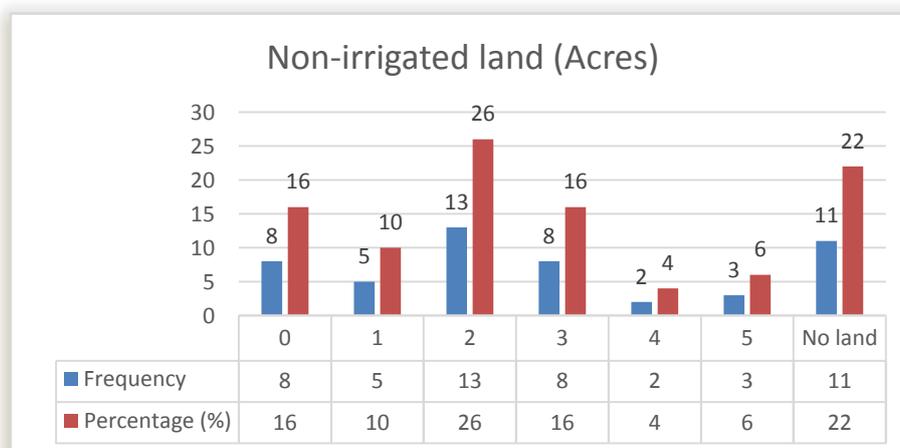
“I left sheep farming and purchased land nearby. But it was an infertile land. I developed that land somehow, but I struggle to get crops due to no rain and continuous drought conditions. So I have to search for wage employment to meet household expenses.”-Shankar Bandgar. Jotibawadi.

Irrigated land in acres



The graph provides insight into the respondents' ownership of irrigated land. This type of landholding holds significant economic importance, as it reflects the extent to which land is made productive through irrigation. As indicated in the above table, the majority, comprising 60 percent (N=30) of the respondents, possess irrigated land. This finding implies that a considerable number of respondents in the study area own land that benefits from irrigation. Nevertheless, it's important to note that despite ownership, most respondents possess a relatively small amount of irrigated land, typically ranging between 1 to 2 acres. This underscores the prevalence of modest-sized irrigated landholdings among the surveyed individuals.

Non-irrigated land in acres





The graph above displays the extent of non-irrigated land owned by the respondents. It's notable that a significant number of respondents are facing challenges in bringing their land under irrigation, leading to its classification as non-irrigated. The size of non-irrigated land varies, ranging from 1 to 5 acres. Specifically, about 26 percent (N=13) of the respondents possess 2 acres of non-irrigated land, while a smaller percentage of 6 percent (N=3) own 5 acres of non-irrigated land. This data underscores the need for substantial efforts to enhance irrigation coverage, aiming to ensure the sustainability of the respondents' livelihoods.

Cropping pattern and main crops

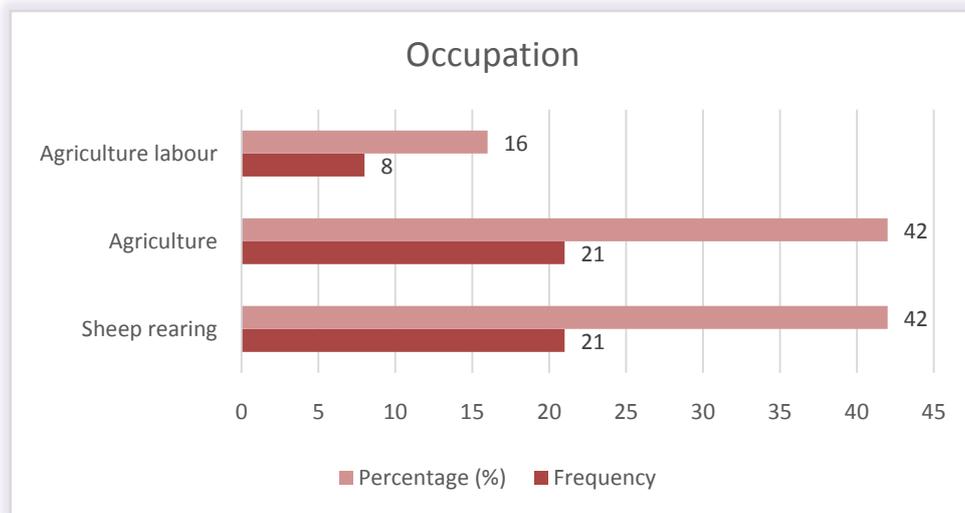
Type of Crops	Crops
Food Crops	<i>Jawar, Holsus Spicatus (Bajra), Wheat</i>
Cash Crops	Onion, Corn, Gram, Green Vegetable
	Fruits: Pomegranate, Crystal Apple

The table presented above provides a clear depiction of the prevalent cropping pattern within the study area. During the focus group discussions (FGDs), participants openly shared their insights regarding their approach to cropping. Given that the region is semi-arid and often experiences prolonged droughts, coupled with varying climatic conditions, the choice of crops is influenced by these factors.

In response to climatic variations and suitability, the community has adopted a strategic approach to sowing crops. This involves the cultivation of land at the onset of rainfall, typically in June or July, referred to as "Rabbi Hangam." When rainfall is favorable, they proceed to sow winter crops, commonly known as "Kharif crops." Consequently, it was observed that a majority of households engage in cultivating staple food crops like Bajra, Jawar, and wheat.

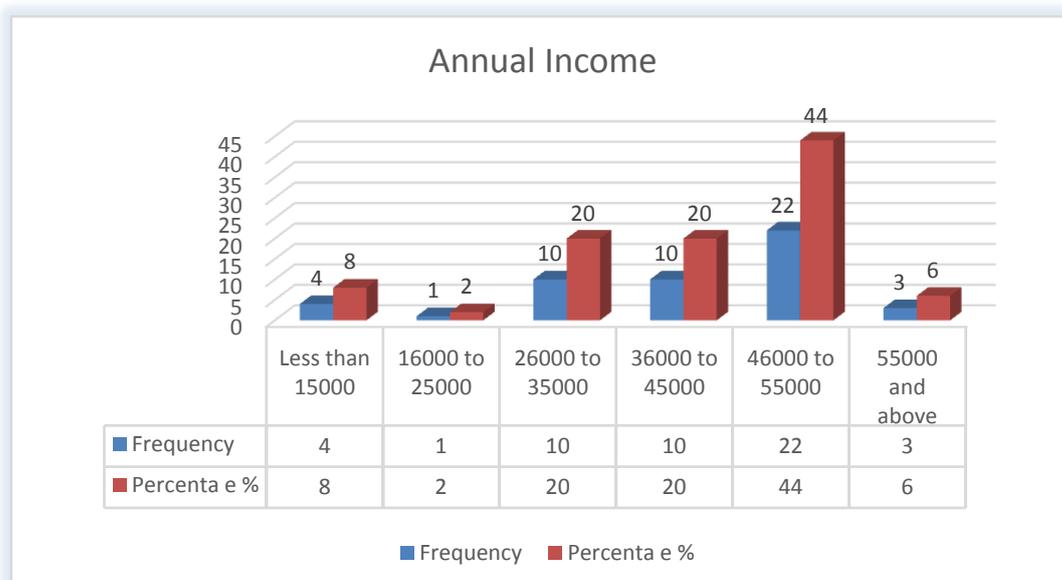
In the domain of cash crops, the community focuses on cultivating crops such as onions, corn, and various green vegetables. Notably, there has been a recent shift in the cultivation landscape, with the introduction of pomegranate and custard apples. This transition has been instrumental in contributing to the economic development of the area and its inhabitants.

