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Headline: Global News Dispatches: 4 Stories

Elevating Farmers' Income Through Organic Poultry Rearing

Credit Line: from the Inter Press Service / Globetrotter News Service

Note to Editors: This is a selection of news wire reports that have been edited to be relevant for audiences for the next two weeks. You are welcome to select and publish individual items or the whole stack.

Headlines in This News Package:

- **Human Trafficking: Women Lured by Promise of Jobs, Sold as Brides**
- **Invasive Species, Fast-Riding Horsemen Galloping the Biodiversity Apocalypse**
- **El Salvador Is Making Little Effort to Eradicate Illiteracy**
- **Elevating Farmers' Income Through Organic Poultry Rearing**

Even after toiling hard for an entire year, Shivaji Rao, a 37-year-old farmer, would find it hard to cover the basic expenses of his family.

He cultivates maize from his one-and-a-half-acre land in India's southern state of Telangana.

Rao told IPS that the prices of fertilizers and seeds in his home state have skyrocketed to the extent that it is herculean to even think of buying them in adequate quantity.

“The changes in climate, on the other hand, [are]... wreaking havoc on poor farmers like us. The untimely rainfall, the drought-like situation coupled with the scarcity of irrigation facilities is leaving us high and dry to the core,” Rao said.

In a remote village of the state called Aseefabad, another farmer, namely Bhagwan Nath, shares a similar predicament.

He says besides farming, he does menial jobs like day labor at some government-sponsored construction sites to make ends meet.

However, the farmer who grows redgram (a type of legume) from a one-acre field says the farming and the daily paid labor aren't enough to suffice his family's needs.

"I mean, we have children who deserve better education. I need to send my kids to a good school so that they can get a quality education, but doing so needs money. I am not earning enough," Bhagwan told IPS.

There are scores of other farmers in the hamlet sharing the same tale and facing the same ordeal.

Nominally, their monthly incomes do not go beyond a mere 15 to 20 thousand rupees (\$180-\$240).

Climate change in the region has been severely affecting the farmers with the late arrival of monsoons and sudden unexpected heat waves occurring.

"This drastic change in the weather pattern damages the crops beyond repair. At times, a year of hard work gets wasted with one single blow of wind. Further, the cost of seeds and fertilizers is adding to our predicament. It is turning us insane," sighs Shivaji.

As per the government records, the hamlet, during February and March, experienced temperatures higher than the norm.

Typically, elevated temperatures result in increased moisture capacity of the air, often leading to the formation of thunderstorms. The temperatures in the hamlet surpassed 35°C, facilitating the absorption of moisture from the Bay of Bengal, culminating in the development of a depression.

Reports show that over the past decade, the area has encountered unprecedented weather occurrences—believed to be both climate-change-induced and because of rapid urbanization in the region.

To mitigate the suffering of the farmers of this remote village, a few non-government organizations have visited the farmers, and this resulted in discussions around opportunities for marginalized farmers for self-sustaining livelihood and climate-resilient agricultural practices through community-owned processes.

One of the NGOs mooted the idea of pollution-free poultry farming for these farmers.

Along with other farmers, Rao and Bhagwan enrolled in the program. Each farmer received 40 chicks of the Gramapriya breed, with a mature weight ranging from 1.5 to 2 kilograms. The poultry rearing was environmentally friendly, ensuring that there was no odor emanating from the shed. This approach not only resulted in wholesome meat and

eggs for the farmer's family due to the organic nature of the produce but also generated supplementary income through the sale of organic meat, eggs, and compost derived from the bedding.

The training provided to farmers included instructions on formulating appropriate feed for the chicks, enabling them to be ready for the local market within just four months. One farmer, Bhagwan, has already sold ten birds weighing a total of 18 kilograms, earning an extra income of Rs 5,400 (\$70) at a rate of Rs 300 (\$4) per kilogram over a span of nine months. Additionally, he has sold 200 eggs at Rs 5 each, resulting in an income of Rs 1,000.

Moreover, Bhagwan is implementing a breeding strategy by using local chicks to hatch PFPF eggs, thereby multiplying the poultry population on his PFPF farm.

As a result of this new PFPF initiative, his annual earnings have increased by Rs 6,400 (\$80). In total, Bhagwan Nath's annual income has risen from Rs 35,000 to Rs 40,000 (about \$420 to \$480) within a few months due to these efforts.

Rao says that the poultry he has received has also helped him receive extra income and make a good living.

"Now, I am not entirely dependent upon farming. The poultry is what keeps me hopeful. I am planning to put in extra effort in this business and make a good living out of it."

Rao says within three months, he has been able to earn more than 50,000 rupees (\$700) from selling organic eggs and chicken in the market.

"There is a growing demand for organic food, and people really like what I sell. They are quite responsive to it," Rao said.