

Review Article

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Poultry Production, Marketing System and Its Challenge and Opportunities in Ethiopia: A Systematic Review

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Poultry sector holds significant potential to contribute to income generation, food security, and employment opportunities; particularly it is the most significant livestock sub-sector for Ethiopia's rural populations.

Objective: The objective is specifically to identify the determinants of poultry production and marketing systems; challenge and opportunity of poultry production and the contributions of poultry production on rural households.

Design/Methodology/Approach: This systematic review has followed procedures to accomplish the review, including literature searches, screening studies, data extraction, synthesis and presentation of the data.

Result: However, despite these potentials, the sector faces several challenges; diseases, shortage of feed, and predators are the majors. Despite the constraints, considerable opportunities are there in poultry production that enhances its investment and profitability in the country. The low investment costs, and small quantity of land needed, government initiative to create a conducive environment for foreign and local investors and improving legal frameworks and working procedures, export advantage to neighbor's countries, good opportunity to invest in feed production, existence of different research institutions working on feeds and nutrition are the major opportunities in the sector.

Recommendation: By leveraging the available opportunities and addressing the challenges, Ethiopia can unlock the full potential of its poultry industry and enhance its contribution to national economic development and food security.

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Introduction

Background

The surge in the global demand for food obtained from animals is fuelled by an increase in income, population, and urbanization, predominantly in developing countries. The poultry industry has shown the most considerable growth among all livestock industries. The Food and Agriculture Organization predicts that developing countries will experience an increase in poultry meat consumption by more than 16 million metric tons in the period spanning from 2015 to 2024, bringing the total consumption to over 84 million [1].

Currently, poultry products constitute over 35% of the total consumption of animal protein in the world. This momentum is not expected to slow down any time soon, as the OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook (2024) has also forecasted increased consumption due to the low cost, swift production cycles, and improved genetics and feed efficiency. The outstanding and rapid

which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. biological ability and low capital requirements of poultry to convert feed into quality protein strengthen its position as a leading contributor to food security, nutrition security, and general global security [2].

Poultry collectively refers to domesticated birds, especially those valued for their meat and eggs, such as chickens, turkeys, ducks, geese and guinea fowl, though only chicken is popularized in most of African countries like Ethiopia [3]. In Ethiopia, the term poultry is almost synonymous to chicken while guinea fowl, geese, turkeys and ducks are not common in the country [4]. The poultry geographical distribution in Ethiopia indicates that Oromia region has the largest population of chickens (35.9%), followed by Amhara (31.6%), SNNPR (18.1%), and Tigray (10.5%) respectively where all regions together represent 96% of the total national chicken number. Afar, Somalia, Benshangul Gumuz and Gambela regions account for only of the remaining 3.9 percent [5]. According to the total population of households owned chickens in Ethiopia were 9.6 million and the number of the

households that owned chickens with the range of 1 to 9 chickens was 7.7million [6]. However, from 10 to 49 chickens were 1.9 million and 50 to 99 chickens were 7100 households [7-9].

In Ethiopia, poultry production has a lion share in livestock sector, contributing to food security, income generation, and employment opportunities for different category of the society in the country; and particularly it is the most important livestock subsector for Ethiopia's rural populations [10,11]. The country has huge number of poultry population, estimated to be 59.5 million being the second largest livestock category after cattle and the breed composition of the poultry indicated that 90.86%, 4.43% and 4.71% are indigenous, exotic and hybrid chickens respectively [12,13].

As of 2023, Ethiopia boasts a poultry population of over 70 million, most of which are kept in traditional backyard systems [14]. The rapid expansion of commercial chicken farms, particularly in Addis Ababa and other cities, has not met the country's overall poultry production needs [15]. The majority of poultry producers in Ethiopia are smallholder farmers who rear indigenous chickens with low productivity, primarily due to limited access to quality feed, veterinary services, improved housing, and other essential infrastructure [16].

