

Chapter 10

Livestock Resource Planning in Kotli District, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan

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Livestock contributes 8% to national GDP; it provides food and social security, livelihood and employment, and status in rural society. In Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), 50-60% of farm income is from livestock.

In the past, not much attention was paid to livestock resource planning. It was left to the individual at the micro-level. If planning was done at central level, it was top-down. However, with the start of the UNDP-funded Neelum and Jehlum Valleys Community Development Project in 1992, followed by the World Bank funded Northern Resource Management Project (NRMP), local-level planning started in AJK. Under these projects, farmers were organised into groups and were encouraged in grassroots planning based on their needs and priorities. A District Planning Meeting system was introduced in 1996, giving representation to all Nation Building Departments and NGOs with particular responsibility for natural resource management. The purpose of this forum, which still continues, is to promote interaction amongst line agencies and communities for integrated planning and development. The devolution plan, under which district governments are being formed, is likely to give a further boost to this process.

District profile

Kotli is one of seven districts in AJK. It covers 1862 sq.km (14% of AJK) and has a population of 0.55 million. Almost 100% of the population is Muslim. It is mainly hilly and mountainous with valleys and plains in some places. The most common fodder crops are maize, wheat, millet, berseem, and oil-seeds intercropped with wheat, and legumes and pulses intercropped with maize. There is a wide gap between fodder availability and requirements. The rangeland is almost unprotected; this causes overgrazing in the spring, summer, and autumn. Grass is harvested from rangeland for haymaking to supply winter fodder.

Current livestock status

Livestock breeds

Although many breeds of cattle and buffaloes are seen in Kotli, the most significant are local or desi (nondescript). Desi cattle are all varieties of size and colour. Average adults weigh 250-300 kg, and large animals weigh 350-400 kg. They mature sexually at a late age (over three years). They calve every 12-13 months; males and females run together during grazing. Daily milk production ranges from 1.7-5 l (Balla 1996; Durrani 1998). Desi buffaloes are different sizes. They mature sexually at a late age; first calving is at around four years.

Livestock population and composition patterns

Most livestock species are raised under mixed cropping systems. Goats are most common (30%), followed by buffaloes (29%), sheep (15%) and cattle (14%). There is a higher percentage of buffaloes and goats in Kotli than in other districts of AJK (GOP 1996). Dung and bedding materials are used as manure for crops. Bullock power mostly meets the requirements for hill agriculture. The average number of livestock per household is 2.78 cattle, 2.44 buffaloes, 4.58 sheep and 5.81 goats (GOP 1996).

Livestock production systems

The buffalo and cattle production system can be broadly divided into urban intensive (near or in the city) and rural intensive. Commercial dairy farming is still gaining momentum.

The production system adopted by cattle raisers is oriented towards production of males to be used as work animals rather than females for milk production. Adult males form 52% of the population followed by adult females (31%), young stock (13%) and growing stock (4%). The trend of keeping large numbers of bulls is similar to that recently recorded in the Punjab Livestock Census (Ahmed et al. 2000).

The production system adopted for raising buffaloes is the reverse of that for cattle. There are more females (65%) than males and they are raised mainly for milk production, with 2% raised as breeding bulls and 28% as work animals.

Goat production is more common than sheep production; this is because goats' ability to browse means that they have better access to feed. Moreover, goat meat is preferred to mutton. The flock size of sheep is small.

Planning process

Livestock planning and development activities are carried out at the state level. The recurrent and development budgets are allocated to the livestock sector at the state level. The Directorate General used to distribute budgets to districts; development schemes were prepared by its planning section with or without the involvement of field officers. These schemes were appraised at the planning and development level of the state and were approved at various forums depending upon costs. Approved schemes were provided with a development budget. The recurrent budget was used for general veterinary services. The budget was barely sufficient to meet staff salaries, operation, and maintenance activities. However, within the budget, extension activities and campaigns such as deworming, vaccination, treatment, and poultry promotion were planned and executed at the local level.

Community participation process

The community participation approach was initiated in Pakistan by the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme in the mid-1980s, and has since been copied and modified by a number of other organisations.

