

The White Revolution
and the reordering of
relations amongst the
pastoralists of Gujarat,
India: Implications for
food security and
nutrition

Food Security and Gender

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Structure of the Presentation

- How did I get here?
- India's Dairy Revolution
- Review of pastoralism
- Analyse the impacts of the White Revolution on women pastoralists
- Recommendations
- Addressing Complexity
- Based on field work conducted in the summer of 2012



Father with his children (top right)

Women preparing chai and managing cows before setting out on migration (bottom right)

Dairying in India

- Dairying – the practice of rearing animals for milk – in India is an instrument for social and economic development
- Plays a vital role in the Indian economy
- 17% of the world's total dairy production comes from India, virtually all of which is consumed domestically
- Typical producer milks less than five animals
- “Low-input/low-output” model with both production costs and yields amongst the lowest in the world
- India maintains the world's largest bovine herd
- Cattle are charged sites through which national cultural and religious identities are produced

White Revolution

- 1946 Kaira District Cooperative Milk Producers Union rose up against unfair monopoly & exploitation of marginal milk producers
 - Led to decentralised collection and cooperatives at the village level
- Phase 1: 1970-1980: copied producer coop and collection model and linked 18 dairying regions (milksheds) to cities
- Phase 2: 1981-1985: increased the number of milksheds to 136; added 290 urban markets to expand distribution
 - Self-sustaining system of 43,000 village cooperatives, 4.25 million milk producers
- Phase 3: 1986-1996: expansion of dairy cooperatives (30,000 new cooperatives)
 - strengthening of infrastructure to procure and market the increasing volume of milk

Mission Milk

- National Dairy Plan (2012) response to increasing food prices and growing consumer demand for dairy products
- Intensive Dairy Development Program:
 - increasing milk production by providing technical inputs services
- Strengthening infrastructure for quality & clean milk production:
 - programme aims to build infrastructure to ensure milk quality from producer to consumer; improve milking practices at the farmer level; and, build awareness on the importance of clean milk production amongst producers
- Assistance to Cooperatives:
 - revitalize underperforming dairy cooperatives
- Dairy Entrepreneurship Development Scheme (2010):
 - aims to create modern dairy farms for the production of clean milk; creating structural changes in the unorganized sector



Women and the White Revolution

- Women's engagement in Operation Flood was due in large part to collaboration with NGOs and Foundations
- 6,000 women's dairy cooperative societies were established, resulting in higher incomes for some women in cases
- **The roles of women in India are highly socially constructed and consequently analysis of the inclusion of women in development projects is complex**
- Is more work for women a good and welcome?
- Withdrawal of women from the domestic manufacture of ghee in order to sell whole milk has been a loss for women
- Men predominantly collect the money derived from the sale of milk, although the money may be given to the wife for safekeeping
- Who holds the money has significance, what is perhaps more important is how the money is used
- Income has been reported to reduce domestic tension but perhaps at the cost of the nutritional security of women

Impacts and Implications

- 9.3 million farmer-members
- 10,900 metric tons of milk per day
- 55,042 functional village cooperative society
 - 6,000 female cooperatives
- 170 milk producer unions
- Increased access to milk = nutrition security
- Advances in dairy technologies
- Income generating opportunities for rural livestock keepers
- Direct financial assistance to the cooperatives
- Proper pricing policies that both benefited rural farming families
- Reduced urban milk famines
- Avoidance of neo-colonial dependence
- Draws attention to the important role of agriculture in poverty reduction
- Extends the vision of agriculture to livestock
- Highlights the value of national ownership over development programmes and the importance of policy
- Makes a case for market-based development
 - not of the laissez-faire variety

Concerns

- Increase is not exclusively attributed to Operation Flood
 - Operation Flood handled only 6.3% of Indian Milk production in 1996
- Increased milk does not directly translate to increased access
- Export of Indian Dairy
- Emphasis on new breeds has led to a dramatic decrease in indigenous breeds
- “farmer” discourse – excludes non-farmers
- Commodification of milk and milk-animals
- Technology-dependent productivity
 - Productionist Paradigm
- Contradictions between the aims of productivity and redistribution
- Producing and entrenching inequalities in rural land ownership
- Rural bias in policy
- Urban bias for distribution
- “The biases of dairy development resemble those of the Green Revolution, so that existing social inequalities are reflected in the membership of cooperatives” (Basu 2009; see also Alvares 1985; Baviskar 1988)

What is pastoralism?

