

Issues faced by poultry farmers in post-covid scenario

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Abstract

COVID-19 pandemic lockdown is for long period and it has created a remarkable impact on various sectors in India, such as agriculture and its allied sub sectors. This research is aimed to represent the pandemic impact and the lockdown impact on broiler poultry industry in the country, which is the fast growing sector in the recent years. The production and consumption pattern of broiler meat industry had a tremendous change in the nationwide. Before pandemic the production and consumption pattern of broiler meat industry has an increase year by year. In the process of pandemic, the production and consumption of broiler meat has decrease in the pattern. The present study is undertaken from the available information collected through various published journals and materials. Primary information is collected from poultry farmers by contacting them personally. This pandemic had caused huge distress to millions of the marginal and poor farmers their produce. This paper highlights the production and consumption pattern of broiler poultry in India and also the reasons for the reduction in demand, distress of produce sale and impact on input supplies. The paper also highlights the challenges faced by the broiler poultry farmers in the pandemic. The paper present the overall scenario of production and consumption pattern along with these the reasons for distress is known from primary data, as this data is collected from the broiler poultry farmers in North coastal Andhra Pradesh this helped in understanding the extent of impact in veracious ways.

Keywords: Broiler poultry industry; Pandemic; Constraints; Production and consumption

Introduction

In developing countries livestock nurture has become a predominant subsidiary occupation to livestock farmer families and rural households as it is the cause for income generation. Poultry has always been the fastest growing section in the aspect of broiler poultry meat production (Assa, 2012). Another reason for continuous growing of world poultry sector is due to rise in the purchasing power of consumers, increase in human population, urbanization and rise in purchase power (FAOSTAT, 2014).

With respect to increase in income and population in India, the focus of people is mostly on developing better living condition and better health; this can be attained through consuming nutritious food. Due to increasing income, people tend to afford nutritious food. Broiler meat is having an annual growth rate to 8-10 percent. Factors such as change in food habits, urbanization and enhanced awareness on nutrition are the main factors in increase in consumption and production. The consumption pattern of India broiler meat, 62 percent of broiler meat is being consumed in top major cities while the enduring consumption is from other cities and villages. The growth of broiler poultry industry in India is a key with 10 percent growth, 7 percent growth in Brazil, followed by 2.1 percent growth in U.S.A and 2 percent growth in China (Singh, 2020).

The problems faced by the farmers involved in poultry farming are mostly they lack financial support from the government or banks, they go for getting loans by mortgaging the property and the interest rates are very high (Biswaneith, 1996), feed cost is a major problem followed by poor marketing facilities and high cost of production (Iddamalagoda et al, 1998). Poultry farmers across the developing countries faces a lot of constraints viz, high feed cost and fluctuating market price (Baruwa & Idowu, 2021; Kandpal & Kumar, 2023) Lack of proper livestock development programs and veterinary facilities are becoming constraints for development of poultry industry (Raut et al, 2002). High maize cost, low productivity, high price of chicks, non-availability of training facilities, less quality chicks and feed are being the major constraints of poultry farming (Darko, 2010 & Sultana et al, 2012). Inadequate capital, high cost of vaccines, weather conditions, high cost of equipment, limited credit accessibility, fluctuations of chick prices and live prices, limited knowledge on diseases outbreaks, non-availability of chicks are being some other issues in managing poultry farming (Isaac, 2014; Ali et al, 2015; Sultana et al, 2012). Lack of sufficient knowledge, breed of bird, social problems, delay in payment by retailers, less selling price are being huge hurdles for efficient running of poultry farm (Jana, 2015; Amit et al, 2017).

The study has been carried to find out production and consumption pattern of broiler in India from 2017 to 2021 and COVID 19 impact on the industry. Broiler poultry farmers both contract and non contract had faced difficulties in the pandemic severely. Even now the scenario is in the same pace. Poultry farming is one of industry playing a crucial role in generating employment opportunities to rural people and it enhance rural economy. Post pandemic poultry farmers used to face certain difficulties and now in pandemic these difficulties have been increased. Due to this most of the farmers have closed their farms. This study tries to find out the problems faced by the poultry farmers in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh and it helps in developing the policies for growth and development of the farmers and even the sector with the following objectives,

1. To understand the production and consumption pattern of broiler meat in India.
2. To identify the problems of broiler poultry farmers in pandemic.

Materials and methods

The study undertaken is descriptive in nature and the data collection is done from both primary and secondary sources. The study is conducted in the year 2022. 200 poultry farmers are interviewed with the help of a structured questionnaire. The data is collected from the farmers situated in Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram and Srikakulam districts. From Visakhapatnam district the data is collected from 86 poultry farmers, from Vizianagaram district the data is collected from 72 respondents and from Srikakulam district the data is collected from 42 respondents. The capacity of poultry farm of the respondents is 9000 birds. The secondary data is collected from various journals, handbooks, websites; newspapers etc. snowball sampling technique is adopted. The information gathered is analysed with the help of the mean and SD, conclusions are made.

Broiler meat production of India from the year 2017 to 2021 (April) is presented in table 1. There is decrease in the percentage change of broiler meat production in the above period every year. Considering the decrease over this period it is observed that decrease of broiler meat production is more in the year 2020.

