***Review Article***

# Livestock Development for Sustainable Livelihood of Small Farmers


## Abstract

The present paper reviews the distribution of different species of livestock in different countries and the strategy adopted for improving the productivity of animals owned by small farmers. Animal Husbandry is an integral part of agriculture, making a significant contribution to the rural economy and socio-economic development in many developing countries. Livestock has been directly contributing to livelihood and food security of more than a billion people in different parts of the world. The Indian experiences of livestock development, focusing on the opportunity to provide sustainable livelihood, has been very effective in empowering the poor. The key to success are selection of suitable technologies to suit the stakeholders, development of suitable infrastructure to develop the value chain and mentoring of small livestock owners to ensure that all the problems, both technical and business related, are addressed from time to time. As livestock husbandry is an opportunity for poor and illiterate rural families, it is essential to ensure that these family enterprises are able to generate adequate income for sustainable livelihood. The population and distribution of livestock in different countries will be helpful in identifying countries where priority should be given to certain species. Further information on the present level of livestock productivity along with the anticipated demand in future for various commodities, is useful to decide on the investment priorities.



**Keywords:** Livestock development, animal husbandry, Small farmers, rural economy


## Livestock for Sustainable Livelihood

Animal Husbandry is an integral part of agriculture, making a significant contribution to the rural economy and socio-economic development in many developing countries. Livestock is also linked closely with the local culture and traditions, which are being followed ever since the domestication of livestock for economic benefits. For instance, the cow is considered to be sacred by most of the Hindu communities in India while the goat is offered as a sacrifice during certain festivals and rituals in both Muslim and Hindu religions. However, pigs are neither maintained nor consumed by the Muslims and only certain communities leading a nomadic life, have been maintaining sheep.

Presently, livestock has been directly contributing to livelihood and food security of more than a billion people in different parts of the world. A majority of them have been living in the developing countries, with small land holding, deprived of assured income from crop production and depending heavily on livestock husbandry for food security. In general, there is good scope to improve the productivity of these livestock by introducing suitable technologies and systems. However for these communities, it is a slow and extremely difficult process to bring about a change in the practices followed so far, due to traditional mind set and lack of infrastructure to develop the value chain. Simultaneously, as livestock has been identified as a source of

greenhouse gases (GHG) emission, it is necessary to keep a control on the population and management systems, to reduce their interference on the ecosystem and the environment. Hence, modernization of the livestock development sector should carefully consider the traditional systems and gradually introduce desired changes, involving the stake holders in the developing countries.

On the contrary, livestock husbandry has been prospering in many developed countries, where it was taken up as a commercial venture, with advanced science and technology, to enhance productivity and profitability. Modern livestock husbandry is highly competitive and labour efficient, to an extent, that it can even pose a threat to traditional livestock keepers, for their employment and livelihood. Hence, it is a challenge for policy makers in the developing countries to promote sustainable practices, striking a balance between local livestock owning communities, environmental conservation and competing global commercial enterprises. It is also essential to ensure that small farmers remain efficient and connected closely with the changing marketing scenario. It is the responsibility of the Governments and Development Organizations to develop suitable policies and programmes targeting small livestock holders in their respective countries.

**Distribution of World Livestock Population**

The estimated world livestock population in 2014 included 1.494 billion cattle, 0.2 billion buffaloes, 1.173 billion sheep, 1.006 billion goats and 0.98 billion pigs (Cook, 2015). Livestock is a source of nutritious food in the form of milk and meat. They also provide skin, fibre, manure and animal power in many countries. Livestock husbandry is very dynamic with higher rate of growth, as compared to crop husbandry. The unique feature of livestock is its easy mobility and ability to withstand the changing weather conditions, while generating year round employment. Although livestock husbandry is a competitive commercial activity with fairly high capital investment, it is also an important source of livelihood for small farmers in the developing countries. However, most of these farmers are scattered in remote villages, deprived of technical services and market connectivity, and experiencing low production and reduced income. In such a situation, livestock often turn into a liability, instead of contributing to the economy. Thus, empowerment of small livestock holders to improve their livestock productivity, is a priority in the developing countries.

This paper reviews the distribution of different species of livestock in different countries and the strategy adopted for improving the productivity of animals owned by small farmers.

Among different species of livestock, cattle is the most popular in more than 100 countries, accounting for more than one million population. Out of the total world cattle population of 1.468 billion in 2014, Brazil ranked first with 211.76 million. India second with 189 million, followed by China and the United States (Cook, 2015). By 2017, there was a marginal increase in the population by 1.6 per cent, with some changes in the ranking of countries (FAO, 2019). Among the top ranking 25 countries based on the cattle population in the world as presented in Table 1, in 19 countries

except USA, Australia, Russia, France, Canada and New Zealand, a majority of the herds were of small size, owned by farmers having lower income. The other countries with more than 10 million cattle population and where poor farmers were dependent on small herds for their livelihood, were South Africa, Turkey, Paraguay, Uganda, Uruguay, Niger, Uzbekistan, Madagascar, Chad and Mali. However, there has been a serious concern about the negative contribution of cattle towards global warming, which has influenced many developed countries to reduce the population. This pressure has certainly had a significant impact on the cattle population during recent years, as reflected in the population in 2017 in Table 1.

Figure 1 presents the cattle population density in different regions across the world (Robinson *et al*, 2014). Some of the countries having dense population of cattle are India, Bangladesh, Brazil, China and Ethiopia, where the number of cattle per $km^2$ ranges from 50 to 200 heads. Population density in the developing countries can be directly correlated to the dependence of farmers on cattle for their livelihood. Cows and bullocks were generally maintained for milk, meat, hide, manure and draught power for farming and transportation. In many of these countries, cattle production is under stress, due to low productivity, shortage of fodder and feed resources, outbreak of various diseases and poor market development, which need to be addressed on priority.

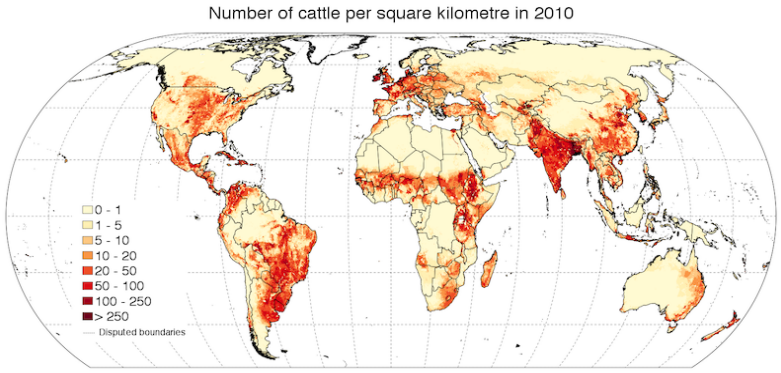
India is the largest milk producer in the world. In 2015-16, India produced 155.48 million tonnes of milk of which 73.65 million tonnes (50.8 per cent) was contributed by cows and the rest by buffaloes. United States was the second largest milk producer with 93.5 million tonnes but the entire production was from cows (Anwar, 2017). Hence, the United States is the largest producer of cow milk. The list of ten largest milk producing countries in the world is presented in Table 2.

