

R E S O L U T I O N
Imphal, the 8th November, 2016

No. 1/16/2016-Vety(Pt) : Whereas the State Government is keen to lay down a Policy for the Conservation and Development of Manipuri Pony, one of the five recognised equine breeds of India and in pursuance of a decision of the State Cabinet taken in its meeting held on 17th October, 2016, the Governor of Manipur is pleased to resolve to publish the draft "Manipur Pony Conservation and Development Policy, 2016" for inviting comments for all Stake holders and the general public. The comments shall reach the undersigned by 4:30 p.m. of 22nd November, 2016 either by letter or mail to spuii_123@rediffmail.com.

"Manipuri Pony Conservation and Development Policy"

The Manipur Pony is one of the five recognised equine breeds of India which is very important and critical for the State as well as the country as national gene pool. The Manipuri pony has been indispensable with Manipuri society for its socio-cultural association for centuries. Its antecedents, however, are not clear, as one source stated Tibetan ponies as it ancestors while another source stated its origin to be a cross between Mongolian wild horse & Arabian. However, all agreed that it was derived from ancient stock. In some manuscripts, it is referred to as Mangal-sa or Mongolian animal. In Manipuri mythology, the Manipuri pony was regarded to have descended from "Samadon Ayangba" the winged steed of Lord Margjing, one of the guardian deities of Manipur.

The Manipuri pony was so highly regarded that it was never used as a draught animal. The Manipuri pony though small breed of 11 to 13 Hands is known for its unique stamina, agility, intelligence, speed, manoeuvrability and great adaptability to harsh geo climatic condition. It is rightly regarded as original polo pony as the modern polo is derived from the traditional Sagol Kangjei of Manipur.

Manipur ponies figure prominently in the Manipuri way of life. Besides traditional events of "Lai haraoba" and being used in the sport like Polo & race, they were also utilised as mounts for Manipur cavalry which was feared throughout upper Burma during 17th century. The population of this highly valued breed is dwindling rapidly in recent time, from 1898 nos. of Ponies in 17th Quinquennial Livestock Census 2003 to only 1101 nos. in the 19th Quinquennial Livestock Census 2012.

Food and Agriculture Organisation publication on World Watch List on Domestic Animal Diversity has listed the breed as "An Endangered Animal". Shrinkage of wet lands which is the natural habitat of Manipuri Pony due to rapid urbanisation and encroachment, lack of polo ground/polo playing areas in the Rural, restriction of use of ponies except in the game of polo, uncontrolled diseases and the exodus of ponies to the neighbouring states and countries are some of the attributing factors for the decline of the population of the Pony in the State.

Now, the situation calls for immediate implementation of the conservation programmes through formulation of a holistic policy on conservation and development of the Manipuri Pony. The State Govt. has also declared Manipuri Pony as an Endangered Breed in 2013. Therefore, the conservation of Manipuri Pony will require not only the policy and programmes of the Government but also the collective efforts of all stake holders like NGOs, Pony lovers, owners and subjects of State of Manipur towards the goal of conservation of this precious breed of pony in the State. In view of the above, a draft policy on Manipuri Pony Conservation and development is hereby drafted.

1. **Title :** The Title of the Policy will be as "Policy on Conservation of Manipuri Pony"
2. **Implementing Agency :** The State Veterinary & A.H. Department shall be the Nodal Department for implementation of the Policy.
3. **Fund :** The State Government shall provide a continuous and sufficient fund for implementation of the Policy preferably with the opening of a separate Head of Accounts for the purpose.

4. Constitution of Manipuri Pony Development Board.

Constitution of Manipuri Pony Development Board with resource members from Government, university and non-government organisations including experts from inside and outside the state for effective formulation of work plans and activities and its implementation is immediately required. The Board shall coordinate with all the stake holders of the state for effective contribution to the policy and to fulfill its objectives. Action plan is as below. The state government shall constitute "the Manipuri Pony Development Board" with the following members :

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|---|---|------------------|
| 1. Hon'ble Chief Minister, Manipur | - | Chairperson |
| 2. Hon'ble Minister (Vet. & A.H.), Manipur | - | Vice Chairperson |
| 3. The Principal Secretary/Commissioner/Secretary, Secretary(Vet. & A.H.) | - | Member |
| 4. The Principal Chief Conservator (Forest & Environment) | - | Member |
| 5. The Commissioner (Revenue) | - | Member |
| 6. The Director General of Police | - | Member |
| 7. The Director (Veterinary & A.H.) | - | Member |
| 8. The Director (Tourism) | - | Member |
| 9. The Director (Youth Affairs & Sports) | - | Member |
| 10. The President, Manipur Horse Riding & Polo Association | - | Member |
| 11. The President, All Manipur Polo Association | - | Member |
| 12. The President, Manipur Pony Association | - | Member |

