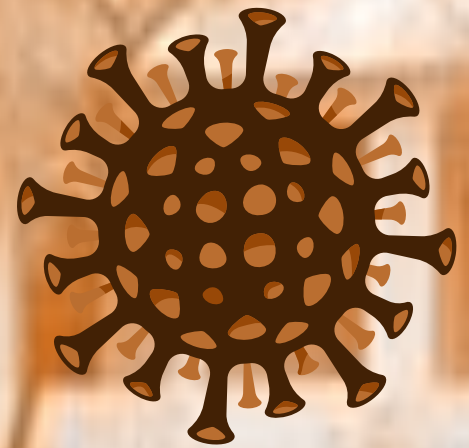


an effort of Indo-Global Social Service Society, New Delhi
covid-impact May, 2020



amplifying voices of the unreachable

impact of COVID -19 on livestock rearing community

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This report has been possible due to the joint effort of many. First and foremost, the livestock farmers whose lives have been so devastatingly impacted by the COVID 19 pandemic, specifically of those 33 respondents who have willingly opened up about their lives and distress.

Thanks to my colleagues from IGSSS and partner NGOs the document would not have been completed without the support of committed field team members who diligently note down the information shared by communities.

I am also thankful to my fellow team members for stimulating discussions and critical inputs during the conceptualizing, analysis and drafting that has contributed significantly to shape the document to this final document.

We are excited to present some of the innovative strategies to improve resiliency of rural livestock farming community. This document will be useful for the development practitioners and policy makers related to rural farmers and livestock rearing community to develop sustainable approaches in tailoring support plan.

Netaji Basumatary

Indo-Global Social Service Society



INTRODUCTION

21-day nationwide lockdown on March 24, 2020, that was later extended up to 3rd May with a new set of guidelines for the calibrated opening of the economy to be effective from 20th April. In spite of such relaxation, Union Minister for Animal Husbandry, Dairy and Fisheries Ministry expressed his concern over the low consumption of milk and poultry products even though they come under essential services largely due to supply and demand issues amid lockdown.

The National Sample Survey Office carried out the Land and Livestock Holdings Survey in its 70th round during January – December 2013. As per the report, around 1.75% of the total rural households derived the major income from self-employment in livestock farming, which comprises around 2.7 million rural households. Livestock is supplementary and complementary venture of landless, marginal and small landholders who own a sizeable proportion of livestock wealth. Livestock is the most liquid asset for farmers because of their potentiality to dispose of during emergencies.

Prolong lockdown however has severely hit the farm economy. Due to various operational restrictions, farmers are facing shortage of feeds, vaccination and medicine for their livestock. Neither Veterinary doctor is available at dispensaries or medicines though state government are directed to ensure continuous emergency services in the animal husbandry and veterinary sector especially in emergent animal health situation. Another major setback faced by these farmers is that unable to sell off their livestock as market remains closed they are burdened with extra cost on feeding. Besides, delivery of cattle feed has become difficulty due to restrictions of movement. Rumor circulated linking poultry as possible vectors of the virus lead to the drastic decline in its demand and hence, realization and profitability. Many have sold chicken and other birds below the cost price due to various reasons.

At the time of writing the report, ICAR is preparing documents of the possible impacts on agriculture and allied sectors and measures to minimize the negatives so that the food system remains unaffected. Meanwhile, Government of India, just two days before the scheduled end of the national lockdown extended it for another two weeks till May 17, 2020. Despite all the exemptions made by the Ministry, livestock farmers continue to face hardships.

ABOUT STUDY

Through this rapid research we have tried to reach out to a small representative sample of 33 people involved in livestock rearing from different states of the country. The survey samples were collected from 26 villages of 12 districts in 8 States of Kashmir, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Assam, Odisha and Chhattisgarh. This research focuses on the foreseeable impact of the COVID 19 in the lives of people engaged in livestock rearing and that of their families.