**Table 1. World Cattle Population in 2014 and 2017**

| Rank in 2014 | Country | Population in 2014 (Million) | Population in 2017 (Million) | Rank in 2017 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Brazil | 211.764 | 214.900 | 1 |
| 2 | India | 189.000 | 185.104 | 2 |
| 3 | China | 113.500 | 83.210 | 4 |
| 4 | United States | 89.300 | 93.705 | 3 |
| 5 | Ethiopia | 54.000 | 60.927 | 5 |
| 6 | Argentina | 51.095 | 53.354 | 6 |
| 7 | Sudan | 41.917 | 30.734 | 9 |
| 8 | Pakistan | 38.299 | 44.400 | 7 |
| 9 | Mexico | 32.402 | 31.772 | 8 |
| 10 | Australia | 29.291 | 26.176 | 11 |
| 11 | Tanzania | 24.532 | 26.400 | 10 |
| 12 | Bangladesh | 24.000 | 23.935 | 12 |
| 13 | Colombia | 23.141 | 22.461 | 13 |
| 14 | Nigeria | 20.000 | 20.773 | 14 |
| 15 | Russia | 19.930 | 18.752 | 16 |
| 16 | France | 19.096 | 19.233 | 15 |
| 17 | Kenya | 18.139 | 18.339 | 17 |
| 18 | Indonesia | 16.607 | 16.599 | 19 |
| 19 | Venezuela | 14.500 | 16.483 | 20 |
| 20 | Myanmar | 14.350 | 17.147 | 18 |
| 21 | Turkey | 13.917 | 14.080 | 22 |
| 22 | Uganda | 13.020 | 15.593 | 21 |
| 23 | Canada | 12.215 | 11.535 | 24 |
| 24 | Uruguay | 11.500 | 11.754 | 23 |
| 25 | New Zealand | 10.182 | 10.146 | 25 |
| | **World Total** | **1,467.549** | **1,491.387** | |

Source: FAO, 2015; FAO, 2019

**Fig. 1. Density of Cattle Population in the World**




Source: Robinson *et al.*, 2014

**Table 2. Largest milking producing countries in the world in 2014-15**

| Rank | Countries | Annual Milk Production (Million tonnes) |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | India | 146.31 |
| 2 | USA | 93.5 |
| 3 | China | 45.0 |
| 4 | Pakistan | 43.0 |
| 5 | Brazil | 35.7 |
| 6 | Germany | 29.34 |
| 7 | Russia | 29.00 |
| 8 | France | 23.2 |
| 9 | New Zealand | 21.53 |
| 10 | Turkey | 19.00 |

Source: Anwar, 2017

The average milk yield of cows in selected countries is presented in Table 3. The world average yield is 2200 kg per lactation, while the highest yield of over 10,000 kg is accounted by Saudi Arabia and Israel. South Korea and USA have an average yield which is above 9000 kg. All the 20 highest milk yielding countries are developed (CIWF, 2012). Among the developing countries, China has an average milk yield of 3300 kg while India has only 1310 kg per lactation. This reflects on the efficiency of milk production in the developed countries, where the aim is to produce more milk with lesser number of cattle, because of lack of additional demand for milk and restriction on cattle population. In the developing countries like India, Pakistan and other countries in Asia and Africa, there is a shortage of milk due to growing demand and lower milk yield. Hence, the challenge is to increase production, through increase in yield, while reducing the cost of production.

**Table 3. Average Milk Yield of Cows in Different Countries in 2010**

| Rank | Countries | Yield: kg/ Lactation |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Saudi Arabia | 10,133 |
| 2 | Israel | 10,035 |
| 3 | Republic of Korea | 9,816 |
| 4 | U S A | 9,314 |
| 5 | Denmark | 8,389 |
| 6 | Sweden | 8,144 |
| 7 | Canada | 7,963 |
| 8 | Finland | 7,873 |
| 9 | Japan | 7,284 |
| 10 | Spain | 7,278 |
| 11 | Netherlands | 7277 |
| 12 | United Kingdom | 7271 |
| 13 | Luxembourg | 7,002 |
| 14 | Czech Republic | 6,884 |
| 15 | Germany | 6,877 |
| 16 | Estonia | 6,780 |
| 17 | Switzerland | 6,651 |
| 18 | Hungary | 6,596 |
| 19 | Jordan | 6,521 |
| 20 | Kuwait | 6,448 |
| Others | Russia | 4,030 |
| | China | 3,300 |
| | Brazil | 1,906 |
| | Pakistan | 1,542 |
| | India | 1,310 |

Source: CIFW, 2012

Buffalo is another important source of milk, but it is confined mostly to Asia. The world buffalo population in 2017 was 201 million of which 195 million (97 per cent) was in Asia, as presented in Table 4. India has the highest buffalo population of 113.33 million, followed by Pakistan and China. There are two types of buffaloes, namely Swamp type and River type. Swamp types belong to three different species, which prefer to wallow in muddy water. These are found in China, Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, Myanmar, Laos, Sri Lanka, Kampuchea, Malaysia and North Eastern states of India. Swamp type buffaloes yield less than 200 kg milk per lactation. They are hardly milked and are generally used for meat and farming operations. River buffalo species was domesticated in India, where buffalo was the main milk producing species till the last few decades. These buffaloes, also known as Asian water buffaloes, are found in India, Pakistan, Bulgaria, Hungary, Turkey, Italy, Egypt, Brazil and Caucasia. These are maintained primarily for milk production and used for meat and draught purposes as well. They prefer to wallow in clean water and rivers. Although the share of buffaloes in world milk production was only 12 per cent, this species was the main source of milk in India and Pakistan. Table 5 presents the ranking of countries based on buffalo milk production. Major buffalo milk producing countries are India, Pakistan, China, Egypt and Nepal (Anonymous, 2018).

**Table 4. Ranking of the countries in the world based on buffalo population**

| Rank | Countries | Population in 2017 Million | % of World Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | India | 113.330 | 56.38 |
| 2 | Pakistan | 37.700 | 18.76 |
| 3 | China | 23.469 | 11.68 |
| 4 | Nepal | 5.178 | 2.58 |
| 5 | Myanmar | 3.747 | 1.86 |
| 6 | Egypt | 3.376 | 1.68 |
| 7 | Philippines | 2.882 | 1.43 |
| 8 | Vietnam | 2.492 | 1.24 |
| 9 | Bangladesh | 1.478 | 0.74 |
| 10 | Indonesia | 1.395 | 0.69 |
| 11 | Brazil | 1.381 | 0.69 |
| 12 | Lao PDR | 1.189 | 0.59 |
| 13 | Thailand | 0.996 | 0.50 |
| 14 | Cambodia | 0.655 | 0.33 |
| 15 | Italy | 0.401 | 0.20 |
| 16 | Colombia | 0.300 | 0.15 |
| 17 | Sri Lanka | 0.284 | 0.14 |
| 18 | Iraq | 0.209 | 0.10 |
| 19 | Azerbaijan | 0.197 | 0.09 |
| 20 | Malaysia | 0.119 | 0.06 |
| Asia & Pacific | | 194.914 | 96.97 |
| World | | **201.000** | **100.00** |

Source Hegde, 2019

**Table 5. Ranking of countries producing buffalo milk**

| Rank | Country | Milk Production in 2013-14 (Million Tonnes) |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | India | 70.000 |
| 2 | Pakistan | 24.370 |
| 3 | China | 3.050 |
| 4 | Egypt | 2.614 |
| 5 | Nepal | 1.188 |
| 6 | Myanmar | 0.309 |
| 7 | Italy | 0.195 |
| 8 | Sri Lanka | 0.065 |
| 9 | Iran | 0.065 |
| 10 | Turkey | 0.052 |
| **Total World** | | **101.908** |

Source: Anonymous, 2018

Sheep is another species of livestock maintained for wool, meat, hide and manure. Out of 1.176 billion sheep, five countries together own 37 per cent of the world sheep population. China has the largest sheep population of 187 million, followed by India and Australia, as presented in Table 6. Sheep population density was high in Central Asia, Iran, Sudan, Nigeria, New Zealand, UK, Pakistan and South Africa, as

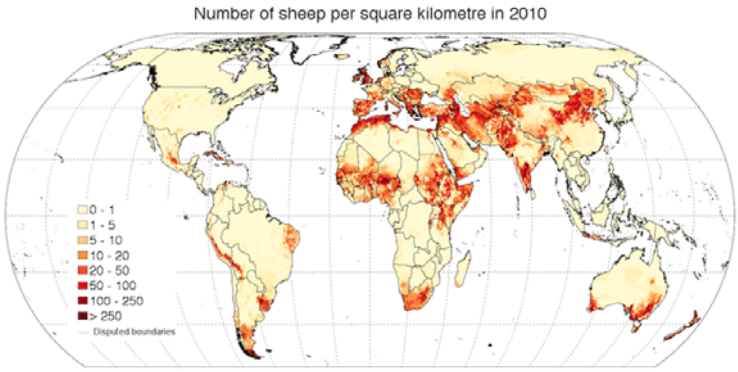
presented in Figure 2. Traditionally, sheep was an important source of wool, till the synthetic fabrics started replacing wool in the late 20th century. Presently, sheep is reared in most of the developing countries more for meat, with wool as a secondary product. Sheep herds are generally large in size, maintained by specific nomadic communities who move with their flock for several months in search of fodder.

