



Improving Livelihoods of Women in Tribal Communities Through Backyard Poultry

Key words : Livelihoods, Tribal Communities

The importance of backyard poultry is well recognized by Government of India and special programmes are formulated for its promotion (Khan, 1984; Sonaiya, 1996). Therefore, different states in India have taken steps for strengthening of Departmental Poultry & Duck farms under Centrally Sponsored Scheme and District Poultry Hatcheries under SGSY Infrastructure Development Fund and order to promote the low input technology birds in the backyard sector. Through this, the States expects to enhance food security at household levels and improve nutritional status (Khan,2002).

Ninety percent of rural families keep a small number of indigenous chicken and this traditional system has been employed for centuries. The major problem observed by Krishi Vigyan Kendra was problem of low weight gain and less egg per bird with high mortality in chicks. So, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Pandirimamidi mad intervention with dual purpose improved birds, which can thrive well under poor feeding and management practices followed in village, can grow faster than indigenous birds and lay more eggs, thus leading to improvement in the livelihood security. Krishi Vigyan Kendra has selected vanaraja breed as a need based intervention for tackling the problem with Deshi breed and planned to conduct front line demonstration on enhancing poultry production by introducing vanaraja breed. Vanaraja breed is selected for intervention due to multiple colours, disease resistant and withstand adverse environmental conditions, look like indigenous bird and fetch better price in terms of meat and egg in the market. The area of intervention is dominated by tribals.

Demonstration unit on backyard poultry with improved breed Vanaraja has been started at institutional farm of Krishi Vigyan Kendra with an aim to show case the technology of scientific backyard poultry production with improved variety

Vanaraja and the birds were give timely vaccination, treatment etc. up to 30 days. Krishi Vigyan Kendra organized several training and demonstration programmes on backyard poultry rearing for farm women. After that, Krishi Vigyan Kendra supplied 7350 no's of Vanaraja (30 days old) to 627 tribal women in agency area of Rampachodavaram division in East Godavari District. The tribal women received 50 per cent financial assistance from ITDA, Rampachodavaram under TRICOR subsidy scheme to all the beneficiaries.

The intervention resulted in significant improvement in the returns in comparison to traditional method of rearing poultry birds in backyards. In backyard it is observed that 65 per cent increase in live weight of Vanaraja with free range management over the deshi breed. The eggs production are also 97 per cent more and the mortality due to weak chicks & diseases are almost nil while 10-20 per cent in deshi breed. The backyard poultry units are having an average of 10 birds. Around 1500 eggs were produced which cost about Rs.4,500/- within 52 weeks of productive life. Production performance of bird is promising which an average weight of 3 kg live weight per bird at 5 months which costs about Rs.400/-. Eggs and poultry meat from their own backyard contributed to improved nutrition by becoming part of the weekly menu. The women are selling their birds at an older age. The average age of bird at sales was 12 months. Started hatching 10-12 eggs at a time by using local broody hens and sells chicks to other fellow farmers thus making a horizontal dissemination of the technology. Both production and marketing are managed and controlled by the women. The women spent the income predominantly to meet out the day to day household purpose mainly for purpose of food grains, provisions, farming inputs, educational purpose of

their children. Backyard poultry are feed with broken or waste grains & bran of other millet, pearl millet by products and other cereal mined with the wastage after processing pulses and oil seeds, and as long as these are available from the produce of the household, feed costs are negligible. No special management is required for rearing.

The intervention resulted in significant response from the FLD beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries & has become a hub for backyard poultry production with improved birds. Farm women are taking up improved backyard poultry as a potential practice leading to sustainable livelihood security. KrishiVigyan Kendra could make on excellent impact in improving the livelihood status of tribal women though relevant intervention.

Department of Horticulture
Krishi Vigyan Kendra
Rampachodavaram 533 288
Andhra Pradesh

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A Srinivas
K Dhana Sree
V Govardhan Rao
V Jyothi Swarana

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