

Key Village Scheme | Intensive Cattle Development Project | Gosadan and Gaushala.

Topic: Cattle and Buffalo Improvement Programmes: Key Village Scheme, Intensive Cattle Development Project, Gosadan and Gaushala.

Efforts Through Specific Programmes

Several programmes were implemented by the Central Government from time to time for dairy development in India.

Important among them

- Key Village Scheme,
- Intensive Cattle Development Project etc. are discussed in this section

Key Village Scheme

The Key Village Scheme (KVS) was a novel attempt made by independent India towards the development of cattle and buffaloes. The basic aim was to bring about rapid improvement in the production potentiality of milch animals through improved breeding (multiplication of superior germ plasm), effective healthcare, and scientific management and organized marketing facilities.

It was taken up in August 1952. This was the first step initiated for systematic cattle improvement with the comprehensive programme of

- Introduction of superior bulls
- Castration of undesirable inferior bulls
- Use of artificial insemination
- Milk recording
- Improved fodder production
- Prevention and treatment of diseases
- Distribution of mineral feed supplements

Artificial Insemination (AI) was included as an integral part of the technical programme. It envisaged establishment of Key Village Blocks in breeding tracts of bovines and each

block consisted of one AI centre and four key village units to cover about 10,000 breedable cows and buffaloes. The scheme was evaluated at different phases and by 1962 it was very well realized that it failed to evince the desired impact and that too a large number of dairy plants were unable to collect sufficient quantities of milk.

The reasons for failure include establishment of centers in the states where there were no recognized breeds, creating confusion in the personnel of Animal Husbandry Departments (AHDs) by introducing lot of modifications in the scheme, inadequate attention paid to the fodder development and in establishment of marketing cells.

Intensive Cattle Development Project (ICDP)

When KVS did not yield the expected results the Government of India introduced another comprehensive project, Intensive Cattle Development Project (ICDP) almost on the similar lines of Intensive Agricultural District Programme in the year 1963.

The ICDP was started as a Special Development Programme during Third Five Year Plan. It was envisaged to locate the projects in the breeding tracts of indigenous breeds of cattle and buffaloes and in the milk sheds of large dairy projects. The establishment of ICDPs was linked with the dairy plants so as to enable the dairy plants to collect and process milk to their full capacities. Each ICDP was expected to cover one lakh breedable female bovine population and to provide necessary inputs and technical services.

Activities of ICDP

The activities include conducting Bench mark survey, Controlled breeding, Veterinary aid and disease control, Feeds and fodders and Dairy extension.

The ICDP was considered as the most determined effort to increase milk production and productivity of cows and buffaloes. However, the Programme Evaluation Organization (1970-71) in its evaluation report indicated that the ICDPs also did not succeed in accomplishing their objectives. The reasons identified were

- considerable time lag in providing organizational structure and various inputs
- set back in transferring ICDPs to state sector with financial cuts resulting in dilution of inputs and
- wastage of semen to the tune of 30 - 40 percent of the semen supplied to project area.

In addition, a dairy extension officer post created in each and every ICDP to give fillip to the extension activities was not filled up in most of the ICDPs. Even in those places where they were posted were not involved in education of livestock owners and instead their activities were confined mostly to supply of inputs or other nonextension activities.

At present the ICDPs in many states are merged with the Animal Husbandry programmes and no funds are allocated separately to ICDPs.

Gaushala

Recognizing the potential of Gaushalas (about 10000) which were engaged in rehabilitation of disowned cattle, the government of India in 1952 set up the Central Council of Gowsamvardana (CCG). Some of these gaushalas are providing quality indigenous / cross breeds / heifers / bulls at many places like Nasik, Urli, Kanchan, Amirtsar, Indore and Ahmednagar. One gaushala at Bombay has completed a century of devoted work in 1986 and has established two institutes

- One for research and
- Another for fodder research and grassland development.

The Sabarmathi Ashram gaushala founded in 1915 by Mahatma Gandhi near Ahmedabad is now being managed by NDDB and has a training centre for AI service including embryo transfer.

