

Livestock Development Federation (LIFE-TN) Network in Tamilnadu

- For strengthening the livestock farmers on primary healthcare services and preventive solutions (such as de-worming and vaccinations of birds) available through LWC`s

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Introduction: -

The Tamilnadu livestock development project (TANLIP), originally called as PULDEP (Pudukkottai Livestock Development Project) with DANIDA assistance has been striving for making the basic veterinary services available at the door steps of the rural farming communities, especially in the more remote and inaccessible parts of 5 districts (Tuticorin, Ramnad, Sivagangai, Pudukkottai and Virudhunager) in Tamilnadu since 1989. The project was pilot-tested in 3 blocks of Pudukkottai district in 1989 to 1997 and up scaled to 5 more districts in 1998 to 2003, in a phased manner.

The basic veterinary healthcare delivery system is catered by the trained Link Worker Couples in the remote villages. Since the basic Animal Husbandry services are made available to the farmers at their doorsteps, the delivery system has won the acceptance of the livestock farmers leading to an increasing trend in more birds and small ruminants, **particularly in the case of back yard poultry**. The LWCs have won the confidence among the livestock farmers for their role in bringing down the morbidity and mortality rates of the livestock of small animals in their villages. The lessons learnt from the **Integrated Livestock development projects** are given in the **Annexure-I**.

But the increasing trend and the acceptability behaviour is not uniform in all the villages / area due to many factors. The services of the LWCs have to be made continuously available and the acceptance of the livestock farmers has to be improved, due to following reasons.

- ❖ Farmers have to be further motivated in rearing livestock for livelihood sustainability.
- ❖ Accepting the services of LWCs at very minimal cost and thereby securing a larger income from the assets has to be still taught well.

- ❖ The economical benefit (which is very cost-effective) of the services of the LWCs has to be well propagated at the grassroots level.
- ❖ The level of awareness on the vital role of livestock to upkeep the rural economy has to be strengthened.
- ❖ Danida had only worked with the community for a period of 12 to 24 months, and it has touched the tip of the community.
- ❖ In order to strengthen the livelihood systems, lot more have to be done like arranging marketing support for the poor people in the remote villages, promoting better input supply for the trained LWCs, etc.

In the meantime Danida withdrew from the project, on the expiry of the agreement with Government of India on 31-01-2004. In order to achieve better results, and to strengthen the available manpower, LIFE was promoted by building up the structures from the field.

At the block level, **federation of LWCs was promoted** with the following objectives.

- To give a chance for the LWCs to come together at regular intervals,
- To continue to excel in their services for the poor farmers in the rural areas,
- To strive for more knowledge and exposure through training and field visits,
- To continue to assist the livestock farmers in taking up better marketing and innovative methods.

The support required at the LWC level is given below:

- ❖ They are to be recognized by the community by paying the service charges.
- ❖ They need to get accepted in the community in rendering basic livestock services.
- ❖ They require basic inputs, such as vaccines at periodic intervals, de-worming medicines, etc. at an affordable cost. (May be an organization could help in procuring the drugs and vaccines at a wholesale price and distribute at a competitive price).
- ❖ Periodical advice and refresher training have to be provided to the LWCs motivating them to work better.
- ❖ LWC needs to be sustained by enabling him to have a flair for this work and a notable earning from this work.

Role of the LIFE-TN Network:

1. Initiating various activities for sustaining the LWC federations in all the Blocks such as research, Assistance in marketing of Animal Husbandry products, Lobbying and advocacy, taking up innovative schemes, for example cattle insurance, etc) supply of inputs, etc.
2. Ensuring effective functioning of the LWCs to increase the productivity of the animals, by
 - Arranging/procuring standard medicines for the LWCs and make sure it is available at all times,
 - Providing training at regular intervals on innovative and alternative medicines,
 - Promoting low/no cost technologies related to livestock,
 - Working for improved feed and fodder,
 - Promoting grass-root level co-operatives/local production,
3. Establishing Linkage with various stakeholders (Cross cultural learning and sharing).
4. Creating a Database in Animal Husbandry and related areas.
5. Sharing of Various success stories among ourselves/with outsiders.
6. Linking LWC federations with Government and other agencies.
7. Promoting insurance for livestock.
8. Intensification of animal and animal products marketing.
9. Planning action research in the livestock sector.

