

Gau Sadans: A Scheme of Delhi Government

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Functions

Following the Delhi Agricultural Cattle Preservation Act, 1994 that prohibited slaughter of cattle, the Delhi government provided subsidies to NGOs to establish 10 Gau Sadans in Delhi.

Findings

- According to the Animal Husbandry Department, 251 acres of land had been allotted for the construction of Gau Sadans. Around 50% of the allotted land is lying unutilised.
- A survey conducted by the Planning Department of the Delhi government revealed that the number of cattle in seven Gau Sadans put together was less than the capacity of three Gau Sadans.
- In 2001, the government spent total of Rs 1,49,22,164 for the 3,379 cattle. The expenditure per cow is Rs 4,416, more than the per student expenditure in a government school.
- A large number of stray cattle can still be seen roaming on roads, and within the Sadans, the mortality rate of cattle continues to be high.

Reforms

Many of the stray cattle in Delhi are healthy, productive cattle left in the city for free fodder. The government should pick them up and auction them off. Also all cattle should be registered, so that owners can be fined on the spot if their animals are found stray. This would reduce the number of 'stray' cattle significantly.

Delhi government has given top priority to ban cow slaughter and their proper maintenance. Keeping in view this objective, the Delhi Agricultural Cattle Prevention Act was passed in 1994. Accordingly a plan scheme 'Setting up of Ten Gau Sadans' was framed during the 1994 Annual Plan. Under this, Gau Sadans were established by various NGOs in different localities of Delhi.

Functions

The Gau Sadans were set up to provide shelter and proper care to stray or unclaimed animals as well as those which are no longer productive. The basic objective was to stop accidents and loss due to these animals. The functions of the Gau Sadans are:

- To take measures to ensure the well-being of cows and its progeny
- To provide proper shelter, maintenance and food to stray animals
- To control the problem of stray cattle on the roads and streets in the city

Refer to Table 1 for the allocation of funds to Gau Sadans.

Gau Sadans in Delhi

Table 1: Budget Allocations (Rs in lac)

Year	Plan Outlay	Revised Outlay	Expenditure
1994-95	5.00	Nil	Nil
1995-96	55.00	Nil	23.88
1996-97	65.00	34.00	5.43
1997-98	66.00	Nil	Nil
1998-99	66.00	66.00	Nil
1999-00	56.00	60.10	60.00
2000-01	66.00	-	-

Source: Government of NCT Delhi. 2001. Evaluation Study Report on Seven Gau Sadans Functioning in Delhi. Evaluation Unit, Department of Planning

Gau Sadans in Delhi

1. PFA Gau Sadan, Bawana
2. Gopal Gau Sadan, Hareweli
3. Surbhi Gau Sadan, Sultanpur Dabas
4. Dabar Hari Krishan Gau Sadan, Surhera
5. Manav Gau Sadan, Rewla Khanpur
6. Krishan Kanhaiya Gau Sadan, Malikpur
7. Acharya Sushil Muni Gau Sadan, Ghummenhera

The financial position of these seven Gau Sadans is given in Table 2.

Table 2: Financial Statement (Rs)

Name of Gau Sadan	Income	Expenditure	Surplus (+)/ Deficit (-)
PFA Gau Sadan, Bawana	40,29,733	43,74,940	(-) 3,45,207
Dabar Hari Krishan Gau Sadan, Surhera	37,13,819	34,37,757	(+) 2,76,062
Manav Gau Sadan, Rewla Khanpur	27,28,305	26,45,179	(+) 83,126
Gopal Gau Sadan, Hareweli	19,89,836	22,00,399	(-) 2,10,563
Surbhi Gau-Sadan, Sultanpur Dabas	15,66,599	14,27,216	(+) 1,39,383
Acharya Sushil Muni Gau Sadan, Ghummenhera	13,86,115	8,36,673	(+) 5,49,442

Source: Government of NCT Delhi. 2001. Evaluation Study Report on Seven Gau Sadans Functioning in Delhi. Evaluation Unit, Department of Planning

The old NGO namely Krishnan Gau Sambhardhan Sansthan, Surhera misutilised the grant released from Delhi Kalyan Samiti and the account was seized. The new NGO was changed in June 1998 .

For the operations of the Gau Sadans, the Delhi government allotted the NGOs *gram sabha* land. According to the Animal Husbandry Department, 251 acres of land have been allotted for the construction of Gau Sadans. However, according to a survey conducted among NGOs the allotted land is 273.43 acres. Out of this, about 18 acres is under litigation or encroachment. Out of the total land allotted, around 131.49 acres is unutilised, which is around 50% of the total allotted land.

Problems

Most of the Gau Sadans are not working properly and are inefficient. They suffer from many problems that can be blamed on the inefficiency of the government and the NGOs in charge of them. These NGOs do not have any prior experience and thus prove out to be very inefficient.

First, the land utilisation is inefficient. Most NGOs have utilised only about 50% of the land allotted to them. This is sheer wastage of land resources, which are already scarce. Also, there is a lot of discrepancy regarding the allocation of land because the official sources and the survey done with NGOs show different figures. To top it all, a large amount of land allotted to Gau Sadans is under litigation.

Second, a survey conducted by the Planning Department of the Delhi government revealed that the cattle in seven Gau Sadans put together was less than the capacity of three Gau Sadans, which shows that three Gau Sadans are enough to give shelter to the present number of stray cattle and hence seven are not needed. In totality, around 3,379 cattle have been taken care of by the Gau Sadans. If we look at the cost per cow it works out to Rs 4,416 per cow. (Total expenditure of Rs 1,49,22,164 divided by a total number of cattle of 3,379).

The Gau Sadans are also not so effective because only 13.46% cattle of the target capacity were present in all the seven Gau Sadans, even after a lapse of 4-5 years. The Gau Sadans have failed to achieve the purpose for which they were set up. A large number of stray cattle can still be seen roaming on roads and mortality rate continued to be high in these Gau Sadans. As already mentioned earlier only 2 out of 7 NGOs, i.e. PFA Gau Sadan, Bawana and Surbhi Gau Sadan, Sultanpur Dabas are experienced in the field of animal welfare activities.

The most crucial question which comes up is whether we need the government to take care of stray animals for us: whether it is feasible or even justifiable to spend Rs 4,416 on one cow when much less is spent by way of welfare activities on people. Also the basis on which the government decides to give the contract of such Gau Sadans is unclear as some of them are not qualified to run such institutions.

Reforms

Since the Gau Sadans have failed to achieve their purpose and also are highly inefficient they should be shut down. More importantly even if they continue to operate, the government should stop spending the taxpayer's money on such useless and unprofitable ventures.

Many of the cattle roaming in Delhi are not really stray cattle. They are healthy, productive cattle left in the city for free fodder. The government should pick them up and auction them off. This would reduce the number of 'stray' cattle significantly.

What is required is an incentive structure that makes it *expensive* for cattle owners to let even unproductive cattle go astray. A system of registering and recording ownership of cattle for the lifespan of the animal, (by say, having a 'livestock registration number' marked on each animal) would make the owners accountable for the well being of the cattle. (In fact there is already a system in place for keeping track of cattle ownership, as per the Delhi Municipal Corporation Act, 1957, there is a provision for levying of tax on each buffalo/ cow kept for milking.) The owners would be traceable and spot fines could be charged from the owners whose animals are found stray.

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References

Government of NCT Delhi. 2001. *Evaluation Study Report on Seven Gau Sadans Functioning in Delhi*. Department of Planning