While the poultry sector has focused on feeding and breeding at the technical level, such efforts alone have not produced desired changes. There is greater understanding now that improving access to markets as well as enhancing integration into the value chain do offer growth opportunities for development, in this case poultry production, in rural areas [17]. The value chain analysis enables one to study the entire life cycle of products starting with production until consumption, determine important stakeholders from all levels, evaluate the institutional relations, and determine elements that restrict productivity and competitiveness. Additionally, the market determines the success of smallholder poultry producers to a great extent. Access to markets should also consider proximity to markets, their design and operations, as well as the extent to which producers can participate constructively. Farmers with unsupportive market structures and value chains are left with little incentive and financial security to invest in increasing production.

Ethiopian ministry of agriculture has set a target to increase egg production in the country with an annual increase of 20% from 2020 to 2030. It also aimed to increase commercial poultry meat production from 30,000 ton from 2020 to 2,415,000 ton in 2030 [18]. In order to ensure the current and future poultry research, development and sustainability in poultry production, it is important to take into account relevant information on the major constraints and opportunities in poultry production in the country. Therefore, this review was attempted to collect, organize and summarize information on the poultry production, marketing system and major constraints and opportunities in Ethiopian poultry production for future interventions.

Ethiopian Poultry Production Overview Poultry Production Systems in Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, there are three types of chicken production systems. These are extensive system (ES), semi-intensive system (SIS), and intensive system (IS). Similarly, the poultry sector in Ethiopia can also be characterized into three major production systems namely; large scale commercial, small scale commercial, and village or backyard poultry production system. Each can sustainably coexist and contribute to solve the socio-economic problems of

the different target societies. The poultry production systems in Ethiopia can also be classified in to four categories. Large scale commercial industrial integrated system farms have the capacity of over 10,000 birds with high level of bio-security. Medium scale commercial system farms have the capacity of 1,000 to 10,000 birds with moderate to high level of bio-security and birds kept indoors continuously. Small scale commercial system farms have the capacity of 50 to 1,000 birds with low to minimal level of bio-security. Backyard production system with the small number of birds and minimum to no bio-security in which birds kept in this system are usually the indigenous and dual-purpose breeds adapted to the scavenging production environment.

In the extensive poultry production system, chickens are usually kept under free-range system and the major proportion of the feed is obtained through scavenging. The extensive poultry production system contains small flock sizes of 5-20 chickens per household which are indigenous breed types mostly depend on locally available feed with low health services and other management practices. The chicken does not have their own constructed chicken house rather maintained in the main house with the family.

The semi-intensive production system or the small-scale intensive production system is the newly emerging system in urban and per-urban areas; where either broilers or egg type exotic breeds of chicken are produced along the commercial lines using relatively modern management methods. It is characterized by medium level of feed, water, and veterinary service inputs and minimal to low bio-security. Most of these farms obtain their feeds and foundation stocks from the large-scale commercial poultry farms and involved in the supply of table eggs and broilers to the various supermarkets, kiosks, and hotels through the middlemen.

The intensive poultry production system is the large-scale commercial production system involves an average of 10,000 chickens kept under indoor conditions with a medium to high bio-security level. This system heavily depends on imported exotic breeds that require intensive inputs such as feed, housing, health, and modern management systems. It is estimated that this sector accounts for nearly 2% of the Ethiopian poultry population. This system is characterized by the higher level of productivity and entirely market oriented to meet the large poultry demand in the major cities. The large-scale commercial poultry farms provide fertile eggs, table eggs, day old chicks, broiler meat, and adult breeding stocks to the small-scale modern poultry farms.

Methodology

Selection of Relevant Documents

An article review is undertaken by conducting document analysis through an in-depth review of related literature from a different source. In this article review, a systematic method was used, starting with the process of searching using online databases. The data were collected from previously published materials, like books, research articles, reports from national and international organizations, policy briefs and other indexed scholarly materials that are related to the topic of this review's research.

We critically identified and reviewed studies that focused on Poultry Production, Marketing system and challenges and opportunities. The inclusion criteria were as follows: articles published in English; studies conducted exclusively in Ethiopia; cross-sectional and longitudinal research designs; studies where the primary outcome was Poultry Production, Marketing system and challenges and opportunities, and studies published between

2010 and 2024. Since the concept of resilience in this context has only been applied in Ethiopia since 2010, no relevant articles were available prior to that year.

