

CATALYSING CHANGE

Experiences in the
small ruminant
sector

Indo Swiss Small Ruminant
Development Programme

A N D H R A P R A D E S H



Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation (SDC)



inter
cooperation

Natural Resource Management
Rural Economy
Local Governance and Civil Society



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Indo Swiss Small Ruminant Development
Programme - Andhra Pradesh

SERIES 1 2005

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with due acknowledgement of the source.

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Photos
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Publisher
Intercooperation India – Delegation, Hyderabad.

Citation
Indo-Swiss National Resource Management Programme – Andhra Pradesh (2005)
Catalysing Change – Experiences in the Small Ruminant Sector
NRMPA Programme Series 1
Intercooperation Delegation, Hyderabad, India.

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FROM THE DOCUMENTATION TEAM

In order to undertake the process documentation of the Natural Resource Management Programme - Andhra Pradesh (NRMPA), the documentation team carried out a desk review of relevant project documents such as reports, training reports, review mission reports, project plan of action and progress reports. They also held discussions with project personnel in Hyderabad.

The documentation team visited a few randomly selected villages in the three districts of Mahabubnagar, Nalgonda, and Anantapur. Documentation was done through observations, discussions and interactions with the village health workers, cluster organisers, district coordinators, Managing Directors at Anantapur and Nalgonda, District Union members and rearers, etc.

This document captures the processes, the structures formed, and the experiences of the community. It also describes the different endeavours in the field, and incorporates some of the successful and not so successful stories from the course of the project tenure.

Our special thanks to Ms. K. Rebecca, Dr. Anjaiah, Ms. Satyavathi, Ms. Bhagya, Mr. Prabhakar Rao and Mr. Apparao.

We are indebted to the small ruminant rearers whose enthusiasm and zeal made us more determined to identify each and every aspect of the project, so that others could learn valuable lessons from this experience.

Documentation Team
New Concept, Hyderabad

FOREWORD

The Swiss collaboration with the Government of Andhra Pradesh in the livestock sector through its Animal Husbandry Department dates back to 1975. The major intervention started with breeding of the large ruminants (buffaloes and cows) but gradually it grew into a full-fledged programme "influencing policies of the state for the betterment of the livestock sector".

It was only in 1996 that the Indo Swiss Project AP (ISPA) together with the Animal Husbandry Department began to think about the small ruminant (sheep and goat rearers) production and management. It was not an easy task to enter this sector as sheep rearing practices are strongly influenced by social and cultural factors. Sheep rearing is an integral part of the community's social and economic activities and interventions needed to have a holistic development perspective.

The experiences gained in the Small Ruminant Development Programme under the umbrella of the Indo Swiss Natural Resources Programme – AP (2000-2005) is shared through this document. Small interventions in the selected pilot villages of three districts of Anantapur, Mahabubnagar and Nalgonda have brought about lasting effects in the areas of strengthening sheep breeders' primary cooperatives, preventive health practices, alternative feed to sheep and goat during the summer months and improving productivity of sheep through breed development.

The rearers found it difficult to see the difference between "*Kulla Sangam* (caste based association)" and the sheep breeders' cooperative. Though the Yadavas are not the poorest in the village, it was important to work with them in order to make them a part of the village structure to bring about social changes within the community. The sheep and goat rearers, who represent many castes and sub-castes, are not a close-knit group within the community. Therefore, it was not easy to initiate joint decision-making processes.

It is interesting to note that in a male dominated community organisation like the cooperative, the programme was able to introduce lamb rearing by women which gave them an opportunity to become members of the cooperative and move towards gaining control over the marketing of breeding rams.

Sheep and goat rearing is the main source of income especially in the drought-prone areas of Telangana and Rayalaseema. With recurrent droughts, long dry spells and depleting ground water resource, they become the mainstay of rural livelihoods as has been seen in the last decade in AP. Support to strengthen rearers' organisations, creating awareness for better management practices and training of youngsters in small ruminant healthcare have led to better networking with the local veterinary institutions.

This document is accompanied by a VCD that helps understand this group of rearers, who, with a little support would like to be part of the village dynamics and in its development as well.

Rupa Mukerji
Delegate, Intercooperation India
December 2005

ABBREVIATIONS

ANGRAU	Acharya NG Ranga Agricultural University
AHD	Animal Husbandry Department
CFM	Community Forest Management
DCC	District Coordination Committee
DU	District Union
GB	Governing Board
IC	Intercooperation
JD	Joint Director
JFM	Joint Forest Management
MACS	Mutually Aided Cooperative Societies
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NRMPA	Natural Resource Management Programme – Andhra Pradesh
RAAKS	Rapid Appraisal on Agriculture Knowledge Systems
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SHGs	Self-Help Groups
SPCC	State Project Coordination Committee
SRDP	Small Ruminant Development Programme
VAS	Veterinary Assistant Surgeon
VHW	Village Health Worker
VSS	Vana Samarakshana Samithi

PREFACE

The small ruminant rearers are a group of people who would like to come together in a way that can reduce mortality rate within their sheep and goat flocks and improve their own livelihoods. These ruminant rearers would like to play a role in the development of their own village.

With the thought of his/her flock of sheep and goats primarily on their minds, it was no wonder that when work began in 2000 with the sheep and goat rearers, all that they could talk of was mortality of their animals due to diseases. They showed no interest in sustainability, systems or procedures, or even their own organisation (cooperative). The first intervention that laid the foundation of trust between the project and the rearers was a massive de-worming programme, which was followed by a vaccination programme in selected villages, both of which found a good response. The rearers had to pay for the supplies and the non-rearers instigated the former to demand free supply of de-wormers and vaccines. This prompted the project to take up awareness programmes on sustainability of cooperatives, preventive health measures (economic benefits), and breed development.

Working with a highly politicised cooperative, which was exclusive to Yadavas with a negligible representation of women, was the greatest hurdle.

The constant interaction with the rearers in the villages helped achieve the outcome of the programme. The political interferences, personality clashes and inadequate awareness on cooperative development caused anxieties among the rearers and the facilitators, but it was a challenge well taken.

Networking with other organisations like the ANGRAU and AHD gave value to the interventions initiated under this programme. The NRMPA team constantly reviewed the various issues faced during the planning and implementation of the programme. It is hoped that the experiences gained will stand in good stead for all those who were involved.

Go placidly amid the noise and haste,
And remember what peace may be there in silence.
As far as possible without surrender
Be on good terms with all persons.
Speak your truth quietly and clearly;
And listen to others, even the dull and the ignorant;
They too have their story.
(Found in Old Saint Paul's Church: dated 1692 – DESIDERATA)

Rebecca Katticaren
Programme Coordinator
Indo Swiss NRMPA

PROLOGUE

Small ruminants and backyard poultry are reared primarily by the traditional small-ruminant rearing castes such as the Kurma and the Golla, the landless adivasi and the dalits – a very marginalised social group.

Although a majority of the traditional rearers belonging to the Yadava community have given up their earlier nomadic life and have settled in villages, many of them still migrate. Migration during the lean summer months, when there is no fodder available in the village, is a common feature even today. This lifestyle has led to the isolation and marginalisation of this community within the village. The community is socially backward – a majority of the rearers are illiterate; children are commonly engaged in rearing sheep and goats; and child marriages are quite widespread in the community.

As a community, except for the *Kulla Sangam* or caste-based group, the sheep and goat rearers have never been a close-knit group within the community or within the village. Thus, even though the Yadavas are not the poorest, it was important to work with them to integrate them within the village structure, and to bring about social change within the community.

The Small Ruminant Development Programme (SRDP) viewed poverty not merely as an economic issue but as a question of social development and inclusiveness. Thus the programme decided to work with the rearer community not only to make the small ruminant production process efficient, but also, through this process, help

in correcting the prevalent backward practices and the integration of the rearer community into the village structure.

Started in 2000 in Andhra Pradesh, the Small Ruminant Development Programme (SRDP) was a collaborative Programme between the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)/Intercooperation (IC) and the Government of Andhra Pradesh. Even though the programme activities were initiated with the help of NGOs, it was soon realised that working with the rearers' cooperatives was more fruitful and sustainable. Thus, instead of setting up a parallel system, the SRDP worked with the cooperatives that were formed in 1968 but were lying dormant.