**Table 6. Ranking of Countries based on Sheep Population**

| Rank | Countries | Sheep Population (Million) | % of World Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | China | 187.00 | 15.9 |
| 2 | India | 75.000 | 6.4 |
| 3 | Australia | 74.722 | 6.3 |
| 4 | Sudan | 52.500 | 4.4 |
| 5 | Iran | 48.750 | 4.1 |
| | **World Total** | | **100.0** |

Source: FAOSTAT, 2014

**Fig. 2. Population Density of Sheep in different Regions**




Source: Robinson *et al*., 2014

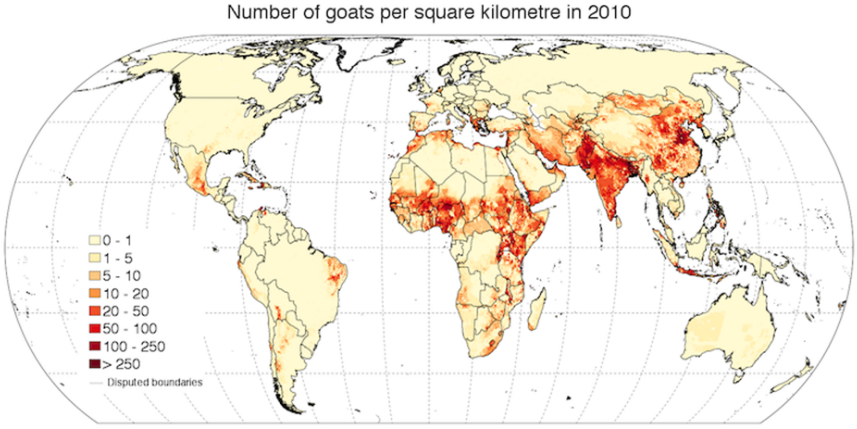
Goat is another popular species of small ruminant, maintained for meat, milk and hide. There are a few breeds thriving in temperate regions and producing special quality fibre called Pashmina, which is used for making expensive garments. Goat milk is considered superior to cow or buffalo milk, particularly for feeding infants and children. China has the highest goat population of 148.4 million, followed by India and Pakistan, as presented in Table 7 (Skapetas and Bampidis, 2019). Other countries having more than 10 million goat population are Nigeria, Sudan, Bangladesh, Iran, Somalia, Indonesia, Tanzania Ethiopia, Kenya, Niger and Burkina Faso. The goat population density in different parts of the world is presented in Figure 3. Goat population is generally concentrated in semi-arid regions, which are not suitable for cattle husbandry.

**Table 7. Ranking of Countries based on Goat Population in 2012**

| Rank | Countries | Goat Population (Million) | % of World Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | China | 148.412 | 12.65 |
| 2. | India | 123.358 | 10.52 |
| 3. | Pakistan | 52.763 | 4.50 |
| 4. | Nigeria | 47.552 | 4.05 |
| 5. | Sudan | 42.030 | 3.58 |
| 6. | Bangladesh | 39.600 | 3.38 |
| 7. | Iran | 25.679 | 2.19 |
| 8. | Somalia | 13.000 | 1.11 |
| 9. | Indonesia | 12.722 | 1.08 |
| 10. | Tanzania | 12.556 | 1.07 |
| 11. | Ethiopia | 12.000 | 1.02 |
| 12. | Kenya | 11.946 | 1.02 |
| 13. | Niger | 10.390 | 0.89 |
| 14. | Burkina Faso | 10.036 | 0.86 |
| | **World Total** | **1173.000** | **100.00** |

Source: Skapetas and Bampidis, 2019

**Fig. 3. Goat Population Density in different Regions**




Source: Robinson *et al*., 2014

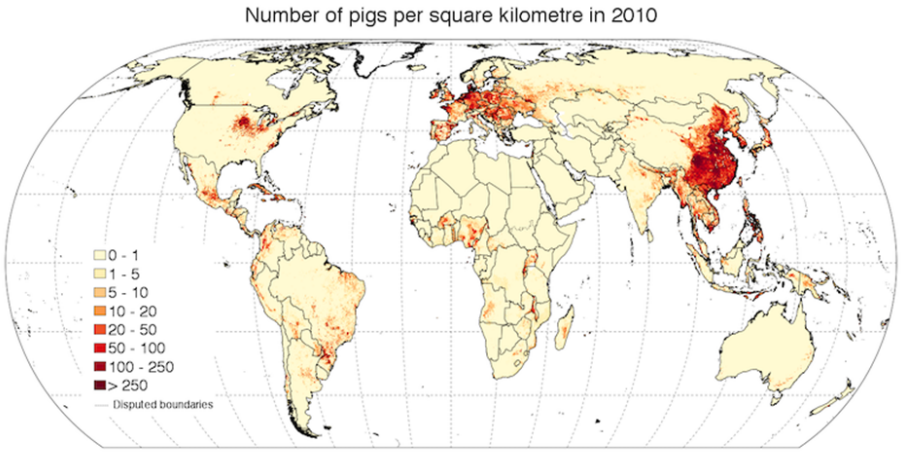
Pig is another important source of meat. Out of the world pig population of 980 million in 2018, China accounted for 433.25 million, representing 44 per cent of the world production, as presented in Table 8. Like in other species of livestock, there is also a drastic difference in the management systems followed in developed and developing countries. The scale of operation is high and intensive in Europe and North America, moderate in Central and South America and of very small scale in Asia and Africa. Density of pig population in different regions is presented in Figure 4. The population in China is concentrated in the eastern regions of the country. In USA, pigs are concentrated in the Northern states. Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela, Paraguay and Uruguay are the counties in Central and South America, having high population density of pigs. In Africa, pig population density is high in Nigeria, Togo, Burkina Faso, South Africa, Uganda, Malawi and Angola.

**Table 8. Ranking of countries based on Pig population in the world in 2018**

| Rank | Countries | Pig Population In 2018 (Million) | % of Total | Pork Production In 2017 (Million Tonnes) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | China | 433.25 | 44.21 | 53.40 |
| 2 | Europe | 150.25 | 15.33 | 23.68 |
| 3 | USA | 73.42 | 7.49 | 11.61 |
| 4 | Brazil | 38.83 | 3.96 | 3.73 |
| 5 | Russia | 22.20 | 2.27 | 2.96 |
| 6 | Canada | 14.33 | 1.46 | 1.97 |
| 7 | Mexico | 11.08 | 1.13 | |
| 8 | South Korea | 10.51 | 1.07 | 1.28 |
| 9 | Japan | 9.35 | 0.95 | 1.28 |
| 10 | Ukraine | 6.25 | 0.64 | |
| | **World Total** | **980.00** | **100.00** | **110.64** |

Source: Statista, 2018

**Fig. 4. Population Density of Pigs in different Regions**




Source: Robinson *et al*., 2014

It is estimated that around 1.0 billion pigs are slaughtered every year, producing 110.64 million tons of pork and the per capita world consumption of meat is 15 kg per annum. However, pork consumption in China was twice the time higher than the world average consumption, and was highest at 60 kg per annum in Hong Kong as presented in Table 9 (Pork Checkoff, 2017). Other countries with higher consumption of pork are South Korea, United States and United Kingdom.

