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CONTENTS

Sr. No.	TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)	Page No.
1.	SUSTAINABILITY IN GREEN RETAILING: ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES, AND A VISION FOR THE FUTURE <i>DR. GIRISH.K.NAIR, HARISH K NAIR & SWATI PRASAD</i>	1
2.	CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF RURAL-URBAN MIGRATION IN OYO STATE: A CASE STUDY OF IBADAN METROPOLIS <i>OSHATI TITILOLA, ESAN, ADESIJI DAVID & DR. ADU, EMMANUEL OLUSOLA</i>	6
3.	ORGANIZATIONAL TEACHING AS STRATEGIC PLAN <i>DR. NASSER FEGH-HI FARAHMAND</i>	10
4.	CORPORATE GOVERNANCE PRACTICES IN FIS OF BANGLADESH <i>MOZAFFAR ALAM CHOWDHURY</i>	17
5.	MAJOR PROBLEMS AND ISSUES IN SRI LANKAN UNIVERSITY SYSTEM – STUDY FOCUS ON THE STUDENT PERSPECTIVE <i>W.M.R.B.WEERASOORIYA</i>	22
6.	A DIVERSIFIED APPROACH OF FACE DETECTION AND RECOGNITION <i>KALIYAPERUMAL KARTHIKEYAN, DR. MUNGAMURU NIRMALA & SREEDHAR APPALABATLA</i>	27
7.	IMPROVING THE SOCIAL DISABILITIES OF PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS <i>MATEBE TAFERE</i>	32
8.	RELATIONAL SOCIAL CAPITAL AND CUSTOMER LOYALTY IN RETAIL BANKING IN KENYA: THE CASE OF NAKURU COUNTY <i>DR. DANIEL ONWONGA AUKA & JOSEPH BOSIRE</i>	36
9.	JOB INVOLVEMENT AS A MEDIATOR OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AND JOB PERFORMANCE IN THE SYSTEMICALLY IMPORTANT BANKS IN SRI LANKA <i>U.W.M.R. SAMPATH KAPPAGODA</i>	44
10.	A STUDY ON EXISTING CAR CUSTOMERS (ALL BRANDS) ON THEIR REPLACEMENT PLANS <i>S. SHRILATHA & DR. A. ARULAPPAN</i>	49
11.	EVALUATION OF RESOURCE MOBILIZED THROUGH MUTUAL FUNDS IN INDIA <i>DR. RAM SINGH, PALLAVI MANIK & ANUBHUTI MODGIL</i>	54
12.	EMOTIONAL LITERACY – TEACHERS AND STUDENTS IN SELF-FINANCING ENGINEERING COLLEGES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO TIRUCHIRAPALLI DISTRICT <i>K. ARUN PRASAD & DR. S.V. DEVANATHAN</i>	59
13.	AN OVERVIEW MODEL ON THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT AND GROWTH CHALLENGES OF SMEs IN INDIA <i>VENKATARAMAN.KK</i>	65
14.	MEASUREMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF KURUKSHETRA CENTRAL CO-OPERATIVE BANK THROUGH RATIO ANALYSIS <i>DR. SUDESH & ARCHANA MAKKAR</i>	68
15.	PERFORMANCE OF DISTRICT CENTRAL CO-OPERATIVE BANKS (DCCBs) IN INDIA - AN EVALUATION <i>S. USHA & C. SIVARAMI REDDY</i>	73
16.	A STUDY ON ECONOMIC RETURNS IN POULTRY FARMING WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SUGUNA BROILER CONTRACT FARMS IN COIMBATORE DISTRICT <i>A. SRIDHARAN & DR. R. SARAVANAN</i>	76
17.	DEVELOPMENT OF KNOWLEDGE BASED FRAMEWORK FOR AGRICULTURE SECTOR: A STEP TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE e-GOVERNANCE IN RURAL INDIA <i>ALPANA UPADHYAY & DR. C. K. KUMBHARANA</i>	80
18.	HEALTH INSURANCE STRUCTURE IN INDIA – CURRENT PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES <i>DR. SHIBU JOHN</i>	86
19.	A STUDY ON THE CUSTOMERS SUCCESS ON THEIR INVESTMENTS IN A RESIDENTIAL FLAT AND THEIR GUARANTEE <i>DR. P. RAMAN</i>	89
20.	THEORETICAL COMPARISON CRITERIA FOR SOFTWARE RELIABILITY MODELS <i>SANJEEV KUMAR & DR. AMIT GUPTA</i>	92
21.	INVESTIGATING SERVICE QUALITY DIMENSIONS THROUGH EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS IN A HEALTHCARE SETTING <i>DR. MUSHTAQ AHMAD BHAT & DR. MOHD. YASEEN MALIK</i>	95
22.	WORKING CAPITAL MANAGEMENT OF MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (MSMEs) IN MANIPUR- AN EMPIRICAL STUDY <i>MOIRANGTHEM BIREN SINGH & DR. TEJMANI SINGH</i>	104
23.	PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS OF AODV PROTOCOL UNDER BLACK HOLE ATTACK <i>MONIKA SINGH & RAKESH KUMAR SINGH</i>	109
24.	21ST CENTURY ADS- ADDS MORE <i>ASHISH RAMI & PRIYANKA SRIVASTAVA</i>	116
25.	CORPORATE RESTRUCTURING THROUGH MERGERS AND ACQUISITIONS-A CASE STUDY ON TATA STEEL AND CORUS <i>NARGIS BEGUM & EVELINA MOHAPATRA</i>	121
26.	CLOUD COMPUTING: SMARTER COMPUTING FOR A SMARTER WORLD <i>DR. IKVINDERPAL SINGH</i>	128
27.	SATISFACTION OF SMALL CAR OWNERS IN SELECT AREAS OF AUNDH, BANER AND PASHAN IN PUNE CITY <i>DR. G. SYAMALA</i>	133
28.	CRM: SERVICE QUALITY & CUSTOMER LOYALTY - A STUDY OF MOBILE TELECOM INDUSTRY AT JAIPUR CITY <i>DR. ANJU PANWAR, SHUCHI MATHUR & NEHA CHAHAL</i>	138
29.	TOUGH TIME FOR INDIAN TEA INDUSTRY <i>KAKALI HAZARIKA</i>	141
30.	IMPACT OF OPEC ON SUPPLY AND PRICE OF PETROLEUM PRODUCTS <i>GAURAV MANOJ JHA</i>	146
	REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK	155

