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Introduction of unique black chicken meat variety (Kadakhnath) in hilly areas Jammu and Kashmir, India

Mandeep Singh Azad

Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology, India

Kadakhnath is only Black Meat Chicken (BMC) breed of India. It is a native bird of Madhya Pradesh, reared mainly by the tribal communities of Bhil and Bhilala. The Kadakhnath is not the only black chicken variety in the world. China has the Silkie chicken and Indonesia the Avam Cemani. But because of indiscriminate crossbreeding with RIR and other breeds the pure Kadakhnath birds are very rarely available. It is very important to conserve and propagate this unique indigenous breed of India. Purity of native breeds has become questionable due to large-scale introduction of exotic breeds under various rural development programmes undertaken by the Government. Need of conservation and improvement of animal/poultry genetic resources has been globally accepted. Considering its unique medicinal and nutritious value, Krishi Vigyan Kendra made an attempt to introduce this variety in hilly areas of Jammu. Women farmers either remain at home or accompany men to farmer's field for labour work. There is no income coming directly to the hands of the women farmers which has resulted in their less contribution to household income and socioeconomic development. Studies have shown that backyard poultry farming results in women empowerment and socioeconomic upliftment. Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Reasi made an attempt to improve socioeconomic status of these women farmers with following objectives in mind.

- To conserve and promote popularize this unique highly nutritious, medicinal breed for the first time in Jammu and Kashmir.
- To encourage these farmers especially women to contribute to family income.
- To provide these women with small but steady source of income round the year.
- To improve nutrition requirement of their family and malnutrition.

A survey was conducted in Reasi district of Jammu (J&K) and women farmers were identified which mainly were landless small marginal farmers and mostly below poverty line. Data were collected from rural women involved in poultry rearing practices through pre structured interviews schedule. Factor analysis was performed to identify the empowerment factors. The results show that backyard poultry rearing practices empower rural women. Near about 2000 No. of birds were distributed with 15 birds per household. Farmers were given training for rearing these birds and were advised to make small wooden cages to prevent predation.

Medicinal properties of Kadakhnath:

- Kadakhnath has special medicinal value in homeopathy and a particular nervous disorder. The tribal uses kadakhnath blood in the treatment of chronic disease in human beings and its meat as aphrodisiac (Believed/Myth to infuse vigor).
- Kadakhnath chicken has a peculiar effectiveness in treating women's discuss, sterility, Menoxenic (abnormal menstruation), habitual abortion.
- Kadakhnath meat has high levels of vitamins B1,B2,B6, B12, C and E, niacin, protein, fat, calcium, phosphorus, iron, nicotinic acid etc. High levels of 18 essential amino acids as well as hormones that are required by the human body.
- The Central Food and Research Institute, Mysore, studied its medicinal qualities and found it suitable for cardiac patients as it increases blood supply to the heart.

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- This breed has evolved through natural selection in indigenous agro-ecological conditions and is well adapted to the local environment. The Kadaknath bird's reveals appreciable degree of resistance to diseases compared with other exotic breeds in its natural habitat in free range. Kadaknath birds are also resistant to extreme climatic conditions like summer heat and cold winter stress and can thrive very well under adverse environments like poor housing, poor management and poor feeding.

Result and Conclusion: These birds are being reared in open scavenging system in day time and kept in wooden or iron cages in night only. They are mostly being fed on kitchen waste, broken rice and crop and field residues. Households engaged in BYP obtain a small but steady flow of income by selling of eggs almost daily, at the rate of Rs. 10 to 12 per egg. Farmers also sell live birds at a price ranging between Rs. 800-1000 Rs/kg live weight. Although high variation among households was observed. A positive association between economic condition, availability of grains, literacy of family and income generated from birds was observed. Women farmers were advised to hatch few eggs for chick production so that the breed can be propagated. As a result of this these farm women were selling the new born chicks to nearby villages @ 60-80 Rs/chick. Around 70% of the farm women produced the next generation chicks from the parent birds given.

Biography

Mandeep Singh Azad working as scientist in Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Jammu from last 7 years. I have been a recipient of Netherland Fellowship 2017, Inter bull New Zealand fellowship, Orange Knowledge programme fellowship 2018, Netherlands. I had made around 100 research contribution in form of research papers, popular articles and abstracts in international and national Journals. Also have 3 books publications with international and national publishers.

mandeepsinghazad@gmail.com

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