



World Organisation
for Animal Health

SKETCHING CHANGE

TALES FROM VETERINARIANS ACROSS ASIA-PACIFIC



SHE CHOSE KNOWLEDGE OVER SILENCE



Scan the QR code to access the comic stories in this publication in digital format, and to read several others.

© WOA, 2026

Some rights reserved. This work is made available under a CC BY-SA 3.0 IGO licence.



This publication was possible thanks to the support of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

Note: Designations, statements and opinions in the material do not imply any official position of WOA or partner organisations, and responsibility for interpretation lies solely with the reader.

ABOUT THIS VOLUME

The World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) is committed to strengthening gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) within the veterinary sector. Our recent work in Asia and the Pacific has shown that, while there is a growing number of qualified women and diverse professionals in the sector, many still face barriers shaped by longstanding norms, insufficient adjustments and unequal opportunities.

As noted in regional studies conducted by WOAH in Asia-Pacific, gender stereotypes influence perceptions within the veterinary sector, and the absence of reasonable accommodations reinforces the exclusion of persons with disabilities. These findings highlight the need for continued awareness and action across institutions, training systems, and professional communities.

To foster this change, WOAH has expanded its GEDSI initiatives, including awareness raising events and partnerships with veterinary associations and networks in Asia and the Pacific region, in particular the Federation of Asian Veterinary Associations (FAVA), the Asian Association of Veterinary Schools (AAVS) and the International Veterinary Students' Association (IVSA). The Comics Competition Promoting GEDSI in the Veterinary Sector, organised between December 2025 and January 2026, invited veterinary students and professionals to reflect creatively on what an inclusive profession looks like.

The competition aimed to celebrate storytelling, artistic talent, veterinary commitment and GEDSI values, and to inspire dialogue through accessible and engaging narratives. Among the winning submissions, the comic presented here captures the imagination, concerns, and aspirations of veterinarians in different parts of the Asia and the Pacific region. The story reminds us that inclusion is not only a policy goal—it is a shared cultural commitment that strengthens the profession and the communities it serves. While we could not award all participants with prizes, we appreciated all entries and will be sharing additional comic stories of note on our website (see QR code on the cover inner page).

We extend our heartfelt congratulations to the winners of this competition, and thank all participants for adding their voices to this important conversation. This comic enriches WOAH's ongoing efforts to promote a veterinary sector where everyone can thrive, advancing our mission to improve animal health and welfare globally and ensure a better future for all.



Dr Tomoko Ishibashi
WOAH Regional
Representative for Asia and
the Pacific



Dr Naree Ketusing
WOAH Sub-Regional
Representative for South-East Asia

A small village in rural India.



Careful... don't spill it.



She's not standing properly...



This was just the beginning.

She noticed things others didn't.



A weekly village meeting.

We will expand the dairy—
purchase two more cows.



Girls, sit quietly now, hahn?

But what if—?

Shhh.



What does she know?

Animal husbandry is not
a job for women!



What will become
of her?



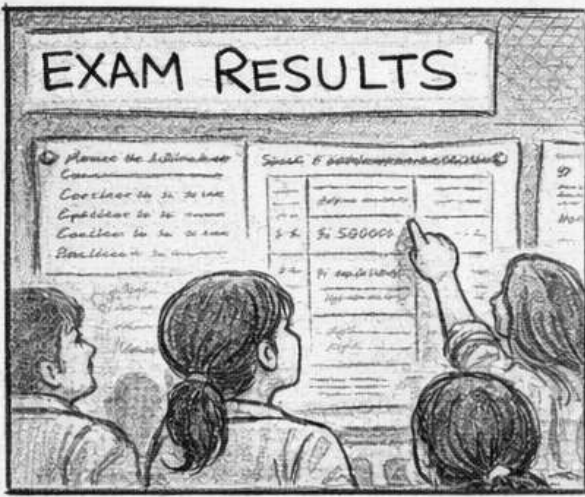
... We
could do
that too.