Literature Search Technique

Data were collected from empirical research works that were published in recognized scientific databases: Scopus via www.scopus.com and Web of Science via www.webofscience.com. Following the initial search from recognized databases, a total of 206 records were identified, comprising 88 articles from Scopus and Web of Science, Google scholar 47 and 71 papers from government reports, conference proceedings, seminars, and other grey literature sources. After removing duplicates, 157 unique articles remained. These were screened by title and abstract according to the eligibility criteria. In the final selection, 68 documents were retained: 51 peer-reviewed articles for thematic analysis, 7 grey literature and report papers, and 10 articles from other countries that were used for supplementary evidence.

The search of the literature's study area is limited to Ethiopia or studies that comprise Ethiopia. The studies were identified using keywords such as the adoption of CSA practices, food security, resilience and livelihood risk management, the impact of climate change, the effect of SCA practices and Ethiopia.

Screening the Literature (Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria)

As shown in Table 1, the literature inclusion and exclusion criteria were established by considering different criteria that assure the relevance of literature to achieve the review objectives.

Studies were excluded if they did not meet the predefined eligibility conditions. Specifically, articles not written in English, studies conducted outside Ethiopia and research designs other than cross-sectional (experimental designs) were excluded. Studies published before 2010 or after 2024, as well as books, commentaries, editorials, policy briefs, and unpublished reports, were also excluded from the analysis. These criteria were applied to maintain procedural consistency during the article selection process.

Table 1: Criteria for Literatures Inclusion and Exclusion in the Review

Criteria	Included	Excluded	Justification for Criteria
Publication date	2010 to 2024	Papers before 2010 and after 2024	To examine the current data on poultry production and marketing channel.
Country or papers study area	Studies conducted in Ethiopia or comprise Ethiopia	Non-Ethiopian papers	To maintain the scope of the Review
Publication language	Papers in English language	Papers not written in English language	Easily readability of the Papers
Publication theme	Poultry production, poultry marketing channel, poultry value chain analysis and challenges and opportunities of poultry production	Papers outside poultry production, marketing and value chain analysis	To keep the main aim of the systematic review
Papers availability	Fully available papers		Some papers requiring may not freely accessible

Source: Authors' own summary (2025)

For selecting relevant articles, the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) approach was followed, as illustrated in Figure 1. Using the four-stage article selection procedure (identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion), duplicates were removed; titles and abstracts were screened to retain only relevant studies; and finally, 68 full-text articles were included for data extraction.

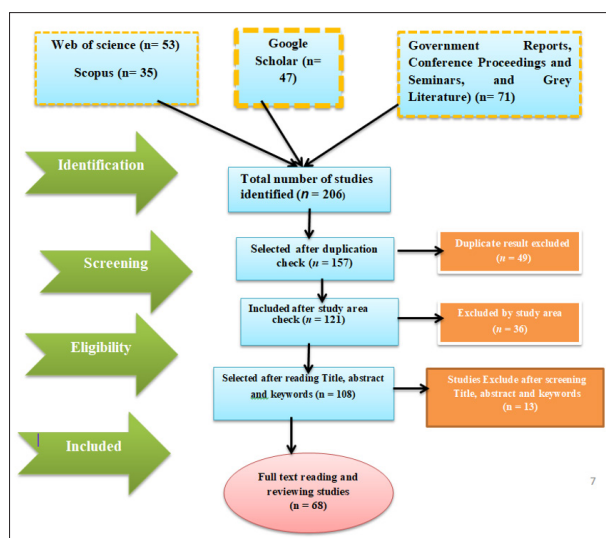


Figure 1: PRISMA Method for Article Selection
Source: Created by Author (2025)

Result and Discussion

Determinants of Poultry and Marketing System in Ethiopia

Previous study conducted in Ethiopia has indicated that; gender of the household head, wealth status, market access, neighborhood, and homestead locations are the factors that determine flock size and composition [19]. In other way, the factors related to household characteristics, flock size, infrastructure, and institutional services also affected the marketing and consumption of household poultry. The flock size per household highly significantly and positively affected the poultry selling [20].

