

A Study of the Role and Contribution of Livestock in the Lives of Rural Population

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ABSTRACT

An increasing trend of different livestock population in recent years implies its popularity and support in providing sustainable income to rural families. Rural economy is greatly depended upon livestock. Livestock plays a vital role in the development and upliftment of SES of rural household. Sixty two percent of the marginal farmers were associated with livestock and according to the latest data reports, seventeen percent of their total income came from the livestock sector. Besides generating income livestock rearing also provide nutritional security and help the rural household to overcome poverty. The current study is an endeavor to understand the role and contribution of livestock in the life of people especially in rural areas.

Keywords

Livestock, SES, Rural Economy, Nutritional Security

1. INTRODUCTION

A very significant and important role is played by livestock in economy of developing nations and in earning livelihood in rural areas [1]. They provide employment and sources of income to producers as well as others that work in these value chains [2]. They act as an important asset for the poor people and especially in rural areas.

In Indian society livestock is very crucial component of rural population [3]. It is more popular among the marginal and small farmers. About 60% of marginal household are directly linked with livestock sector. It has the ability to overcome poverty, household which are associated with livestock has less chance to fall into poverty [4].

Livestock as a combination of two words live and stock was used for the first time between the period of 1650 and 1660. Livestock in simple terms is defined as, "Domesticated animals rose in an agricultural setting to produce labor and commodities such as meat, eggs, milk, fur, leather, and wool". Livestock production is considered as a source of income [5]. It serves as additional means of income for rural population. It also serves as chief contributor in economy and food security.

Livestock can give surety against threats, risk and challenges [6]. This works as an economic buffer of food supply and income in some areas and the some economies of the nation's [7]. Nevertheless, it is observed that its role as a buffer might sometimes be confined in the situation of the presence of alternatives. It can indicate planned maintenance of insurance which may reflect strategic maintenance of insurance adding up the longing to regain the productive assets [8]. Livestock in some developed countries can work as a sort of insurance even to some owners of livestock.

2. LITERATURE SURVEY

In order to adopt a strategy to diversify the sources of income, some of the crops growing farmers can produce livestock with the intension to decrease the challenges pertaining to markets, weathers and other such influencing factors [9]. It is evident from many investigations that livestock holds great significance in the areas of rural poverty in the developing nations with regards to social and economic aspects. Let us confer input of livestock [10] for the people residing in rural places. People are endowed with food as well as non-food items by the livestock [11]. These items have been discussed as under:

1. **Food:** The items of food like milk, eggs and meat are provided for the consumption of humans through livestock. The rank of our count in the production of milk is first. According to data of 2017-18, India has produced around 176.34 million tones yearly. In the same way, India has produced approximately 95.22 billion eggs along with 7.70 million tones meat yearly. With the worth of Rs. 9, 17,910 Crores, the livestock sector has contributed the significantly value output in 2016-17. Its contribution was around 31.25 percent of the total output worth of agriculture and its associated sectors. At regular prices, the output cost obtained from livestock has been approximately 31.11 percent of the total output worth gained from agriculture and its connected activities. India has produced fish around 12.61 million metric tons during the financial year of 2017-18.
2. **Skins and Fibres:** The contribution of livestock is also in the production of wool, hair, hides, and pelts. Leather is the most important product which has a very high export potential. India is producing about 41.5 million Kg of wool per annum during 2017-18.
3. **Draft:** The backbone of agriculture in India is the bullock family. Bullocks are the back bone of Indian agriculture. Despite lot of advancements in the use of mechanical power in Indian agricultural operations, the Indian farmer especially in rural areas still depend upon bullocks for various agricultural operations. The bullocks are saving a lot on fuel which is a necessary input for using mechanical power like tractors, combine harvesters etc. Pack animals like camels, horses, donkeys, ponies, mules etc are being extensively used to transport goods in different parts of the country in addition to bullocks. In situations like hilly terrains mules and ponies serve as the only alternative to transport goods. Similarly, the army has to depend upon these animals to transport various items in high areas of high altitude.