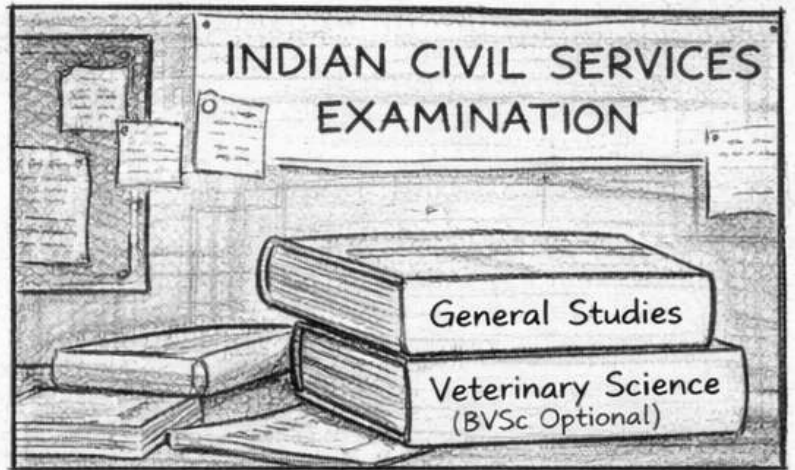
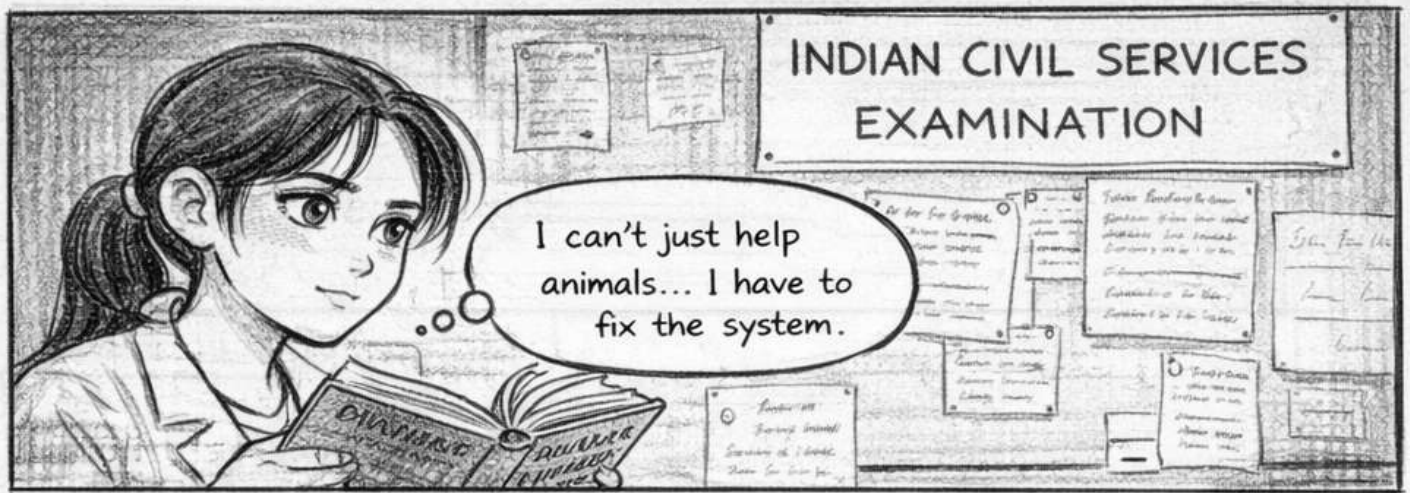
This meeting is for serious matters.



But she was never just going to sit in silence.



She chose knowledge over silence.