The sheep rearers have been taking care of their flocks for generations and are aware of the many problems that affect their flock. They not only spend substantial time tending the flock, they also spend money regularly on medicines for the flock. However, the rearers used to suffer low productivity and efficiency. In order to make the production and rearing of sheep and goats more efficient, they needed guidance to supplement their traditional practices with scientific inputs.

The key concepts that guided the programme were:

- Improving traditional small-ruminant rearing practices, thus enhancing livelihoods.
- Supporting conservation of indigenous breeds.
- Effective mechanisms and capacity building of existing institutions to address the needs of the rearers of small ruminants.

This emphasis on improving the quality of the flocks rather than increasing the number was guided by the principle of natural resources management – of not increasing the burden on the available resources, but optimally and efficiently managing production and using natural resources.

The programme has looked at the issue of development beyond economic and livelihood enhancement and security, and incorporated a broader perspective of social inclusion that sought integration of this shepherd community within the village. It has slowly facilitated a process of change, which is helping the community manage its resources better and bring in efficiency in the small ruminant production process.

Primary societies had been in existence in most of the selected pilot villages before the programme started, but over a period of time they had become dysfunctional. Instead of wrenching out the old system and setting up a parallel system, the SRDP revived and strengthened the existing Primary Societies and restored the community's faith in this institution. In Mahabubnagar and Nalgonda, the programme worked through the District

Union, while in Anantapur, Mutually Aided Cooperative Societies (MACS) were formed. The MACS at the cluster level (cluster of 4-5 villages) were federated at the district level.

Working with the cooperatives has helped in building and strengthening grassroot organisations. Apart from the technical aspects to make rearing more efficient, the programme looked at issues of gender empowerment and devised interventions to address these.

The programme did face hurdles and roadblocks, but discussions and negotiations with the different stakeholders helped to iron these out. Gradually, it was able to establish the need for the interventions. Today, a definite change is in the making in the villages where the programme was implemented.

This document traces the process of change that the SRDP has brought about and deals with the issues it faced and its field experiences in the three districts – Mahabubnagar, Nalgonda and Anantapur of Andhra Pradesh.

This is just a beginning

Intercooperation
December 2005

Background

The animal husbandry sector plays a vital role in providing household nutritional security, raising rural household income, generating employment – and in rural transformation. Animals are very useful to the rural economy. They provide labour for cultivation, irrigation and transportation; their wool and hide are used for making fibre and leather goods; and their waste is used as manure for fertilising the soil and as fuel. Besides these, animals and poultry provide milk, meat and eggs for human consumption. Livestock provide economic security and social status to the family. The concentration of livestock in general and of small ruminants in particular, is in marginal, small and semi-medium holdings, which represent mostly the poorer sections of Indian society.

Andhra Pradesh is the fifth-largest state of India in terms of both surface area and population. About 70 per cent of the state's population is engaged in agriculture. Over 80 per cent of them are small and marginal farmers and landless labourers own a mere 35 per cent (3.5 million hectares) of the total 10 million hectares of cultivated land. About 20 million bovines (cattle and buffaloes), 15 million sheep and goats, 750,000 pigs and 65 million poultry are owned by some 10 million households engaged in agriculture. The landless, marginal, and small farmers own about 70 per cent of the livestock. Small ruminants and backyard poultry are reared primarily by the landless *adivasis*, the traditional 'meat-eating' castes such as the Kurma and the Golla, and dalits – a very marginalised social group.

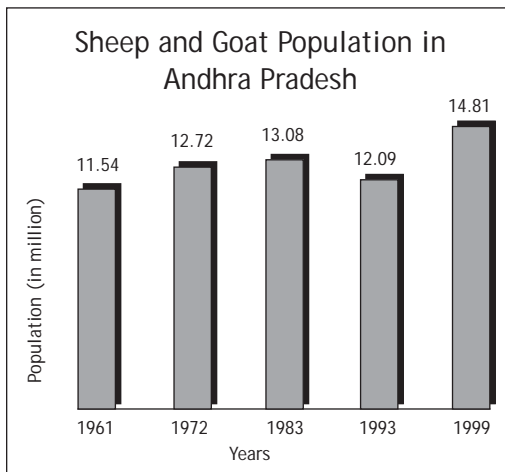
The size of a bovine herd is closely linked to private land ownership, with the number of bovines increasing with landholding size. In all agricultural settings across Andhra Pradesh, women play an important role along with men in agricultural work, food preparation and in handling almost 80 per cent of the day-to-day livestock management.

Small Ruminant Sector of Andhra Pradesh

Sheep and goats are predominant sources of livelihoods for rural households in the arid and semi-arid regions of Andhra Pradesh¹. Many factors such as climate, needs of the people, economic and social environment, and available technologies influence the small ruminant husbandry that is kept under different production systems. Small ruminants are reared mainly by the poor. The government programmes largely neglected the small ruminants sector even though a majority of the people belonging to the weaker sections depend on sheep and goat rearing.



¹ Bhagyalakshmi P., "Empowering Women in Small Ruminant Development Sector" – Report



Of the 15 million small ruminants, 65 per cent are sheep and 35 per cent are goats. The sheep population is concentrated along the hill ranges of Rayalaseema, Mahabubnagar, the central parts of Telangana and north coastal Andhra. The goat population is spread more evenly due to its better adaptability to divergent climatic conditions. However, there are a few pockets with a high goat concentration, especially in the tribal and hill belts along the northern border of the state.

The census of the small ruminant population has various limitations, which cast some doubts on its accuracy and reliability. The sheep and goat census is conducted every five years, but not at a definite time of the year. Moreover, only the total number of small ruminants is shown without any further classification of sex and age.

The poor prefer goats because of the ease of feeding them and their faster reproduction rate, but government policy in Andhra Pradesh has sought to actively discourage goat rearing (Deshingkar 2002). This policy has received further impetus due to watershed and joint forest management (now community

forest management) initiatives, where the village-level user committees are excluding poor goat-keepers from grazing on common lands.

Among the forest-dependent communities, a large number depend on livestock-rearing as a source of livelihood in the Rayalaseema and southern Telangana regions². In these regions fodder requirements for livestock are met through a variety of ways, namely, grass in common village lands, agricultural lands after the harvest, private fallow lands, and the periphery of forestlands. However, in spite of all these options available for fodder, most of the rural poor are facing difficulties in getting adequate fodder for their livestock. To a large extent-livestock owners who have large ruminants (milk animals) are able to meet their fodder requirements through cut and carry method or cultivated fodder in small plots of land. In case of small ruminant rearers who are generally landless, marginal and small landholders face difficulties in meeting their fodder needs.

The project on Community Forest Management (CFM) involved handing over parts of the state-owned forests to the communities in and around the forests by forming the Vana Samarakshana Samithi (VSS – forest protection committees), as a sustainable source of livelihood in the years to come. For the communities to get good returns from these forests, there was a need to implement several forest management practices, as the forests were degraded or semi-degraded shrub forests. For the small ruminant rearers, controlled grazing and no-entry for goats into forests meant the loss of yet

² Study Report on "Sustainable livestock and forest resources", Centre for Peoples' Forestry



another source of fodder. In addition to this, inactive village level institutions, non-functional sheep breeders' cooperative, government departments not prioritising on fodder requirements, absence of a grazing policy and neglect by development programmes have paved the way for a tussle between the rearer community and the forest department. This situation called for a reassessment of the traditional practices and intervention in a manner that was ecologically and economically sustainable.

Many cooperatives were formed in Andhra Pradesh under the Cooperative Registration Act of 1964. This gave room for political leaders and decision-makers to have a hand in the administration and management of the people's cooperatives. As per the government decision, the sheep rearers mainly belonging to the Yadava communities were enrolled as members into the Sheep Breeders' Primary Cooperative societies and federated at the district level into the District Sheep Breeders' Union. Unfortunately, the staff of the Animal Husbandry Department, who were mandated to form these cooperatives

had inadequate orientation in the cooperative movement. As such, most of the cooperatives at the village and district levels were formed keeping the *Kulla Sangam* as the base, therefore, the cooperatives both at the village and district levels did not function efficiently and went defunct. Most of the members enrolled in those cooperatives belonged to the traditional sheep-rearing community (Yadava and its subsect) but were not actively involved in the rearing process. Many did not even possess sheep or goats, which was the basic criterion to be a member of the cooperative!

