

Anthra Annual Report 2015-16

Livestock, Landscapes and Livelihoods

Horses of the Deccan

The sturdy horse of the Dhangar women has traditionally been used as a pack animal carrying the worldly possessions of the women on their stout backs. While the men walk with their sheep, women and children travel along with their chicken, lambs and other material possessions to set up camp in preparation for the night halt.

These horses are sturdy and sure footed as they transport several kilos on their backs everyday especially through biting rain and searing sun. They also transport precious cargo; babies, young lambs, chicken and sometimes sick animals too. Since the horses spend most of the day with women they are mainly taken care of by the women. Veterinary care is not easily available as these families are constantly on the move in fairly remote areas. It has been observed that shepherds are slowly giving up maintaining horses and shifting to motorized transport as managing and tending to these animals is becoming difficult. Should all the shepherds shift to motorized transport these animals would slowly but surely disappear.

In July 2015, Anthra initiated a project to document the sturdy horses of the Dhangar women and their cultural significance. Julie Joly a student from the Ecole supérieure d'agriculture, D'Angers, France undertook the documentation as part of her summer internship project. During the interactions with the women they requested support in taking care of their horses and a small illustrated booklet has been prepared. This booklet has been illustrated by Nikhita Prabhudesai.

Livestock Products and Livestock Markets in Dry land areas of India ; Emerging Changes and Challenges

There are an estimated 2000 livestock markets in the country. Some are held weekly, some annually. Some markets specialize in certain species of animals and others in certain breeds of animals. These markets are a part of the large informal economy and provides livelihoods to several different categories of livestock holders

Anthra is coordinating a study on livestock markets in India. This study is one of the pilots under the Rainfed Livestock Network. As a part of this study several small studies have been initiated in different states.

in April and May 2015 we undertook a detailed study of the livestock markets in the state of Maharashtra. We documented the status of these markets, the animals which are purchased and sold, the days on which the markets are held, people who visit the markets as well as problems if any faced by people who work in these markets.

In August 2015 a presentation on livestock markets was made at the Regional workshop on Strengthening Small Ruminant Based Livelihoods at Bengaluru. This presentation was made by Dr. Nitya Ghotge

In October 2016 a meeting was organized at the livestock market Kerur, district Bagalkot, Karnataka. The objective of the meeting was to have discussions with the APMC (Agricultural Produce Market Committee) members, NABARD and the state government to initiate a pilot programme for developing an ideal livestock market for

small ruminants. Dr. Balu Athani of Future Greens anchored the meeting. The meeting was very well attended. A note was prepared based on the discussions and recommendations which emerged from the meeting. This was submitted to the Karnataka state government. As a result the state government has agreed to invest money in improving 10 livestock markets in the state.

The Climate Change Cell

Sugar cane, popcorn and sweets; integration strategies of Maldhari pastoralists in India

A new book Titled “Valuing Variability; new perspectives on climate resilient dryland development ” and published by IIED was officially released at Nairobi, Kenya on 28th April 2015 to coincide with the 9thCBA(Community Based Adaptation) conference. Anthra has a case study in the book on the Maldhari cattle herders “Sugar cane, popcorn and sweets ; integration strategies of Maldhari pastoralists in India.” Dr. Nitya Ghotge attended the book release function which was held in Nairobi. Dr. Ghotge also attended the CBA 9 conference and was a panelist at the session entitled Harnessing Climatic Variability to Enhance Adaptation in the Drylands.

Mobile and solar

We continue to explore solar options for mobile communities especially mobile pastoral communities. Solar lamps remain a hot favourite and we made it possible for several pastoral communities to access solar lamps and lights. We are also dialoguing with organizations such as Selco Foundation and Atom Solar to look for new designs which cater to the specific needs and conditions that pastoral and nomadic groups face.

Foodscapes and agroecology

Good food concerns us all. At Anthra we are concerned that emerging systems of food production such as factory farming and industrial systems of livestock rearing pose several risks to both producers and consumers. Some of the risks are loss of biodiversity, loss of small holder livelihoods. There are also concerns of animal welfare dangers of epidemics and of chemicals in the food chain. These systems have been promoted in an effort to make foods easily available, more affordable and accessible. But do the economic advantages outweigh the social and environmental disadvantages ?.

To get better informed on this we studied the dairy sector in the periurban area of Pune city in India and found several new and emerging patterns in the dairy sector. While the small holder farmer is rapidly stepping out of dairy farming as it is becoming too expensive to raise and feed dairy cattle, new and emerging systems of modern dairy farming are emerging which offer clean, hygienic but expensive milk delivered at the door step of wealthy urban consumers. Who are these farmers ? Laura Murray a Phd candidate from New York University who interned with Anthra spent a few days visiting different kinds of dairy farms and finding out the difference.

A short film on what shepherds perceive as good food was prepared for sharing with the discussion on Good Food which took place at the Center for Science and Environment in

February 2016.

One health

We believe there is an artificial separation of livestock care and human medical care; communities do not necessarily view these as two separate streams. A key component of Anthra's approach is to actively ally resources in human and livestock health.

Workshop on “Maternal and Child health in mobile pastoral communities: Invisible and Unaccounted for “

Anthra organized a workshop between June 24th and 26th at the Crompton Greaves Management Development Centre (CGMDC), Tal Mulshi District, Pune 412108. The main objective of the workshop was to present the results of a small scoping study conducted in Maharashtra with women of the Dhangar shepherding community who are mobile and migrate for at least 6 months of the year. Along with this a concept note and literature review related to the topic was also shared.

