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Youth Empowered through Scientific Interventions on Livestock and Poultry based Entrepriise

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Karbi Anglong is one of the hill districts of Assam with undulating hills and plains. The majority of the inhabitants belong to the Tribal community in the district. Agriculture is the main occupation and a wide range of crops are grown especially Paddy, Sesame, Blackgram, Toria, Pineapple, Pumpkin, Ginger and Turmeric. Animal husbandry is also an integral part in the livelihood of the local folks. Prominently, Piggery is considered to be the main component along with Goatery, Dairy, Fishery and Duckery. Amidst the tough road connectivity and other hurdles, a rural youth came out with encouraging results after being supported by Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Karbi Anglong, Assam Agricultural University under a project called Attracting and Retaining Youths in Agriculture (ARYA) funded by Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR). The name of the youth is Mr. Stephen Enghi. His entire journey of success is narrated as below.

Background profile

Mr. Stephen found himself in a challenging situation to help in income generation activities. He applied for numerous jobs in urban areas, but the lack of opportunities in his region made it difficult for him to secure meaningful employment. Faced with limited prospects, the youth began to explore other avenues that could help him create a livelihood and contribute to his family's income.



Intervention

His interest in agriculture was sparked by his family's small-scale farming activities, which included rice and vegetable cultivation. However, he was determined to pursue something beyond traditional agriculture. While working in his family's fields, he observed the growing demand for poultry products like eggs and chicken in the local market. Additionally, he noticed the potential for raising livestock, particularly cows and goats, for milk and meat. Drawing on his keen observation and entrepreneurial spirit, he was supported with capacity building training programme, consultancy support. He continued to venture into poultry and livestock farming, especially Pig and goat farming. He made the decision to begin small, with an initial investment of ₹50,000, which he had saved up from his personal savings and small loans from relatives. During the initial phase of his journey, he was supported with poultry farming by contributing small flock of 100-layer poultry chicks. He started by constructing a simple poultry shed using local materials, such as bamboo and thatch, which helped keep his initial costs low. In the beginning, things weren't easy. Ranjit faced multiple challenges, including disease outbreaks among the birds and a lack of access to quality veterinary care. His poultry business was hit hard by Newcastle disease, a common poultry illness that wiped out a large portion of his flock. This problem was overcome by regular advisory support and arrangement of vaccine provision from KVK office as and when required. He was also advised for best practices for poultry management.

Enghi's persistence paid off. After taking better care of his birds and introducing vaccinations and proper hygiene practices, he was able to stabilize his flock. Within a year, his business began to show positive results. He sold eggs and chickens at local markets and earned good income to reinvest in expanding his farm. Over time, he increased his flock to 500 broiler chicken and diversified by adding piggery and goatery.

Venturing into Livestock Farming

With his poultry business steadily growing, Enghi's confidence grew as well. Observing the demand for good quality piglet along with high pork consumption in his local market, he decided to expand his operations into livestock farming. He purchased a few local Assam Hill Goat, Yorkshire pig for breeding purpose as well as renovated his pond for raising fish. Raising livestock proved to be a profitable venture, as he could sold 26 nos of good quality piglet @ ₹ 5000/piglet. Enghi took great care in selecting healthy animals and ensuring that they were well-fed and well-cared-for. His understanding of animal husbandry grew as he gained more experience, and he eventually built a small-scale breeding unit. Enghi's decision to combine poultry, livestock farming and fishery proved to be a strategic one. By diversifying his sources of income, he was able to mitigate risks associated with market fluctuations and diseases that might affect a single segment of his business. His poultry farm became a steady supplier of eggs and chickens, while his livestock farm provided a consistent income from selling of piglet and fish.

Impact analysis

| Impact factor | Before intervention | After KVK interventions |
|---|---|--|
| Name of enterprise and area/size | Traditional farming and wage earner, Fish farming | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Layer bird var. BV380: 86 nos Local indigenous birds:120 nos Dual purpose Kamrupa: 180 nos Pig Breeding unit:12 Fish farming expanded: 0.56 ha Goatery unit under TSP: 15 goats |
| Yield/value of output | Rice domestic consumption | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eggs- 13200 Eggs Kamrupa birds live weight-324 Kg Local indigenous birds-148 Kg Culled birds: 145 Kg Fish production: 16.8 q |
| Cost of Production /unit | ₹68,980.00 | ₹,4,73,467.00 |
| Gross income year⁻¹) | ₹91053.00 | ₹12,68,892.00 |
| Net income | ₹56,900.00 | ₹ Rs. 7,96,900.00 |
| Marketing | Household consumption | The farm products were sold in the local market in the area of Diphu Town and Dimapur. |

Challenges Faced Along the Way

Like most farmers, Ranjit faced numerous challenges throughout his journey. One of the major obstacles was the lack of adequate infrastructure and fluctuation in feed prices. He had to rely on external suppliers for poultry feed, which made it difficult to maintain consistent costs. Additionally, while Ranjit had initially started his farming activities with minimal financial support, the lack of access to formal credit and financial institutions made it difficult to scale his business quickly. He often had to rely on personal savings, family loans, and small informal loans from friends and neighbours. However, Mr. Enghi remained focused on overcoming these challenges. He began to start small poultry feed outlet to meet his demand

as well local farmers. He also built stronger relationships with local markets and customers, which helped him ensure steady sales despite transportation challenges.

Success and Impact on the Community

Today, Mr. Enghi's farm is a thriving business. He now owns over 1200 chickens and has expanded his livestock farm to include 5 pig breeding stock and 8 goats. His farm produces high-quality eggs, chicken, fattener pig and good quality piglet, which are sold not only in Karbi Anglong but also in neighbouring districts. He became an influential figure in his community, inspiring other young people to pursue agricultural entrepreneurship. The youth could earn an net annual income of ₹ 7,96,900.00 from the different enterprise with B:C ratio of 2.68: 1. In addition to his own success, created employment opportunities for several individuals from his village. He employs local youth to help with the daily operations of his farm, providing them with training and stable income. His farm has become a model for others in the region, demonstrating that with determination, the right knowledge, and access to resources, young people in rural areas can build successful businesses in agriculture.

Conclusion

Mr. Stephen Engh's journey from a struggling graduate to a successful poultry and livestock farmer is a testament to the power of perseverance, innovation, and community support. Through his hard work and dedication, he has not only transformed his own life but also made a significant impact on his community. His story serves as an inspiration for youth across rural Assam, showing that agriculture can be a powerful vehicle for social and economic change.