Objectives

To preserve the Indian cows and progeny and to breed and upgrade them for supplying plenty of unadulterated milk and milk products to the people and distribute the best female calves to the villagers.

Prepare best pedigree Indian Bulls and supply to villagers for breeding and upgrading village cows.

Production of best healthy bullocks for draught works and preserve male calves for distribution to agriculturists.

History

The Gaushala movement is synonymous with the protection of cows and cattle wealth of our country. Being practiced for the last five thousand years or so, its origin can be traced in the Vedic period when social customs and rules laid great emphasis on protection, preservation and development of cows for home, and oxen for agriculture-fields.

According to Vedic concepts, cows were considered sacrosanct and constituted material and spiritual assets of the people of the country. At that time, possession of herds of cows was the yardstick for measuring economic esteem and prosperity of an individual.

The Rishies (Ascetics) maintained Asharam Gaushalas, with hundreds of milking cows, which helped them to offer hospitality to visitors. Cow being the backbone of rural life and economy in India, care was taken for their well-being and upliftment.

Grazing areas and grasslands were kept reserved in abundance everywhere. People used to donate their lands to Gaushalas on auspicious occasions so that cows may have sufficient land for grazing. Thus the entire culture of ancient India was based on cow.

It was in 1946 that the Animal Husbandry wing of the ICAR recognised the potentiality of the valuable work done by gaushalas & pinjarapoles and recommended a plan to encourage them to be the fountainheads of milk and draught power in the country. They formulated a plan to constitute state-wise federations of Gausalas & Pinjarapoles.

Although the Gosadans established by the Government could not prove to be successful, the Goshalas and Pinjarapoles managed by the community were still running.

A report published by the 'Central Council of Gosamvardhan', New Delhi under the heading 'Gaushalas and Pinjarapoles in India' informs that, during the First Five Year Plan, there were nearly 3,000 Gaushalas and Pinjarapoles spread over the whole country. These institutions maintained over six lakh cattle at an annual cost of Rs. 7 crores.

It has been realised that, in spite of their drawbacks, these institutions could, with better organisation, very well serve as useful centres for the improvement of cattle and milk production, supplementing Government's efforts in this direction.

Gosadan

The Government of India appointed a 'Cattle Preservation and Development Committee' on November 19th, 1947 under the chairmanship of Sardar Datar Singh, Vice President of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research.

Along with other issues, the Committee also studied as to how agencies like Gaushalas and Cattle Protection Societies and Salvage Centres could be utilized for preserving cattle wealth and for promoting its development.

The Committee recommended establishment of 'Gosadans' where 'uneconomic' cattle could be housed cheaply and allowed to die naturally.

In pursuance of this recommendation a scheme for establishment of 160 Gosadans in the country was included in the first Five Year Plan with an outlay of Rs. 97.15 lakhs with the idea to segregate the old, unproductive and useless cattle from the good ones so as to control promiscuous breeding and also to relieve pressure on the limited resources of feeds and fodder available for the productive stock.

The segregated cattle are housed in proper shelters or shed and maintained on natural pastures and hay. The scheme was launched to solve the problem of degraded cattle.

One Gosadan was designed to house 2000 cattle in a land of about 4000 acres. It was estimated that a Gosadan, capable of housing 2000 cattle, would require Rs. 50,000 as non-recurring and Rs. 20,000 as recurring expenditure per annum.

The scheme could not achieve the projected targets. Only 17 Gosadans could be started during the plan period. Established in the States of Bihar, UP, Pepsu, Coorg, Bhopal, Kutch, Vindhya Pradesh, Tripura and Saurashtra, these Gosadans could have only 5293 cattle against the capacity of 34,000.

Lack of funds with the State Governments for meeting their share of expenditure, non-availability of suitable land, absence of legislative measures for the compulsory removal of unproductive cattle from owner's premises, transport difficulties etc. are the reasons generally advanced as to why the 'Gosadan' scheme could not succeed then.