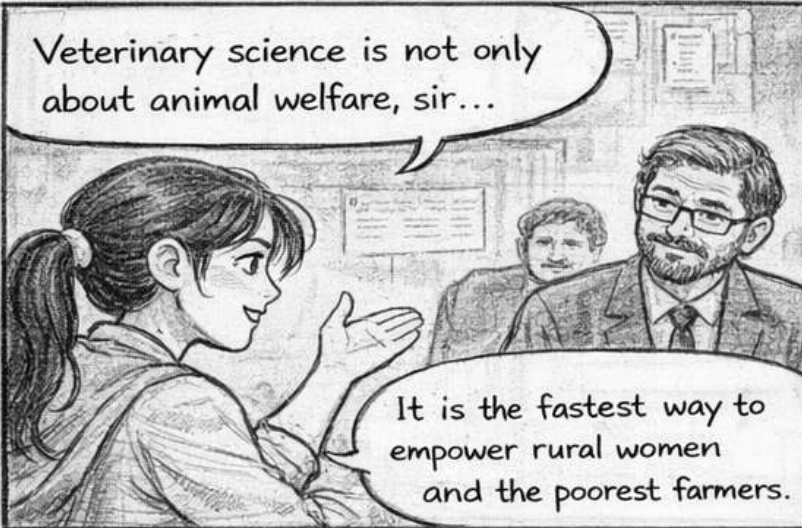


She aimed not just to serve animals---but the system itself.

After years of struggle, she finally had the chance to speak for others...



Veterinary science is not only about animal welfare, sir...



It is the fastest way to empower rural women and the poorest farmers.

It is the fastest way to empower rural women and the poorest farmers.



DEPARTMENT
Appointment Order
insw/gol/ine
SECRETARY - ANIMAL HUSBANDRY
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
We are pleased to appoint you as
SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF
ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

She's got a point...



I can't believe she did it!



Incredible...

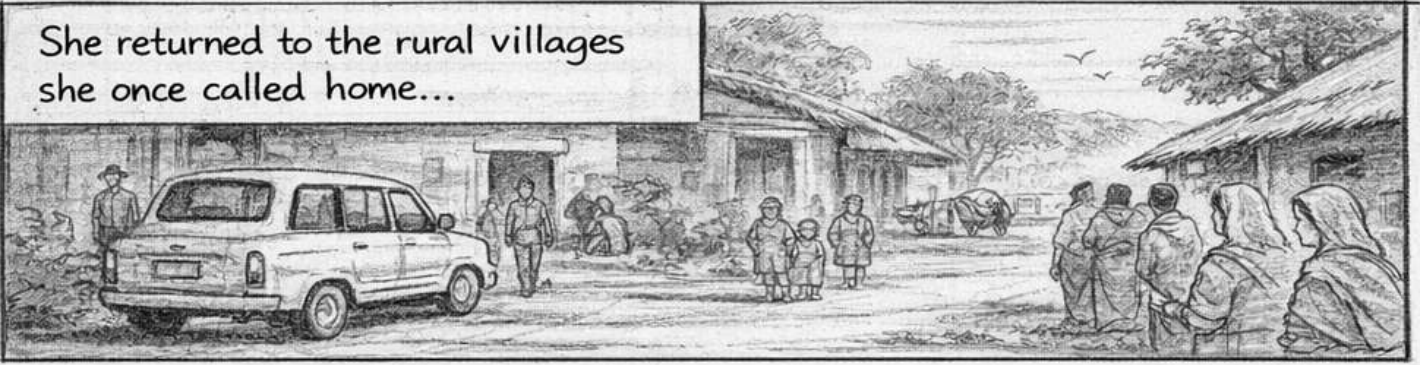
...you earned it.



A village girl entered the corridors of power.



She returned to the rural villages she once called home...



I promise, I'm here to work with you, not just to issue orders...



Our cows are sick. We're losing everything.