Occupation of the respondents



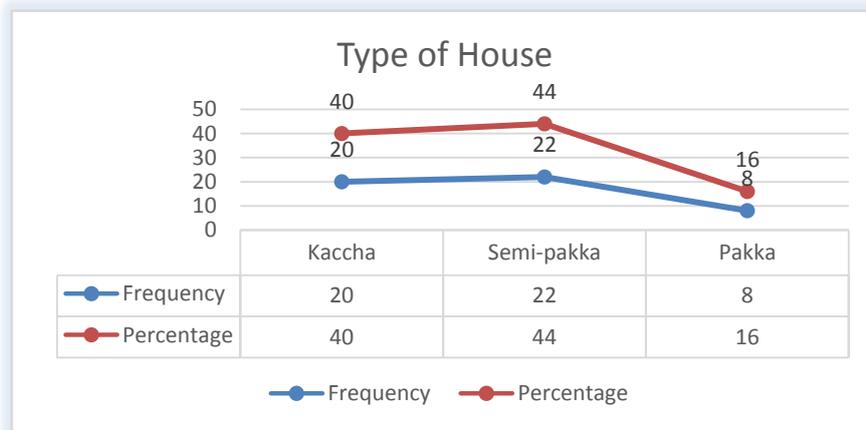
Analyzing the occupation pattern of the respondents holds significant importance. As demonstrated in above graph, the predominant occupations among the respondents include sheep rearing, agriculture, and agricultural labor. Notably, around 42 percent (N=21) of the respondents are engaged in sheep rearing and an equal percentage are involved in agricultural activities. Additionally, a smaller segment of eight respondents, accounting for 16 percent, are employed in agricultural labor.

Annual income of the respondents



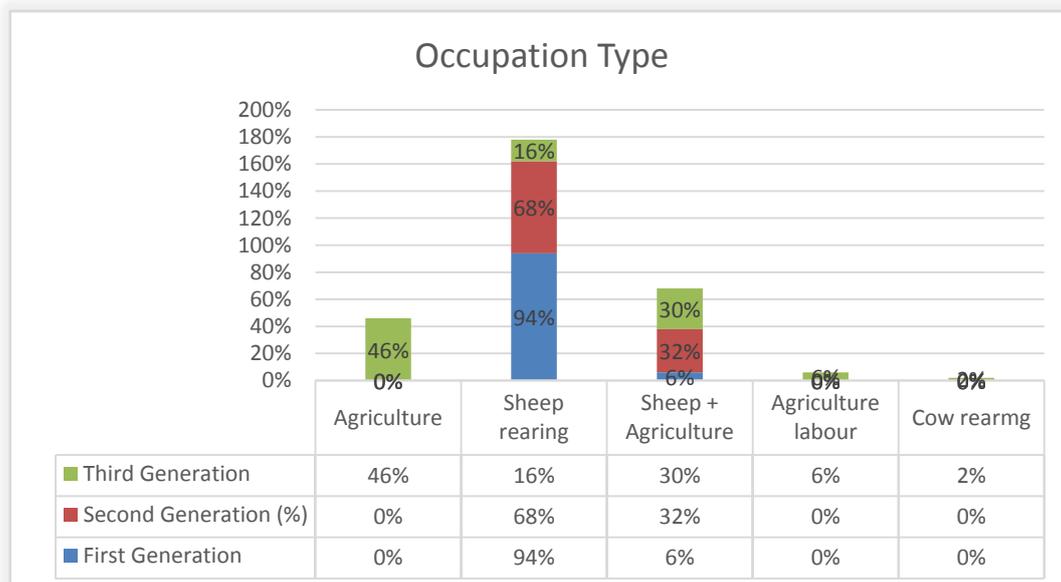
The graph above provides a visual representation of the respondents' annual income from various sources. It's evident that approximately 44 percent (N=22) of the respondents indicated an annual income ranging from Rs. 46000 to 55000. A smaller proportion, just 6 percent (N=3) of respondents, reported an income of Rs. 55000 and higher. Interestingly, four respondents disclosed an income of less than Rs. 15000 per year.

Type of house



As indicated in the graph above, it can be observed that 44 percent (N=22) of the respondents possess semi-pakka houses, while approximately 40 percent (N=20) reside in kaccha houses. In contrast, a smaller fraction, comprising eight respondents (16 percent), have pakka houses.

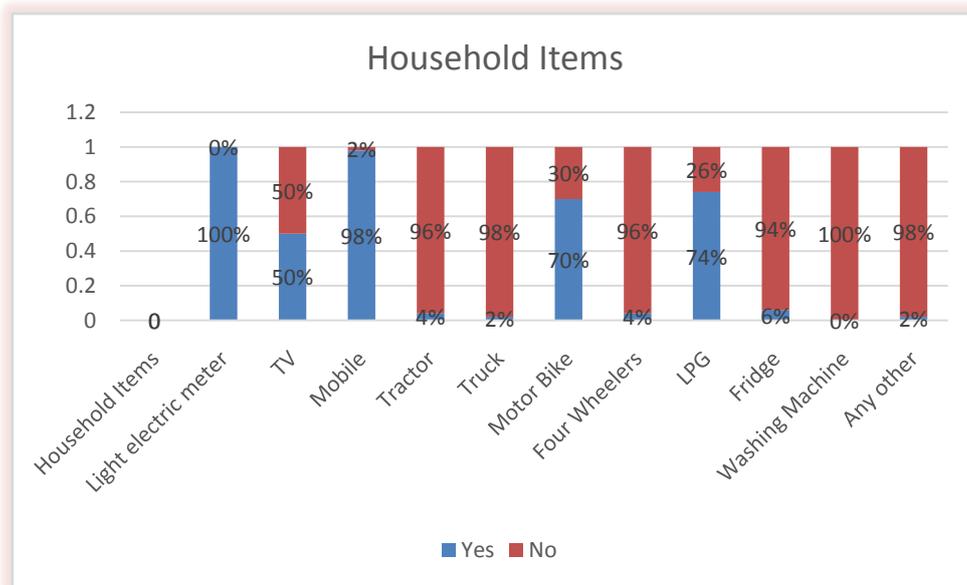
Generation-wise distribution of occupation