Indo-Swiss Small Ruminant Development Programme

The Context

The interests of the poor, especially the marginalised community that rears goats and sheep, have not been well represented in livestock policy processes in the country. It is the rural poor who are particularly dependent on common pool resources, such as pastures and forests, for grazing their animals. Policies and approaches in other sectors, notably forestry and watershed development, have tended to be hostile to small



ruminants (particularly goats), and hence anti-poor, by imposing restrictions or bans on grazing³. The alternative – stall-feeding – tends to be less viable with small ruminants than with large ruminants.

Moreover, inappropriate animal breeding programmes, and discrimination against livestock important for the poor, also contributed to the decline of livestock-based livelihoods in Andhra Pradesh.

It was in this context that the Small Ruminant Development Programme (SRDP) was initiated in Andhra Pradesh by Intercooperation with funding from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). This five-year intervention started in 2000 and was a collaborative programme between SDC/IC and the Government of Andhra Pradesh.

The programme recognised that the livestock sector had significant potential



³ Conroy and Lobo, 2002

for improving the livelihood of landless people and small and marginal farmers. The programme also recognised that resource and institutional constraints prevented poor producers from realising the full potential of the animals they possessed. The programme therefore looked at developing effective mechanisms and building capacity of existing institutions to address the needs of the rearers of small ruminants. It focused on organisational development, management practices, support systems and research and development in the small ruminant sector.

The team at Intercooperation worked in close association with the Animal Husbandry Department of the Government of Andhra Pradesh, which was in charge of the technical component of the intervention for effective results.

Building Collaboration

Desk studies carried out during 1998-99 indicated that the districts of Anantapur, Mahabubnagar, and Nalgonda had high concentration of small ruminant population. Further, with the help of NGOs, surveys were conducted to understand the production and management practices, caste-wise composition of small ruminant rearers, market, and their way of life. This survey gave insights into the functioning of the *Kulla Sangams*, and the sheep breeders' cooperative at the village and district levels.

Understanding of the different issues of sheep and goat production was very crucial in building up collaboration with the rearers. It was an effective collaboration that would support the designing and developing of an efficient intervention plan. Therefore, before the commencement of the activities in the field, a discussion was held in 1999 with

Objectives of the Programme

1. To strengthen formal and informal organisations of sheep and goat rearers at village and district levels through organisational, institutional and human resources development
2. To improve small ruminant productivity by building up the awareness of the small ruminant rearers on management practices and by strengthening and restructuring the relevant support systems and
3. To identify suitable research and development activity for innovation.

different stakeholders on identifying the different issues of sheep and small ruminant production. This meeting, attended by various technical and social experts, helped in understanding the process of rearing small ruminants and the issues that influenced it.

Considering the situation on ground, the programme looked at working in this sector by building networks and collaborating with the existing institutions such as the AHD, DU and primary society.

The Interventions

Revitalising the District Unions

In Nalgonda, the project was able to make a good start. After two years of the pilot experiences, the GB members began to see positive results. There was a demand to expand the programme to the Primary Societies of the director's villages. Plans were made and the Cluster Organisers volunteered to monitor the programme in those villages. Therefore, 12 more villages were added to the pilot villages.

Issues in Small Ruminant Rearing in the Identified Districts

In the course of discussion, various issues and aspects of sheep production were identified as crucial to sheep rearing. These were health of the flock, feeding and breeding practices, organisational aspects of cooperative management, marketing linkages, and gender issues in the sector.

Regarding the issue of fodder and feed, the depleting grazing resources were a major concern. The continuous drought in the region had prompted traditional and non-traditional rearers to purchase more animals and therefore the concentration of sheep rearing areas increased the pressure on land. It was found that migration prevented the excessive pressure on grazing resources during the lean seasons. Watering of animals was a real issue in all surveyed villages.

The rearers invariably kept their flock size at 50% more than the required size as the mortality rate was estimated at 30-40%. High incidence of lamb mortality, diseases, and abortions were reported. Interestingly, the rearers felt the need to provide shelters to their flocks during

the hot summer months and during the monsoon, as this would prevent the incidence of disease to some extent.

Rearers very often preferred the rams from their own flock and this led to the practice of "in-breeding". The unscientific breeding strategy and practices also led to high incidence rate of abortions and lamb mortality.

Survey and interaction with rearers indicated that the rearers had no complaints about the market. They trusted the traders/ brokers/ agents/ who came to their flock site to purchase animals. This reduced the cost of marketing their animals. These agents also played a vital social role in their families and often provided the required consumption loans, etc. The programme realised, any intervention in this area would be a challenge.

The absence of a functioning cooperative was a handicap in mobilising the rearers for any joint activity. For the traditional rearers it was the *Kulla Sangam* that mattered.

To initiate the activities in the field, it was important to enlist the support of the DUs. Since the DU was the spearhead of the intervention, it was important to interact with its members and presidents. The DUs were politicised, and their members came forward in the hope of furthering their political ambitions. It was observed that an active DU president helped implement the project activities faster.

In order to reactivate the DUs, various awareness-building and capacity-building programmes were held for their members. The DU at Mahabubnagar was active and

readily came forward in support of the programme. An exposure trip for the Nalgonda District Union Governing Board Members to a fishermen's cooperative in Kerala in 2003 helped the DU members to see how an active union functioned and was able to negotiate space and help in the development of its community.

Experiences in Mahabubnagar became a lesson to be learnt. After planning the activities, when the fund flow began, the NRMPA team made frequent visits to the primary societies, mainly to create awareness on building up the rearers'

Ushering in Change

"When I was a president, the society was not active, but now with the support of the district union and the project office at Hyderabad, we are becoming more aware of not only taking good care of our flock but also on how to run the society. We meet at least once a month to discuss our problems. The new team is working and trying to improve the economic status of the rearers. This was really needed as many of us are poor and have no access to easy credit. Last year a loan of Rs. 1 lakh was given to many members to buy 20 sheep and one ram.



I feel proud to come and attend the meetings and I wish in my times somebody had come and guided us too!"

Mr. M.A. Pitchiah, Ex-President,
Primary Society, Valigonda-Nalgonda

organisations and support in book-keeping and to help the members build up strategies to make it a financially viable cooperative. In the process, the actual rearers who were members of the primary society realised that their governing board would not take interest in activities related to preventive health measures, as they were members who had no animals. A few of the rearers from the village got together, met the President of the DU, and demanded re-election, as the governing board members were not actual rearers. This created a conflict between the DU and the rearers at the village level. Slowly, the DU began to realise that the strategy adopted for creating awareness among the rearers might lead to the present leaders losing their "chairs". In the difference that arose, the DU made it very clear to the NRMPA team that the DU preferred to have control over the project and therefore the NRMPA team should not visit the village directly. The DU assured NRMPA that they would send the accounts and the reports every month, and therefore demanded the release of the entire budgeted amount. The NRMPA team had to make frequent visits to the DU and the JD office to

clarify the principle of the project and make them aware that the project was also aiming at reviving the primary societies and making it a viable rearers' organisation. The DU had no such interest. It was obvious that the DU wanted to have the power to control the members of the primary society, thus depriving them of autonomy and independence.

Among the primary societies, it was observed that once the rearers were able to perceive the benefit of the programme and see value in their association with the society, they came forward to avail the services and even demand them. In Anantapur, a few villages had active Mutually Aided Cooperative Societies (MACS). In 2004, many primary societies gave loans to their members. The rearers were also explained that they were charged interest at the rate of 15 per cent –of this 8 per cent went to the primary society and 7 per cent to the DU.

In Anantapur, the programme experienced a setback after a severe drought, when the loans given for fodder purchase, were not repaid. This problem got compounded

when a particular batch of sheep pox vaccine provided that year caused adverse reaction, and a few rearers lost many sheep and goats. This was the case across Andhra Pradesh at that time, but these rearers demanded compensation for the loss, which the programme was not able to fulfill. This incident put the process on hold, and since then the community has been hostile to the programme. Efforts were made to explain why the batch of vaccines had failed, but for the rearers it had been a great loss.