It was also undertaken with the view that in this crisis moment how and what could be the response mechanism of IGSSS or through its partners to minimize the woes and problems of the community. At the same time, this is an effort of sharing our understanding with a larger audience to assist them and facilitate in responding to these group more meaningfully and strategically by assisting by the system to be more proactive in reaching to the most affected.

States	Districts
Kashmir	Bandipora
Bihar	Nawada
Uttar Pradesh	Siddharth Nagar, Shrawasti
Madhya Pradesh	Jhabua, Barwani
Rajasthan	Dholpur
Assam	North-Lakhimpur
Odisha	Koraput, Rayagada
Chhattisgarh	Kanker, Gariyaband

The core objectives of the study were as follows:

- To analyse the impact of COVID-19 lockdown on small livestock rearing communities.
- To document the current distress small livestock rearers are going through.
- To analyse the accessibility and effectiveness of government relief packages.
- To suggest possible strategies and recommendations for future.

The survey was conducted by IGSSS's staff as well as by Project partners through telephonic interviews using questionnaires. Please note that,

- Information collected are qualitative in nature, however equal efforts was given to those questions where there are possibilities of quantifying them into numbers or percentages.
- Information is collected through proper dialogue with the individuals and hypothesis or generalizations are to be avoided.
- Data collection was done only telephonically between the months of April – May 2020.
- The desk review was carried out in parallel to the primary data collection process to complement the primary information.
- Reviewed the existing Government schemes and relief packages.

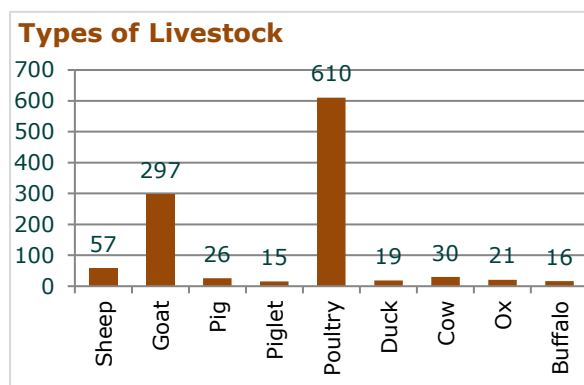
During the study, few challenges were faced by the research team of communicating with the respondents and generating responses amidst the personal difficulties and mental trauma they were going through. Nevertheless, effort has been to put things straight and as witnessed and communicated by the community.



FINDINGS

RESPONDENT PROFILE

All the respondents were engaged in livestock rearing for livelihood in parallel with agriculture practice. Out of 33 respondents, the income from livestock constituted 10-15% for 9, 25-30% for 14, 50-75% for 6 and 75-100% for 4 farmers.



From the survey it is found that poultry and goat were among the mostly reared livestock with 610 poultrys and 297 goats amongst the 33 respondent from 8 different states of India as reflected in the graph.

The survey found that though livestock rearing was practiced by of 33 respondents, 7 respondent earn below Rs. 15,000 annually, 13 respondent earns between Rs. 15,000 – Rs. 30,000, 6 respondents earns Rs. 30,000- Rs.50,000 and 7 respondents

earns between Rs. 50,000- Rs.70,000 annually.

UNDERSTANDING OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Most of the respondents were aware and informed about COVID-19. They knew that it is transmitted through person to person through coughing, sneezing or even by touching the infected person.

They were also aware that the virus has no treatment but can be prevented only by taking preventive measures by avoiding large crowds and gatherings, maintain hygiene by washing hands and clothes regularly, wear mask and by physical distancing.

Feroza Begum from Bandipora district of Jammu and Kashmir said "Corona virus spread through mixing with people, so we should stay at home to prevent from this deadly disease, we should wash hand and our cloths regularly and use of sanitizer is a must"

They are aware of COVID-19 pandemic through the awareness created by the Panchayats and peer communications such as social media and one to one interaction.



