20. ROLE OF LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Livestock production activities provide a robust support to the economy of the enterprise of the Indian farmer by ensuring farm level diversification and flexibility in agri-business. They serve as complement to crop enterprises and supply products of food value and materials of commercial importance. The livestock production business in India is mainly in the hands of small and marginal farmers and agriculture labour, who maintain livestock as means to meet part of their family food requirements and to earn supplementary income.

The national Commission on Agriculture, therefore, laid emphasis on the role of animal husbandry development in the context of food production and income generation for the rural poor. In fact, livestock keeping forms an important component of rural development.

Livestock in Livelihood of Rural Poor

The role of livestock in the lives of the small farmers and the village poor is many fold as shown below.

1. It buffers the risks due to crop failure, un - and under employment.
2. Enhances family nutrition status, allows some domestic consumption of essential nutrients.
3. Provides regular cash income
4. Renders services - draft, manure and fuel.
5. Helps enhance socio-economic status.

But the small farmer faces several constraints in developing his livestock enterprise. Some Such constraints are listed below.

1. They possess meager resources.
2. They have limited access to resources, service, technology and market, due to their low socio-economic status.
3. Theirs is a subsistence farming/live hood.
4. They are poorly organized.
5. They are distributed over a wide area, with no/poor transport and communication facilities
6. They are generally tradition/taboo/apathy bound to allow big changes in technology towards the better.

Selection of Suitable Livestock Enterprise

Every farmer at every locality of the country cannot effectively use all types of livestock enterprises. Based on our experiences and researches, the scope of different livestock enterprises for different regions of the country can be as follows.

Cattle : Milk-Milk-shed areas, near towns and cities
Female calf rearing Scheme - Milk-shed areas, near towns and cities

Fodder Cultivation Technologies
Buffalo : Milk-Milk –Shed areas, near towns and cities
Male calf rearing – Around slaughterhouses
Sheep : Wool & Meat
Goats : Milk & Meat
Pigs : Pork-Near cities(for specific areas and people)
Poultry : Eggs-Poultry-shed areas, near cities and towns
Meat -Any area
Rabbits : Meat - Any area
Fur-Hilly areas
Allied Activities : Feed & Fodder - Production/collection
Processing - Crop by products
Hatcheries - for custom hatching in selected areas
Cold stores - for egg & meat storage in selected areas
Feed mills - for improving quality of straws.

Normally livestock are used for alleviation of poverty in rural areas via certain specifically designed schemes or programmes. The Considerations to be kept in mind in organization of livestock sector for beneficiaries in an area are as follows.

1. Select appropriate livestock enterprise for the target micro area. Some considerations desirable for this are
   (a) Enterprises generally needing low/intermediate (not intensive) technology;
   (b) Enterprises generally producing less/not perishable items;
   (c) Enterprises that fit into local “likes” and “dislikes”;
   (d) Enterprises whose products have local/nearby demand market.


3. The livestock owners need be organized.

4. Input services need be organized:
   (a) Provision of capital/loan/subsidy;
   (b) Supply of “improved” birds/animals;
   (c) Supply of feed/todder seeds/tree saplings(Subabul);
   (d) Creation / improving of infrastructure facilities for-
       a. Health cover
       b. Feed processing technology
       c. Slaughter houses
       d. Egg and meat handling/storage facilities
       e. Technology transfer
       f. Marketing facilities, etc.

Fodder Cultivation Technologies
Service & Input Requirements

It can be seen from the above that organisation of supply of inputs and services constitute the main plank of livestock development in the rural areas. The broad guidelines for development of essential inputs for livestock sector for the small farmer recommended by the Food and Agriculture Organization are as follows.

1. Improvement of fallow land for grazing through fencing controlled grazing, cultivation, fertilization.
2. Augmenting nutritive value of agriculture by-products through simple technologies: Presoaking, ensiling with Urea, Urea-Molasses-Block, compounded feeds etc.
3. Diffusion of less costly, simple, improved techniques of stock management.
4. Correction of mineral deficiencies by use of mineral mixture supplementation, salt-bricks.
5. Control of infertility and Clinical diseases.
6. Resorting to group approach in services and marketing. Some possible ways are clusters of beneficiaries, complexes(poultry, dairy), Cooperatives etc.