The graph illustrates the occupation trends among different generations of the respondents. The primary occupations observed include sheep and cow rearing, agriculture, and agricultural labor. Notably, a significant number of respondents were engaged in sheep rearing during the first generation, but this number gradually diminishes in the second and third generations.

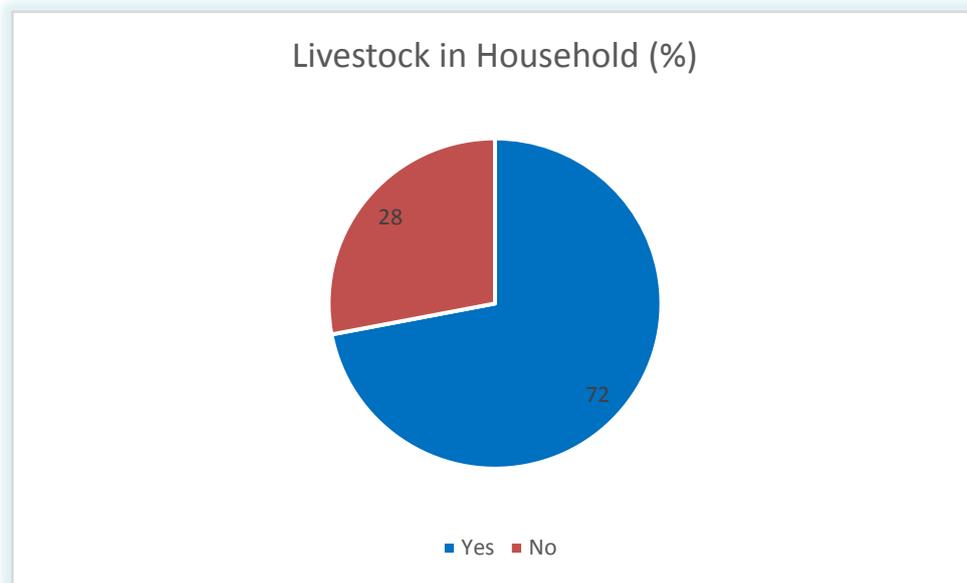
The data presented in the table underscores the transition from a nomadic lifestyle to settled living, resulting in a shift toward agriculture as the predominant occupation among the respondents. However, it's worth mentioning that only 16 percent (N=8) of the respondents continue to be involved in the occupation of sheep rearing.

Household Items Owned



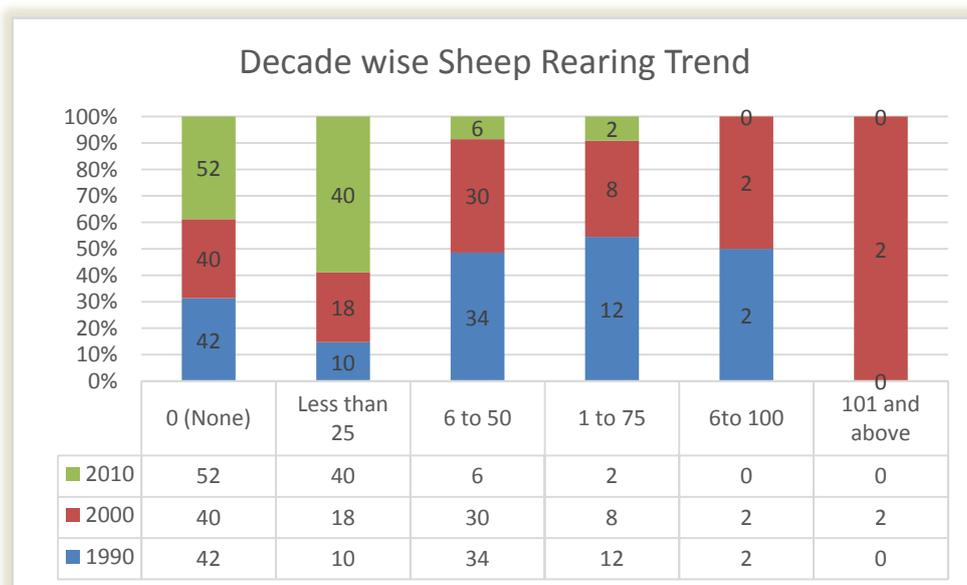
The graph presents a clear picture indicating that the majority of respondents possess essential items like electricity meters, mobile phones, LPG gas connections, and motorbikes. Furthermore, approximately 50 percent (N=25) of the respondents have a television as part of their household possessions.

Livestock in household



The graph above reveals that 72 percent (N=36) of the respondents have livestock in their households, while a smaller proportion of 28 percent (N=14) do not have any livestock. This indicates a shift among some respondents from sheep rearing to alternative occupations like agriculture and labor work.

