STRENGTH, WEAKNESS, OPPORTUNITY AND THREAT OF LIVESTOCK AND POULTRY DEVELOPMENT IN THE NEH REGION OF INDIA - A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Livestock contributes about 40% to the GNP. Hence it constitutes the backbone of Indian Agriculture. Livestock currently employs about 8% of the India’s work force and has been growing during the last two decades at an annual rate of 4.5% in comparison to 2.2% in Agriculture sector. It provides more self-employment opportunities for the socially backward and tribal people, including rural woman. In areas where agriculture is impossible as in the deserts and hilly region livestock is able to survive and solve food problem. Livestock sector is one among the few growth sectors in India, which is directly linked with the livelihood of more than 70% of rural population. Moreover, India has great potentiality to export animal products. So, time has come to frame policy and implement it for the development of livestock sector with special reference to NEH Region. Therefore, strength, weakness, opportunity and threat of Livestock and Poultry Development in the NEH are discussed in details.

STRENGTH

The NEH region is rich in livestock resources. According to Anonymous (2002) in India, there are 219.64 m cattle, 94.13 m buffaloes, 58.20 m sheep, 123.50 m goats, 17.50 m pigs, 2.00 m horses and ponies, 1.03 m camels and 413.00 m poultry. The corresponding figures in NEH region were 13.14 m cattle, 1.17 m buffaloes, 0.22 m sheep, 4.41 m goats, 3.07 m pigs, 0.03 m horses and ponies, 32.03 m poultry (Anonymous, 2002a). Besides there are 0.01 m yaks and 0.15 m mithuns. So, the contribution of this region to national livestock population stood cattle 5.98%, buffalo 1.24%, goat 3.57%, sheep 0.38%, pig 17.54%, horse and ponies 1.5% and poultry 7.76%. It was also found out that number of cattle and pig per 100 human population in this region stands 34.18 in cattle and 6.74 in pig in contrast to 24.17 in cattle and 1.27 in pig at national level.

Around 50% of the land in this region is unfit for crop production. Therefore, local people find animal husbandry as an alternative source of livelihood.

WEAKNESS

Lack of superior germplasm in different species of livestock is the main constrain in increasing productivity in terms of meat, milk, egg and wool. Lack of good quality feed ingredients in this region is another important drawback of this region. So, it is brought from West Bengal, Bihar and UP, so,
the cost of feed goes high. Sometimes due to poor nutrient content of the feed ingredients, the productivity of the animal is not achieved even from superior germplasm. Moreover, due to lack of balanced nutrition, animals suffer from deficiency disorders. Non-availability of kits to diagnose disease immediately causes high morbidity and mortality. Sufficient vaccine is not available in this region. If it is available, due to poor cooling system, the efficacy of the vaccine is reduced. Lack of coordination between research institutes, state departments and state agriculture universities causes low dissemination and adoption of technologies among the different categories of users. Poor communication facility is another serious problem for the development of livestock industry. Insurgency is another problem, which creates unhygienic environment for the development of livestock industry. Lack of market facility causes serious problem for purchasing raw material as well as selling different products and slaughterhouse by products. Above all, sometimes lack of trained manpower leads to production of poor quality products which is unfit to compete in regional and national market.

OPPORTUNITY

I) PROMOTION OF CATTLE FATTENING FARMS

Among various meats, beef is the most preferred and widely consumed item in NEH region by the local population. It is reported that 40 to 50% of the total consumption of meat comes from beef followed by pork, chicken, chevon and mutton etc. In the case of cattle, annually about 2,54,600 animals are slaughtered. Of them, 40% of animals are from internal sources and 60% are brought from other states. It amounts about 1,53,000 cattle are sourced from other states like Assam, Bihar, and Uttar Pradesh in the year 1998. The genesis for cattle farming emanates from the following:

1. The growing demand for beef is lined with the enhanced incomes, changing life styles.
2. Local supply sources are not adequate for any programme to fasten the growth.
3. Even at national level, the growth of cattle population is sluggish and hence, impending danger of reduced supplies in the long term.

There is enormous demand for beef (21.4 million kg/year) in the state of Meghalaya and in addition, in most parts of North East. The preference for beef is strong in Meghalaya as well as in the other states of North East. This trend is likely to continue and thus ensuring bright prospects for cattle fattening farms. In the light of above factors, there is a need for development of cattle stock and more particularly an urgent necessity to establish and promote exclusive fattening farms.