Action Plan for the future

- ❖ Identifying issues related to basic LWC functions and thereby develop suitable audiovisual programmes.
- ❖ Initiating the Data Base and creating a General format
- ❖ Supplying of Input to the LWCs.
- ❖ Starting of a newsletter for knowledge sharing and LWCs are the primary target audience.
- ❖ Reviewing Animal Husbandry policy and try to revive/refine the same.
- ❖ Collection and Sharing of Animal Husbandry related schemes.
- ❖ Taking various steps like exhibitions at Block level on Animal Husbandry activities, organising exposure trips, etc.
- ❖ Sharing of good and successful initiations among the members.
- ❖ Block Level campaigning on veterinary care, and educating the public on the services available.
- ❖ Setting up of the freezer to store and distribute RDVK vaccines at Madurai. For this an office has been established at Madurai. This has been achieved.

Support required for LIFE-TN Network:

- Training and exposure visits for LWC federation members, selective/progressive livestock farmers, leaders and LIFE-TN network members,
- Undertaking marketing research for marketing the desi birds, eggs, etc, and taking up pilot projects,
- Providing support to the collaborating NGOs to strengthen the grass-root level structures,
- Initiating database and documentation of best practices,
- Promoting LIFE resource center for guiding the LWCs trained in other districts of Tamilnadu under replication programme,
- Arranging regular flow of inputs like vaccines, drugs, etc to the LWCs at an affordable cost,
- To continuously monitor the functioning of LWCs to excel in their work.

Annexure-I*

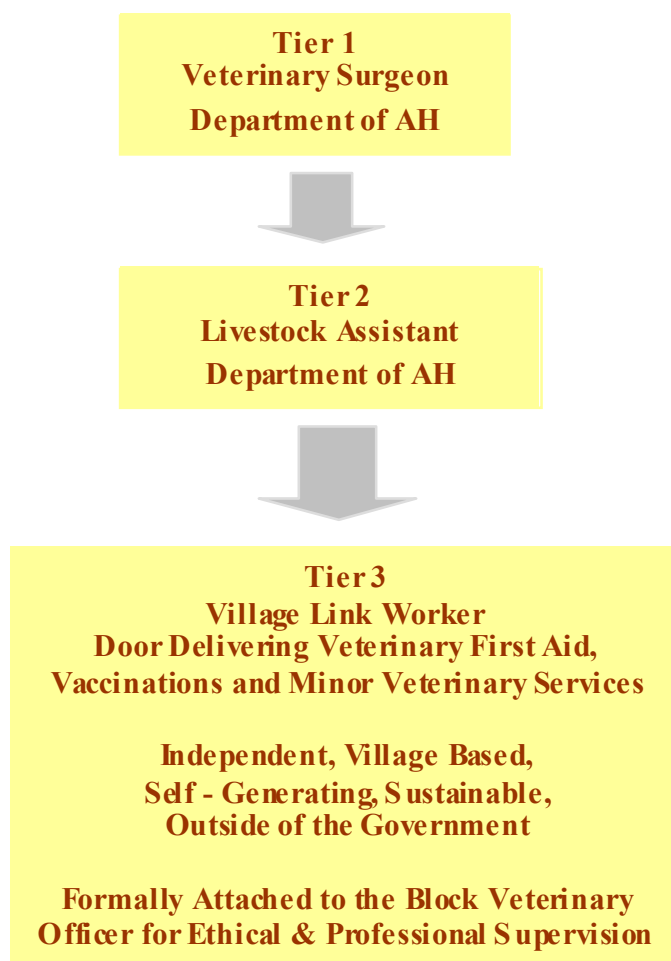
Lessons Learned from the ILDPs

(* A draft document presented in the National level seminar by Dr.M.P.G.Kurup, Livestock consultant)

Integrated Livestock Development Projects implemented over the past two decades in the three states of Tamil Nadu, Orissa and Chhattisgarh have in their wake introduced several no-cost / low-cost technologies relevant to small holder livestock production; several structural and procedural models for farmer-to-farmer livestock extension, decentralised low cost livestock services delivery and for instant cash credit supply to small holders. Many of these are innovative but effective and replicable: lessons for all involved in using livestock as an instrument for social and community development in rural India. The major lessons learned while implementing these projects are iterated in this chapter.

Lesson 1: Third Tier in the Existing Livestock Services Delivery Set Up in States

For the day To day management of their household livestock enterprises, farmers need Skills and Services which do not need a Veterinarian or a Livestock Assistant. These Skills can be transferred to farmers themselves and the services can be home delivered to them by trained Village Level Workers. There is thus a need for a Third Tier added to the 2 Tier Services Delivery Mechanism of the State Departments of Animal Husbandry / Veterinary Services, structured under the Provisions of the Veterinary Council Act & nurtured by these Departments. While the first two tiers are in the government as part of the Department of Animal Husbandry / Veterinary Service, the third tier should be outside of the government, private, independent, self-generating and village based.