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A STUDY ON ECONOMIC RETURNS IN POULTRY FARMING WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SUGUNA BROILER CONTRACT FARMS IN COIMBATORE DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

India with over 60% of its living in villages has not found out alternate livelihood for its rural poor, where farmers live in abject poverty due to frequent failure of monsoon, resulting in crop loss and financial loss. During the last 20 years, Poultry Integrators like Suguna Poultry have given the Indian Farmers a second life through contract poultry farming. The farmers without any investment and marketing risk of selling the produce – chicken get extra income once in 45 days, throughout the year. With the growth in urban population, strong belief in good and clean food habits, increased income and higher purchasing power, the chicken industry has been growing phenomenally, thereby making the lives of farmers happier and richer. This research studies the economic returns of the farmers, when they grow chicken on contract basis in and around Coimbatore District.

KEYWORDS

Indian Farmers, Poultry Farming, Contract Farming, Integrators, Economic Returns.

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is often described as the backbone of the Indian Economy. Its complementarity with other sectors and its ability to trigger growth is due to the following reason:

- (a) Agriculture contributes a significant share in the generation of the country's National Income, though the share has declined from 55% in the early 1950s to about 25% currently ;
- (b) More than half of India's workforce is employed in the agriculture sector ;
- (c) The growth of other sectors in the overall economy depends on the performance of agriculture to a great extent.

Though tremendous progress has been made in the exploitation of the irrigation potential of the country by means of major, minor, small irrigation works, yet 2/3rds of are under cultivation is un-irrigated and there is thus, heavy dependence on the vagaries of nature, i.e., monsoon.

Thus, the overall agricultural growth remained stagnant and slow (below 3%) in the country. Apart from this, agricultural growth has remained confined to a few well – endowed pockets which has created regional disparities.

Poverty in rural India is caused by low level of assets holding, coupled with low and uncertain returns. Land and livestock like poultry are considered to be the major assets of rural households for livelihood support in general and small and marginal households in particular. As distribution of land holdings in rural India is highly skewed towards medium and large farmers, rearing of livestock like poultry are considered to be the potential options for the poor households to earn their livelihood on sustainable basis.

(A) Poverty Reduction and Poultry Sector

Thus, the alternate livelihood, lesser dependence on monsoon, healthy and continuous working conditions made the Indian Poultry Industry a big success story. From a backyard venture, it has made a quantum leap to emerge as a dynamic industry. Over the last 3 decades, there have been significant developments in the poultry industry with each decade focusing on different sectors. The 70's saw a spurt in egg production ; the 80's an acceleration of broiler production ; the nineties advances in poultry integration, automation and feed production. In the current decade broiler industry is poised to exploit value added products and explore global trade.

