

Poultry Farming: Prospects and Impediments in India

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Abstract

India is a land of agriculture wherein most of the people depend on agriculture as the source of economy. The predominance of agriculture and livestock rising as a source of income is both a boon and a bane. While it calls for the richness of India's flora and fauna it also calls for vulnerability in hours of natural calamities. A country with huge prospects in agrarian sector the present study is a humble endeavour to explore the prospects and impediments to poultry farming in India.

Keywords: Impediments, Legal pronouncements, Poultry farming, Potentials and Social dimension.

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1. INTRODUCTION

India is a land of agriculture wherein most of the people depend on agriculture as the source of economy. The predominance of agriculture and livestock raising as a source of income is both a boon and a bane. While it calls for the richness of India's flora and fauna it also calls for vulnerability in hours of natural calamities. A country with huge prospects in agrarian sector the present study is a humble endeavor to explore the prospects and impediments to poultry farming in India. India has a huge population who are non-vegetarians and also promises a profitable market due to its cosmopolitan culture. Further it is fertile, climate is moderate and human resource is plenty and cheap. There is a dearth of work done on livestock rising in this part of the country and legislations are not that impeccable. What could have been a very fertile platform for business both inside and outside the country; poultry farming in India requires serious introspection and developmental policies.

2. Conceptualising Poultry Farming

Poultry Farming is a type of animal husbandry which rears domesticated birds for production of meat and eggs. Chicken are the most commonly raised fowl due to more consumption and better profit and comparatively less investment. Chickens which are raised for eggs are known as layers while the ones reared for meat are known as broilers. Due to the physiological adaptability of poultry, Poultry farming is popular across the globe and is often considered

synonymous to chicken. The ability of initiating the business at low rate of investment accentuates such kind of farming.

Derived from the French/Norman word 'poule' which was drawn from the Latin term 'pullus' meaning small animal, Poultry includes birds like Chicken, Ducks, Turkey Geese and quail, and also refers to birds such as pigeons who are reared and killed for consumption or used for feathers. Poultry means that the birds are reared for meat and eggs and not hunted or used in games. Some countries have even guinea fowls as Poultry farming involving domestication of birds, captive-raising them, for utilization in trade and consumption.

Poultry Farming is a frequent practice in urban and rural areas which contributes substantially to economic growth. Throughout the world, people are engaged in Poultry Farming earning a livelihood and engaging the family's womenfolk in the raising of the fowl. Poultry involves rising of domesticated fowl for eggs and meat. Poultry farming is common as backyard farming and has been recognized as a tradition in many rural areas.

Poultry also play an important socio-cultural role in many societies. Poultry keeping uses family labour, and women (who often own as well as look after the family flock) are major beneficiaries. Women often have an important role in the development of family

poultry production as extension workers and in vaccination programmes (Small Scale Poultry Production, 2004).

3. Indian Scenario on Poultry Farming:

Globally, India ranks third in egg production and fifth in chicken meat production. Although the production is mainly achieved through commercial means, the rural poultry sector also contributes significantly to the Indian poultry industry. It is looked upon as a reliable economic and nutritional source (Gandhi, 2017).

The Indian Poultry Sector is broadly classified into organized and unorganized sub-sectors. Prerequisites for the subsectors are very diverse respectively. Government of India is supplying to the requirements of each of the subsectors with the aid of development programs of Poultry Development and for entrepreneurship development. Central Poultry Development Organizations play a crucial role in the management and circulation of these developmental programs developed by the Government (The Poultry Farm Manual, 2014).

In the First Five Year Plan a diffident commencement towards commercialising poultry keeping was undertaken in the First Plan (1951-55) with the launch of a pilot project in Odisha. This project was further developed into an all Indian Poultry Development Programme in the Second Plan in 1956-1960. This was the maiden attempt for the first scale organized effort in laying the foundation of contemporary poultry farming in our country. In India there are three Regional Poultry Breeding Farms which were initially set up to familiarize the genetically grander stock which was then traded in from America in the year 1956 under the Technical Cooperation Mission. The three farms were set up in Bengaluru, Bhubaneswar and Bombay.

The poultry sector in India has undergone a paradigm shift in structure and operation. An important attribute of India's poultry industry has been its modification from a mere backyard activity into a major commercial activity in just about four decades. This transformation has involved sizeable investments in breeding, hatching, rearing and processing. Farmers in India have moved from rearing non-descript birds to today rearing hybrids which ensure quicker growth, better longevity, excellent feed conversion and high profits to the rearers.

