



Small scale women entrepreneurship development in poultry challenges & opportunities

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ABSTRACT

The importance of small scale poultry farming in rural areas has been recognized globally to alleviate poverty, hunger and malnutrition in developing countries. Poultry production represents an appropriate system to contribute to feeding the fast growing human populations and to provide income to poor small farmers, especially women. It offers advantages over other agricultural sectors and is an entry point for promoting gender balance in rural areas. Entrepreneurship in Poultry sector can be a useful tool for rural development as it provides high returns with less investment. For entrepreneurship development in poultry production in rural areas, it is essential to understand the local production system, their limitations and opportunity, and how they can be improved further. The poultry-based farming can be integrated with other crop and livestock-based farming can significantly improve the financial status of poor and marginal farmers. The Entrepreneurship development process for women in India is increasingly being recognized as a major initiatory source of economic growth. Promoting women entrepreneurship development in small scale poultry is the need of hour to strengthen livelihood, nutrition security and promote gender equity.

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is an important sector and a major indicator of our country's economic status. 70% of the total population is rural, of those, 60% engaged in agriculture as their major source of income. As per the 2011 Census, Agriculture is India's largest private-sector enterprise, engaging about 119 million farmers and another 144 million landless labourers. As compared to 63% of all economically active men, around 78% of women are engaged in agriculture. According to Food and Agriculture Organization (2011) women farmers account for more than quarter of the world's population. Major producers of food in India are women, in terms of value, volume and number of hours worked. Approximately 50% of agricultural and livestock workers are women, whereas in rural India the percentage is as high as 84% (Kumari et al., 2016). Approximately 4/5th of all economically active women in the country are employed in agriculture sector (Swamikannan and Jeyalakshmi, 2015). Women as entrepreneurs, agricultural labourer, farmers and cultivators constitute the backbone of India's agricultural and rural economy.

The Entrepreneurship development process for women in India is increasingly being recognized as major initiatory source of economic growth since women entrepreneurs create new employment opportunities and directions for women's economic independence. Entrepreneurship can be considered as both an opportunity and also a necessity for enhancing the production and profitability. Agripreneurship is considered as one stop solution for many economic problems like poverty, urbanization, unemployment and economic development.

But development of agri-entrepreneurship requires special skills like human development, knowledge of agriculture, knowledge of global agriculture market. Developing entrepreneurs in agriculture can solve many problems viz. reduce the burden of agriculture, generate employment opportunities for rural women, control migration from rural to urban areas, increase national income and support industrial development in rural areas.

Rural poor women plays a significant role in small scale poultry rearing. Although spectacular growth has been achieved in commercial poultry sectors, but still the rural poultry sector has remain unchanged. Rural poultry sector contributes nearly 14.6% of the national egg production in India, but remains one of the most neglected sectors (DAHD, 2023). It has been observed that poultry products are quite expensive in rural areas mainly due to their non availability and lack of market chain. The non-availability coupled with low purchasing power of the rural people deprives them of access to the highly nutritious products like egg and meat resulting in mal nutrition. Free range and small scale semi-intensive poultry production can be promoted in rural areas to enhance the nutritional status of women and children and also to improve the economic conditions of population in these areas. Poultry production in the rural areas is generally considered as a key asset for rural livelihoods. By increasing women's income small scale, poultry farming also enhances women's social status and decision making power in the household (Panda et al., 2022).

Agri-entrepreneurship

To know about agri-entrepreneurship we first need to know about what is entrepreneurship? How can entrepreneurial skills be developed? How do entrepreneurial farmers respond to the changing farming environment? What strategies do they use? Entrepreneurship is the willingness to take risks and develop, organize and manage a business venture in a competitive global marketplace that is constantly evolving. Entrepreneurs are pioneers, innovators, leaders and inventors. They are at the forefront of technological and social movements – in their fields, in their forward thinking, in their desire to push the envelope. They are dreamers and most importantly – **doers**. There are two parts to entrepreneurship. The first is the managerial skills needed to start and run a profitable farm business. The second is 'entrepreneurial spirit'. Managerial skills can be taught, but an entrepreneurial spirit cannot be taught. Many farmers are already excellent managers and many also have some of the spirit of an entrepreneur. Farmers see their farms as a means of earning profits. They are passionate about their farm business and are willing to take calculated risks to make their farms profitable and their businesses grow. Farmer-entrepreneurs operate in a complex and dynamic environment. They are part of a larger collection of people including other farmers, suppliers, traders, transporters, processors and many others. Each of these has a role to play in producing products and moving them through to the market – through the value chain.

