

Project Progress Report Knowledge2Action - Swissnex India

# Gender and Livestock in India: Toolkit for Evolving Research Strategies

Submitted by

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## Summary

Women's work is critical to farming in general and livestock care in particular. This is especially so among marginalised and disadvantaged farming, shepherding, and pastoral communities. Yet, women's agroecological knowledge, skills, and practices related to the daily care, management, and sustainability of livestock and small ruminants have been undervalued both traditionally and by modern animal husbandry. Despite 'gender' being a buzzword in theory, policy, and interventions, researchers and practitioners have struggled to understand and transform prevailing gender biases.

In an attempt to address this, Anthra, with the Indian Pastoral Network and the Centre for Social Ecology organised a workshop in Pune (March 2023). About 50 participants attended this workshop. Most were early or mid-career action researchers, trained in diverse disciplines and working in varied locations across India; some were community representatives. As experiences and perspectives were shared, the workshop served to open up disciplinary silos and forge cross-disciplinary conversations that helped to identify the specific needs of researchers and field workers engaging with livestock and pastoral communities. A proposal for creating a gender toolkit was made and submitted to the Swissnex K2A fellowship just after the Pune workshop.

A core group of mainly early or mid-career researchers and practitioners then decided to take this initiative forward with support from Anthra and Swissnex K2A. The aim was to produce a range of materials (written and audiovisual) that would enable action researchers and others to develop a holistic appreciation of the challenges, negotiate real-life situations, and evolve methods to integrate gender concerns in their work in the field. As part of the efforts, we decided to interview experienced researchers and practitioners who have engaged with gender in their work. From all across the country, we identified 18 such individuals and interviewed them to understand how and why they incorporated gender in their work. Each of the core members contacted the shortlisted individuals carried out the interviews and transcribed them.

Simultaneously, we started building a repository of existing resources on gender, some key terms used in gender work, and useful methods and tools. The aim was to create a resource bank for our audience. We also participated in a meeting of all the Swissnex programme

attendees in March 2024 for a midterm exchange. It was good to know what other grant awardees had been working on and to share our work with them.

After months of brainstorming and interactions, all of the members of the core group met again at a 'writeshop' in the outskirts of Bangalore (June 2024) to frame a Gender and Livestock Manual. This writeshop proved useful to gather our thoughts work together and to give shape to the work we had been doing for months. We worked on the main format of the manual and wrote sections of chapters allotted to each team member. We also invited a designer to see if she could help us visualise some of the outputs of the toolkit.

Once back from the writeshop, we focussed on the structure of the toolkit and made some decisions on the best ways to reach our audience. We see two main sets of potential audience viz. practitioners and researchers, as needing different modes of communication and presentation of the toolkit. An early or mid-career researcher, for example, might find the academic literature in the resource bank useful while a practitioner might be more interested in the various field methods. The main audience of the toolkit, however, is going to be early or mid-career researchers who mainly come from a science background but are not exposed to humanities or training in gender.

For the sections of toolkits, we have already worked on and the collective of nuanced understanding of gender that we have reached as a team, we have already reached a niche audience through IYRP (International Year of Rangeland and Pastoralists) events and the first pastoral livestock census taking place in India in 2024. Our team has closely worked with the state and non-state organizations that are part of this census and provided feedback on engaging with gender. Our team has actively participated in these activities in an attempt to focus on gender dimensions and to increase the quality of data gathering and policy-making. During the last few months, we have also formed an informal discussion group on gender and livestock on WhatsApp. We are now working on identifying the correct dissemination strategies and to try them out.

The process itself of us researchers and practitioners coming from different disciplines and work sites, to come together and to identify how we can better our work in terms of engaging with gender by identifying the gaps and working on them has been an invaluable

outcome. The K2A fellowship has been instrumental in initiating this work. We have realised that this is a project that will need further building on and it is something that has become integral to our work. We envision this as something that could run long-term as part of Anthra's activities.

