


**Research Article**

# Nomadism; Determinants of Nomadic Migrations. A Case Study of District Zhob, Balochistan

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**ABSTRACT**

Nomadism refers to the life pattern in which people roam about for pasture. These nomadic migrants live in different locations who move from one place to another. The study has one main objective of exploring the causal factors behind migration of nomadic settlements. For this main aim of the research, Balochistan province's Zhob division has been carefully chosen as the area of the research. For the conduct of social research, the qualitative method has been employed: 30 respondents have been selected as a sample for the purpose of data collection. The sample includes ten semi-structured interviews and two focused group discussions comprising ten to twelve respondents in each group, were accompanied. For the reason of collecting in-depth data of the entire study, the participant observation technique was adopted. It was revealed by all the qualitative and empirical findings that various nomadic communities live in various parts of Balochistan province. These folks don't have any permanent homes because of their typical lifestyle of roaming which compel them to move to high lands of the province in cold season and spend winter in warmer areas of the province. During the field survey it was reported by the nomads that they follow the typical life pattern that was implemented by their forefathers, the factors behind their roaming are frequently economic and environmental. Moreover, the results of the study revealed that the socio-economic status of nomadic life in Balochistan is very bad that requires proper devotion by government for the sake of their better living standards.

**KEYWORDS:** Nomads, Nomadism, Migrants, Roaming, livestock, Nomadic settlement, Balochistan.

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

The term nomad is derived from a Greek term 'Nomas' that means one wandering about for meadow. These are the people who reside in several locations, travelling from one place to another. The nomadic communities live in shelters and change places for the sake of grass for their livestock and for a place where they need to settle. The nomads are known for having a distinct culture that is presented in their beliefs, traditional arrangements and customs. It's calculated that there are 30 to 40 million nomadic people all around the globe. Many of the past cultures have been nomadic in their nature, but in contemporary world these communities are rare to find in developed countries. The province of Balochistan is densely populated, from all three other provinces undeniably it's the most underprivileged with least established zones. It has uninhabited highlands and deserts which don't have any rivers or any natural belongings that need to be renewed, that suffer from harsh utmost temperature. Currently, the nomadic population of Balochistan are motivated towards the experience other from radical than they have done from inexperience. These types of nomadic populations are also found in other parts of the Middle East. The diverse parts of Balochistan are filled by hundreds of nomads to migrate here (especially near water resources) in summer and move back when the weather gets colder. The nomadic farming and livestock are their main source of livelihood. The source of their transportation/travelling is camel. They don't have any specific area to live in; both plane lands and mountains are utilized by these populations.

Most of the nomads depend on livestock so that it becomes an important part of their lives. Livestock is the commanding part of agriculture that completes the domestic demands of meat, egg and milk. The net foundation of foreign earnings is as well organized by it. Moreover, more than 8 million families who are involved in raising livestock are nomads who are present all over the world. Source of Livestock is central to those communities which are poor that plays an important role in the reduction of poverty and through its socio-economic situations can be uplifted by the nomadic masses of our country. The agriculture value of the country has valued due to livestock at 56.3% even though contributes 11.8% to the national GDP during the year 2014-2015 (G.O.P. 2014-15). The geographical disparity is seen in the production of livestock in Pakistan; the minor ruminants are frequently raised on rangeland where vegetation is naturally delivered as a nutrition. One of the main economic achievements of nomads is livestock rearing on the vast rangeland of Balochistan. The less water for irrigation doesn't allow the progress of arable farming further than a particular edge. People who don't have any permanent agricultural land or belongings are suitable for the nomadic livestock production. The nomadic people don't have such assets therefore they don't stay at any one place and travel all around the province; sometimes even they cross the inter provisional or international limits with Sindh province and Afghanistan respectively. Three or four families are united along with their livestock in huge flocks for travelling.