- Pastoralism is a socio-cultural and economic way of living reliant on the rearing of livestock and sustained through migration
- An efficient way of managing drylands that can enhance biological diversity and ecosystem integrity while fostering resilience
- Mobile pastoralists are a large and significant minority, and often an ethnic minority, in many countries around the world
- Nomadic and transhumant pastoralists may number between 100 and 200 million people globally, and the number rises if you include extensive agro-pastoralists
- Animals include cattle, yaks, sheep and goats, horses, donkeys, camels, llamas, alpacas, and reindeer

Gujarat, India



Maldhari

- The term “Maldhari” is derived from the Gujarati words **mal** (livestock) and **dhari** (guardian): those who guard livestock
- The predominant Maldhari communities found in Gujarat are **Rabaris, Bharwads, Charans** (Hindu) and **Jat** (Muslim)
 - Religion has implications for food security
- Maldhari keep: Cow; Buffalo; Camel; Goat; Sheep



Camel milking: culturally, you cannot sell camel's milk. It can only be offered as a gift.

Main Challenges Facing Maldhari

- Land grab (i.e., urbanization, agriculture, conservation)
 - Loss of common lands- limits grazing, migration routes
- Climate change
 - Changes to migration patterns
- Food price volatility
- Food security/Fodder security
- Political periphery (land, agriculture, dairy and social policies)
- Balancing tradition with contemporary (urban) norms
- “Bad reputation”
- Changing social relations within communities and with other communities
- Earthquake of 2001- killed around 20,000 people, injured another 167,000 and destroyed nearly 400,000 homes
 - Impact = development agencies, support to sedentarise (housing)

Land Grab in Gujarat

- Special Investment Regions: SIR
- SIR covers 500 km² including 44 villages
- Part of Gujarat's industrial policy: developed as an auto and knowledge hub
- Farmers found out from gov. notification in local newspaper (May 14 2013)
- Villages put up notices prohibiting entry of government or industry officials to discuss SIR
- Cooperatives as political agents in protest: passed resolutions opposing SIR



Relationship to Animals

- “The girls in Maldhari communities are **increasingly vulnerable**. They are facing increased pressure to earn money due to loss of animals. This pressure intensifies during the drought. **Animals are power, liberty, food and money for these girls**. The girls are now being pushed into organized labour which is unrelated to traditional skills, leading to the loss of these skills. Most feel that **if there is livestock, they are more proud**: *mal chhe, toh mobho chhe.*”
- Other story...

Relationship to Milk

- “*ma ne dhavay, ma ne khavay nahi* - **You can take milk from your mother but you cannot eat your mother**”
- Intricate rituals and rules associated with the production, distribution and consumption which can all be traced back to community survival
- Cannot sell raw milk. Raw milk is referred to as “unmarried milk” (*kunvaru*)
 - You could however give raw milk to your neighbours, hassle of transporting raw milk vs processed milk products; ghee, leaves you with buttermilk to feed the family as well as to the calves
- Once a month, on the 2nd day of the month according to the moon calendar Maldhari would traditionally not sell milk: this is called *bij*
 - sharing, build relationships with the wider community (farmers, for example) and importantly, it leaves extra milk for the calves

Relationship to Milk

- Traditional relations are shifting as milk becomes increasingly commodified
- Women are sacrificing their milk consumption for income.
 - “Look at us. We are round and healthy. The younger women are so skinny. They are not drinking milk. They are selling it to the coops. They eat only rotla. You can see it when you look at us” (Female elder and leader, August 2012, Gujarat)
 - “Because the coops offer a stable price for milk, women are sacrificing their milk consumption for wages” (field worker, August 2012, Gujarat)

Food Security for Maldhari

- Food security = milk security = animal security = fodder security (also migratory security)
- Policies must address this to assure food security of pastoralists; mobility must be taken into consideration
- HH analysis is not sufficient if needs of women are masked

Pillar	Availability	Access	Utilization	Stability
Attributes	Quality and quantity	Capacity to procure sufficient food	At the household level, how is food is used, stored, processed, prepared and distributed	The social, economic and ecological situation
For Maldhari	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk • Fodder and water for animals • Income for millet, sugar, chai, spices, vegetables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital • Proximity to markets and coops • Security 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storage while on migration • Environment (monsoon = no cooking) • Cooking =extra labour • Women's intake 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relations with others • Stable -reliable weather • Festivals/holidays (weddings) • Proximity to coops/sale points

Where do we stand?

