

# Poultry Farming showing hopes for betterment - A story from Dadgاليا(Uttarakhand) village

Erratic rainfall, scattered holding, low production of pulses and financial constraints have emerged as key factors because of which certain villages of certain mountainous regions have suffered in incorporating protein rich food in their diet. With an increase in awareness about the importance of nutrition, backyard poultry farming, once practised by people of a specific caste, has increasingly gained popularity across the community.

Hema Devi and Janki Devi, two RSPs trained under the NMA II programme from Dadgاليا village have ensured that they not only work for their families but also inspire other community members to adopt practices to improve their nutritional status as well.

Meeting the nutritional requirements only by growing grains in the scattered land holdings that Hema and Janki Devi had, was a difficult task for them. However, under the NMA II programme they took up poultry farming as a means to compensate and work to enrich their daily diet. By rearing around 50 chicks, both Hema Devi and Janki Devi worked towards including eggs in their diet in turn improving their nutritional status as well as that of their families. This endeavour of the two RSPs helped to exhibit the benefits of backyard poultry farming in maintaining nutrition rich diet.

The two RSPs also showed how practising it has not only benefitted them in terms of raising their nutritional status but also aided in generating additional income. They raised their chicks using already available farm produce like that of millet, jhungra, wheat and green leafy vegetables. Within a couple of months both Hema Devi and Janki Devi were able to get enough eggs for themselves from the birds to meet their household nutritional requirements. As the quantity of eggs grew to a surplus, the two ladies began selling the eggs within their village and also in the market at the rate of 10 rupees per egg. Slowly in a bid to promote more villagers to practice poultry farming the two of them even sold a few of their chicks to others within the village. At a time when income generation was an all-time low around the country, Hema Devi and Janki Devi ensured they got a steady additional income through poultry farming.



Janki Devi collecting freshly laid eggs by her hens

Their efforts and results became the news around the village that led the other 60 families that lived in Dadgاليا to adopt poultry farming along with agricultural activities. Each family bought for themselves an average of 6 chicks to boost their nutrition and create an additional source of income. Upon realising the success of their endeavour, the two RSPs along with the field coordinators of Lok Chetna Manch proposed a training program for the villagers to improve their poultry farming practices.



Young girl holding her recently procured chick

Consultation with the experts in the field of poultry by the RSPs and the field coordinators of Lok Chetna Manch are also being done. Calcium rich feed is essential in the shell formation of the egg. Therefore feed rich in calcium is also being arranged to overcome this probable issue.



Hema Devi holding freshly laid eggs

The villagers have also built different kinds of structures to provide shelter to their birds in their own innovative ways. By using close-knit wires or broad knit wires for those who have 10 or more chicks and small homemade boxes for those who have fewer than 4, the villagers have tried to address the problem of shelter for the birds. However, housing the birds still remains a challenge for those who aim to expand their poultry farming. In hopes of addressing these issues field coordinators, RSPs with the support of local government departments like the Animal Husbandry and Rural Development are looking into other government schemes that could provide assistance in building shelters for the birds.



A homemade coop for the birds by a community member

The farming community of Dadgaliya village in this way have accomplished in finding a new, more sustainable way of improving their nutritional status, which has also become a boon for their finances. By adopting poultry farming along with their traditional farming practices the villagers are on the path of generating additional revenue close to that of 14,500 rupees per family annually.

Scattered landholding which had for long been an issue of great discomfort amongst the villagers in terms of obtaining enough produce for their own sustenance, nourishment and generating income has now been compensated by the adoption of poultry farming. This practice will also support in the immunity enrichment of the villagers to fight the corona pandemic. Through the tireless efforts of Hema Devi and Janki Devi with regards to generating awareness about poultry farming and its numerous nutritional benefits the farming community of Dadgaliya village is in the roads to prosperity.

■ Compiled and Edited by Shreyas Joshi