

#KAZIRANGA

A Turning Point in Rhino Conservation

While colonial policies had complex consequences, the protected status in 1905 played a crucial role in preventing the extinction of the rhinoceros



The story of Lord Curzon, his wife Mary Curzon, and the early protection of what is now Kaziranga National Park is one of the most important turning points in wildlife conservation history in India. It is a narrative shaped by colonial travel, early conservation awareness, and the near-extinction crisis of the Indian one-horned rhinoceros.

The Landscape of Kaziranga in the Early 1900s

At the beginning of the 20th century, the floodplains of Assam were still largely wild. The region of Kaziranga was known for its dense grasslands, seasonal flooding, and rich biodiversity. However, it was also a dangerous time for wildlife. Rhinos, in particular, were under severe threat. Hunting by colonial elites, along with local poaching, had reduced their numbers dramatically. Reports from the period suggest that rhinos were becoming increasingly rare, and sightings were not guaranteed even for visitors specifically searching for them. During this period, travelers and naturalists, including trekkers and forest observers such as local guides like "Balram Harzika," reported the growing absence of rhinos in parts of the region due to uncontrolled hunting and habitat pressure.

The Role of Mary Curzon's Visit

A crucial moment in conservation history came when Mary Curzon, wife of Lord Curzon, visited India. During her travels, she expressed a desire to see the Indian rhinoceros in its natural habitat. However, she reportedly did not succeed in seeing one, as the population had become alarmingly sparse in some regions. This personal disappointment is often described in historical narratives as a symbolic moment. It reflected the broader ecological crisis: even high-ranking colonial visitors could not easily encounter species that had once been abundant.

Lord Curzon and the Early Protection Effort

As Viceroy of India from 1899 to 1905, Lord Curzon was one of the most powerful adminis-

trators of British India. Influenced by persuasion of his wife, steps were taken to protect the Kaziranga region. In 1905, efforts were initiated to declare Kaziranga a reserved forest, marking one of the earliest formal protections for the habitat. This was a critical intervention because it restricted hunting and began the process of safeguarding the rhinoceros population.

From Reserved Forest to National Park

The protection of Kaziranga evolved gradually over the decades.

- In 1905, it was notified as a reserved forest area.
- By 1950, after India's independence, it was strengthened into a protected wildlife sanctuary.
- In Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, new legal frameworks supported stronger conservation.
- In 1974, Kaziranga was officially declared a national park.

The Poaching Crisis and Conservation Urgency

Despite early protection, the rhino population remained dangerously low for decades. Historical estimates suggest that at one point, Kaziranga may have had only around 10-12 rhinoceroses remaining in certain vulnerable stretches.

Recovery and Modern Status

Thanks to sustained conservation efforts, anti-poaching enforcement, and habitat protection, Kaziranga experienced one of the most remarkable wildlife recoveries in the world. Today, the population of the Indian one-horned rhinoceros in Kaziranga is estimated at over 2,600 individuals, making it the largest stronghold of the species globally.

Conclusion

The transformation of Kaziranga from a fragile hunting ground to a protected national park is deeply tied to early 20th-century interventions during the time of Lord Curzon. While colonial policies had many complex consequences, the establishment of protected status in 1905 played a crucial role in preventing the extinction of the Indian rhinoceros. If conservation measures had not begun at that time, it is widely believed that the species could have been lost entirely.



Advocate Mansi and Dr. Kunal

India's milk story has long been told as a success narrative, one that began with scarcity and evolved into global leadership. It is a story of transformation powered by small farmers, cooperative movements, and sustained

policy effort. But today, as the country stands as the world's largest milk producer, a more complex reality is emerging. The focus is no longer just on production. It is shifting inevitably and urgently to quality, trust, and the integrity of what reaches the consumer.

