



Indigenous Livestock and Its Role in Biodiversity, Climate and Livelihoods: A Community Perspective

Dr. SABYASACHI DAS

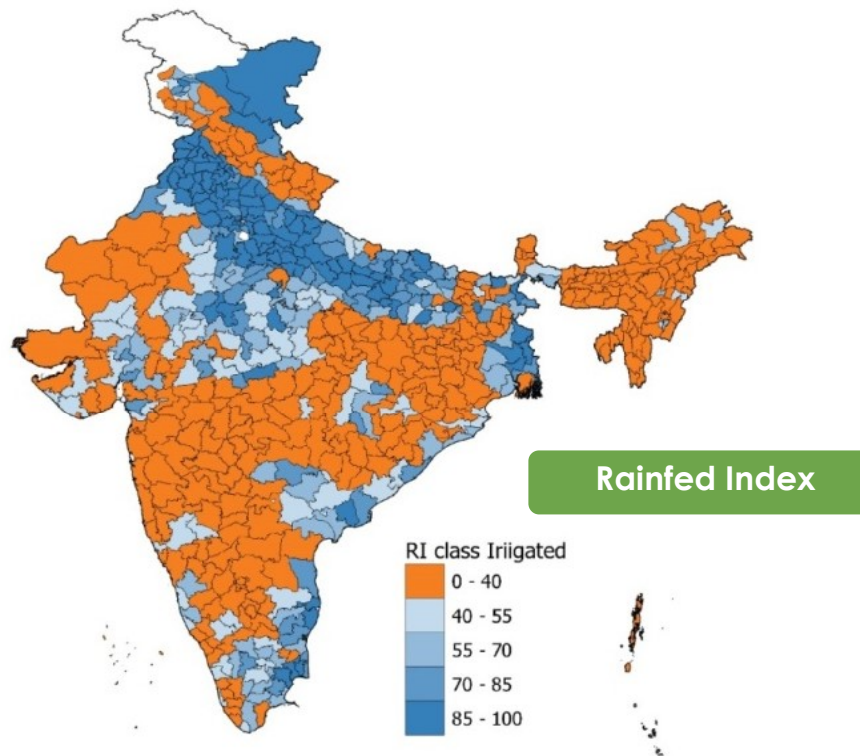
National Coordinator, RRA Network

Director, WASSAN

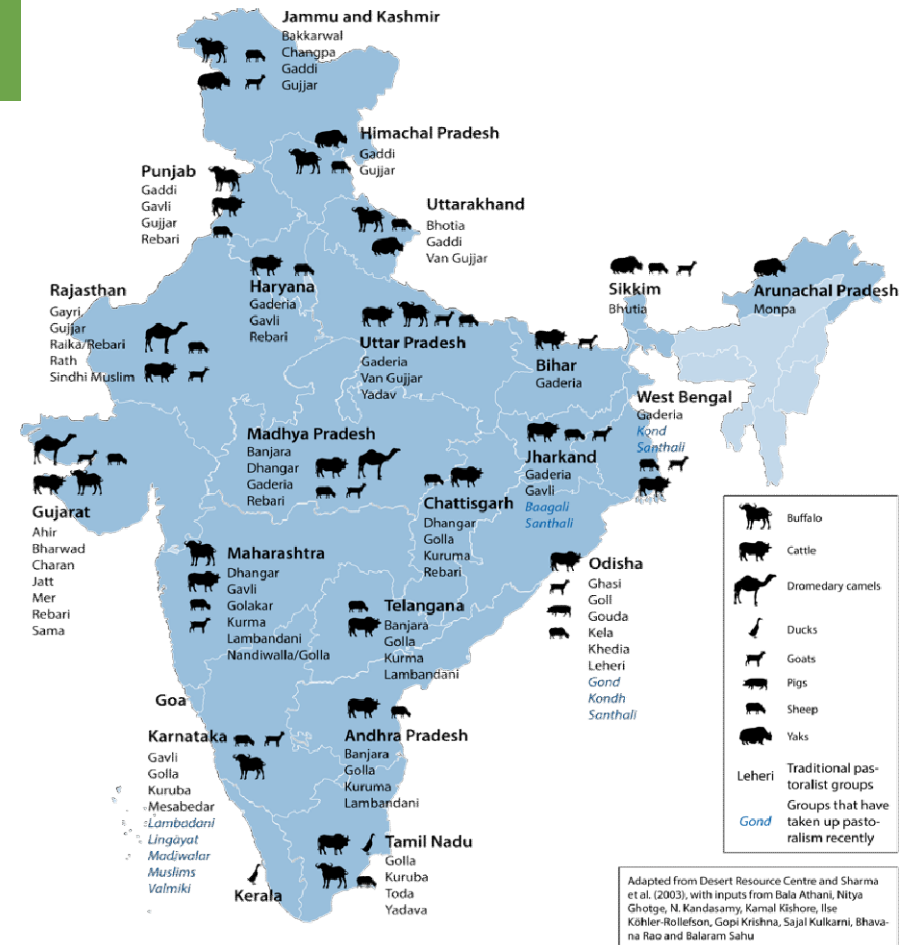
www.rainfedindia.org www.wassan.org



Large Parts of India Area - Rainfed



Rainfed areas are **NATIVE TRACK**
of Most of the livestock breeds in India



Experiences from the Ground

Communities and Breeds – Banni Buffalo



Pastoral Communities are organized, supported by Civil Societies and Scientific communities to register Banni Buffalo

Milk Economy was strengthened by negotiation with Dairies and DAH – in 10 years Milk economy in Banni reached to 900 Cr



Communities forced removal of illegal encroachments and initiated natural regeneration of grassland



Community Eco-tourism Centre promoted



Pastoral communities became partner of Multi-disciplinary Research Centre called RAMBLE

Wildlife and their importance of the ecosystem are valued



Experiences from the Ground

Communities and Breeds
Kharai Camel

“Animal use salinity in their favour – graze of saline species”



The Camel Story