## **Project team members**

The gender toolkit project was always visualised as something that was created by a group of researchers and practitioners for the larger community. That is why the core team of the project consisted of early and mid-career researchers from different walks of life. The core team consisted as follows

Nitya Ghotge, Director, Anthra

Ovee Thorat, Consultant, Anthra

Aayushi Malhotra, Assistant Scientist, CGIAR GENDER Impact Platform

Malaika Mathew Chawla, Project Coordinator, Sahjeevan

Meenal Tatpati, Research and Policy Associate, Women4Biodiversity

Nayantara Lakshman, Conservation and Restoration Team, Rainmatter

Board members of Anthra, Sumi Krishna (President of the governing board) and Bhavana Rao Kuchimunchi also made important contributions to this project at various crucial steps. Manasi Paranjpe from Anthra managed the accounts and supported the team, providing useful assistance especially during the workshops.

## **Objectives**

Gender has become a buzzword in the development and NGO sector. Currently, many opportunities are opening up that expect researchers and practitioners to pay attention to the aspects of gender in their work. At the same time, with better spaces available for practising interdisciplinarity, people who lack substantial training in social science and humanities are taking up projects that include these fields. This gender toolkit is meant to make it easier for such researchers and practitioners to engage with gender in their work. Our aim was to produce a range of materials that would enable action researchers and others to develop a holistic appreciation of the challenges, negotiate real-life situations, and

evolve methods to integrate gender concerns in their work in the fields of livestock-rearing, pastoralism and agropastoralism. It is a resource that tries to look at different scales of work and different groups of audiences. That is why it is meant to be a simple, first step, rather than an expansive toolkit.

This toolkit will involve the following set of resources

1. A document that builds an understanding of why it is important to engage with gender while working with livestock-keeping communities in India and hence, ushers in more reflective work in the field
2. Introduction to popular methods used in gender-based research, their limitations, innovative approaches, notes on ethics, and guidelines on putting these methods into practice
3. Sharing of experiences of senior as well as early or mid-career researchers and practitioners who have worked on gender in livestock-keeping communities
4. Examples from real-life life case-studies shared by the authors of the toolkit
5. Collation of freely available and essential resources for anyone interested in engaging with gender in livestock-keeping communities

This toolkit can be useful at the following stages or instances during the work of a researcher or practitioner – 1. When they first come across gender and read about it, i.e. literature review, 2. When they go to the field, 3. To analyse their work and take it back to the community (validation) 4. Writing, and 5. Dissemination

## **Interviews with the researcher-practitioner community**

When a researcher or practitioner begins their work, learning from the experiences of others before them proves to be very useful. To bring this knowledge to the audience of the toolkit, we designed a questionnaire to generate an understanding of how researchers and practitioners engage with gender in their work in the Indian context.

We interviewed 18 researchers and practitioners from India who have worked on gender in livestock-keeping communities directly or indirectly. This group of people comprised some very senior people with years of experience, while some had recently started working in the field. We approached researchers and practitioners who have worked with the livestock-

keeping communities and gender in India through our existing networks. It was not very difficult as the workshop in Pune which led to the initiation of this project has already brought together many such individuals. We also tried to locate additional respondents using a literature review.

We then reached out to all of the identified people and requested their participation in the interviews, 18 of which responded positively. 16 of the respondents were female, one was male and one non-binary. After receiving their consent, we asked these respondents 22 questions that were divided into 7 themes ranging from tools and methods used by them in their work, to sharing of challenges in engaging with gender. (questionnaire in Annexure). We requested the respondents to take their time and respond to the questions in detail where applicable as this would help us gather a better understanding. The choice of medium (telephonic, video call, in-person, text, etc) of the interview was dependent on the preference of the respondents. The interviews were then transcribed and all of the data was collected for qualitative coding.

## **The process of creation of curated lists of resources and methods**

During the early stages when we got together to discuss gender and livestock-keeping communities with a bunch of researchers and practitioners in Pune, at the end of the workshop, we asked them to share the resources that they had found useful. This was also connected to one of the workshop outputs that the participants themselves had come up with- a resource bank. It could be academic papers, movies, or existing toolkits (most of which are created by Western researchers for working in African communities. The participants of the workshop shared with us such resources. We collated all of those in a document that was later shared with all of the participants. Once we started working on the gender toolkit, the core team systematically went through existing toolkits to understand what is already available, to identify gaps in the available toolkits, to critically look at how the information in the toolkits is organized, useful elements in those toolkits and the audience that they tried to engage with. Each core team member would take up a few of these existing toolkits, go through them, and present to the rest of the team what they found useful and not. Through both of these exercises, the team now could curate the list of all available resources for the audience of the gender toolkit.

