

A success story of Ms Gitarani Barman, Sualkuchi Development Block of Kamrup dist. Assam

Poultry industry is presently one of the fastest growing sectors and has immense contribution to the Indian economy. The sector offers ample scope of income and employment to millions of farmers and others engaged in its allied activities. Chicken meat and eggs are important and rich sources of protein, vitamins and minerals for household nutritional security. Chicken is the most widely accepted meat in India and the country ranks 3rd and 5th in the world in poultry egg and meat production, respectively. According to the National Sample Survey (NSS) report on Livestock possession, the land-less, marginal and small scale farmers, which constitute about 90% of the 107 million agricultural house-holds in India, keep about 85% of the poultry stock of the country. Further, 70 percent of the world's poor depends on livestock as a component of rural livelihood and majority of those families are poultry rearers.

Backyard poultry production in villages is still the primary source of animal protein and supplementary income for rural people. Hence, growth of backyard poultry farming can contribute to enhance nutritional security and poverty reduction in the country. Backyard poultry production is a low input or no input business and is characterized by indigenous night shelter system, scavenging system, with little supplementary feeding and natural hatching of chicks, poor productivity of birds, local marketing, and no healthcare practice. A unit can be started with as low as two chickens to a large flock. Feed cost is also negligible in the system due to better utilization of agricultural by-products and leftover feed and grains.

In Assam though religious taboos were present earlier in different parts and poultry rearing was not adopted at all levels, but now with the onset of education and unemployment problems, people have started accepting poultry rearing and this can be seen in fact in the improved outcome visible as per the Livestock and Poultry Census, 2019, the total poultry has increased by 16.81% and the total poultry is 851.81 million during 2019. Over 45.78% increase in backyard poultry and total backyard poultry is 317.07 Million in 2019. The commercial poultry has increased by 4.5% and the total commercial poultry is 534.74 million.

Out of all the improvements that the backyard poultry system have been able to bring about in the lives of the rural people, one can mention here about the story of Ms Gitarani Barman, who is an educated girl of Singimari area of Sualkuchi Development Block of Kamrup district, and have taken up backyard poultry as a source of secondary income for her family.

Her father and brother are involved in agriculture and she being unemployed ,had decided to rear about 5 local chicken in her house about 2 years ago .So she bought 4 female and 1 male at around 1 month of age and started rearing them using the normal conventional method of backyard system of rearing. Gradually the females started laying eggs and after using a few for their domestic consumption, she started keeping a few for brooding, using the broody hen and slowly the number of chicken started increasing in her house. Then she started selling a few grown up chicken @ Rs 300 and also few eggs @Rs 10/egg .The arrival of money encouraged her as she was able to earn around Rs 1500- 2000 a month and that too without giving much effort or involvement of finances since the chicken were fed household kitchen waste, boiled rice, rice grains and whatever they could get during the day long scavenging period. During the night time the chicken used to stay in a small wooden shelter , that was built using a very nominal amount. In this way she had 10 – 15 birds in her stock at a time.

During my CLA Module III, field work, when I had entered this area and conducted an awareness program, in the Singimari village, I had met Ms Gitarani Barman. She was very much interested in improving her livelihood through backyard poultry rearing. So she decided to increase the number of chicken in her house. For this, she made another wooden shelter for the increased number of chicken. She purchased 20 nos of local birds from the local market and vaccinated the flock as and when required. She started maintaining a cleaner environment in the wooden shelter and maintained the bio security measures that she had learned after my intervention in her work. De-worming and occasional use of mineral supplements kept the flock away from diseases and had a good growth curve. Also she started feeding the birds in the evening before entering the night shelter instead of feeding ad libitum in the morning, which helped the birds to do enough scavenging during the day. Gradually she started selling more numbers of eggs and recently she was happy to inform that she bought a ceiling fan with the little money that she could save by selling eggs and 2 chicken.

In this way a few tips given in the awareness programme and later in the one-to-one talk helped improve the backyard poultry farming of Ms Gitarani Barman and these small changes seen after my intervention during my CLA Module III visits can be said as one of my success stories.



Fig: Showing the local grown up chicken in Ms Gitarani's house



Fig: Showing Ms Gitarani Barman busy with her daily activity



Fig: Showing night shelters constructed for the chicken



Fig: Showing Ms Gitarani Barman ,after interacting with her at the end of the awareness programme.

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