Initiating the Field Work

In order to reach out to the rearers and facilitate the revival of primary societies, it was important to have local resource persons. These local resource persons were the Cluster Organisers and the District Coordinator. One Cluster Organiser was assigned to a cluster of villages, where he had to facilitate the process of forming the primary societies and be the link between the DU and the rearers at the village level. The District Coordinator coordinated and monitored the work in

Details of loans given from District Union, Nalgonda during 2001-2005

Year	Name of the programme	No. of Units	Loan released from DU
2004	Ram-lamb Units (20 lambs)	3	69,600.00
2005	Ram-lamb Units (20 lambs)	13	117,360.00
	Sub Total	16	186,960.00
2004	Breeding Rams	94	221,420.00
2005	Breeding Rams	242	728,010.00
	Sub Total	336	949,430.00
	Grand Total	352	1,136,390.00

Details of loans given from Primary Societies, Mahabubnagar during 2001-2005

Year	Name of the programme	No. of Units	Loan released from DU
2005	Ram-lamb Units (20 lambs)	4	62,552.00
	Total	4	62,552.00
2005	Breeding Rams are not given in this district.		

Details of loans given from Federation, Anantapur during 2001-2005

Year	Name of the programme	No. of Units	Loan released from Fedn.
2003	Breeding Rams	7	24,500.00
2004	Breeding Rams	110	385,000.00
	Total	117	409,500.00

the different clusters and reported to the DU. The District Coordinator and the Cluster Organisers were directly appointed by the DU. In Anantapur, the District Federation appointed the core staff, i.e. the Managing Director, Community Organiser and Cluster Organisers. The Cluster Organiser played a crucial role in enlisting community support and guided them regarding the functioning of the primary society/cluster MACS.



It was recognised earlier on in the programme that technical support to the rearers, in the form of providing medicines and other health services for the flock, would have to go hand-in-hand with organisational development and formation of the village-based institutions. Keeping this in mind, vaccination and de-worming initiatives were undertaken. For effective vaccination and regular de-worming, it was crucial for the rearers to have a local contact source who could provide the

vaccines and de-wormer. Therefore, a Village Health Worker (VHW) was recruited from the village, usually from the same community. The VHW provided part-time service to the rearers, as his income would be only from the margin that was received from the payment the rearers made towards cost of the medicines. Only in one or two exceptional cases, the VHW was from a neighbouring village.

“I joined as a Cluster Organiser two years back. I used to regularly visit the villages and talk to the rearers and find out their problems. Initially they kept asking me why the medicines could not be given free. But after a few months of regular vaccination and de-worming, they realised that their money was being well spent and they stopped asking me that question. The local veterinary doctor at the hospital has also been very cooperative.

In the beginning, we used to visit the villages and conduct meetings but the results were not clearly seen. Now when I go back to the villages, I observe a change in the attitude of the rearers. There have been many instances where they have come and discussed issues other than that

of their flocks. Now they are more comfortable and approach us easily. After a year of working in the field, slowly the results can be seen. The community is getting more organised now, they are more aware of the common ailments and diseases and they seek help from the local doctor or us. Earlier, they were superstitious but now the instances of the rearers going to the traditional healers have also reduced substantially.

The formation of the society helped in bringing the community together and now there is collective motivation. It took lots of effort to make the Primary Society function, and slowly the effort is yielding results.”

Mr Giri, Cluster Organiser,
Nalgonda

A Village Health Worker Speaks

“As a Village Health Worker, I go regularly to the rearers and check the health of the flock. If I notice something wrong, I inform the rearer and the Cluster Organiser. As I am from the same community, interacting with the rearers has not been difficult. Though I faced many problems in collection of the money for the vaccination and de-worming, since I

was from the same village, I kept trying persistently. A few were suspicious that I was not giving enough medicine and I faced a problem on that front. I explained that earlier they were giving more quantity than was required. One day when Dr Anjaiah explained this to them, they were satisfied.”

Kondalingaiah, T.K.Pahad,
Nalgonda

The VHW was the contact point for activities related to health, at the village level. The VHW went through a three-phase intensive training programme to get acquainted with the different aspects of sheep and goat rearing. This training included classroom and practical sessions. The training went a long way in not only enhancing the knowledge of the VHWs, but also in building their confidence.

Institutional Set-up

The SRDP attempted to strengthen the decentralised structure; power was vested with the DUs at the district level and with the primary societies at the village level. This decentralised structure was considered important for implementation of the activities as this would support the rearers in the long run, though their primary societies

Experiences

Experiences in building collaboration in the selected districts of Anantapur, Mahabubnagar, and Nalgonda have been very different.

Mahabubnagar District

In July 2001, the team from NRMPA visited the office of the Joint Director,

Mahabubnagar, with the proposal of wanting to work with the District Union. He was very supportive and immediately introduced the team to the President of the Union. Within a fortnight, a governing board meeting was convened where the team briefed the members on the objectives of the programme and the principles. The emphasis was on “this project has no subsidies”. All payments made by the rearers for services rendered would build up as a “corpus fund” for the Union till the project withdrew.

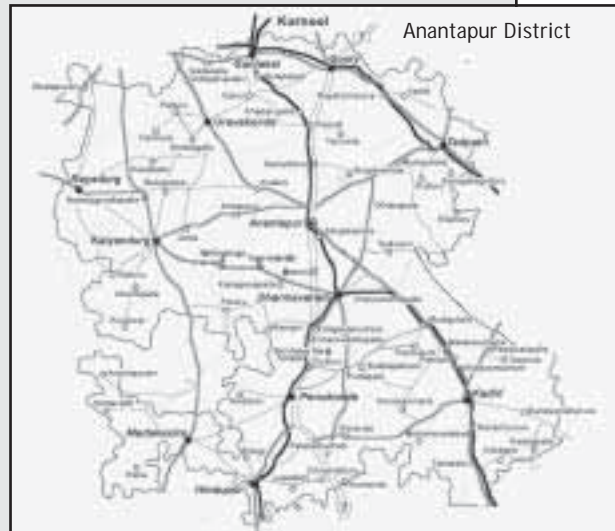
Though there were some objections, a majority of the governing board members felt the idea was good. The board was given the responsibility to select pilot villages. It was decided that a study team consisting of 18 members would visit all the constituencies and study the needs of



the rearers. A survey report was prepared and during a governing board meeting it was decided that 18 villages in two clusters would be selected for the pilot. With the support of the district AHD officials, the Union prepared a proposal for the selected villages and the proposal was submitted to the NRMPA. Staff consisting of a District Coordinator and two cluster organisers were appointed for this project by the Union. Thus began the programme activities.

Anantapur District

In 2000, with the support of the then Joint Director of AHD, the NRMPA team organised a workshop for the governing board members of the Union, on the objectives of the programme and the principles on which the programme would be implemented. The governing board (GB) members had raised a lot of issues related to the need to support the dairy sector. On enquiry, it was found that none of the governing board members had sheep and goat and therefore the project was of no interest to them. The NRMPA team continued to have meetings with the District Union GB. In June 2001, the Joint Director together with an Asst. Director came up with a proposal at the district level as well as in some selected villages. The NRMPA studied the proposals and opted to appraise the proposal for the selected villages. They visited the field and met the rearers – both men and women equally participated in the discussions. An NGO was actively working in these villages on watershed programmes as well as on primary education. The rearers very strongly opposed the idea of collaborating with the registered District Union, as they did not trust the Union members and it was far away from them too. The idea came from the



Asst. Director to register a cooperative under the newly established Mutually Aided Cooperative Societies Act, 1995. This gave freedom to the members to decide on the strategies to build up their cooperative. NRMPA supported the AD and the rearers to form the MAC Societies. Thus, four cluster MACS with 15 villages were registered in 2001. The Joint Director on the request of the NRMPA deputed the AD to work with NRMPA based at Anantapur. The four cluster MACS federated into the Anantapur District Small Ruminant Rearers MAC Federation, with its office established in Anantapur.