In Balochistan the small ruminants have energy for excessive improvement in production. Meanwhile the Balochistan economy's ministry, consequently procedures affecting the production of small ruminants are very important. The traditional lines are followed in Balochistan for the uprising of small ruminants. The present study is an attempt to search for socio-economic situations of nomads in the elected districts of Balochistan (Buzdar, et al. 1989). UNESCO initiated a renowned international institution that studies the nomadic population. According to the institution, nomads have been recognized considerable expenditures more than thousands of years. Their living styles have affected their customs that are well matched to their surroundings. These populations have made an undisputable contribution to the usage of lands and sea which have been known as original fashioned and many of the times recognized as distinctive societies. The symbol for an international institute for the study of nomadic population established and progressed during the nomads' trip to Mongolia. It was decided by UNESCO in 1992 as part of the silk road project when an international team recommended an institution. At a general conference during the 27<sup>th</sup> session, confined in 1993, UNESCO recognized authorization. Prof. Jacques Legrand (France) assumed an option study in that he concluded the attention to the distinction, other side, for preserving the exclusive cultural and historical legacy of nomads, and on the other side, contributing actively for the growth of suitable foundations of modernization for the continual improvement of nomadic living standards.

### **1.1 | Research Objective**

The main objective of the research study is to investigate the causal factors of roaming/migration of nomadic people.

### **1.2 | Research Question**

What are the causal factors of migration of nomadic people?

## **2 | LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 | Historical Viewpoint**

The thought of travelling isn't even liked by most people; on the other hand, it's extreme that some people endlessly migrate and possess their own way or pattern of living. Nomadism is an ancient way of living that originates from communal thought. Due to their unsettled form of living, the entire history of nomads can't be achieved fully (Balland D, 1988). Barfield (1993) in his book 'The Nomadic Alternative', contended that his study deals with an empirical and historical examination of numerous nomadic civilizations. The study survey's basic themes, permitting comparison through values/beliefs and historical time periods. These themes comprise: the atmosphere of nomadic populations; comparative social connotation of nomadic inhabitants; political associations between nomads and the external world; the rise and fall of boundless steppe empires; and the forthcomings of the nomads in the current world. The book surveys every cultural range overwhelming certain ethnographic surroundings to advance and sustenance the theoretical substances raised. It makes the most significant division between developments which can be simplified as an outcome of inner evolution, and as well those which are the outcome of adaptations made to the external world. Five individual case studies of dissimilar nomadic groups are provided, including: cattle keeping

in East African nomadism; the camel nomadism of the desert zone of Bedouins; shepherding amongst rustic humanities of Southwest Asia; the horse rider nomads in the Eurasian steppe; and yak breeding in high altitude pastoralism in Tibet.

According to the study of Leshnik (1972), in the history of South Asia nomads have always made-up conspicuously but the role of this community is infrequently assumed thoughtful anthropological consideration. Later a momentary conversation of some common characteristics of nomadism that have certain position for the archaeologists, three complications in the archaeology of India are deliberated. Even though unconnected, every single issue in its way admits a nomadic explanation. The leading is the similar one of the Aryans to whom it is suggested, and it is principally to have used products of native craftsmen and for only this reason their identification has verified so inexpressible. The consequent segment seeks the distinguishing of certain microlith-utilizers whose association by domestic animals is protected, by a nomadic amendment distinguishable in the preceding centuries BC. The concluding section deliberates the distinctive of an authoritative South Indian grave complex. It's exact Iranian excellence in which horse weapon and equipment are prominent, which again look as best explained by reference to the migrations of nomadic populace.

