

Socio-Economic Impact of Poultry Farming in Thoubal District, Manipur: A Case Study

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Abstract: Poultry farming plays a crucial role in the socio-economic development of rural areas, contributing significantly to income generation, employment, and nutritional improvement. This research paper aims to assess the socio-economic impact of poultry farming in Thoubal district, Manipur. Thoubal district, located in northeastern India, has a predominantly agrarian economy, and poultry farming has gained prominence as an alternative source of livelihood for the local population.

Keywords: *poultry farming, socio-economic impact, livelihood, Thoubal district, Manipur*

Introduction

Thoubal district, situated in the northeastern state of Manipur, India, holds a unique position within the diverse agricultural landscape of the region. Traditionally characterised by an agrarian economy, the district has witnessed notable transformations in recent years, with the emergence of alternative livelihood options. Poultry farming has become an alternative, offering a promising avenue for income diversification and economic upliftment in rural areas. This shift in agricultural practices reflects a response to changing market dynamics and a strategic effort by the local population to enhance their socio-economic well-being.

The district's topography, climate, and cultural milieu have influenced the choice of livelihoods, with poultry farming emerging as a feasible and accessible option for many households. The relatively lower entry barriers and the potential for both subsistence and commercial production make poultry farming an attractive proposition for farmers in Thoubal district.

In the context of this evolving landscape, the primary objectives of this paper are multifaceted. Firstly, the study seeks to comprehensively analyse the socio-economic impact of poultry farming in Thoubal district, shedding light on how it contributes to the region's overall development. Secondly, a detailed examination of the role played by poultry farming in income generation and employment creation will be undertaken. Given its potential to alleviate poverty and enhance rural livelihoods, understanding employment dynamics in the poultry sector is crucial. Lastly, the study aims to delve into the challenges faced by poultry farmers in Thoubal district, exploring the unique socio-cultural, economic, and infrastructural

hurdles that may impede the sector's growth, alongside identifying opportunities for sustainable development.

By addressing these objectives, the paper endeavours to provide valuable insights into the socio-economic fabric of Thoubal district, unravelling the intricate relationship between poultry farming and the well-being of its residents. This exploration is pertinent for the academic community and holds practical implications for policymakers, development practitioners, and local communities seeking avenues for inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

Methodology

A sample of 218 respondents from Thoubal district was obtained for the study. A purposive sampling technique was employed to capture a representative picture of the socio-economic landscape related to poultry farming in the Thoubal district. Poultry farmers from various locations within the district were selected, ensuring a diverse representation of communities, socio-economic strata, and farming practices. The sample includes small-scale subsistence farmers and more extensive commercial poultry operations.

Structured interviews were conducted with poultry farmers, local authorities, and key stakeholders in the poultry value chain. Additionally, surveys were administered to gather quantitative data on income levels, employment generation, and production metrics. Field observations complemented these methods, providing contextual insights into the daily operations of poultry farms and the broader agricultural environment.

SPSS and MS Excel were used to derive critical quantitative data indicators such as income levels, employment rates, and production outputs.

Results and Discussions

Poultry farming has emerged as a significant source of income for households in Thoubal district. The study found that, on average, small-scale poultry farmers reported an annual income increase of 34.6% after engaging in poultry farming activities. More extensive commercial operations, characterised by higher production volumes, reported even more substantial income growth, with an average increase of 52.9%.

The poultry sector has proven to be a notable contributor to employment generation, especially in rural areas. The study found that, on average, each poultry farm employed three to ten individuals, encompassing caretakers, feed handlers, and administrative staff.

Table 1: Age-wise distribution of respondents

Age group	No. of Respondents	%
21 – 30 years	21	9.6
31 – 40 years	93	42.7
41 – 50 years	86	39.4
Above 50 years	18	8.3
Total	218	100

Table 2: Education-wise distribution of respondents.

Educational Qualification	No. of Respondents	%
10 th passed	42	19.3
12 th passed	67	30.7
Graduate	56	25.7
Post Graduate	14	6.4
Others	39	17.9
Total	218	100

Despite the positive impact, poultry farmers in Thoubal district encountered various challenges that affected their operations. Chief among these were market access and disease management. Small-scale farmers needed help accessing broader markets, limiting their ability to scale up operations and increase income. 47.6% of small-scale farmers reported difficulty reaching broader markets beyond local communities. 54.2% of poultry farmers faced issues related to diseases affecting their poultry stocks.

Despite challenges, the study identified significant opportunities for the growth of the poultry farming sector in Thoubal district. Improved infrastructure, access to training programs, and cooperative farming initiatives were identified as crucial factors that could contribute to overcoming existing hurdles. 83.8% of farmers expressed that better roads and transportation facilities could significantly enhance their ability to access larger markets. 76.3% of farmers indicated an interest in training programs related to disease management and modern poultry farming practices.

In summary, poultry farming had a positive impact on income generation and employment in Thoubal district, while there have been substantial challenges and a need for potential avenues for growth and development in the sector.

Conclusion

The findings of this paper illuminate the transformative impact of poultry farming on the socio-economic landscape of Thoubal district, Manipur. Poultry farming has emerged as a lucrative income-generating activity and a significant source of employment, contributing to the overall well-being of the local population.

The observed income level increase among small-scale and commercial poultry farmers underscores the economic viability of poultry farming in the region. The data suggests a substantial upliftment in the financial status of participating households, indicating the potential of this sector to address the economic challenges rural communities face.

Moreover, the employment opportunities created by the poultry sector contribute to reducing unemployment rates, particularly in rural areas where alternative sources of employment may be limited. The observed average employment emphasises the sector's role in enhancing livelihoods and fostering community development.

However, the paper also brings to light the challenges poultry farmers face, with market access and disease management emerging as significant impediments. Small-scale farmers, in particular, need help expanding their reach beyond local markets. These findings underscore

the need for targeted interventions, such as improved infrastructure and training programs, to empower farmers and facilitate market expansion.

The identified opportunities for growth, including infrastructure improvement and training initiatives, present actionable pathways for policymakers, agricultural extension services, and local communities to foster a more resilient and sustainable poultry farming sector. The insights derived from this study hold valuable implications for policy formulation and practical interventions to promote the socio-economic development of Thoubal district. Policymakers should consider targeted investments in infrastructure, particularly in improving transportation networks, to alleviate market access challenges faced by small-scale poultry farmers. Furthermore, training programs on disease management and modern farming practices can empower farmers with the knowledge and skills needed to enhance productivity and mitigate risks. Cooperative farming initiatives, fostering farmer collaboration, could also address scale and market penetration challenges.

This paper lays the foundation for future investigations into the dynamic landscape of poultry farming in Manipur. Longitudinal studies and in-depth analyses of specific challenges like disease management and market access could provide more nuanced insights. Additionally, exploring the ecological sustainability of poultry farming practices and their impact on local ecosystems remains a promising avenue for future research.

In conclusion, the socio-economic impact of poultry farming in Thoubal district is significant, offering a viable pathway for rural development. By addressing challenges and leveraging opportunities, stakeholders can collaboratively work towards a more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable poultry farming sector, thereby contributing to the holistic progress of the region.

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