



## The year that was

2023 the Chinese year of the rabbit gave way to 2024 the Chinese year of the dragon . At the International level, the United Nations year of the millets gave way to the year of the Camelids . The year will highlight how *“camelids are key to the livelihoods of millions of households in hostile environments across around 90 countries, particularly households of Indigenous peoples and local communities. From alpacas to Bactrian camels, dromedaries, guanacos, llamas, and vicuñas, camelids contribute to **food security, nutrition and economic growth** as well as holding a strong **cultural and social significance** for communities across the world”*. While at Anthra we do not work directly with camelids the theme resonates with our work with pastoralists , local communities , especially related to the cultural and social significance of different breeds of livestock and their importance for livelihoods, biodiversity and nutrition .

The year 2023 saw a lot of activity in Anthra as old projects came to a close and new projects got approved . We were delighted to start two new projects **Livestock in Agroecology : an action research project to document and share different ways livestock contribute to promote agroecology** and **Gender and Livestock in India: Toolkit for Evolving Research Strategies**. Details of the project are given within .

We were invited to be on committees and participate in seminars . We engaged with the government and were further delighted to learn that the next livestock census would finally include pastoralists especially migratory pastoralists. We engaged with youth groups and farmers . We celebrated women livestock farmers and their knowledge.

In March 2024 , our registration under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act ( FCRA) was renewed . This meant that the existing projects could continue .

Despite all the celebratory news we are also deeply aware that there has been a huge change in society and the environment . An organisation like Anthra needs to reflect deeply on the role they play not just in the livestock sector but also in the ecological and social spaces. While keeping our goals in mind we also need to look at fresh ways to reach out and communicate and to continue to make a difference where it matters .

Nitya Sambamurti Ghotge



## Our Projects and Programmes

### Bringing Visibility and Recognition to Women Livestock Farmers and Pastoralists & Their Knowledge.

This project which began in September 2020 drew to a close in November 2023 after receiving a small extension.

The main objectives of the project were to :

- *Increase research and scholarship on women livestock farmers especially women from migratory pastoralist families*
- *Document their knowledge , and give it value and recognition*
- *Create platforms for sharing this knowledge*

The activities undertaken in the last year under this project are summarised below

#### Research

**Following from the** workshop **titled Gender and Livestock: Evolving Research Strategies** held from 6th to 8<sup>th</sup> March 2023 in Pune we applied for a project for writing a tool kit and were happy to receive a small grant .

We presented our work at the Indian Association of Women's studies seminar and shared our knowledge and learnings with different groups.

#### Women in Livestock Care Awards

10 women were selected for receiving the awards from different communities across the state of Maharashtra . The award ceremony took place on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2023 in Pune . Dr. Chanda Nimbkar was the chief guest .

The women were accompanied by members of their family .



#### Pastoral Youth Network

Follow up meetings of the Pastoral youth Network were held in a few locations to identify groups and individuals who would help in the identification of pastoral groups in the livestock census scheduled to take place in 2024. The opportunity was also used to inform the pastoralist groups about the census process and how best to align with it .



## One Health

### **“India Zoo Risk+: Using One Health approaches to understand and co-develop interventions for zoonotic diseases affecting forest communities in India**

Anthra is partnering with UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, ATREE, VGKK (Vivekananda Girijana Kalyana Kendra) in this project on one health .

The project focusses on three zoonotic diseases; Kyasanur forest disease( KFD) , Leptospirosis and Scrub Typhus prevalent in the forested areas of the Western ghats but which most often go undiagnosed and unreported. This project attempts to map risks , vulnerabilities and adaptations of livestock rearing communities living on the edge of forests of Southern India who are under risk from vector borne diseases.

In Maharashtra the field location for this investigation is in the districts of Kolhapur and Sawantwadi and reaches out to pastoralist and farming communities in the area.

PRA techniques , detailed household surveys, focused group discussions and photo-elicitation methods have been used to gather information . Additionally, water samples and urine samples from livestock have been collected for sampling for leptospirosis



Initial findings have shown that loss of forests and other land use changes including the emergence of plantations of cashew and areca have led to the spread of KFD in these areas. Sugarcane cultivation has increased and in some areas replacing paddy . There has also been a shift in livestock species from



buffalo to goat and cattle. Communities have reported an increase in the prevalence of ticks much more than noticed before. Both mobile and sedentary pastoralists groups are equally vulnerable and have poor access to formal health care including veterinary care. Villages are remote and often cut off during the monsoon . In several villages wildlife predation is common. Disease preventives such as vaccinations and diagnostic facilities are extremely limited and traditional knowledge systems are inadequate to deal with severe outbreaks.

We believe a one health approach which calls for a better understanding of disease risk to livestock owners from vectors , wildlife and domestic animals is important in suggesting disease prevention and management strategies which can be refined and developed by health providers. We expect our research and the findings to feed into guidelines for governments, local health providers and communities on disease risk and health-care access and into future surveillance regimes.