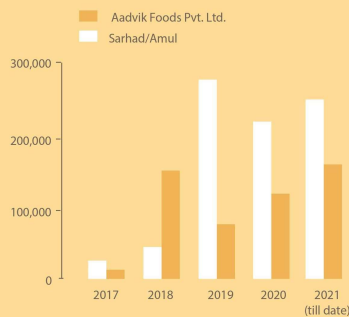
REFRESHING REVIVAL

Investments in camel milk procurement over the past five years have led to substantial gains for camel herders in Kutch. A major consequence is that a number of herder youth have returned to herding and Kutch is the only region in the country with increasing camel numbers.

But Kutch has only 5% of India's camels. More than 80% are in Rajasthan. There is a need to invest in camel pastoralism in Rajasthan.

More camels

There has been a 17% spike in camel numbers in Kutch between 2019 and 2020. We are yet to do the census this year, but expect the numbers to go up further. We feel this data supports our hypothesis that if we can create viable livelihood alternatives for camels, it will lead to a revival in camel populations and the camel herder economy.

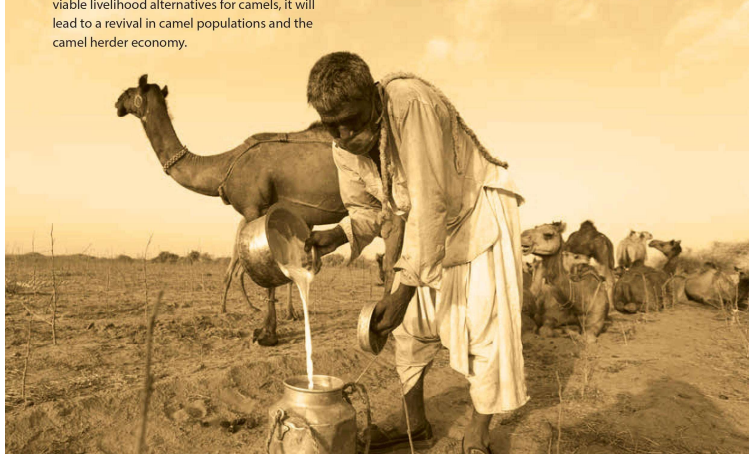


Milk Procurement in Kutch (in litres)

More milk procurement

Milk has been procured by Amul – Sarhad and by Aadvik Foods Pvt. Ltd. since 2017. The data above shows dramatic increases in the amount of milk that is being procured with a substantial jump after 2019.

Data on camel populations from livestock censuses and Sahjeevan surveys.



