



Self-Reliance through Poultry Entrepreneurship in Rural India

Dr. S. A. Unde¹ & Dr. A. P. Unde²

¹Assistant Professor, A.C.S. College, Ashvi.

²Professor, Swami Samarth Institute of Management and Technology.

Corresponding Author - Dr. S. A. Unde

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Abstract:

India's rural economy largely depends on agriculture and its allied sectors for livelihood and employment. Among these, poultry farming has emerged as one of the most dynamic and sustainable forms of rural entrepreneurship. It plays a vital role in improving income, generating self-employment, and enhancing nutritional security in rural areas. Over the last two decades, India's poultry industry has grown from traditional backyard farming to a highly scientific and organized sector. This study explores how poultry entrepreneurship fosters self-reliance, rural employment, and economic development. The findings reveal that poultry farming offers tremendous potential for income diversification, women's empowerment, and sustainable rural growth when supported by proper training, finance, and policy interventions.

Keyword: *Poultry Farming, Commercial Enterprises, Livelihood Source.*

Introduction:

India is primarily an agrarian nation, with over two-thirds of its population residing in rural areas. The majority of rural households depend on small-scale agricultural and allied activities for livelihood. In this setting, poultry farming has become an important income-generating and employment-creating activity, particularly for small and marginal farmers, landless laborers, and rural women. In recent years, the poultry sector in India has undergone a significant transformation—from a backyard subsistence activity to a commercial enterprise that contributes substantially to the national economy. India is currently the third-largest producer of eggs and the fifth-largest producer of poultry meat in the world. Poultry products not only

provide a cheap source of high-quality protein but also create employment across various levels of production, processing, and marketing. Thus, poultry entrepreneurship contributes to self-reliance by providing steady income, enhancing food security, and fostering inclusive economic growth in rural India.

Review of Literature:

Several studies have highlighted the growing importance of poultry farming in rural development. Hunter (1981) examined the evolution of the commercial egg industry and found that modernization in poultry operations significantly increases productivity and employment. Durgaa and Subhadra (2009) explored the role of women in poultry farming and reported that farm

women actively participate in operations but face constraints such as lack of training and limited access to credit. The FAO (2009) emphasized that livestock and poultry play a central role in enhancing global food security and rural income generation. The Department of Animal Husbandry (2014–2015) documented that poultry farming has become one of the most organized segments within Indian agriculture, contributing substantially to rural employment and GDP. Agro Chart (2019) and ResearchGate (n.d.) studies confirmed that the poultry sector supports around 300,000 farms in India, 90% of which are owned by small and medium farmers. The reviewed literature collectively underlines poultry farming's significant role in improving livelihoods, reducing poverty, and promoting self-reliance in rural regions.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To examine poultry farming as a source of livelihood in rural India.
2. To assess the contribution of poultry farming to rural employment generation
3. To evaluate the role of poultry entrepreneurship in improving the living standards of rural people.

Research Methodology:

The present study is exploratory in nature and is based on secondary data sources. Data have been collected from published books, journals, government reports, and reliable online resources. The analysis focuses on understanding the socio-economic contributions of poultry farming and its impact on rural employment and self-reliance.

Discussion and Suggestions:

Employment generation remains one of the major challenges in rural India. Limited access to education, skills, and non-farm employment restricts the livelihood opportunities of rural people. In such a context, poultry farming offers a promising alternative that requires minimal investment, small landholdings, and easily available inputs. Poultry farming generates both direct and indirect employment—from rearing, feeding, and marketing to the production of poultry feed, hatchery operations, and processing industries. It contributes to women's empowerment, as rural women actively manage household poultry farms and participate in income-related decisions. According to estimates, India's poultry sector contributes nearly 330 billion annually and supports about 300,000 farms nationwide. The sector ensures continuous income flow and provides nutritious food in the form of eggs and meat, thus improving health outcomes alongside financial well-being. Moreover, poultry manure serves as an effective organic fertilizer, contributing to sustainable agricultural practices. Therefore, poultry entrepreneurship not only supports self-reliance but also strengthens rural economies by creating value-added opportunities and reducing unemployment.

Conclusions:

Poultry farming has emerged as a crucial driver of rural self-reliance in India. It contributes significantly to employment generation, income enhancement, and nutritional security among rural households. The industry's inclusive nature enables

participation by women, youth, and marginalized groups, thereby promoting equitable development. With continued investment in training, infrastructure, and policy support, poultry entrepreneurship can serve as a sustainable model for rural economic empowerment. Strengthening this sector will help transform rural India into a more resilient, self-reliant, and prosperous community.

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