

Kutch UnthUchherakMaldhariSangathan

(Camel Breeders Association of Kutch)

Trust Reg. No. F/2270/Kutch, Society Reg. No.Guj/2092/Kutch

A Report of 4th Annual General Body meeting, 2014



(Pleaseinsert the picture of the curtain of the embroidery patches here as a cover picture. It will look nice.)

Date; 22-6-2014 (Camel Day)

Venue: JillaPanchayat Hall Bhuj-Kutch

On the occasion of 'Camel Day' KachchhUntUchchherakMaldhariSangathan organized their fourth Annual General Body meeting. The meeting was attended by the esteemed Member of Parliament of Kachchh-Morbi district, ShriVinodbhaiLakhamshiChavda. Breed profile report of one of the unique breed of camel in Kachchh, namely, Kharaiwas also presented to Dr. A J Kachhia Patel, Director of Animal Husbandry department of Gujarat. Six books under the title 'Through participation in natural resource management' were also launched on the same day.

June 22nd is celebrated as a day to honor camels. Since its inception, 'KachchhUntUchcherakMaldhariSangathan (KUUMS)' has organized its Annual General Body Meeting on this day. Maldharis from both the Rabari and FakiraniJat communities attend this meeting. They get their traditional songs, cultural music and everybody can be seen in their traditional attire. This appearance and overall outlook of the program creates a unique atmosphere.



All attendees looked through an exhibition before entering the meeting. A display of products made out of local camel wool were set out for display, alongside images of different camel breeds from around the world. The wool products are the result of an ongoing project by Sahjeevan and KUUMS that is developing products out of local camel wool that will assist in raising the livelihood security of the camel pastoralists.



A new addition to the exhibition this year was a large panel of embroidered pieces from across Kachchh. KUUMS and Sahjeevan are currently working with BPUMS and two other organizations in Kachchh to develop an exhibition about the maldhari communities of the district. One of the exhibits will be a large canopy made of pieces embroidered by the many pastoralist women in the district. About 200 pieces that have been made so far were stitched together to display at the KUUMS AGM, and embroidery kits were available for women to collect so they too could participate in the project.

This year is special as the **Kharai Camel Breed Profile Report** of the unique camel breed found in Kachchh, was presented to Dr. A J Kachhia Patel, Director of Animal Husbandry. This breed profile report will help in the registration of the breed as a national camel breed. This camel breed is decreasing in number as it is deprived of all the medical facilities as being non-registered. The esteemed chief guests were welcome with the bouquet of flowers and shawl by the senior members of KUUMS. Marking their presence, Dr. A J Kachhia Patel(Director of Animal Husbandry), Dr. N B Patil (Director of NRCC- Bikaner), Dr. A GPanchal(Regional Joint Director-Rajkot), RamzanbhaiHaleputra (President of BanniPashuUchchherakMaldhariSangathan), SalemamadFakirmamadHaleputra (Institute management committee NBGAR-karnal) , SandeepbhaiVirmani and SushamabenIyengar shared their thoughts on the efforts of the members of Sahjeevan for breed recognition and also appreciated participation of *maldharies* in breed conservation.



The event commenced with the distinguished guest lighting the lamp.



The Member of Parliament Kutch and Morbi Shri Vinodbhai Chavda was the chief guest of this programme. He was recently elected MP of Kutch district. The Breeders Association has a longstanding relationship with Shri Vinodbhai Chavda. He has been of great help to KUUMS since its initiation. KUUMS

therefore took the opportunity to specially welcome and felicitate Hon. Vinodbhai as a MP. The KUUMS President, Vice President and other members of association jointly presented him with a Kachchhi Shawl and memento. In the speech of Hon. Vinodbhai he said he was happy to see the forward progress of association. He committed to helping KUUMS as much as possible in his capacity as a Member of Parliament. Soon after the welcome ceremony, Bhikhabhai Rabari, president of Kachchh Unt Uchchherak Maldhari Sangathan explained the purpose of

the gathering. The day was designed into three major sessions that is welcome ceremony, Annual General Body meeting and Budget reading of the last year.