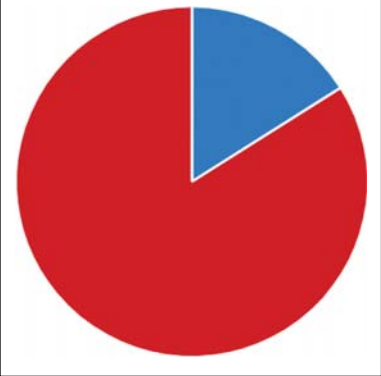
Milk in India has never been just another commodity. It is a daily staple, a cultural symbol, and a nutritional cornerstone across income groups. From temple rituals to morning tea, it occupies a uniquely intimate place in everyday life. Ghee, too, carries weight far beyond its culinary role associated with purity, prosperity, and tradition. Yet, both are undergoing a subtle but significant transformation, shaped by changing consumption patterns, rapid commercialisation, and growing concerns over adulteration.

To understand the present, it is important to revisit the past. In the decades following Independence, India faced a severe shortage of milk. Production was low, supply chains were fragmented, and availability was unreliable. By the early 1970s, per capita milk availability had dropped to nearly 110

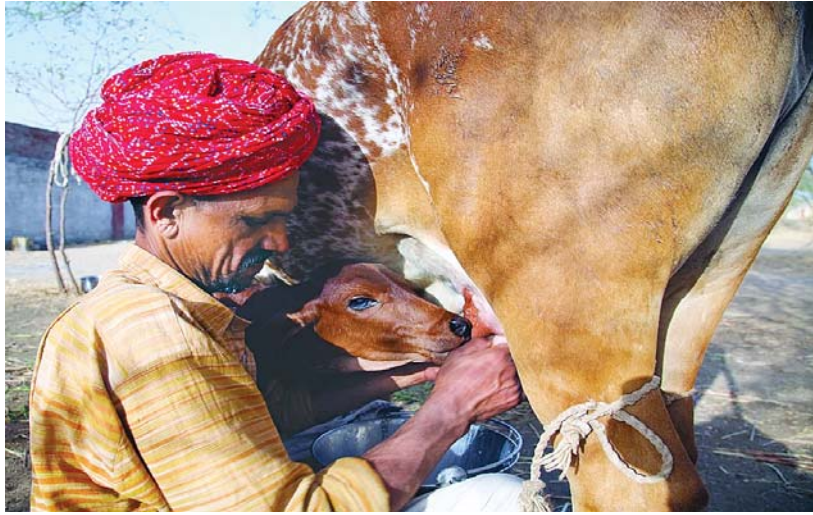
grams per day, far below nutritional needs. The dependence on imports underscored a structural weakness in the agricultural economy. The White Revolution, launched in 1970 under Operation Flood, changed this trajectory. By organising farmers into cooperatives, strengthening procurement systems, and building a national supply network, India transformed its dairy sector. Milk production surged, rural incomes improved, and the country achieved self-sufficiency. Today, that transformation is visible in numbers.