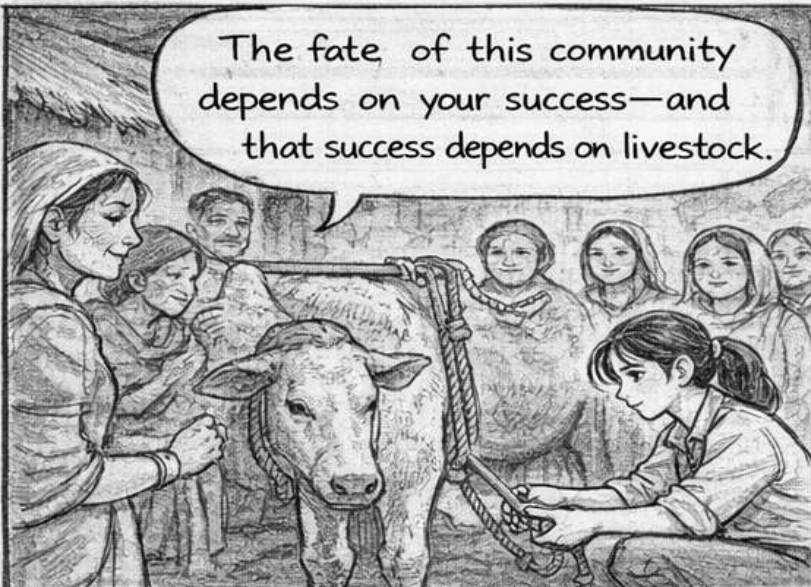
What will we do?



We all know that real change must happen from the ground up.



The fate of this community depends on your success—and that success depends on livestock.



You're the backbone of this village.



Leadership begins with listening.

Animal care is as much about science as it is about compassion...

That's what we've been missing.

Vaccinations will save livestock from disease.

What's learned here goes back to your families, your villages.

TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR WOMEN IN HUSBAND

Government schemes ment to empower you...

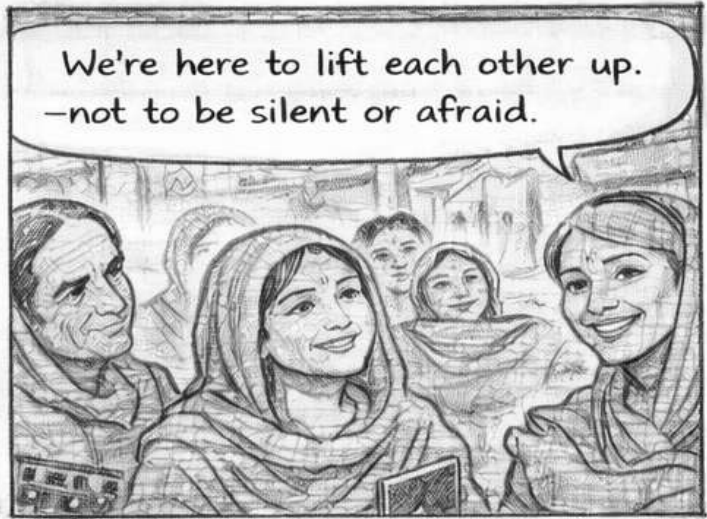
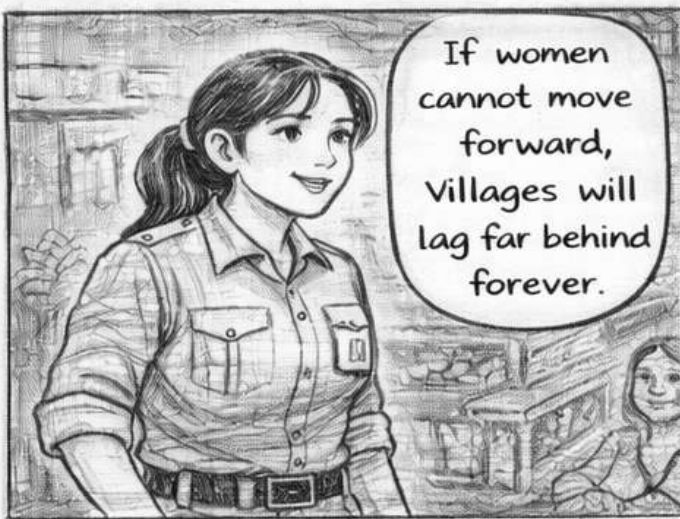
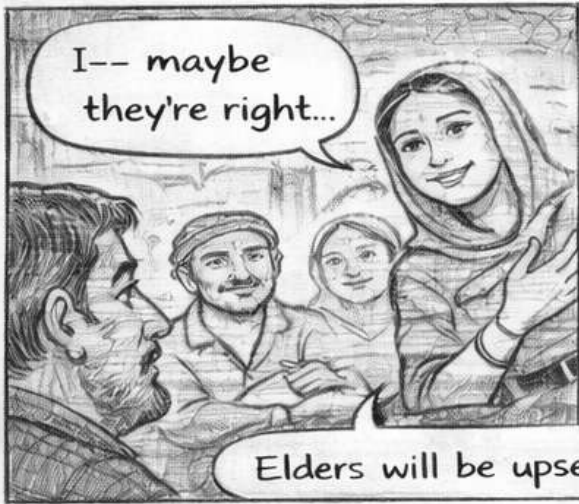
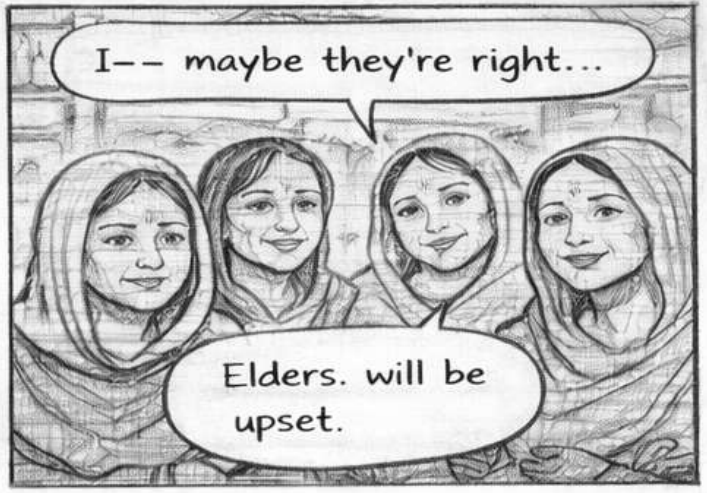
NEW SUBSIDIES PROGRAMME