After the welcome speech by Bhikhabhai, Rabari, president of KUUMS, both Bhikhabhai and Meenaben, vice president of KUUMS presented the Breed Registration profile of *Kharai camel* to the Director of Animal Husbandry Dr. A J Kachhia Patel for further progress in the registration process.



Earlier this year a short film was made by Drishti, a media organization based out of Ahmedabad, on the Kharai Camel. This was screened for everyone present. This project was supported by Sahjeevan.

A film can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5rLXY2nxJW4>

The film is titled **The Kharai Camels: Amazing Camel Breed of India**. It is the



visual documentation of Kharai camel, its unique features, differentiation between Kachchhi Camel and Kharai camel and other facts supporting its uniqueness and eligibility for registration as a separate breed. The traditional knowledge holders- *Maldharies* are given the utmost importance along with the experts of the main stream professionals. In this

occasion Breeders Association Appreciated with special gift to Mr. Devrun and Mr. Darmiyan from Drishti for their contribution and efforts for create a film on Kharai Camels.

Taking the seat back from here Bhikhabhai Rabari hand over the session to Shri R G Bhalara, District Development Officer of Kachchh. He expressed his happiness at having attending all the KUUMS AGM's so far. He shared his advocacy related suggestions with the *maldharies* and suggests team of KUUMS and Sahjeevan to seek ideas from them.

These *maldharies* are migratory as the mangroves are present in the coastal part of Kachchh on which these camels are fed mostly. DDO shri promises to work-out a plan to meet the food security, education needs through Vidya Laxmi Bhavan for these families.

From here the session was taken off by Mahendra Bhanani, (*Project coordinator*) with the help of physical map of Kachchh showed the habitat of this camel. He discussed the various grazing routes of both Kachchhi and Kharai camels. The team feels a need for camel conservation and protection as there are many adversities being faced by both the breeders as well as the camel. Five grazing regions were discussed in detail - Jangi, Chari Dandh, Morgar, Navinad and Mohadi. Natural resource mapping and management of natural resources helped to understand various re-establishment requirements of water resources in these regions. The regions where there is highly a need to re-establish water resources are in Jadwa region (*dharma tadav*), Morgar (*Avado*), Motichoor (*Avado*), Bela (*Bhagadi Tadav*), Bela-Movana (*Avado*), Naredo (*Avado*).



After Shri Mahendrabhai Bhanani's session on the conservation of natural resources, the detailed resource mapping reports for six clusters in Kachchh were launched.



SandeepbhaiVirmanigive a talk soon after the book launch.



ShriSandeepbhaiVirmani congratulated the whole team of KUUMS and Sahjeevan for organizing fourth Annual General Body meeting of KUUMS.He acknowledged Dr. A J KachchhiaPatel's long-term support for the work being done in Kachchh. He was glad that *maldharies*from across the district had cometo this meeting.

After welcoming one and all present, he shares a fact with all and that being, *It is one of the oldest and first occupations on earth- Being a Maldhari is being into the most successful profession as it is one of the sustainable occupations for past m10,000 years or more.*

He added, *'Maldharis have a give and take relationship with the nature but on the contrary Agriculture has one-way relationship. If we can see greenery and healthy environment than it is the efforts of a maldhari.'*

One of the major work done by the biodiversity team of Sahjeevan of preparing Peoples' Biodiversity Register will help these maldharies, farmers claim for access benefit sharing. Work is also ongoing on claims for traditional land under the Forest Rights Act 2006. Both of these are works is in progress. He closed with the reminder that with every benefit comes roles and responsibilities, which the community must bear.