In a similar way, the core team also worked on methods and frameworks that have been used to engage with gender. The interviews with the community of experienced researchers and practitioners, the existing toolkits, as well as personal experiences, all provided examples of different methods that can be useful for anyone to work with livestock-keeping communities. Throughout the course of this project, the team listed down these methods and frameworks and where they could be useful. A curated list of these methods would also be part of the final toolkit so anybody who is beginning to engage with gender while working with the communities can try out some of the most useful methods based on their context. We share some of these methods below-

<p><b>Collaborative methodology</b></p>	<p>Attempt to perceive research in ways that are inclusive, dialogical, and able in terms of acknowledging the agency of individuals and seeing them as more than research subjects.</p>	<p>Collaborative methodology involves working together in a dynamic manner, being attentive to the inputs from the field, and democratizing knowledge. Listening to what the field was telling us and adapting our methods accordingly enabled us to get a glimpse of the nuanced and messy nature of pastoral women's lives.</p>
<p><b>Participatory methods-</b> resource maps, seasonal calendars, economic well-being ranking, mobility mapping and resource benefit analyses</p>	<p>the value of which in opening up deeper and more complex discussions, on issues such as access and control of resources was recognized. The transformative potential of participatory methods can be understood through three core principles. First, the participants are actively involved in the research process; second, there is co-ownership of the research process and outcome; last, any investigation of a phenomenon builds on what people know, accessing their local knowledge.</p>	<p>One, as we have been discussing so far, was to unpack experiences and knowledge which is emotional, ephemeral, slippery, and hidden in nature. In other words, experiences that fall beyond the ambit of oral language and articulation. Two, it allowed us to engage in a more democratic form of research practice which altered our ways of relating with pastoral women and led to conversations that were not only important for the study but equally important for the women who we were doing this research with. Engages participants' auditory, visual, oral, written and numeric skills. Empowers participants by fostering skill-building and initiating critical dialogue, Raises participant consciousness around previously unarticulated behaviours and beliefs. Shifts power from researchers to</p>

		<p>participants. Enables in-depth examination of the thoughts, beliefs and practices of participants. Allows participants to take on various roles in the design, implementation, analysis and distribution of data. Determines the assets and needs of community-based issues that are important and relevant to participants. Provides input into culturally relevant indicators</p>
<p><b>Gender Analysis Frameworks (GAF)</b></p>	<p>Gender analysis (GA) is an organised approach aimed at understanding how men and women relate to each other in terms of roles and responsibilities, access to and control of resources and benefits in a given community (Pasteur 2002); also includes what men and women, boys and girls do, locations and patterns of mobility, and their daily and seasonal patterns. It requires separating data and information by gender and age, the so-called. gender-disaggregated data. GA is therefore important at all stages of any research and development (R&amp;D) process.</p>	<p>Gender Analysis Framework (GAF) included an assessment of livelihood assets, power and decision-making processes. Also, practical and strategic needs of men and women, priorities and perspectives were explored. GA tools such as social and resource mapping, daily and seasonal calendars, economic well-being ranking and mobility mapping were used. This helped in the analysis of the opinions of different gender groups. With regard to the costs and benefits of various SFM technologies. It was therefore important to involve target groups in planning, monitoring and evaluation of research activities in order to analyse their impact on women, men, boys and girls.</p>
<p><b>Gender analysis</b></p>	<p>Gender analysis is the collection and analysis of quantitative data (numbers, percentages, proportions, ratios) and qualitative information (preferences, beliefs, attitudes, behaviours, values, scope, etc.) through a gender lens. It is a systematic methodology for examining the differences in roles and norms between women and men, girls and boys; the different levels of power they hold; their differing needs, constraints and opportunities; and the impact of these differences in their lives.</p>	<p>Gender analysis is useful to reveal the nature and extent of gender inequalities and discrimination against women and girls including men and boys.</p>