Rajasthan alone accounts for a major portion of India's dairy production

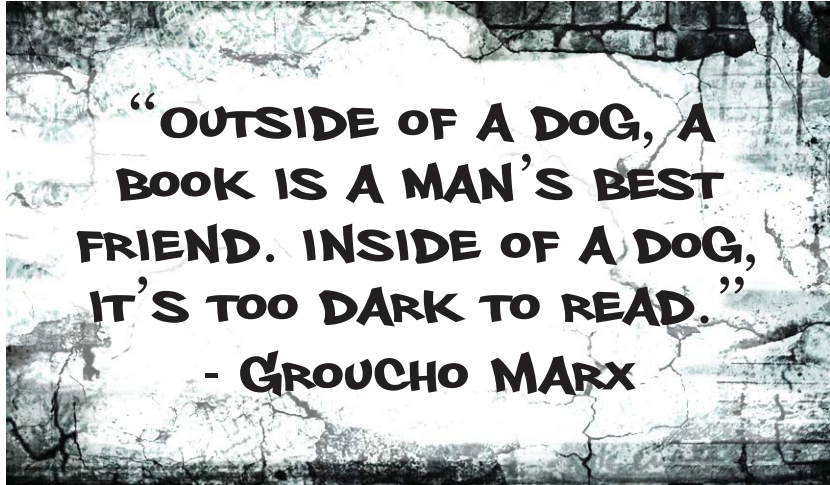
Share in India Milk Production



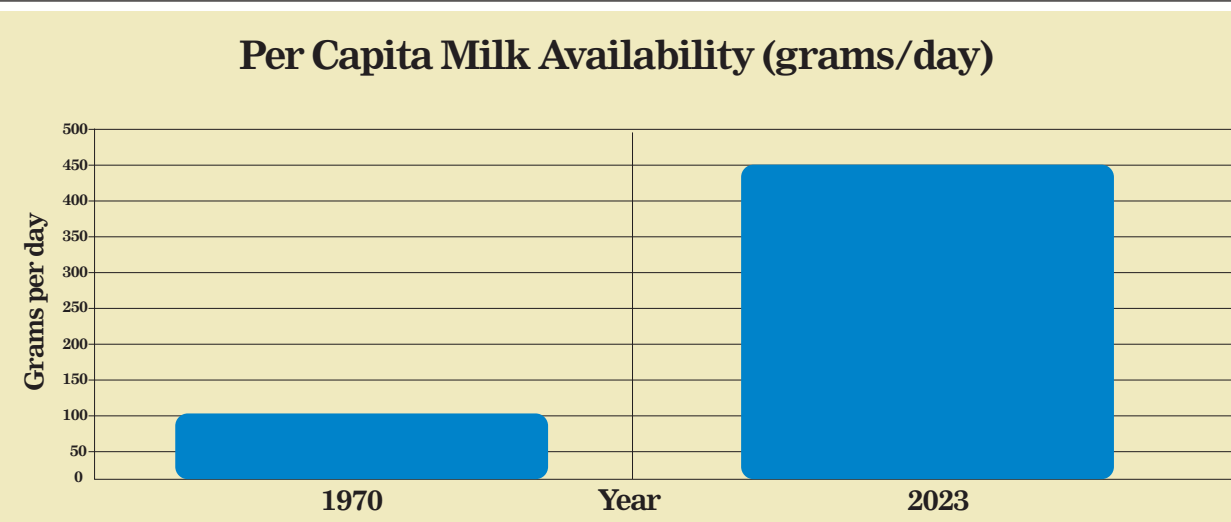
The rise of dairy in the state has had far-reaching economic implications. For many farmers, milk pro-



THE WALL



#QUALITY AND TRUST



Milk availability has grown more than fourfold over five decades

From scarcity, India has moved decisively into abundance. Per capita availability now exceeds 450 grams per day, and total production has crossed 230 million tonnes annually. Milk is no longer a constrained resource, it is embedded in daily consumption across regions.

Alongside milk, ghee has also undergone a shift. Once considered a luxury or reserved for special occasions, it has increasingly entered everyday diets. This change reflects rising incomes and greater access to market-produced goods. However, it also marks a broader transition from

home-based production to commercial supply chains. This shift is particularly visible in states like Rajasthan. Traditionally associated with arid landscapes and water scarcity, Rajasthan has emerged as India's leading milk producer, contributing a significant share to national output.

vides a steady daily income, less dependent on erratic rainfall than crop agriculture. It has strengthened rural livelihoods and contributed to income diversification.

But the transformation is not merely economic, it is also social. As urbanisation accelerates and lifestyles evolve, traditional practices of producing dairy at home are declining. Consumers, particularly in urban areas, are increasingly dependent on packaged milk and branded ghee. Convenience has replaced familiarity, and trust has shifted from personal knowledge to institutional assurance.

This growing dependence on markets has been accompanied by a steady rise in demand. Higher incomes, greater awareness of nutrition, and expanding urban populations have all contributed to increased consumption. Milk is widely regarded as an affordable

source of protein, while ghee has regained popularity in certain dietary trends that emphasise traditional foods.

However, this growth has also exposed fault lines within the system. The problem is particularly acute in the unorganised sector. Loose milk, sold without branding or traceability, is far more difficult to monitor. In contrast, packaged products generally adhere to stricter quality controls, though they are not entirely immune to concerns.

For states like Rajasthan, where dairy production has expanded rapidly, ensuring quality across a vast and decentralised network is a major challenge. Authorities have intensified inspections, especially during festive seasons when demand spikes, but enforcement remains uneven. This raises a fundamental question: Can India sus-

tain its dairy success without compromising consumer confidence? The answer lies largely in how the next phase of growth is managed.