The next speaker was Dr. N B Patil, Director of NRCC, Bikaner. He pointed out that in the past four years, animal census report has shown increase in the depletion of camel population from 10 lacs to now 5 lacs in India. Camel milk is not recognized as a food product yet because the scientific research says the calcium of camel milk is less in % than the cow milk. This is the Indian scenario

but in the United States the Food and Drug Identity has recognized camel milk as a food product. It is strange though as there are no camels in the United States. But the fact is, whatever % of calcium is present in camel milk is highly medicinally benefitted. In Arab countries the Milk powder is been sold for about Rs. 6000/- per kilo. In India the pricing needs to be worked upon as it is of that worth too. He says that the recent research have shown that camels are surviving in minus degrees also. As there were some found grazing in Ladakh which is on the higher altitude.

Lastly Dr. A J Kachchhia Patel addressed the attendees. He expressed his happiness at being able to support KUUMS. He said that in Gujarat there are 9000 camels out of the total national population of 4.5 lacs (as per the recent census) and they already have a breeders association for its better life. He says that Gujarat has taken lead to shown necessary action towards conservation of camel breeds through formation of breeders association. He promised to support KUUMS' work and provide financial support if possible.

About Rs. 80, 00 000/- has been sanctioned to Sarhad Dairy for 2 lac milk storage



and marketing of the same. Sarhad dairy is a local dairy of Kachchh District. He says, *'the work done by following the correct processes, and decisions taken in patience, are more sustainable than decisions taken in a hurry, which are not fruitful.'* The Banni breed recognition took time to get registered but now even the Prime minister mentions it from time to time. Vaccination for diseases in camel will

also be supplied by the State Department of Animal Husbandry.

Earlier, Bhikhabhai Rabari had expressed the difficulty in organizing a meeting of maldharis from across the district. Dr. Patel said, ' I would not say that the maldharis lack unity due to their disbursement across the district. Rather, the fact

that it is possible to bring everyone together like this proves their strength and unity.’Maldharies may be dispersed in nature but they are well connected.

He is convinced by the efforts of both the organization in preparing the Breed registration profile and promises to forward the file within the one week’s time to the central level for further registration related process. As per the 18th animal census, the population of camel has seen a great fall but the next census will show increase in its population as soon the breed will be supported.

On behalf of the KachchhUntUchchherakMaldhariSangathan, ShriBhikhabhaiRabari (president) and Smt, meenaben (Vice president) presented a memento to both Dr. A J Kachchhia Patel and Dr. N V Patil towards the end of the event.



ShriRamzanbhaiHaleputra was the last speaker of the day. He mentioned that youth are shifting out of pastoralism to different jobs and called on Sahjeevan to help retain youth in the pastoralist livelihood. Ramzanbhai said, ‘I feel that each and every maldhari should be responsible enough to run the committee smoothly and successfully and not just few.’ Jai Hind Jai Maldhari.



Before entering into the second session of the day few girls from two villages Ukheda and Jadwa sang traditional Rabarifolk songs for the audience.

Thereafter, ShriKiranbhai Patel (Project coordinator, Sahjeevan) presented the Annual report and work done in the last financial year in short read through and few Resolutions were taken by Camel maldharies of Kutch UntUccherakMaldhariSangathan as listed below;

- (1) Efforts will be made for Camel milk to get recognized as food item by FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India)
- (2) Memorandum on Restoring grazing right and addressing problems faced by traditional livestock keepers/ pastoral communities in different states of our country will be submitted to Prime Minister of India
- (3) Approval of Annual Progress report of KUUMS
- (4) Approval of Audit report
- (5) Formation of New Karobari (Board) of KUUMS

Following the reading, the event moved toward conclusion. A group of 15 camel maldharis had come from Jodiya region of Jamnagar district to meet Dr. A J Kachchhia Patel and discussed the issue of their region with him. The accounts were made clear in front of all the maldharies present and their votes were taken on showing their agreement to the accounts. The new Governing Body members were announced for the next three years. There were 15 members from across Kachchh district. Their names are below.

Sr. No.	Name of Member	Taluka	Designation
1	BhikhabhaiVaghabhaiRabari	Bhachau	President
2	Miss. MinabenRabari	Lakhpat	Vice president
3	NurmamadbhaiJat	Anjar	Secretary
4	Bhachiben		
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