Nalgonda District

Interestingly, steps were initiated in Nalgonda to establish partnership with the District Union even before Anantapur and Mahabubnagar. But the Union members showed no interest in this programme. The NRMPA team was engaged in initiating activities in Mahabubnagar and Anantapur and waited for Nalgonda. In October 2002, the newly elected President of the Union approached NRMPA and requested the team to visit the Union and brief them on the programme. A



meeting was held in the campus of the Veterinary Hospital, under a tree. GB members assembled and the Joint Director and the Managing Director joined the meeting. To select the pilot villages, a study team was formed consisting of 10 members, who visited all the constituencies. A survey report from the team helped in identifying the pilot villages. A project proposal was prepared by the Union, which was accepted by the NRMPA. A staff team consisting of the District Coordinator, three cluster organisers, an accountant and an office assistant was appointed.

Table 1: SRDP intervention villages

Anantapur	PTR Palli (5 villages)	HR Palli (2 villages)	MN Palli (3 villages)	Golla (3 villages)
	Plithimreddypalli Kodipalli Varni Eguvathanda Diguvathanda	Hanimireddypalli Kaluvapalli	Muddinayanipalli Venkatampalli Kaparlapalli	Golla Pathacheruvu Seebai
Mahabubnagar	Raemaddulaa (7 villages)	Garla pahad (9 villages)		
	Raemaddula Singayapalli Turkadinne Narzaipalli Tellarallapalli Chokkayapalli Thirmalapur	Garla pahad Ranpur Malkapur Adan Venkatpur Chinnadarpalli Boyapalli Abhangapatnam Manikonda Hanwada		
Nalgonda	Indluru (6 villages)	Kakkireni (6 villages)	Anantharam (6 villages)	
	Indluru Jangareddygudam Sarvaram Mamidala Pajjuru Thipparthi	Kakkireni Munipampula Palliwada Iskilla Uttatur Ennaram	Singireddypalem Dosapadu Ananthram Anajipuram Kesaram Tallakhammpad	

and DUs would help find solutions for members at the grass-root level. The delegation of power among the various stakeholders also ensured that responsibilities were shared and that all the stakeholders were accountable and transparent.

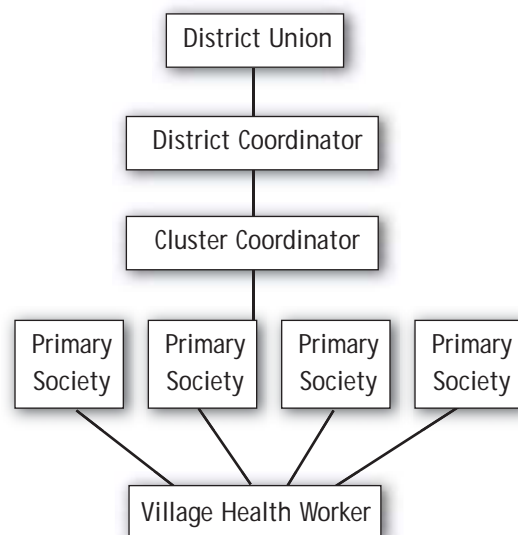
The programme was supported by a State Project Coordination Committee (SPCC) at the state level. The SPCC was established as per the bilateral agreement between the Government of Switzerland and the Government of India. The District Coordination Committees (DCC) at the district level were formed on the advice of the NRMPA mainly to keep planning and review closer to the people. The overall project coordination, support was in the hands of the Programme Office, Andhra Pradesh (POA), with a Programme Coordinator (SRDP) Technical Programme Coordinator (PC -Technical). The latter was deputed by the AHD to POA as per the bilateral agreement.

Regular cluster reviews, district reviews and state planning and review once in six months gave an impetus to the programme. The involvement of several institutions/organisations like the ANGRAU, ANTHRA, and several individuals who provided technical support and guidance provided the required direction needed for the progress of the programme.

Fund flow was an important part of the institutional set-up. Interventions were designed in a manner that would support the building up of a financially viable organisation.

Technical Inputs

The SRDP worked in close association with the AHD, which was in charge of the technical components of this intervention.



For the sheep and goat rearers, the health of their flock was the most important concern, as their livelihood depended on the well-being of their livestock. The rearers had followed traditional practices for rearing goats and sheep. Most of them were aware of the need for regular treatment of their flock, but a combination of lack of access to veterinary services and medicines, and their superstitious beliefs had prevented them from treating their livestock effectively.

The programme built on the existing practices and aimed to strengthen them with scientific and modern livestock management inputs. The rearers were aware of the various aspects of rearing, but they needed to improve management practices, streamline the process and procedures they used and rear their livestock more efficiently. The technical expertise of the programme improved their practices and made them more efficient.

The programme emphasised the provision of scientific and quality services at the rearers' doorstep (flock-site). Technical support was provided not only to inculcate the practice of

preventive health measures but also to strengthen the primary societies and in turn the DUs and to give need-based support at every level to enhance the livelihoods of the rearers. SRDP focused on the following:

- Regular vaccination and de-worming
- Increasing awareness on common ailments and diseases in a flock
- Improving rearing practices
- Improving feeding practices

Regular field visits by the veterinarian and discussions with the rearers went a long way in winning their confidence and helped in establishing the programme in the districts.

Regular Vaccination and De-worming

The programme was clear that it would not supply free medicines to the rearers and that they would have to pay for the services, mainly for the vaccines and the de-wormers. Initially, it was difficult to get the rearers' support in this regard, as they expected the programme to supply free medicines. Later on, being convinced by the impact of the medicines and seeing their healthy flock, the rearers themselves came forward to avail of the services.



Under the programme, money for de-worming had to be repaid within a week, which was difficult for the rearers. Hence, initially the rearers preferred medical shops, which gave them medicines on credit for six months. Moreover, the rearers were used to administering 10-20 ml of de-wormer per sheep, which was more than what was necessary. Under the programme, the trained VHVs started giving only 1.5ml of a particular de-wormer, which was the recommended dosage. Initially, the rearers were not satisfied with this, but over a period of time, they were able to see the difference in their flocks, and many were convinced about giving just the right dose to keep the flock healthy.

The programme made the rearers and members of the primary society aware of the advantages of receiving services from the cooperative. De-wormers and vaccines were purchased by the DU and were supplied to the primary society as per requirement. It took some time for the rearers to believe in the quality and quantity of the doses. This was not easy, since they were used to managing and administering medicines to their individual flocks. Now, with the support of the programme field staff, in some villages, the community has realised

the benefits of buying medicines collectively, for this has reduced their individual expenses on medicines.

Regular de-worming through supply of de-wormers from the project hinged on prompt collection of money by the VHWs and the Cluster Organisers and its return to the DU. Initially, recovery of the money was slow, and hence de-worming became irregular. But over the last six months, there has been a change in this scenario. The rearers, having seen the

benefit of the services rendered by the VHW, have now slowly started paying within the stipulated time. With reliable services available at their doorsteps, their dependence on unscrupulous medical shops has come down. Discussions with the shepherds have revealed that many prefer these services to the extended credit facility given by the medical shops. Consistent efforts were made to disseminate information on common ailments and diseases to the rearers. Special awareness camps were organised

Details of vaccination programme coverage during 2001-2005

Name of the disease	Year	Nalgonda	Anantapur	Mahabubnagar
E T	2001	-	7750	-
	2002	14750	3470	3906
	2003	16332	6580	-
	2004	Conducted by	6800	-
	2005	AH Dept.	12500	-
F M D	2002	7332	-	-
	2003	6716	9859	-
	2004	-	8790	-
	2005	-	-	-
PPR	2003	3393	-	-
HS	2003	-	4650	-
	2004	-	1250	-
	2005	-	8100	-
Sheep pox	2002	-	2650	-
	2003	-	3460	-
Vimeral	2003	-	480	-
	2004	-	1350	-

Details of de-worming programme coverage during 2001-2005

Name of the de-wormer	Year	Nalgonda	Anantapur	Mahabubnagar
Albendazole	2001	-	8640	-
Panacur 10%		-		-
Panacur 10%	2002	10429	6420	13246
Analgon		16389		-
Panacur 10%	2003	7060	6350	14498
Refax Plus		17068		-
Panacur 10%	2004	11465	14800	-
Analgon		21833		-
Panacur 10%	2005	18818	28800	-
Livofox		20246		2850 (1 village)

as part of this information dissemination effort. Visual pamphlets were also brought out to help the rearers understand the symptoms and take immediate steps to treat the ailments.

The VHWs were also trained to identify these ailments and seek medical help, and in case of emergency, inform the DU or the Project Office at Hyderabad.

