Turkey Farming As an Income Generating Activity for Rural Women

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ABSTRACT

Turkey Farming was introduced as an attempt of poverty alleviating tool which can assure sustainable livelihood for rural women in Satara District of Maharashtra. Women were randomly selected from Satara District of Maharashtra as beneficiary. Selected women were trained in rearing, production and marketing of turkeys. Beneficiaries on successful completion of training provided with an unit of 25 turkey poults (4 weeks age) and 50 per cent turkey feed (9 kg). The beneficiaries reared the birds for 12 weeks and sold the birds. Socio-economic survey revealed that majority of turkey rearing women beneficiaries were belonged to young age group; land less and from BPL families. Self Help Group (SHG) activity plays a major role in providing micro finance to the women including agriculture and animal husbandry activities. More than 83 per cent of women beneficiaries were member of SHG out of these 56.00 per cent women borrowed loan from SHG for various reasons such as Agriculture (14.29%), Business (7.14%), Livestock purchase (14.28), Education (7.14) and Domestic purpose (57.14%). Through turkey farming, there was 13.37 per cent rise in income per batch of turkey reared by women beneficiaries belonging to BPL families. It is to note that the rise per batch can be enhanced by rearing two batches of 25 turkey birds annually. With training on turkey farming, rural women are capable of entering in to small scale entrepreneurial activity to generate additional income for their livelihood security.

Key words: *Women empowerment; Turkey Farming;*

The fast changing trend of commercialization of livestock units have left rural poor to stay away from it due to lack of infrastructure and funds. In such scenario, small scale farming of other avian species can be a promising option for the rural poor to get the empowerment and financial status. Initial heavy investments, lack of education and skill, family responsibilities and poor family support are major constraints that stretch behind the rural woman for her empowerment. She has to struggle a lot for managing her livelihood. Though it is a tradition on the part of women to make efficient management of household affairs but now-a-days women are equally interested in setting up their own business to become independent and self reliant (*Borah, 2014*). Women entrepreneurship has played a dynamic role in the economic development of region. Empowerment can enable rural community to participate, in the economic, political and social development of the rural communities. (Sridhar *et al., 2013*). The World Bank has suggested that empowerment of women should be a key aspect of all social development programs.

Turkeys are suitable birds for tropical climate of Indian sub continent. Turkey farming can be initiated with marginal capital. Turkey can be reared in free range or semi-intensive systems especially in rural areas for economic enhancement of landless labourers, marginal and small farmers *(Turkey- management guide by Central Poultry Organization, Southern Region)*.

An attempt was made to introduce Turkey farming as a poverty alleviating tool which can assure sustainable livelihood for rural women in Satara District

of Maharashtra through a project entitled **"**Sustainable Rural Livelihood Security for Women of Satara District of Maharashtra through Diversified Turkey Farming".

METHODOLOGY

There are eleven tehsils in the Satara district. Total population of the Satara district is 28,08,994 out of which Male population is 14,00668 and Women population is 1408326. Around 68.71 women population is literate while rest is illiterate. The district has well established network of Self Help Group. District has 35,511 Women Self Help Groups, out of which 5,456 number of Women Self Help Groups (WSHG) are under the Below Poverty Line (BPL). The SC and ST population of this area is 8.76 per cent and 0.8 per cent , respectively. The maximum population (85.83%) of Satara district lives in the 1739 villages and the remaining population (14.17%) in 15 towns of the district. The total number of families below poverty line is 83517. The total numbers of agriculture farmers are 515217. The majority of women population in rural area is dependent on the Agriculture seasonal employment. With the modest rainfall and meager irrigation facility rural women population is not getting the full year employment.

The age old main occupation of the people in Satara District of Maharashtra are conventional agriculture but crops incomes are not assured because low, irregular rain fall. The problem may be tackled by starting alternative subsidiary occupation to agriculture.

Training and Demonstration : A centre for Turkey demonstration and farming was established at Kranti Sinh Nana Patil College of Veterinary Science, Shirval. This centre has facility of demonstration, training as well as and hatchery for production of poults. Women were randomly selected as beneficiary of the turkey farming training. A total 40 women were trained at this centre and 11 beneficiaries were supplied with the initial inputs. The beneficiaries were trained in the rearing, production and marketing of birds. On successful completion of training the women beneficiaries (n=11) were provided with the unit of 25 Turkey poults of four weeks age and 50 per cent feed (9 kg) to be used during next 5 to 16 weeks of age. The beneficiaries were asked to invest on the semi-intensive shelter. Further these women were encouraged to erect the shelter by using local available resources for minimum capital expenditure. Turkey farming has proved to be an immediate step for empowering women. The training and demonstration centre has played a major role as an effective channel to help, motivate and influence the women for their livelihood security.

