



Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad

**A REPORT ON THE PROCEEDINGS
OF THE NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS WORKSHOP
ON
“Pastoralism in India: Challenges and Options for the Rural Poor”**

June 24, 2003

**held at
CSK Himachal Pradesh Agricultural University,
Palampur 176 062 (INDIA)**

**Indian Institute of
Management, Ahmedabad**

**Department of Agricultural Economics,
Himachal Pradesh Agricultural
University, Palampur**

BACKGROUND TO THE WORKSHOP

Pastoralism makes significant contribution to the economy of developing countries, both in terms of providing employment and income opportunities and in supplying nutrition to the rural poor, however, their economic system is constantly threatened by the inappropriate government policies. Indian pastoralism is under-researched and poorly documented and differs in structure and social organization from other parts of the world. The Livestock Production Programme (LPP) of the United Kingdom Department for International Development commissioned a Scoping Study on Pastoralism in India which reviewed various issues related to pastoralism in India and identified topics in pastoral development that represent “researchable constraints” for the Livestock Production Programme. Realizing the importance of pastoralism in the Indian economy in general the rural poor in particular, the LPP decided to launch a second Phase of the study on Indian Pastoralism and asked Prof. Vijay Paul Sharma of the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (IIMA) to submit a project proposal. The architects of the proposal (LPP/IIMA) realized the importance of feedback/inputs from key stakeholders for successful implementation of the project and proposed to organize stakeholders workshop to discuss the project proposal to seek inputs from stakeholders for wider acceptability of the project. The workshop became a reality when the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad in collaboration with Himachal Pradesh Agricultural University (HPAU), Palampur organized the Stakeholders Workshop at Himachal Pradesh Agricultural University, Palampur campus on June 24, 2003 to facilitate participation of various stakeholders and especially the representatives of the pastoralists from the region. The second workshop will be held for the western region at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad during the last week of July 2003.

SESSION I: OPENING CEREMONEY (9.00 am -1.00 p.m.)

One day Stakeholders Workshop on “**Pastoralism in India: Challenges and Options for the Rural Poor**” was organized by the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad in collaboration with Department of Agricultural Economics, Himachal Pradesh Agricultural University, Palampur on June 24, 2003. The workshop was officially inaugurated by Dr. R. P. Awasthi, Former Vice Chancellor, Dr. YS Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry, Solan (Himachal Pradesh) and attended by about 80 participants comprising the chief guest Dr. R.P. Awasthi, guest of honor, Dr. John Morton (DFID, U.K.), Prof. Vijay Paul Sharma, IIM,

Ahmedabad, Deans and Directors of HPAU, Head of Departments of constituent Colleges, officials of the state government departments including forests, animal husbandry, scientists from the university, Indian Veterinary Research Institute, Regional Centre, Indian Grassland and Fodder Research Institute Regional Centre, Palampur and the distinguished representatives of pastoral community. After formal registration of the dignitaries and delegates, Prof. P.K. Sharma, Dean, College of Agriculture, Himachal Pradesh Agricultural University extended a hearty welcome to the Chief Guest, representatives from the NRI/DFID U.K., Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, Indian Grasslands and Forage Research Institute, Palampur, officers of the Department of Forest, Indo-German Changar Dhauladhar Project, representatives of pastoral communities and delegates from different strata within the country. He stressed the importance of holding such a workshop in Himachal Pradesh where pastures constitute more than 35 per cent of the total geographical area and thus, play a key role in socio-economic development of pastoralists. He acclaimed the efforts of the Department of Agricultural Economics and expressed the gratitude to the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad and Livestock Production Programme (LPP) of DFID for organizing the workshop on hitherto neglected resource. He hoped that the experts and the stakeholders would establish close rapport and integrate in sorting out the researchable issues for the ambitious project.

Prof. G.S. Sethi, Director of Extension Education, Himachal Pradesh Agricultural University highlighted the progress of various on-going projects and programmes in the University for development of pastures and grasslands, constraints in the pasture development in the hills and emphasized the need to ameliorate their status. He stressed that pastures play an important role in the socio-economic development of the pastoralists. He informed the participants that scientists in HPAU, Palampur are working on various projects related to pasture development and grasslands improvement and many forage varieties have been released and adopted in different parts of the state under operational projects. However, the university has not worked closely with the pastoralists. The important cultivars like setaria, napier grass, lucerne, clovers, fescue grass, hybrid bajra etc. have been successfully introduced for improving the productivity and quality of forages in the owned and natural grasslands. The Himachal Pradesh Agricultural University along with other institutes in the hills is constantly endeavoring to improve the management of grasses by evolving new varieties of grasses, controlling/ eradicating weeds, sowing mixture of legumes, seeding the grasslands and fertilizing them to improve nutritional quality and other management aspects. He also

emphasized the future thrust areas of research and extension as introduction of superior germplasm, breeding high yielding quality grasses; forage-based farming systems, dissemination of technology, development of pastures of farmers and development of grassland nurseries.