(B) Poultry India : World Vs. India

The traditional poultry farming view of the domestication of the chicken is stated in Encyclopædia Britannica (2007): "Humans first domesticated chickens of Indian origin for the purpose of cockfighting in Asia, Africa, and Europe. Very little formal attention was given to egg or meat production.

Modern commercial broilers are specially bred for large scale, efficient meat production and although they are the same species, grow much faster than egg laying hens or traditional dual purpose breeds. They are noted for having very fast growth rates, a high feed conversion ratio, and low levels of activity. Broilers often reach a slaughter weight of 1.5 kg. to 2.5 kg. (dressed) in only five weeks.

India is currently ranked as the fifth largest poultry producer in the world, behind the United States, Brazil, the European Union (EU), and China in the year 2012. Of late India is the world's fourth largest egg producer and fifth major producer of broilers .

India produced 3.16 million tons of broiler meat in 2012, up from 1.8 million tons in 2005, 1.65 million tons in 2004 and 1.6 million tons in 2003. According to US Department of Agriculture estimates, India's poultry meat production grew about 6% annually during the 1980's, accelerated to 11% annually in the 1990s and to nearly 19% during 2007 – 2011.

The rearing of poultry also provides an excellent opportunity for underemployed members of the rural families. Poultry of 1000 birds either Layer or Broilers can support at least 15-20 persons upstream, direct and downstream, beginning from the input end (upstream), to farming (direct) and transport, processing and marketing (downstream)

The growth of the poultry sector in India is also marked by an increase in the size of the poultry farm. In earlier years broiler farms had produced on an average a few hundred birds (200-500 chicks) per cycle of 40 days. Today units produce minimum of 5,000 birds units 5000 to 50,000 birds per cycle are common.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

While poultry farming does provide alternative livelihood to the small and marginal farmers, they also face various obstacles like lack of institutional credit, shortage of labour force, cost escalation of coal, electricity, high mortality of birds especially in summer, loss owing to bird flu, payment issues with integrators either delayed or FCR related losses. Under this background, the present study has been undertaken in Coimbatore District with the aim of exploring the cost

and returns in broiler farms under the given changed condition of contract farming and the problems like above mentioned ones, faced by broiler contract farmers in Coimbatore District.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study would look into the various economic aspects of broiler production. The study covers the broiler production units under Suguna Poultry Limited, which are run on contract basis in Coimbatore District. The survey has been conducted for the period 2006 - 2010 and the interview has been conducted between June, 2011 and May, 2012.

The Coimbatore District has been purposively selected as it alone accounts for more than 30% of total broiler production in India. Coimbatore also reflects the agricultural oriented rural life where people have started taking broiler production on commercial basis to supplement their income.

The study on the cost and returns and problems of contract broiler farming will help the contract broiler farmers to understand whether their units are running in profit or loss and help the farmers in their investment decision in this sector.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the input purchase and other expenses and output sale arrangements and estimate the net returns in broiler farming,
2. To identify the constraints in broiler farming and suggest remedial measures

METHODOLOGY USED

The following methodology is used in the study

i) Study Area

The study area refers to Coimbatore District.

ii) Sampling Procedure

Tamil Nadu comprises of 32 districts. However, in it, Coimbatore has a unique role to play as it is the birth place and protector, promoter and developer of broiler industry, as can be seen by the fact that 30% of Indian Broiler Production is mainly concentrated in Coimbatore District.

Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Punjab are the major broiler producing states of the country. The Coimbatore-Salem belt of Tamil Nadu is in the forefront of broiler production of the country. 75% of the broilers produced and consumed in this region come from integrated farms.

Tamil Nadu is leading the states in broiler production with a record production of 397 thousand tonnes in 2009-10. Tamil Nadu accounts for 17.71 per cent of the poultry population of the country.

Poultry integrators have been expanding most rapidly in southern India, particularly in the Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu, reportedly has a large integration, which now accounts for about 75% of production and consumption.

The major integrators and contract growers operating in the southern region of the country include Venkateswara, Suguna, Pioneer, Star chick, Godrej real gold, Godrej agro vet, Santhi, Peninsula, Skylark. Some of these integrators are also selling their processed chicken products in brand names like Venkateswara with brand name Venky, Godrej-Realgold, Suguna – Suguna Fresh.