The first phase, i.e., the expansion of production, has been a clear success. India not only achieved self-sufficiency but also became a global leader. The second phase must focus on strengthening the systems that support this growth. That means improving traceability, investing in testing infrastructure, and tightening regulatory oversight. Equally important is the need to strengthen the organised sector without neglecting the realities of small-scale producers. Millions of farmers continue to operate within informal frameworks, and any solution must account for their role in the supply chain. Consumer aware-

ness will also play a critical role. As individuals become more informed about quality standards and testing



World Suicide Prevention Day - Spreading Hope and Awareness

Every year on September 10, World Suicide Prevention Day is observed globally to shine a light on one of the most pressing public health issues, suicide. The day is dedicated to raising awareness, reducing stigma, and promoting conversations around mental health and well-being. It reminds us that reaching out, listening without judgment, and offering support can save lives. Communities, health organizations, and individuals come together to spread hope, organize awareness campaigns, and encourage people to seek help when needed. World Suicide Prevention Day serves as a powerful reminder that suicide is preventable, and compassion can make all the difference.

#NAMAH-SHIVAYA

The Sacred Symbolism of the Golden Roof of Nataraja Temple

The number 21,600 is deeply symbolic. According to yogic tradition, an average human being takes approximately 21,600 breaths in a day...

The ancient Nataraja Temple at Chidambaram is not merely a place of worship; it is a profound spiritual diagram built in stone, wood, gold, rhythm, and sacred geometry. Spread across nearly forty acres, this magnificent temple is one of the most philosophically sophisticated temples in India, where architecture becomes theology and every measurement carries symbolic meaning.

At the heart of the temple lies the famous golden-roofed sanctum known as the Chit Sabha, one of the most sacred spaces in Shaivism. The roof of the Chit Sabha possesses a uniquely curved structure, neither flat nor fully pyramidal, giving it a distinctive identity among Indian temples. But the true wonder of the shrine lies not only in its beauty, it lies in its symbolism.

The Five Sacred Sabhas

The Chidambaram Temple is traditionally organized around five sacred halls or Sabhas, each associated with a different spiritual dimension of Shiva as Nataraja, the Cosmic Dancer. These include:

- **Chit Sabha** - the Hall of Consciousness, containing the sanctum of Nataraja and the mysterious Chidambara Rahasya.
- **Kanaka Sabha** - the Golden Hall where rituals are performed.
- **Nritya Sabha** - the Hall of Dance, celebrating Shiva's cosmic dance.
- **Deva Sabha** - the Hall of the Gods.
- **Raja Sabha** - the grand Thousand-Pillared Hall associated with royal ceremonies and cosmic grandeur.

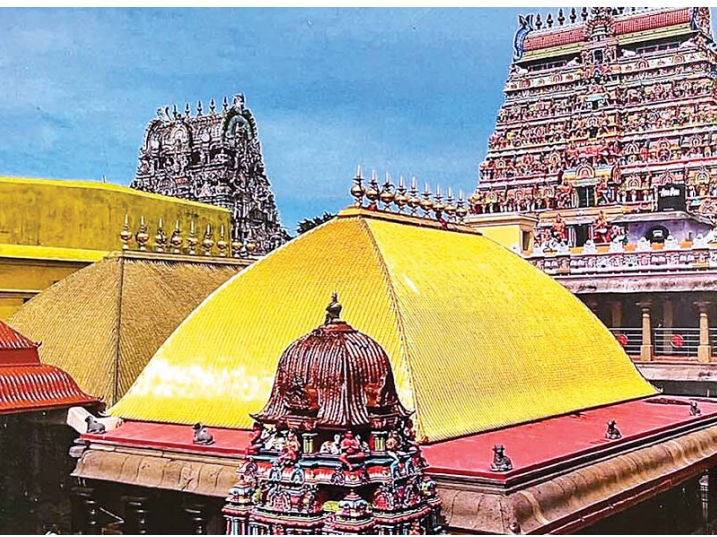
Among them, the Chit Sabha is considered the spiritual core of the temple complex.