II) ENCOURAGEMENT OF GOAT FARMING IN DECENTRALISED SECTORS

Though goat meat is not widely consumed like beef, their slaughter takes place in all most all places. The demand for goat meat is growing as it could be seen through the high prices of goat meat. This is due to shortage of meat animals. The demand potential for goats should not be seen only from the angle of NEH Region. Infact, the whole country offers enormous market potential. Further, export opportunities are plenty for goat meat. The NEH Region, with its vast natural vegetation and pastures, offers great potential for rearing goat in rural areas. Infact, such rearing could become a 'mini business' to the large number of rural areas. However, a caution must be exercised to protect the reserved forests through controlled grazing/browsing of goats.

III) PROMOTION OF SHEEP FARMING AS LARGE SCALE COMMERCIAL VENTURE

The state of Meghalaya has the unique distinction of highest rainfall region in the world. Large parts of the NEH Region are green throughout the year and possess vast tracks of
Table 1. Livestock Population in different states of NEH Region (Basic Statistics of NEC, 2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States</th>
<th>Cattle</th>
<th>Buffalo</th>
<th>Goat</th>
<th>Sheep</th>
<th>Pig</th>
<th>Horses and Ponies</th>
<th>Yak</th>
<th>Poultry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AP</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>8000</td>
<td>728</td>
<td>2677</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>1082</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipur</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meghalaya</td>
<td>738</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mizoram</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagaland</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>571</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tripura</td>
<td>1228</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>639</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11343</td>
<td>911</td>
<td>3989</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>3067</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>32030</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

grazing area. Sheep are known to be excellent grazers as they thrive in pasture. While that is the reality, the population of sheep is a small insignificant portion i.e. 0.22 million. Infact, the climate and the terrain also offer excellent potential for rearing sheep. Most appropriately, goats could be raised in small flocks at village level, on the other hand sheep can be raised in large flocks in commercial farms as major business ventures. Human population density being less, vast tracks of land being available with no major cultivation. So, there is a great scope for large commercial farms for raising sheep in NEH Region, with special reference to Meghalaya.

IV) PROMOTION OF PIG BREEDING AND FATTENING FARM

The pig is the animal of priority in this region. The population in this region is higher than national level. It was also found out that number of pig per 100 human populations in this region stands 6.74, in contrast to 1.27 at national level. People in this region are pork eater and obviously demand for pork in this region is very high. It is estimated that pig population is to be increased by 1.64 million to meet the demand of pork for this region. In this region, local pig of Meghalaya, Nagaland, Assam is available. Besides that, crossbred pig and exotic pigs such as Hampshire, Large Black, and Saddle Back are available for the development of piggery. So, there is golden opportunity for development of commercial large-scale piggery and backyard small-scale piggery in NEH Region more particularly in Meghalaya, Nagaland and Mizoram.

V) PROMOTION OF POULTRY BREEDING FARM

The NEH Region is the home of Red Jungle Fowl. The females are mostly of the non-descript type but some exotic breeds have been used to upgrade local stock. Different commercial hybrid broiler and layer strains are also available. The highest population is in Assam (Table 1), however highest density in terms of numbers/Km² and number/100 human population are highest in Tripura. The egg production in this region is 878 million with a highest production of 488 million in Assam followed by Tripura i.e. 105 million. So, there is wide scope for developing poultry industry in this region. Hence, there is urgent need for developing few poultry breeding farms in different states to cater the need of local demand and to reduce the dependency on other states, like Andhra Pradesh, etc.

VI) MEAT PRODUCTION AND PACKING CENTRES

Meat production and handling have been the cause of concern in the whole spectrum of meat industry in India. The age-old slaughter houses under the control of local bodies are unable to provide the facilities for production of hygienic meat. In a field survey, conducted by the CLRI revealed that many of the Indian urban slaughterhouses lack basic amenities such as water, flooring, lighting, etc.
Further, there is wastage of valuable by-products. Local bodies consider slaughter houses as only source of revenue and hardly put back any money for modernization. In the case of Meghalaya, butchers are allowed to slaughter, as they like in most unhygienic and unscientific ways. As an alternative to the existing scenario, it is suggested to establish "Meat Production Centers" near animal concentrated areas on commercial basis. The meat can be packed hygienically and marketed in urban centers as well as rural areas. This concept is gaining ground in the context of changing lifestyle and perceptions of the people for packed and clean food items. So, all the NE states offer excellent opportunities for packed food.