IMPACT ON LIVESTOCK FARMING ACTIVITIES:

Unable to sell the products

“Although I also work as labour but the main resource of my income is poultry and animal husbandry. Almost 75-80% of my family income comes from livestock farming. At present, I have 29 goats, 32 chickens, 4 bulls and 2 cows. The total annual income from livestock ranges from 45,000 to 50,000. Every month I used to sell 1 to 2 goats and 10-12 chickens. Minimum Rs.2,500.00, I used to earn by selling a goat in a month. There was a net earning of up to Rs.1,500.00 from selling chickens. Thus, I could earn up to Rs.4,000.00 per month but for the last one month, I have not sold a single goat and only 2 chickens have been sold, from which I earned only Rs. 300.00. So, my net loss of the month is Rs. 3,700.00. If the feeding cost incurred on animals in the last one month is added, then the total loss is up to Rs.5,000.00”

This is story of Mr. Tarachand Kharte, 47 Years farmer cum agriculture labourer from village Borli, Block-Sendhwa, District-Barwani of Madhya Pradesh. He has 6 family members to feed.

Income is going downhill as they are unable to sell their products in the market or from home because of the rumours that consumption of pig meat and poultry may risk lives and increase the chances of infection. Many people are unable to sell their dairy products, meat, and eggs, causing financial problems.

Few respondents had highlighted that they would want to sell their sheep and goats to fulfil their basic needs during the lockdown but they were unable to sell it as the value offered was far less than the market price.

Three respondents from Kashmir have admitted that they had to sell the eggs @Rs. 6 which they normally sell for Rs. 10 in the normal days. It was also highlighted by few respondents that even though the markets are open, it can be open only for limited time and there is very less opportunity for them to negotiate the rates, most of the time, they are getting very less margin as compared to normal days.

Some of the respondents used to sell 1 to 2 goats and 10 to 12 chickens per month but due to lockdown their sale dropped to 2 chickens per month. Some had plans to sell their goat and buy basic supplies for home but the plan did not materialize. When some people tried selling their livestock in their neighbourhood, the prices dropped to one third (1/3) of the market price. Hence, due to lockdown livestock sales are completely on halt and the expenditure of feeding livestock are increasing day by day.

Sale of milk and dairy products has also faced the brunt due to slow rate of sale and limited movement. While calculating the losses, a family purely dependent on goat rearing is facing loss of INR 500-700 a day and families engaged in poultry are facing loss of INR 200-300 per day due to lock down situation.

Those farmers who cultivate vegetables along with livestock rearing are unable to sell their vegetables too. They have to sell their vegetables in their neighbourhood and within the village at very low prices compared to the market. In this process, the middlemen who supplies vegetables, chicken and goat from villages are making profits taking advantage of the situation.



Fodder shortage for Livestock

Most of the time livestock like sheep, goat, cow and buffalo were taken to the field for grazing, but due to the subsequent lockdown they are not in a position to take their livestock for grazing in the field. It has also been difficult for the livestock rearers to get dry feeds for their livestock from the market due to the shortage of stocks and unavailability in market, no transportation etc.

Few respondents said only green grass is available locally and not in required quantity for feeding the livestock and since the livestock are not allowed to be taken to the field for grazing it has been extra burden for the owner to collect fodders from the field.

Non-Availability of timely vaccination services

Vaccination is another major concern for the livestock rearers. A sense of fear amongst the livestock rearing community is that their livestock may be infected due to absence of timely vaccination facility or availability of medicine. Few respondents also highlighted that the local Vet doctors are not willing to come for vaccination in the villages. On the other hand, it is difficult for them to take their livestock to vaccination centre due to the movement restriction and also that the required medicines are not available in the centre. Some could not get medicines for their livestock as there are no veterinary shops nearby and some had to travel around 12kms to get the medicines.

FOOD AND NUTRITION STATUS

According to the respondents the problem of food and nutrition supply varies from state to state, the farmers in Kashmir region are facing difficulty in managing meal required for a day. Also, they are facing short of cash in hand or income to buy the necessary items like nutritional food, medicine, etc. but somehow they are arranging through loans and borrowings from others or from the shops.

