

30 th Annual Report of SEVA 2021-2022

SEVA is registered as NGO under society's registration Act (136/1992). SEVA has been involved in 2 major activities viz. documentation and dissemination of traditional knowledge and grassroots innovations; livestock development and conservation of local livestock breeds.

Documentation and Dissemination of Innovations:



SEVA has been regularly SEVA staff and volunteers (Community Livestock Volunteers trained by SEVA) attended 2 days training program as resource person on organic farming, ethnoveterinary practices in the Tamil Nadu Govt. program on Integrated Farming Cluster (IFC) implemented by Tamil Nadu Sustainable Rural Livelihood Program (TNSRLM) during March 2022 onwards. It covered all districts except Chennai and Nilgiris. In each district 30-50 women group members/ Community Resource Person (CRPs) attended. Totally more than 1200 members participated. Both theory and practical sessions on preparations of bio inputs and herbal medicine for animals were demonstrated.



In Surendranagar district of Gujarat Sahjeevan NGO has organized 2 days ethnoveterinary training program for 50 goat keepers / pastoralists on 28-29 Jan. 2022. SEVA participated as resource person and demonstrated preparing herbal medicine for different condition of animals.

Webinar on Herbal Treatment for Animals: Sharing Experiences of Fieldworkers

In association with International Institute of Goat Management (IIGMA), Honey bee Network, International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), International Year of Rangelands and pastoralists (IYRP) and The Goat Trust webinar on Herbal Treatment for Animals: Sharing Experiences of Fieldworkers was organised on 12th August 2021, from 10.00 am to 12.00 noon. The objective of the webinar was to share the importance of herbal treatment for the animals and sharing the experience of field workers. In the panel, we had Dr Braja Bandu Swain, ILRI Scientist - Bhubaneswar, Dr Balaram Sahu, Pathe Pathshala – Odisha, Mr P. Vivekanandan -SEVA, Dr Sadana, Chairperson, RISG- IYRP, South Asia and Mr Sanjeev Kumar, Founder, Advisor of The Goat Trust. Among the audience, we had 71 participants from NGOs, CSR, individuals with extensive experience in development policy, farmers, and Pashu Sakhies all over the country. It was supported by ILRI New Delhi unit.

UNESCO Heritage Site for Tank system of irrigation in Tamilnadu

In association with Dhan Foundation a draft note and application has been prepared and circulated to members for their feed back and comments. Two webinars organized on the methodology and terms for preparing the note. (In India apart from the widely popular Taj Mahal, Sun Temple, Qutub Minar and Ajanta-Ellora Caves, there are many more cultural and natural sites have been declared in the UNESCO World Heritage sites list. After the latest additions in July 2021, there are a total of 40 UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India. Out of these, 32 are cultural, 7 natural and 1 is a mixed site).

Goat manual



In order to meet requirements of small scale goat keepers Goat manual has been prepared during Jan 2022 separately specific for Odisha, Maharashtra, Karnataka in English. This has been supported by Dhan Foundation. It includes all aspects of goat farming including case studies and ethnoveterinary practices.

Studies on Neerkattis in traditional water management system

Tanks are the traditional rain water harvesting structures mostly from their local catchments, used for irrigation in south India. There are about 40,000 tanks situated in Tamil Nadu. It is estimated that roughly 3 lakh neerkatties have been actively engaged in the traditional water management system and their presence is reduced in the recent past. Neerkattis are traditional water managers of village tanks recognised by village communities. They mainly regulate flow of water by opening and closing of shutters in sluice and allowing water to farmers field through irrigation channels. They monitor overall irrigation management for Ayacut farmers for crop cultivation. Their work is seasonal and also take care of tanks during off season times. It includes checking the bunds, assist in repairing of sluices, shutters and mobilizing labour for tank renovation work and channel clearance . They also play role in village festivals, customary harvesting and planting rituals, communicators as village announcer, funerals etc. They receive remuneration for their services in the form of kind i.e. usually paddy grains on the basis of area cultivated. At the time of threshing of crops Neerkattis collect their share. Nowadays Neerkatti system is becoming defunct or deteriorating and it is facing critical stage and needs attention. There is a need to explore future role of Neerkattis by improving their socio economic status while reviving tank based water management system. With support of Dhan Foundation SEVA has documented profiles of 21 Neerkattis in Madurai, Virudhungan, Sivagnagai, Ramnad, Kanchipuram, Vellore and Pudukottai districts. Webinar on “Restoring Traditional water Management and their livelihoods through sustainable vayalagams” was organized on 25 Aug 2021 . A Convention on Neerkattis was organized on 29 Oct 2021 as part of Madurai Symposium at Dhan Foundation and members participated. Lead paper has been prepared for discussion with participants. Some policy level discussions are important on the following aspects :

