

Foundation for Ecological Security (FES)'s efforts in building capacity of Fodder Innovation System at Bhilwara, Rajasthan, India by Mr.Sanjay Joshie

For the development of rural India, it is essential that different actors such as local governments, NGOs, educational institutions, individuals, and social organizations come together and establish a dialogue that focuses particularly on the deprived section of the society. If a behavioural change in the society is to be brought in, it is important that all these local actors come together on a platform and develop systems for the realization of the collective vision of rural development. An initiative in this direction in Bhilwara district of Rajasthan, India has been taken up, where the initial successes has inspired the actors to plan for higher goals and make attempts to achieve them.

In Bhilwara region the livelihoods of the rural communities are dependent on agriculture and animal husbandry. The consecutive droughts have seriously impacted on agriculture and animal husbandry. With livestock and livestock products not fetching good market price, the issues such as improving the breed, animal husbandry practices, new diseases and their treatment, are being given lesser importance. This has led to animal husbandry becoming not for profit and for subsistence. The multi-actor platform formed to collectively work towards making animal husbandry a profitable venture, and thereby improving the livelihood of poor livestock keepers.

In the perspective of animal husbandry in Bhilwara the following actors are present. The relationship between them is shown in the picture below:

All efforts have been made to bring together animal husbandry related actors on one platform and analyze the situation in the region for preparing a detailed plan. As a result, a comprehensive plan was developed. But in the absence of understanding about each other and faith on the process of working together, only limited progress could be achieved.

One of the planned activities was vaccination. To implement this, FES, Bhilwara Dairy, BAIF and the Animal Husbandry Department came together, jointly planned and executed. The program was implemented efficiently and all were pleased with the success of this program. During the camp 2740 animals from the project villages were vaccinated. The joint post program review gave some positive direction for future, in which division of responsibilities and preparation of long-term plans was some of the important issues. But the best part of the review was that everyone was focused on improving effectiveness and not pointing to the deficiencies. Better relations between these actors have resulted in the development of new way of working.

The field level staff of Bhilwara dairy started to participate in the village meetings with the FES staff. With the two actors working together the thought process was broad based and the quality of deliberations at the village level also improved. The Dhuwala Dairy Cooperative Society of Bhilwara dairy, registered an upward trend in milk procurement and this was very encouraging for them. The community members got a good market for their produce and have started to believe on the animal husbandry sector, again. In Dhuwala, the community members requested for vaccination of animals and another camp was organized in the village where a total of 2,640 animals were vaccinated. FES, Dairy and Rural volunteers motivated the livestock keepers while the Animal Husbandry Department vaccinated animals and they along with BAIF answered people's questions on the issues of animal husbandry.

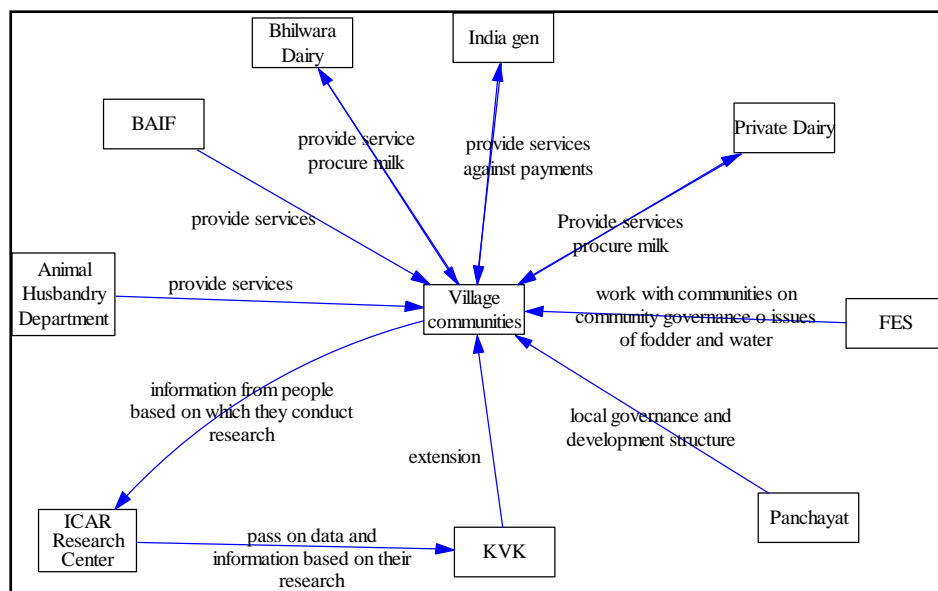


Figure: Map of actors of fodder innovation system at Bhilwara, Rajasthan, India

Lessons: The efforts have been praise worthy and will guide us in future. The main points are:

- All the actors have realized the importance of collective action.
- All the actors in the future have agreed to strengthen this platform.
- Members of the community have realized the importance of this forum and they want to include other actors such as medical assistant, post master, teachers, to participate in the forum so that qualitative improvement can be attained in the overall development of the village.

This is only the beginning of the long journey of bringing in behavioural change.