One farmer mentioned that with extended lockdown it is not possible for him anymore to manage the requirements due to source of only income drying up. Similarly, farmers in Bihar are facing difficulty in managing grocery, vegetables, required nutrition to infants/toddlers, pregnant or lactating mothers, and medicines for the needy ones. The prevention of movement from one place to another has worsened the situation more. According to the farmers in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, they are able to manage only 25% of their daily requirements like grocery and food items, fodder for cattle and medicines.

Usha Devi from Nawada district of Bihar who earns her livelihood through daily wages and goat rearing is facing hardship to feed her family during lockdown. She shared, “I cannot go to field to work and earn income. I have no other ways to earn and facing hunger situation. The situation of my infant and children are so bad that I am not able to afford basic food like milk and other nutrition. Due to lockdown I cannot sell my goat in local market”.

Although in Madhya Pradesh the Government has distributed wheat, rice, oil and sugar



Tarachand Kharte from Barwani district of Madhya Pradesh said “Wheat and rice are being helped by the government but other food items like potato and onion are no longer at home”.

but managing vegetables and spices is very difficult. One of the farmer from Madhya Pradesh mentioned that the nearest place to buy vegetables is 7 km away from the village. Farmers in Rajasthan are unable to get nutritious food because of the unavailability of products in the market and with the rise in prices of vegetables.

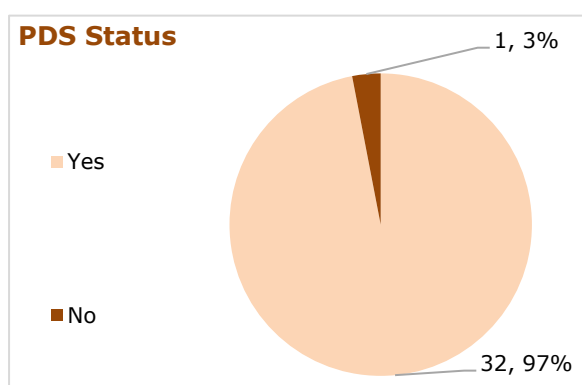
Similarly, people in Assam are facing difficulties in managing daily grocery items, medicines and fodders as the halt on transportation in the region has restricted supply of the commodities/ essentials from towns to villages. Moreover, the shops in villages have limited stock and the nearest market is 10 Km away from the village. Similarly in Odisha and Chhattisgarh farmers are unable to manage necessary items like the sanitary pad, medicine, vegetables, etc., Government has distributed rice in the region but other items are not included. It has been observed in the data that the price of items in the village shops has shot considerably on account of slow or no supply and increased demand.

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

No particular Government support was announced till the time of writing report towards livestock rearers. The general support as extended to all poor communities was also offered to them, that are as follows:

Public Distribution System

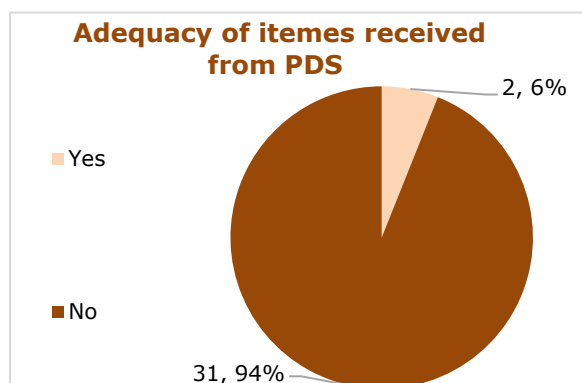
According to Graph 4, 32 Households i.e. 97% received Public Distribution System ration from the Government only one household from Bihar hasn't received ration from the Government even if he has a ration card, the reason is unknown.



Smt Jasmati, 55 years female respondent from Siddharth Nagar district of Uttar Pradesh said “Although we got ration from PDS but other items like pulses, oil, spices and salt have gone in crises. Sanitizer, Soap for bathing & hand cleaning are not available. Women are using dirty clothes during mensuration period”.