Increasing Awareness on Common Ailments and Diseases in a Flock



Improving Rearing Practices and Promoting Indigenous Breeds

Another significant technical input by the programme was the introduction of quality breeding rams into the flock and supporting the rearers to maintain a ratio between ram and ewes as 1:25, which improved the lambing ratio.

The ratio of rams to sheep was not appropriate. For getting a good stock, the ratio of rams to sheep should be 1:25, whereas the rearers generally had only one ram for 30-40 ewes. The rearers were explained why it was important to have an appropriate ratio of rams and ewes. Consistent discussions and explanations helped the rearers understand the importance of having a better ram-ewe ratio.

It was observed that the unscientific practice of in-breeding by the rearers had resulted in a weak stock. The dangers of constant in-breeding were explained to the rearers through training programmes and simple communication messages, including songs, pamphlets, etc.

The indigenous Deccani breed of sheep, which is on the verge of extinction, is being promoted as part of an effort to conserve it. A few years ago the Nellore breed was introduced into the Deccani flock. The rearers had introduced the Nellore breed (mutton), as the change in climate (temperature) was not suitable for the Deccani (woolly); shearing had become expensive, and the wool price was not competitive.

Improving Feeding Practices

During the lush season when plenty of green fodder is available the health of the animals is well maintained. Problems arise during the summer season, when the flocks are made to walk long distances for sufficient fodder. To supplement the intake of the small ruminants together

with the ANGRAU, feed supplements were introduced into flocks. It was found that during summer months if the animal was taken for six hours of grazing and on returning home the animal could be supplemented with mixed feed made from crop residues, its weight was retained or even improved. This reduced income loss to the rearers' families.

Today there is a demand for mixed feed, which is purchased and supplied to

Building on Traditional Knowledge with Scientific Approach

"We have been traditionally rearing goats and sheep. From our fathers we have learnt how to take care of the flock. As and when needed we would give vaccination and de-wormers. But after the programme came to our village and we formed the MACS, we were told about the common ailments and diseases and how to take care of our flock. After discussions we have now realised the importance of regular vaccination and de-worming. In fact now we also have started having more rams per flock to improve the breed. We learnt about the importance of feeding and keeping the shed clean. We built better enclosures for our flocks too."

Mallikarjun, M.N. Palli,
Anantapur

Goat and Sheep Breeds in Andhra Pradesh

Goat Breeds

Andhra Pradesh does not have any specific breed of goats. All the goats are non-descriptive and locals. Osmanabadi goats are reared in Telangana in the area bordering Maharashtra.

Sheep Breeds

The Nellore breed is the meat sheep of South India. They are long legged, measuring some 76 cm in height at the shoulder, with broad bodies. The rams are horned and heavily maned. This breed is sub-divided into three breeds based on the characteristics and colour of the coat. They are Nellore Brown, Nellore Jodpi and Nellore Palla. Nellore Brown sheep have brown coloured coats. Jodipi sheep are white in the body and black on the abdomen and belly extending to the legs. Palla sheep are pure white. The Deccani breed is from the western parts of Telangana and Rayalaseema regions of the state. This is a dual-purpose breed yielding both wool (around 600-700 grams per annum in two shearings) and meat. The Bellary breed has a white body and a black face with horns. In course of time, the distinctive features of this breed have been lost. The breed is now called the black-bodied Bellary breed. The Deccani breed is predominant in Andhra Pradesh.





primary societies from where the rearers' purchase at a cost during the summer months. It is hoped that this will also encourage the rearers to slowly move away from intensive grazing and take to semi-intensive management practices.

Fodder Development

The programme did focus on fodder development in Anantapur, but the lack of cooperation of the local community made this venture a non-starter.

Some land under the common property resources was given by the government to the marginal sections of the village.

Due to drought and non-availability of other support services, these lands were lying vacant and unutilised. A significant development in Nalgonda has been that women rearers who were given ram-lamb units have leased some of these lands, where they are growing fodder to meet the requirement of the ram-lambs.

Information, Education and Communication

Different communication channels such as leaflets, posters, and training sessions were employed to convey the different aspects of rearing and feeding practices. The issues ranged from common diseases, importance of regular vaccination and de-worming, proper ram-to-sheep ratio, to conserving indigenous breeds.

In Nalgonda, a cultural team was formed, which spread the messages through songs and dance. This proved to be a very effective medium of communicating different aspects of the programme to the rearers. The various scientific messages were converted into songs and dances, which were rendered in the local folk art forms like "Palli Sudulu" with which the community could relate. These cultural teams performed in the night when the

Seeing is Believing

"I see a change in the attitude of the rearers. Earlier they were hesitant to come and clarify their doubts but for the past two years they have been coming forward and discussing their problems. They are so happy when I go and visit their sheds and inspect their flocks.

I remember how reluctant they were to come and seek services the first time we had organised a vaccination camp. The whole team waited for 3-4 hours

and nobody came forward; then one person came and slowly a few more joined. Today it is a different story. Regular training sessions have helped the rearers and they see that their lambs are not dying early. The instances of abortions have decreased. There is still room for improvement – such as the feeding practices. It is heartening to see that our efforts are slowly bearing fruit."

Dr Anjaiah, Technical Coordinator,
NRMPA



rearers were relatively free after the day's work. In many places, this cultural programme led to discussions among the community members.

Another important consideration for providing quality services was to prevent the exploitation of the rearers by the local medical shops and veterinarians. It was recognised that this was not going to be easy but consistent attempts were made

in this regard. In fact the technical inputs were seen as a synergistic process with the building of the primary societies. The objective was to improve the collective bargaining power of the community, so that they could order in bulk and thereby reduce individual expense incurred in vaccinating and de-worming their flocks. This was easier said than done, but over a period of time the rearers have begun to understand this.

Delivering the Message – The Folklore Way

"We had performed Kalajatha in many villages on various social issues. The district coordinator at Nalgonda approached us and asked us to develop a cultural skit for SRDP. I was at a loss on how to do it as we had never done anything on goats and sheep. Talking about education, against child marriage and awareness on health issues was one thing, but how were we to communicate messages about goats and sheep? Then a local teacher came to our rescue. He converted the messages into songs and we rendered them in the local folk form (of the shepherd community). We also dressed up in their traditional attire!

I still remember our first performance; we were all so sceptical about how the audience would receive it! But the reaction was very encouraging! It was a new experience and an enriching one for us. That gave us confidence and now we too know all about breeding, diseases, vaccination, etc., and sometimes after the performance the shepherds come to us and clarify doubts.

Who talks about sheep and goats? The performances and interaction at the different villages opened our eyes to their world too."

Mallesh, Cultural Troupe Member

Gender Dimension

The programme was aware that women in rearers' families played a silent but crucial role in the rearing and breeding of their flock. As in many other walks of life, here too the contribution made by women was not given the recognition it deserved. However, under the programme women from the community were encouraged to become members of the Rearers' Cooperative and take part in the activities.

The government programmes often did not yield perceptible results for want of comprehensive policies and strategies due to insufficient information about the sheep rearers' household, their organisations, social organisations and their gender division of labour⁴. As a result the extent of women's involvement with livestock has most of the time been underestimated. In fact, women frequently spend more time than their male counterparts in animal care. Women are closely involved in the caring of young lambs and sick sheep as well as other livestock kept near the homestead. Their involvement in activities related to lambing and caring for the newborn lambs is fundamental. Men's work has generally been associated with herd management and women's work with children and house. Women perform all domestic tasks, including food preparation and supporting the family with their earned daily wages.

Despite their enormous contribution, women from these families have no ownership of properties; many of them accumulated sheep and goats as important gifts (in the form of dowry) from both parents and relatives at the time of marriage. However, it is the fathers and husbands who own the stock and even

sell them. On the other hand, there are many reports of women herding sheep and goats, whose shorter grazing range does not call for women's prolonged separation from their homestead.

The Process

As an outcome of a series of consultations with women (SHG) rearers a six-step process has emerged and is being implemented for effective participation of SHG in SRDP:

1. Defined the criteria for selection of the borrowers for sanctioning the ram-lamb unit.
2. Extending capacity building programmes.
3. Purchase of ram-lamb unit.
4. Established membership of women in the Primary Society.
5. Regular monitoring and evaluation.
6. Follow-up support.

