SIGNIFICANCE OF COMMON PROPERTY RESOURCES IN THE CONTEXT OF SLA

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Anchored by
Foundation for Ecological Security
COMMONS

- Estimates suggest that around 4 billion ha can be classified as Common Pool land Resources.
- Over 2.5 billion people across the globe depend directly on common pool resources such as forest, pastures and drylands.
- Dominant proportion of livestock in dryland/rainfed regions are reared under extensive/open grazing systems.
- Livestock in these production systems play a critical role in nutrient transfers and reallocation of fertility both across space and time.
Commons and Livestock—INDIA

- Around 21% of the geographic area can be classified under Commons.
- Households in the arid, semi-arid and sub-humid regions of the country, meet around 45% of their fodder requirement from the Commons.
- Contribution of commons to livestock forms a part of larger grazing system—agriculture provides an extremely important feedback—both through post harvest stubble grazing and crop residues.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Draught animals</th>
<th>Indigenous cattle</th>
<th>Crossbred cattle</th>
<th>Buffalo</th>
<th>Sheep and goats</th>
<th>Camel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arid</td>
<td>33.1</td>
<td>62.94</td>
<td>44.63</td>
<td>65.13</td>
<td>83.78</td>
<td>68.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-Arid</td>
<td>31.09</td>
<td>40.79</td>
<td>29.82</td>
<td>29.95</td>
<td>51.73</td>
<td>29.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Humid</td>
<td>67.83</td>
<td>74.02</td>
<td>11.11</td>
<td>58.24</td>
<td>79.3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not only are the small ruminants but also other livestock species, supported in grazing based production systems. Even the archetypical stall fed animals, buffaloes and crossbred cattle depend on commons for meeting more than 20% of their fodder requirement.

*Based on a study undertaken by FES and partner organizations in arid and semi-arid regions of India (2010)*
Mainstream Views

- Neglect of low input livestock production systems and mainstream focus on intensification
- Sectoral Perspectives: Neglect of the livestock-water-fodder-commons-agriculture interface
- Land and water governance without a livestock lens
- Construct of ecological-social-economic positions
  - Ecological: Carrying Capacity
  - Social: Tragedy of Commons
  - Economic: Low Productivity
Commons seen as ‘wastelands’ and diverted for other ‘productive’ uses

Reports from World Bank show that large-scale land acquisitions have multiplied by a factor of ten since the 2007 global food and oil crises (Deininger and Byerlee, 2010).

Land Matrix project has documented deals and expressions of interest amounting to over 200 million Ha globally since 2000. These are acquisitions of over 200 that involve a conversion of land use from community use or provision of ecosystem services to commercial production.

In many cases, such land is made available by governments to investors on the assumption that such land is unused or underutilized.

Commons and Community Ownership generally do not feature in the official vocabulary of land use
On the Other side..

- Legal frameworks in support of local management of forests
  - FAO estimates that of 1999 over 50 countries including Nepal, India, Tanzania, Gambia and Mozambique had adopted policy changes supporting local management of forests to various degrees

- Legal recognition of indigenous land rights and customary land tenure arrangements
  - Examples of India, Latin America, Australia, Cambodia, Canada, Tanzania, Mozambique

- Involvement of local user groups in management of water resources
  - Examples of water user groups and participatory irrigation management in Latin American and South Asian Countries

- Reform of local government policies and laws
Rainfed Livestock Network

- Shaping policies to support socially and ecologically sustainable livestock development in India’s rainfed areas
- A Consortium of NGOs and Research Organisations- Anchored by FES
- Key thematic areas
  - Livestock and Commons
  - Breed Conservation and Promotion
  - Primary Health Services for Livestock
  - Backyard Poultry
  - Livestock and Markets
Outcome of Common land development (in semi-arid area)

- Improved Biomass and Water Availability (3.4:1, treated:untreated),
- Increase in agricultural double crop area and reduction in the risks of crop failure in low rainfall years
- Livestock holding in poor households increased by 15%
- 50% of HH reported an increase in milk production attributing it to increase in fodder and water availability

*Based on a study undertaken by the South Asia Pro Poor livestock policy programme*
Lessons

- Commons is a key factor for providing forage to the livestock sector and responsible for 40 to 70% of their income.
- Commons provide crucial and irreplaceable support to subsistence livelihoods of the poor.
- Commons offer a physical setting to revive institutional mechanisms that energize collective action and check undesirable individual behavior.
- Working on common lands provide the landless poor both physical and political space as equal members of the community.
- Commons are good platforms for bringing together issues concerning conservation, social justice and economic development.