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Promoting Livestock Service Reform in Andhra Pradesh

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1. Background

In South Asia, PPLPI originally sought engagement in two states of India: Orissa and Andhra Pradesh, because these two states have relatively large numbers of livestock-dependent poor while the political climate seemed to offer good prospects for pro-poor livestock policy reform.

In close consultation with local stakeholders, the policy context in the two States was reviewed and a number of livestock-related policy measures affecting the poor livestock keepers and desirable changes were identified. In her assessment of the political economy of the livestock sector in Andhra Pradesh and Orissa, carried out for PPLPI, Turner (2004, PPLPI Working Paper 9) concluded that *pro-poor implementation of animal health service reforms* was one of five potential areas in which PPLPI and partners could engage.

After elections in Orissa in 2004, the political climate changed and PPLPI concentrated its activities on Andhra Pradesh, specifically on encouraging pro-poor livestock service reforms. This choice was made because service reform is an area in which the government itself was seeking to improve the situation and in which partnerships could easily be established.

In Andhra Pradesh, as in many other states of India, the state government continues to be the main provider of livestock services. Due to significant budget constraints, however, outreach of services is limited, service quality is variable, and scant attention is paid to public-goods services such as prevention and control of contagious diseases of livestock. A large proportion of the livestock disease burden is borne by the poor.

2. Main Partners & Institutional Linkages

CALPI (Capitalization of Livestock Program Experiences India), a project of the Swiss Development Co-operation (SDC), was launched about the same time as PPLPI and the two projects shared significant commonality in their overall vision and approach. Recognizing the significant overlap in their objectives, the two projects identified each other as strategic partners. PPLPI and CALPI joined efforts to facilitate assessment and reflections on livestock service delivery systems in the state of Andhra Pradesh and initiated a consultative process in partnership with the Government of Andhra Pradesh (GoAP).

In addition, the Andhra Pradesh Livestock Development Agency (APLDA) and the Natural Resource Management Program, Andhra Pradesh (NRMPA) - another state level program of SDC, provided considerable logistical, technical and networking support during the duration of the process.

The initiative functioned under a multi-stakeholder Steering Committee chaired by the top bureaucrat of the GoAP Animal Husbandry Department. The agenda of the process was deliberately kept open and flexible so that the spirit of consultation and participation prevailed and the outcome had wide ownership.

3. Process

The process followed in Andhra Pradesh involved talking to a wide range of stakeholders to ascertain their (often differing) views on effective livestock service delivery systems, discussing it with technical experts and peoples' representatives, and conducting field studies to come to an informed view on a policy intervention.

Initially, consultative workshops were organized at the village and district levels. The purpose of these consultations was to start a process of reflection and assessment of the effectiveness of the livestock service delivery system in the state by bringing together individual farmers, farmer groups, NGOs, students of Veterinary Colleges and functionaries of the Government, and to encourage and facilitate an open dialogue. In all, five district- and village-level consultations were organized at various locations in Andhra Pradesh - Musapet in Mahbubnagar, Chittoor in Chittoor District, Annavaram and Rampachodavaram in East Godavari district and some selected villages in Nalgonda district. The consultations were usually organized by the District administration, facilitated by the State Management Institute for Livestock Development Andhra Pradesh (SMILDA), and guided and supervised by the CEO, APLDA and the Director Animal Husbandry. PPLPI and CALPI provided technical and financial support.

The consultations at Musapet and Chittoor, led by APLDA and the Government of Andhra Pradesh, were structured in two parts: (a) a half-day participatory rapid appraisal in selected villages in the district by groups of professionals to study and review the present status of livestock production and services delivery and elicit farmers' perception on the types of reforms required and (b) a two-day series of interactive plenum and group discussions amongst the various stakeholders participating in the consultation to arrive at the consensus on recommendations. Village consultations usually started in the early morning carried on all day interacting with a cross section of the village communities.

Consultations took place in about 18 villages. The consultations in Rampachodavaram and Nalgonda were of shorter duration and were focused on understanding the needs and problems of tribal households and sheep and goat keepers, respectively. Subsequent to these two workshops and village consultations, some allegations were made that the consultative process was narrow and an attempt to lend legitimacy to a pre-conceived agenda of privatization. Doubts were also expressed on the sincerity and ability of government officials to lead a complex consultative process with objectivity. The project team responded to this criticism by further widening the consultative process and inviting some NGOs to lead the consultative process. Organization of the next farmer workshop - in Annavaram - was therefore shared by a local NGO and the government.

As stakeholder consultations progressed, the gaps and deficiencies in service delivery were identified. This additional information prompted the stakeholders to demand a further widening of the scope and coverage of the initiative. The resultant refinements included:

1. wider area and stakeholder coverage under the consultative process,
2. additional studies to identify the gaps and weaknesses of the Para-veterinary system,
3. formulating a legal frame for delivery of minor veterinary services,
4. capacity building programs for GoAP officers and selected NGO participants, and
5. development of an efficient and practical prevention and control strategy and an action plan for selected animal diseases of economic importance to the poor.

Table 1 provides an overview of the meetings and workshops conducted within the livestock service reform process.