With this realisation of women's role and their contribution to small ruminant development, the idea had emerged to strengthen their inherent capacities. Apart from this, it was also thought to provide them a platform for income generation and make them effective partners in the breed development programme with ram-lamb rearing.

In this direction the NRMPA had initiated a project for women belonging to the rearers' families. In order to institutionalise women's development within the small ruminant sector it was felt necessary to work with women, organising them into self-help groups rather than working with them individually. The SHGs were formed by women way back in 2002. While the programme was stalled in Mahabubnagar the women's groups continued to come

⁴ Bhagyalakshmi P., "Empowering Women in Small Ruminant Development Sector" – Report

together, providing credit and savings to SHG members. Going back to these groups after three years helped the NRMPA team understand that the women were willing to be part of the development process.

Ram-lamb Units – The Process

Twenty rams were provided through the loan. The idea was to buy young rams (between 3-6 months-old), rear them with green fodder and supplement feed. The lambs had to be regularly de-wormed and vaccinated. When the lambs are nine months old they are examined by a veterinarian for suitability as breeding rams. If found suitable, the woman is advised to rear them for another three months when rearers would be ready to purchase them for breeding purposes. The unsuitable lambs are immediately sold off. While selling the animals the woman is obliged to replenish the stock and repay part of the loan. The cost of a 4-5 month-old ram may be Rs. 1500-2000 while that of a year-old ram could fetch Rs. 2500-3000. This way there is a regular stream of income.

In this regard a comprehensive framework was developed to understand the various dynamics of group functioning and the extent of institutional and financial capacities of these SHGs that are conducive to small ruminant development.

In order to involve and facilitate women's participation in the SRDP, it was decided to provide ram-lamb units to women. This was not seen merely as a means of improving the economic status of the family but also as a means for negotiating more space for women's rights and place in the family and eventually in the community. Loans were given for a set of 20 ram-lambs (aged >3 months) as a unit.

The idea was to help women and their families to generate income throughout the year and to meet the constant demand of breeding rams in the flocks.

Women Promoters and Self-Help Groups

In order to reach out to women in the rearer community, a few active women were nominated as women promoters in Anantapur project area. Their main duties were to collect information about the population of small ruminants in their village, and infections, if any, and to inform the VHW about it. They facilitated the formation of thrift and saving groups or self-help groups of women. Every month, each member would save Rs. 20-30 and take decisions on loans to be given to fellow members during an emergency or when needed. The women promoters were paid salaries for the first six months, but this was discontinued, because of opposition from the VHWs, who were not paid salaries.

Though the initial idea was to make these self-help groups vibrant and to actively involve them in the rearing process, in

Forming Women's Groups

"We formed the women's group three years back. Then we were told that we should start saving every month; we were also promised ram-lamb units. That never happened but the good thing is that we have continued the saving group. We save Rs. 20-30 every month. We give loans to members of the sangha at an interest of Rs. 2 for Rs. 100. These loans have been very helpful during crises. Moreover it is there with us and we do not have to go and ask any other person for our small crises and needs."

Nagamani, M.N. Palli,
Anantapur

Ram-lamb units: Selecting beneficiaries

In order to sanction a ram-lamb unit it was imperative to lay down the criteria of selection of borrowers and in this regard a poverty analysis exercise was undertaken. Initially this analysis was undertaken in Gopalakrishna sheep breeders' Primary Cooperative Society in Thirumalapur village and later extended to other SHGs in Mahabubnagar and Nalgonda districts.

This exercise helped in developing an understanding of the various socio-economic conditions of these rearer families. Many factors were studied under this exercise such as family size, educational and occupational status of the children and adults, earning pattern, land holding pattern, ownership of the house, livestock holding, the income and expenditure, loan and debt pattern and sheep rearing experiences and practices.

many cases this endeavour met with only marginal success due to other issues. However, many groups continued to function without any support from the programme and went on with the savings and thrift activity and today have an easy access to credit.

Provision of ram-lamb units to women rearers by the primary society made rams available to the community in their villages, on demand. This also helped build the confidence of the women rearers and gave them better negotiating power. In fact there have been instances where the primary society has decided to levy a surcharge of five rupees on its funding a purchase made in its village!

The ram-lamb units have helped the women to:

- Meet the breeding ram requirement locally



Empowering Women

Anjamma is a 28-year-old woman. She has two daughters and a son – all of whom are studying in the local school. Today she is a picture of confidence. In her words, "My life changed after I took the loan from the society to buy ram-lamb units. I purchased 20 rams in January and reared them and sold them at the Miriyalguda shanty.

By September I repaid the loan I had taken, and by selling rams I made a profit of Rs. 20,000.

After this many women come and ask me about what I did and how I manage the rams. Within my family too now people view me with respect. That loan changed my life in a big way. Now I am planning to take two acres of land on lease to grow fodder and ask for another loan for buying ram-lamb unit"

Anjamma, Indluru,
Nalgonda



- Become members of the cooperative and be part of the decision-making process
- Become part of the marketing process

Convergence

Support from other departments is essential to achieve success in the field. SRDP being a collaborative project between IC and AHD, the element of convergence was built in from the beginning. The technical inputs for the programme came from the AHD. In spite of this, at the field level, the cooperation from the AHD depended at times on the individuals in charge of the AH institutions.

Wherever and whenever possible collaborative awareness programmes were organised along with the AHD at the field level. Veterinary Assistants and Veterinary Assistant Surgeons (VASs) were contacted to build rapport at the field level and attempts were made to involve them in the village programmes. The Cluster Organisers interacted with them and facilitated direct interaction between the rearers and the medical staff.

Efforts were also made to interact with the Department of Forests to address issues of fodder development and grazing on common lands. The Fodder Forum was initiated in collaboration with a few NGOs and interested individuals. The Forest Department introduced a Grazing Policy while the Assembly session was on in 2002. This policy made the Fodder Forum critically look at the content of this policy and also to review its impact on the poor rearers. The content of this policy proved to be a deterrent to the livelihoods of the poor rearers of goat and sheep. A committee consisting of representatives from NRMPA, ANTHRA, and AHD approached the then Secretary of Forests and Environment to withdraw this



policy. It also accepted the responsibility to come out with a proposal that looked into not just “grazing on forest land” but also at all other suitable common land available. Thus a proposal for a study on “Fodder Production and Management” was formulated, but the Forest Department did not accept the proposal. The struggle to gain access to forest land for grazing continued.

It was in 2005 that the Centre for People’s Forestry (CPF), while studying the impact of Joint Forest Management programmes, came across the negative impact that JFM had on the livelihoods of the poor rearers. This prompted CPF to collaborate with NRMPA and initiate a pilot project in Kadapa for fodder generation and management with the rearers of those villages and the Vana Samarakshana Samithi (VSS). While such an initiative was being planned, CALPI with its RAAKS (Rapid Appraisal on Agriculture Knowledge Systems) tool approached NRMPA for a training on this tool. This gave the various stakeholders the opportunity to come together not only to learn the use of this tool but also to work together in the Kadapa project. Today the Forest Department is willing to look at the issue related to fodder in a positive way and also contribute to fodder generation and management in a big way. The programme is likely to be upscaled very soon.

Sustainable Livestock and Forest Resources

Livestock rearing, even among forest-dependent communities in VSSs and forest fringe villages in the Rayalaseema region, is a very important source of livelihood. This dependence is seen mostly among the poorest of the poor as they are landless. The communities meet their fodder needs by grazing their animals (mostly goat & sheep) in common village lands, agricultural fields and the forest. However, in recent times, shrinking grazing lands, less availability of agriculture crop waste and government land distribution programmes have increased the communities' dependence on the forests to meet the fodder needs – causing severe stress on the existing forest resources.

