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Socio-economic variability of tribal backyard poultry farmers of Koraput district, Odisha

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Abstract

Backyard poultry farming plays a very important role in tribal areas in providing nutritional support, employment opportunities, improving rural income besides meeting consumer demands. In spite of its huge contribution to rural livelihood not much interest has been shown by the farmers to scale up the production process. This study is an effort to explore the variability in the socio-economic characteristics of the tribal farmers which is contributing to the backyard poultry production system in the rural areas. Koraput district of Odisha was selected purposively for the study and 160 tribal poultry farmers were selected randomly from eight randomly selected villages. The findings revealed that majority (44.38%) of the tribal poultry farmers belonged to middle age group and 49.38% of them had of primary level of education. 82.5% of the respondents owned semi-pucca house and 60.62 % of the tribal farmers had in possession of less than eight animals besides poultry. Whereas, 61.25 % of the tribal farmers possess less than equal to 28 numbers of indigenous poultry. But, 90.62% of the farmers reported that the backyard poultry was their secondary occupation. Analysis of data revealed that 30% of the respondents had land holding of less than 1 acre and only 21.25% of the respondents had annual income of above one lakh rupees.

Keywords: Backyard poultry farming, livelihood, income

Introduction

Poultry is a proven venture for livelihood. It can be reared by the poorest of the society to the affluent people of the society. Both commercial and backyard poultry are popular in the country due its economic and nutritional importance. Poultry is a survival tool for the poorest of the poor during financial crisis. Over 3.8 million metric tons of poultry meat was consumed across India in 2019. The per capita availability of eggs from 1950-51 to 2018-19 has increased from 5 to 79 per annum (Basic A.H & Fisheries statistics, 2019, DAHD, GOI) [1]. The Poultry Industry provides direct or indirect employment to more than 3.2 million people. The total egg production in the country is 103.32 billion numbers. A huge 95% of the total egg production is contributed by poultry and the rest are produced by duck and other birds. The total number of poultry birds in the country is 851.81 million in 2019, which has registered an increase of 16.8% from the 19th livestock census.

The growth of commercial poultry has been no doubt significant over the years. On the other hand backyard poultry production has been rising steadily and there is growing preference among the consumers towards the backyard poultry meat and egg. The backyard poultry is predominantly rural based and can be started with a meagre investment of a few hundreds of rupees to meet economic, rituals and nutritional needs of present and future. Small family poultry flocks represent a very vital source of income for poor rural households. Poultry rearing is often considered as supplementary to other livelihood activities. Birds serve as a buffer against shocks of bad harvests and support in dire need of money because they can easily be sold anytime for cash. The investment being very low, poultry keeping in the backyard gives very high return. Sale of eggs and meat can generate income for the farmers. The growth of backyard poultry over the years is very encouraging in the state of Odisha. There is rising interest among the rural farmers for backyard poultry farming in general and tribal farmers in particular. Besides economic benefit, the tribal farmers also rear the indigenous birds for cultural and religious purposes. Indigenous poultry can be found in most of the rural households in tribal district of Koraput of Odisha. They are reared both by the landless as well as affluent land holders. There is high demand of indigenous poultry meat in the State and the birds are sold in premium price. In spite of all these advantages of indigenous poultry rearing, the tribal poultry rearers of Koraput district are found unable to derive desired

income from this occupation. In spite of all these advantages of indigenous poultry rearing, the tribal poultry rearers of Koraput district are found unable to derive desired income from this occupation. Their poor status is reflected in their poor socio-economic condition. The present paper discusses and highlights the socio-economic variability of the backyard poultry farmers of the Koraput district of Odisha.

Materials and Method

The study was conducted in Koraput district of Odisha. From this district two blocks were selected randomly and from these two blocks, two Gram Panchayats were selected randomly. Thereafter, from each Gram Panchayat, two villages were selected randomly and from each village, twenty poultry farmers having more than 20-25 indigenous poultry were selected randomly. The total 160 tribal poultry farmers selected from the district constituted the sample size. Interview schedule was prepared as per the objectives of the research study and it was pilot tested. The poultry farmers were surveyed with the help of pretested interview schedule. The collected data were compiled, tabulated and analysed using frequency, percentage, mean score, etc.