Hence the sample contract farmers were selected from Coimbatore District. We have selected the entire 254 farms of Suguna Poultry Farm Limited, operating in Coimbatore District. We have selected farms, by adopting census sampling technique.

The 254 sample contract farms selected for the study was further classified in to small, and large farms based on the number birds reared.

Out of the 249 contract farms, 96 (38.0%) come under the category of small farms (less than 5000 birds), 143 (56.0%) come under medium category (5,000 – 10,000 birds) and 15 (6.0%) belonged to the large farms (more than 10,000 birds) category.

(iii) Data Sources

- a. **Primary Data** : The study has used primary data, which was collected using interview schedule.
- b. **Secondary Data** : The Secondary data was collected from various Poultry Magazines, Journals, Websites, Conference Papers, Indian and Foreign Government Records, Balance Sheets of various Poultry Manufacturers.

(iv) Tools used for collection of data

An interview schedule was constructed for the purpose of collecting data. A pilot study was conducted on 62 contract poultry farmers, based on which the interview schedule was restructured to meet the accuracy and reliability of data.

v) Framework of analysis

Suitable statistical tools have been used to draw inferences using SPSS (21.0 version) for Windows. The following tools are used in the study:

1. Chi Square Analysis

HYPOTHESIS

Suitable null hypothesis has been framed and applied wherever necessary.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The following are the limitations of the study

1. Most contract poultry farmers who were administered detailed interview schedules were found to be keeping improper records of farm management details.
2. The results and findings are based on the opinion of the respondents of Coimbatore District, and it cannot be generalized.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ramaswami, B, et. al. (2009), surveyed randomly 25 contract and equivalent number of non-contract growers during 2002-2003 to collect information for the year 2001-2002. A majority of the contract growers were associated with a leading poultry integrator.

From regression analysis, the team found that the marginal cost of producing a kg. of bird under contract production was Rs.30 while it was Rs.26.22 under non-contract production. When the team reflected competitive prices for feed and medicine, they recalculated the contract production costs using the prices paid by non-contract growers. When this was done, they obtained the marginal (and average) costs for contract grower as Rs.24.80, compared to the marginal costs for the non-contract grower of Rs.26.20 per kg. Contract production thus saved an amount of Rs.1.40 for every kg. of bird.

Kalamar, (2012), carried out a survey in Maharashtra, The study was based on the primary data collected from the broiler units in Maharashtra. In the total costs, variable costs accounted for 98.7 per cent, while fixed costs formed only 1.3 per cent in non-contract group. The corresponding shares were 75.8 per cent and 24.2 per cent, respectively in contract group. The average cost per kg of live bird was estimated to be ` 3.02 in contract farming and ` 48.47 in non-contract category. The average cost per kg of live weight decreased as the size of unit increased in both the cases. The average live weight of the bird was 2.15 kg in contract and 2.10 kg non-contract group. Across different farming categories, body weight was highest in medium-size units of contract farms and large-size units of noncontract farms.

KEY RESULTS: COST AND RETURNS IN BROILER CONTRACT FARMING: CHI-SQUARE TEST

1. AGE AND LEVEL OF INCOME IN POULTRY FARMING

In order to find the relationship between Age and Level of Income in poultry farming of the respondents, a Chi-square test has been applied and the result of the test is given below.

Null Hypothesis (H₀) : *“There is no significant relationship between Age and Level of Income in poultry farming”.*
 Alternative Hypothesis (H₁) : *“There is a close significant relationship between Age and Level of Income in poultry farming”.*

Factor	Calculated Value	Table Value	D.F	Remarks
Age	13.963	12.6	6	Significant at 5% Level

From the above analysis, the calculated value of chi-square (13.963) is more than the table value (12.6). Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, it is disclosed that there is a close significant relationship between Age and Level of Income towards poultry farming.

2. GENDER AND LEVEL OF INCOME

With a view to study the relationship between gender and Level of Income in poultry farming of the respondents, a Chi-square test has been applied and the result of the test is given below.

Null Hypothesis (H₀) : *“There is no significant relationship between gender and Level of Income in poultry farming”.*
 Alternative Hypothesis (H₁) : *“There is a close significant relationship between gender and Level of Income in poultry farming”.*

Factor	Calculated Value	Table Value	D.F	Remarks
Gender	0.957	5.991	2	Not Significant at 5% Level

From the above analysis, the calculated value of chi-square (0.957) is less than the table value (5.991). Hence the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence, it is inferred that there is no significant relationship between Gender and Level of Income towards poultry farming.

3. EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION AND LEVEL OF INCOME :

In order to find the relationship between Educational Level and Level of Income in the poultry farming of the respondents, a Chi-square test is used and the result of the test is given below.

Null Hypothesis (H₀) : *“There is no significant relationship between Educational Level and Level of Income in poultry farming”.*
 Alternative Hypothesis (H₁) : *“There is a close significant relationship between Educational Level and Level of Income in poultry farming”.*

Factor	Calculated Value	Table Value	D.F	Remarks
EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION	13.829	12.6	6	Significant at 5% Level

From the above analysis, the calculated value of chi-square (13.829) is more than the table value (12.6). Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is a close significant relationship between Educational Level and Level of Income towards poultry farming.

4. AREA OF AGRICULTURAL LAND HOLDING AND LEVEL OF INCOME

In order to find the relationship between an Area of agricultural land holding and Level of Income towards poultry farming of the respondents, a Chi-square test is used and the result of the test is given below.

Null Hypothesis (H₀) : *“There is no significant relationship between Area of Agricultural Land holding and Level of Income in poultry farming”.*
 Alternative Hypothesis (H₁) : *“There is a close significant relationship between Area of Agricultural Land holding and Level of Income in poultry farming”.*

Factor	Calculated Value	Table Value	D.F	Remarks
Area of Agricultural Land	13.247	12.6	6	Significant at 5% Level

From the above analysis, the calculated value of chi-square (13.247) is more than the table value (12.6). Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, it is concluded that there is a close significant relationship between an Area of Agricultural Land holding and Level of Income towards poultry farming.

5. OTHER OCCUPATION OF POULTRY FARMERS AND LEVEL OF INCOME

For analysing the relationship between other occupation of poultry farmers and Level of Income in poultry farming of the respondents, a Chi-square test is used and the result of the test is given below.

Null Hypothesis (H₀) : *“There is no significant relationship between other occupation of poultry farmers and Level of Income in poultry farming”.*
 Alternative Hypothesis (H₁) : *“There is a close significant relationship between other occupation of poultry farmers and Level of Income in poultry farming”.*

Factor	Calculated Value	Table Value	D.F	Remarks
Other occupation of poultry farmers	12.940	9.49	4	Significant at 5% Level

From the above analysis, the calculated value of chi-square (12.940) is more than the table value (9.49). Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is a close significant relationship between other occupation of poultry farmers and Level of Income towards poultry farming.

6. YEAR OF STARTING THE POULTRY FARM AND LEVEL OF INCOME

In order to find the relationship between the year of starting poultry farm and Level of Income towards poultry farming of the respondents, a Chi-square test is used and the result of the test is given below.

Null Hypothesis (H₀) : *“There is no significant relationship between the year of starting poultry farm and Level of Income in poultry farming”.*
 Alternative Hypothesis (H₁) : *“There is a close significant relationship between the year of starting poultry farm and Level of Income in poultry farming”.*

Factor	Calculated Value	Table Value	D.F	Remarks
Year of starting poultry farm	5.643	9.49	4	Not Significant at 5% Level

From the above analysis, the calculated value of chi-square (5.643) is less than the table value (9.49). Hence the null hypothesis is accepted. Thus, there is no relationship between the year of starting the poultry farm and Level of Income towards poultry farming.

7. NUMBER OF BIRDS IN THE POULTRY FARM AT BEGINNING AND LEVEL OF INCOME

In order to find the relationship between number of birds in the poultry farm at beginning and Level of Income in poultry farming of the respondents, a Chi-square test is used and the result of the test is given below.

Null Hypothesis (H₀) : *“There is no significant relationship between Number of birds in the poultry farm at beginning and Level of Income in poultry farming”.*
 Alternative Hypothesis (H₁) : *“There is a close significant relationship between Number of birds in the poultry farm at beginning and Level of Income in poultry farming”.*

Factor	Calculated Value	Table Value	D.F	Remarks
Number of birds in poultry in farm – at beginning	62.041	12.6	6	Significant at 5% Level

From the above analysis, the calculated value of chi-square (62.041) is more than the table value (12.6). Hence the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hence, it is disclosed that there is a close significant relationship between number of birds in the poultry farm at beginning and Level of Income in poultry farming.

8. NUMBER OF BIRDS IN THE POULTRY FARM AT PRESENT AND LEVEL OF INCOME

In order to find the relationship between number of birds in the poultry farm at present and Level of Income in poultry farming of the respondents, a Chi-square test is used and the result of the test is given below.