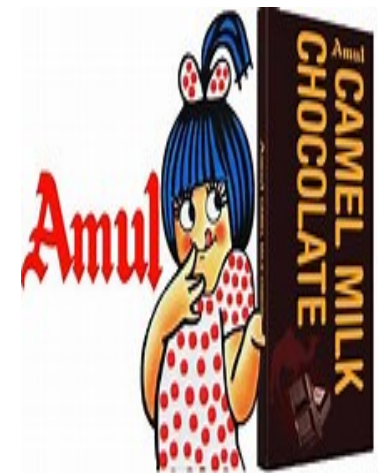
Pastoral youth return to camel herding

18 youth have returned to herding over the past 3 years. Data below shows the amount of milk they are selling and the monthly income. Everyone is earning a decent income.

	Herder Youth	Taluka	Litres/Month	Monthly Income	Total Camels
1	RABARI NAGAJI BHIKHA	Rapar	296	14,800.00	22
2	RABARI PACHAN ARJAN	Rapar	506	25,300.00	18
3	RABARI HARI PACHAN	Rapar	314	15,700.00	16
4	RABARI VIBHA SANGA	Rapar	267	13,350.00	33
5	MURA MANGAL RABARI	Rapar	835	41,750.00	35
6	KANA MAMU RABARI	Nakhtrana	2231	*1,11,550.00	18
7	RUPA MAMU RABARI	Abdasa	1978	*98,900.00	45
8	LAKHMIR VASANG RABARI	Nakhtrana	292	14,600.00	27
9	RAYMAL PALA RABARI	Nakhtrana	1225	61,250.00	36
10	AMRAT KANA RABARI	Nakhtrana	2405	*1,20,250.00	40
11	RABARI SAJANBHAI	Bhuj	2325	*1,16,250.00	62
12	RAMA BHAMU RABARI	Jamnagar	701	35,050.00	18
13	RAMA JESA RABARI	Mandvi	1289	64,450.00	34
14	RABARI DEVA JIVA	Mundra	252	12,600.00	26
15	RABARI SHAKAR VEJA	Nakhtrana	486	24,300.00	22
16	RABARI BUDHA SHURA	Nakhtrana	624	31,200.00	18
17	RABARI MEGHA BHAI	Nakhtrana	191	9,550.00	11
18	RABARI DEVAJI BHAI	Mandvi	339	16,950.00	23
	Total:		16556	8,27,800.00	504

* These individuals are aggregating milk from several herder families, hence the inflated figures.

Source: Sahjeevan survey





Desi Oon – Wool in Pastoral Systems

India's vast animal genetic resources, especially that of sheep, yak and camels, have been conserved and bred by the nomadic pastoral communities. Until about two and a half decades ago, wool was used extensively by pastoralists for domestic consumption and also fetched a market price on par with meat. Wool-craft, for centuries, was a small home and village-based craft industry but grew into an industry and now largely works with imported wools



Sheep

India has an estimated 74 million sheep. Ironically, while India boasts of the third-largest population of sheep in the world, it is the only natural fibre in which we are deficient!



Camels

India has about 0.25 million camels. Camels produce high-quality wool that is very warm, water-resistant and highly durable. It can be used to make textiles, carpets, ropes or bags.



Goats

Up to half of India's 148 million goats, are managed by pastoralists. Some of the most extravagant fibres are produced by goats such as Cashmere and Mohair. They are usually used in knitted or woven garments.



Yaks

India has about 0.06 million yaks. Typically, craftspeople work with both hair and wool harvested from Yaks. Yak coat is naturally shed each spring. It can be used to make apparel, ropes, tents, rugs, and bags.

Halari Donkey



The Halari donkey is an indigenous, endangered breed native to Gujarat's Halar region, recognized for its predominantly white coat and high resilience to semi-arid conditions. With fewer than 500 individuals, it plays a crucial role as a pack animal for local pastoralist and farming communities. Halari donkey milk is reputed for its nutritional and medicinal properties and commands significant commercial value both locally and internationally

Care for some donkey milk? It's ₹7,000 a litre!

Gujarat's Native Donkeys Set To Supply World's Costliest Milk

Prashant Rupera
@timesgroup.com

Vadodara: Gujarat's breed of indigenous donkeys will have its own milk dairy! And, to shock you further, this donkey milk — truly liquid gold — fetches the world's costliest price of Rs 7,000 per litre! Now, isn't this worth braying about?

But before you wrinkle your nose, here's another prized piece of information: In ancient Egypt, Cleopatra is said to have taken baths in donkey milk to preserve her legendary beauty and youth. Known to contain anti-ageing, antioxidant and regenerating compounds, donkey milk is indeed precious.