According to, household size, level of education, frequency of extension contact, breed type owned, and number of poultry owned positively and significantly while distance to nearest market negatively and significantly influence the poultry market participation decision [21]. Similarly, the poultry herd size also determines the household decision to participate in poultry marketing. In addition, the type of poultry breed owned positively and significantly associated with the small holder households' poultry market participation decision.

In other way, household size is also associated positively with small holder farmer's household decision to participate in poultry marketing. Similarly, the credit service has also a positive influence on the smallholder farmers' participation of poultry market [22]. In addition, farm income is the total value of the livestock and crop sold in the production year and has also a positive influence of smallholder farmers' participation in poultry marketing. On the other hand, the finding of has also indicated that; sex of the household head, distance to market, family size, and educational status of the household head were variables significantly influencing the market participation decision of poultry market negatively [23].

Poultry Marketing structure has not well studied in Ethiopia. The market outlets or channels available to producers are diverse at all markets, although their importance differs across markets. The major channels through which producers/farmers sell their chicken in the markets are direct sold to consumers and/or to small retailers that take the chicken to large urban centers [24]. However, the farmers do have little knowledge on how the market works and why price fluctuates and has virtually no information on market conditions [25]. Thus, most farmers sell chickens within their vicinity. This can attribute to the small number of chickens offered for sale, long distance to the high demanding urban and pier urban markets and that selling of chickens is occasional and based on prevalent pressing needs of the family [26].

Although local consumer generally prefers the indigenous birds the high consumption associated only with holy days resulted in the largest off take rates from the flock to occur particularly during holidays and festivals and during the onset of disease outbreaks. In such circumstances, prices fall dramatically due to the high supply compare to demand. Ultimately, affect the producers.

In most cases, traders use public transportation (buses and minibuses) or hire space in private trucks to transport chicken to terminal markets. During transportation, the chickens may be kept along with other bags sacks of grain bundles of firewood by binding their legs together that can result in considerable lose due to stressful conditions [27]. The traditional chicken and egg collectors, who collect eggs and birds from the villages, can facilitate the marketing of small holders however, such marketing structure are over looked, or criticized, as it is not sustainable.

In developing countries like Ethiopia, village poultry represents significant component of the rural household livelihood as a source of income and nutrition, and as a gift to strengthen social relationships [28]. There was a higher variation in the price of chicken and egg, due to festivals based on the coat color of the chicken and the size of the eggs [29]. There were fluctuations across the months of the year in sales as well as in consumption of both chicken and eggs. The highest chicken sales and consumption overlapped with the major social and religious festivals of the year. These are Ethiopian new year (September 11), Ethiopian Christmas (January 5), Ethiopian Epiphany (January 19), Ethiopian Easter (April), and St. Mary's day (August). The periods of low chicken sales and consumption coincided with the pre-Easter fasting period which lasts about two months, from February to March [30,31].

The Contributions of Poultry Production on Rural Households

The benefits of poultry production to rural households are positive aspects that encourage people to diversify their livelihood activities within and/or outside of farming. Commercialization of agriculture, increased infrastructure, closeness to an urban region, improved market access, rise of rural towns, development of labor markets, and advancements in education and technology are some examples [32].

Poultry plays a significant socioeconomic importance in terms of food security, supplementary financial flow, and religious/cultural reasons. Rural chicken generates 98.5 percent and 99.2 percent of national egg and chicken meat output, respectively, and is a substantial part of the national economy in general and the rural economy in particular [33,34]. Village chicken-raising is the practice of maintaining chickens in rural households employing family effort. Poultry remains an important part of farming systems and household economies in rural communities, while large and small-scale commercial poultry industries in cities and towns play a critical role in providing safe, high-quality products for urban consumers [35,36]. Poultry production is used to provide employment and income-generating opportunities and is a priority animal for holy days and religious sacrifices [37,38].

Humans rely heavily on village poultry for assistance and poverty alleviation. They have been identified as having desirable traits such as heat tolerance, disease resistance, and improved egg quality. Productivity and firm eggshell, as well as excellent fertility and hatchability ability rates, and meat flavor, as well as having a high carcass proportion [39]. With a population of 65 million, poultry provide the most benefit in terms of number when compared to other livestock genetic resources in Ethiopia, and they play an important role in human nutrition and money generation.