5. Breeding strategies of the Breed.

True to breed multiplication of the Manipuri Pony is important at this juncture. This could be achieved through the establishment of preserves as free traditional style commons for natural breeding and on the strengths of local custom and practice as well as the establishment/ strengthening of the Manipuri Pony Farms where all breeding data are recorded. It will provide a holistic approach that recognises, respects and strengthens the indigenous traditional knowledge of keeping the animal.

It is pertinent to mention that the main utility of this animal at present is for the game of Polo and most of the pony owners practiced castration/gelding of their ponies at early age, so that their ponies are easily controlled during the game. In the process, good quality pony, possessing unique genes responsible for good performance in Polo game, has been withdrawn or removed from the population. The practice of using geldings in polo should be reconsidered and the use of mares as practised in the current polo playing countries may also be introduced and encouraged in the state.

Selection of Stallion and mare having all the true characteristics of Manipur Pony for breeding purposes.

- i) Selection of Stallions and Mares having all the true characteristics of Manipur Pony for breeding purpose.
- ii) Development of a breeding tract in every District of the state by establishment of a common preserve for natural breeding with participation of local community.
- iii) Scientific breeding programmes shall be carried out through establishment/ strengthening of farm of true to breed Manipuri Pony by the state Government where scientific records are kept.
- iv) Relevant laws shall be framed to prevent early castration of stallions.
- v) Regulation of export of Manipuri Ponies from the State to other States and countries through appropriate laws which may continue till the population is stabilised in the state with complete banned of export of Manipur Ponies.
- vi) Cross breeding of Manipuri Ponies with the breed of horses imported from outside the state shall be strictly banned.
- vii) Cryo-preservation of semen of good pedigree stallions shall be undertaken under available facilities in the state for ex situ conservation.

6 Feeding Plan of Manipuri Pony.

Lack of grazing land and the natural habitat in the valley Districts are one of key factors for the decline of pony population in the state. Shrinkage of grazing areas deprived the ponies nutritionally in terms of quality and quantity. Therefore, fulfilment of nutritional requirement of the animals is the need of hour. While planning feeding plan, the following action plan may be taken up.

- i) The existing laws Cattle Trespass Act, 1871 shall be strictly enforced to keep the ponies off the roads and the Board shall oversee its enforcement.
- ii) The available wastelands near the foothills or any other areas around/ adjacent to the breeding tract in each district may be declared as reserved/ preserved for the purpose of shelter, fodder production and grazing area for the ponies taking into account the availability of water sources in the area.
- iii) The maintenance of the area may be entrusted to the local communities/ bodies, pony owners / lovers, clubs etc. under the supervision of the Board. The area may also be developed to attract the tourists.
- iv) Feeding schedule and requirement of feed and fodder for different categories of ponies need to be formulated / developed.
- v) Pasture development programmes in places wherever feasible such as common grazing ground must be initiated.
- vi) The reserved/preserved may also be developed to cater to tourism and recreational spots.

7. Prevention and Control of Pony Diseases -

Health and Prevention/Control of Diseases will be monitored by implementing agency

8. Development of Permanent Polo Ground and Race Courses.

Lack of polo playing grounds in the village level, loss of interest of playing polo as village game and lack of race courses in the state are also the contributing factor for the sharp decline of pony population in the state. In the past, polo games and horse races were regularly organised at Hapta Kangeibung and other local polo ground under the Royal patronage as a result many pony owners were enthusiastic of breeding good ponies for participation in the polo game and races. Nowadays only few grounds are available for playing Polo in the State. Therefore, there is urgent need for preservation of polo playing fields and race courses in the state so that the enthusiasm of pony rearing and breeding as before are back again and the below mentioned action plan may be taken up.

Initiative must be taken up for preservation of at least one polo ground in each district which may be developed with adequate infrastructures. Mapal Kangleibung /Imphal Polo ground may be preserved for yearly events of polo at the state level as well as International level.

The management of polo ground in the village level should be entrusted to local communities and polo clubs.

The state may initiate to develop a race course in Imphal City only for the purpose of popularisation of Manipuri Pony, with careful monitoring by the Board so that it may not used in the wrong way. Such areas may also be used for pony related events like polo, equestrian games etc.