Thanks to its indigenous Halari breed of donkey, a breed which is mainly found in Gujarat's Saurashtra region only, Gujarat aims to add the beast of burden to its list of milch animals and literally milk riches.

The National Research Centre on Equines (NRCE) has embarked upon the an innovative project to start a donkey milk dairy in Haryana's Hisar.

Two years ago the National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources (NBAGR), the nodal agency of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) for registration of new breeds had granted independent breed status to Halari — the second donkey breed — to be recognized in the country and the first

SAY HEE HAW!

► Cleopatra took donkey milk baths to enhance her beauty and youth

► It is rich in vitamins, polyunsaturated fatty acids

► Contains anti-ageing, antioxidant and regenerating compounds

► In Ayurveda, it used to treat skin diseases like eczema and psoriasis

► Milk used to produce niche cosmetic products like soaps, skin gels, face wash



One litre donkey milk can cost up to ₹7,000

It is said to be world's costliest milk

ABOUT THE BREED: Halari donkeys found mostly in Jamnagar and Devbhoomi Dwarka districts are bred by Bharwad and Rabari communities who use the animals to carry luggage during migration. Kumbhars use the donkeys for pottery work in Dwarka and Jamnagar regions while they are also used to cart bricks at kilns

VITAL STATS

NATIVE: Jamnagar & Devbhoomi Dwarka district and some parts of Saurashtra

COAT COLOUR: White

BODY SIZE: Large To massive

SPECIALTY: Used as beast of burden to carry heavy items like luggage to bricks

POPULATION: 1,112

one from Gujarat.

"Halari donkeys are shorter than horses but taller than other normally seen donkey breeds. They look almost like a

small horse and have snow-white fur," said Rank, adding that the breed has existed in the Halar region for more than 200 years. National recogni-

tion of a breed paves the way for better conservation and preservation of its genes.

► Continued on P 5

Scripting the History

(INDIA_CATTLE_3600_ PODATHURPU_03044)

Poda Thurpu cattle created history in January 2020, when it has been registered as the unique and the first indigenous cattle breed of the Indian state of Telangana.

Native Breeding Tract

Amrabad Forests of
Nagarkurnool district,
Telangana



Average size of the Herd

44.91 ± 0.84

Existence of the Breed

Over 450 years as per the Oral History

Community

Lambadi (NT),
Golla/Yadava (OBC)
and Maala
and Maadiga (SC)



Estimated Population

15076
(approximately)



500 Households

Owner (approximately

1000 | 50 - 70k per year

(People)

(Salary)

Labour (approximately



Economy, Livelihoods and Employment

DRAUGHT POWER

- ❑ Used in both dry-land & wetland agricultural operations.
- ❑ Excellent draught power in terms of endurance, speed and stamina.
- ❑ Starts working at the age of 2.5 years and up to 20 years.

OTHER USES

- ❑ Milk is not a source of income, but ghee is sold for INR 1500-1650/kg.
- ❑ The use of dung for manure and bio-gas production was observed.