In Ethiopia, farmhouse indigenous poultry account for 95.86 percent of total national poultry output (eggs and meat), whereas well-developed exotic breed chickens account for 1.35 percent and hybrids account for 2.79%. The contribution of animal-derived foods to the nutritional status of the global population is well recognized. Household and small-scale chicken production helps people satisfy their nutritional needs, especially youngsters, pregnant and nursing mothers. Chicken meat and eggs are a widely available, high-quality, and low-cost source of proteins, vitamins, and minerals for vulnerable and rural communities, particularly in developing countries.

Women's Role in Poultry Production for Rural Households

Women in agriculture require extension services. Agriculture's poultry industry is a sub-sector. Women play an important part in

chicken production; hence a big proportion of poultry producers are female. As a result, poultry directly contributes to household food security and children's well-being. It is one of the production strategies that contribute to the reduction of gender inequality in agriculture. Women in poultry production, on the other hand, face greater constraints in many countries [40]. Women in the poultry sector confront common challenges such as a lack of education, limited access to capital and input, land availability and tenure, a lack of acceptable farm and home technologies, and a lack of training facilities.

Challenges and Opportunities of Poultry Production in Ethiopia

Challenges of Poultry Production in Ethiopia

Feed Shortages and Quality

Though affordable price and standard qualities are critical for the stability of livestock production, feed is the most important input for poultry production. Feed is a capacious commodity for which all livestock species compete and it is a major pillar towards ensuring economic, social and environmental goals of livestock production in all producing countries [41]. Protein and energy feeds contribute more than 90% of all of the required nutrients for poultry production [42]. In the future, the survival of poultry production in many developing countries will undoubtedly, depend on the ability of poultry industry to compete with humans for the available for feeds supply.

In Ethiopia, human food demands and poultry feeds and its ingredients have been facing market competition. The competition is happened due to most the common poultry feed ingredients prepared from cereal grains, and oil seed cakes. For instance, feed covers around 70% of the cost of poultry production in the country. As a result, recently, smallholder poultry producers in Ethiopia have complained the increasing cost of feed and quality of feeds on the market. The future expansion of poultry production in Ethiopia is expected to be limited due to the increasing cost and decreasing supply of traditional feedstuff. In addition, recently, ensuring feed safety and quality is one of the key challenges in the commercial feed sectors. According to high aflatoxin levels in compound feeds are the serious concerns in ensuring the desired quality and safety of feed along the food value chain [43].

Disease

stated that diseases are the major constraints to the production of scavenging chickens which was rated (40%) of the respondents followed by lack of chick management (16%), lack feed (9%), lack improved local chicken (8%), absence of medicine (6%), lack of regular vaccination (5%), predator (4%), lack of market chain and government favor chicken producers(3%) and lack of capital, exotic chicken and weak extension (1%) [44]. Among the disease Newcastle disease (ND), Infectious bursal disease (IBD), Marek's disease, Mycoplasmosis, Salmonellosis, Colibacillosis, Coccidiosis, Toxoplasmosis and Helminthosis are poultry diseases with significant economic importance both in the family poultry production systems and intensive production systems in Ethiopia [45].

Predators

The other major constraint in poultry production is predators which are common in local indigenous chicken production system caused by poor housing and scavenging feeding practices. The major predators responsible for the loss of a significant number of poultry birds in Ethiopia are birds of prey, hawk, cat, kite (*Elanus caeruleus*), ownerless domestic cats (*Felis catus*) and foxes (*Canis aureus*) (local name Jedelo) and snakes [35]. For instance,

predators like birds of prey (34%), dogs and cats (16.3%), and wild animals (15%) cause the death of household poultry in the basin of the Oromia region, Ethiopia [46].

They challenge poultry producers to protect their chickens and limit investment in poultry production and expansion of poultry industry [40]. The consequences of the predators on chicken are related with seasons. Accordingly, eagles are severe concern during dry season while the rest of the birds are more likely to attack chicken during the rainy season. During the rainy season, chicken is highly attacked by wild cats and foxes due to the fact that the scavenging grounds are hidden by vegetation. On the other hand, chicken is more exposed to eagles during dry time, since scavenging sites' foliage is sparser [47].

