



NATIONAL MULTI SECTORAL ASSESSMENT ON KUCHI

MAIN FINDINGS

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1. INTRODUCTION

Kuchi is a term that is generally used to describe the transhumant or nomadic pastoralists of Afghanistan. In fact it is a term that can cause confusion, since it refers to both a lifestyle (migratory), a production mode (livestock dependent), and a cultural identity. The more appropriate term to use for this group of people is 'pastoralists', which refers to the livestock production mode. Pastoralism is a social and economic system based on the raising and herding of livestock.

However in reality, many 'Kuchi' may have settled decades ago, own land or large transportation companies, and still refer to themselves as 'Kuchi'. Also those that have lost their livestock during the years of war or the recent drought and have been forced to settle (temporarily?) still refer to themselves as Kuchi, and have as yet not been able to establish an alternative livelihood.

Primary data on Kuchi is scarce. Experience has demonstrated the constraints encountered when trying to include this group in assessments geared towards settled communities. Census exercises carried out in the past have always struggled with the nomads, and population figures have been estimates at best. Data on Kuchi have been collected during the 2003 NRVA exercise, but in relatively low numbers (83 communities) making aggregation and extrapolation difficult. In this report, data from NMAK and from NRVA will be compared, if possible.

This lack of information has constrained the development of strategies aimed at supporting the Kuchi and as a result the Kuchi have not received equitable access to services and reconstruction efforts. This was recognized by the cabinet in late 2003 and an inter-ministerial commission on Kuchi was established to mitigate this. The inter-ministerial commission on Kuchi was supported by a technical Kuchi Vulnerability Committee, a coordination body established under the Ministry of Frontiers and Tribal Affairs, with stakeholders from all relevant ministries or other organizations. Members of this Committee from the sphere of health, agriculture, education, and others all expressed the urgent need to obtain more information on the Kuchi, to enable them to develop programs and allocate resources in a fair and appropriate manner. This demand led to the important decision that a multi-sectoral assessment shall be implemented as soon as possible; the National Multi-sectoral Assessment on Kuchi (NMAK).

This assessment was conducted in early 2004, just before the onset of spring migration. The lead was taken by the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, in close collaboration with Ministry of Frontiers and Tribal Affairs and the Central Statistics Office.

Objective

The objective of the National Multi-sectoral Assessment on Kuchi was to obtain baseline demographic information on pastoralist communities, and their current access to service related infrastructure, in order to provide the government with the necessary data to support programme design.

It is not the objective of this assessment to be a full census of the Kuchi population of Afghanistan, even though it does aim at providing estimates. It is also not meant to describe and compare vulnerability levels, for which the NRVA a better instrument.

The NMAK data is essentially primary data on Kuchi; on their demographic patterns and their current access to services. Areas of concern can be indicated on the basis of this data, and basic recommendations on issues that require attention. However, full policy recommendations required more than primary data alone, but it is hoped that this document can serve as the basis.

2. METHODOLOGY

Representatives of the Inter-ministerial Commission on Kuchi, and other interested members of the Kuchi Vulnerability Committee were requested to formulate their information needs on Kuchi. Since the specific objective of this assessment was to fill information needs for programming and planning, and not directly for a vulnerability assessment, the members were requested to formulate their questions accordingly.

These information needs were compiled and analyzed by the Assessment Management Team; a team formed from members of the MRRD Pastoralist Support Unit (Ms. Frauke de Weijer, Mr. Amanullah Assil and Mr. Zuhoor Mehri), the MRRD Vulnerability Analysis Unit (Mr. Andrew Pinney and Mr. Tariq Wardak), and staff from the WFP Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM) unit (Mr. Saadat Khan) seconded by WFP to the assessment. Furthermore, direct cooperation was sought with CSO (Mr. Sami Nabi), to benefit from their expertise in assessments.

Since the most pressing information need was an understanding of the demographic patterns of the Kuchi, *'how many are where when?'*, an assessment based upon a sampling framework was not recommended. Instead an assessment was required which covered all Kuchi in the country. For reasons of manageability, the chosen unit of observation was the 'community'.