<b>Logical framework</b>	A methodology that articulates the assumptions connecting a programme's/project's activities, outputs, outcomes and goals based on a Theory of Change (ToC).	Gender can be incorporated into a programme/project Logical Framework in two main ways. Firstly, by “engendering” the objectives, outcomes, outputs, activities and indicators (e.g. ensuring that they refer to the anticipated changes expected for both women and men or girls and boys).
<b>Gender-sensitive monitoring</b>	Gender-sensitive monitoring is the systematic and regular tracking of progress during planning and implementation of gender mainstreaming and it provides opportunity to understand how and why change occurs for different women, men, girls and boys and reexamine interventions and to realign objectives and methods in order to be more effective.	It is needed to collect and analyse data and information using both quantitative (surveys, questionnaires) and qualitative methods (key informant interviews, focus group discussions, mapping, workshops, etc.) based on the gender-sensitive indicators that have been defined in the M&E plan, in order to verify whether intended goals and measures are being achieved.
Method for empowering: <b>Power analysis as part of the Conflict Transformation Framework</b>	The Conflict Transformation Framework (mentioned in the Introduction) aims to strengthen a community's capacities to transform the environmental conflicts they are affected by through strategically targeting three types of hegemonic power (structural power, cultural power and actor-networks). The resulting analysis and actions can help pull up the roots of environmental injustices, by challenging harmful dominant legal, political and economic structures and discourses.	In particular, this lens for understanding power can help CKEJ processes differentiate among types of hegemonic power while also identifying power of agency and strategies to impact upon and transform hegemonic power. Using this method for power analysis is very complementary to other methods used in CKEJ processes aiming to be transformative: in order to change something, and to know how to change it, we first have to understand what we're dealing with and what strengths we have at hand.

<p>Method for self-evaluation: the <b>Alternatives Transformation Format</b></p>	<p>The Alternatives Transformation Format is a tool developed over many years through Kalpavriksh's Vikalp Sangam process to help initiatives and organizations to self-assess how holistic and integrated (or conversely, inconsistent and fragmented) their actions and transformations are, and where they may want to make changes. Five overlapping 'petals' guide us through possible indicators of ecological wisdom, integrity and resilience; social well-being and justice; direct and delegated democracy; economic democracy; and cultural diversity and knowledge democracy.</p>	<p>This format, not for use by external actors or for extractive purposes, can also be applied in diverse ways and moments by groups wanting to check in on and/or increase the transformative potential of their project/movement. It is also a useful tool for research communities/teams to reflect on the strengths, weaknesses and possible blind spots of CKEJ projects; activities using the format were held at the final ACKnowl-EJ project meeting and with the Living Aula's alternative research school group for self-analysis and reflection on our own CKEJ processes.</p>
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## **K2A midline meeting**

Ovee Thorat and Aayushi Malhotra from the Gender Toolkit team attended the midline meeting of all K2A fellows. We presented the concept of the toolkit and our progress. We received valuable feedback, especially from a couple of other fellows working on similar topics such as Soundarya Khanna who is creating a toolkit for local CSOs on climate finance. It was also good to talk about the projects on women's empowerment in Pakistan. The meeting increased our motivation and validated the need for our work. The meeting also made us interested in exploring the possibility of taking our work across the borders.

## **Bangalore writeshop**

After several month of brainstorming and interactions, the group met in person for a three-day 'writeshop' on the outskirts of Bangalore (21<sup>st</sup> June 2024) to frame the gender toolkit. On the first day, we deliberated on some critical questions as a group. Some of them were as follows-

- What are our vision and ethics for this toolkit?
- Should we stick to the system of livestock production or only pastoralism?

- What do we mean by “toolkit”-does everything need to go in one output or do we want multiple outputs? Could it be something like a field guide that can be used by people on the ground?
- Can the toolkit be easily taken to NGOs?
- What do we understand by coproduction of knowledge, do we need coproduction of knowledge?
- How can biases be detected and overcome?
- Why does interdisciplinary research lead to improved design and outcomes?
- How do ethnographic tools, oral histories, testimonies etc deepen gender research?