Lesson 2: Farmer-to-farmer Livestock Extension Network

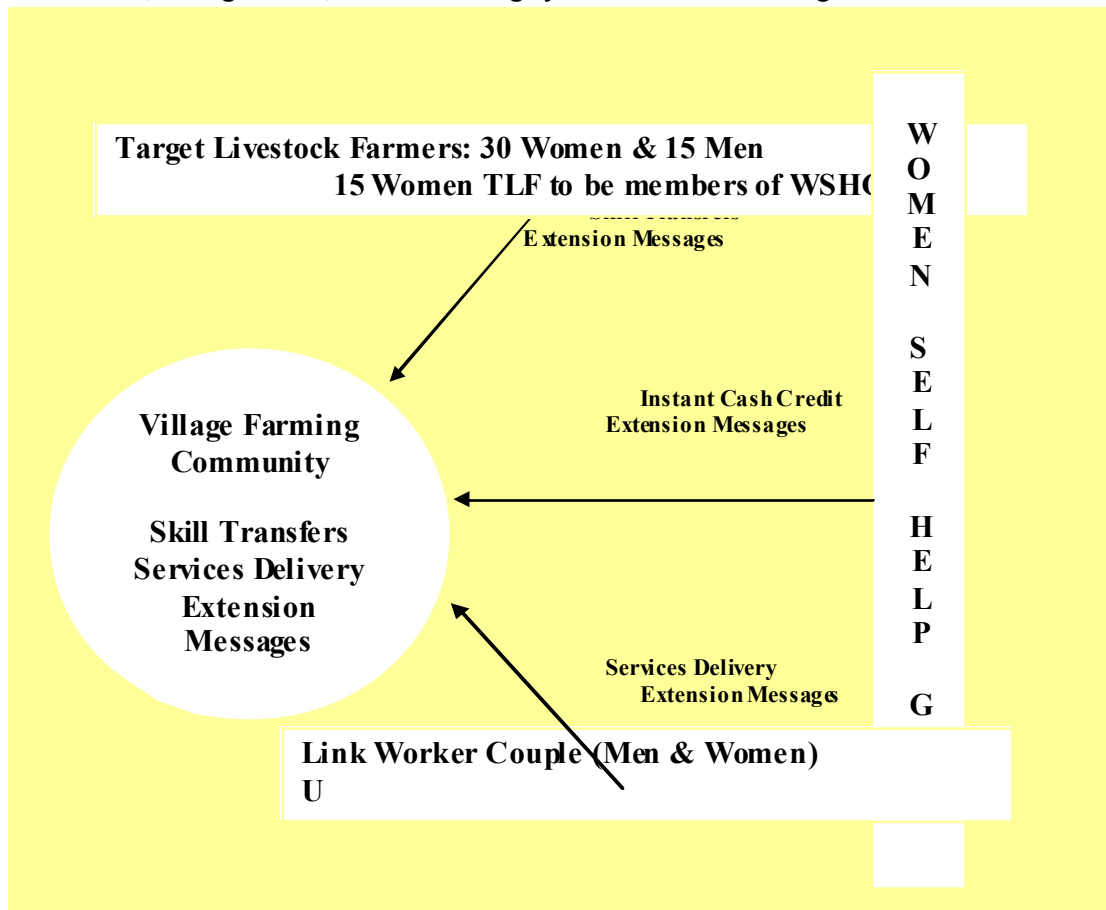
Target Livestock Farmers, Link Workers and the Women's Self Help Groups together constitute a very Effective, Completely Decentralised, Low Cost, Sustainable, Live & Continuing Farmer to Farmer Extension Network as an Integral Part of the Village Community.

A massive Agricultural Extension Network including Animal Husbandry was established along with the First Five Year Plan to mobilise mass participation and to promote adoption of newer technologies in Agriculture and animal husbandry introduced under the Plan:

