

Tribal Start-Up

The Success Story of a Tribal Woman Entrepreneur



Killo Jamuna, a tribal woman is resident of a small tribal habitat Killoguda in Dumbriguda Mandal of Visakhapatnam District. She lives with her husband and their only child. She has 0.5 acre backyard where she used to cultivate turmeric and other vegetables and earned ₹ 3000 - 5000 annually. However, things have changed since she took up desi (native) backyard poultry. She now earns ₹ 5000 a month, an amount she used to earn annually.

The Beginning of a Successful Tribal Start-up

It all started when Jamuna, attended a gram sabha organized by a local NGO, to form a common interest group and select entrepreneurs interested in taking up desi backyard poultry in the village. She learned that any tribal family with 0.5 acre backyard space with fruit trees is eligible to receive financial support.

Jamuna expressed her interest to start the desi backyard poultry start-up. The gram sabha finalized her application, after site verification by the technical agency, to confirm that her backyard meets the criteria of presence of shade trees, source of water, determination of her willingness to learn about poultry management, adaptation of best practices and capacity to invest in the poultry farm etc.

She attended a two day training program organized by WASSAN on desi backyard poultry management and establishing a poultry breed farm. As a part of the exposure programme, she visited a few places in the neighbouring Srikakulam district where tribal women successfully managed desi backyard poultry enterprises.

Investment and Adoption of Best Management Practices

She shared her experiences from the training and exposure visit with her husband and the couple managed to pool an amount of

₹ 20000, mostly from family savings to invest in the enterprise. She paid membership fee to join the desi poultry farming common interest group. The Department of Animal Husbandry extended support for construction of an enclosure (to keep the birds safe at night), fencing, and breeder birds and feed.

She built a fence and an enclosure with partitions to separate hens (with chicks), adolescent chicks and roosters separately. The enclosure was provided with nest boxes for hens to lay eggs. Jammuna's desi poultry breeder farm became fully operational in September 2017. The trained local community vaccinator administered vaccines once in two months to prevent Ranikhet disease. She has secured forage/feed for the birds through a tie-up with local millers for the supply of cereal bran. She followed the package of practices and achieved 80% hatchability. She updates the data on the blue card, with information of flock status, deworming, vaccination, mortality, domestic consumption, and sale of birds.

Income from the Backyard Poultry Farm

After establishment of enterprise in September 2017, Jamuna earned ₹ 60600 (7 month period) by March 2018. She earned ₹ 37600 from sale of chicks and ₹ 23000 from sale of adult birds. She tends a total of 54 hens, 10 roosters, 6 adolescents, and 52 chicks, among which 42 chicks (worth ₹ 3360) are ready for sale.

The Impact of Desi Poultry

The income from backyard poultry is often referred to as farmer's "petty cash" and continues to remain an important source of income for rural women. Backyard poultry is managed predominantly by women, thereby, remains one of their major sources of income generation. Further, backyard poultry is a low-investment venture and it can be taken up as a subsidiary activity without intervening in the daily household chores. Women use the income from backyard poultry to buy food, pay for kid's education, etc. Few women also barter small-ruminants (goat) in exchange for chicken.

She is planning to invest profits from backyard poultry into diversification and enhancement of the household income. She plans to divide the half-an-acre backyard space between backyard poultry farm and vegetable garden. The family has already invested in land preparation and nursery to grow vegetable garden, as a means to diversify household income and secure household food and nutrition.

Contribution to Household Food and Nutrition Security

The family used to consume animal protein 2-3 times a month, which usually comprises of meat of broiler chicken and commercially produced farm eggs bought from the local market. She says her family now consumes fresh eggs and chicken (meat) twice a week, which is produced in their own backyard. The family has switched to consumption of a more healthy and fresh desi chicken eggs and meat and gave up consumption of commercially produced eggs and broiler chicken.

The Role of Local Culture

She says that desi chicken is more than just meat and eggs, used as food. According to her desi chicken has significant cultural value which the improved breeds lack. Desi chicken breeds are exclusively used in local rituals and local festivals, hence highly valued locally. The price of desi chicken spikes and fetches double the price at the local market, during the local festival season. Locals use different varieties of desi chicken as per the situation and context of the local ritual/festival. She says that different desi chicken varieties are kept, keeping in mind the local preferences and demand of the local markets. She prefers to cater to the needs of her own village first and then to outside villages.

Jamuna, says she is extremely happy with her backyard poultry and feels proud when she supplies chicks to the neighbors and other women entrepreneurs interested in backyard poultry. Her story could be an inspiration to the other tribal women and may motivate other women to come forward to become entrepreneurs.

Acknowledgement

Around 129 tribal start-ups, involving tribal women entrepreneur have been developed by WASSAN, in collaboration with field partner groups and the support of the Department of Animal Husbandry, Andhra Pradesh. WASSAN would like to thank the DAH, ITDA, and Sanjeevini for their constant support and strengthening of the backyard desi poultry initiative, with an aim to improve not only food and nutritional security but also enhance the household income of tribal families.