The workshop sought to collectively look for ways in which the problem of health for mobile communities is understood and analyzed and to collectively look for approaches to address the problem as also identify ways in which the women of mobile groups can:

- a. be made visible so that state services can easily and effectively reach them;
- b. Use technology which can be applied to remote areas and locations such as mobile technology to receive messages for ensuring safe pregnancy and early childhood.

Cross cultural learning

Enabling the flow of Knowledge across disciplines requires keeping communication channels patent in diverse ways. Our approach is to enable the sharing and exchange of knowledge across and between disciplines by providing appropriate spaces and platforms

In November 2015 Dr. Nitya Ghotge was invited to take part in the seminar “Re-imagining futures: On our way towards global citizenship”. The seminar took place over 4 days in Prague and Litomyšl in the Czech Republic and had several public discussions and lectures, workshops, pro-action cafés and interviews. The workshop was hosted by NAZEMI a Czech NGO.

Education on the move : the case of children of mobile communities

The Right to Education has been guaranteed by the Indian constitution. However, we know that children from some communities are more marginalised than others and for various reasons have an inequitable access to education

Children of the semi-nomadic Dhangar shepherding community have poorer access to formal education because of their migrating lifestyle that is essential to the financial viability of their families. In recent years, families have realised the importance of literacy and formal education, and many have put their children in to ashramshalas or government funded boarding schools from a very young age.

Between May and October 2015, we undertook a semi-structured survey to assess the educational status and the lives of Dhangar children of school-going age. We interviewed children currently in school and out of school, on migration and in ashramshalas(hostels). We also interviewed teachers of ashramshalas and a few parents. The study was an attempt to understand the current educational landscape and establish baseline characteristics and practices among Dhangar and Maldhari communities

We found that children from Dhangar communities enjoy being in school, especially in ashramshalas and would prefer to complete their education. However, all the children we spoke to are usually taken out of school by age 15 (10th grade). When they leave school they are able to read and write and according to teachers have an increased confidence from when they began their education. Hardly any would like to take up the family business of shepherding but are forced in to it as they are unable to secure other jobs. The migratory lifestyle with the associated hardships of living exposed to the elements, is not one that educated Dhangar children aspire to.

The study has shown that children from pastoral are keen to continue with their education. Relative to a life on the move, ashramshalas(hostels) offer Dhangar children access to modern facilities including three meals, running water, permanent shelter, electricity, television, books and play facilities. After being educated some try to pursue other jobs in factories or cities but the quality of the education they receive may fail them. This forces them to take up the family business which they now come to perceive as an inferior option mainly because of the hard lifestyle, without creature comforts, exposed to the elements.

A new generation of literate Dhangars could be an opportunity to channel their desire to continue education within the family business. Our aim is to educate/provide/share scientific knowledge about sheep rearing of sustaining the thirst for learning by infusing age old and empirically learned/observed practices with modern scientific principals that can enhance the health of the sheep, the economic viability of the profession while adopting principals of one health and environmental sustainability. The intended impact is to inject in to shepherding a modern and scientific approach by creating a knowledge hub, while also documenting, integrating and preserving traditional empirical knowledge in order to give the younger generation a fresh perspective on sheep rearing through using technology, such as an easily accessible knowledge bank.

NOMADS EDU KIT: A three phase tool kit was developed by Rasi Surana a student of industrial design at the MIT design school Pune. This kit is being tested in the field. The kit takes into account the several challenges faced by mobile communities and works on overcoming these barriers.

Some events we participated in

Anthra participated in the 63rd International Congress and Annual Meeting of the society for Medicinal Plant and Natural Product Research in Budapest, Hungary, 23-27 August 2015. And participated in the posted session. Anthra is now also a member of the GA-networking group on Medicinal Plants and Natural Products in Animal Healthcare and Veterinary Medicine

Anthra was invited to out up a stall at Agrowon. Agrowon is one of the largest exhibitions for farmers held in the state and it is an excellent opportunity to interact with farmers and pastoralists.

Nitya Ghotge participated in the XIV National Conference of Indian Association of Women Veterinarians held in Pune where she presented a paper on “Women in Veterinary Science more than a question of numbers”

The Indian Association of Women Veterinarians (IAWV) also felicitated Dr. Nitya Ghotge on this occasion for her considerable contribution for the development of Veterinary Science.

In Dec 2016 Dr. Nitya Ghotge was invited to take part in a discussion entitled “How can we feed the world and protect the planet at the same time?” Glopolis, an NGO based in Prague, Czech Republic hosted this discussion.

Dr. Nitya Ghotge participated in the National Conference on Climate Change and local initiatives. Which took place at St Pius College, Aarey Road Goregaon Mumbai 400 063, from December 28 - 29, 2015.

Events we hosted

Training programmes

Several workshops were conducted through the year on livestock health and making medicines from locally available herbs.

The Maldhari women are very happy with the herbal medicines they have learnt. Several simple cases which affect animals on a day to day basis and can affect productivity have been suitably addressed using these herbal preparations. The community is now interested in growing medicinal plants around their

Celebrating women’s day !

Women’s day was celebrated with the women of pastoral communities at Village Isarwadi, District Aurangabad. A game of snakes ladders which held important concepts of dairy and milk production was played enthusiastically by the women and children. The women were also taught how to make herbal medicines for cattle.

Publications

“Women in Veterinary Science More than a question of Numbers “

XIV annual conference of Indian association of women veterinarians (IAWV) and National seminar on “recent advances in Veterinary and Animal Sciences and Role of Women Veterinarians (8-10 Oct 2015) Compendium cum Souvenir

Co-creating knowledge collectively

An article entitled Co creating knowledge in agro ecology : Experiences in livestock care from Anthra was published in LEISA Mar 2016 issue