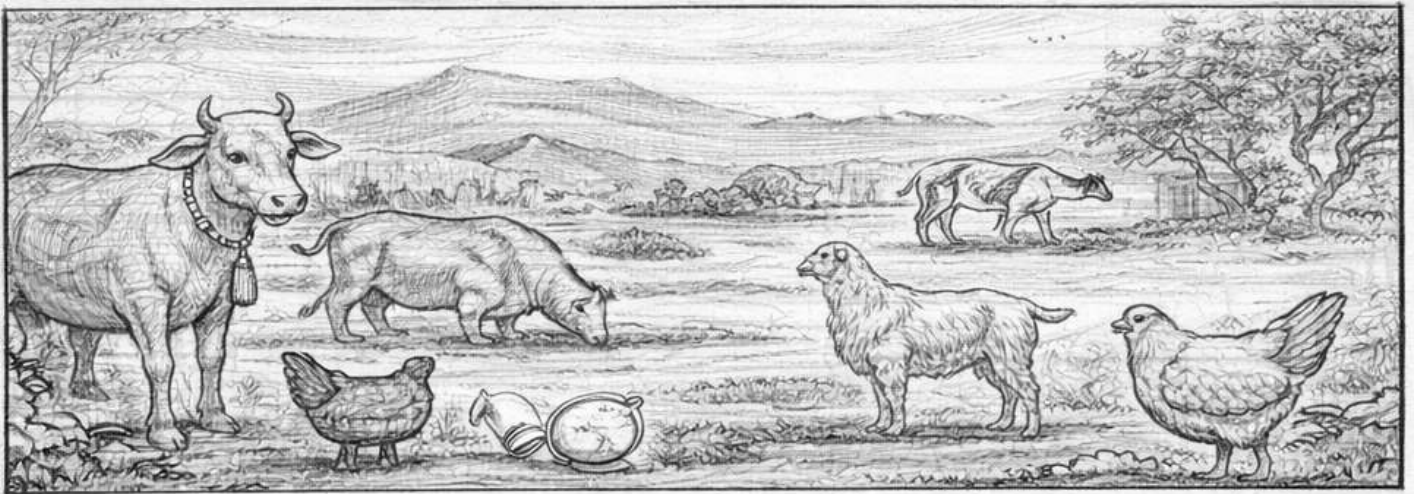
And support that delivers real change.