The Golden Roof and the Rhythm of Breath

The golden roof of the Chit Sabha was traditionally attributed to the patronage of the great Chola dynasty kings, who transformed Chidambaram into one of the crown jewels of sacred architecture.

The roof is covered with 21,600 golden tiles or golden bilva leaves, each inscribed with the sacred mantra: *Na Ma Shi Va Ya*, the five-syllabled Panchakshara mantra of Shiva.

The number 21,600 is deeply symbolic. According to yogic tradition, an average human being takes approximately 21,600 breaths in a day. Thus, the



roof represents the rhythm of human life itself, every breath becoming an unconscious repetition of Shiva's name.

The message is profound: life itself is worship.

The 72,000 Nails and the Human Body

The golden plates are fixed using 72,000 golden nails or rivets, corresponding to the 72,000 nadis described in yogic physiology. In yogic understanding, nadis are subtle channels through which prana, vital life energy, flows within the human body. By embedding this number into the structure, the temple symbolically transforms the shrine into a cosmic human body.

The Nine Kalashas

Atop the roof stand nine sacred kalashas (finials), symbolizing the Navashaktis, the nine divine energies or forms of feminine cosmic power.

These kalashas represent completeness, spiritual awakening, and the union of Shiva and Shakti. Their placement above the sanctum signifies that cosmic consciousness is crowned by divine energy.

The 96 Windows and the Tattvas

The main shrine contains 96 symbolic windows or panels, representing the 96 tattvas described in Shaiva and Siddha philosophy.

These tattvas encompass the complete structure of human existence, including the senses, mind, ego, elements, emotions, energies, and states of consciousness.

The 28 Pillars and the Shiva Agamas

The Chit Sabha is supported by 28 wooden pillars, corresponding to the 28 Shaiva Agamas, the foundational scriptures governing Shaiva temple worship,

rituals, yoga, meditation, and philosophy.

The 64 Beams and the Arts of Civilization

The roof structure also includes 64 beams, representing the 64 Kalas, the classical arts and sciences of Indian tradition. These range from music, dance, poetry, and painting to architecture, strategy, philosophy, and craftsmanship. In the presence of Nataraja, the Lord of Cosmic Dance, all human creativity is viewed as an expression of divine consciousness.

The Five Steps and the Panchakshara

Leading towards the sanctum are five sacred steps, symbolizing the five syllables of Shiva's mantra:

Na - Ma - Shi - Va - Ya

These five syllables are believed to represent the five elements, earth, water, fire, air, and space, as well as the journey from material existence towards spiritual liberation. Every step towards the sanctum becomes a symbolic movement towards inner awakening.

The Chidambara Rahasya

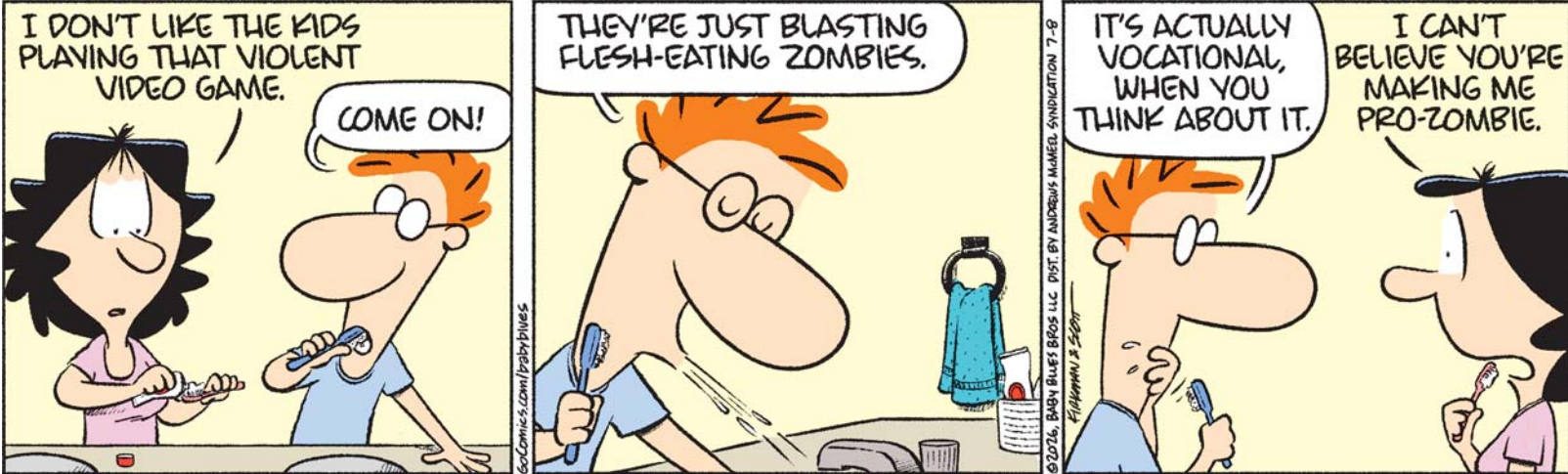
Within the Chit Sabha also resides the mysterious Chidambara Rahasya, the "Secret of Chidambaram."

