

Dairying in J&K beyond post amendment in Article 370

Dairy blog with 91st edition of Dairypulse (1st to 15h August 2019)

Dear friends,

Last fortnight was **hysterically historical** or **historically hysterical**; at least I could not decipher that.

Apart from news about food safety officials conducting raids on adulterated milk and milk products, we also saw some news in which the convicts were booked under NSA in a particular state for trading unsafe adulterated milk products. For the first time, a reward of Rs 11000.00 to anyone informing the department about milk adulteration was announced. All these steps look good as long as they are implemented honestly in good spirits in the national interest.

The issue of India allowing imports of dairy products from New Zealand under RCEP was discussed in detail in our last edition, however in this week a good coverage on how underprepared Indian team was at the RCEP meeting shocked everyone. The designated officers from Indian contingent even believed and did not raise any objection while New Zealand team stated that by 2022 India would be a net importer of dairy products due to a shortage of milk production. How could an Indian believe that the top milk producer of the world in 2019, at over 50% higher level of per capita milk availability (from WHO's standard) for 17% of the world's population could become a milk beggar by 2022?

Still, under the leadership of Narendra Modi ji, we believe that such decisions might not be taken on a real-time basis at least in our lifetime.

Now let us shift our focus on the title of this edition ie "Dairying in J&K beyond post amendment in Article 370".

Around 5-6 years back I got an assignment for community mobilization for dairy development in J&K and particularly in the valley and adjoining districts. As a routine, I prepared a proposal to conduct a baseline survey first so as to understand the real-time issue in milk production, collection and market linkages. Our target area, to begin with, was Pulwama, Sopore, and Poonch. We shared our plan with the questionnaire for the dairy farmers with clear instruction to have the survey done with the women in the household. Surprisingly the project did not get through due to two unreasonable reasons.

- a. Firstly we were told that no one would allow you or your women representative to talk to the women in rural areas and, secondly
- b. No male would share any meaningful information to you about how these women rear the cattle and contribute to the family income.

Even the money is not shared with women at home by these male gatekeepers.

It was in 2018, as the luck would have it we again got a chance to work in Pulwama for setting up a state of the art technology milk processing plant for a group of farmers involved in farming, aggregating or in other words collective marketing of milk in that area. This farmer group was also a key supplier to almost all the private milk processing plants in the valley. For the first time, we got to know about Muslim Gujjar community who are involved in the milk business in that region. We found this group very hardworking but highly unaware of the best practices and are being exploited by the existing players. We also observed them very closely while we executed the complete installation and commissioning of the plant during the aftermath of the tragic Pulwama incident. We saw their commitment towards making their dairy happen and also the way they took care of our team as well as myself while we were traveling in that area.

So I see three possibilities as a silver lining for the dairy industry in Sri Nagar.

- a. Someone taking responsibility to implement the Amul model with women cooperative society as a first priority as if you empower the women in the area, the whole family would get empowered.

b. There has been a proposed scheme of offering these Muslim Gujjars an OBC status which might link them to the mainstream by inducting their kids in government jobs and other purposeful interventions.

c. Someone taking interest in formalizing safe milk production and collection infrastructure in these selected districts so that everyone in the valley gets high-quality milk and milk products.

I am so glad that like always, Amul has offered their services to build the dairy infrastructure of J&K and particularly in the valley. I believe that NDDB might also play a role in building this state and bring it on the list of top-producing states of milk in the next 3-5 years.

It is for the information of all that Pulwama and nearby areas are the highest milk and apple-producing districts of J&K.

I request everyone to share your views and suggestions for better and innovative models at all functional areas in the dairy sector. We will try to include the same and forward it to our regular suggestions being sent to various ministries through this forum.

With this edition, I am also sharing the presentation being given by GCMMF to Ministry of Commerce to help them understand the strengths of Indian dairying.

Happy e-reading and a great independence day weekend.

with best regards

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