9. Pony Based Employment Opportunities.

In erstwhile Manipur kingdom the animals were utilised for defending the boundary of the state and for welfare of the common people, transportation and Polo. But due to the changing political scenario and increasing mechanisation, the animal was withdrawn from warfare and transportation activities. The Pony is a sacred animals used in rituals and traditional and Cultural activities of Lai Haraoba.

At present, ponies are kept mainly for playing game of polo and other ritual activities. Pony owners are not earning any income from rearing of pony which is one of the most important factors for decline of pony population. It is now desirable that ponies are utilised for economic activities and to create employment opportunities for many pony owners which will ultimately help in the conservation of the breed. Points to be considered are as follows.

Pony based employment schemes may be introduced at the Government level and may pursue Banks to sponsor schemes for economic utilisation of Manipuri Pony in eco-tourism activities.

Re-establishment of Mounted Police in Manipur Police which will be very helpful in controlling of crowds and traffic in the congested areas.

Establishment of a cavalry unit as body guard of Governor of the state which may be used as escort of Governor in Republic Day functions and at the start of state Assembly for Governors Speech like that of the Presidential body guard of Union Government.

Introduction of pony/horse riding school wherein interested young boys and girls may be imparted training on horse riding and other related activities so as to popularise the pony amongst the youths of the state.

Efforts should be taken up to carry out extensive research work for scientific utilisation of Manipuri Pony at appropriate centre.

Ponies may be introduced in the tourist spots like Sendra, Waterfalls of Leimaram, Santhel eco tourist park of Andro and other tourist spots for a pony ride around the centre for the visitors as well as photo session on payment basis as done in famous sea beaches of the country.

10. Incentives Programmes to Pony keepers.

Most of Pony owners are landless and generally dependent on agriculture and allied activities. As they are unable to invest in maintenance of the Pony, they are let to wander on the road, market places and garbage dumping areas depending on the left over of the hotels, markets, garbages and plastic bags and on the mercy of the nature thereby damaging their health. It is right time that that Government may have a re look for providing maintenance allowance to polo club/owners. Action plan to be taken up in this aspect are as follows.

- i) To organise awareness programme on scientific management practices.
- ii) To provide incentives to the Polo club/ individual farmer by organising health camps and providing maintenance allowances for Pony in kind i.e. feed ingredients, medicines etc.
- iii) To organise Pony shows regularly so as to encourage Pony owners to breed good ponies.

11. Organisation of Eco - tourism Activities.

Manipur state in addition to its beautiful landscape diverse flora and fauna and salubrious climatic condition is well known as the birth place of game of Polo. Organisation of polo tournament/festival, equestrian sports as eco tourism activities are required on regular basis to attract both domestic and international tourists.

- i) To organise Polo Festival, Pony shows, Polo tournaments regularly as part of eco-tourism activity.
- ii) To formulate strategic plan and time bound work schedule for development of Sagol Kangjei & Polo. The state should develop Imphal as an International Polo city as the state being the birth place of Polo. This will attract both domestic and foreign tourists.
- iii) To introduce other activities of pony other than the game of polo, such as equestrian games, arambai throws for the tourists.

12. Inclusion of pany related literatures in the text book.

The importance of Manipuri Pany needs to be popularised among the younger generation of the society. The literatures related to Manipuri Pany in regards to its origin, uses in socio-cultural and political, history need to be taught to the younger generation so that the indispensability of the Manipuri Pany with the society is known to them. Action plan may be as follows.

The state Government shall include a topics on Manipuri Pany in the text book of the middle and high school level.


(Baichhngpuli)
Under Secretary (Vety. & A.H.),
Govt. of Manipur.

Copy to :-

1. The Secretary to Governor, Manipur.
2. The Secretary to Chief Minister, Manipur.
3. The PPS to Deputy Chief Minister, Manipur.
4. The PPS to Minister, Vety. & A.H. Services, Manipur.
5. The PPS to all Minister, Manipur.
6. The S.D. to Chief Secretary, Govt. of Manipur.
7. The AD ACS, Principal Secretary/Commissioner/Secretary, Govt. of Manipur.
8. Dr. K.K. Nimsi Singh (J.A.S. Rtd.), Consultant to the Govt. of Manipur.
9. The Director (Vety. & A.H.), Govt. of Manipur.
10. The Director, Printing & Stationery with a request to publish the resolution in the Manipur Gazette Extraordinary.
11. Order Book/Office Copy.