**Table 9. Per Capita consumption of Pork in different Regions**

| Rank | Country | Per Capita Consumption Kg/Year in 2011 |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Hong Kong (China) | 60.4 |
| 2 | China (Mainland) | 35.6 |
| 3 | South Korea | 30.9 |
| 4 | United States | 27.9 |
| 5 | United Kingdom | 26.7 |
| 6 | Brazil | 12.6 |
| 7 | South Africa | 4.5 |
| | **World Average** | **15.5** |

Source: Pork Checkoff, 2017

The data on livestock population and production suggests scope for improving the productivity of livestock in the developing countries.

**Strategy for Livestock Development in India**

The population and distribution of livestock in different countries will be helpful in identifying countries where priority should be given to certain species. Further information on the present level of livestock productivity along with the anticipated demand in future for various commodities, are useful to decide on the investment priorities. In India, a majority of the farmers are dependent on livestock for supplementing their income and to support agricultural production. The demand for livestock products is also growing steadily. Table 10 (FAO, 2011) presents demand and supply status of various products of livestock origin in India. It can be observed that by 2030, India will have surplus production of milk and buffalo meat, while there will be shortage of mutton and pork. Thus, the development priority may focus on improvement in milk yield and reduction in the cost of production. There is also scope for improving the productivity of goats and pigs while generating year round employment for small farmers in agriculture. There is also scope for investing in processing the produce for value addition, to explore the export market.

While taking up livestock development, it should be ensured that small farmers maintaining animals for their livelihood are supported to improve their profitability. This will benefit rural women in particular, who can remain engaged in livestock enterprise from home itself, while taking care of their household activities. As livestock has been imposing pressure on biodiversity because of increasing shortage of feed and emission of GHGs, sustainable management should be the goal, which can be achieved by improving productivity through genetic up-gradation, culling of unproductive animals, timely health care and balanced feeding. This can be done by introducing new technologies and development of value chain for establishing backward and forward linkages, by local livestock owners. As Indian livestock holders typically represent small livestock holders in developing countries, any successful development model in India, can be widely replicated in many other developing countries.

**Table 10. Demand and supply of livestock products in India in 2000 and 2030**

| Product | Year | Consumption (Million Tons) | | | Production (Mill. Tons) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Urban | Rural | Total | |
| Milk | 2000 | 18.565 | 47.883 | 66.448 | 81.627 |
| | 2030 | 59.327 | 86.450 | 145.777 | 178.408 |
| Beef | 2000 | 0.733 | 1.895 | 2.628 | 2.861 |
| | 2030 | 1.609 | 2.537 | 3.966 | 4.266 |
| Mutton | 2000 | 0.190 | 0.497 | 0.687 | 0.696 |
| | 2030 | 0.513 | 0.762 | 1.275 | 1.025 |
| Pork | 2000 | 0.159 | 0.418 | 0.577 | 0.577 |
| | 2030 | 0.605 | 0.893 | 1.898 | 1.498 |
| Poultry | 2000 | 0.293 | 0.758 | 1.051 | 1.052 |
| | 2030 | 4.030 | 5.886 | 9.916 | 9.916 |

Source: FAO, 2011

**Ownership of Livestock in India:** In India, about 67% of the land holders belong to the category of marginal farmers, who own less than 1.0 ha land and additional 18 per cent are small farmers, owning between 1 to 2 ha land. For these 117 million families, livestock is a source of livelihood. This is because in the absence of fertile lands and assured sources of irrigation, income from agriculture is not adequate to sustain their livelihood. Among small and marginal landholders, those having irrigation or fertile lands, prefer to maintain large animals such as cattle and buffaloes, while others who have no confidence in maintaining large ruminants, prefer to own goat, sheep and poultry. According to the livestock survey of 2012, 65.34 million families owned cattle, 39.18 million families owned buffaloes, 33.01 million families owned goats, 4.55 million families owned sheep and 2.55 million families owned pigs. The population of different livestock species in 2012 is presented in Table 11 (Govt. of India, 2014).

**Table 11: Livestock Population in India**

Write unit for values

| Sr. No. | Species | Livestock Census | | % Increase in 10 years | No. of families Engaged (Million) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 2003 | 2012 | | |
| 1. | Cattle | 185.2 | 190.90 | 3.08 | 65.34 |
| 2. | Buffalo | 97.9 | 108.70 | 11.03 | 39.18 |
| 3. | Sheep | 61.5 | 65.07 | 5.80 | 4.55 |
| 4. | Goat | 124.4 | 135.17 | 8.66 | 33.01 |
| 5. | Other Animals | 16.05 | 13.19 | -21.68 | 3.50 |
| **Total Livestock** | | **485.0** | **512.06** | **5.58** | |

Source: Govt. of India, 2014

The population of livestock in 10 years between 2003 and 2012, increased by 5.6 per cent, but increase in cattle population was only 3 per cent. Increase in buffalo population was 11 per cent and in goat, it was 8.7 per cent. Over the last 50 years, there has been a significant development in the dairy husbandry sector to empower poor farmers to improve their livelihood through dairy husbandry as presented below.

**Performance of Cattle and Buffaloes in India:** Inspite of achieving the highest milk production in the world, the productivity of cattle has been extremely poor. It can be observed in Table 3 that the average milk yield of cattle in India was 1310 kg per lactation, as against the world average of 2200 kg, which was far below the yield of the top five ranking countries. Such low milk yield can be attributed to a large presence of genetically eroded nondescript cattle representing 60 per cent of the cattle population, and which are yielding around 450 to 500 kg milk per year. The situation in 1973-74 was more pathetic when nondescript cattle represented 80 per cent of the total cattle population and the annual milk production was 23.2 million tonnes and the average milk yield was around 600 kg per lactation. Over the last few centuries, India had a rich cattle wealth, which was used by farmers for manure, bullock power and milk. Production of bullocks was the priority in most parts of the country, whereas milk production was prominent in selected regions, depending on the productivity of local cattle. This was how several breeds of cattle were developed in different parts of the country.

**Important Breeds of Cattle in India**

Among the cattle, 39 breeds were recognized in three categories, namely, Milk breeds, draft breeds and dual purpose breeds – useful for both milk production and as bullocks for draught purpose. In Table 12, various Indian cattle breeds under different categories can be seen. Among 39 breeds of cattle in India, only four breeds namely Gir, Red Sindhi, Sahiwal and Tharparkar, with an average milk yield of 1500 kg/lactation are milch breeds, while seven breeds are dual purpose, for milk and tillage, with 800 to1200 kg milk yield. Other 28 breeds with annual milk yield below 800 kg, are draught breeds for bullocks. This reflects on the importance of cattle in supporting agriculture rather than milk production, although milk and milk products are an integral part of every meal in India. Most of the farmers used milk produced in the house for household consumption and the surplus milk was used for producing butter and milk concentrate for producing a wide range of sweets.