## 2.2 | Socio-Economic Aspects of Nomadism

Sciuva (2025) showed Recent literature has identified digital nomads as an emerging and distinct group of consumers, leading to the development of specialized services, infrastructure, and events designed to cater to their unique needs. This evolving system of support is often referred to as a digital nomad infrastructure. The attention has increasingly shifted toward the role of digital nomads not only as consumers but also as agents contributing to the transformation of local labor markets. In various locations, such as Gran Canaria, stakeholders have actively responded to the presence of digital nomads by introducing a range of tailored strategies. These include amenities aligned with nomadic lifestyles, facilities for remote work, enhanced digital connectivity, and opportunities for social interaction. The relationship between nomads and local populations has given rise to a new form of social identity, sometimes described as 'new locals,' where integration between communities and mobile professionals creates hybrid social environments. A key component of this infrastructure is the rapid expansion of co-working spaces. In recent years, numerous global co-working brands have emerged, including names like We Work, Impact Hub, Regus, Second Home, Spaces, Your Alley, and Urban Station. Some of these brands go further by blending workspaces with accommodation and social areas, creating multifunctional hubs that support both productivity and community engagement. These spaces have become essential for digital nomads, offering more than just work environments—they serve as centers for networking, collaboration, and social connections.

Ullah et al. (2024) indicate in their study that nomadic populations often experience poverty and have a generally low standard of living. This situation is largely linked to limited access to education, absence of family planning, and a lack of technical skills. If both government and non-government organizations invest in providing quality education and vocational training, these communities could see significant improvements in their quality of life and contribute more to national development. Although education is crucial for the social and economic progress of nomadic groups, many—such as the Fulani—remain largely excluded from it. Several challenges hinder their educational participation, including their constant movement, financial constraints, irrelevant curricula, and the reliance on young people for labor. According to a study of Akhtar, et al, (2013) nomads are basically those who belong to roaming nomadic community. Nomadism is a complicated term that is based on a community which regularly shifts here and there, and their mobility is based on temporary centers of operations, the devotion of that is to trust on the supply of food and the access to the technical data for occupational resources and adjusting those in the labor market. It was addressed as the aim of the study that many economic behaviors of the nomads were evaluated. The results showed that the birth rate in nomadic population was very high. The main income source of them was the labor work which is performed by both (male and female). Few of the other respondents revealed that their source of income was raring poultry, sheep and goats.

Casciarri (2009) discussed about the article which deals with the conflict between communal practices distinctive of pastoral Sudanese groups, specifically in accessing and dealing natural resources, and market logic, which became foremost during the association of global capitalism in Sudan. The emphasis of the study is on broader socio-political structures and cultural standards that support communal performance and their contradiction with individualistic philosophy. The central factors of recent transformations are demonstrated first. Secondly, the local

observation of changes, the transmission of ideological effect and the permanence of some institutions as gesturing a 'silent resistance' by pastoral socio-cultural systems to commoditization, are evaluated. The dilemma and inconsistency experienced by the Ahamda (Central Butana) and the Awlad Nuba (Southern Kordofan) in this context of conflicting arrangements is described.

According to the Johnson (1969) mentioned in his book, "The nature of nomadism" discussed various aspects of nomadism such as their environment, livestock farming, agricultural dependency and classification of nomadic collections. Various case studies are complemented on diverse tribes in parts of Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey and North Africa. The measures of migration are investigated and recognized agriculture to play an adjustable trait in migration. A study on 'Small ruminants' production practices in upland ranges of Balochistan' is accompanied by Hyder, et al, (2002) where they concluded that nomads had dependency only on grazing for the feed of their animals. Besides this sedentary were increasing their agricultural land for their animals. Few of the respondents in the study stated that they must pay money for the grazing of their animals.

Another study of Salzman (2002) reveals that an assessment of his study on nomadic population in Iran describes to several common explanations about nomadism. The patterns of migration are greatly determined by certain production or other relevant objectives. Usually, the movement of nomadic population is engaged to upsurge the production of objects in a quantity of various divisions.

### **3 | METHODS**

Methodology is accountable for investigations during field that are considered scientific. This part of the study deals with methodology that is employed for research. It's purely qualitative method of social research, it emphasizes the methods of data collection on nomads of Balochistan.

#### **3.1 | Area of study**

Nomadic populations are found in all fragments of Balochistan province, but the present study is limited to Zhob division of Balochistan province due to time and resource limitations and that point of time mostly nomads migrate to that area. The study was carried out in various districts of Zhob which include Killa Suaifullah and Sherani.