Constraints faced by women for entrepreneurship development:

Majority of the farmers in India generate their livelihood from agriculture and allied sector. It is a means of survival for most of the farmers in India. Majority of the farmers are illiterate and in the absence of adequate knowledge, resources, technology and linkage with the market, it is very difficult to turn agriculture into an enterprise besides these women are facing a variety of constraints starting from physical to social, while beginning entrepreneurial activity. This is mainly due to the fact that most of the work done by women at farm and home is considered as daily activities. The constraints are,

Lack of confidence and faith: Lack of role models undermines the self confidence of women entrepreneurs. The activity of selling is considered abhorrent to the female gender.

Lack of finance: Access to finance is one of the most common challenges to women entrepreneurs. Availing finance and carried out many responsibilities are major hurdles faced by women in initiating, requiring and managing an enterprise. Other obstructing external factors include gender discrimination, inaccessibility to

information, training opportunities, infrastructure and market. Women entrepreneurs must have adequate knowledge and information of the various financial institutions which are rendering financial incentives.

Lack of confidence: The first step towards success is self confidence. Some internal factors such as risk aversion by women, lack of self-esteem and selfconfidence, lack of vision etc. also obstructs women's entrepreneurship.

Gender gaps in education: While women are making major strides in educational attainment at primary and secondary levels, they often lack the combination of education, vocational and technical skills, and work experience needed to support the development of highly productive businesses.

Social acceptance: The most common problem which a woman faced is the no-cooperation from her guardians/ husband / family members. Most of the women can devote all their time and energies to their children, home and older dependent family members. Although the Indian society is fast evolving, it remains a male-driven / patriarchal society in which women have to fight many battles in order to become successful entrepreneurs.

Lack of Proper Marketing: Most women entrepreneurs are selling their products for under value due to lack of knowledge about the pricing and marketing. Women needs proper knowledge on market, updating of market, other exposures etc., Government can provide trainings on these field and connect networks for them.

Mobility Constraints: Women lack mobility due to their household responsibilities, conservative nature of Indian society and inability to travel alone, the women's movement is always encircled in depend with any of male member.

Poor infrastructure and operational knowledge: When coming into the production stage, the women entrepreneur struggle to find raw material at optimum cost and uninterrupted supply of them and they lack in necessary technical skills and knowledge about infrastructure facilities etc.,

Lack of extension facilities: Our government approved number of laws to protect women entrepreneurs and announced numerous incentive schemes, training programmes towards their development. NGO's have strong role in propagating these schemes as they are the bridge between government and public. The women entrepreneur can make use of these programmes and develop the business. But the awareness on this field is less to women entrepreneur.

Lack of right public/ private institutions: Most public and private incentives are embezzled and do not reach the woman unless she is backed by a man. Also many trade associations like ministries, chambers of commerce do not entertain to women expecting women's organizations to do the necessary thing.

Basic requirement for entrepreneurship development:

Gender is a necessary component of a poultry project in order to identify factors of production and access to benefits. Availability of raw material at low cost and market facility with maximum profit are two basic components for women /women groups having pool of their resources to take up an enterprise. Other basic requirements for women entrepreneurship development are,

- Knowledge: Technical, Legal, Marketing
- Risk bearing capacity
- Ability to use available resources
- Administrative skills
- Education

- Innovativeness
- Proximity of supporting organization
- Technically skilled labour
- Availability of infrastructural facilities
- Accessibility of suppliers
- Venture capital availability

Entrepreneurship development with special reference to poultry

Entrepreneurship development related to poultry production and management is a crucial tool in income generation for women entrepreneurs in rural India as the major shares of the work is handled by women. Moreover, contribution of women groups in the rural communities by designing development projects and programmes that would serve as a source of income generation such as poultry production is essential for livelihood improvement (Panda et al., 2010).