Prof. V.K. Gupta, Dean Postgraduate Studies, Himachal Pradesh Agricultural University addressed the participants. He informed the participants that there are about 20 million households in India deriving their sustenance from pastures. They constitute important tribes, namely, nomads and agri-pastorals. They are generally poor and socio-economically backward. In Himachal Pradesh, there are 6 tribes in which Gaddi tribes of Bharmour and Kangra hold special significance. They are the custodians of rich traditions and cultural heritage. However, with increasing pressure on land, the pastoralists in the Himalayan region, are facing the daunting challenges to sustain their agro/silvi-pastoral based avocations due to shrinkage of pastures and forest lands. According to him developmental activities are causing more harm to ecology and environment than sheep and goat rearing. He stressed the need for fostering pastoral-based economy through literacy drive, judicious natural resource utilization, conserving traditional wisdom and cultural heritage. The pressure on the pastures has increased particularly since the closing of international border with Tibet. The sub-alpine and alpine pastures are unique features of the Himalayan eco-system. Grasses dominate the botanical composition of these pastures and legumes are scarce. Under migratory system of livestock rearing, the nomadic tribes like *Gujjars*, *Bakarwals*, *Gaddis*, *Bhotias* etc practiced continuous transhumance along with their livestock. The grazers move down gradually staying en-route for many days and they keep on moving from one place to another. At the outset of spring, movement starts again and the herds are taken to alpine and sub-alpine pastures.

Prof. Vijay Paul Sharma, IIM Ahmedabad who conceived and formulated the project proposal and was instrumental in holding this workshop, welcomed all participants. He extended a special welcome to Dr. John Morton and pastoralist representatives. Prof. Sharma gave an overview of the project, which IIMA in collaboration with other institutions is about to implement. He mentioned that project on pastoralism was conceived after a detailed discussions with Dr. Wyn Richards, Manager, Livestock Production Programme (LPP) of DFID and Dr. John Morton. The main objective of the project is “to improve the livelihoods, and strengthen the capacity of pastoralist/stakeholders communities by increasing their

participation in policy dialogue with key institutions at state and national levels”. He acknowledged the support and cooperation provided by Drs. Wyn Richards and John Morton.

He outlined the objectives and expected outcomes of the workshop. The main objective of the workshop is to “provide a forum for discussion of the proposal and improve the dialogue between the policy makers, pastoralists, researchers, development agencies, and other relevant actors. He mentioned that this workshop is different from other workshops in the sense that in this workshop we will discuss the project proposal, rather than presenting the results after the project is complete. The workshop will provide a forum where key stakeholders have opportunity to share their substantive ideas and experiences related to pastoralism. This will provide inputs on the project proposal and also open the doors for better dialogue among major stakeholders during the course of study. He then called upon the participants to contribute in the workshop deliberations. Prof. Sharma acknowledged the support given by LPP/DFID in support of this workshop. He then thanked the Vice Chancellor, HPAU, Deans, Directors, Head, Department of Agricultural Economics and others for their support without which the workshop could not have taken place.

Dr John Morton, NRI/DFID, guest of honor for the workshop, expressed his deep concern over the poor socio-economic conditions and political marginalisation of the pastoralists. He mentioned that pastoralists are socio-economically poor but their extent of poverty is perhaps lower in terms of the position of assets owned by them. However, they are vulnerable to CPRs losses and natural disasters. He highlighted various problems of pastorals and underlined the need for formulation of a suitable future policy for sustainable development of pastorals and their food and economic security for improving the quality of life. He briefed about the various on going and completed projects commissioned by the LPP/DFID in India. He also discussed about the expected outcomes of the workshop as well as project, which would be completed by December 2004.

Dr. R.P. Awasthi, Former Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Y S Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry, Solan and the chief guest of the workshop addressed the participants. He raised various issues related to degradation of pastures and made several suggestions including working in co-operation with other development departments. He stressed that *gaddis* are faced with numerous socio-economic and socio-political problems, which have dampened their interest and enthusiasm in sheep and goat rearing in the hills. The mounting human pressure

has drastically reduced the carrying capacity of land in hills. The profession of sheep and goat rearing received a serious set back with the reduction in the import duty on wool. The pastures suffer from soil erosion and nutrient loss as well as infestation of wild weeds. Unless quick and adequate corrective measures are taken, these grazing lands may become critically degraded. Looking at the current problems of shrinkage of grasslands due to weed infestation, conversion of pastures into cultivated lands, diversion to non-agricultural uses and poor quality of grasses, the need is to improve the management of grasslands and thoroughly understand the problems of pastoralists. Nourishment of grasslands/pastures through conservation and improvement of soil and water resources is the burgeoning need of the future. At the end of his speech, Dr. Awasthi declared the workshop officially open.