**Table 12. Indian Cattle Breeds**

| | Breed Characters | Breed Names |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Milch Breeds:** Milk production > 1500 kg/lact. | Gir, Sahiwal, Red Sindhi, Tharparkar |
| 2 | **Dual-purpose Breeds:** | |
| 2.1 | **Medium milk yield:** 1000-1500 kg/lact. | Hariana, Kankrej, Rathi, Minari, Ongole, Dangi, |
| 2.2 | **Low milk yield:** <1000 kg/lact. | Mewati, Deoni |
| 3 | **Draught-Purpose Breeds:** Milk production <500 kg/lact. | Nagor, Bachaur, Malvi, Hallikar, Amritmahal, Khillar, Bargur, Panwar, Siri, Gaolao, Krishna Valley, Kankatha, Kherigarh, Khangayam and others |

Source: Hegde, 2014

Except for a small proportion of large cattle owners, rest of the farmers depended on private bull owners for breeding their cows, which involved both time and cost. Often, the cows were served by stray bulls, when let out for grazing on community lands. These factors contributed to the increasing number of nondescript cattle over the years. By 1950, a few years after Indian Independence, more than 80 per cent cattle were nondescript, resulting in heavy genetic erosion. With the introduction of farm machinery, it was uneconomical for 85 per cent marginal and small farmers to maintain bullocks. Hence, low yielding cows became uneconomical. In the 1960s, realizing the erosion of precious cattle genetic resources, the Government of India launched breeding services through Artificial Insemination (AI) and conservation of native breeds in their home tracts. As a result of these efforts, some of the nondescript cows produced upgraded progeny of these native breeds. However, farmers had no interest in these breeds as most of them attained puberty after a long period of 24 – 30 months and their milk yield was also low. In 2012, the population of pure indigenous breeds including all the 38 breeds, was only 9.35 per cent of the total population and 10.51 per cent cattle were upgraded progeny of these breeds born to nondescript cattle. The population of important indigenous breeds and their upgraded progeny in India in 2012 is presented in Table 13 (Government of India, 2014). It can be observed that upgradation of nondescript cattle by using only good dairy breeds such as Gir and Sahiwal were accepted by the farmers to a limited extent, while Hariana and Kankrej were popular among the dual purpose breeds. Among the draught breeds, there was some demand for Khillar and Ongole breeds in their home tracts.

**Status of Buffaloes in India**

Buffalo has been the major source of milk since decades in India. India has very rich genetic diversity of buffaloes, with over 20 important breeds of buffaloes (Asian River type), including 10 well-defined breeds. These are Murrah, Nili-Ravi, Jaffarabadi, Surti, Bhadawari, Banni, Mehsana, Marathawadi, Nagpuri, Pandharpuri and Toda, which have been grouped into 5 groups based on their original habitats, as presented in Table 14 (Yadav *et al,* 2017; Dhanda, 2006). Murrah is the most popular breed, followed by Jaffarabadi and Nili – Ravi breeds. Surti is a small breed. Pandharpuri can tolerate high temperature. Banni, Mehsana and Godavari breeds have originated from Murrah breed, which are popular in their home tracts (Yadav *et al*, 2017). These breeds give a wide option for farmers to make their own choice to upgrade their native animals, although most of the farmers want to upgrade their buffaloes with Murrah. Many other breeds such as Kundi, Manda, Marathwada, Kalahandi, Jerangi, Sambalpuri, South Kanara, etc. are almost on the verge of extinction. Characteristics of Major Indian Buffalo Breeds are presented in Table 15 (Yadav *et al,* 2017; Dhanda, 2006). Inspite of such rich breeds, there was heavy genetic erosion due to lack of facilities for providing breeding services, resulting in indiscriminate breeding by stray bulls. Thus, the contribution of buffaloes to milk production has also been poor, except in the home tracts of elite breeds, till artificial insemination using frozen semen, was introduced in the late 1970s.

444 **Table 13. Population of Important Indigenous Breeds of Cattle in India**
445

| | Names of Indigenous Breeds | Pure (Million) | Graded (Million) | Total (Mill.) | % of Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Hariana | 1.639 | 4.641 | 6.280 | 4.15 |
| 2 | Gir | 1.380 | 3.733 | 5.113 | 3.38 |
| 3 | Sahiwal | 1.092 | 3.790 | 4.882 | 3.23 |
| 4 | Kankrej | 1.945 | 1.083 | 3.028 | 2.00 |
| 5 | Kasali | 2.432 | 0.0004 | 2.432 | 1.61 |
| 6 | Khillar | 1.102 | 0.912 | 2.014 | 1.33 |
| 7 | Hallikar | 1.211 | 0.597 | 1.808 | 1.20 |
| 8 | Malvi | 1.158 | 0.552 | 1.710 | 1.13 |
| 9 | Bachaur | 0.741 | 0.805 | 1.546 | 1.02 |
| 10 | Rathi | 0.866 | 0.372 | 1.238 | 0.82 |
| 11 | Malnad Gidda | 0.899 | 0.150 | 1.050 | 0.69 |
| 12 | Tharparkar | 0.197 | 0535 | 0.732 | 0.48 |
| 13 | Kenkatha | 0.393 | 0.277 | 0.670 | 0.44 |
| 14 | Ongole | 0.116 | 0.519 | 0.635 | 0.42 |
| 15 | Red Sindhi | 0.060 | 0.498 | 0.557 | 0.37 |
| 16 | Motu | 0.469 | 0.067 | 0.537 | 0.36 |
| 17 | Nagori | 0.373 | 0.135 | 0.509 | 0.34 |
| 18 | Red Kandhari | 0.235 | 0.223 | 0.458 | 0.30 |
| 19 | Nimari | 0.342 | 0.112 | 0.454 | 0.30 |
| 20 | Khariar | 0.290 | 0.094 | 0.384 | 0.25 |
| 21 | Deoni | 0.151 | 0.200 | 0.352 | 0.23 |
| 22 | Gaolao | 0.122 | 0.201 | 0.323 | 0.21 |
| 23 | Amritmahal | 0.105 | 0.124 | 0.229 | 0.15 |
| 24 | Kherigarh | 0.075 | 0.124 | 0.199 | 0.13 |
| 25 | Dangi | 0.119 | 0.074 | 0.193 | 0.13 |
| 26 | Kangayam | 0.081 | 0.113 | 0.193 | 0.13 |
| 27 | Mewati | 0.015 | 0.018 | 0.033 | 0.02 |
| 28 | Krisnha Valley | 0.003 | 0.011 | 0.144 | 0.01 |
| | Indigenous Breeds | 17.849 | 20.070 | 3.792 | 25.06 |
| | Nondescript Cattle | - | - | 113.253 | 74.92 |
| | Total Zebu Cattle | 17.849 | 20.070 | 151.172 | 100.00 |

446 Source: Govt. of India, 2014
447
448 **Table 14. Home tracts of important breeds of buffaloes in India**

| Group | Breeds | States |
|---|---|---|
| Murrah | Murrah, Nili- Ravi, Kundi, Godavari | Punjab, Haryana, A. P. |
| Gujarat | Jaffarabadi, Mahsana, Surti, Banni | Gujarat |
| Uttar Pradesh | Badhawari, Tarai | Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand |
| Central India | Nagapuri, Pandharpuri, Manda, Marathwada, Kalahandi, Jerangi, Sambalpuri | Maharashtra, Odisha |
| South India | Toda, South Kanara | Tamil Nadu, Karnataka |

**Table 15. Main Features of Indian buffalo breeds**

| Breed | Habitat | Age at 1st Calving (Months) | Lactation Yield (Litres) | Characteristics |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Murrah | Haryana, Punjab, U.P. | 45 | 2000 Fat 7.83% | Black, massive, stocky; heavy bone, horns short, tightly curled; Placid |
| Jaffarabadi | Saurashtra, Kutch (Guj.) | 47 | 2200 Fat 7.7% | Black, massive, long barrelled conformation; Horns long heavy, broad, bent towards face to cover eyes |
| Bhadawari | Agra (UP) Gwalior (MP) | 49 | 1150 Fat 9.0% | Copper colour with a white ring at neck, scanty hair, black at base and brown at top, tail switch is white or black and white; Horns are short and grow backward. |
| Surti | Anand, Surat (Gujarat) | 50 | 1300 Fat 8.1% | Black or reddish skin, having 2 chevrons on chest, white markings on forehead, legs and tail; Sickle shaped medium size horns; Long tail with white tuft |
| Nili Ravi | Firozpur (Punjab) | 42 | 1800 Fat 7.1% | Similar to Murrah, with white marks on extremities and walled eyes, horns less curled, shorter, well shaped udder |
| Mehsana | Mehsana (Gujarat) | 42 - 44 | 2000 Fat 6.6% | Resembles Murrah and Surti, jet black, sickle shaped horns; Well developed udder with prominent milk veins |
| Pandharpuri | Solapur, Satara, Sangli and Kolhapur (Maharashtra) | 45 | 1384 Fat 7.0% | Light to deep black, often with white markings on forehead and legs; Long, sword shaped horns; Hardy, thrives well between 9°C and 42°C. |
| Nagpuri | Nagpur, Wardha (Maharashtra) | 36 - 40 | 900 Fat 7.0% | Black with white patches on face, legs and switch; Flat, long horns, curved back towards shoulder; Short nasal flap |

