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## Empowerment of rural women in backyard poultry farming with improved breeds

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### Abstract

The present study was conducted to analyze the rearing knowledge of poultry farming which includes selection of eggs, hatching, brooding of chicks, vaccination and preparation of feed with locally available materials and socio economic status of rural women in backyard poultry farming with improved breeds in two selected villages of Vijayapura district. Thirty women beneficiaries were selected and they were trained in different management practices of poultry rearing such as preparation of poultry feed with locally available seeds and *Azolla* cultivation. Forty Swarnadhara chicks which were brooded for four weeks and vaccinated against the three important diseases (Marek disease, Ranikhet disease and infectious bursal disease) were supplied for each beneficiary. The women actively participated in poultry rearing activities under natural conditions in villages with locally available facilities. It was found that there is considerable increase in egg yield and body weight gain as it is a dual purpose breed.

**Keywords:** backyard poultry, rural women, women, empowerment

### Introduction

Women are now coming out of their seclusion and are assuming greater responsibilities in national reconstruction activities. They constitute nearly fifty percent of our population. Majority of women are unskilled and low bargaining power although it has been observed that, in general rural women contribute more than the men folk in animal husbandry activities as invisible workers (Begam, 1994 and Rehman, 1995) [2, 6]. Since independence, the government of India has emphasized the need for women's development and empowers them through implementation of various programmes and schemes all over the country. Empowerment has been defined as an active, multidimensional process which enables women to realize their full potential and power in all spheres of life (Renganathan, 2004) [5]. Self-help group approach is a silent revolution promoting women development. Backyard poultry is one of the feasible options for sustainable livelihoods and has been successfully demonstrated by several agencies. Livestock and poultry rearing is an imperative factor for improving the nutritional security of rural poor in India

(Pathak and Nath, 2013) [4]. Improved strains of backyard poultry in selected farmer's field to scale up the practice in the locality by proving their potential over the local strains at micro farming situation (Banja *et al.*, 2017) [1]. Vijayapura district of Karnataka comes under dry zone where among the livestock enterprises, poultry farming is feasible one. In the backyard farming system, farmers usually rear desi/native type chicken having low egg and meat production potential. Most of these indigenous strains exhibit poor production performances. Backyard poultry is an important component for the rural poor not only for supplementing valuable animal proteins in the form of egg and meat but for socio economic improvement of rural women by providing subsidiary income.

### Materials and Method

Thirty rural women from B. Bagewadi taluka of Vijayapura district of Karnataka were selected. They were trained on different skills of poultry rearing such as brooding, vaccination, poultry feed production with locally available seeds and *Azolla* production as a rich source of protein. The women were provided with 40, four weeks old Swarnadhara chicks. Follow up was done twice in a month. Personal information was gathered using questionnaire. Pre and post test was conducted. Data was analyzed using suitable statistical tools.

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## Results and Discussion

Training was imparted to the farm women on poultry rearing techniques. Knowledge of farm women regarding poultry rearing techniques was tested and it was found that knowledge on breeds improved by 80 percent, feed preparation by 89 percent, *Azolla* production and feeding by

95 percent and 93 percent regarding vaccination to poultry birds (Table-1). Similar results were found by Reddy et al. (2017) [3] wherein an improvement in knowledge regarding cleaning, washing and disinfecting of the brooding room, arrangement of feeders and setting of lighting, spreading of litters and acquisition of feeds and drugs was observed.

**Table 1:** Pre and post training knowledge of farm women regarding poultry rearing

Topic	Before (%)	After (%)
Knowledge on breeds	23.00	80.00
Knowledge on feed preparation	32.00	89.00
Knowledge on <i>Azolla</i> production and feeding	0.00	95.00
Knowledge on vaccination to poultry birds	15.00	93.00

Further table 2 reveals the live weight gain and economics of local and swarnadhara poultry breeds. The local breeds attained an average body weight of 0.9 kgs and Swarnadhara birds around 2.2 kgs in four months. Based on the live weight of the bird, the women earned higher price for more weight of the bird. The net returns obtained per bird in case of local

breed as 142 rupees whereas in case of swarnadhara, it was rupees 377 per bird. The B: C ratio was found to be 2.8 in case of local bird and 4.7 in case of swarnadhara birds. Among the thirty women, twenty farm women sold the birds after rearing for 4 months @ of 450 per bird.

**Table 2:** Live weight gain and economics of local and Swarnadhara poultry breeds

Breeds used	Average live wt/bird (in Kgs)	Gross Cost (Rs./bird)	Gross Returns (Rs./bird)	Net Returns (Rs./bird)	B:C
Local breeds/nati koli (4 months)	0.9	78	220	142	2.8
Swarnadhara(4 months)	2.2	103	480	377	4.7

Whereas ten women retained the birds for egg purpose and it was recorded that there was an average of 148 eggs/bird in a period of 54 weeks (Table-3). It was observed that one swarnadhara bird laid 148 eggs and local bird laid 77 eggs in

54 weeks. Further, it was also observed that the net returns per bird was higher in case of swarnadhara breed compared to local breed and the B: C ratio was found to be 1.51 in case of local breed and 2.12 in case of Swarnadhara breed.

**Table 3:** Egg production and economics of local and Swarnadhara poultry breeds

Breeds used	No of eggs laid/bird/54 weeks	Gross Cost (Rs./bird)	Gross Returns/bird (eggs*+sale of bird)	Net Returns (Rs./bird)	B:C
Local breeds/nati koli	77	455	685	230	1.51
Swarnadhara	148	490	1040	550	2.12

## Conclusion

Backyard poultry farming is mostly popular in backward and resource deprived areas of India and provides rural families with good source of income, healthy food sources i.e. meat and eggs, alleviates women status in rural society and provides employment to needy and also reduces the demand and supply gap of poultry meat and eggs. Significant limitations of backyard poultry farming in India are high death rate in chicks because of a frequent disease outbreaks, absence of framework, lower potential of desi chickens, absence of scientific information, predation, climate change and fluctuating feed supply and price all throughout year. Being the best option for the marginal and small farmers to their backup salary with very small input, this farming needs an upliftment. Hence this study was carried out. Findings revealed that the Swarnadhara breed fetched higher benefits for the farm women and hence showed more interest in rearing the improved breed and the demand for the chicks too increased. Apart from this, it also gave a balanced nutrition to their family as the easy availability and accessibility at home increased their egg consumption.

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