Poultry is the major source of meat in India in the recent times. Its share in total meat intake is 28 percent, in comparison to 14 percent ten years ago. This has outperformed its two contenders – beef and veal, and buffalo meat. Elevated mutton prices, religious restrictions on beef and pork, and an inadequate availability of fish outside coastal regions are few

reasons why poultry is the most ideal and most consumed meat in India. Escalating domestic production and increasing integration have reduced the price and boosted consumption. Eight states account for bulk of egg production in India – Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal (Mehta & Nambiar, 2007).

4. Social Dimension on Poultry Farming:

The inhibitions with regard to this industry may restrict people from all sections of the society to seek income from it. Religious practices, food habits and social stigma may act as an impediment to opt for this as a source of income. However it can prove to be quite profitable and rural women can become financially independent as it requires not much expertise and skill. Sensitization, awareness programs can initiate a positive and propelling approach towards this lucrative industry and provide employment opportunities both in urban and rural areas.

5. Legal Pronouncements on Poultry Farming:

Under the Constitution of India, animal husbandry as a whole comes under the State List. As a result of which the centre has not taken much initiative in introducing legislations in this regard. Poultry farming in India is a very profitable business. Animal husbandry is the branch of agriculture which is concerned with animals that are raised for commercial consumable needs. For a healthy consumption poultry farmers must ensure day-to-day care, selective breeding and the raising of such livestock. Most of the states in India have their respective departments on animal husbandry which looks after how licence can be procured to get into this lucrative enterprise. There is no such legislation in India for uniform establishment, operation and sale of poultry in the country. There are several State specific statutes and rules with respect to housekeeping and transport of chickens. Following are the examples of State Laws -

- a) The Bombay Diseases of Animals Act, 1948
- b) The Punjab Livestock and Bird Diseases Act, 1948,
- c) The Orissa Animal Contagious Diseases Act, 1949
- d) The Rajasthan Animal Diseases Act, 1959.
- e) The Punjab Livestock Development Board Rules, 2001
- f) The Gujarat State Poultry Farm Registration and Regulatory Authority Act, 2007
- g) The Punjab Poultry Production Act, 2016.

The contemporary legal system segregates humans and animals on the basis of cognitive and social capacities such as culture and moral dimensions. "Animal welfare jurisprudence" has suggested for a reappraisal of this imaginary boundary. Jeremy Bentham, argued that ability to suffer rather than the ability to reason should inform the way law treats animal (Law Commission of India Report 269, July 2017).

The Law Commission of India, on March 2, 2017, received a reference from the Ministry of Law and Justice wherein the Commission was asked to carry out a comprehensive study on the prevailing legislations, and international policies and practices relating to “the transport and housekeeping of poultry birds”. As a result of which the Law Commission laid down two sets of draft rules. One was the “Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Egg Laying Hens) Rules” which has got a modified version in 2012. The reforms incorporated are in tune with the objects of the “Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960”, the constitutional requirements and the best practices in other countries. The second draft rules proposed to deal with the “Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Broiler Chickens) Rules” with respect to meat producing chickens (Law Commission of India Report 269, July 2017).

Under the Directive Principles of State Policy, in Article 48, the State is mandated to “organise agriculture and animal husbandry on modern and scientific lines”. Simultaneously, the Constitution of India (under Article 48A) mandates the State to “endeavour to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard the forest and wildlife of the country”.

The Food Safety and Standards (Licensing and Registration of Food Businesses) Regulations, 2011 (FSSR) has been outlined under section 92(2) (o) read with section 31 of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006. The FSSR has also put forward certain guidelines for the Pre-Slaughter Handling of Animals especially with respect to the transport of animals.

In *Tetragon Chemie v. CCE & Ors.* (1999 (63) ECC 709), the Customs Excise & Gold Tribunal held that “poultry feed must not only include that food which is necessary for their survival but also that food which is necessary for their growth and development”.

The Apex Court in India in *Animal Welfare Board of India v. A. Nagaraja & Ors* (Jallikattu Case) ((2014) 7 SCC 547) has laid down that Article 21 includes all living beings. The Court, in the said Jallikattu case, emphasized on “each animal’s right to live with intrinsic worth, honour and dignity under Article 21 of the Constitution”. The extended protection of right to life was to allow all species a set of rights according to international standards.

