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Making policies work for the poor

A case of participatory multi-stakeholder
livestock policy development in Chhattisgarh

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Introduction

"Policy" is not a tightly defined word but a highly flexible one, used in different ways on different occasions. Policy is a definite course or method of action selected (by government, institution, group or individual) from among alternatives and in the light of given conditions to guide and, usually, to determine present and future decisions. Mostly policies are formulated in a top down manner and in many cases are the results of political decisions to achieve the 'perceived needs' of stake holders. In fact, before formulating a policy, the policy makers should essentially:

- Understand the needs and concerns of key stakeholders
- Know emerging trends in the sector and
- Implications on the resource poor



Livestock policy development in Chhattisgarh

Chhattisgarh is one of the youngest states of the Indian Union born in the year 2000. In Chhattisgarh livestock offer a significant source of livelihoods and over 80 percent of its rural households own livestock of one species or the other. The Government of Chhattisgarh (Department of Animal Husbandry), knowing the long standing experience of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and Intercooperation (IC), in the livestock sector and in policy facilitation invited CALPI (a programme of SDC-IC) to support them in developing a holistic and forward looking livestock sector policy for the state. The policy development process followed a systematic approach. It started with capacity building of key stakeholders. Before starting the actual policy

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development work, almost a year was spent in developing the capacities of key policy actors through trainings and exposure trips. This was intended to improve the motivation level, ownership, proactiveness, analytical capacity, technical, social and managerial skills and capability in implementing the policy. Top bureaucrats, politicians, researchers, farmers, field staff, NGOs and academicians were also exposed to broaden their understanding of the sector. This is one of the striking features of the policy development process in Chhattisgarh.

Capacity Development, a key strategy in policy development process

Prior to initiation of the policy development process a sensing mission visited the state and it emphasized that for developing an implementable policy there needs to be strong capacities within the implementing organization, namely the animal husbandry department. The mission pointed out that one of the key lacunae within the department is lack of interaction of staff with farmer community and other stakeholders. Also the staffs were more technical oriented than livelihood focused.

A capacity development plan spanning one year was prepared to bridge the above gap. A group of resource persons were sensitized through trainings on rural development, participatory technology development, entrepreneurship, micro enterprise development, extension and facilitation and communication skills. They were trained at premier institutes such as Institute of Rural Management Anand (IRMA), National Institute of Agricultural Extension and Management (MANAGE), Xavier Institute of Management and Business (XIMB) etc. They were also exposed to Visaka Livestock Development Agency, MYRADA, National Dairy Development Board (NDDB), Nestle and Bharatiya Agro Industries Foundation (BAIF). The key outcome was empowerment of a critical mass of people in the state who could play a proactive role in the policy development process.

Simultaneous to the capacity development process, a **Policy Steering Committee** was constituted representing heads of government departments from the green sector (livestock, agriculture, forest, watershed, irrigation) and allied sectors viz. Rural and Tribal development and Planning and Finance. This committee had the mandate to:

- Oversee the policy development process
- Provide an enabling environment for all key stakeholders to participate in the process
- Deepen the understanding of the sector as a means of livelihood for the poor and marginalized
- View the sector in a holistic way under the overall natural resource management frame.

A **Resource Group** comprising of experienced middle level officers and young dynamic officers from the Department of Animal Husbandry and representatives from NGOs and CBOs was constituted, mainly for conducting studies in various subsectors such as milk, meat, draught animals, poultry, feed and fodder, disease control, service delivery, breed development, indigenous knowledge and human and institutional setups. Based on the professional experience in the respective sub

sectors the whole resource group was divided into sub groups. The various sub groups studied the identified sub-sectors by collecting data on aspects such as markets, pro poor concerns and macro economic perspectives. This contributed to development of a 'Situational Analysis Report' on the livestock scenario in the state. In many cases, data were collected at both primary and secondary levels through field surveys. The Situational Analysis and sub-sector reports were later presented in multi-stakeholder workshops where farmers, NGOs/CBOs and private sector (feed manufacturers, commercial poultry companies and other service providers) validated it and brought in new perspectives to the policy. This was supplemented by micro planning with farmers in different agro-climatic zones, vision building exercises, state level workshops and public hearings that defined the scope, potential and priorities of the livestock sector in Chhattisgarh.

Following these activities a draft livestock policy was prepared. It was then discussed with the heads of departments, technical staff, employees' associations and farmers' representatives through workshops, seminars and consultative meetings. The draft policy was then refined, duly incorporating the feedback, and presented to the steering committee. The steering committee reviewed the draft and submitted the final version of the policy to the cabinet for approval.

A 10 year perspective plan based on the policy was also prepared for implementation.

A **consultative committee /core committee** formed within the department representing senior officers, external livestock consultants and project coordinator supported the whole policy development process through planning a roadmap, synthesizing data collected from multiple sources, presenting findings in consultative workshops and steering committee meetings and drafting the policy and the perspective plan.

An NGO (CARD) acted as the facilitating organisation at the local level. CALPI provided all necessary thematic backstopping, networking and financial supports.



Salient features of the policy process

(1) Reflecting farmer perspectives

Understanding farmers' perspectives was very crucial before developing a sound policy and hence adequate priority was given to involve farmers throughout the process. The facilitating NGO along with AHD officers conducted a primary survey using PRA/RRA, focused group discussions and environmental scanning to understand the needs of livestock farmers. The survey revealed, among other things that about 70% of rural households maintain back yard poultry and it contributes quite substantially in the livelihoods of poor farmers. Similarly there is a lot of importance for pigs for the adivasi community. Hence adequate emphasis was given in the policy for pigs and back yard poultry.