I can take care of cattle all by myself...

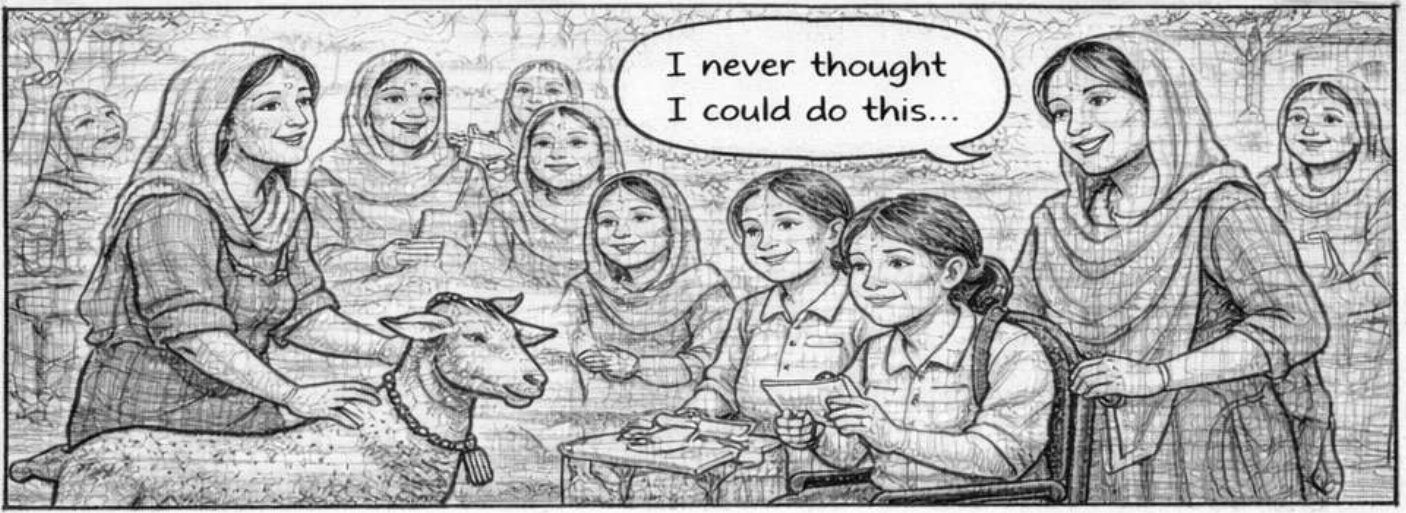
...and start my own business!

Knowledge turned into opportunity.

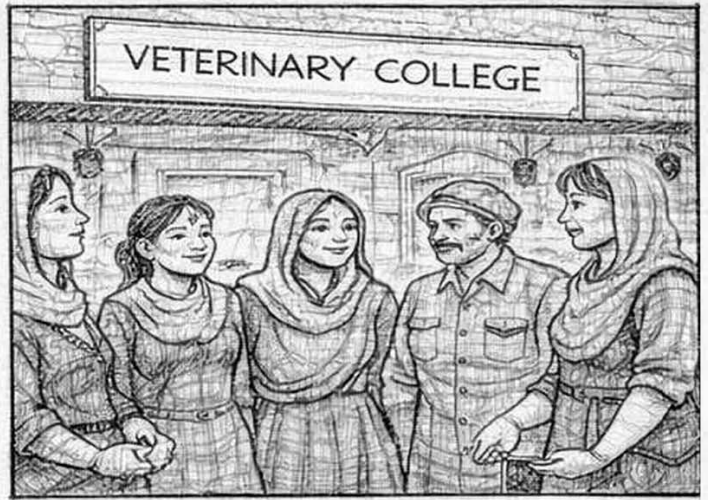




Economic freedom changed everything.



Empowerment multiplied.



True success outlives the leader.

Veterinary isn't just
about animals...