6. Potentialities of Poultry Farming in India

(a). Integral part of Indian Economy

Livestock is now days playing an important role in the economy of India not only in micro level but also in macro level too. From research it is known that about for livelihood 20.5 million people depend upon livestock. It contributed 16% and 14% to the income of small farm households and rural households. Again it provides a strong economic support in the form of earning to two third of rural community. It is also playing an important role in the form of employment provider in India i.e. provides 8.8% employment. This important sector contributes 4.11% and 25.6% in GDP and total agricultural GDP respectively (National Action Plan for Egg & Poultry-2022 for Doubling Farmers’ Income by 2022).

(b). Poultry Farming as a Private Enterprise:

This industry has matured largely due to the initiative of private enterprise with minimal government intervention, appreciable indigenous poultry genetics capabilities, and significant support from veterinary health, poultry feed, poultry equipment, and poultry processing sectors (fao.org). Poultry sector is now in current state where commercial production is the norm of the day with a number of technologies intervention. The total egg production during the end of the tenth five year plan was about 51 billion. By the end of 2011-12, the total production increased by 37 % to about 70 million (Livestock and Poultry in India- An Overview). Poultry farming being one, poultry business requires proper planning and management. This has been practiced in India for such a long time that it has become an indispensable part of the farming and agriculture system (Gandhi, 2017). In a developing India poultry farming sector is playing an important role. The value of this poultry farming in 2019 was ₹2,049 billion. The International Market Analysis Research and Consulting Group (IMARC Group) is expecting that Indian poultry market would exhibit a notable growth during 2020-25 (www.imarcgroup.com/indian-poultry-market).

(c). Positive Role of Financial Institutions:

Recently The Indian Bank has introduced three new and important financial products to support and help farmers, poultry players and the additional work force in the informal sector financially during this difficult time of pandemic. These plans were launched to deal with the current economic crisis triggered due to outbreak of Covid19. These loans are repayable in the form of easy instalments.

Table-1.1: These repayments also include recession period of 6 months. They are;

Financial plan	Facilities provided
“The IND Covid Emergency Agro-Processing Loan.”	“Agro-processing units can avail 10 per cent of the working capital limit.”
“The IND Covid Emergency Poultry Loan scheme.”	“Borrowers in the poultry sector (layer/breeder/broiler) can avail 20 per cent of the working capital limit.”
“The IND KCC Covid Sahaya Loan”	“farmers cultivating crops and rearing animals and having Kissan Credit Card facility can avail 10 per cent of the limit as a soft loan.”
“SHG Covid Sahaya Loan”- this is a special credit package.	“Women members of Self Help Groups can avail loan @ ₹5,000 each. Thus an SHG with 20 members can avail a loan up to ₹1,00,000 as a soft loan repayable in easy instalments, the Bank said.”

Source: <https://thepoultrypunch.com/2020/01/the-scenario-of-poultry-farming-in-india/>

Though the pandemic has affected both the farmers and labour force engaged in the informal sector too. In recent time food and agro procession companies are experiencing a decline cash flow (Amit, 2020).

It is evident from the history as well as present analysis that the backbone of Indian economy is

agriculture. Therefore financial institutions of all types are always ready with various plans to provide monetary help to these farmers with maximum subsidy and minimum pressure. All across the country financial institutions are ready to offer monetary aid to farmers.

Table-1.2: These financial helps are categorised under the table below which reflect that one can avail loan for the following activities related to farming;

1	Running day to day operations
2	Buying farm machinery such as tractors, harvesters, et cetera
3	Purchasing land
4	Storage purposes
5	Product marketing loans
6	Expansion

These Agricultural loans are not only accessible to agriculturalists who are cultivating food crops but also are available to others who are engaged in other agriculture-related sectors like “horticulture, aquaculture, animal husbandry, silk farming, apiculture and floriculture” (<https://www.bankbazaar.com>).

