



Successful Transition from Conventional to Commercial Dairying-Success Story of a Female Dairy Entrepreneur

*Syed Mohmad Shah, Anees A Shah, Arif A Pandit, Rameez A Dar, Manzoor A Yatoo, Gowher Gull Shiekh and Syed Ansar-ul-Haq

Mountain Livestock Research Institute, Manasbal, Safapora, SKUAST-Kashmir

*Corresponding Author's email: syedalhyderi14@gmail.com

Kashmir valley commonly called as Switzerland of India and paradise on earth boasts of everything that could be natural, organic and pristine-thanks to majestic Himalayas, Pristine alpine lakes, snow-capped mountains, lush green meadows, sparkling rivers, huge chinar trees and finally the harmony that has evolved between nature, humans, animals and birds inhabiting the valley. This has since times immemorial led to a mechanism and cycle of co-existence where the fragile balance between mountainous agriculture and local needs was maintained- evolving into a sustainable and unique *Traditional System* of practices. This system has engrossed each and everything that was Kashmiri, bestowing it the majesty and serenity that has been unmatched and unparalleled. But like the rest of the world, the depletion and indiscriminate of natural resources to cater for increasing human population, increasing human needs, wants and greed and geo-political situations, the traditional package of practices sanctorum faded away paving the way for new paradigms and new practices, some of which bought an overall harm than any gain expected. Animal husbandry was one such venture where traditional dairying transitioned into commercial dairying- and for good and betterment of both the primary producer and the end consumer. The scarcity of pure milk from animals reared in the valley has led to huge inflows from outside the valley, harmful adulterations in dairy products and almost negligible dairy processing units. Realizing the harmful impact this scarcity of pure dairy had on the local population, both the government and private institutions joined hands to launch a movement. This movement backed by policy makers from the relevant institutions and support by the concerned Govt. departments paved the way for ushering what can loosely be called as Dairy entrepreneurship. The present story is one such case where a local girl, educated but unemployed, dreamt of shifting from traditional cow rearing at her home to a commercial dairy unit that thrived successfully bringing economical stability to the poor family on one hand and sustaining hopes of further prosperity on other, while alleviating the availability of pure dairy products, at least at the local level.

From a Homemaker to an Entrepreneur

Ms. Sabreena Shafi, a 14 year old girl and daughter of Mr. Mohd Shafi from Warip[ura District Ganderbal, J&K, as a dedicated family member was offering her helping hands to her parents for the daily house chores in addition to her studies. She was keenly interested in the cow that her parents reared and would spend a good portion of her free time in rearing the animal, as if it were her hobby. As time passed, she got more interested in the poor animal management and got thrilled when the cow delivered a female calf. The hope of raising the calf to cow in shortest possible time led her to read about calf management from internet. After reading a bit of literature and seeing a number of videos on calf and cow management, she gained some knowledge but not the confidence required to put the knowledge into practice. In dilemma she started to interact with her neighbors and eventually came to know

about a dairy institute in her neighborhood. It is then she came to Mountain Livestock Research Institute, Manasbal, SKUAST-Kashmir for gaining additional knowledge and hands on training related to dairy animal management. Seeing her keenness and enthusiasm for dairying, the scientists at the institute provided her the necessary training and guidance, and eventually she was registered in an MSME-sponsored training coordinated by one scientist of the institute. Dr. Syed Mohmad Shah, the training coordinator and Reproductive Biotechnologist serving at the institute seeing her passion for dairying introduced her to his colleague scientists for further exposure and hands-on training related to all aspects of dairying vis-à-vis dairy animal management, housing, nutrition, reproduction, diseases, vaccination, breeding, etc. She successfully completed the MSME training and was awarded participation Certificate accordingly (48653/E-SDP/2024-25/7; dated: 16-02-25). In a short span of time, she learned all the major dairy related activities and started a dairy farm at her home, with minimum capital investment. She kept in continuous touch with the scientists of the institute, and implemented the advices religiously and there she is- the successful dairy entrepreneur- now expanding her venture and serving as a symbol of live motivation for other girls of the area who too want to do something alike in their lives.

What she did differently

Realizing the potential of scientific management for successful dairying, Miss Sabreena, unlike other starters, focused more on scientific animal management and breeding than on huge capital investments for purchase of high yielding animals from neighboring states. She devotedly focused on:

- Genetic up-gradation of the available cross bred cows through use of high genetic merit sexed semen- Application of knowledge which she gained during the MSME training.
- Scientific nutrition for better animal health and productivity.
- Rigid vaccination and deworming schedule.
- Attempts for early maturation and calf-a-year breeding policy.
- Hygienic milking and value addition through Dahi and Paneer making
- Vermicomposting for additional revenue generation.

What She Achieved

Miss Sabreena started her dairy unit (Now Zargar Dairy Enterprises) at her old family shed with 4 animals. One 3rd parity lactating cow, one 4 Parity pregnant cow, One crossbred HF heifer of 14 months and one crossbred HF heifer of 6 months. She used High genetic Merit conventional and sexed semen available from Department of Animal Husbandry for Artificial insemination. Under the supervision of mentors from MLRI Manasbal, she used the right type of semen and with right AI timing, and good body condition score of the animals, she successfully bred the animals and is now an owner of 7 animals, 6 females and 1 male. The F1 progeny she obtained has high genetic composition and she intends to go for line breeding to raise pur bred founder lines from the HGM bull semen she has already used. She is planning for back crossing of the recipients at the age of 14months, when she expects the F1 progeny to attain the required body weight and score. Her farm has become a focus of inspiration for the local youth. She currently earns Rs INR 92,000/p.m from the sale of milk and vermicompost and is able to save an amount of INR 35,000/p.m., after deducting all the charges. She efficiently utilized the fodder of her paternal land and used the manure for organic vegetable cultivation for which she already has a number of customers willing to pay extra for the organic veggies. She now plans to go integrated with induction of sheep, goat, poultry and ducklings to her farm.

Challenges she faces

Miss Sabreena though being highly motivated for carrying on the Dairy entrepreneurship faces a number of challenges as:

- High cost of sexed semen straws for AI.
- Unavailability of reliable market for milk.

- Unavailability of cold storage facility.
- No linkage with milk supply chain due to remote location of her farm.
- Scarcity of skilled labour for farm work.
- Lack of proper expert guidance.

She urges Govt. and line departments to facilitate such ventures by hand-holding and availability of soft loans. She thanks MLRI SKUAST-Kashmir and HADP Dairy Project for facilitating and helping her throughout her journey.

A few Glimpses of her initial set up:

	
MSME-Sponsored Training at MLRI Manasbal Co-ordinator: Dr. Syed M Shah	The initiation of the Beginning- Traditional Animal housing at Zargar Dairy farm