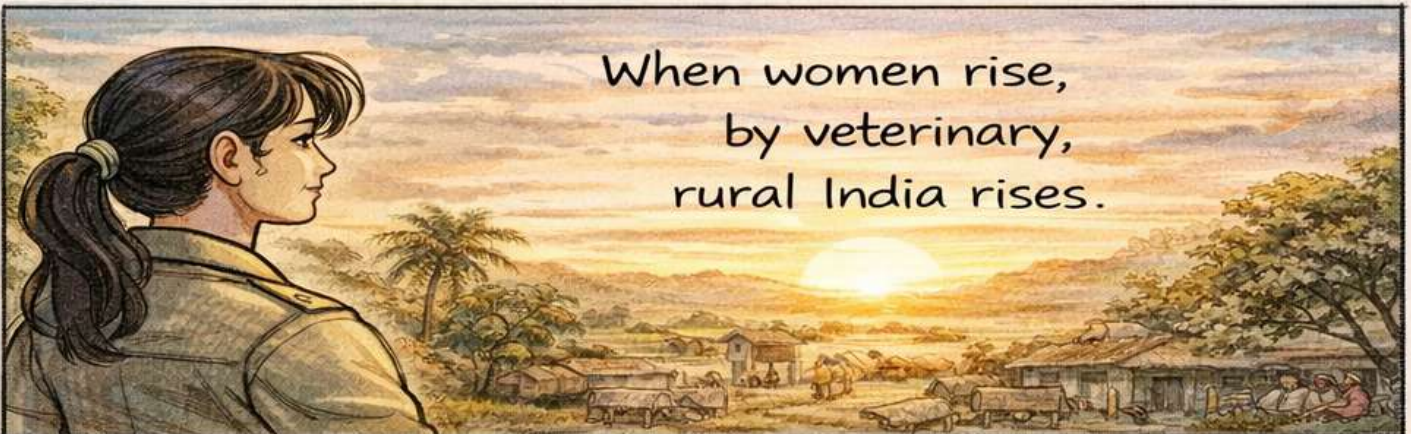
... it's about empowering women...



... and strengthening
rural India.



When women rise,
by veterinary,
rural India rises.



Comic by – G. Karthikeyan, Assistant Professor,
Veterinary Sciences, SRM College of Agricultural Sciences, India

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

G. Karthikeyan

I am G. Karthikeyan, currently working as an Assistant Professor (Veterinary Sciences) at the SRM College of Agricultural Sciences, SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Tamil Nadu, India. I have completed my M. Tech in Poultry Technology from Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University. I also have one year of industrial experience as a Technical Assistant at Suguna Foods and prior academic experience as an Assistant Professor at JKK Muniraja College of Agricultural Sciences.

Brief concept of the comic

The comic is set in a rural village and narrates the journey of a **widow mother** who faces severe economic uncertainty while raising her single daughter. Her simple aspiration is to rear a cow, sell milk and sustain her family. However, due to a lack of scientific livestock management practices, her livelihood remains unstable.

Observing these challenges, her daughter aspires to bring change and chooses to pursue a **Bachelor's degree in Veterinary Sciences**, despite prevailing male stigma in the livestock sector within rural communities.

During her journey, she encounters significant difficulties in implementing scientific veterinary practices at the grassroots level due to limited authority and systemic constraints.

To create sustainable impact, she prepares for and clears the Indian Civil Services Examination with Veterinary Science as her optional subject. Upon becoming a district-level Secretary, she initiates policy decisions to implement scientific livestock practices, leading to improved livelihoods for rural women. Her journey positions her as a role model, inspiring many young girls to pursue veterinary sciences and contribute to the growth of their communities.


The comic aims to highlight **women empowerment, scientific livestock management and the transformative role of veterinary sciences in rural development.**


World Organisation for Animal Health


Regional Representation for Asia and the Pacific
Food Science Building 5F
The University of Tokyo
1-1-1 Yayoi, Bunkyo-ku
Tokyo 113-0032
Japan

World Organisation for Animal Health

Sub-Regional Representation for South-East Asia
c/o Department of Livestock Development
69/1 Phaya Thai Road
Ratchathewi 10400 Bangkok
Thailand

 WOAHAAsiaPacific

 @WOAH_Asia

 WorldAnimalHealth

Visit us: woah.org | rr-asia.woah.org