7. Impediments to Poultry Farming in India

- Arsenic is fed to chickens to boost growth and weight gain with less feed. This long term exposure of arsenic to fowls can be a source of cancer. Recently the use of antibiotics to meet the demand of growing population has been the topic of debate secondary to the fear of bacterial antibiotic resistance. Antibiotics accelerated growth, and appeared to be an ideal and cost-effective way to increase the output of poultry (Roth, 2016).
- Growth hormones given to the fowls are detrimental on consumption by humans. NEERI investigated the environmental problems related to poultry farming with respect to air, water and soil pollution (Gandhi, 2017).
- Poor poultry practices like overcrowding cages, limited space for the fowls to accommodate themselves and stretch their wings. As rightly pointed out by Ms. Maneka Gandhi (2017), “Generally there are approximately 60,000-70,000 birds in each farm. Each cage houses 3-4 hens, which is insufficient and uncomfortable for them.

The hens are unable to stand properly and stretch their wings. The hens are fed a mixture of grains and marble dust.”

- The poultry farming rearers hardly maintain hygiene, improper management, ventilation and aeration. There is an unbearable odour due caused due to infrequent cleaning of excreta, feathers, wastewater, feed-wastes, and dead hens (Gandhi, 2017).
- A major constraint affecting the growth of the poultry industry in India is the lack of basic infrastructure such as storage and transportation, including cold chain. Consequently, there are immense fluctuations in the prices of poultry products, i.e., eggs and broilers.
- Yet another constraint to growth is an inefficient marketing system. The presence of so many market intermediaries harms both the producer and the consumer. A third problem relates to the price availability of feed resources (fao.org).
- A majority of the poultry farms in India are open buildings with no climate control or quarantine mechanisms in place, which exposes the birds to various climate variation as well as potential diseases and epidemics.
- Lack of storage, cold chain and transport, more than 60% of broiler birds produced in India are produced in 6 states (Andhra Pradesh, Telangana Karnataka, Maharashtra, Punjab and), similarly

more than 60% of eggs produced in India are produced in 6 states (Andhra Pradesh, Telangana Haryana, Maharashtra, Punjab and Tamil Nadu). Birds are currently transported alive between the states, which causes them to be transported in inhumane and sometimes unhygienic conditions.

- There are no quality standards in farm management in India, prescribed either by the Government or by self-regulating industry bodies.
- In the domestic market, there is a lack of comprehensive regulating authority to maintain hygiene in farms, processing and transportation. Licensing of farms is done on municipality level, who often lack the knowledge, expertise and human resources to strictly enforce quality standards.
- There is a lack of dry processing capabilities in the Indian domestic poultry market. Indian consumers prefer to go for freshly culled birds which are not processed in clean and hygienic conditions. This prevents the popularity of dry processing capabilities in India. Wet Processing techniques raise the concerns of the environment due to owing to poorly managed waste disposals.
- Disasters pose a serious threat to the poultry as these ground birds require their basic needs such as food and water to be sufficed with. Avian Influenza has resulted in a huge culling of birds in the last couple of years.
- Poultry producers around the world are being affected by the impact of COVID-19, but the impacts vary from market to market. Some governments have been reasonably successful in halting the disease's spread, allowing economies to continue with a degree of normality while, in others, governments have failed to act at all or have inadvertently made production more difficult.
- Rumours play a huge role in causing harm to the poultry and farming. Millions of small poultry farmers across the country have lost hope after poultry meat sales crashed by 80% following false claims that chickens are carriers of the coronavirus. The states of Maharashtra, Karnataka, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh appear to be worst affected with farmers resorting to panic sales and some even going as far as culling chickens.
- The health of poultry workers is also a topic of concern since they experience substantially higher rates of illness and injury than manufacturing workers do on average. High rates of carpal tunnel syndrome and other muscular and skeletal disorders are reported. Disinfectant chemicals and infectious bacteria are causes of respiratory illnesses, allergic reactions, diarrhoea, and skin infections. Workers are exposed to concentrated airborne particulate matter (PM) and endotoxins (a harmful waste product of bacteria) (Quintanilla, 2016).

8. Suggestions for Advancement in Poultry Farming in India

- The government must encourage research towards introducing natural ways of boosting growth and strength in poultry for the purpose of meat and eggs.
- A statutory body should be formed which will keep vigilance on the maintenance of poultry farms, and also lay down a minimum standard working environment to check on the health of the poultry farm workers.
- While licence is being provided or before loan is sanctioned, the appropriate authority must undertake surprise visit at the business location.
- Owing to the recent problems faced during pandemic it is proposed that the poultry farming market must be regulated as far as price of the products are concerned.
- There must be demarcated zones in the market and openly selling of meat should be discouraged.

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