Adequacy of Ration Received



From the above graph 5, we see that 94% of the respondents have said that the items received are not adequate.

Only two of the respondents from Madhya Pradesh region said that the items and quantity received from Public Distribution System is adequate. This should last till lockdown. 94% who said it was not adequate was based on their requirement of food

according to the family members.

Status of Mid Day Meal and ICDS

Respondents from Kashmir mentioned that the eligible families received Mid-Day Meal and ICDS while in Bihar none of the respondents mentioned receiving any assistance.

In Uttar Pradesh none of the family have received any assistance from MDM.

However in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Assam, Odisha and Chhattisgarh the eligible family have benefited under these schemes. With regard to ICDS and Mid-day meal scheme Kashmir is continuously delivering the items door to door. However, in Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh the current quantity is less in comparison to the normal days. In Odisha it's normal as earlier.

Status of PHC

States	Comments
Kashmir	The PHC center is nearby to the respondents village and it is functioning well
Bihar	The PHC in nearby to the respondents' village and it is functioning in the area where the respondents were interviewed
Uttar Pradesh	The CHC center in the project villages of IGSSS in Uttar Pradesh region is 5 Km away from the respondents' village. It is functioning but right now the center is focusing only on preventive measures and awareness for coronavirus.
Madhya Pradesh	According to the respondents, one PHC center is available in their village but accessing it all the time is difficult as they mentioned that the center is sometimes functional and accessible. While one of the respondents from a different village mentioned that the health center is 7km away from his village and is fully functioning and people do visit when in need.
Rajasthan	According to the respondents from Rajasthan the PHC center is 7km away from their village and is functioning but the problem is shortage of medicine which is frequent phenomenon of the center.
Assam	The respondents from Assam stated that the Health Centre is an average of

States	Comments
	15 km away from the village and is functional. Accessing it is difficult due to lack of transportation.
Odisha	The center in Odisha is also functioning and sometimes the health staff does home visits in their villages but the center is average of 12km away and accessing it all of the time is difficult.
Chhattisgarh	According to the respondents from the Chhattisgarh region, the nearest PHC is 7–25 km away from the villages, and is functioning The problem is there is only nurses and the doctors aren't available to do proper health check-up.

Panchayat Interventions

The response about Panchayat taking action on COVID-19 varies from state to state. Below is the compilation of data from the respondents. And the rating is calculated on the basis of average numbering by the respondents with respect to their Panchayat

State	Respondents Response	Rating (average)
Kashmir	The panchayat personnel comes up with awareness camps regarding maintenance of physical distance especially at Banks and while distributing food in the villages. However people are expecting more from them.	5 out of 10
Bihar	The Panchayats in Bihar made a quarantine center in their Panchayat Headquarters and made arrangements for the households who don't have a ration card.	3 out of 10
Uttar Pradesh	The only thing mentioned by the respondents is that the panchayat personals sanitize the whole village and instructed the respondents to stay at home.	5 out of 10
Madhya Pradesh	Panchayat personnel conducted an awareness camp on coronavirus and helped villagers to get ration from Public Distribution System.	7 out of 10
Rajasthan	In Rajasthan panchayat played a major role from arranging rations to face mask to soap/hand sanitizer and also made rules and regulations during the lockdown for people to stay at home.	6 out of 10
Assam	The Panchayats made arrangements for the BPL families and to those Household who don't have a ration card. Identified the right families for support during lockdown.	5 out of 10
Odisha	Just responded "Yes" satisfied with Panchayat work to COVID-19 response	6 out of 10



State	Respondents Response	Rating (average)
Chhattisgarh	Conducted awareness program from door to door on hand wash practice and precautionary measures along with ANM and AWW workers	5 out of 10

AMPLIFYING THE VOICES (RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMUNITY)

Maximum number of the respondents from all over the region are concerned about the source of income and livelihood during and post lockdown.