In AJK, a number of programmes have adopted this approach. Among these are the Neelum and Jehlum Valleys Community Development Project, the Suketar Watershed Management Project, the Bhimber Upland Rehabilitation and Development Project,

the Northern Resource Management Project, the Area Development Project (South) AJK, and an NGO called the National Rural Support Programme.

Model for planning livestock activities

- At the grassroots or village level, community and user groups are mobilised through frequent interaction and dialogue.
- Data are recorded on natural resource management including livestock.
- Information is gathered on pasture, rangeland, and fodder.
- Problems are identified by the community regarding their livestock.
- Information is prioritised in a participatory manner with collaboration of the social mobilisation unit.
- An annual plan is formulated within the resources of the department and local community.
- An annual operational plan is developed showing activities (quantity), budget (both government and community share), and timeframe. It is sub-divided on a quarterly and monthly basis.
- For monthly execution of activities, a project planning meeting is held every month. Activities to be carried out are planned with coordinating agencies such as the livestock, agriculture, and forest departments.
- For actual implementation, time and venues are arranged in the district planning meeting and communicated to the local community.
- Participatory implementation is carried out at the village level.

In 1996, an NGO, the National Rural Support Programme (NRSP), was launched in 15 of 36 Union Councils of Kotli District. People were mobilised into community organisations that became the main vehicle for local-level planning and development. As with most community development organisations, there is a community commitment to savings, and this forms the basis for subsequent credit arrangements with NRSP. One criteria for judging the success of community organisations is their ability to contact government departments and obtain a desired input.

NRSP works in two ways: through social mobilisation for community organisation development, and by awareness-raising of and training on natural resource management and human resources development issues that affect the community. Physical infrastructure and technology development, and rural credit and enterprise development are also carried out. NRSP responds to community needs in the fields of agriculture, livestock, poultry, forestry, and natural resource conservation.

With the launching in 2000 of the Area Development Project in 10 Union Councils of Kotli District, village organisations are being formed to ensure community participation in the planning, implementation and evaluation processes. A credit line has also been established to provide loans against community savings and social collateral. Micro-enterprise development is the hallmark of this local-level planning process. In addition, all extension and development activities are carried out on a demand-driven basis.

Key issues in local-level planning

Baseline data

Baseline data are an important tool for successful planning. In the areas where development projects and NGOs are working, baseline data are recorded at the community level. However, there is no such practice of recording baseline data at the community level in other areas.

Training for planners

Planning is a professional job that requires expertise. Training for planning is barely provided at the local level. There is no provision for training in planning in government agencies.

Level of planning

Experience shows that implementers, especially field professionals, can provide practical and relevant information to the planning process. Professionals are usually only involved in planning in development projects. Lack of professionals can make planning defective, and result in the objectives of the programme not being translated into reality.

Community participation

The community can play a valuable role in planning. It has a good appreciation of its problems and may be able to suggest useful solutions. It is also effective at execution. At present, communities are only involved in the planning processes where NGOs and development projects work.

Budgetary allocation

In general, budgetary allocations are not based on community needs or nation-building resources; this hinders effective and productive planning.

Constraints to integrated planning

There is a lack of integrated development policies amongst government departments. This results in defective integrated planning at the local level. Departments engaged in natural resource management are divided into many sub-sectors.

Suggestions

- There should be an integrated development planning policy at the government level for all departments involved in natural resource management.
- A system should be developed for regular data collection by setting up a special section involving community organisations and experts from line departments.
- There should be regular training programmes for professionals and community members.
- All stakeholders involved in natural resource management such as different departments and communities should plan, implement, and evaluate programmes together, even at Union Council level.
- There should be an autonomous budget-handling system at the local level.

- The private sector should work on development plans at the grassroots level.
- Development of an integrated service system in the private sector should be encouraged for marketing of farmers' produce.
- Characteristics of local breeds of livestock should be described so that their productive and reproductive potentials can be identified.
- A co-operative and integrated livestock production system is needed.
- Commercial dairy and beef production systems should be developed by the livestock department in collaboration with the private sector.
- Rangeland should be protected and managed by the private sector with the collaboration of forestry and livestock departments.
- Fodder and forage production should be preferred in areas where crop production is not economical.
- Forage trees should be planted on wasteland.

References

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