NES BLOCKS → EO (AH) → GRAMSEVAK → VILLAGE COMMUNITY

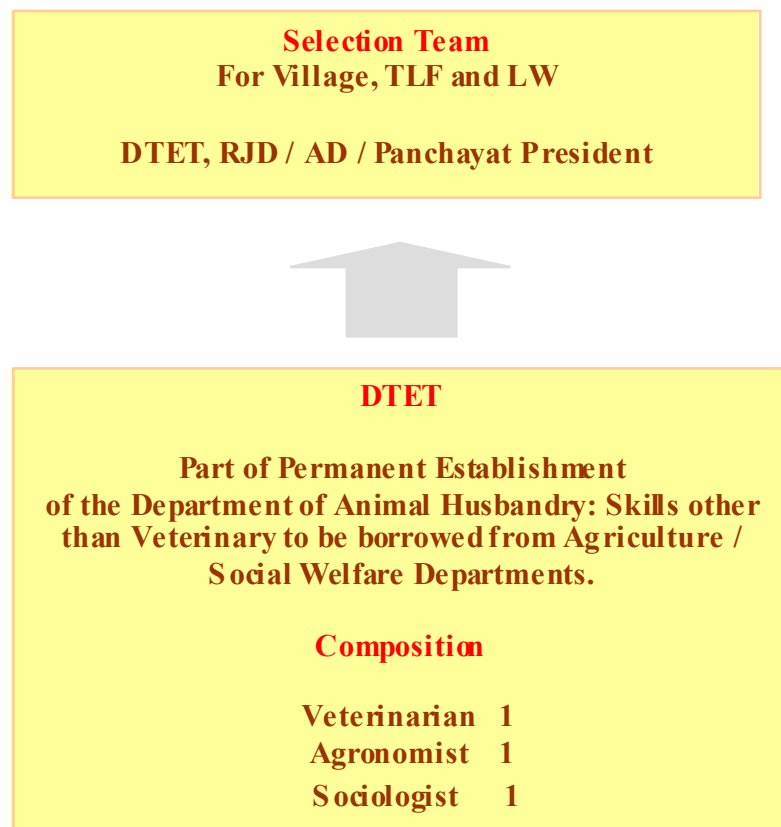
This Worked well during First & Second Five Year Plans. Then in the wake of the Grow More Food Campaign, Gramsevaks focussed on food grain Production and thereafter on the green revolution that followed suit. Livestock Extension was left to the Departments of Animal Husbandry, the Department had no expertise and so the livestock extension movement that started with the First Plan gradually fizzled out.

India, as of now, does not have a meaning full livestock extension support system. The model structured by the ILDP, Tamil Nadu had been stunningly effective and sustainable. There are no parallels for this System anywhere else in India. It would be worthwhile for the State Governments to replicate this Extension Network especially for supporting the Small Ruminant and Indigenous Poultry Production in the Backyards, as a decentralised, village based, self-sustaining system out side of the government.



Lesson 3: Teams for Training & Extension

Identification and Selection of the Village, Target Livestock Farmers (TLF) and the Link Worker are all critically important Tasks, to be handled entirely in the participatory format. Training and Induction of the Link Worker and Village Based Training of TLF are professional tasks to be handled by Specially Skilled and Experienced Multi Disciplinary Teams. Linking of TLFs with the Department of Animal Husbandry and Conveyance of Extension Messages to the villages from time to time need a committed Extension Team. The State Governments should therefore structure as part of the permanent establishment of the State Animal Husbandry Departments Multi Skilled “District Training & Extension Teams” (DTET), one for each replication district in the State.



Lesson 4: Instant Cash Credit Service

Credit is the Most Important Input in Small Holder Livestock Production. Inadequate Credit Availability & Poor Quality Credit circumscribes the potential of the Small Holder to contribute to livestock production. Women's Self Help Groups in the project Areas Promoted by the Project have revolutionised Credit Quality and Access in Project villages. Women's Self Help Groups have emerged as the most powerful Change Agents for ushering in Rural Prosperity. The Women's SHGs have wiped out Money Lenders in Project Villages.

Status of Credit Availability to Livestock Sector 2000-'01

Total Agricultural Credit Disbursed: Rs.53000 Crore

Cash Credit out of this for Crop Production: Rs. 30000 Crore

**Livestock Credit Disbursed out
of the Total: Rs. 2500 Crore**

**All of it as Term Loan
No Cash Credit Available for
Farm Level Livestock Enterprises**

**Not Even Kisan Card Valid for
Purchase of Livestock Inputs**

Source: Credit Disbursement Details: Annual Report Nabard 2000-'01

Lesson 5: Focus on Small Ruminants and Indigenous Poultry in the Backyards

Small Ruminants & Indigenous Poultry in the Back Yard are extremely Livelihood Intensive and over 90 per cent of them in all states are owned by the Small Holder Group. Promotion of Livestock Development in the State should therefore be on a Balanced Format enabling all species to grow and develop according to their Livelihood Intensity. Though their contribution to the GDP is small, they constitute the livelihood

support system for the subsistence farmers. To sustain the backyard poultry system, development of the indigenous fowls through selection within Indian Breeds is essential, as a brooding hen with mothering instinct is a prerequisite for the backyard system. Exotic breeds of fowls and their crosses do not have these qualities.