Null Hypothesis (H_0) : "There is no significant relationship between Number of birds in the poultry farm at present and Level of Income in poultry farming".

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1) : "There is a close significant relationship between Number of birds in the poultry farm at present and Level of Income in poultry farming".

Factor	Calculated Value	Table Value	D.F	Remarks
Number of birds in poultry in farm – at present	42.367	12.6	6	Significant at 5% Level

From the above analysis, the calculated value of chi-square (42.367) is more than the table value (12.6). Hence the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hence, there is a close significant relationship between number of birds in the poultry farm at present and Level of Income towards poultry farming.

CONCLUSION

- It is disclosed that there is a close significant relationship between Age and Level of Income towards poultry farming.
- It is inferred that there is no significant relationship between Gender and Level of Income towards poultry farming.
- There is a close significant relationship between Educational Level and Level of Income towards poultry farming.
- It is concluded that there is a close significant relationship between an Area of Agricultural Land holding and Level of Income towards poultry farming.
- There is a close significant relationship between other occupation of poultry farmers and Level of Income towards poultry farming.
- There is no relationship between the year of starting the poultry farm and Level of Income towards poultry farming.
- It is disclosed that there is a close significant relationship between number of birds in the poultry farm at beginning and Level of Income in poultry farming.
- There is a close significant relationship between number of birds in the poultry farm at present and Level of Income towards poultry farming.

SUGGESTIONS

Like any other developing country, India is witnessing a growing population, urbanization, income growth, growing middle class, awareness about health benefits, which are all fuelling demand for food of animal origin. Like any other developing countries, population, urbanization and income growth in India is also fuelling demand for food of animal origin. These changes in changes in diet, income growth opportunities, particularly of rural populace are triggering as to what is termed as "Livestock Revolution", and is demand-driven. In India, poultry is one of the fastest growing segments of livestock/agriculture and contributes a major share in terms of protein supplementation, from eggs and poultry meat.

This sector now employs over 3.0 million people. At least 80% of employment in the poultry sector is generated directly by farmers, while 20% is engaged in allied activities like feed production, pharmaceuticals, equipment etc. Additionally there may be a similar number of people engaged in marketing and other channels servicing the poultry sector. It is also estimated that for increase in per capita availability of one egg or 50 gms. of poultry meat, additional 20,000-25,000 job opportunities are created. The value of output at current prices is steadily increasing for eggs and poultry meat during the last few years and during 2010-2011 it was nearly US \$ 9.3 billion. This is equivalent to nearly 10% of the total output from livestock and 2.8% of total agriculture. The value of exports is also increasing slowly with over Rs.372 crores during 2009-10 from a mere Rs. 11 crores, 20 years back. Overall it appears that the poultry sector has tremendous potential for growth and development.

Contract farming of broiler chickens became an alternative source of employment for the farmers in Coimbatore and it gives them additional income. However according to the study, the current growing charges offered by the integrators are not sufficient and some of the farms incurred loss. The poultry farming activity was not remunerative. Integrators should increase the growing charges in order to sustain the interest of the farmers as the survival of hatcheries and feed mills are linked to the farmer's continued interest in poultry farming. There is a need to define the status of poultry as a part of agriculture. Hence, the Government has to declare poultry farming as an agricultural activity and the benefits available to agriculture to be extended to poultry farming also. If all the above suggestions are implemented by the concerned authorities, the broiler farming will move in the right direction and the farmers will get good income. Poultry farming will prove to be an alternative source of income and employment.

SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- As the demand for poultry products are increasing there is tremendous scope for processed chicken. A study on the acceptability and profitability of broiler processing industry could be carried out.
- To have a comprehensive knowledge on poultry farming, a comparative study on the cost and returns in broiler and layer farming, a comparative study on integrated farms and individual farms both in broiler and layer farming and a study on cost and returns in Broiler production for the integrators could be undertaken.
- Layer farming is equally important as that of broiler farming. Hence, a study on poultry farming with special reference to layer farming may be undertaken.
- India has a tremendous potential to play a major role in the international market. The value of poultry exports from India is increasing that encourages to venture into new markets. Hence, a study on the feasibility of chicken exports in the era of globalization may be carried out.
- Price is an important factor which decides the profit to the producers and there exists no relationship between the cost of broilers and market price. Hence a study may be undertaken to analyse the pattern of behavior of broiler prices, on existing marketing practices and on the price spread among the different channels in marketing of broiler meat.

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