Unlike ordinary sanctums centered solely around an idol, Chidambaram uniquely emphasizes empty space as divine presence. Behind the curtain of ritual lies the philosophical idea that the ultimate reality is formless consciousness, invisible, infinite, and beyond material description.

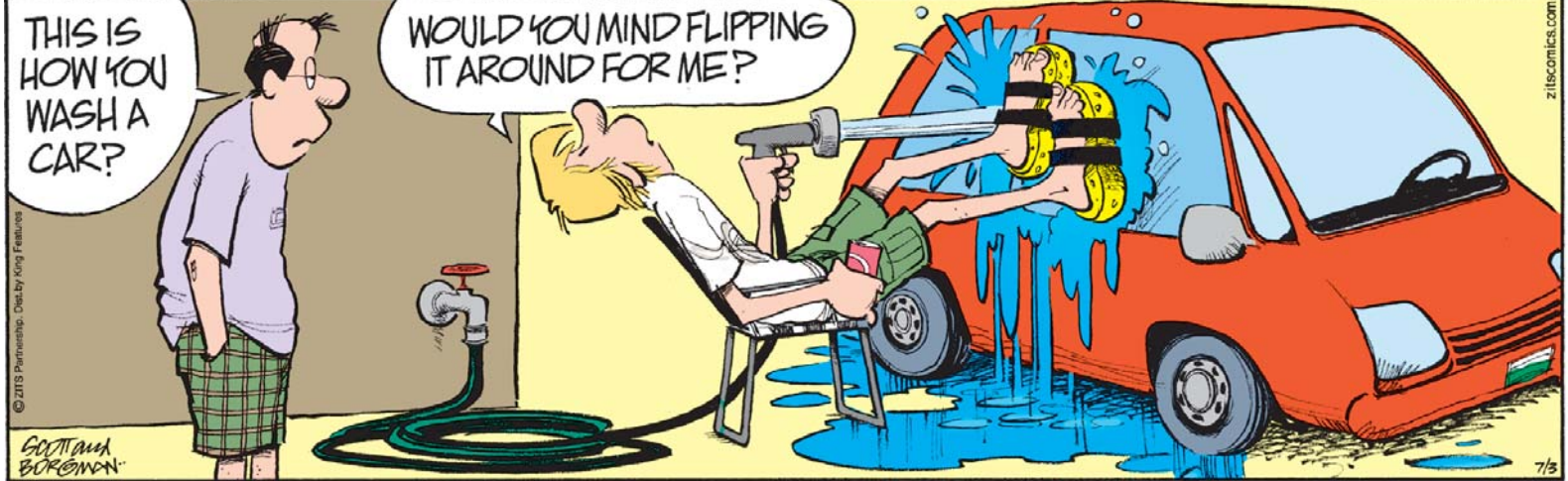
This is why Chidambaram occupies such a unique place in Indian spiritual thought. It unites devotion, philosophy, yoga, cosmology, architecture, dance, and metaphysics into one sacred experience.

By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

BABY BLUES



ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman