

Indian Economy: Role of livestock in farmer's economy.

GS Paper 3: Indian economy and issues related to planning, mobilisation of resources, growth, development and employment; Inclusive growth and issues arising from it.



Livestock plays an important role in Indian economy. About 20.5 million people depend upon livestock for their livelihood. Livestock contributed 16% to the income of small farm households as against an average of 14% for all rural households. Livestock provides livelihood to two-third of rural community. It also provides employment to about 8.8 % of the population in India. India has vast livestock resources. Livestock sector contributes 4.11% GDP and 25.6% of total Agriculture GDP.

Contribution of livestock to farmers

- Livestock is a source of ***subsidiary income*** for many families in India especially the resource poor who maintain few heads of animals. Cows and buffaloes if in milk will provide regular income to the livestock farmers through sale of milk. Animals like sheep and goat serve as sources of income during emergencies to meet exigencies like marriages, treatment of sick persons, children education, repair of houses etc.

- A large number of people in India being less literate and unskilled depend upon agriculture for their livelihoods. But agriculture being seasonal in nature could provide **employment** for a maximum of 180 days in a year. The land less and less land people depend upon livestock for utilizing their labour during lean agricultural season.
- The livestock products such as milk, meat and eggs are an important source of animal **protein** to the members of the livestock owners. The per capita availability of milk is around 355 g / day; eggs is 69 / annum.
- The animals offer **social security** to the owners in terms of their **status** in the society. The families especially the landless which own animals are better placed than those who do not. Gifting of animals during marriages is a very common phenomenon in different parts of the country.
- The bullocks are the back bone of Indian agriculture. The farmers especially the marginal and small depend upon bullocks for **ploughing, carting and transport** of both inputs and outputs.

LIVESTOCK AS A LIVELIHOOD AND ENHANCER OF INCOME

Meat and dairy products are less fluctuating in price compared to agricultural produce.

Demand driven approach calls for synchronising the activities in agricultural & allied sectors.

Small & marginal landless farmers can rely on this sector.

The dairy sector has already proved to be a success & measures in line with it is needed.

Clustering in agriculture can lead to fictional unemployment & so livestock is an alternative.

The economics of animal rearing

It is well recognized that humans depend upon animals for food and associated by-products, work and a variety of other uses. To fulfil these demands, they have tamed or held in custody species of mammals, birds, reptiles, fish and arthropods. These animals are called livestock, and rearing them has implications for occupational safety and health.

Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries sectors greatly contribute in the national economy and in the socio-economic development of the country. These sectors also support in enhancing family incomes and generating profitable occupation in the rural sector, mainly, among the landless labourers, small and marginal farmers and women, besides providing cheap nutritional food to millions of people.

Livestock are the best insurance against the vagaries of nature like drought, famine and other natural disasters.

Role of livestock in achieving inclusive growth

- Livestock has been an important source of livelihood for small farmers. They contributed about 16% to their income, more so in states like Gujarat (24.4%), Haryana (24.2%), Punjab (20.2%) and Bihar (18.7%).
- The agricultural sector engages about 57% of the total working population and about 73% of the rural labour force. Livestock employed 8.8% of the agricultural work force albeit it varied widely from 3% in North-Eastern states to 40-48% in Punjab and Haryana. Animal husbandry promotes gender equity. More than three-fourth of the labour demand in livestock production is met by women.
- The distribution patterns of income and employment show that small farm households hold more opportunities in livestock production. Incidence of rural poverty is less in states like Punjab, Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Gujarat, and Rajasthan where livestock accounts for a sizeable share of agricultural income as well as employment.

Government initiatives to boost livestock sector

- National Livestock Mission: The Mission is designed to cover all the activities required to ensure quantitative and qualitative improvement in livestock production systems and capacity building of all stakeholders.
- Rashtriya Gokul Mission: The Mission aims to conserve and develop indigenous breeds in a focused and scientific manner and for that breeding facilities will be set up for varieties with high-genetic pedigree.
- Central Sector Scheme on Blue Revolution: Integrated Development and Management of Fisheries (CSS) approved by the Government provides for a focused development and management of the fisheries sector to increase both fish production and fish productivity from aquaculture and fisheries resources of the inland and marine fisheries sector including deep sea fishing.

Questions

1. Livestock sector can play a crucial role in the country's economy. Analyse how livestock as a livelihood can lead to inclusive growth.