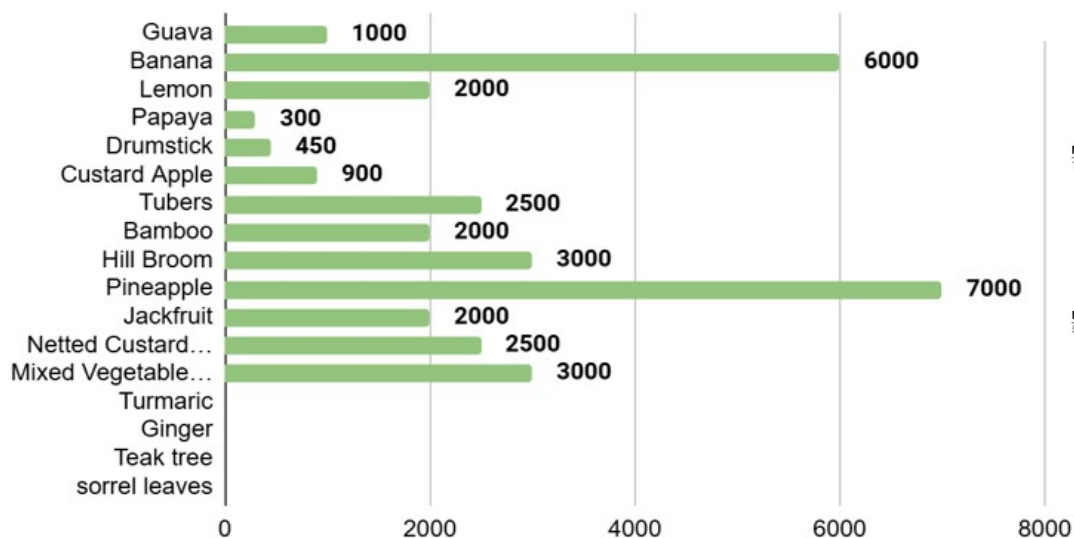




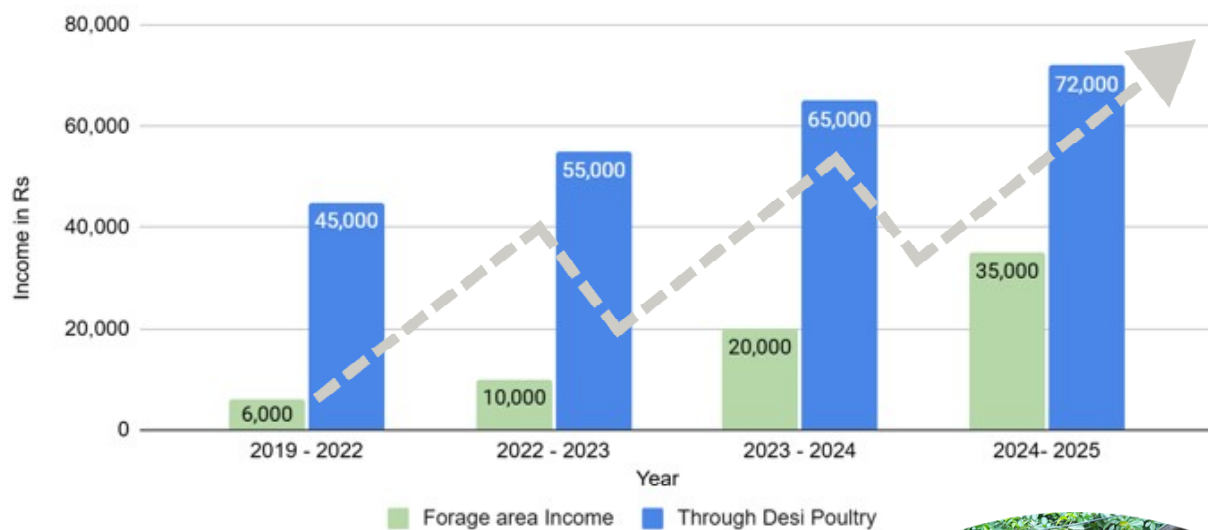
"This poultry farm gives us income and nutrition. It helps cover expenses like loan repayments and even expand our horizons."