The data were collected form 30 women beneficiaries with a pre-tested structured interview schedule. In order to get logical interpretation, the data were compiled, tabulated and subjected to the appropriate statistical analysis methods like frequency distribution, percentage and mean. The investment, income and expenditure per batch per beneficiary were calculated.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Age: The data presented in Table 1 revealed that, majority of women (36.67%) belonged to young age group, while 30.00 per cent women were from upper middle group followed by middle (26.67%) and old (6.67%) age group. This study revealed that, majority of the women beneficiaries belonged to young age group and it is in agreement with the studies of *Mishra et al.,* (2008). Study of age distribution of entrepreneurs in entrepreneurship study has significance in determining the growth of entrepreneurs of the total population. The growth of women entrepreneurs generally fall within the age group of 15-60 years (*Borah, 2014)*. Similarly, younger farmers were likely to adopt new innovations more than the older ones. This showed that most of the youth women showed interest in taking scientific training on turkey production in the study area (*Maikasuwa et al., 2014)*.

Caste: Majority of the respondents (60%) belonged to general caste, followed by VJ/NT (30%) and Other Backward Caste (10%). The lowest percentage of women entrepreneurs were religions binding, low literacy rate, deficiency of capital and household burden.

Family size: The role of women in family largely depends on type and size of the family. The time available with women largely depends on the number of members as well as type of family. Majority of the respondents (63.33%) had medium family size. About 33.33 per cent women beneficiaries from small family size and only 3.33 per cent from large family size. The household size in turkey production had positive and significant relationships with profit in turkey production (*Maikasuwa et. al., 2014)*.

Table 1 Socio-economic profile of the women beneficiaries (N=30)

Variables	No.	%
Age		
Young (25-34)	11	36.67
Middle (35-44)	8	26.67
Upper Middle (45-54)	9	30.00
Old (More than 55)	2	6.67
Caste		
Scheduled Tribe	0	0.00
Scheduled Caste	0	0.00
VJ/NT	9	30.00
Other back ward	3	10.00
General	18	60.00
Family size		
Small (<4)	10	33.33
Medium (4-7)	19	63.33
Large (>7)	1	3.33
Education		
No Formal education	9	30.00
Primary	6	20.00
High school	10	33.33
Intermediate	2	6.67
College	3	10.00
Present working activity		
Agriculture	8	26.70
Daily wages	8	26.70
House keeping	10	33.30
Livestock rearing	4	13.30
Land Holding		
Land less	13	43.33
Very low (upto 1 acre)	3	10.00
Low (1.1-2.0)	12	40.00
Medium (Above 2.0)	2	6.67
Annual Income		
BPL (< 15000)	26	86.67
APL(> 15000)	4	13.33

*Education:*Majority of women beneficiaries (33.33%) were studied up to high school followed by no formal education (30.00%) and primary (20.00%) category. Only 10.00 per cent women were attended college education and mere 6.67 per cent were educated up to intermediate (Table 1). This situation might have risen due to the poor education facilities, paucity of schools, absence of schools in the village and nearby villages, it might also be resultant of the common belief that women do not require education and that education is meant only for men and people from the elite class. The educational level in turkey production had positive and significant relationships with profit in turkey production (*Maikasuwa et al., 2014)*. Backyard Poultry Training proved that there was about 86.00 per cent gain in knowledge among the poultry farmers *(Sridhar et al., 2013)*.

Present working activity: Women actively participate in various activities relating to crop and livestock production in addition to conducting their routine domestic duties often working non-stop from dawn to dusk. A cursory look at Table 1 indicates that, majority of women beneficiaries were (33.30%) engaged in housekeeping activity. Around 26.70 per cent each were engaged in agriculture activity and worked on daily wages basis respectively. Only 13.30 per cent women looked after livestock rearing activities.

Land holding: Around 43.33 per cent women were land less followed by low land holding category (40%). Only 10 per cent women had land upto one acre and very meager (6.67%) women owned land above two acres (Table 1).

Annual income: More than 86 per cent of women had their annual income less than Rs.15000/- where as only 13.33 per cent women had their family income above Rs. 15000/- per annum (Table 1). Although, women's participation in the decision-making process has significant impact on their improved status and greater role in society, their involvement in decision making process specially related to money matters is low *(Raju and Rani, 1991)*.