From the above (Tables 1 & 2) the production and consumption decrease in the year 2020 in broiler meat is very high due to lockdown, even before the first covid-19 case is registered in India the rumours regarding poultry birds came into picture in social media, stating that poultry birds are likely to be the carriers for the circulation of virus, this had led to demand reduction of chicken meat in several parts of our country. Later on the clarifications given by various agencies stating that it is safe to consume chicken meat is also not able to convince the consumers to

Table 1: Broiler Meat Production of India

Year	Production (1,000 Metric Tons)	% change
2017	3762	-
2018	4062	7.97%
2019	4350	7.09%
2020	4000	-8.04%
2021 (Jan)	4200	5%
2021 (Apr)	4200	No change

Source: USDA, 2021.

Table 2: Broiler Meat Consumption of India

Year	Production (1,000 Metric Tons)	% change
2017	3760	-
2018	4059	7.95%
2019	4347	7.09%
2020	3997	-8.05%
2021 (Jan)	4199	5.05%
2021 (Apr)	4197	-0.04%

Source: USDA, 2021.

Table 3: Challenges faced by broiler poultry farmers in the pandemic

S. N.	Constraints	Mean of Responses	SD of Responses
1	Marketing Constraint:		
	a) Transport challenges	4.00	1.388
	b) Low selling price	4.23	0.501
	c) Delay in payment by retailers/wholesalers	3.86	1.466
	d) Long distance to market	1.20	0.899
	e) Inconsistent market information	2.86	1.676
	f) Lack of organized marketing structures	2.50	1.702
2	Human resource Constraint:		
	a) cost of labor and labor problems	4.86	1.772
	b) Lack of adequate training facilities	2.00	1.466
	c) Lack of skilled employees	1.90	1.083
3	Financial Constraint:		
	a) Lack of government support	4.65	1.657
	b) Insurance	4.85	1.703
	c) Inadequate financial support as high risk is associated with the business	2.90	1.636
4	Input procurement constraint:		
	a) High price of raw materials	5.00	1.752
	b) Timeliness in supply of feed	3.00	0.221
	c) Providing spurious feed	1.00	1.280
	d) Unavailability of chicks	4.83	1.071
	e) Delay/irregularity in supply of inputs	1.12	0.716
5	Logistics constraint:		
	a) Quality of the product	1.00	0.221
	b) Delay in lifting the bird	1.90	0.662
	c) Rejection of birds by the retailers/wholesalers due to quality aspects	1.03	0.221

a great extent. Even logistic factors are reasons behind reduce demand across the country. Even though state government did not laid many restrictions on meat shops, but the reduced movement of people hinder the meat market. Likely, most of the consumers who eat non vegetarian also did not consider this commodity as essential food item, hence they are reluctant to take risk and by buying from various places as they are available at certain allotted places. Indian consumers mostly prefer to have fresh chicken and therefore almost 90% of the broiler meat sales are confined to unorganized retail outlets. Closure of restaurants also had a great impact on the demand. The transport chain disruption, produce perishability and closure of wholesale markets also affected the supply chain. Several incidents like burying, burning and killing of live birds to avoid the spread of COVID 19 caused decline in sales (Jyotsnarani et al, 2020). COVID 19 lockdown impacted around 10 lakh broiler poultry farms by the end of April 2020 (Singh, 2020).

Results & Discussion

From the above (Table 3) of constraints mean analysis it was observed that the major problems faced by the broiler poultry farmers in the pandemic are high price of raw material (5.00), followed by labour problems (4.86), lack of insurance facilities (4.85), unavailability of chicks (4.83), lack of government support (4.65), low selling price (4.23), trans[port issues (4.00), payment delay by retailers and wholesalers (3.86), late supply of feed (3.00), inadequate financial support (2.90), no proper market information (2.86), and lack of organized market structure (2.50)

From the farmers interview it was noticed that most of the farmers had planned for farming activities in the pandemic even though the situation is worse, they had stated that with a hope of having remunerative prices for their produce on later period they had continued the farming activities. Most of the farmers stated that inadequate accessibility to feed from the feed plants or local feed agents they found very difficult to raise the produce. Even the poultry hatcheries are affected highly as there was no demand for the chick from the farmers. In the initial stage of pandemic, hatcheries have thrown the freshly hatched chicks and even the incubated eggs.

Even though government had given permission for continuing the farming activities, hatchery operation and other related farming activities associated with supply and market value chains, even then there remain crisis such as non-accessibility of adequate transport, non-availability of labour and mostly the fear regarding COVID-19 infection among daily wage labours (Jyotsnarani et al, 2020).

The government should extend the support for poultry farmers such as cold storage facilities, rescheduling loans, feed subsidies, and promotion of cold/frozen chicken. A poultry board set up is needed and this was also requested by the sector to the government. But the government haven't responded towards these requests. There is an increase in demand recently and prices of the produce are also treated to be good as there is a shortage in supplies (NBSO, 2020).

Conclusion

From the study conducted in the North Coastal Andhra Pradesh it was observed that poultry farmers of these regions are facing difficulties in the pandemic and the above problems should be taken into consideration by policy makers during framing of policies. There should be a structured process in chicks supply and in marketing produce in such a way that the farmers get benefited. Every time when there is a virus attack in the country the first and foremost wrong assumptions is made on the poultry farming which is leading to the huge loss for the poultry farmers. This should be seriously taken into consideration by the government and should support poultry farmers in all these aspects.

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