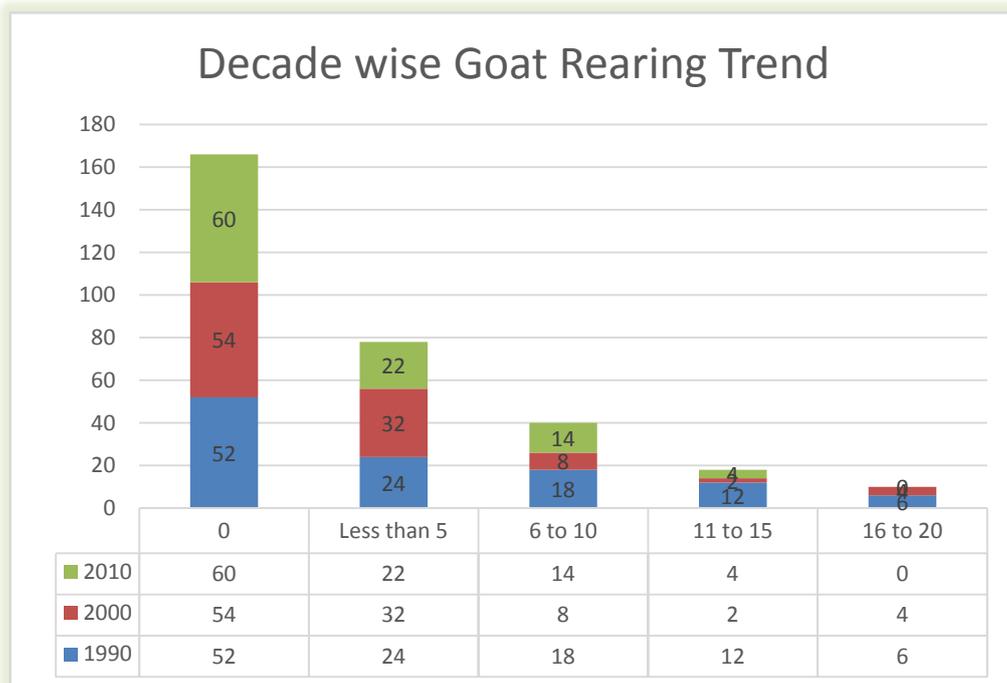
Decade wise sheep rearing trend



The graph above illustrates a noteworthy transformation in the sheep rearing pattern. In the past, respondents used to engage in sheep rearing on a larger scale. However, over time, this trend has shifted, leading to an increase in the proportion of small-scale holders and a decrease in the proportion of larger-scale holders. This shift is evident in the decreasing number of sheep held by the respondents over the decades, as depicted in the table. This change can be attributed to various factors such as droughts and diminishing grazing areas.

In the year 1990, approximately 42 percent (N=21) of the respondents were not involved in sheep rearing, and this percentage increased to 52 percent (N=26) in the year 2020. Similarly, in 1990, around 34 percent (N=17) of the respondents had holdings of 26 to 50 sheep, a proportion that has decreased significantly to 6 percent over time.

Decade wise goat rearing trend



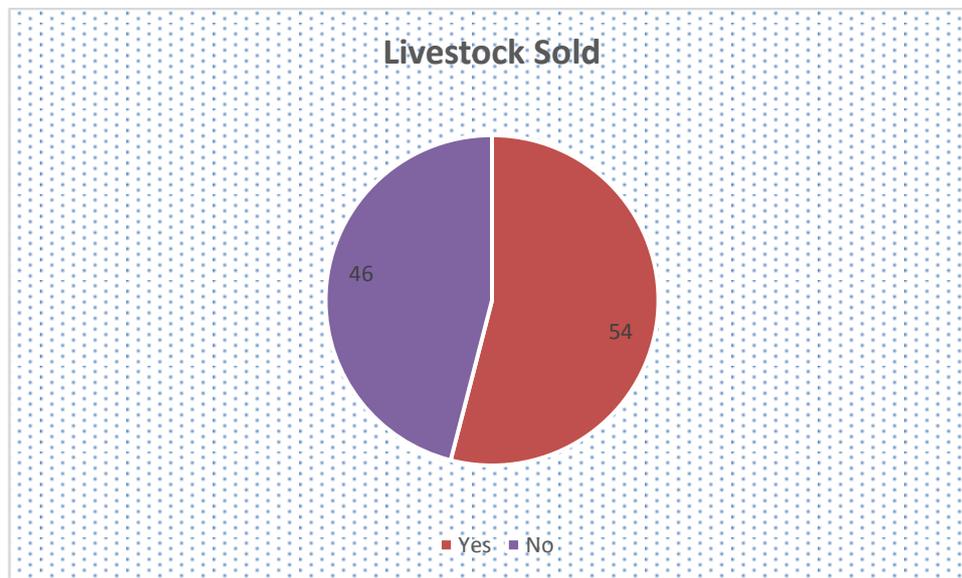
The graph above displays the trend in goat rearing over three decades, indicating a consistent decrease from one decade to the next. For instance, in 1990, there were 24 respondents involved in goat rearing, while this number decreased to 20 in 2010.

Apart from sheep and goats, a shift has been observed in Dhangar households as they settle down. These households have begun to rear hybrid cows, buffaloes, and bullocks. This

diversification into different types of livestock has also contributed to household income. While this contribution might be minor, it does signify a slight shift away from exclusive sheep rearing. This trend is becoming increasingly common.

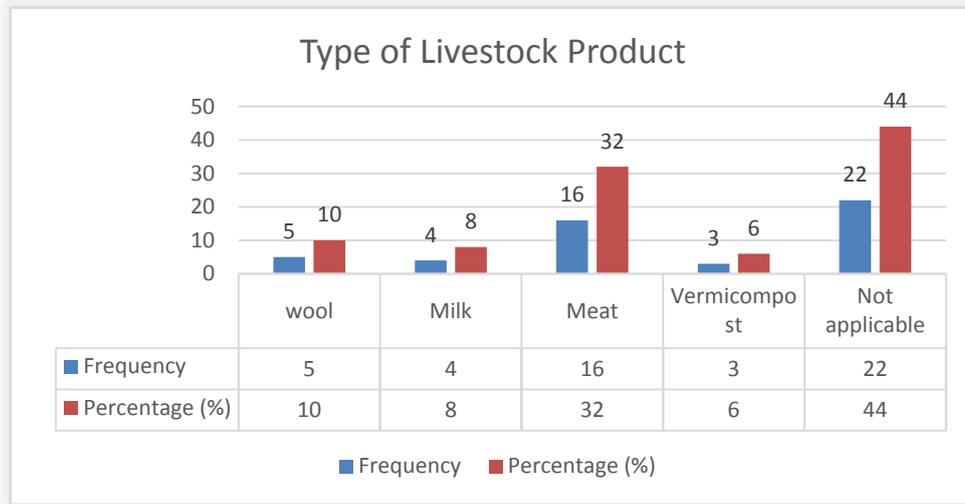
Regarding horse rearing, it's noticeable that the number of households owning horses is declining as these households adopt a more settled lifestyle. Informal discussions have also highlighted that due to longer distances and associated risks, shepherd households are moving away from traditional migration practices. Instead, they are choosing to travel to their destinations by vehicle in order to reduce risks to their lives and resources.