Based on these questions, we worked as a group to lay down the foundation of the toolkit and to give it a better structure. We also decided on the limits of the toolkit. For example,

we decided that we cannot provide an endless list of methods but share with the audience why certain methods become important for gender research and give a few examples of those. We also discussed that it might be good to have a section on male researchers' points of view in the toolkit and that it could be about men researching men and not necessarily women.

On the third day, we worked on creating an outline for the toolkit. Towards the end of the day, we also discussed the need to write proposals for further support of this endeavour which is turning out to be much more intensive and expansive than earlier imagined. Apart from conducting workshops for the audience, we also realised that to take this work forward, it might be important to tie up with universities so that the toolkit could be a part of field immersions. The biggest output of the write shop was that it helped us define scope, boundaries, and the limitations of the toolkit.

The proceedings of the writeshop were made available to the public on Anthra's website <https://www.anthra.org/news/writeshop-to-develop-a-field-guide-on-gender-and-livestock/>

## **Gender toolkit outline**

We used the writeshop to come up with a general outline of the toolkit under which we could present all of our resources. The toolkit has 8 broad sections which could be converted into multiple outputs such as handbooks, audio-visual tools, or booklets. The sections are as follows

1. **Introduction** - vision and context
2. **Getting started** - when and how to use the toolkit at an individual level or organizational level
3. **Research design and methods** - importance of positionality, good research design, and overview of available methods for researchers and practitioners
4. **Analysis and validation** - available gender analysis frameworks, the importance of taking our work back to communities and how to do that
5. **In-field experiences and challenges** - interviews and a small note on mental health and safety

6. **Useful and freely available resource** (resource list with links)

7. **Lexicon** of gender-related terms

8. **Call to action** for further research and conclusion

## **Other outputs**

The most important outcome of this project has been the process through which the core team of researchers and practitioners coming from different background have worked together. Each of the core team members has found this process extremely useful and has resulted in broadening their understanding of the landscape of gender and livestock. A lot of self-learning has taken place which has transformed the core team members. Most of the core group is composed of early career researchers and practitioners. To engage with gender deeper through the process of creating this toolkit made us more aware of the way gender is treated in our fields and to identify instances where there is need for change in the way research is done or projects are designed and implemented. We all also work in different landscapes- from Kashmir, and Himachal, to Gujarat, Rajasthan and Maharashtra. We each had our own set of experiences which we could articulate better with the lens of gender and apply it in our own work. An outcome of this was also a WhatsApp group dedicated to gender and livestock which became a space where the team could exchange experiences, ideas, field developments etc.

Although a final toolkit has not been formed yet, we are not very far from there and have already reached out to a section of the intended audience through our active engagements in meetings and events that we have been part of. One of the main such events has been the livestock census of 2024 where for the first time, the livestock of pastoralist communities will also be counted along with profiles of their owners. This is happening for the first time in the country so far, the livestock owned by pastoralist communities could often not be counted in a regular census. Nitya Ghotge, who is also the coordinator of the gender working group for IYRP, participated in the training of trainers (ToT) for the Western Indian states in Ahmedabad. Sumi Krishna, participated in ToT for southern states in Bangalore, while Ovee Thorat participated in ToT for Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh which took place in Srinagar. She also participated in the pre-census meeting in Delhi to discuss questions that could be included in the census survey. Each of them provided useful

feedback to government officials and CSOs who are involved in the census, bringing a special focus on gender in the consultation. The gender toolkit team also provided feedback on the brochure that was designed for enumerators for the census.

The team submitted an abstract of a paper on the interviews conducted for the gender toolkit to a meeting of researchers and practitioners all over India coming together early next year to share their work in Delhi. This meeting is organized by National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS) and Centre for Pastoralism (CfP). The title of the paper is - Gender in Research and Practice: Successes and challenges of working with livestock-keeping communities in India.

## **Way forward**

We plan to continue working on this toolkit and to take it to the audience. The next steps would be to design the final product/s and to conduct a workshop where this toolkit could be shared with the main audience. The interviews that were conducted for this toolkit have turned out to be very useful and we plan to give them their own space and bring them out in a suitable medium.