— Savara Shirisha

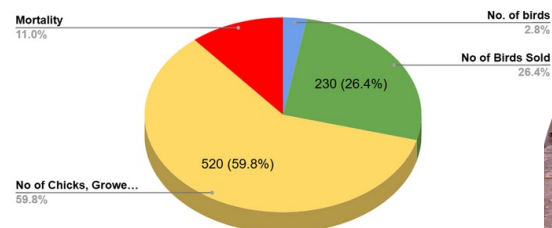
Income (₹) from 0.5 Acre of Forage



Forage area Income and Through Desi Poultry



Desi Poultry Production



Dual Income, Deep Impact



40M ha Forest

Eligible for CFR

12.5 M ha

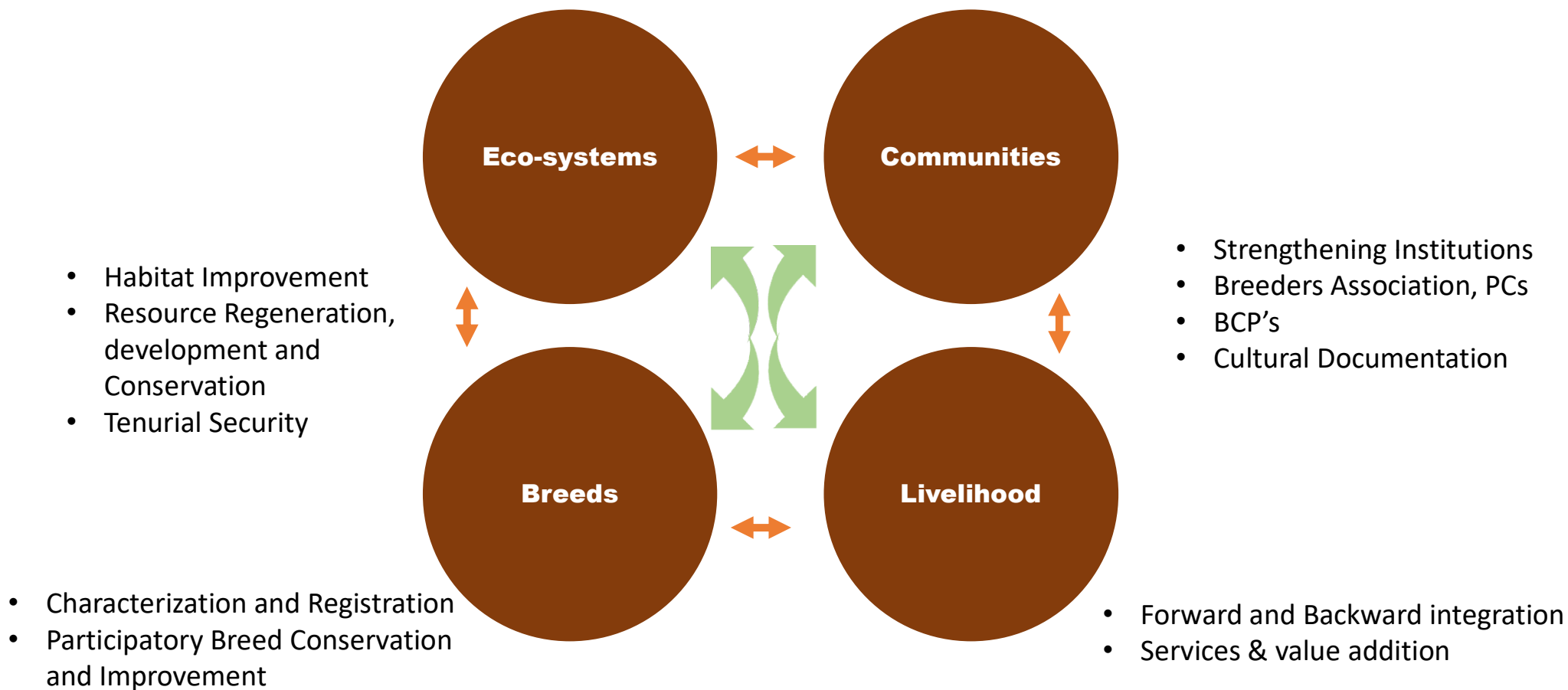
Classified Grassland



Forest Governance & Climate Justice

- ❑ More than 1 lakhs villages are in forest fringe
- ❑ Tenurial Security and access to grazing – FRA 2006
- ❑ Promotes traditional knowledge and governance systems.
- ❑ FRA based Climate Action Plan and community led governance

FRAMEWORK FOR LIVESTOCK BIO-DIVERSITY, ECOSYSTEM, COMMUNITY AND LIVELIHOODS



LEARNINGS FROM THE GROUND

- Breeds are evolved through intelligent interaction between Ecology, AnGR and community
- Breed Registration has opened several dimensions to Ecological Restoration and Economic Revival
- Community took the centre stage and collaborated with all stakeholders
- Communities knowledge on Breeds, Breeding Practices, Ecology – soil, grass and plant diversity were appreciated
- Cultural value associated with the community, breeds and ecosystem got recognition
- In a complex, diverse and risk-prone rainfed areas, genetic resources that are flexible, resistance are optimized by the communities

A photograph of a herd of cattle, including white, brown, and speckled breeds, gathered in a dry, dusty valley. The valley is flanked by steep, rocky hills with sparse green and yellow vegetation. The sky is filled with heavy, grey clouds, with some light breaking through near the horizon. The overall scene conveys a sense of a traditional, rural landscape.

Thank you

The Breed – The Landscape – The Community – Their Livelihoods
Every indigenous breed carries not just DNA, but a cultural code of coexistence with Nature.

Acknowledgement with thanks

Sahjeevan, WASSAN, RRA Network, Breeders Associations and others