Table 2 Involvement of the women beneficiaries in Self Help Group (SHG) (n=30)

Particulars	No.	%
Participation in SHG		
Member of SHG	25	83.33
Non Member of SHG	5	16.67
Beneficiaries of Loan from SHG		
Loan Not Taken by SHG Members	16	53.33
Loan Taken by SHG Members	14	46.67
Purpose of Loan from SHG		
Agriculture	2	14.29
Business	1	7.14
Livestock purchase	1	14.28
Education	1	7.14
Domestic	7	57.14

It is reported from Table 2 that more than 83.00 per cent of women were member of SHG, out of these 56 per cent women received loan from SHG for various

reasons such as Agriculture (14.29%), Business (7.14%), Livestock purchase (14.28), Education (7.14) and Domestic purpose (57.14%). Women were engaged in various activities such as farming, livestock rearing and farm labour. There were significant differences between the woman members of Small Farmers and Marginal Farmers households of both SHGs and non-SHGs in relation to their decision making in farm activities and women of Marginal Farm households of non-SHGs had no participation in decision making in the areas of farm production *(Pal, 2014)*. It was clearly indicated that SHG activity plays major role in providing micro finance to the women including agriculture and animal husbandry activities. SHGs offer immense potential as units for promotion of livelihood activities of women.

Table 3.Economics of turkey rearing at women beneficiaries shed (n=30)

Studied parameter	Values
Percent livability	63.00
Total expenses for rearing per turkey birds (Rs.)	113.00
Average sale weight per bird (Kgs.)	1.94
Sale rate /kg live body weight (Rs.)	170.00
Average receipt /bird (Rs.)	329.80
Net Profit per bird (Rs)	216.80
Total profit / batch / beneficiary (Rs)	2005.00
Percent increase in annual income per batch	13.37

It is revealed from Table 3 that on successful completion of training the women beneficiaries (n=11) were provided with the unit of 25 Turkey poults of four weeks age and 50 per cent feed (9 kg) to be used during next 5 to 16 weeks of age. The beneficiaries were asked to invest on the semi-intensive shelter. Further these women were encouraged to erect the shelter by using local available resources for minimum capital expenditure. The average gross profit after sale of turkey birds was Rs. 2005.00 per batch per beneficiary. Figures in Table 3 indicates that there was 63 per cent livability of turkey birds at field condition, which reflects that sustainability of the turkey bird for the management and environmental condition is better. As the women fed the birds mostly on kitchen waste, wasted grains and scavenging the total expenses on feed was very less i.e. Rs. 113.00 per bird. Lower cost of feeding turkey due to most turkey producers practice the semi-intensive and extensive system of management provided supplemental feed to the turkeys, which include food/ crop processing by-products, household waste and food remnants (*Maikasuwa et al., 2014*). The birds were sold at the rate of Rs. 170.00 per kg live weight. Average sale weight per bird was 1.94 kg and the average receipts per women beneficiary per turkey batch was Rs. 2005.00. From the figures it was cleared that there was 13.37 per cent rise in income per batch of turkey reared by women beneficiaries belonging to BPL families. It is to note that the rise per batch can be enhanced by rearing two batches of 25 turkey birds annually. This indicates good scope to establish sustained livelihood in rural areas through turkey farming. With the help of turkey farming, returns were increased and all these amounts are in hands of farm women's. *Amao et al., (2014)* conducted Survey on Turkey Rearing in Rural Areas of Kwara State, Nigeria. They had used Participatory Rural Appraisal Technique (PRAT) to obtain information from 132 randomly selected turkey farmers in Kwara state, Nigeria. They found that the mean flock size was 13 birds per farmer. Over 90 per cent of the birds were kept either extensively or in a semi-intensive system using locally available food wastes and grains. *Ironkwe et al., (2007)* advocated that turkeys were easier to manage, had relatively high turnover and quick returns to capital invested. Turkey production is a means of livelihood and a way of achieving certain level of economic. *Ajala et al., (2007)* reported, the rate of return on investment in turkey farming was estimated at 57.80 per cent. This implied that, to maximize profit occurring from turkey production, there has to be a concerted effort directed at increasing the scale of production and efficient use of the inputs. This needs to be addressed in the state of Maharashtra.

CONCLUSION

Turkey can be reared in free range or semi-intensive systems especially in rural areas for economic enhancement and as an income generating activity for rural women. Rural women can also initiate the turkey farming with minimum investment and financial support from Self Help Group. With minimum recurring cost, time, labour and with ordinary skill, turkey farming can be carried out as additional source of income for rural women. The potentials of diversified turkey production if properly harnessed will increase rural farmer's income, improve household food security and nutrition thereby

improving their livelihood. Through turkey farming there was 13.37 per cent rise in income per batch of turkey reared by women beneficiaries belonging to BPL families. It is to note that the rise per batch can be enhanced by rearing two batches of 25 turkey birds annually. With training on turkey farming, rural women are capable of entering in to small scale entrepreneurial activity to generate additional income for their livelihood security.

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