



A Monthly e Magazine
ISSN:2583-2212
February 2024 Vol.4(2), 835-837

Popular Article

Boosting the GDP of UT of Jammu and Kashmir through the improvement of Livestock sector

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10728302>

Introduction

The livestock sector in Jammu and Kashmir is a crucial component of its agricultural economy and makes a greater contribution to the state's gross domestic product than it does to the country as a whole. "In J&K, the livestock sector provides 5.04 percent of the state's GDP, compared to a national average of 4.1 percent for livestock. A robust 33 percent of the state's agricultural GDP is contributed by the livestock sector. 1.79 percent of the 512 million livestock in the nation dwell in J&K." J&K has significantly more animals per person than the national average. J&K is home to 77.14 percent of the nation's yaks, 20 percent of its horses, and 5.2 percent of its sheep. As per the Economic Survey-2021, the contribution of Livestock in total agriculture and allied sector Gross Value Added (at Constant Prices) has increased from 24.32% (2014-15) to 28.63% (2018-19). Livestock income has become an important secondary source of income for rural families and has assumed an important role in achieving the goal of doubling farmers' income. Nearly 80 per cent of the J-K population lives in rural areas and about 60 per cent of the revenue is generated by the agriculture and animal husbandry sector.

Role of livestock in socio-economic life of J&K

The farmers in J&K use mixed farming, which combines crops and livestock and maximizes resource efficiency by converting one enterprise's output into the input of another. In J&K, many people rely on their livestock as a secondary source of income, particularly the resource-poor families that keep fewer animals. The sale of milk from cows and buffaloes will



give livestock farmers a consistent income. Animals like sheep and goat serve as sources of income during emergencies to meet exigencies like marriages, treatment of sick persons, children education, repair of houses etc. For the family members of livestock owners, animal products including milk, meat, and eggs represent a significant source of animal protein. In Punjab and Haryana, where dairying is a key activity and animals are fed in stalls, women make up about 90% of the workforce in the livestock business. However, this number is quite low and needs to be increased in the UT of J&K.

Challenges faced by the Livestock sector in J&K

Productivity: Improving the productivity of farm animals is one of the major challenges. The average annual milk yield of Indian cattle is 1172 kg which is only about 50 per cent of the global average.

Diseases: The frequent outbreaks of diseases like Foot and Mouth Diseases, Black Quarter infection; Influenza, etc. Continue to affect livestock health and lowers productivity.

Loss of indigenous breeds: Cross breeding of indigenous species with exotic stocks to enhance the genetic potential of different species has been successful only to a limited extent.

Limited Artificial Insemination services owing to a deficiency in quality germplasm, infrastructure and technical manpower coupled with poor conception rate following artificial insemination have been the major impediments.

Meat production and market: Slaughtering facilities are inadequate. About half of the total meat production comes from un-registered, make-shifts slaughter houses. Marketing and transaction costs of livestock products are high taking 15-20 per cent of the sale price.

Livestock Economy of Nomadic Gujjars in J&K

Animal husbandry is the primary employment of the Gujjars, a nomadic tribe in the UT of J&K. The majority of the people in the UT are nomads who move about looking for pastures for their livestock. Their cattle are typically viewed as being of poor quality, unprofitable, and a burden on the earth. It has been discovered that Gujjars are keeping surplus animals and breeding indigenous breeds. The main factor contributing to the low production of the livestock is the severe shortage of feed, particularly green nutritious fodder. The animals' output is extremely low because the available feed is both scant and lacking in nutritional value. And because of this, they are almost unprofitable from the bovine economy. To improve the livestock economy of Gujjars, they must get adequate supply of feed and fodder, adequate animals' health facilities, improved genetic or breeding system, marketing facilities etc.

Dairy sector: A major contributor of J&K economy



The major contribution of livestock sector is from dairy industry and around 25.94 Lakh MT milk is produced in J&K annually which However, the growth rate recorded in the dairy sector is amounts to a turnover of Rs. 9080 Cr.3.5% as against the country's average of 5.8%. The UT is considerably lacking behind in dairy processing sector wherein only 2.8% of the total milk produced is marketed through organized processing sector against the country's average of 34%.The bulk of the produce with no amicable market further lowers its market price and hence renders the farmers amenable to exploitation by the middlemen and local private dairy processing units who sell the pasteurized/preserved milk at exorbitant prices, often with compromised quality.

It is thought that there is plenty of room for dairying to be enhanced and integrated with processing and value-adding, which might increase milk supply, income, and employment. The structured milk procurement, processing, and marketing will improve the socioeconomic and nutritional stability of both the producers and the consumers while also assisting farmers in receiving fair compensation and improving their quality of life. The only way forward is development of strong and commercially viable dairy value-chain, where facilities and infrastructure for milk procurement, processing, marketing, cold storage facilities and quality control, etc. are created, upgraded and intensified.

Strategies for doubling farmer's income through livestock sector in J&K

The animal husbandry market was estimated to be around Rs. 1000 billion in 2021 and experts expect it to reach Rs. 1,574.7 billion by 2027. It means the growth rate is anticipated to be 7.66% during 2022-2027, which is almost double the growth rate of agriculture. Livestock sector grew at a compound annual growth rate of 8.15% during last five years. It can undoubtedly increase farmers' incomes far more quickly than agriculture. Also, this industry may continue to increase as a result of rising population numbers and consumption of foods like eggs, meat, fish, dairy products, and other such items. Over the years, exports of products used in animal husbandry have also seen strong increase.

It is necessary to upgrade Kashmir's existing low-yielding cattle to high-yielding, low-body-weight dairy cattle by persistently crossing them with native Red Sindhi and exotic Jersey genetics in order to turn dairy farming in Kashmir into a lucrative industry. Balanced feeding in accordance with scientific requirements and modernization of local cold stress management procedures are required for the persistence of milk and mutton production. It is necessary to spread the Ovine Booroola fecundity gene in Kashmiri sheep for twinning in order to grow the sheep population vertically in order to reduce the demand for mutton consumption. To run the broiler farming profitably, there is a need to produce day old chicks and poultry ration



formulation within valley to reduce the inputs cost. To boost the growth of livestock sector and employment generation, Mega Dairy processing plants and byproduct processing plants at Divisional level need to be established. Through better coordination between scientists and the developmental departments, it is possible to disseminate the research-based technology to enhance farmer's net profit by increasing the production of milk, meat, eggs, dairy product etc.