Biosecurity and Veterinary Service Challenges

Adoption of biosecurity measures remains low among Ethiopian poultry farms, contributing to disease spread and persistence [48]. Many farms lack adequate preventive protocols such as disinfection, controlled access, and proper waste disposal. Veterinary services are often limited in scope, and farmers have inadequate access to diagnostic laboratories and qualified animal health professionals, resulting in delayed or improper treatment of diseases [49]. Vaccination coverage is inconsistent and often poorly executed, diminishing the potential benefits of immunization programs [50].

Lack of Organized Market and Poor Access to Main Market

Poor infrastructure and limited market information hamper poultry marketing in Ethiopia. Many farmers receive insufficient pricing information, and inadequate transport and storage facilities constrain product quality and access to distant markets. This infrastructural deficit particularly affects smallholder producers, diminishing their ability to secure fair prices and expanding sales beyond local markets.

Opportunities for Poultry Production

Despite many challenges mentioned earlier that affect poultry production in Ethiopia, there are also opportunities to improve chicken production and productivity in the country. In Ethiopia, poultry production is an important economic activity that plays a significant role in generating employment opportunities, improving family nutrition, and empowering women. The small quantity of land and low investment costs required as a starting up and running the operation create a suitable business for poor households in the country.

Poultry sector has recognized by government of Ethiopia to reduce poverty, achieving food and nutritional security, and contributing to the national GDP and hence the government developed strategies that boost the production and supply of poultry products in the country. The strategies created a conducive environment for foreign and local investors, and enhancing the ease of doing business in the county by improving legal issues and working procedures [51]. The increase in the current Ethiopian economy (annual average growth rate of above 7%) and the reduction of poverty rate from 44% in 2000 to 23.5% implies an increase in disposable income, the current huge demand and supply gap of poultry products, the increase in population growth (annual average growth rate of 2.7%) will prompt growth in the demand for consumable products, including poultry [20].

Ethiopia has a huge opportunity to export poultry products to neighboring countries mainly in East Africa, where demand is also growing and being member of COMESA and CFTA has

also another opportunity to share market of poultry products. For instance, in the year 2017 Somalia and Djibouti are the major destination for eggs products where 24,300 kilograms of eggs were exported from Ethiopia and the same year 46,000-day-old chicks and 21,800 exported to Rwanda, Somalia and Djibouti [21]. Currently, federal and regional research institutes, different non-governmental organizations as well as higher learning institutions are engaged in various poultry research activities dealing with feeds and nutrition, health, genetic improvement and management practices that will support the expansion, production and productivity of poultry industry in Ethiopia [52-69].

Conclusion

The economic contribution of the poultry production sector is not still proportional to the huge chicken numbers, due to the presence of many productions, reproduction and infrastructural constraints. The poultry in Ethiopia keeping in large scale commercial, medium scale commercial, small scale commercial and village or backyard commercial production system. Poultry plays an important role in the human economy, supplying food, creating wealth through job creation for the booming population. Chicken population growth over the year almost similar because of high chicken mortality due to diseases and predators. Breed characterization can be important to identify breeds at risk of extinction or which are highly desired by farmers. In Ethiopia, chickens are widely distributed in almost all over part of the country and reared by rural family, in some private chicken producers and governmental institutions. The indigenous chickens of Ethiopia have various names and characterized based on different criteria. The genetic improvement chicken in Ethiopia focused on introduction of exotic breeds, but it is failed due to less adaptation of exotic chicken, poor management; lack of input and output markets; and shortage of quality feeds, vaccines and veterinary inputs. Despite the constraints, there are also a lot of opportunities in Ethiopian poultry production that enhance its investment and profitability. The low investment costs, small quantity of land needed and, government initiative to create a conducive environment for foreign and local investors and improving legal frameworks and working procedures, export advantage to neighbors countries, good opportunity to invest in feed production and existence of different stakeholders working on feeds and nutrition, health, genetic improvement and management practices that will support the expansion, production and productivity of poultry industry in Ethiopia.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors write, read, and approved the manuscript equally.

Competing Interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Financial Interests

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