Source: Yadav *et al*. (2017); Dhanda (2006)

**Role of State Animal Husbandry Services**

Inspite of a large number of cattle and buffalo breeds, there was acute shortage of milk in the country and small farmers owning low productive animals were not taking good care of them. Realising the need for improving the productivity of dairy animals, the Government of India had already introduced a programme of crossbreeding of nondescript cattle way back in the 1960s. Pilot projects on crossbreeding were already carried out in India between 1910 and 1932, at National Research Institutions and Military Dairy Farms. Based on the successful performance of crossbred cows, several bilateral aided projects were initiated and the Scientific Panel of the Agriculture Ministry in 1965, recommended the upgradation of nondescript cattle with selected indigenous breeds as well as to cross breed with exotic breeds. Crossbreeding of nondescript cattle for increasing milk production was adopted as an official policy of the Government of India in 1969 (Wakchaure, *et al*, 2015).

Providing animal husbandry and veterinary services to farmers was the responsibility of the State Government, which were delivered free of cost since independence. The services included breeding cattle and buffaloes through AI, preventive vaccination, treatment of sick animals and extension services to promote new schemes and technologies. However, in the absence of greater mobility in interior rural areas, most of the services were confined to the periphery of the veterinary clinics established at the block level. With the shortage of qualified veterinary graduates, most of these technical services were gradually assigned to semi-skilled livestock supervisors. In the absence of efficient services, farmers in interior areas could not take advantage of these services. There was no scope for sale of surplus produce due to lack of marketing infrastructure. Thus, livestock development, particularly dairy husbandry, could benefit only a small population in selected pockets, while a large section of small farmers were left out. As the Government was providing free services, farmers were reluctant to pay for the services even if private services were available in the vicinity.

To promote crossbreeding for improving the progeny of low productive nondescript cattle, the State Animal Husbandry Departments established semen collection centres in potential districts in the 1950s and liquid semen was sent in thermos flasks to block-level veterinary dispensaries and farmers wanting to inseminate their cows, had to bring them to the centre. However, this programme had several drawbacks such as inferior quality bulls, low sperm motility in the semen at the time of insemination, untimely insemination whenever farmers brought their cows, high incidences of infertility problems, poor follow up and lack of technical guidance. As the conception rate of AI using liquid semen was less than 10 per cent, farmers were not attracted to take advantage of this programme. Thus, livestock husbandry remained stagnant for over 2-3 decades since independence.

The milk production in India in 1950-51 was 17 million tons, which increased to 23.2 million tons in 1972-73, with an annual increment of over 1 per cent. With per capita availability of 112 gm milk per day, acute shortage of milk, forced the Government of India to use imported milk powder for supplying reconstituted milk to restricted permit holders in four metropolitan cities. As the milk shortage continued, the National Nutritional Advisory Committee in 1960 recommended prohibition of

commercial production of milk based sweets during the summer season through the Sweet Control Order in 1965, which was effective till 1974. To address the challenge of milk shortage, Operation Flood programme was launched by the National Dairy Development Board in 1970 and special schemes were implemented by the Government of India to improve the progeny of low yielding non-descript cattle through crossbreeding and to conserve the native breeds. The Government had given major thrust on use of proven sires and improving the intensity and efficiency of the artificial insemination programme, during the Fourth Five Year Plan between 1969-1974. However the programme did not make significant impact, as the problems faced by small farmers were not addressed.

**Challenges of Poor Livestock Owners**

If the programme had to reach the poor, it was necessary to sort out the problems of small livestock holders who were generally poor. The major problems faced by small farmers are given below.

- Poor quality animals needing genetic upgradation and severe culling;
- Poor breeding services, both with respect to quality of the germplasm and timely breeding, resulting in poor conception and birth of inferior progeny;
- Nutritional deficiency due to shortage of feed and fodder;
- Poor health conditions and high rate of mortality due to lack of preventive vaccinations and timely diagnosis of health problems;
- Lack of coordinated efforts to eradicate common diseases;
- High cost of veterinary services leading to neglect of sick animals;
- Lack of technical guidance and credit facilities to improve animal husbandry practices;
- Lack of market outlets for farmers living in remote villages, resulting in lower price realisation and exploitation by middlemen and private dairies;
- Poor linkage between research institutions and farmers resulting in use of outdated technologies;

Although the Government had realised the need for addressing these problems, there were several policy and practical hurdles. As the Government was using liquid semen for AI, the total number of bulls required was large and hence, the genetic quality had to be compromised. Frozen semen technology was very new and expensive, because of extensive network required of frozen semen supply chain to reach farmers in the field. In the absence of adequate number of veterinary professionals, unskilled paravets were carrying out the AI services, without professional skills, resulting in poor conception and infertility problems. The extension services to motivate small farmers to adopt dairy husbandry for income generation, were also poor. As the

productivity of cattle was poor, farmers were reluctant to pay for any service and expected the Animal Husbandry Department to provide free services. Above all, as most of the small farmers were illiterate, they needed awareness and regular mentoring to adopt good livestock breeding and husbandry practices, which was missing in the programme implemented by the Animal Husbandry Department.

**Involvement of Civil Society Organisation in Cattle Development**

Realising the plight of small farmers who were owning low productive nondescript cows, which had the potential to provide gainful self-employment and sustainable livelihood, a civil society organization, BAIF Development Research Foundation in 1967, decided to promote cattle development for producing high yielding progeny, using low productive cattle owned by small farmers. Never before in India, had any non-government agency been engaged in cattle breeding, which was supposed to be undertaken by the Government, free of cost. Under this programme, BAIF, for the first time in India, used frozen semen for providing breeding service at the barn of small farmers, free of cost. Farmers were educated to detect heat in their cows and invite the paravet for insemination. Timely insemination using frozen semen, not only ensured higher conception rate of 48 - 50 per cent, but also helped to facilitate direct interaction between paravet and livestock owners, who needed technical guidance and mentoring from time to time. Initially, BAIF raised financial support from various donor agencies to cover the cost of operation. With the birth of new progeny, which had the potential to yield higher milk, farmers were prepared to spend on feeding and health care of their crossbred cattle. The paravet served the farmers with preventive vaccination, fodder production techniques, balanced feeding method by making optimum use of all the available resources and helped them to organize milk collection and marketing. Gradually, the programme turned out to be a self-sufficient programme, reducing the financial burden of the Government. Farmers started earning from sale of milk and surplus animals (Hegde, 2014).