(2) Reflecting multi-stakeholder perspectives

The draft policy made was subjected to review by other key line departments such as Revenue, Finance, Forest etc. to deepen linkages on cross-cutting issues and their comments were incorporated.

(3) Social inclusion

Adivasis are indigenous people constituting 35 percent of the total population. Pig rearing and backyard poultry are the key livestock based livelihoods of the Adivasi poor. They traditionally do not drink milk. So in place of cattle adequate emphasis was given in the policy on pigs and back yard poultry.

The poor living in remote villages suffer from lack of access to services and information. Hence the policy proposes to enhance capacities of the poor producers in terms of knowledge, information and skills. This would improve their competitiveness vis-à-vis large commercial producers.

Women play an important role in livestock keeping. The policy advocates increasing women's participation in livestock production and marketing. It suggests empowering women through capacity enhancement programmes and enrolling them in SHGs.

(4) Environmental sensitivity

The policy is sensitive to the potential negative impacts of modern livestock rearing practices on the environment and suggests a systematic environmental assessment before making any major changes in management practices.



Lessons learnt

- **Stakeholder participation** is a very important component in the policy development process and it should not be underestimated. Because of public consultation and participation in the livestock policy development process, stakeholders could greatly contribute to the process and they felt empowered as their opinions and suggestions were incorporated. Having ownership of the policy made them more interested and supportive in ensuring its success. Regular participation of officers in the policy development process has broadened the overall understanding of the sector. Such understanding has further changed their attitude towards small ruminants that were neglected in the past. Presentation of the analysis of sub sector findings to steering group has strengthened their argument for correcting skewed budgetary allocation.
- The policy development processes brought about much needed **convergence** among *allied line departments* namely Rural Development, Forest, Cooperation, Finance and Planning as also NABARD and regional rural banks.
- **Past experience** of SDC-IC in facilitating livestock sector policies in Orissa, and Sikkim as also the national livestock sector perspective contributed much to the policy development process in Chhattisgarh. In Orissa, the process was more project driven. In Sikkim participation of all stake holders was ensured, however, external influence could not be totally avoided. In Chhattisgarh, the process started with thorough sensitization of stakeholders leading to a more participatory process than in the earlier two states. Thus the process of policy making was not water tight and had the scope for growth and innovation.
- An **explicit and transparent process** is essential to improve the quality of any policy. With an explicit process all participants know the standards that they must meet, at each stage of the process. For example, in the policy process in Chhattisgarh, the resource group was informed of their terms of reference and expectation from them. This enabled them to be aware of the big picture and have clarity about their role.



- The **capacity for policy making and policy implementation** depends not only on administrative leadership but to a great extent on the human and institutional arrangements that facilitate such processes. The example of Chhattisgarh shows that without proper and efficient cadre of 'policy makers and implementers', policy implementation will remain weak. Capacity development can play an effective role in enhancing policy ownership and implementability.
- Despite all efforts **specific community interests** may mean that in practice the policy is implemented in different ways within the state. With multiple interest groups involved in the policy process, there is a tendency *not to take radical steps*, rather an orientation to make small policy shifts. Some stakeholders voice frustration because they believe that the policy making process should produce more dramatic changes. On the other hand, seemingly minor changes in the short-term can have enormous long-term impacts.
- **Failure to have the right information can impede decision making.** Government officials are often faced with *information overload*. Too much information can create uncertainty and weaken decisiveness. Concise, well-organized data and analyses can facilitate the decision-making process.
- **Time factor.** The participatory policy development process in Chhattisgarh took two years, which was much longer than the normal policy making process. But it is worth spending this time considering its long term impact, holistic nature, potential to bring about significant changes in the lives of the poor and contribution to the livestock economy of the state.

Conclusion

The pro poor policy development process in Chhattisgarh is a good example of making an implementable policy that is responsive to the stakeholders' needs and the state interest, though its operationalisation is a matter influenced by many factors including resource availability. However the process followed is worth replicating in any other sectors and states.



Chhattisgarh Livestock Sector Policy Key features

- Redesign the input delivery service to serve as a protective armor around the small producers and their subsistence farming systems.
- Promote and nurture grass root level participatory bodies all over the state, organic link between the department and small holders.
- Enable grass root level organisations like Milk Producer Cooperative Societies, CBOs, Self Help Groups to act as organic link between the Department and the small holders to function as change agents for motivation, skill training, extension coordination and value addition wherever necessary.
- Equip and empower the small producers with information and skills to maximize returns from their household livestock enterprises through appropriate technologies and self-help approach to problem solving.
- Empower the underprivileged, especially women and resource poor rural households to participate in the livestock production process to reduce poverty and social economic inequalities.
- Minimize negative environmental externalities of modernization of livestock sector through appropriate technological, institutional and policy interventions. Conserve and develop the indigenous livestock and poultry bio-diversity in situ preferably with community participation.
- Encourage growth and modernization of the State Livestock Sector in a well-balanced format, where all species of livestock are allowed to grow and develop in proportion to their livelihood intensity and potential to enhance livelihoods; not merely in proportion to their population size.

The Knowledge Management Platform aims at improving the access to knowledge of stakeholders in the domains of Livestock Livelihood and Environment; Local Governance and Civil Society; and Climate Change and Adaptation. Through this platform we seek to capture, analyse and consolidate evidence based lessons that can help address some of the development challenges before us. We welcome your suggestions to improve the content of the website and the platform, which may please be sent to:

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