VII) ESTABLISHMENT OF TANNING COMPLEX FOR LEATHER PROCESSING

There are about 1100 tanneries in India, which are concentrated in three states viz., Tamil Nadu (53%), West Bengal (22%) and Uttar Pradesh (13%). In all these states tanneries came into being in clusters over a long period of time. Large number of new tanneries as well as expansion of old ones took place in the same clusters during the last 30 years. The growth of the tanning industry in clusters without scientific and systematic planning and control has caused extensive damage to environment in the areas of agriculture, water resources as well as congestion/constraint to the cities. With the growing social awareness, this cannot go unabated on the long term. In fact people based organizations are active in this field. As a result, there have been stringent actions initiated on the tanneries including the closure. About 400 tanneries have been ordered to close in Tamil Nadu due to non-compliance of pollution treatment norms. A two pronged strategy, introduction of cleaner process technologies and establishment of common effluent treatment plants is being put into action on war footing to re activates the tanning industry in Tamil Nadu.

There are two important issues connected with complex. Invariably tanners found it advantageous to operate in clusters. The overriding benefits cannot be ignored. At the same time clusters have caused extensive damage to the environment through increased pollution burden. Hence, the advantage of being in the cluster has to be ensured and at the same time pollution has to be checked. The proposed tanning complex has to take into consideration these issues - cluster approach and treatment of effluents. Accordingly a Common Effluent Treatment Plant will form part of the complex.

VIII) ESTABLISHMENT OF LEATHER FOOTWEAR COMPLEX

Leather footwear is the major end product of leather. As high as, 65% of total leather production goes for footwear fabrication. The demand for leather footwear continues to be strong in spite of the invasion of synthetics. In India, annually 1686 million pairs of footwear are consumed and of this 368 million pairs account leather footwear (1995). With the emergence of booming middle-class, there is a spurt in the domestic demand for leather footwear. Of late, number of new players (Woodlands, Phoenix, MESCOS, etc.) appeared on the scene. Further, large number of tiny and small-scale units are also doing brisk business. This is in addition to the growing opportunities for export.

More particularly, there is a good demand for footwear (6.0 to 6.5 mil. pairs) in the state of Meghalaya and also in many parts of North East. As high as 50% of the footwear sold in Shillong market is full and part leather footwear. The local production of footwear hardly accounts 5% of the total market demand in the state. Hence, there is a good scope for local production to meet the demand with in
the state and also extending supplies to other states in North East. Further with the availability of good quality leather, export attempts could also be made.

IX) ESTABLISHMENT OF LEATHER GARMENTS (APPAREL) AND LEATHER GOODS COMPLEX

The second and third important products made out of leather are leather garments and goods, comprising 15% and 12% of leather, respectively. Both are widely traded globally (US $ 19 billion.) and find place in the most fashionable markets of Europe and North America. As much as 75% of the global production originates from South Asia for consumption in the affluent countries of the West. India is one of the leading exporters of both categories. The export of leather garments account 24% of the total leather sector (1995-96) and further goods and garments together account 45% of total leather related exports from India. Especially India is able to make a significant dent into the global leather garments market. Both are categorized as thrust areas from the point of view of export promotion. Domestic consumption of goods and garments is very less as compared to exports. The market within the country for garments exists in few places like Jammu and Kashmir, Meghalaya and Delhi in a limited way. As far as Meghalaya is concerned, there is a reasonably good market for leather garments in the Shillong and all over Khasi and Jaintia Hills to the extent of 15,000 garments annually. In the case of leather goods also, market potential exists especially in Shillong during the Christmas season. While local market being so, much of the emphasis is to be laid on export with the availability of quality leather from the proposed tanning complex.

THREAT

There is threat of sudden outbreak of diseases of the livestock in this region, provided proper care is not taken in border during import of animal as this region is surrounded by five countries i.e. China, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar and Bangladesh.

There is threat of terrorists to businessmen and industrialists who will invest for the livestock industry.

So, if all those weakness and threats are overcome, definitely there is golden opportunity in the whole NEH region for the development of livestock and poultry industry in near future followed by employment generation and economic upliftment.

REFERENCES