Livestock products sold



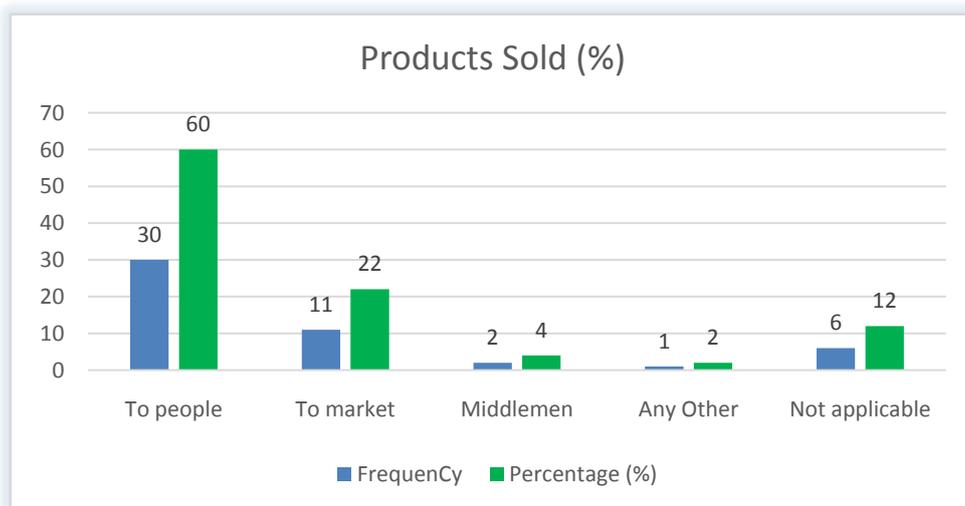
Livestock plays a pivotal role in sustaining the livelihood of the nomadic tribe. Consequently, various products derived from livestock, including wool, milk, meat, and vermin-compost, are sold to support their livelihoods. This practice is evident as a significant proportion of respondents, specifically 54 percent, have engaged in the sale of diverse livestock products. On the flip side, 46 percent (N=23) of respondents have not participated in selling their livestock products.

Type of livestock products



The presented graph indicates that 32 percent (N=16) of respondents have engaged in selling meat as a livestock product. Additionally, 8 percent (N=4) of respondents have sold milk, while 10 percent (N=5) have sold wool. A smaller percentage of 6 percent (N=3) have been involved in selling vermin-compost. The data in the table underscores that, among sheep rearing communities, milk production is notably lower compared to meat production.

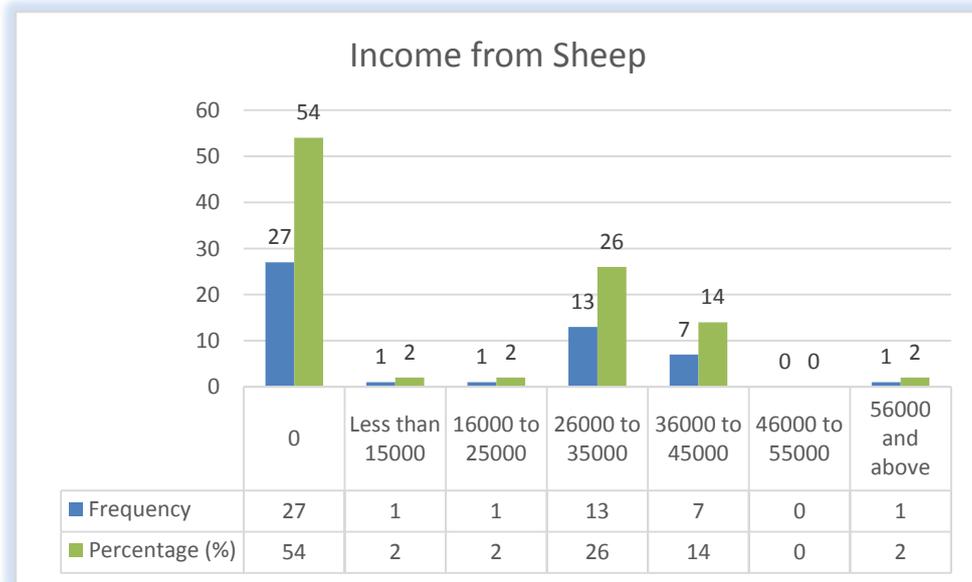
Buyers of Livestock Products sold



The graph above illustrates that a majority of the respondents, specifically 60 percent (N=30), have sold their livestock products directly to individuals. Additionally, 22 percent (N=11) of respondents have chosen to sell their livestock products in markets. In contrast, a mere two

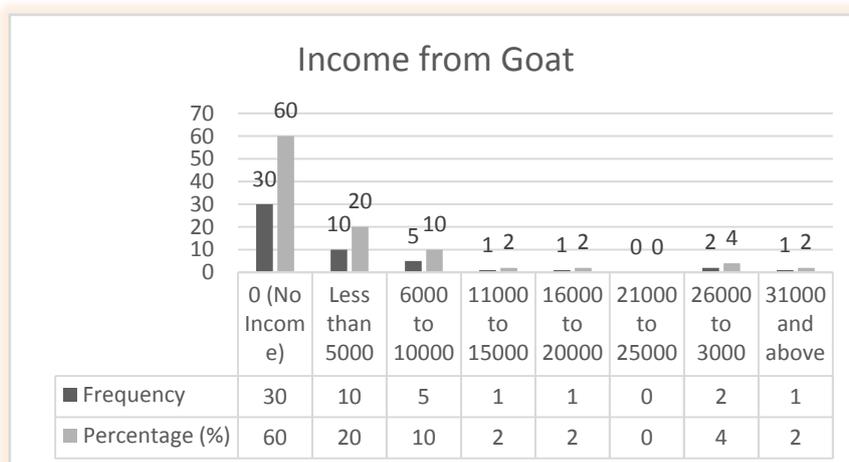
respondents, accounting for 4 percent, have opted to sell their livestock products to middlemen.