Table 1 Meetings, workshops and missions organized in Andhra Pradesh within the livestock service reform process

Period	Venue	Topic/Purpose
December 2003	Mahboobnagar	Consultations with livestock farmers, local NGOs, cooperative unions, financial institutions, village level administrative units, and field level government functionaries
February 2004	Chittoor	
July 2004	Annavaram	
July 2004	Rampachodavaram	Consultations with tribal households
July 2004	Nalgonda	Consultations with sheep and goat rearers
December 2004	Ahmedabad	First training and capacity building for AP government officers from Animal Husbandry Department
May and June 2005	Multiple locations	Consultations with selected NGOs, training institutes, animal health workers and para veterinary staff
September 2005	Hyderabad	State level workshop to bring together the results of all the studies and consultations
October 2005	Ahmedabad	Second training and capacity building for AP government officers from the Animal Husbandry Department
October and November 2005	Mahbubnagar, Chittoor, Prakasam, East Godavari, Adilabad and Hyderabad	Focus group discussions with professional veterinarians
November 2005	Ahmedabad	Third training and capacity building for AP government officers from the Animal Husbandry Department
In addition there were a number of task force, steering committee and minor veterinary expert group meetings in Hyderabad.		

4. Supporting Documents

Detailed description of all workshops, meetings, studies, capacity building programs and expert group consultations are available in separate reports and documents listed below:

Sastry, NSR and S Ramalinga Raju. (2004). Para-veterinary Programs in Andhra Pradesh: A Review, Consultancy Report.

Sastry, NSR and S Ramalinga Raju. (2005). Para-veterinarians and Animal Health Workers in Andhra Pradesh: Service Delivery, Supplies, Support and Supervision, Consultancy Report

Rajasekhar, M. (2005). Control Strategy and Action Plan for Animal Diseases of Economic Importance in Andhra Pradesh; Consultancy Report

Venkatramaiah, P.V. and Ahuja V. (2005). Mainstreaming Minor Veterinary Services in Andhra Pradesh: A report based on Expert Group deliberations and consultations with key stakeholders; CALPI, Government of Andhra Pradesh, and PPLPI.

Ahuja, V. (2006). Assessment and Reflections on Livestock Service Delivery Systems in Andhra Pradesh: A Synthesis.

Ahuja V. (2006). Livestock, Livelihoods and Leadership: Building Perspectives, Facilitating Change Training Completion Report; CALPI, Government of Andhra Pradesh, and PPLPI.

5. Key Lessons

The participatory process in which the state Department of Animal Husbandry and the major stakeholder categories played an active role, improved the acceptability and implementability of the proposed reforms. Evolving a common agenda against opposing views, striking a balance among strong divergent demands of stakeholder groups and maintaining strict neutrality of the consultative process were the major challenges the project had to deal with. The process at the end threw up a number of practical lessons on the difficulties and approaches to facilitate policy change. Some of these are discussed below:

- Analytical work and process interactions are both necessary for enhancing the objectivity of policy making although the process is often much more complicated and aggressive. But there is also the danger of undermining the utility of data and analysis by the entrenched positions of the stakeholders. The challenge therefore is to understand the factors that can enhance the 'uptake of research/field evidence' into policy making.
- There is often a gap between policy design and implementation/internalisation. The internalisation can take place only if all participants are willing to learn and adapt. This inevitably means policy development will take longer but will hopefully lead to better learning and internalisation by all stakeholders during the process. Continuous internalisation through learning centred approaches can greatly facilitate bridging the gap between policy design and implementation. Also, given that there is a very long gestation period in intellectual change, it is critical that the organizations and individuals representing the next generation become an active partner in all these processes.
- Working with partners to design and facilitate policies requires an understanding and ability to operate well within these relationships and to have a robust understanding of the context in which the work is taking place. The projects therefore need to have a strategy to invest in relationship building as much as have a strategy for knowledge generation and dissemination. This requires processes and mechanisms to invest continuously in the quality of interaction and communication and ensuring mutual accountability.
- Providing space and opportunities for constant and continued reflection and respecting individual autonomy are key to effective learning. Unfortunately, those spaces are not abundant in many developing countries given the 'power and accountability relationships'. It

is therefore critical to constantly examine ways of stimulating communication and nurturing creative spaces. Otherwise these relationships will continue to block communication and prevent understanding the core issues leading to enhanced fragmentation and political alignment.

- Differences among stakeholders can be a result of divergent perspectives and understanding of reality as well as divergent ideological positions - both at organization and individual level - and the degree of mistrust and the history behind it. While differences and divergent perspectives can be a source of adding tremendous meaning to the consultative process, much historical baggage often needs to be ejected before any meaningful dialogue can take place.
- Ensuring 'ownership' by governments and maintaining effective relationships with non-government partners are necessary elements of the process. But, at the same time, fragile Government-NGO relationships create new challenges in introducing appropriate policy directions. While NGOs can be quite effective in maneuvering the political power relations and putting the concerns of the poor on political agenda, they can get equally entangled in power politics and in an attempt to build and protect their own constituency can exclude sections of poor people from key decision making processes.

The core lesson at the end was that Influencing something via building sustainable partnerships will require facilitators and project managers who are understanding of others' needs, have respect, trust and confidence about other peoples' view points, able to adapt to the dynamics of the relationship and able to make space for every one to express discontent safely. It was quite clear that when people come together directly to reflect, power factors can present a significant barrier to effective communication. How to deal with these power relationships continues to be a major challenge.

6. Contacts

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