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Integrated Approach to Rural Livestock Development and Urban Stray Dog Management: A Field Veterinarian's Perspective

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Introduction:

The role of a veterinarian today extends far beyond clinical practice, encompassing rural livelihood development, women empowerment, and urban animal management. In India, where livestock forms the backbone of rural economies and stray animal issues are a growing urban concern, there is a pressing need for an integrated, field-oriented veterinary approach. This article reflects practical experiences from implementing such interventions at the grassroots level.

Rural Livestock Development in Nalanda, Bihar:

During my tenure in Nalanda district under programs such as IGSDS-5 and IPDS-3, I was actively involved in designing and implementing livestock-based livelihood models for Self Help Group (SHG) women.

Under the goat-based livelihood initiative of IGSDS-5, selected SHG women were supported with three goats each as a means of income generation. Beneficiaries brought goats to designated camps, where each animal underwent thorough veterinary screening based on parameters such as age, body condition, and disease status. Only clinically fit animals were approved, followed by ear tagging for identification and insurance coverage, ensuring transparency and minimizing disease risks.

In parallel, the poultry-based livelihood model under IPDS-3 focused on reducing early mortality and improving productivity. Day-old chicks procured in bulk were reared under technical supervision for 28 days, ensuring proper feeding, vaccination, and health management. After this period, each SHG woman received 45 healthy, vaccinated chicks at a highly subsidized rate, significantly improving survival rates and outcomes.

Capacity Building through Pashu Sakhi Model:

A key aspect of my work involved strengthening community-based veterinary support through the Pashu Sakhi model under BRLPS (Jeevika). As a Master Trainer, I conducted structured training programs

in two phases of five days each. The training combined theoretical knowledge with practical exposure, covering major field-level goat diseases, herbal treatment methods, feeding practices, vaccination schedules, and marketing strategies.

In the advanced phase, emphasis was placed on hands-on skill development, including castration of male goats using a Burdizzo castrator and administration of vaccines through proper injection techniques. This model empowered rural women to act as first-level animal health service providers, improving accessibility and sustainability.

Animal Health Camps and Preventive Interventions:

I organized and led ten animal health camps across different blocks of Nalanda district focusing on disease diagnosis, treatment, deworming, vaccination, and farmer awareness. Goat deworming and ear tagging drives further strengthened disease control and livestock traceability.

Urban Veterinary Responsibility: ABC Program in Adityapur

Currently serving as a Municipal Veterinary Officer in Adityapur, Jharkhand, I am leading the Animal Birth Control (ABC) program for stray dogs. The program focuses on sterilization, anti-rabies vaccination, and scientific handling of aggressive animals. It plays a crucial role in humane population control and prevention of zoonotic diseases such as rabies.

Challenges and Practical Solutions:

Field implementation presents challenges such as limited infrastructure, lack of awareness, and resistance to scientific practices. These can be addressed through pre-distribution health screening, scientific rearing practices, integration of insurance and identification systems, and strengthening community-based models like Pashu Sakhi.

Conclusion:

The evolving scope of veterinary practice demands integration of rural development and urban animal management. Combining scientific interventions with community participation leads to sustainable outcomes. Livelihood support, women empowerment, preventive healthcare, and humane animal control together strengthen the veterinary ecosystem in India.