Income from Sheep



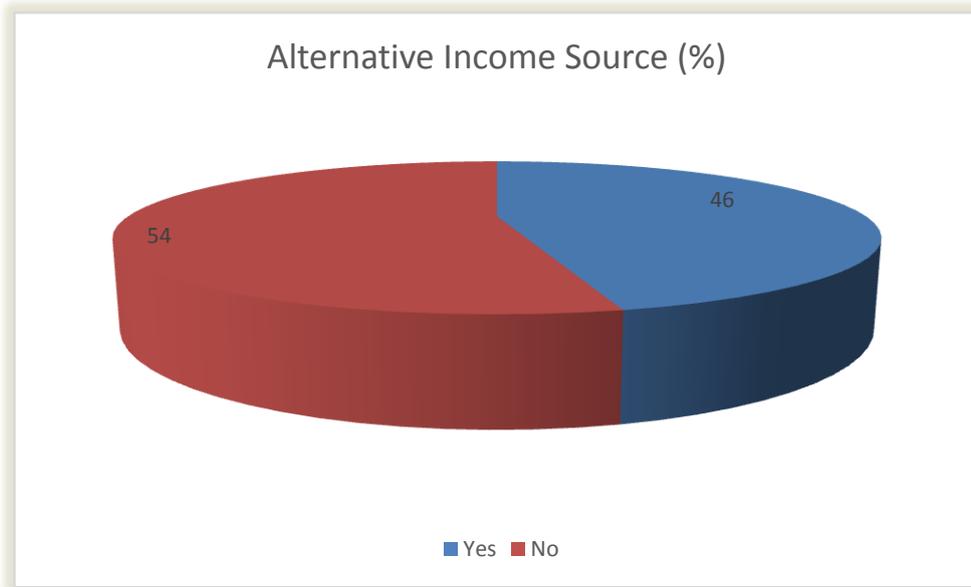
The graph presented above highlights that 54 percent (N=27) of the respondents are unable to generate any income from sheep rearing. In contrast, 26 percent (N=13) of respondents can generate an annual income ranging from Rs. 26000 to Rs. 35000. Furthermore, a smaller group, constituting 14 percent (N=7) of respondents, is capable of generating income between Rs. 36000 and Rs. 45000.

Income from goat



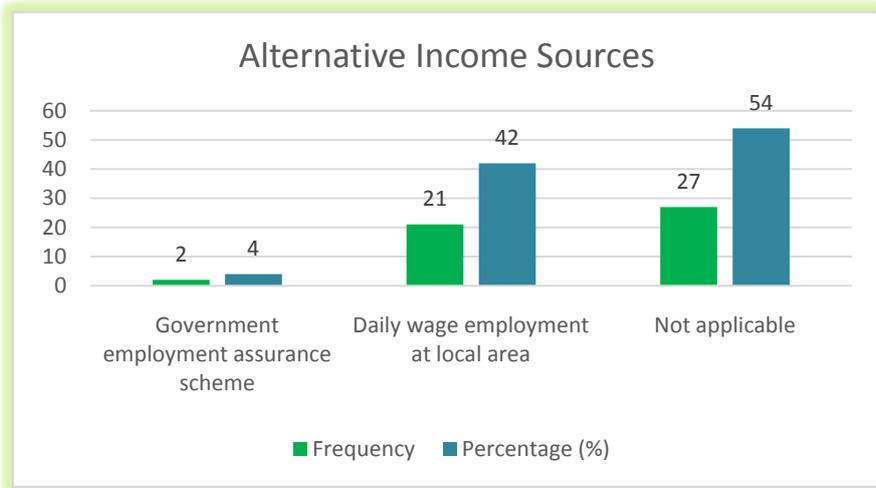
The graph displays that 60 percent (N=30) of the respondents do not generate any income from goat rearing. In contrast, 20 percent (N=10) of respondents are able to generate an income of less than Rs 5000 per annum from goat rearing.

Alternative Income Sources



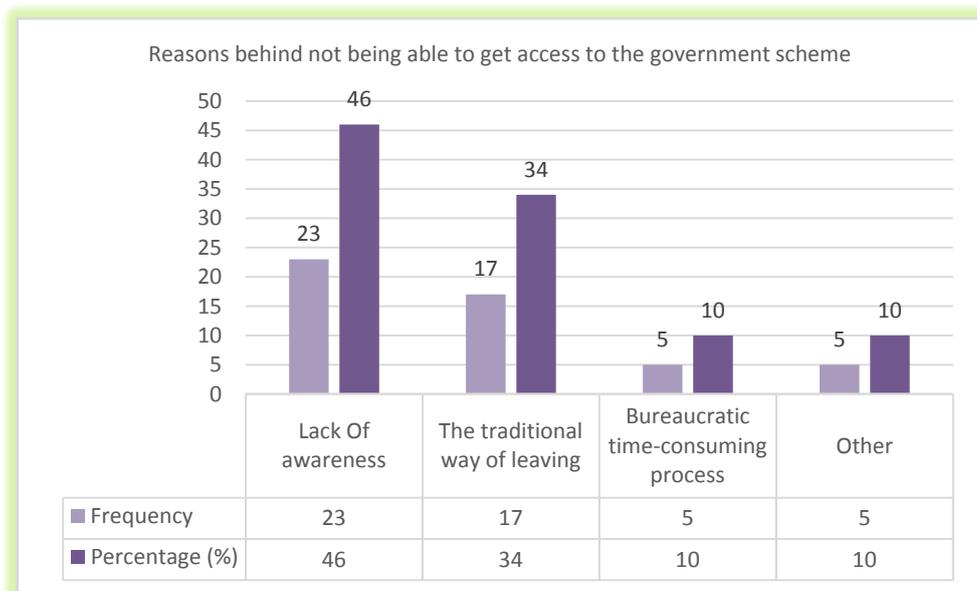
Alternative sources of income are of paramount importance for nomadic communities. This is largely due to their heavy reliance on a single income stream. However, the table above brings to light that nomadic communities also actively seek out alternative sources of income. For instance, 46 percent (N=23) of the respondents have managed to establish an alternative income source, while 54 percent (N=27) currently do not possess an alternative income avenue.