4. **Dung and other waste material from animals:** The waste material from animals like dung is used as good sources of manure. The cost of these wastes is about several crores. Moreover it can be used as fuel in the form of dung cakes and bio-gas. Dung can also be used as poor men's cement for construction purposes.
5. **Storage:** Livestock are taken as moving banks. They are so called because they have the potential to dispose off in emergency. They act as capital. In case of the labour class that does not have land and works in the fields of landowners, livestock is the only source of income or capital source for them. It is an asset and can be used as guarantee source to take loan from banks and money lenders also.
6. **Control of Weeds:** Livestock can also be used in controlling growth of bushes or weeds biologically
7. **Cultural Importance:** It is seen several times that the livestock can add glory and self-esteem to their owners when they owe high yielding animals like cows, buffaloes or any other prized animal like dog, bull etc
8. **Sports / recreation:** Livestock can also be used as a source of recreation as animals are used by their owners in various sports or other such activities. They held various competitions among them. There are several sports like cock fight, bull fight, ram fight that are banned but still are carried out on various festive occasions.
9. **Companion animals:** Dogs are treated as the most faithful and loyal animal. In modern times the concept of joint families has been replaced by nuclear families. In such cases the old parents live a solitary life and animals like dogs give them a good company.

3. CONTRIBUTION OF LIVESTOCK IN FARMERS ECONOMY

The livestock occupies a significant task in the welfare of the farmers [12]. The Indian peasants sustain the mixed farming system. This system combines the livestock and crop and the results of one sector becomes of input of another sector and hence it realizes the competence of resources [13]. The farmers are served by livestock in a number of ways.

1. **Income:** In many Indian families livestock acts as a source of supplementary income particularly poorly resource access that maintains a small number of heads of animals. In the case of milk providing income at regular basis to the farmers of the livestock by selling milk, cows and buffaloes occupy notable place. Goat and sheep like animals serve as a means of income in emergencies to satisfy the needs like repair of houses, children education, treatment of sick people and marriage [14]. The children also provide economic insurance to their owners by serving as moving banks as well as assets.
2. **Employment:** India is agriculture based country and of its economy resides on agriculture and allied sectors. Most of the population indulged in agriculture sector is either illiterate or less skilled. But the nature of agriculture is seasonal and hence it can supply employment for the highest 180 days yearly. Both having land and non-having land rely upon the livestock in order to utilize their labour during lean agricultural season [15].
3. **Food:** Food items like egg, milk, meat are some key sources of animal protein for the livestock owners. The availability of milk in terms of per capita is approximately 375 g / day; eggs are 74 / annum during 2017-18.
4. **Social security:** Animals provides communal security to the owners as they maintain their reputation in their respective societies. The families particularly the landless whose own animals are better placed in comparison to those people who do not have their own animals. It is a very common thing to gift animals in marriages in various regions of the nation. Indian culture has made its part to rear the animals. They are used for different social and religious occasions. Cows considered as a good omen in various functions, bucks, ram and chickens for sacrificing in festive seasons; Bulls and Cows are worshipped during different sacred purposes. The owners develop a sense of attachment with their animals [16].
5. **Draft:** The bullocks play a very important part in Indian agriculture. Bullocks are used in the fields for ploughing, transporting and carting by the small farmers [17].
6. **Dung:** The animal waste i.e. dung is used in a number of ways like fuel, manure, and as cement of poor people for construction [18-21].

4. CONCLUSION

A significant role is played by livestock in Indian economy. About 21 percent of the total population depends upon livestock to earn their livelihood. About sixteen percent of the total income for the small farm households is contributed by livestock as compared to total income of rural households. About two third or 66 % of the rural population earn its livelihood through livestock sector. If we talk about the total population of India, livestock provides employment to about 9 percent of its population.

5. REFERENCES

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