

# Dairy Development in Himachal Pradesh

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**Abstract – This paper intends to comprehend the contemporary scenario of dairy farming and various concerned issues and problems that help in dampening the spirit and zeal of the farmers to take it up as their profession and mode of earning their livelihood in the rugged and mountainous terrain of Himachal Pradesh. In mountainous state of Himachal Pradesh the various issues of farmers who are involved in rearing cattle require redressal in order to promote dairy farming in the state. The farmers face number of problems like scarcity of high yielding milch cattle, shortage of feed and green fodder, inactive veterinary and diagnostic services, and lack of scientific understanding. The diligence of the people and the institutional efforts are required to raise the economic status and social identification of the people in the state. Agriculture is the main occupation and livestock is given special attention to supplement people's income and fulfil their dietary requirements. Though peasants put more labour in their farms to get fodder to cattle, they don't get remuneration in proportion to their toil because of domestic breed of milch cattle. Albeit the yield of the cattle is very low, people's enthusiasm to rear cattle does not wither. They consider cattle as a social status and member of their families. In spite of such a healthy environment for dairy farming, they don't perform it on commercial basis rather confine it only for subsistence level. The lacklustre efforts of the government seem to be the critical reason to restrict dairy farming to subsistence level in the state. The provision of high yielding milch cattle to the farmers is required for rapid promotion of dairy farming. Therefore, government and farmers are needed to work together for its swift promotion in the state.**

**Keywords - Milch Cattle, Environment, Himachal Pradesh, NSDP**

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## INTRODUCTION

Himachal Pradesh is located in rugged terrain of middle Himalaya. Due to extreme variation in elevation great difference occurs in climate conditions. The climate varies from hot and sub-humid tropical in Southern tracts to cold, alpine, and glacial in the northern and eastern mountain ranges. Agriculture is the main source of livelihood. It contributes over 45% to the NSDP<sup>64</sup>. Over Ninety three percent of the population depends directly upon agriculture which provides direct employment to seventy one percent of its people. Himachal Pradesh ranked fifteenth in the list of highest per capita of Income of all states and union territories for the year of 2013 -14.<sup>65</sup> The whole geographical area in context with the economic activities may be divided in upper and lower belt of the state. Upper belt, as mentioned above, is known for apple, and Pea, while the lower belt is known for mango and potato belt. The main cereals grown in the lower belt are wheat, Maize, Rice and Barley. Apple is the principal cash crop of the upper belt of the state grown principally in the districts of Shimla, Kullu, Karsog Tehsil of Mandi, some blocks of Chamba

districts, some parts of Sirmour and Lahaul-Spiti with an average annual production of 0.5 million tonnes and per hectare production is of eight to ten tonnes. The apple cultivation constitutes forty nine percent of the total area under fruit crops and eighty five percent of total fruit production in the state with an estimated economy of ₹350 million.

The lower belt is identified as the key locale for promoting dairy farming in which the farmers are traditionally engaged in rearing cattle. By far, women are bestowed with the responsibility of domesticating cattle and performing household chores whereas men, in strength, are engaged in government as well as private jobs. Though there are many components of the development of dairy farming, high-breed cattle is considered to be the main component of it. Farmer rear indigenous cows for the want of money as high yielding cattle are beyond their economic affordability. Moreover they also lack sophisticated knowledge regarding the techniques and different breed of milch cattle. Rearing cattle of high yielding is the critical factor in the development of dairy farming. Therefore, institutional efforts and financial incentives to the farmers are marked as stimuli in this direction.

Nearly all the households have subsistence landholding. They are traditionally accustomed to

<sup>64</sup> "Indian States by GDP Per Capita" Statistics Times 20 August 2015. The Hindu Retrieved 31 May 2016 □ 2011.

<sup>65</sup> "statistical facts of India " indianmirror.com, retrieved 26 October 2006

rearing cattle which is deemed as a pivotal fraction of their farming system. The dairy farming meets not only the rising demand of the milk, but the spectrum of fundamental needs of the farmers as well. Traditionally, it has never been commercialized; however, it continues to be the critical dietary supplement for virtually every household of the state. Farmers, in the present changing economic scenario, endeavour to diversify their agricultural activities in order to mitigate the risk and gain more economic benefits from their limited resources. Dairy farming remains a critical dimension of diversified agricultural practices and most attractive economic measures for the farmers in the state.

Despite the plethoric scope of the dairy development, the farmers are not able to achieve encouraging sequel because of the paucity of proper guidance, technical know-how and medical assistance from the state in practice. The laboriousness of the farmers in general and women in particular goes in vain as their cattle don't give as much yield as arduous efforts they put to nourish them in the state. Consequently, rational measures are needed desperately to safeguard the interest of the farmers not only to cater the demand side but also to create entrepreneurship amongst masses for creating self-employment milieu in the state. It will go a long way in enabling farmers to supplement their income on one hand and in obtaining the pure and organic milk on the other which is going to be dreamt element in the near future as market is experiencing supply shock because of huge shortage of quality milk and flood of adulterated and synthetic milk in the market. Most often, there are speculations among masses that the culture of consumption of pasteurised milk (packed in polythene sachet) has developed health-hazards in the society. The version of equilibrium of demand and supply side appears quite incredulous among masses as the number of milch cattle has been flagging down since the incitation of new economic policy because of structural as well as occupational changes in the economy.

## OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study is to find out the problems faced by the farmers to promote dairy farming in hilly state of Himachal Pradesh. Besides, it aims at construing if any other factor except economic and natural affects the promotion of dairy farming in sample districts of Himachal Pradesh.

## DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Keeping in view the authenticity of the research, genuine efforts have been made to collect primary data through census method from four districts i.e. Una, Hamirpur, Bilaspur and Kangra.

These districts have huge scope of dairy farming. Hundred farmers from each districts have been selected i.e., total four hundred farmers have been taken as sample to collect information regarding the

problems faced in dairy farming. Enumerator personally interviewed farmers by preparing questionnaire with relevant questions. Dickey-fuller cointegration and Sims and Granger causality methods have been applied for the quantitative analysis of data.

## IMPORTANCE OF DAIRY DEVELOPMENT

Dairy products are always in diary of dishes of households they cook in the state. Farmers are in need of more nutritional food as they burn more calories during the time of work they do in the mountainous terrain having high gradient of almost twenty to thirty degree. They intake milk and its product to keep themselves hail and healthy to earn their livelihood from the "terrace farming" and other activities they performed to supplement their income. As the terrace farming is always considered non-remunerative, dairy farming becomes indispensable to supplement income and raise their living standard. Farmer's marginal physical Productivity from less per capita arable land is inadequate to meet the expenditure of daily needs. Hence dairy farming appears as the best additional activities to complement their income. They are habitual of rearing cattle. Therefore, the Government must put grave attention towards this remunerative activity by providing high yielding breed cattle and provision of "soft loan" to the farmers for minimum ten bovine and buffaloes to start small dairy farm.

## CATTLE FARMER RELATIONS

People in the sample districts have been rearing cows and buffaloes as milch cattle meet their personal milk demand since ages. By far indigenous buffaloes are found in each household. Farmers domesticated them not only for meeting their household milk demand but also to meet the need of manure for their farming. However, the changes have been witnessed in farmers' behaviour and their farm practices. Structural changes in mountainous economy brought about occupational changes gradually that affected the subsistence sector adversely. Earlier men, largely, enlisted in army and women looked after the domestic as well as the agricultural work including domesticating cattle. However, the existing traditional trend has changed and men and women both are reluctant to undertake agricultural activities. They have swapped agricultural activities with jobs in private as well as public sector as more efforts are put and fewer yields is got from this sector. Moreover, farmers feel discouraged for making any investment in agriculture due to increased monkey menace, of course, because of destruction of their natural habitat. Such changing trend is an affect of structural changes which happened not only in Himachal Pradesh first time, but in all economies of the World axiomatically. Such occupational shift could have been marginalised if the Government of Himachal Pradesh would have trained farmers optimally with a special

focus on women to perform scientific agriculture activities and educated them to start small unit of dairy farming to make them economically independent. However, institutional measures for dairy promotion appears not very useful as couple of decades ago, each household used to have five milch cattle on an average, but with the passage of time it has reduced to one or none as is evidenced in the sample districts. All buffalo in the region are indigenous; the dairy species are largely a mixture of improved Murrah and Bhadawari, with a possible mixture of other indigenous (Indian) breeds imported from the plains, but not well acclimatised to mountainous conditions.

## **OBSTRUCTION IN DAIRY DEVELOPMENT**

There are many problems which deter the progress of dairy development and discourage people to adopt it as their main vocation. The dairy cattle are mostly fed with shuck and sheaves of dry grass kept in stocks by the farmers that bring their yield. Sustained supply of Green fodder is apparently a distant dream for cattle in the state. Thus low productivity of the cattle dampen the efforts of the farmers

## **WOMEN STATUS AND DAIRY FARMING**

Women of the state are sublimely involved in rearing cattle as a social insignia and critical source of an improvement of their economic condition. They can disregard feeding their offspring but not their milch cattle. Non –working class Women get social recognition only if they domesticate cattle. They wander for green fodder in jungle and other places having a gradation more than thirty degrees. Though they face myriad problems in taming cattle, it doesn't dampen their efforts to disseminate dairy farming. They achieve satisfaction while cooking different dishes to their families out of the milk they get from their cattle. However, despite government harping on the issues of rising social status and economic conditions of women, no special measures have been taken to improve their all-round conditions engaged in dairy farming in Himachal Pradesh. It is seen that many families extremely depend on the income they gain from the proceeds of milk. Estranged women secure livelihood from dairy farming and provide education to their children from the income they earn from it. Thus, it is needed to be commercialized and Government soft policies are to be implemented to disseminate dairy farming in the state. Since it appears less remunerative in present scenario, women attitude towards dairy farming is dissipating gradually. It will bring about supply shock in the market and encourage people to indulge in malpractices like preparing synthetic milk to equalize the demand with the supply side of the economy.

## **CONCLUSION**

Survey and agricultural background of the author state that lack of high breed milch cattle, green fodder,

inactive veterinary services and lack of training to the farmers are the major problems which become albatross in the way of farmers to enhance the scope of dairy farming in Himachal Pradesh. Such problems hold them back in maintaining dairy farming to the subsistence level that helps not to increase their economic standard.

Though Government seems to be helpful to the farmers by addressing their problems in all respects, administrative set up is still reluctant to visit the problematical spot and demand money for that work even falls in their duty hours. Demand side seems to be higher than supply side. Institutional initiatives are required to maintain balance.

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