From a Terrace with 100 Birds to a Rs 15 Crore Enterprise

About The **AUTHOR**

***Mr Ravindra Manikrao Metkar** is a farmer-entrepreneur from Mhasala Anjangaon Bari, Amravati district, Maharashtra, where he runs a debt-free, 50-acre integrated poultry and natural farming enterprise. Starting in 1984 with 100 birds on a terrace and Rs 3,000, he built the operation into a 1.8-lakh-bird, circular farming model generating roughly Rs 15 crore in annual turnover. He has spoken at institutions including IIT Bhilai, ICAR, Dr. Panjabrao Deshmukh Krishi Vidyapeeth, Maharashtra Animal and Fishery Sciences University, Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology, Singapore University, and the University of Oxford's Global Research Conference. He now devotes much of his time to mentoring fellow farmers in allied agri-activities.*

I run a poultry and integrated natural farming operation in my village, Mhasala Anjangaon Bari, in Maharashtra's Amravati district — 50 acres, 1.8 lakh birds, and roughly Rs 15 crore in annual turnover, with zero bank loan. It's the kind of figure that invites a simple, one-line success story. But the real story is longer, harder, and more instructive than the number suggests.

A Terrace, 100 Birds, and Rs 3,000

I was the son of a Class IV Forest Department employee, and money was tight enough growing up that I stitched and rewore torn clothes rather than replacing them, and I had no bicycle to get to junior college. In 1984, while I was still a student, I started a poultry operation on my family's house terrace with 100 birds and Rs 3,000 my father gave me. There was no shed, no subsidy, no mentor — just a young man determined to build something of his own.

After completing my Masters in Commerce, I made a decision that still stands out to me as quietly bold: my family sold four acres of ancestral land my mother had inherited, we used the proceeds to buy one acre at Badnera, I took a bank loan of Rs 5 lakh, and I restarted with 4,000 birds. By 2006, the operation had grown into a 20,000-bird enterprise across 10 acres at Mhasala Anjangaon Bari. It looked, at last, like the difficult years were behind me.

Losing Everything, and Starting Again

Then came 2006, and bird flu swept across India's poultry industry, bringing operations like mine to a complete standstill. It's the point at which most farmers in a similar position never fully recover — many fall into a debt trap they don't escape. I did not let that happen. In 2008, I took a second loan of Rs 25 lakh and rebuilt, once again, from 20,000 birds.

This is arguably the most instructive part of my story, more than any revenue figure: I had already proven I could build something once, and then had to prove, under far worse conditions, that I could do it again. From 2008 onward, the operation grew by roughly 10,000 birds a year, reaching its current scale of 1.8 lakh birds on 50 acres, entirely free of bank debt.

What Actually Makes the Model Different

The turnover figure draws attention, but it isn't the most interesting part of what I've built. That distinction belongs to how the farm is structured.

First, it is genuinely circular. Alongside the poultry, I cultivate banana, mango, orange, sweet lime, sapodilla, coconut, wheat and corn, using natural farming methods and organic fertilizer. Poultry waste feeds the horticulture; the horticulture, in turn, supports the economics of the feed. This isn't a pilot project or a demonstration plot — it's a commercial-scale operation generating crores in revenue, built on principles that natural-farming advocates usually only get to discuss at a much smaller scale.

I Stopped Increasing The Bird Count

Second, and more unusually, I made a deliberate choice a few years ago to stop increasing my bird count further. In an industry where the incentive is to keep scaling until small farmers nearby get squeezed out, I capped my own growth and redirected my energy toward mentoring other farmers in allied agri-activities. My goal was never to run the biggest operation in the district, but to leave the farming community better off than I found it.

That value system carries into the next generation. My youngest son studied agriculture business management and completed an MBA; my elder son holds a Master's in Business and Management from a foreign university. Both remain part of our family farm ecosystem alongside two of my brothers — evidence, I hope, that I am building an institution meant to outlast me, not simply a business.

Challenges Beyond the Turnover Figure

None of this happened without real friction. Poultry farming in India carries disease risk that can wipe out a business overnight, as 2006 proved decisively. Access to formal credit after a catastrophic loss is genuinely difficult — the second loan in 2008 was not an easy conversation to have with any bank. Integrating natural farming methods with commercial-scale poultry meant years of trial and error with no established template to follow. And choosing to stay smaller by design, rather than keep scaling indefinitely, is a hard sell in an industry built on the opposite instinct.

Where the Opportunity Lies Now

What makes this moment notable is that my model — debt-free, low-input, circular, farmer-first — is precisely the kind of story that conversations around Atmanirbhar Bharat and doubling farmers' income have been looking for. I have since been invited to speak at institutions including IIT Bhilai, ICAR, Dr. Panjabrao Deshmukh Krishi Vidyapeeth, Maharashtra Animal and Fishery Sciences University, Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology, Singapore University, and most recently the University of Oxford's Global Research Conference.

For a region like Vidarbha, long associated with agrarian distress, I hope my journey is valuable not as an individual success story but as a replicable template. I started with Rs 3,000 on a terrace, four decades before "startup" became a word anyone used for agriculture. In many ways, I was already living it.

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