We are also bringing out educational material in the form of posters and short movie clips to help communities understand how these diseases are transmitted and what preventive measures they can take to avoid getting affected . Stakeholder meetings are also planned to inform different stakeholders about our learnings.



## New Projects

Livestock in Agroecology : an action research project to document and share different ways livestock contribute to promote agroecology

This project looks at livestock species normally overlooked by policy and research in the country as well as in areas that are neglected by mainstream development processes namely the buffalo and duck. Buffalos reared by Van Gujjars in Uttarkhand and Gawli Dhangars in Western Maharashtra have been selected for the study and Ducks reared in paddy fields in Tamil Nadu. Through this project we wish to bring visibility and a better articulation of local agro-ecological practices and local food systems especially in areas where there has been little attention. This will be done by documenting practices across a few distinct geographical areas and highlighting food systems both crop based and livestock based. The project will also look for pathways to reduce dependency on external inputs especially chemicals, antibiotics, pesticides etc. Additionally we hope this will generate confidence in the community to review their practices with care and look for sustainable alternatives

**Initial findings** There's an enormous contribution of livestock to lives and livelihoods in these areas



which goes unrecognised and undervalued. Many of these communities are facing several problems related to access to land, tenure rights and grazing.

Landscapes, cropping patterns, grazing lands and land use patterns are changing. These changes are causing them to adapt and change. Some adaptation strategies documented are reducing size of herd, changing

species, seeking new grazing lands or seeking other sources of employment. Nomadic communities have especially poor access to services such as health, veterinary care, education. Interestingly marketing does not seem such a challenge.

## Next steps planned

- Take learnings back to the community
- Help create documentation which will be useful for them as well as inform larger society and other farmers about livestock and pastoral systems
- Help them access services ( solar lights in Western ghats )
- Inform other partners about the importance of livestock especially the lesser known species



The project is supported by Bharat Agroecological foundation.



## **Developing a Gender Handbook**

The idea of writing a gender tool kit relevant to Indian conditions was born during a workshop held by Anthra in March 2024. . The tool kit will contain an introduction to popular methods used in gender-based research, their limitations, innovative approaches, notes on ethics, and guidelines on putting these methods into practice. This tool kit is to be a practitioners guide when working in the field with livestock rearing communities.

A group of young researchers volunteered to write the chapters and have been meeting regularly online to discuss chapters and content . The team is working on a collection of existing resources on gender, some key terms used in gender work, pastoralism and livestock rearing as well as useful methods and tools.

As part of the efforts, they also decided to interview experienced researchers and practitioners. These interviews are being analysed and will be part of the training manual.

The project is supported by Swissnex

## **Training and Training resources**

Our collaboration with Access Agriculture the online portal that enables local access to quality training videos in local languages continues . A movie on fowl pox was scripted last year and is being finalized.

Additionally using the documentation available from our research on women's knowledge systems we have been working on short films on "ghee making the traditional way" , "processing dung" and protecting livestock from ticks using "non chemical methods".

## **Participation in different forums**

### **Papers presented**

Two papers were selected for presentation at the 17<sup>th</sup> National Conference of IAWS on Women's Studies and Women's movements which was held between the 7 -10<sup>th</sup> of September 2023 in Thiruvananthapuram

"Confronting gender issues in veterinary science and practice" (Nitya Ghotge and Sumi Krishna )

"Is Mobile Pastoralism only for Men" (Nitya Ghotge)



A paper "Dhangar Women's Articulations of Kinship: an exploratory study of changing kinship patterns in shepherding families of the Deccan ( Ashwini Labde, Sangita Khapre, Nitya Ghotge, Ovee Thorat, Rujuta Date) was presented at the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences (IUAES) World Anthropology Congress 2023. The paper was selected for presentation in the session "Pastoral systems in uncertain times: spatial and socio-economic mobility of animals in humans' worlds".

Additionally, Ovee Thorat presented a paper titled" Being a Bakarwal in Jammu and Kashmir: Struggles and Interdependencies".

### **Visitors**

We were happy to have **Saverio Kratli** ( Editor, *Nomadic Peoples*) visit the Anthra office and also visit pastoralists working with Anthra in Uttarakhand and Village Raak in October 2023

**Christopher Brown** ( researcher associated with the Royal Veterinary College and DFID) also visited us in January 2024 . He participated in a small meeting with the pastoralist community from Maharashtra in Pune and also visited the community in the field to better understand pastoralist systems of livestock production .

### **Staff**

Manasi Paranjpye and Sangeeta Khapre continue to be with us in our core team . We were also happy to have Ashwini Labde work with us for a few months , Ovee Thorat take charge of the gender tool kit project and Rujuta Date join us during field research on the Indo zoo risk project .

We particularly value and appreciate the contribution of Gayatri Khapre who tirelessly participated in field work and workshops associated with the India zoon risk project . She brought in fresh energy and enthusiasm .