Definitions

As explained above, the term '**Kuchi**' is likely to cause confusion and a blurring of lines between different types of people. Many 'Kuchi' that settled a long time, if not decades ago, still consider themselves Kuchi. It is as much a lifestyle as it is a cultural identity. To differentiate between these people, and to ensure that nation-wide the same definition is used, the following definition was used in the NMAK:

A Kuchi is either migratory, or has settled recently due to loss of livestock during the last drought.

A '**community**', the basis unit of observation, was defined as 'a group of households' that stay in one area, and have the same winter- and summer grazing area. Therefore, one **dasht** (grazing area) can contain more than one community. Generally, these communities have a clear sense of identity (tribally based) and have a clear leadership structure with a community shura. Interviews were conducted at the 'community-shura' level.

Questionnaire development

The questionnaires were designed by the Assessment Management Team, based upon the information needs and experience gained from previous assessments carried out (including NRVA¹ and REFNAs²).

The questionnaires were circulated for comments among the members of the Inter-ministerial Commission on Kuchi, the Kuchi Vulnerability Committee, and the stakeholders. In addition the questionnaire was discussed extensively with the national Kuchi shura to determine the appropriateness and clarity of the questions.

Themes covered in the questionnaire are demographic patterns, actual and preferred migration patterns, integration with settled people, land and house ownership, livestock ownership, water, education, health, labour and income, mines and intervention priorities. The questionnaires are attached in annex III.

¹ National Risk and Vulnerability Analysis

² Rapid Emergency Food Needs Assessments

Verification measures

The assessment methodology is not a census; it relies on reported figures which have an inherent unreliability. A few measures were put in place to reduce the risk for over- (or under) reporting:

- The surveyors were trained to be critical of number of households reported, and were trained to count the tents and/or houses for verification of household numbers. A column was added in the questionnaire for this purpose, which needed to be filled. When comparing the number of tents/houses with the number of households during analysis, a close relationship was found (mean ratio 0.99).
- Pastoralists, with no exception for the Kuchi, are notorious for under-reporting of livestock figures. To remedy this to some extent, the question about livestock ownership was preceded by a question on which vaccines they would require for their livestock. Vaccines are in short supply, and are often demanded by the Kuchi. It was hoped that this question may make them more realistic in reporting their livestock numbers.

Data collection and management

Teams were formed consisting of 4 members; one of MRRD, one of MFTA, one of CSO or another member ministry (MoPH, MoE, MAAH, Min. of Mines, MoI) and one hired surveyor. The hired surveyors were experienced interviewers, who were taken from the pool of the most competent NRVA surveyors. In few cases, the national kuchi shura representatives joined the teams.

In February 2004, the teams were sent out to 30 provinces, all except Ghor and Bamyán where no Kuchi stay during the winter. A timeframe of 4 to 6 weeks was allowed for field data collection.

The initial step, at provincial level, was to determine the areas where Kuchi stay. By means of the provincial Kuchi shura these areas were determined and subsequently visited. Often one of the provincial kuchi shura representatives would accompany the team.

Data was collected, screened upon arrival, and entered into a database in Kabul.

Data analysis and dissemination.

Due to unforeseen complication in the database development and available analytical expertise, the analysis of the data was delayed for a considerable time.

In the assessment, which was conducted early 2004; the old system of 32 coding provinces and districts based on 32 provinces was used³.

This report aims at providing a compilation of the information collected, with a general analysis. Where possible, comparisons with NRVA have been made, but caution is required when comparing assessments with different sampling mechanisms.

On the MRRD – VAU website a map has been placed, where basis information on demographic indicators, migration patterns, and use of water sources of all the assessed communities can be accessed directly.

Validity of the data

³ The only exceptions are the districts of Azra and Kahmard which in the old system belong to respectively Paktya and Baghlan, but for the purpose of this assessment have been placed in respective provinces of Logar and Bamyán to which they now belong.

Population figures provided in this report are estimates, and shall be treated as such. There are different reasons for caution:

- Communities may have been missed out, due to inaccessibility, time or motivational constraints of the team to work in difficult areas, bias by the Kuchi leaders, etc.
- In spite of good training of the surveyors and the verification measures put in place, the figures area still are reported figures and are therefore liable to under- or over-reporting.
- Population figures are calculated through multiplying the number of households, which can to some extent be verified, with the average household size which is not verifiable. Small differences in household size can have large implications for population figures.
- Nomadic population are by definition fluid, and individuals, households or communities may change their otherwise predictable pattern for opportunistic reasons. Data collected in one season may change during the next season. However, in general, migration patterns are predictable and community ties are strong which lead to a certain coherence in the community.
- Subjectivity of the questions related to 'preferred summer area'. Kuchi that have settled may still mention their former summer area as their 'preferred summer area', because they would prefer to (still have livestock and) migrate. Others may not. Others may have suffered from disrupted migration patterns over the course of time and may have changed from long-range migratory, via short-range migratory to recently settled. Which area will they call their preferred summer area?

3. KUCHI CATEGORIES

Depending on their actual migration patterns, Kuchi can be divided over three categories; long range migratory, short range migratory, and settled. Long range migratory Kuchi migrate between provinces, short range Kuchi migrate within the province, and settled Kuchi do not migrate at all. According to the definition used in the assessment, all those Kuchi that have settled during the last drought, are still considered Kuchi. Those that settled longer ago are not considered Kuchi in the context of this assessment, even though they may perceive themselves as Kuchi and may still be represented by 'Kuchi leaders'.

Kuchi that are now settled could have been long-range migratory Kuchi before, or they could have migrated within the province. Equally, those that are currently short-range migratory, may once have been long range migratory Kuchi that lost access to their summer grazing areas. Sub-categories have been formed, to differentiate between those determining factors:

Category	Sub-category
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long range 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long range, fully migratory Long range, partially migratory Long range, disrupted migration pattern
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short range 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short range, fully migratory Short range, partially migratory Short range, disrupted migration pattern Formerly long range, now short range, fully migrating Formerly long range, now short range partially migrating
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Settled 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formerly long range, now settled in winter area Formerly short range, now settled Formerly long range, now settled in summer area

Table 1 Categories of Kuchi

A disrupted migration patterns refers to a situation in which the preferred summer area is not the actual summer area. Chapter 5 provides more background information on the potential reasons behind this disruption.

Partial migration of a community means that a proportion of the community remains behind, while the others migrate to the summer area. This split can even take place within the household; one brother stays and the other goes.

Data has been analyzed on the basis of these categories or sub-categories; where interesting differences appear between the (sub-) categories these are reported.

4. DEMOGRAPHIC PATTERNS

The Kuchi of Afghanistan, according to the definition used in this survey, number 2.426.304 individuals or 239.859 households.

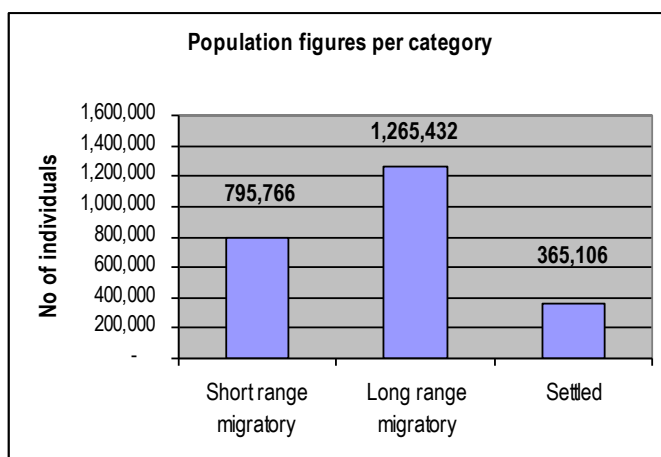


Figure 1 Populations figure per category

The long-range migratory Kuchi are predominant (52%), followed by the short-range migratory Kuchi (33%) and lastly the settled Kuchi (15%).

The total number of Kuchi in settled Kuchi communities is 365.106 individuals.

Even in migratory communities, not all households necessarily migrate to the summer areas. In partially migratory communities, some households remain behind and this proportion can vary between 1 and 99%. Detailed information on the level of partial migration is provided in the provinces overviews in

annex IV. The total number of non-migrating Kuchi is 967.210 (this number includes settled Kuchi in entirely settled communities and the non-migratory Kuchi in partially migratory communities).

The table below shows the overview of Kuchi population figures:

Total no. of HHs	Total population	No. of HHs not migrating	Population not migrating	Active migrating population	% actively migrating
239.859	2.426.304	93.859	967.210	1.459.103	60.1%

Table 2 Overview of Kuchi population figures

An additional 16.056 households were reported as having crossed the border, at the time of the assessment. These were mostly from Nangarhar (7.858 HHs), Khost (6.998), Paktika (661) and Paktya (350). Some caution is required when interpreting these figures, because 1) they were not verified in any way, and 2) entire communities may have been missed out, if they did not have relatives or the tribal liaisons who would have reported these.

Including those that crossed the borders in winter, the total Kuchi population would be 2.588.719 individuals.

The map below shows the distribution of the non-migratory Kuchi:

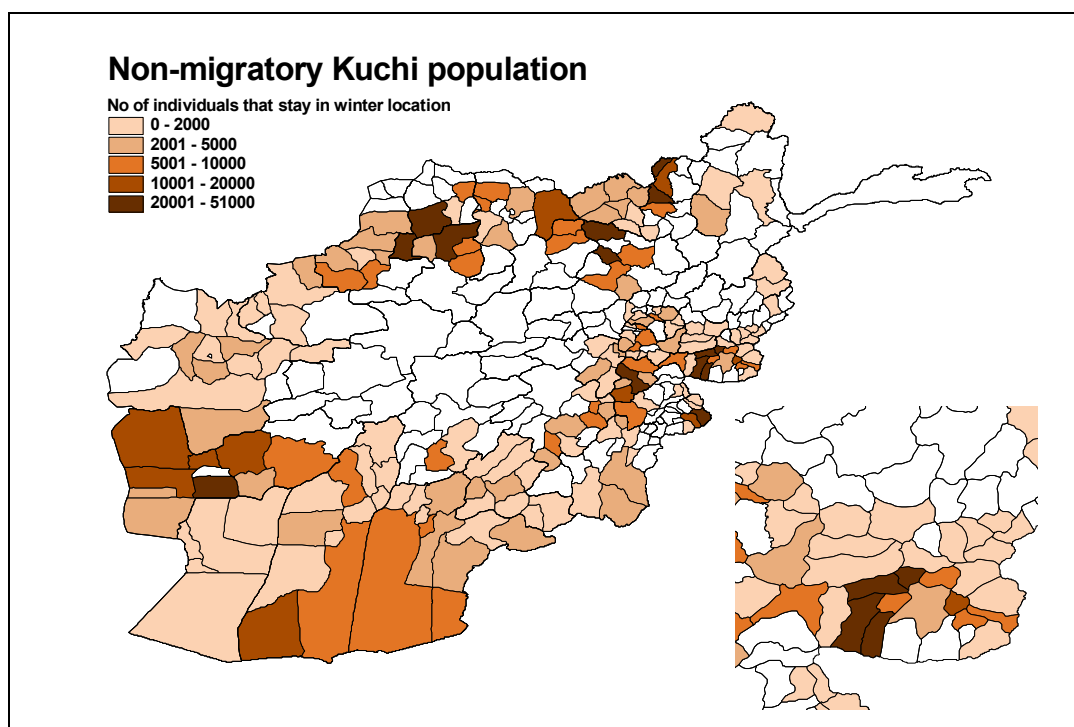


Figure 2 Distribution of non-migratory Kuchi

Kuchi that no longer migrate tend to settle in their winter area, with a few number of exceptions in Ghazni and Paktya where they settled in their summer area. This is probably related to the fact that they own some land in their summer area.

Main reason for not migrating	relative importance
Loss of livestock	79%
Availability of other income in winter area	9%
Security	6%
Became settled	4%
Attitude of resident people in the summer grazing area	2%
Other	0%

Table 3 Relative importance of reasons for non-migration

The main reason for not migrating is the loss of their livestock for the majority of the Kuchi. The second reason 'availability of other income in the area' signals a more conscious reason to settle, and this likely to be the richer group.

Region	Loss of livestock	Security	Became settled	Attitude of resident people	Availability of other income in winter area	Other
Central	82%	0.5%	3.7%	2.3%	11%	0.5%
East	71%	0.9%	10%		18%	
North	71%	20%	1.4%	5.6%	1.8%	
South	91%				9.1%	

West	88%		3.7%	1.2%	7.4%	
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Table 4 Relative importance of reasons for non-migration per region

When broken down per region⁴, it transpires that in the north the 'security' issue is relatively more important, in the east the 'availability of other income' is more important, and in the south the 'loss of livestock' is the most important reason. When comparing the main reasons over the Kuchi categories, the obvious result is that 'loss of livestock' is the more important reason for the (partially) migratory communities (short-range 92% and long-range 86%), and less important for the settled Kuchi (54.2%). For the settled Kuchi 'the availability of other income' and 'security' is relatively more important (both 18%) than for the migratory communities, but still less important than the 'loss of livestock'.

Due to the migratory patterns of migratory Kuchi, the population figures change per season. The maps below show the population figures per district in the winter and in the summer. Province specific information can be found in annex V, table A.

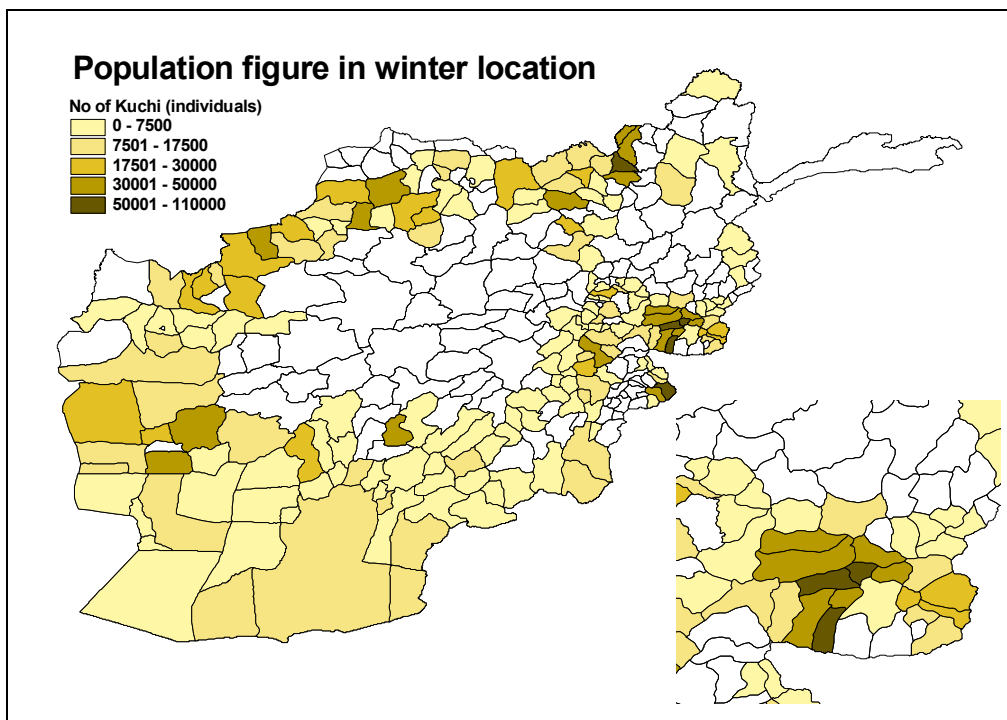


Figure 3 Population distribution in the winter

⁴ Refer to annex V for the distribution of the provinces over the regions.

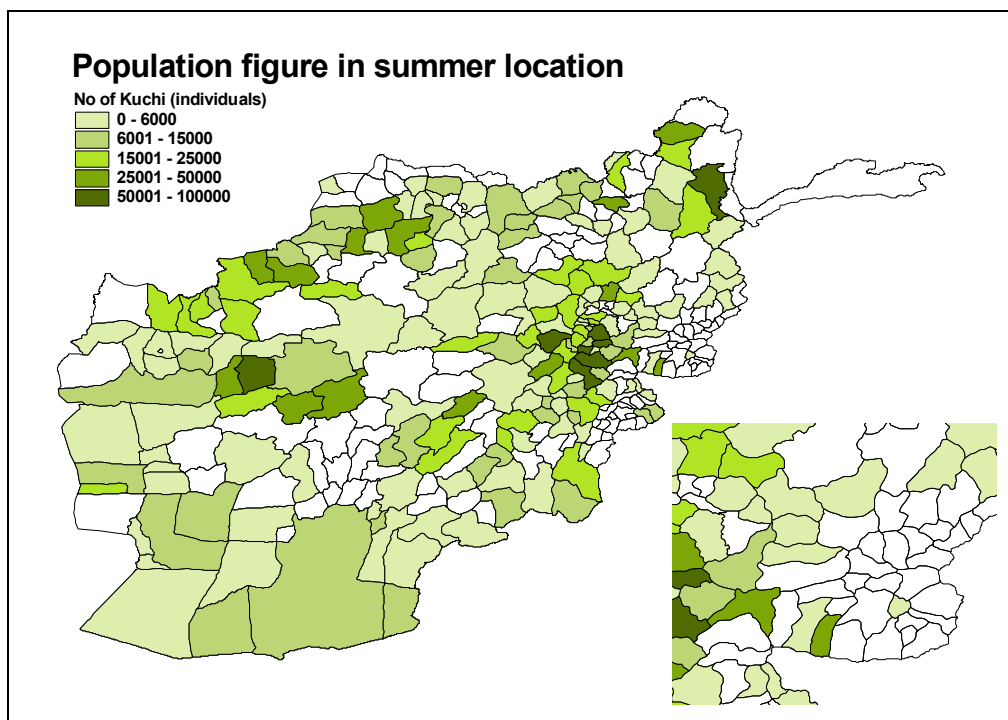


Figure 4 Population distribution in the summer

The average household size is 10.1. The household size is slightly larger for the long-range migratory Kuchi than for the other categories. But this household size is significant larger than national average for the rural settled populations (non-Kuchi) of 6.2 per household.

Migration patterns

Migration patterns for the migratory Kuchi differ per Kuchi category and per province. Specific information on these migration patterns are provided in the province overviews in annex IV, and in this chapter some rough generalizations are made. For some Kuchi, their preferred migration pattern has been disrupted due to the effects of war and factionalism. For this reason, the Kuchi were asked about their 'last summer area' and their 'preferred summer area'. This chapter deals with the 'last summer area' and the next chapter describes the 'preferred summer areas'.

With a few exceptions, the migration goes from the periphery of the country towards the central areas in the spring season. Summer grazing is predominantly in the foothills of the central highlands and other mountainous regions. However, particularly due to effects of the prolonged war, these disruption patterns have to some extent been eroded. Particularly in the north, large numbers of Kuchi who used to be long-range migratory, and move towards the central highlands now stay within the province and have effectively become short-range migratory. The actual migration patterns of the migratory Kuchi are visually presented in the map on the next page.

Generally, the migration patterns follow the seasons; in spring (Hut or Hamal; February/March) the Kuchi migrate towards their summer areas. The migration period differs, depending on the distance travelled, the climate of that particular year, the amount of pasture on the way and the actual weather. Generally the duration of migration is between 1 and 10 weeks and the return migration is of a similar duration.

The return migration to the winter area usually commences around Mizan or Aqrab (September/October).

In the Northern provinces, from the data it seems that the onset of migration is somewhat later than in the rest of the country. This could be partly caused by spring migration; the Northern provinces tend to use different areas for spring grazing as for summer grazing, which would lead to an initial 'spring' migration, followed by a later 'summer' migration.

More detailed information on migration patterns can be found in the province overviews in annex IV.