



## EDITORIAL: THE HINDU

**GENERAL STUDIES 2: SOCIAL JUSTICE**

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**TOPIC: HEALTH**

### BRIDGE THE MILK DIVIDE FOR A NUTRITIONALLY SECURE INDIA

#### India's Milk Revolution and Consumption Disparities: A Roadmap for Equitable Nutrition

##### 1. India's White Revolution and Its Impact

- India became the world's largest milk producer due to **Verghese Kurien's White Revolution**.
- Milk plays a crucial role in **protein and nutrient intake**, especially in India's plant-heavy diet.
- Helps in **reducing stunting, underweight issues**, and malnutrition, especially among children.

##### 2. Disparities in Milk Consumption: A Growing Concern

###### a) Income-Based Inequality

- The top **10% of income groups** consume **3-4 times more milk per person** than the **poorest 10%**.
- The **bottom 30% of households** consume only **18% of India's total milk output**.

###### b) Urban vs. Rural Divide

- **Urban households** consume **30% more milk** than rural households, despite rural areas being primary milk producers.

###### c) Social Category Disparities

- **Scheduled Tribe (ST) households** consume **4 litres less milk per person** than general category households.

###### d) Regional Disparities

- States like **Rajasthan, Punjab, and Haryana** have high per capita consumption (**333-421 grams per day**).
- Eastern states like **Chhattisgarh, Odisha, and West Bengal** consume much lower amounts (**75-171 grams per day**).



### 3. Challenges of Affordability and Overconsumption

#### a) Affordability Issues for Low-Income Groups

- To meet the **recommended 300 grams of milk per day**, **70% of households** would have to allocate **10-30% of their monthly income** to milk purchases.

#### b) Overconsumption and Health Risks

- **Affluent urban households** often consume **double the recommended amount**, leading to risks like **obesity and metabolic disorders**.
- Excess consumption includes **processed dairy products like ice cream, cheese, and sweets**, contributing to unhealthy dietary habits.

### 4. Policy Interventions: Ensuring Milk for the Vulnerable

#### a) Strengthening Existing Government Schemes

- **Expand milk provision** in nutrition-focused schemes like:
  - **POSHAN Abhiyaan**
  - **Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)**
- **Existing state programs** (e.g., **Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka**) should be **scaled up and made more efficient**.

#### b) Innovative Financial Solutions

- **Explore alternative funding sources**, such as:
  - **Social bonds** for dairy development and nutrition programs.
  - **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds** for subsidizing milk for the poor.
  - **Taxing unhealthy foods** (like sugary dairy products) to fund milk access programs.

#### c) Implementing Milk Coupon Systems

- In regions with **strong dairy networks**, provide **milk coupons** to low-income families.
- Supports **local dairy farmers** while ensuring **better milk access** for vulnerable populations.

### 5. Awareness and Promotion of Healthy Consumption

#### a) Nutrition Awareness for Women and Children

- **Promote milk consumption benefits** through:



- Anganwadi centres
- Self-help groups (SHGs)
- Civil society organizations
- Maharashtra and Bihar have already implemented effective **nutrition awareness campaigns**.

## b) Moderation Among the Affluent

- Encourage **wealthier households** to consume milk in **recommended quantities**, preventing waste and overnutrition.
- **Learn from international campaigns**, such as the U.K.'s **Change4Life Sugar Swaps**, to reduce sugar and fat intake from dairy products.

## 6. Conclusion: A Balanced Approach to Milk Distribution

- **Equitable milk access** is essential to **improving India's nutrition security**.
- **Prioritizing vulnerable groups** (children, pregnant and lactating mothers, elderly) will help tackle **malnutrition**.
- **Curbing overconsumption** among affluent groups will help **reduce obesity and make milk more affordable**.
- A **strategic and inclusive approach** will help realize Verghese Kurien's vision of a **nutritionally secure India**.

Source: <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/bridge-the-milk-divide-for-a-nutritionally-secure-india/article69156138.ece>