

Chhattisgarh Livestock Policy and Capacity Development Initiatives

State Livestock Context :

The Agriculture including livestock is the main source of rural livelihoods in Chhattisgarh. About 80% of the State's population lives in rural areas and a majority of small and marginal farmers possess one or another species of livestock; which contributes to poverty reduction in many ways (nutrition, income, risk coverage from crop failure, draught power & manure). Livestock which currently contributes 23% of the agriculture output has been identified as an important source of equitable livelihoods for the rural poor in Chhattisgarh's Vision 2010 document. Given the avenues opening up as a result of the predicted 'livestock revolution' that is resulting in a marked increase in the demand of milk, egg and meat all over India and Chhattisgarh; there is much scope for millions of small farmers in the state to move out of poverty by participating in this demand driven revolution. Need for a Livestock Policy:

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While it is a fact that the livestock sector in Chhattisgarh is extremely livelihood intensive, the state still suffers from low production, poor technology absorption and inadequate services. Furthermore, the Xth Five Year Plan Draft envisages the achievement of 4% GDP growth in agriculture and allied sectors in Chhattisgarh. In the X th plan, this sector contributed only 1.9% to the GDP. The achievement of the XI Plan target seems gigantic but can be made possible due to the encouraging growth rate of about 6% achieved in the livestock domain.

To develop a framework for livestock growth, the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD), GoCG initiated a comprehensive review of the macro-micro economic dimensions of the livestock sector with collaborative support from CALPI (Capitalization of Livestock Experiences in India – A programme of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and Intercooperation), CARD (Centre for Advanced Research and Development) and the ICAR (Indian Council for Agriculture Research) over a two year period starting 2005. The process aimed to recommend new policy directions that would lead to economic growth and greater equity.

Spotlight on the Process:

The institutional framework for policy formulation was dovetailed with capacity development inputs on livestock management, productivity enhancement, extension methodologies and rural entrepreneurship development, to equip key stakeholders to own and respond effectively to the policy being formulated. Furthermore, the policy process was itself highly participatory and primary and was based on primary & secondary research conducted over a two year period by a multi-stakeholder Resource Group (RG) comprising the DAHD, NGOs, private companies, cooperatives and the Veterinary College. The outputs of this process included a Situational Analysis Report based on secondary data and farmers field surveys, a short, medium and long term Livestock development Action Plan and a Draft Livestock Policy. The whole process was guided by a Steering Committee representing key line departments.

Policy Development:

The RG studied various livestock sub-sectors including milk and draught animals, meat animals, poultry, feed & fodder, disease control, service delivery and breed development, indigenous knowledge and human and institutional setups to draw out policy recommendations. This was supplemented by micro planning with farmers in different agro-climatic zones, Public Hearings, Vision Building Exercises and State level Workshops that defined the scope, potential and priorities of the Chhattisgarh livestock sector. Furthermore GIS mapping was done with special focus on livestock population and poor and marginalized communities. The policy draft is now in its final stage of development and speaks of a strategic shift towards decentralizing service delivery, market diversification through producer group formation, establishing cross linkages with line departments and private sector and mounting an extension system in collaboration with village institutions.

The policy thus developed is expected to be a policy in practice and not just on paper. It will be practical and implementable because it represents the needs of its real stakeholders who themselves formulated it.

Capacity Development of Stakeholders:

To ensure that key stakeholders understand the scope of the livestock sector and feel equipped to harness the needs of the large predominantly rural population, a capacity development plan was operationalized in 2004- one year before policy formulation. This was undertaken in association with the Xavier Institute of Management, MANAGE and IIM-Ahmedabad that provided trainings on 'Livestock Sector Management', extension and participatory technology development. Exposure visits of farmers and allied stakeholders

were organized to successful livestock models like NDDB, BAIF, Myrada, APLDA, China Agriculture University and Philippine Agriculture University. Over 200 stakeholders benefited from the above. Furthermore, Technical Support for breed restructuring and fertility management was provided to over 300 paravets and DAHD officers.

Through this process, stakeholders not only transcended traditional institutional and jurisdictional boundaries but also developed greater skill & motivation to respond to emerging needs. As better planners and more informed managers they feel strongly capable to address the impending rural realities of their state.

Policy Framework :

The policy paper envisages a critical role for livestock as a tool to reduce poverty and socio economic inequalities, promote self reliance and food security in Chhattisgarh state. It further focuses on:

- Empowerment of the underprivileged; especially the resource poor rural households to participate in livestock production to reduce their poverty.
- Growth Enhancement of the livestock sector by improving efficiency in production, service delivery systems, marketing and processing to develop a self-sustained livestock economy that enhances employment opportunities, and food security of the large masses.
- Promoting the existing scope, potential of livestock as per the needs and requirements of livestock farmers living in different agro-climatic zones within the state.
- Minimizing negative externalities of modernization of livestock sector to ecology through appropriate technological, institutional and policy interventions and conserving the local livestock resources.
- Ensuring that the process of livestock development takes place within the confines of the cultural and religious ethos of Chhattisgarh's society.

Benefits:

Small holder farmers in Chhattisgarh have opportunities in the livestock sector as increased population; rising per capita income and growing urbanization are fuelling growth in livestock products. Besides, the global market for livestock products is expanding offering export opportunities. Small farmers can gain from this deficit as they have a higher stake in livestock production in the state and control 88% of the poultry, 67% pigs and small ruminants, 59% cattle and 57% buffaloes. As an example, in Chhattisgarh per capita consumption of milk and meat in 1999 was only 22 and 27% of the country's average. Strategic policy frames and need based interventions can ensure that the small livestock producer gains from expanding markets.