- Poultry farming being a high cost intensive project associate with high risk such as vagaries of nature, Bird flu etc., some policy decisions are needed for providing fiscal incentives to the poultry entrepreneurs.
- Availability of foundation Parent-stock poultry birds for production of hatching eggs is a great concern. Suitable strategy will be made in consultation with Government of India to ensure availability of parent stock chicks to the poultry entrepreneurs.
- Availability of dual purpose Day-old-chick at an affordable price is critical for productivity enhancement through backyard poultry farming (Singh, 2015). The dual purpose parent stock poultry breeds are maintained at State owned poultry breeding farms for supply of chicks to the farmers for backyard poultry. Central Poultry Development Organization ensuring regularity in supply of Hatching eggs / Parent stocks day-old chick required for the State Govt. Poultry farm and Hatcheries.
- The linkage between Research-Extension-Farmer is not adequate. Strong extension effort needs to be taken up to reduce the gap between Research and Extension. Some field oriented research activities such as use of alternate feed for poultry farming, production performance and economics of production of dual purpose breeds should be taken up.
- Availability of hygienic poultry meat for consumer is a concern as there are in adequate modern processing facilities available in the state. Under National Mission for Food Processing Policy, 25% of the cost of plant & machinery, technical civil works, subject to a maximum of Rs.50 lakh is available as subsidy for establishment of poultry processing unit. All organizations such as Govt./Public sector unit/ Joint ventures /NGOs/ SHGs/Individuals can avail the financial assistance. Fiscal Incentives are also available for establishment of big poultry processing industry under the Odisha Food Processing Policy. Such scheme will be popularised in order to create a marketing chain and ensure food safety as per Food Safety Standard Act.
- All commercial farm will adhere to bio-security measures and Disease Surveillance will be strengthened. Routine vaccination, de-worming of poultry should be carried out. There should be a monitoring agency to check the technical skills and ability of the entrepreneur, quality of the services and the charges collected from the farmers to ensure high standards and also to avoid exploitation.
- Commercial poultry farming should be encouraged for development of entrepreneurship particularly for women. State incentives viz. capital assistance and marketing for poultry products are essential.
- A well-organized marketing system, accessible to women, is the key to guaranteeing a better price for their poultry products. Provision of training specially for women in poultry practices and gain access to poultry health services, poultry activities are essential (Panda et al., 2015). The role that women play in poultry production and in rural development needs to be supported by adequate policies and be addressed by policy makers and planners. Most importantly for a successful poultry entrepreneur it is essential to make available the right type of bird along with a package of services like supplementary vaccination against major diseases (Ranikhet disease, Marek's disease, etc.) and medicines against parasitic infestation and coccidiosis.

Support services for women entrepreneurship development:

Besides government, different types of organizations provide either direct or indirect supports to women entrepreneurs. Among various supporting organizations, the financial institutions are considered most important. A list of supporting organizations is given below:

- Poultry loan by SBI and other banks
- NABARD Poultry Venture Capital Fund Scheme
- Agriculture Finance Poultry Farming by IDBI Bank
- MUDRA loan

Other Govt. schemes are,

- Capital Subsidy scheme for technology Up-gradation of Micro and Small Enterprise.
- National Livestock Mission for rearing poultry.

Advantages of poultry for entrepreneurship development:

Poultry raising and production are the most important livestock activities for many poor rural families worldwide, providing a source of income and a tool for poverty alleviation. Poultry farming generates cash income and employment opportunities, while increasing production of valuable protein foods (i.e. meat and eggs) that improve nutritional standards. Rural women traditionally play an important role in this sector and are often in control of the whole process from feeding to marketing, which is not the case in production systems for other livestock species.

CONCLUSIONS

Small scale poultry production in rural areas represents an appropriate system to contribute to feeding the fast growing human populations and to provide income to poor small farmers, especially women. For many rural families, poultry raising and production are the most important livestock activities providing a source of income and a tool for poverty alleviation. Poultry is the better source of liquid cash where rural women can find positive and significant increase in income. Promotion and implementation of long-term policies focusing women for sustainable rural poultry production integrating both public and private sector is the need of the hour.

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