Details of alternative income sources



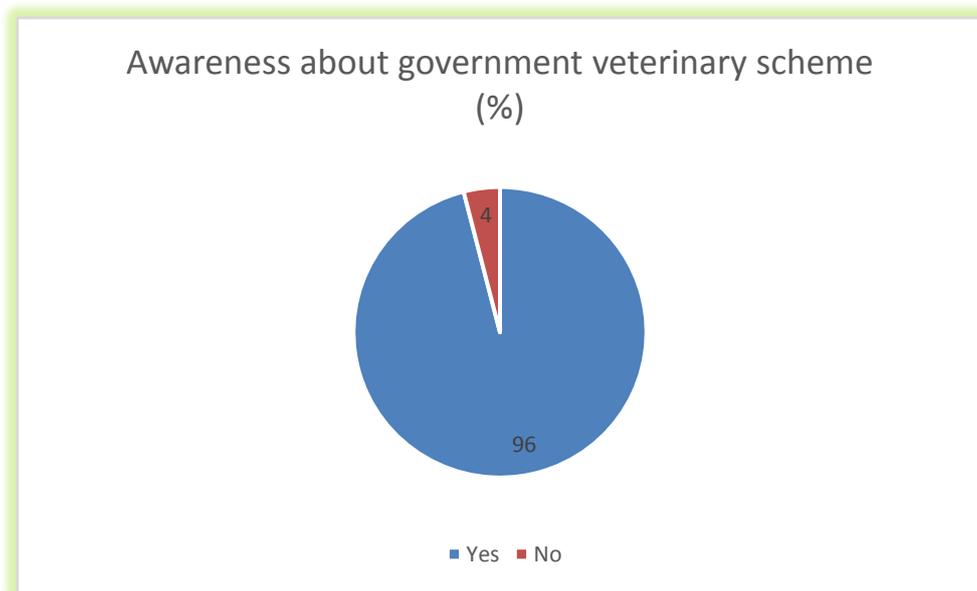
Among the nomadic tribe, a range of alternative income sources exists. Respondents have ventured into diverse avenues such as government employment assurance schemes and local area employment. In terms of government employment assurance schemes, merely 4 percent (N=2) of respondents have adopted this as an alternative income source. Meanwhile, 42 percent (N=21) of respondents have embraced daily wage employment as an alternative means of income. However, it's important to note that a significant portion, namely 54 percent (N=27) of respondents, have yet to explore any form of alternative income source.

Reasons behind not being able to get access to the government scheme



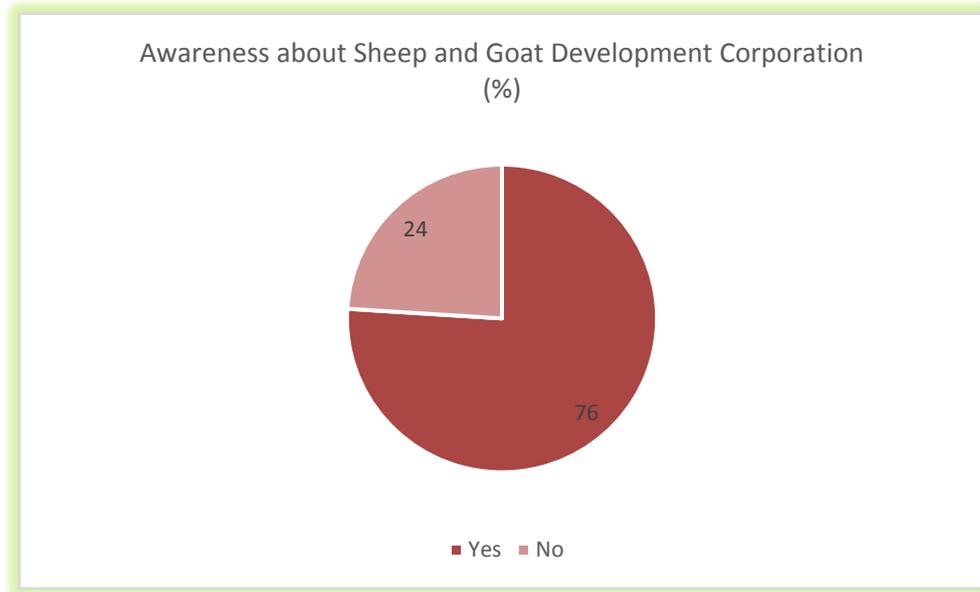
Frequently, the process of accessing government schemes is laden with complexities. Factors like lack of awareness, adherence to traditional lifestyles, and the intricate bureaucratic procedures contribute to the challenges of accessing these schemes. As presented in Table 4.28, it's evident that 46 percent (N=23) of respondents lack awareness about government schemes. Additionally, 34 percent (N=17) of respondents are unable to access government schemes due to their constant movement from one place to another. This emphasizes the barriers posed by the nomadic lifestyle in engaging with such support systems.

Awareness about government veterinary scheme



Nomadic tribe communities predominantly rely on livestock and associated occupations. Hence, understanding government schemes related to veterinary services becomes crucial. The provided table illustrates that a significant 96 percent (N=48) of the respondents are well aware of the government veterinary schemes. Conversely, a mere 4 percent (N=2) remain uninformed about such schemes. This indicates a commendable level of awareness among the community members regarding veterinary-related government initiatives.

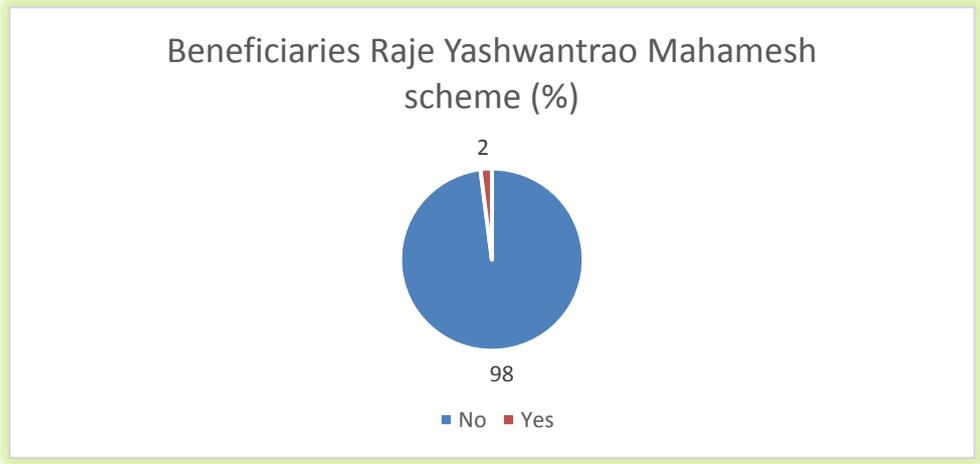
Awareness about Sheep and Goat Development Corporation



The Sheep and Goat Development Corporation was established with the aim of safeguarding, conserving, and supporting the sustenance of livestock. Its role extends to assisting communities in enhancing livestock production through crossbreeding. This corporation is particularly established for the benefit of nomadic communities due to their heavy reliance on livestock.

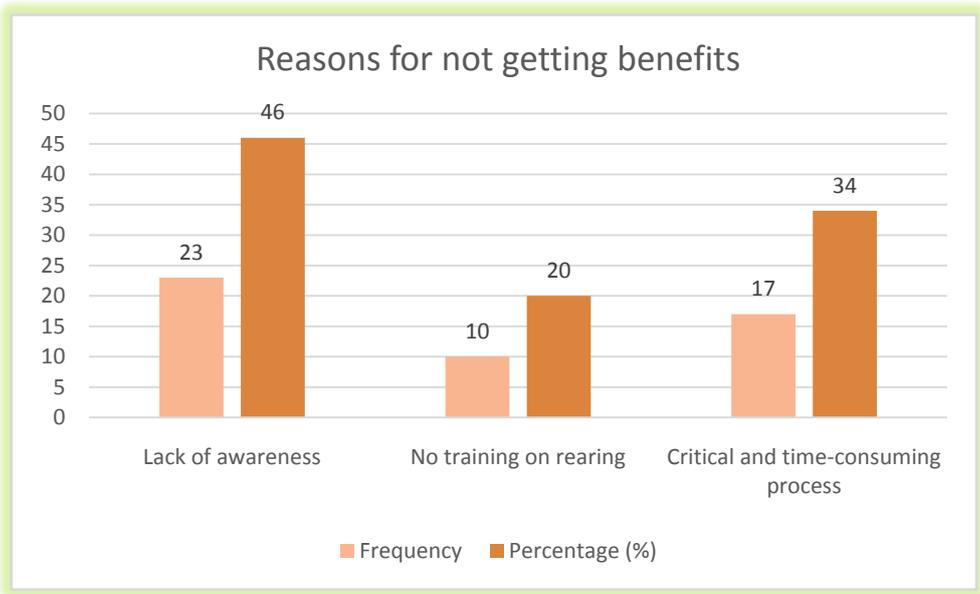
As indicated in the provided table, 76 percent (N=38) of the respondents are aware of the Sheep and Goat Development Corporation. However, it's notable that 24 percent (N=12) of respondents remain unaware of this corporation's existence. This highlights that, despite being designed specifically for nomadic groups, approximately 25 percent of the respondents lack awareness about it. Consequently, there is a need for government-driven awareness campaigns to ensure better utilization of the available resources.

Beneficiaries Raje Yashwantrao Mahamesh scheme



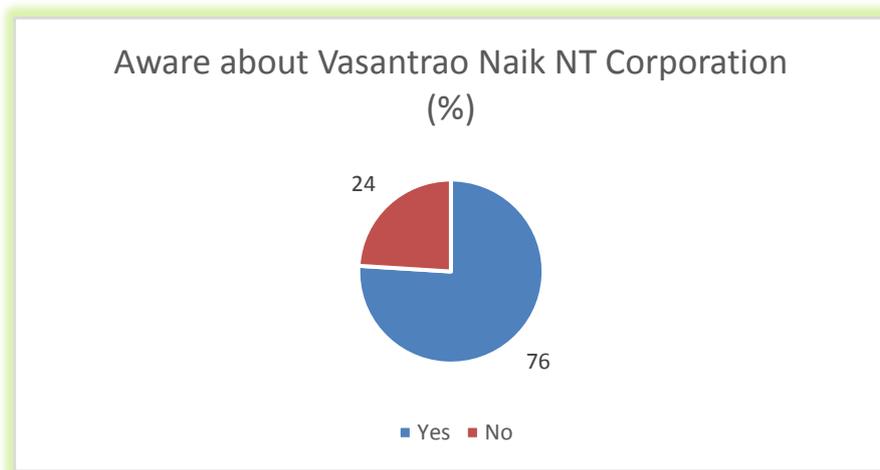
The presented table indicates that a substantial 98 percent (N=49) of respondents are unable to avail material benefits from the Raje Yashwantrao Mahamesh Scheme, while only one respondent has been able to do so. Despite their awareness of the schemes, it remains challenging for nomadic tribes to access government initiatives. The data underscores that only a small number of respondents are able to derive material benefits from the schemes, and none of the respondents have been able to access financial and other advantages offered by the Raje Yashwantrao Mahamesh Scheme and the digital nature of its operations. These factors have led to the exclusion of many pastoralists from benefiting from the scheme.

Reasons for not getting benefits



The graph above underscores the respondents' inability to access and derive benefits from government schemes, particularly those designed for nomadic tribe communities. Several key reasons contribute to this inability, such as lack of awareness, absence of proper training in rearing, and the challenging and time-intensive procedures involved. From the respondent pool, it's evident that 46 percent (N=23) have been unable to access the Raje Yashwantrao Mahamesh scheme due to inadequate awareness about its existence. Meanwhile, 20 percent (N=10) have refrained from benefiting due to their lack of training in livestock rearing. Additionally, 34 percent (N=17) of the respondents have not taken advantage of the schemes due to the intricate and time-consuming nature of the application process.

Aware about Vasantao Naik NT Corporation



The Vasantao Naik Nomadic Tribes Corporation operates with the primary objective of enhancing the welfare of nomadic tribe communities. This corporation serves as the conduit for implementing various schemes and programs targeted at these communities. It's noteworthy that approximately 76 percent (N=38) of the respondents are aware of the Vasantao Naik Nomadic Tribes Corporation, while only 24 percent (N=12) remain unaware of its existence.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the extensive data analysis conducted on the socio-economic conditions of the Dhangar community in Maharashtra sheds light on several critical aspects that define their livelihoods and challenges. The study revealed that the Dhangar community, historically



engaged in nomadic pastoralism, has been undergoing significant transitions. While they once relied primarily on sheep rearing for sustenance, this traditional occupation has seen a decline, with a notable shift towards settled living and diversified livelihoods.

The analysis of various graphs underscores the socio-economic dynamics at play within the community. One of the striking observations is the community's struggle to access and benefit from government schemes designed to support their traditional and alternative livelihoods. Lack of awareness, intricate bureaucratic processes, and the digital nature of scheme operations have been identified as key barriers.

Livelihood diversification has become paramount, with respondents venturing into alternative sources of income, such as agricultural labor and local employment, in response to changing circumstances. The transition from nomadic pastoralism to settled living has brought about changes in occupation and housing patterns. Moreover, the study reveals how the community's socio-economic landscape is intertwined with government initiatives and their effective implementation.

In this context, it is evident that comprehensive awareness campaigns are necessary to bridge the information gap and ensure that the community members can fully benefit from the available schemes. Additionally, while shifts in livelihood patterns are understandable, preserving traditional practices and exploring sustainable ways to integrate them with modern economic activities will be crucial for the community's holistic development. As Maharashtra's Dhangar community continues to navigate these changes, it is imperative that policy interventions are tailored to the specific needs and challenges they face, safeguarding their unique cultural identity while enabling socio-economic progress.

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