- Promotion of participatory management or replication of Vayalagam type of Aycut farmers association both in system and in non system tanks and recognise the role of Neerkattis
- Social security net for neerkattis including issuing identity cards for them
- Favourable policies enabling local panchayat /authorities to remove encroachments and keeping vigilance for protecting tank irrigation system from any further decline.
- Declaring tank system of Irrigation through notification under UN heritage site towards holistic village development by strengthening local intuitions and protecting socio cultural and ecological history of that region/ locality.

State Level Grassroots Innovators Workshop



State level grassroots innovators workshop was held on 19.09.21 at Melakkal, Madurai district. 25 members were participated in the meeting (including SEVA members). Innovators describe about their innovations and show through power point presentation. We visited his banana fibre making units with improved machines developed by him. This unit supports more than 50 women labourers engaged in fibre making handicrafts produced by them.

International Year for Rangeland and Pastoralists (IYRP) 2026

SEVA joined international lobbying group of NGOs, volunteers, Government and International organizations/ Institutes for declaration of International Year for Rangeland and Pastoralists for the year 2026. As coordinator of South Asia Regional Support Group for IYRP (RISG SA) we obtained letter of support from Bhutan, India and Afghanistan and also from many organizations. On 15 March 2022, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York unanimously declared 2026 the International Year of Rangelands & Pastoralists (IYRP). This final approval is the culmination of an IYRP movement that grew over several years to become a global coalition of over 300 pastoralist and supporting organisations, including the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) and several UN agencies. Building on these efforts, the Government of Mongolia and 60 co-sponsoring countries developed and put forward the resolution to UNGA.

Pastoralists and Rangelands Award 2021

The Pastoralists Awards 2021 have been organised in South Asia (SA) and the Rangelands Awards 2021 in Central Asia and Mongolia (CAM) through an announcement of competitions by the Regional IYRP Support Group of South Asia (RISG-SA) and the Regional IYRP Support Group of Central Asia and Mongolia (RISG-CAM). Based on a total of 21 entries received from five countries, multistakeholder committees in each region selected a total of 14 pastoralists / community organisations to receive awards this year. These organisations / livestock keepers are contributing to regeneration of rangelands and common grazing lands or maintaining local livestock breeds for sustainable livelihoods and healthy ecosystems. Their profiles are presented in a book.

In India, the concept of giving awards to recognise the role of pastoralists / livestock keepers was initiated in 2009 by SEVA in association with the LIFE (Local Livestock for Empowerment) Network, the Honeybee Network and the National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources, and was supported by the National Biodiversity Authority of India. It led to greater awareness of the importance of local livestock breeds and to the dissemination of best practices in livestock keeping in India. The concept is now being promoted in other countries and regions. This year, SEVA jointly with the RISG-SA arranged for "Pastoralists' Awards 2021" for SA. These awards were supported by the Centre for Pastoralism (CfP), SAHJEEVAN NGO and Indigenous Livestock Society-India (ILSI). The awards for "Sustainable Pasture Management and Conserving Rangelands 2021" have been organised by the National Federation of Pasture User Groups of Mongolia (NFPUG); Environment and Development Association JASIL; Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Light Industry, Mongolia (MoFALI); CentralAsia PastoralAlliance (CAPA); RISG_CAM; and the Mongolian Working Group on "Territories of Life" for Natural Resource Management Communities, Pasture User

Groups (PUGs) and Forest User Groups (FUGs) for balancing ecological capacity of pasture with animal numbers and sound use of the rangelands.

These two sets of awards in 2021 were arranged in recognition of the importance of designating an International Year for Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP) in 2026. We were proud that the ceremony to distribute awards to the winners was held in the Joint International Grassland and Rangeland Congress (IGC/IRC) in Kenya on 27th October 2021. It's a matter of great satisfaction that 14 awardees are being honoured in this event. The Conference wished all the awardees a big success in their endeavours and in raising awareness on the theme of sustainable use of grassland / rangeland resources and indigenous breeds for improved livelihoods. We wish both the awardees and the organisers further innovative opportunities to play a greater role in further raising awareness on the importance of rangelands, local breeds and traditional-knowledge-based practices for holistic development of their region while sustaining their livelihoods.