- The fact that pastoralists are still migrating is powerful testimony to their resilience and adaptability.
- Given increased pressures associated with climate change and restricted natural resources, as well the importance of prioritising small-scale food producers in development and food security initiatives, pastoralist-sensitive policies make sense.
- Policies impacting pastoralists should be grounded in the normative and analytical right to adequate food framework.
 - A right to food approach seeks to improve coordination across government, enhance accountability, collective learning, participation, inclusivity, democracy and empowerment.
 - The value of the approach is the combination of agency of people, accountability on the part of the State, and a framework to hold governments accountable.

Where do we go from here?

- Local
 - Address customs that disadvantage girls and women
 - Develop markets (sheep and goat milk)
 - Tension: customary authority/HR
- State/National
 - Consult pastoralists: multistakeholder platform
 - Uphold the VGGTs and RTF
 - Mobile services (schools and health services)
 - Prioritize food security and environment (new fundamentals)
- Global
 - Awareness building: complex
 - Address land grabbing, especially of the commons and conservation efforts



Maldhari women participate in the Global Gathering of Women Pastoralists (November 2010, Mera, Gujarat India)

Local Level

- At the local level support is needed for efforts seeking to develop alternative markets.
- A strong case has been made for the potential of niche markets and there are examples of such initiatives in pastoralist communities in Gujarat, such as the handicraft economy that has been established in the Kutch region.
- There are also opportunities to develop new markets for camel, sheep and goat milk.
- The State of Gujarat has earmarked money in the 2012-2013 budget for the first commercial dairy to process camel milk in Kutch (Times of India 2012a).
 - Will not work in some pastoralist communities where camel milk is not allowed to be sold. “Camel milk is only supposed to be consumed by the village.”
 - Acknowledging complexity and diversity, the example illustrates that there are opportunities beyond the traditional dairy cooperatives.

Conclusion: Camel in the room (?)

- This is complex, complicated, layered territory
- Contradictions abound: development programmes and policies stem from and reproduce complex, complicated, layered territories wherein contradictions abound
- Dairy policy has negatively impacted pastoralists BUT provides stable income & security and there are calls to include them, consult them, make policy changes to reflect their reality
- Not good enough to stop at complexity: One is trapped by the framing of some win and some lose
- It's not about winners and losers: its about social reorganization or biopolitics (Nally 2008)

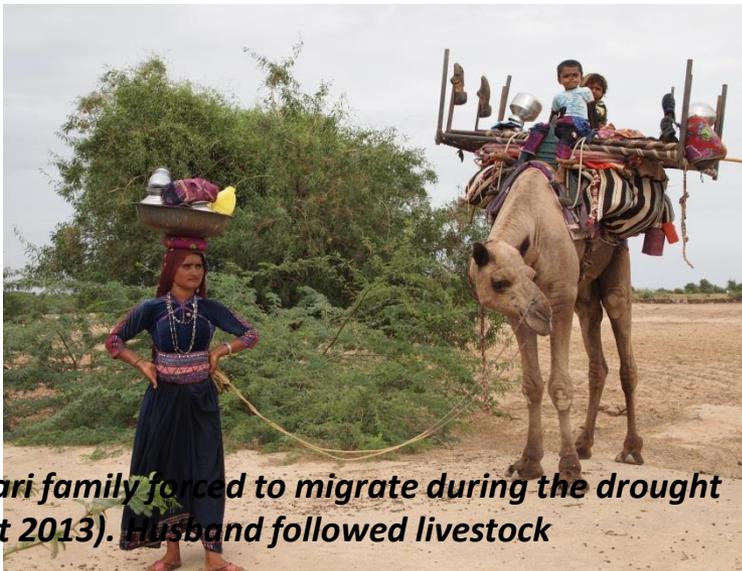
Task performed by Maldhari women



Woman prepares chai for guests



Young woman boiling milk into mava (condensed milk) (above)



Maldhari family forced to migrate during the drought (August 2013). Husband followed livestock



Everyday these women & girls collect wood from nearby rangelands to sell. They earn about rs.50-60 per-day (approx. 1 UDS)

Thank You



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