Results and Discussion

The analysis of data presented in Table-1 revealed that the majority (44.38%) of the tribal poultry farmers belonged to middle age group, i.e. between 36-50 years of age which is productive age of human being. The educational status reveals that 49.38% had of primary level of education. 35.63% of the respondents did not attend any formal schooling. Similar findings were reported by Reddy *et al.* (2017) [12], Rahman (2017) [10] and Deka *et al.* (2013) [2] where they conceived that majority of the poultry farmers were in the middle age category and very low level of educational attainment. Majority of the tribal farmers are married and around 95.63% of the respondents had nuclear family. The findings revealed that 42.5% of the respondents had 4-5 members in their family. The study conducted by Rawat *et al.* (2015) [11] Deka *et al.* (2013) [2] and Mahanty and Das (2018) [6] reported that majority of their respondents were having more than 5 members in the family. Most of the tribal farmers (82.5%) owned semi-pucca house in the study area. This indicates that the farmers are from poor socio-economic condition. Similar findings are reported by Swain and Das (2016) [14], Sarangi and Swain (2017) [13], Majhi and Swain (2017) [5] and Mohanty and Das (2018) [6] in their studies in the tribal areas of Odisha. Livestock possession is considered as an asset for tribal people who thrive on agriculture and allied sector as their livelihood. Since farming is an age old tradition of most of the tribal farmers, they possess varied number of cattle, buffalo, sheep and goat. The analysis revealed that 60.62% of the tribal farmers had in possession of less than eight animals besides poultry. Whereas, 61.25% of the tribal farmers possess less than equal to 28 numbers of indigenous poultry. But, 90.62% of the farmers reported that the backyard poultry was their secondary occupation. In a similar note of conclusion, Yadav *et al.* (2018) [16] reported that poultry farming was the main occupation of the respondents in his study. But, in absolute contrast, Nchinda *et al.* (2011) [7] reported that poultry was considered as the main income generating activity by only 1.53% of the respondents. Whereas, studies conducted in tribal district of Odisha by Swain and Das (2016) [14], Sarangi and Swain (2017) [13], Majhi and Swain (2017) [5] and Mohanty and Das (2018) [6] reported in similar

line with the above findings. Analysis of data related to land holding revealed that in total 30% of the respondents have land holding of less than 1 acre. 26.88% of the farmers have land holding between 1 to 2 acres. Only 15% of the beneficiaries have more than 2 acres of land holding. So it may be inferred that majority of the farmers have small land holdings. Patra and Singh (2016) [9] reported that 78% of the backyard poultry farmers had less than 1 acre of land.

Table 1: Distribution of Backyard Poultry farmers according to their Socio-Economic characteristics, (n=160)

S. No.	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1. Age			
1	Young age (up to 35 yrs)	49	30.63
2	Middle age(36-50yrs)	71	44.38
3	Old age(above 50yrs)	40	25.0
2. Education			
1	Non schooling	57	35.63
2	Primary(1 to 7)	79	49.38
3	Middle (6-7)	9	5.63
4	High school and above (8 th and above)	15	9.38
3. Marital Status			
1	Married	153	95.63
2	Unmarried	07	4.38
4. Family Type			
1	Nuclear	153	95.63
2	Joint	7	4.38
5. Family Size			
1	Up to 3 members	42	26.25
2	4-5 members	68	42.5
3	>5members	50	31.25
6. House Type			
1	Kutchra	18	11.25
2	Semi Pucca	132	82.5
3	Pucca	10	6.25
7. Livestock Possession			
1	Low(≤ 8)	105	60.62 %
2	Medium(9 to 16)	41	25.62 %
3	High (≥ 17)	14	8.76
8. Poultry Possession			
1	Low(≤ 28)	98	61.25
2	Medium(29 to 42)	58	36.25
3	High (≥43)	4	2.5
9. Occupation			
1.	Backyard Poultry as primary occupation	15	9.38
2	Backyard Poultry as secondary occupation	145	90.62
10. Land Holding			
1	Landless	45	28.13
2	< 1acre	48	30.00
3	1-2acre	43	26.88
4	> 2acrr	24	15.00
11. Annual Income			
1	Up to Rs 50000	13	8.13
2	Rs50000-100000	113	70.62
3	Above Rs 1lakh	34	21.25

Dumrya *et al.* (2015) [3], Varadharajan and Gnanasekar (2019) [15] and Kushwah and Kumar (2017) [4] also had similar findings. Analysis of data related to annual income presented in Table-1 revealed that in total 21.25% of the respondents had annual income of above one lakh. 70.62% of the respondents had annual income of Rs.50, 000- 1, 00,000/. Only 8.13% of the respondents had annual income below 50,000/. So it may be inferred that these tribal farmers must

be getting some sizeable income from the poultry they rear. Annual income of tribal farmers mostly depends on subsistence agriculture, animal husbandry activities, poultry rearing and forest produce. The findings reported by Mohanty and Das (2018)^[6] and Panda and Das (2017)^[8] in their studies in tribal districts of Odisha are in the same line.

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