India possess the largest number of cattle in the world but due to low productivity the per capital availability of milk is very low. Since the First Five Year Plan the Government of India tried to increase the milk production. Under Fourth Five Year Plan 'Operation Flood' project was taken up to increase the milk production through artificial insemination and systematic cross-breeding. This programme was intended to be implemented through small and marginal farmers and agricultural labourers in order to satisfy the two objectives of increasing milk production and improvement of the well-being of these people. The Draft Fifth Plan observed that the 'Operation Flood' could not make much headway and recommended further intensification of this programme.

In order to analyse the causes of failure of this programme a social cost-benefit analysis should be performed. Only two social cost-benefit analyses on crossbred cattle have been made so far in India. The first one was made in 1976 jointly by National Dairy Research Institute (NDRI), Karnal, and Indo-Swiss Project, Kerala, on cross-breeding programme of the Indi-Swiss Project, Kerala. The second one was performed by Prof. S.N. Mishra in 1978 on Intensive Cattle Development Project (ICDP) and ICDP-1, Poona.
The above two works yielded opposite results. Prof. S.N. Mishra found the recommendation of crossbred cattle to be socially undesirable while NDRI and Indo-Swiss Project found the recommendation of the crossbred cattle to be socially desirable. The objective of the present work is to clear up this confusion.

A critical review of the joint work of NDRI and Indo-Swiss Project and analysis of our own data collected covering three districts in the plains of West Bengal reveal that the recommendation of the crossbred cattle in the plains is socially undesirable, whereas the recommendation of the crossbred cattle in the highranges is socially desirable.

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