Dr. G.D. Vashist, Head, Department of Agricultural Economics, Himachal Pradesh Agricultural University proposed a vote of thanks to one and all and appreciated the role of all those who helped in organizing this workshop. He informed the participants of the workshop that it was a modest attempt to involve the stakeholders and people from the grassroot level in the planning process. Prof. R.K. Sharma also spoke on the occasion and conducted the proceedings of the workshop.

SESSION II: TECHNICAL SESSION (2.00-5.30 p.m.)

Chairperson: Dr. B.S. Katoch, Dean (Retd.) College of Veterinary Sciences, Palampur

Rapporteur: Dr. H. R. Sharma, Assoc. Professor, Department of Agricultural Economics, College of Agriculture, Palampur

In the technical session, Prof. Vijay Paul Sharma introduced the theme and objectives of the proposed research project by presenting the background of the project and intended expectations from the stakeholders' workshop. He made a comprehensive presentation of the project proposal and emphasized the need for involving stakeholders in the deliberations before launching the project. He made the presentation in mix of English and Hindi (local language) to facilitate more meaningful discussion keeping in view the profile of representatives of the pastoralists.

Responding to the call given by Prof. Sharma, the representatives of the Gaddi community appreciated the efforts of organizers especially Prof. Sharma for organizing such an event and involving the stakeholders. The representatives of pastoralists actively participated

in the discussion and provided important inputs. They put forward the real practical problems regarding the herding of sheep and goats such as declining prices of the wool and shrinkage of the pastures due to weeds, encroachments besides other developmental activities. The delegates also highlighted the need of water conservation measures to increase vegetative cover and regeneration of saplings and grasses in range/pasture lands. The stakeholders also suggested for a capsule training courses on sheep and goat rearing on scientific lines. They stressed the need for documenting the traditional knowledge available with the community and identify scope for commercializing this hidden wealth. Further, the representatives of the pastorals were of the view that sheep and goat rearing which is a good source of self-employment was dwindling due to inappropriate government policies such as stringent forest laws and closing of pastures in the lower hills and non-involvement of pastoralists in the policy formulation and implementation. They also reported the occurrence of diseases and heavy risk during migration due to lack of veterinary health care and other facilities.

The Divisional Forest Officer, Palampur emphatically stressed the need for active involvement of local inhabitants to inculcate participatory management among the stakeholders for the rehabilitation of degraded pastures and protection of forests to improve the well beings of pastoralists. He perceived the problem of ‘tragedy of commons’ in the exploitation of forests and pastures. The pastorals also interacted with the forest officials and agreed that the workable model has to be developed jointly by the development agencies and the people to improve the livelihoods of the pastoralist community and such workshops/projects can bring key stakeholders closer to each other and facilitate dialogue among them.

The scientists from Indian Grasslands and Fodder Research Institute (IGFPRI) Regional Centre, Palampur, Indian Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI), Regional Centre, College of Veterinary Sciences, College of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and other organizations also participated in the deliberations and made very useful contributions. Dr. John Morton appreciated the bold response and active participation of the stakeholders and was of the view that their valuable suggestions will be of great help to refine the proposal and formulate the suitable policy for their sustainable development. Dr. B.S. Katoch, Former Dean College of Veterinary Science, chairperson of the technical session summed up the discussion Based on extensive deliberations of this workshop it was felt the following researchable issues should be included in the study:

- ❖ Generate some robust estimates of pastoralist populations,
- ❖ Assess socio-economic, ecological and cultural situation of pastoralists with respect to their education, health status, assets and other socio-political and cultural institutions.
- ❖ Study of dynamics and sustainability of livelihood systems of pastorals and their role and impact on natural resources, ecology and environment
- ❖ How to improve relationship between pastoralist groups and the development institutions, which affect their livelihoods and steps to effectively organize communities to participate in policy dialogue with government and other key institutions at state and national levels
- ❖ Analysis of problems and constraints coupled with need for paradigm shift in existing policies for betterment of pastoralists
- ❖ Documentation of traditional knowledge available with the pastoralists

The workshop concluded with a vote of thanks to the chair.