In such a situation through the AP Forestry Project, VSSs (forest protection committees) were formed to conserve this natural resource. Even though the project's intention was primarily to safeguard the livelihoods of forest dependent communities to have a secure future ahead it had a drastic negative impact on the landless communities who reared livestock - as they could not use VSS forest lands for grazing. In places where the VSS management

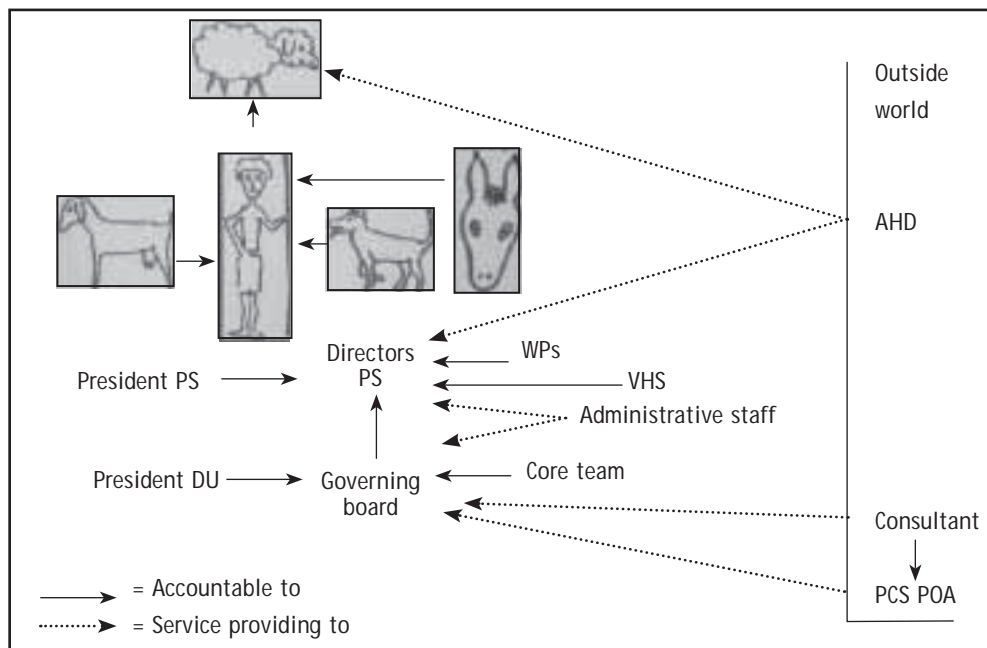
committee was stronger the number of livestock in the villages automatically reduced and where the VSS was not, there was more livestock – but never a situation where there was a balance between both.

In such a situation, the Centre for People's Forestry initiated a study in one panchayat to understand the situation of livestock rearers in VSSs, which led to the initiation of a pilot project in Mydukur mandal of Kadapa district. Broadly, the pilot is attempting to “generate and manage fodder by utilising different types of lands in and around the VSS effectively through a heterogeneous village level fodder management committee (FMC) towards the sustainability of both livestock rearers and VSS forest resources”.

Objectives of the project are two-fold:

- Encouraging fodder generation in common and farmers' lands by adopting alternate land use systems
- Strengthening community's capacities on developing and managing pasturelands, rotational grazing systems, fodder/feed banks under rainfed conditions





Monitoring and Review

Even though there has been continuous monitoring and review of the intervention from Intercooperation, one of the limitations of the programme has been an institutionalisation of the monitoring and review process. There is inadequate monitoring at the district and cluster level.

A self-reflection exercise in 2004 helped to take stock of the situation in the field. This exercise helped in an honest assessment of the programme and the roles of different team members. It also helped to develop the confidence of the team⁵. This gave a sharper focus to the programme at the district level.

One of the important findings was that while focusing on the improvement of small ruminant productivity through technical solutions, there was a need to look at the needs and priorities of sheep rearers and alternative means for reaching out to the community too. The exercise also highlighted the need to build capacity and streamline the functioning of the different partners. Another important observation

was the need to integrate the gender component into the different activities.

These findings helped to make mid-course corrections and make the programme respond to the needs at the field level.

The Result

Every development programme faces the challenge of meeting the present needs of the community and the long-term goals of development. The Small Ruminant Development Programme was a response to the need for improving small ruminant productivity by building up the small ruminant-owner's awareness on improved management practices and by strengthening and restructuring the relevant support system.

In all the three districts, the rearers' community is now better informed about the common diseases and more aware of the need for de-worming, vaccination and importance of breed development, etc. Thus the importance of breed development and better management of sheep and goats resulted in a collaborative

⁵ Self reflection exercise carried out by Ms. Annette Witteveen & Nandagopal, Picturisation by Annette

experiment involving local communities through primary societies/MACS and the District Union/MAC Federation and the Animal Husbandry Department with Inter-cooperation acting as the linchpin.

The programme has initiated a collective, sustainable approach to livelihood though there are some concerns that need to be addressed, such as the functioning of the primary society as a community collective and the non-inclusion of breeders from the non-traditional rearer community.

The significant achievement of the project has been the focus on the needs of small ruminant-owners and importance of developing programmes catering specially to them. It is a step forward that an organised body which represents the rearers is available, even though the primary societies and MACS are not as active as the programme would have desired.

The rearer community has always been, in its own way, taking good care of its flock. The programme helped in inculcating a consciousness in the community on

the importance and need for adopting a scientific process of rearing.

The programme has also been able to focus on the need for greater involvement of women from the rearer community to participate in the process of rearing and marketing.

During implementation, the programme was faced with the challenges of addressing the immediate and short-term needs of the community. These included economic needs and livelihood security, and bigger than these was the challenge of persuading local people to participate in the primary society.

The low-cost Small Ruminant Development Programme has demonstrated that a little support and guidance can go a long way in catalysing a qualitative change to empower the community.

Issues of Replicability

The programme has initiated a collective, sustainable approach to livelihood, though there are some concerns that need to be

Table 2: The rearer community – then and now

Where the community was	Where the community is today
● Inactive primary society	● Active primary society and MACS
● Inactive District Union	● Active District Union
● Heavy doses of de-wormer – six times a year (poor quality de-wormers)	● Appropriate doses of de-wormer – three times a year (quality de-wormers)
● Prominent in-breeding	● Promotion of importance of “breed development”
● High lamb mortality	● Low lamb mortality
● A skewed ram:sheep ratio (1:50)	● Better ram:sheep ratio (1:25)
● Loss of local indigenous breeds	● Revival of local indigenous breeds
● High dependence on local medical shopkeepers	● Lesser dependence on local medical shopkeepers
● Unaware and gullible	● Aware and confident
● Women rearers not recognised	● Women rearers playing a significant role

addressed, such as the functioning of the primary society as a community collective and the non-inclusion of breeders from non-traditional rearer community. The issue is important for replicating this endeavour as without the involvement of all rearers, this will only be a caste-based group (a *kulla sangam*) and not an all-inclusive body of rearers.

A crucial factor for replication would be the stability and involvement of the District Union because political connotations have played a role in every aspect of development, the small ruminant sector being no exception.

The relationship between the primary societies and the DU is not one of mutual

respect. The DU overshadows the primary society. The rearers at the society are not very assertive and get subjugated by the union presidents. Even though the DU is a representative body of the rearers, in reality its presidents and members, owing to their exposure and experience, have a patronising attitude towards the primary society members.

Another important issue to be looked at would be the link between the DU and the AHD. Often, due to a similar approach and vision of development, there is delay in implementation and positive collaboration. But as observed in SRDP, a responsive AHD and facilitative DU help in realising the vision of development of the small ruminant rearers.

THE SMALL RUMINANT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME



Started in 2000 in Andhra Pradesh, the Small Ruminant Development Programme (SRDP) was a collaborative programme between the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)/Intercooperation (IC) and the Government of Andhra Pradesh. Even though the programme activities were initiated with the help of NGOs, it was soon realised that working with the rearers' cooperatives was more fruitful and sustainable. Thus, instead of setting up a parallel system, the SRDP worked with the cooperatives that were formed in 1968 but were lying dormant.

As a community, except for the Kulla Sangam or caste-based group, the sheep and goat rearers have never been a close-knit group within the community or within the village. Thus, even though the Yadavas are not the poorest, it was important to work with them to integrate them within the village structure, and to bring about social change within the community.

The Small Ruminant Development Programme (SRDP) viewed poverty not merely as an economic issue but as a question of social development and inclusiveness. Thus the programme decided to work with the rearer community not only to make the small ruminant production process efficient, but also, through this process, help in correcting the prevalent backward practices and the integration of the rearer community into the village structure.



Swiss Agency for Development
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Natural Resource Management
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