#### **3.2 | Qualitative Research Method**

It is a wide research technique that examines the experiences of people in-depth. In which various methods are applied such as in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), content analysis, life histories, observations and case studies (Hennink *et al.*, 2011). The study 'Nomadism: determinants of nomadic migration, a case study of District Zhob, Balochistsn' could be examined more detailed through qualitative method. Hence, qualitative research methods are employed to uncover the hidden determinants of nomadic migration and problems of nomads in Zhob division.

#### **3.3 | Sampling**

Sample is a representative unit of the entire population. Selecting a population is hard work especially then the entire population isn't known. The number of nomads is unknown in Balochistan and data collection from all nomads is impossible because of time limitations and resources. Therefore, sampling is an important tool that covers a extensive range of population by distributing the population into fragments.

#### **3.4 | Sampling Size**

The sample size is selected according to the characteristics of nomadic people. The 30 respondents were selected as a sample, which includes 10 detailed interviews, two focused group discussions and four key informant interviews. Both male and female respondents were approached for the detailed interviews. For getting comprehensive data therefore qualitative research methods are selected.

### **3.5 | Purposive Sampling**

The respondents meeting the criteria of the research are selected in purposive sampling. The nomads are unknown population, the actual number can't be known fully, therefore because of their temporary settlement purposive sampling is selected.

### **3.6 | Techniques of Data Collection**

The methods of both primary and secondary data are utilized for the collection of data. For settling the purpose of collection of data different research methods are used to collect data through primary and secondary methods.

### **3.7 | Secondary Data**

The usage of already existing information to follow a research activity is called secondary data. The present literature was reviewed for finding out the determinants of nomadic migration. For this purpose, different research journals, articles, books, reports, newspapers and newsletters were concerned.

### **3.8 | Primary Data**

Primary data is process of gathering firsthand data. In this study comprehensive interviews, FGDs and key informant interviews were used to gather primary data.

### **3.9 | Key Informant Interviews**

The people who have detailed information about their population are called key informant interviews in qualitative research. Four key informant interviews were conducted by the nomadic population.

### **3.10 | Detailed Qualitative Interviews**

For getting detailed information, 10 semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather comprehensive data from the respondents. These interviews are more in-depth for getting various aspects of nomadic life patterns.

Focus group discussion is a method or technique of data collection in which few people are making a group and discuss a topic or issue in-depth for sorting out the main problem of the study. Two focus group discussions were conducted comprising ten to twelve members each based on similar traits. Male and female both were selected as to get detailed information.

### **3.11 | Participant Observation**

The active participation of the subject of study is a research technique which is called participant observation. This type of method was utilized to gain a clear picture of the situation or the actual patterns of nomadic population and factors of their migration.

### **3.12 | Data Analysis**

Data analysis is a procedure of assessing data applying logical reasoning to observe apiece part of the data. It is the most significant fragment of qualitative research. Descriptive analysis is an extensively used practice of data analysis in qualitative research which is used to define the basic structures of the data in a study. It offers simple reviews about the sample and the measures. For this study the whole data was examined through descriptive method in which all the open ended/unstructured questions were thoroughly descriptive, and few structured questions were analyzed through tabulation method.

## **4 | Demographic Characteristics of Nomads**

The data on demographic factors is given in the table.

**Table 1**  
*Demographic Characteristics of Respondents*

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)
<b>Gender</b>	Male	18
	Female	12
<b>Age Group</b>	20–30	11
	30–40	10
	40–50	4
	50 and above	5
<b>Education Level</b>	No formal education	21
	Primary	4
	Secondary	3
	Intermediate and above	2
<b>Occupation</b>	Unemployed	18
	Self-employed	5
	Employed	4
	Student	3
<b>Family members</b>	1-5	9
	6-10	9
	11-15	8
	16 and above	4

The above table includes all the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents who were interviewed.