The strategy was to breed low productive, nondescript cows with popular exotic breeds such as Jersey and Holstein Friesian, using imported frozen semen. Subsequently, BAIF established its own frozen semen laboratory, to produce semen of exotic and their crosses and indigenous breeds of cattle and buffaloes. The crossbred progeny could conceive at the age of 24 – 28 months and come into milk production at the age of 3 years, yielding 2500 to 3000 kg milk per lactation. F1 crossbred cows were bred with either exotic or crossbred bulls of same breed to maintain the desired exotic blood level, preferred by farmers. Those who were confident of taking good care, wanted to maintain higher exotic blood level of 75 – 87.5 per cent while small farmers were keeping the blood level restricted at 50 or 75 per cent. Maintaining 3 such cows could provide sustainable livelihood for small farmers, lifting them above poverty. Without this programme, it was not possible for small farmers to own high yielding cows as elite cows of Indian breeds were n very small number, as shown in Table 13 and it was beyond their capacity to buy such expensive cows. On the contrary, these farmers were able to produce and sell superior quality cows at higher prices. While the nondescript cows could be purchased at Rs.1000 – 3000, the crossbred cows were priced in the range of Rs. 25000 and 50000, depending on the milk yield (USD 1= Rs.68). This programme in a true sense, empowered the poor to participate in dairy development, as a reliable source of

livelihood. With the production of high yielding cattle, farmers also started disposing off unproductive animals, thereby reducing their herd size. Most of the farmers used crop residues as the basic feed thereby reducing the cost of feeding green fodder and concentrate. The dung was used as organic manure to boost their crop production. Thus, dairy husbandry demonstrated an efficient nutrition management, to enhance farm income as well as health status of the rural families, through increased consumption of milk and organic food.

**Support Services and Value Chain Development**

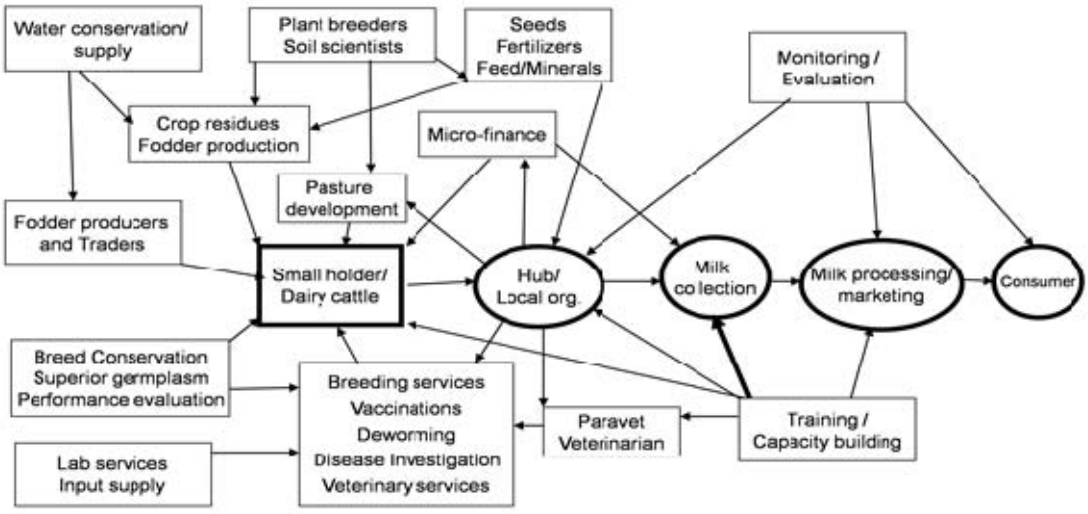
While providing breeding services for cattle, BAIF realized the need for providing services to buffaloes as well. Hence, along with cattle breeding, buffalo development was also initiated by producing frozen semen of elite buffalo breeds. This helped in improving the progeny of buffaloes, benefitting millions of small farmers to take up production of buffalo milk. With the initial success of producing improved progeny, the need for introducing other services was also felt. Efforts were made to establish linkage with various research and development institutes to facilitate backward and forward integration. This in a way, helped the small farmers to establish their value chain as shown in Figure 5. For the success of the value chain, a lead organisation should take the responsibility to coordinate the activities. The most appropriate agency is the processing unit. It is also necessary to empower farmers to play a bigger role in due course and take up processing and market on their own. As a part of the backward integration, BAIF introduced the following activities, particularly for the benefit of livestock owners living in remote villages.

**Genetic Improvement:** To improve the productivity of new progeny, BAIF initiated the progeny testing programme of bulls for semen freezing. Apart from high milk yield and fat content in milk, other quality parameters such as body type, udder shape, tolerance to heat stress, etc. were also considered while selecting the bulls. Application of Super ovulation and embryo transfer technology for production of bull mothers and bull calves was adopted. Farmers maintaining elite herds of cattle and buffalo were involved in bull calf production through planned breeding. Conservation of native breeds in their home tracts was an important consideration. This was aimed at through breeding nondescript animals as well as pure bred cows and buffaloes with elite bulls of the same breed in selected areas.

**Health Care:** Cooperative Dairy Federations and private entrepreneurs were encouraged to take up the responsibility of providing effective health care. Private veterinarians were encouraged to practice in close association with paravets engaged in providing breeding services. This enabled paravets to take up minor treatments and refer major cases to the veterinary doctor, apart from carrying out vaccinations and deworming.

**Feed Management:** Efforts were made to develop community pasture lands involving local communities through soil and water conservation, introduction of improved forage legumes, grasses and tree species and prevention of grazing. This not only eased fodder supply but also brought about greater awareness about the need for conserving fodder resources. New fodder crops such as fast growing *Leucaena, Stylo* and several legumes and grasses were introduced on barren lands. On farm studies

**Fig. 5 Dairy Value Chain**




Source: Hegde, 2014

and demonstrations were laid out to promote cultivation of food crops and varieties which yield higher quantity of crop residues, which could be used as forage. Awareness was created to make efficient use of crop residues by introducing various techniques. Decentralised complete feed production units were developed to overcome nutritional imbalance in the field. Farmers were advised to reduce their herd size and ensure optimum feeding instead of keeping a large number of underfed animals.

**Processing and Marketing of Produce:** Farmers were trained to take up small scale dairy enterprises to add value to the produce and generate additional income. Marketing of surplus livestock was equally difficult and grossly neglected. In the absence of an organised market, farmers were cheated by traders. The market for meat, wool and skin was highly scattered. Hence, direct linkage with processors and consumers was initiated.

**Capacity Building:** To promote efficient breeding services, skill oriented training courses were organised for local youth to serve as paravets and to take up breeding and minor veterinary services around their villages. Dairy farmers were organized to form their producers' groups and Cooperative Dairy Federation for establishing backward and forward linkages. Village level trainings were organized on different topics to promote good dairy husbandry practices. Farmers were linked with local development banks to avail credit facilities.

**Impact of Livestock Development Programmes**

This programme of BAIF was well accepted by 5 million families in 100,000 villages spread across several states, with 52.8% participants belonging to the category of landless, marginal and small farmers. The average milk yield of crossbred cows born to nondescripts was 2413 litres/lactation. The Jersey crosses yielded 1765 in 189 days, H.F. crosses produced 2867 litres in 252 days, while the local cows and buffaloes

yielded 208 and 610 litres of milk in 135 and 150 days respectively. The cost of milk production of nondescript cows was 100% higher than crossbred cows due to low yield (Mangurkar, 1991). BAIF clearly demonstrated the scope for ensuring sustainable livelihood of poor farmers through dairy husbandry (Hegde, 2018).

Looking to the success of the cattle development programme promoted by BAIF, the National Dairy Development Board in India and several Cooperative Dairy Federations and the Government of India widely replicated this technology across the country. Several State Governments provided financial support to operate this programme, withdrawing their breeding programme. After a few years, farmers started paying the service charges and financial support from the Government was discontinued, relieving them of this responsibility. Dairy farmers were linked with Cooperative Dairy Federations by establishing milk collection routes in remote villages. These efforts certainly gave a boost to the milk production.

By mid 1980s, crossbreeding programme of cattle was popular across the country, which was reflected in increasing milk production, as presented in Table 16. The annual growth rate in milk production which was around 1-1.5 per cent in 1960s increased to 4-6 per cent in the 1990s, which further increased to 8-9 per cent. In 2015-16, milk production in India increased to 155.5 million tonnes and to 176.35 million tonnes in 2017-18. This significant increase in milk production could be attributed to genetic improvement and composition of types of cows in the total population. In 1973-74, out of the total cattle population, 80% were nondescript and 20% cows were of 37 native breeds and the composition in 2012 changed to 59 per cent nondescript, 20 per cent indigenous breeds and 21 per cent crossbred cattle, as presented in Table 17.