As a follow-up to the last workshop, we plan to organize a methods workshop where researchers and practitioners can get together to discuss methods. This would be an extremely useful exercise as many people struggle to find the right methods or design a methodology that helps them successfully engage with gender.

An output that would not take much effort and would be useful is to expand the existing WhatsApp group and open it up to a larger community of researchers and practitioners. The platform could be accordingly chosen and does not have to be WhatsApp.

Lastly, Anthra is connected to various NGOs and networks working with livestock-keeping communities (such as RRLN- Revitalising Rainfed Agriculture Network) as well as government bodies such as the Animal Husbandry Department. We see this toolkit and the team playing an important role in informing policies concerning farmers and livestock-keepers as well as the efforts taken by CSOs and NGOs.

## Annexure

Questionnaire used for interviews

*Accompanying text: This questionnaire is designed to generate an understanding of how researchers and practitioners engage with gender in their work. This exercise is an integral part of the process of making a gender toolkit for researchers and practitioners working with livestock-keeping communities in the Indian context. The project is supported by Anthra (<https://www.anthra.org/>) and SWISSNEX Knowledge to Action (<https://swissnex.org/india/k2a/>). The interview contains questions belonging to seven themes ranging from tools and methods used by you in your work to sharing of challenges in engaging with gender. It can take around 30 minutes or more to respond to questions based on the level of detail you would like to get into. We request you to take your time and respond to the questions in detail where applicable as this would help us gather a better understanding. We appreciate your contribution to this toolkit. Thank you for considering sharing your insights and experiences. If you would like to get in touch with us regarding the toolkit or if there are any queries or suggestions, please get in touch with us at [genderandlivestock@gmail.com](mailto:genderandlivestock@gmail.com)*

Date:

Name:

Gender:

Please tell us briefly (in one or two sentences) about your field of work and current projects/position:

### Theme 1 Introductory questions

- Where have you worked, with which community, and were there any gender aspects you directly or indirectly worked on?

- Why did you want to incorporate gender dimensions to your work?
  
- What aspects regarding gender emerged as key areas in your work?

## **Theme 2 Pre-fieldwork preparations and reflective questions**

- How would you describe the gender landscape of that community?
  
- Did your research account for the intersectionality of gender with other social factors, such as age, caste, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status within pastoral communities?
  
- How did you navigate cultural norms and sensitivities around gender when conducting your research? How did you prepare yourself- pre, within and post fieldwork.
  
- How did you navigate your own positionality in the field based on your gender orientation?

## **Theme 3 Ethical considerations**

- How did you obtain informed consent, especially in settings where literacy levels may vary?
  
- How did you establish trust and rapport with community members, particularly women, to gain access to their perspectives?

- Were you able to gain access to the gender-segregated spaces or private conversations? What were some of the challenges you faced in this process?
- How did you involve community members, especially women, in the research process and ensure their voices were heard?
- Were you able to capture the experiences of marginalized groups, such as female headed households, widows etc.?
- How did you ensure the inclusivity of gender perspectives within your research design?
- What would be those ethical considerations you would like the researchers to be aware of while conducting research with pastoral communities and especially on gender issues?

#### **Theme 4 Methods used- what worked/failed**

- What methodologies did you employ to capture the diversity of gender roles and experiences within these communities? Or what data collection methods did you find most effective or most ineffective in eliciting gender-related information?
- Any methodological innovations (well documented or otherwise) that worked in capturing relevant information?

#### **Theme 5 Analysis- sense making process**

- Specific concepts, theories, frameworks related to gender

- Did you find translation of gender related concepts into local language difficult? If yes, how did you ensure that you were accurately interpreting the local terminology and cultural nuances related to gender roles and relations?
  
- Do you consider gender vocabulary an issue in your research, and if so, what do you think can be possible ways of addressing them?

### **Theme 6 Challenges**

- Were there any unique challenges in analysing gender-related data within the pastoral context?
  
- Were there any instances of cultural taboos or gender-specific restrictions that you had to be aware of or experienced during your research that impacted your data collection/interpretation.

### **Theme 7 Recommendations**

- Based on your research experience, what recommendations do you have for future researchers working on gender-related issues within pastoral communities?

### **Any other comments and suggestions**