

Project Submission for Visual Arts (Photography)

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Project Summary:

Goat Value Chain Development in India

Goat rearing is an important source of livelihood for 20 million resource-poor farmers in India, and an essential part of the rural economy. Close to 83% of goat rearers belong to landless, marginal and small farmers category who also happen to belong to the most poor agricultural communities in the country. Furthermore, since it is the women who are largely engaged in goat rearing, developing the sector will have a direct impact on women empowerment.

Challenges however are aplenty which need to be addressed to increase overall production. Traditional methods of rearing, overgrazing in pastoral areas, limited expertise and information, high mortality rates due to diseases, poor quality of the breeding animals, inadequate extension services, low penetration and adoption of improved technology and unorganized markets are major bottlenecks in achieving any breakthrough in the goat sector.

High dependence on monsoon for farming, declining groundwater level, erratic farm output, uncertain market prices for farm produce and poor support in terms of credit and extension are factors which is making traditional farming unviable for the smaller farmers. Forms of integrated farming with a high focus on goat rearing holds great potential in reviving livelihood opportunities for these farmers.

At the global level, India stands second in goat population and accounts for 20% of global chevon production. In India, both demand and production of chevon have shown steady increase during the last decade and prices have risen continuously and steadily. In 2017-18, India imported goat cheese worth Rs. 156 million as domestic production is low and insufficient to meet the growing demand. High demand for goat products in the national and global market is a strong indicator for supporting development of the goat sector for impacting incomes of goat rearing households and generating much needed rural employment.

Recognizing the importance of goat rearing as a critical component of livestock sector development and the role it plays economically as well as culturally and socially are vital steps in supporting the development of resource-poor farmers in India and much of South Asia. Relevant research, identifying distinctive challenges and formulating concrete steps to move ahead with a vision are core aspects of Agricultural Economics.

Strengthening of the goat value chain in regions dominated by goat rearing will be a major step forward in the years to come to support the farmers involved. This would require having institutions in place to ensure inputs and services like veterinary care, feed and fodder as well as developing quality breeds and providing bucks for breeding. Extension services will be critical in

adoption of scientific and efficient production practices. Market linkages and necessary processing units will also need to be identified and developed to ensure regular sale and optimum prices to the farmers. As majority of the farmers involved operate on an extremely small scale, community based goat rearing can be a way forward in developing the goat sector in India.

Abstract:

Goat rearing is a major livelihood activity for the resource poor farmers in India who happen to be among the poorest agricultural communities and also largely women. However, the sector faces numerous challenges in the form small scale traditional production methods, lacking input support and inefficient marketing practices. A consistently growing market and massive scope of improvement in production makes developing the value chain an effective tool of combating low farm income and falling rural employment in India. It is also a strong means of women empowerment as the sector largely employs women, though in an informal manner. With the necessary input and extension support, market linkages and developing on community based models, the goat value chain can be strengthened manifold.

These photographs are from various states in India and include farmers involved in goat rearing. I had worked with Creative Agri Solutions, an agricultural research organization in Delhi, India. We worked on multiple studies involving value chains development of the goat sector in different states in India as well as at the national level. These photographs are from my visits to these states during the duration of these research projects. They represent an intimate connection between the farmers and the goats and also the different stages in the value chains.