**Table 16. Milk Production in India from 1950-51 to 2017-18**

| Years | Total Milk Million tons | % Increase in 10 Years |
|---|---|---|
| 1950-51 | 17.00 | |
| 1960-61 | 20.00 | 17.7 |
| 1973-74 | 23.20 | 16.0 |
| 1980-81 | 31.60 | 36.2 |
| 1990-91 | 53.90 | 70.6 |
| 2000-01 | 79.65 | 47.8 |
| 2005-06 | 95.62 | |
| 2010-11 | 121.85 | 53.0 |
| 2015-16 | 155.48 | |
| 2017-18 | 176.35 | 44.7 |

Source: Hegde, 2019

**Table 17. Composition of Different types of Cattle in India in 2011- 12**

| Sr. No. | Species | % of Total Milk Production | Yield Kg/day |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Buffalo indigenous | 35 | 5.76 |
| 2 | Buffalo non-descript | 14 | 3.80 |
| 3 | Cow indigenous | 11 | 3.41 |
| 4 | Cow non-descript | 9 | 2.16 |
| 5 | Cow cross-bred | 26 | 7.33 |
| 6 | Cow exotic | 1 | 11.21 |
| 7 | Goat | 3 | 0.45 |

Source: Government of India, 2014

In 2011-12, buffaloes, crossbred cows and indigenous cows contributed 49 per cent, 26 per cent and 21 per cent milk respectively to the total milk production, as presented in Table 18. The national daily average milk yield of crossbred cows was 7.33 kg, while the yields of indigenous breed cows, nondescript cows, buffaloes of recognised breeds and nondescript buffaloes were 3.41 kg, 2.16 kg, 5.76 kg and 3.80 kg respectively (Govt. of India, 2017). While crossbred cows made significant contribution to the income of small farmers, there was further scope to improve the yield through use of proven sire for future breeding, proper feeding and timely health care. This was achieved through investment in advance research and infrastructure, awareness among farmers and efficient delivery of services.

**Table 18. Contribution of different types of livestock to Milk Production in 2012**

| Sl. No. | Types of Cattle | Population (Million) | % of Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Exotic Cattle | 39.732 | 20.81 |
| 2 | Indigenous Breeds | 37.919 | 19.86 |
| 3 | Non- descript Cattle | 113.253 | 59.32 |
| | **Total Cattle Population** | **190.904** | **100.00** |

Source: Govt. of India, 2017

**Goat Development**

Goat is an integral part of the farming system and finds multiple use in meat, skin, milk and manure. The goat population in India has grown by about 2.4 per cent over the last census to exceed 128 million, inspite of about 15 per cent mortality and 38 per cent annual slaughter. It is essentially, a low input - low output livelihood support for most of the poor sections of the society comprising of the landless, women and small and medium farmers. Generally, these families rear 4-5 goats and the flock size tends to be larger in areas adjoining the forests. In terms of domestic and export market, the contribution of goats is high and its share is increasing gradually over the last few decades. Apart from export of hide and meat, the domestic market of meat is growing due to increasing human population and restriction on cow slaughter. However, goat

development has been given low priority and is often neglected in most of the States. The reasons for stagnation in development of goat husbandry are given below:

- Small flock size owned by small goat keepers, maintained exclusively on free grazing on community lands, resulting in poor growth;
- Indiscriminate breeding by inferior quality stray bucks, leading to genetic erosion;
- High mortality and morbidity due to absence of preventive vaccination and veterinary care and weak infrastructure to provide disease diagnosis and other support services;
- Lack of marketing network, forcing goat keepers to sell their animals to middlemen at an extremely low price;
- Lack of credit support to adopt good goat husbandry practices and absence of insurance services to cover the risk.

In the 1970s, the Government of India had promoted several goat development schemes wherein the poor families received financial support to procure female goats with a few breeding bucks. These programmes were heavily criticized as the population density of goats increased in the project areas, causing heavy burden on the biodiversity. Hence, such schemes were discontinued and no services were provided to goat keepers, except during disease outbreaks. With the negative tag of destroying the environment, no donors were willing to support goat development projects in the recent past.

**Sustainable Goat Husbandry:** Against this background, with a view to help the existing goat keepers, a pilot project was launched by BAIF in 2005 in association with the State Animal Husbandry Department in West Bengal state in the eastern part of India. The goal was to promote goat husbandry for sustainable livelihood, while improving the breed with appropriate technologies. The joint project aimed at demonstrating sound goat husbandry practices for enhancement of income of goat keepers, and upgrading their managerial skills using appropriate technical interventions through the following activities:

1. Formation of Women Goat Keepers' Groups, with 8-12 women, representing their families, together owning about 50 female goats;

2. Providing one elite buck for each group to provide breeding services for 50 goats. One of the members will maintain the buck and collect a nominal service fee to cover the cost of feeding and maintenance of the buck;

3. Appointment of a female Field Guide, preferably from the local community, who will be trained in basic goat husbandry practices, to support members of goat keepers' groups, through vaccination, deworming, castration, guidance on feeding and fodder production and to help the members to sell surplus goats. Each field guide could support 5-6 groups and she was paid by the members for the services provided. Being a female guide, the women goat keepers felt very comfortable to interact and seek solutions for their problems.

4. Demonstrations on forage production, feeding of concentrates and mineral mixture were set up in every village and a weighing balance was provided to understand the impact of various interventions.

5. The goat keepers were trained to weigh their goats from birth, to monitor their growth. They were sensitized to sell goats based on body weight. A general guideline was developed to fix the selling price at 60 per cent of the prevailing price of mutton, which empowered them to bargain for a higher price.

This programme covered 2500 participants having a population of 10,000 goats in two districts of West Bengal, namely, Burdwan and Bankura, spread over 100 villages. Field Guides served as effective link persons between the goat keepers and the external agencies. The programme could bring about a change within a short span of 8-10 months. The kids born, were of superior quality and healthy, and were vaccinated at the age of 3 months. There was significant reduction in the death of kids from 40 per cent to less than 5 per cent, mainly due to timely vaccination, higher growth rate due to better feeding, deworming, early castration of male kids and greater awareness about marketing. The goat keepers reported that their income increased by 500 per cent, without increasing the herd size.

Two guiding principles which facilitated this response, were firstly, not to distribute female goats which would increase the pressure on fodder and feed and secondly, the goat keepers should aim at restricting the flock size, ~~until~~ till they adopted stall feeding. Generally, the traditional goat keepers have a tendency to increase their flock size and let them out for free grazing, which can pose a threat to the biodiversity. Hence, rigorous culling, particularly of sick and nondescript goats could help in maintaining healthy goats of recognized breeds. This model was adopted under various programmes in India in recent years. The advantages of goat development programme were short gestation period and opportunity to help the poor and women-headed families who were the most vulnerable sections of the society (Hegde, 2014).

Like cattle, buffaloes, goats, pigs and poultry can also be promoted by organizing the livestock owners at the village level and empowering them to develop their value chain. There are many such success stories in the developing countries which can be suitably modified to suit the local situation, for wider replication.

## **Conclusion** Write Conclusions

The Indian experiences of livestock development, focussing on the opportunity to provide sustainable livelihood, has been very effective in empowering the poor. The key to success are selection of suitable technologies to suit the stakeholders, development of suitable infrastructure to develop the value chain and mentoring of small livestock owners to ensure that all the problems, both technical and business related, are addressed from time to time. As livestock husbandry is an opportunity for poor and illiterate rural families, it is essential to ensure that these family enterprises are able to generate adequate income for sustainable livelihood.

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