## 5 | RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Nomadism is such a way of living that is only defensible basically as the environmental edition. In the present situations seasonal migration could be possible by changing shepherds and transferring their families. However, the understanding of nomadic system between the family and diversities in marginal situations are unachievable by other sources. Furthermore, the results and the facts of the nomads about their surroundings is vital support for other parts of the economy. This part of the study reveals the major factors of the nomadic population that compel them to roam from one place to another. The main causes of nomadic migration are concerned with economic welfare of these communities and availability of water and pasture to perform an adaptable role in nomadic migration ways.

With water and pasture they find sources of earring as well. During interview one respondent said that the main cause of their migration is due to finding sources of earning for their livelihood of the family. The females find out work at homes of upper class and support their males in economic welfare of their family. With these jobs they get a few thousand per month. The male members find daily wage works; from these tasks they get few hundred rupees per day. The findings are in line with the results of the study done by Beck (1978) where he has found that in nomadism both male and female members cooperate and make efforts for mutually beneficial relationships. Some other respondents further added that in recent times the main aim of everyone's life is the economic part, especially the nomadic populations who roam about and have low standard of living. It is obvious that they migrate here and there for their livelihood resources for the existence of their animals and family members. Some of the other factors of migration were as well noticed during the field survey, such as social factors, political motives, environmental reasons and many more

On the other hand, additional permanent frequent number of respondents had issues of the environment, they migrate here and there due to the changes of weather. Due to weather changes most of the respondents were in Zhob rather than other zones of province such as Sibi, Khuzdar, Lasbella, Naseerabad etc. Few of the respondents in the

interview answered that they don't have any houses built which may protect them from weather changes, therefore they aren't able to tolerate variations of the weather as compared to other societies that are settled. This is the reason that nomadic population roams about to upper lands in summer season and lower lands in winter season.

All the results of the study are related to the findings of Singh, et al, (2012), where they establish that the changes of population are basically related to variances in snow depth and the road density. It was found during the results that the behavior of nomadic people isn't flexible and somehow, they have rigid behavior. It was viewed that people have some social matters due to present militancy, law and order situations etc. because of which these people migrate to different zones of the province. Therefore, Kreutzmann and Schutte (2011) have mentioned that nomadism is such an approach that is given importance for the survival or better living standards of these people that is changing by different socio-cultural, ecological and political doubts and it explains the different aspects of their lives along dangerous routes.

## 6 | CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of the research show that the life of nomads is mostly established in scattered regions which support only the sparse populace, predominantly in arid and semi-arid areas of the province. This traditional form of society permitted flexibility and mobility. These small, dispersed populations have more social interaction with each other. The way of life of nomads exemplifies the values to which the rest of the populace pledges. Nomad's periodical movements could be in numerous cases be proficient by commuting shepherds as well as by moving families, though, the appreciative and commitment nomadism forges between the family and the ranges in marginal circumstances. Moreover, nomads' understanding and knowledge of the land is a significant support for other sections of the economy and for society's general commencement of nature, the relation between the total society and its atmosphere.

Nomadic societies lack the basic life facilities and so, the study suggests that both governmental and non-governmental organizations should be accountable for adequate amenities to recuperate the living pattern of the poor nomads. These facilities can be connected to the form of education, socio-economic conditions, health services and many other environmental challenges. In allowing significances for health, more efforts and resources are necessary for the excess of their awareness and variation in attitudes towards acceptance of present day's health care services. Government can give mobile health services and educational amenities to the nomadic population.

The law of human rights should be accountable for the nomadic communities with rights to get and establish lands, if they have any lands. The same, as these people move all through the year it shouldn't deprive nomads of the right to have land. With the passage of time government allotted lands to the farmers, nomadic people may as well get the same facilities to improve their living standards. Hence, government should announce laws of land and usage of that land for them during variations of seasons. Moreover, the nomadic migratory patterns of life shouldn't become a hinder to have rights to their own areas.

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