The individuals from Kashmir region shared that financial help along with consumable relief materials will be a remarkable assistance to them while the individuals from Bihar are more concerned about their livelihood opportunities.

Similarly individuals from Madhya Pradesh are concerned about the income from their livestock. The lockdown has made fodder management and vaccination for their livestock very difficult.

Likewise, respondents from Rajasthan are concerned about assistance from Government. They are worried about the sustainability support from the Government in the long run.

Livestock rearing community are facing a problem with managing fodder and vaccines for their livestock. The swine flu (new virus infecting pigs) and foot & mouth diseases (infecting cattle) in the Northeast region has added to the woes of the farmers.

Government is trying its best, from the distribution of Public Distribution System ration to ICDS, MDM, and even cash. The distribution of items varies from state to state but now people are worried about sustainability support from the Government in the long run.

POSSIBILITIES

1. Awareness and disseminating correct information to the common mass is very critical, the wrong information have contribute to adverse behaviour among the community and in livestock context, consumers have stop buying meat for consumption. In present electronic media age it is important to have strict surveillance on spreading of wrong information, where every locality can form vigilance group to monitor social media and peer to peer sharing of false information.
2. There is urgent need to regulate market price of livestock/animal feed to stop taking undue advantage during the time of crisis. The government should issue a notification on the market selling price of livestock feed and continuously monitor the stock availability in the market to ensure continuous supply of livestock feed. Seeing the present context there will be mobility restriction or containment zone, therefore it is important to ensure animals feed are made available and affordable.
3. Whenever and wherever there is restriction in mobility, arrangement should be made for door step delivery of feed supply. For small livestock farmers, there is possibility to map them and create data base to supply the feed to the nearest possible livestock rearing community.
4. For livestock farmers who depend on open grazing can be given skill training on know-how to prepare homemade feed for livestock. They can be given know-how of storing feed along with support to build storage for storing livestock feed.

5. One of the critical challenge is accessing to veterinary doctors or Para vet during the mobility restriction and in some places Veterinary dispensary is at far way distance. There is possible for arranging tele consultancy with the Veterinary Doctor to get right advice during the time of emergency. The skills and knowledge of Para-Vet (Poshumitra) has to be updated on regular basis on emerging diseases like the swine flu who in turn disseminate the information to community for prevention and treatment.
6. With mobility restrictions or without restriction this is the time to explore new innovative marketing strategy. Taking advantage of the situation the livestock farmers should look for alternative marketing like online selling of livestock and livestock products. Here the NGOs working with livestock farmers can support by introducing and linking the farmers to online market and service providers. This will enable the farmers to get the right price and do away with brokers who take maximum advantage in time crisis.
7. Other possible action to combat crisis collectively is by forming small livestock farmers' company or cooperative society. The company/cooperative will collectively buy feed in bulk and make storage facilities from where individual farmers can take the feed according to their requirement. The company/cooperative can also take up marketing of livestock and livestock products that will give them better bargaining advantage to get maximum return. The company/cooperative can also function as centre of knowledge and innovation from where every member benefit for better and improved livestock management.
8. The livestock farmers' family members engage in livestock rearing and also many employ additional labours, in future if there is no demand and if the livestock rearing become unviable enterprise, there are high chances of many becoming jobless. To keep livestock farming alive, government may plan support to the livestock farmers with financial grant or subside loan to continue the livestock farming and bounce-back

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ABOUT IGSSS

Indo-Global Social Service Society (IGSSS) is a non-profit organisation working with the mandate for a humane social order based on truth, justice, freedom and equity. Established in 1960, IGSSS works for development, capacity building and enlightenment of the vulnerable communities across the country for their effective participation in development.

With its presence in 25 states and one Union Territory of India, IGSSS has set its thematic focus on promoting sustainable livelihood, energising the youth as change makers, protecting lives, livelihood and assets from the impact of hazards, advocating for the rights of CityMakers (Homeless Residents) and developing cadre of leaders from the community and civil society organisations. Gender and Youth are underlining theme across all its interventions.

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