

Executive Summary

The Centrally Sponsored Rural Backyard Poultry Development Scheme of the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAH&D) of the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), Government of India (GOI), was implemented by the Department of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services (DAH&VS) of the Government of Karnataka (GOK) since 2011 in six districts (Bengaluru Rural, Bengaluru Urban, Ramanagara, Mandya, Tumakuru and Shivamogga) of the State. The total number of beneficiaries covered during the three year period from 2012-13 to 2014-2015 is 8731 (1743, 3371 and 3617 in the three financial years respectively).

Under the scheme, Low Input Technology (LIT) Breeding Stock maintained and reared by State Poultry Farms (SPFs) is distributed to Below Poverty Line (BPL) beneficiaries. As per the GOI letter number 43-8/2011-LDT (P) dated 04-07-2011 (Annexure A), an amount of Rs 240.50 lakh for 10500 BPL beneficiaries was recommended for release. Each BPL beneficiary family is given 45 Giriraja birds (fowls) in three installments of 20, 15 and 10 birds after checking the progress, at 16th and 32nd week.

The Government of Karnataka decided to evaluate the performance of the said scheme through Karnataka Evaluation Authority (KEA). KEA allotted the evaluation study to NABCONS, a wholly owned subsidiary of NABARD.

The main objectives and purposes of the study are to find/evaluate:

- a. Whether the scheme is reaching out to the BPL families?
- b. What is the performance of the Giriraja bird?
- c. Whether the nutritional and financial status of beneficiary improved?
- d. Whether it will be prudent to require the beneficiary to contribute towards cost of the bird?
- e. What changes are to be suggested for better implementation of the scheme?

The field study was conducted in the month of December 2015 (from 02.12.2015 to 30.12.2015) covering 247 sampled beneficiaries from 10 Taluks of the six Districts of the State where the scheme is being implemented. The major findings of the study are summarized below:

1. Adherence to major scheme guidelines

There was a wide variation in scheme implementation in almost all the parameters. Scheme specific, clear cut operational guidelines were not issued by State Directorate, Bengaluru. As far as the selection of beneficiaries is concerned, three out of the 247 selected sampled beneficiaries did not belong to BPL category. The selection of the beneficiaries was not done through Gram Sabha in all Taluks as envisaged in guidelines and section 3(A) (3) (c) of the Karnataka Panchayat Raj Act 1993. The cluster areas/pockets/Taluks/districts, selected/identified for scheme implementation were from commercially/industrially developed areas contrary to one of the selection criteria. In terms of checklists enclosed to GOI letter no. 43-23/2009-LDT (P) dated 26.04.2011 cluster area/pockets to be selected should be the ones where only unorganized sector is present and no commercial, industrial or even Semi is not present. The scheme results were not encouraging in the better developed areas e.g. Bengaluru North Taluk of Bengaluru Urban district. Training was not organized for the beneficiaries as well as staff of the AH & VS Department before implementing the scheme and distribution of birds. Proper selection and training of farmers would have resulted in better impact. The birds were sourced from a public sector organization (State Poultry Farms) except in Madhugiri Taluk where, one third of the birds distributed were sourced from a private party.

2. Supply of inputs

The interval between supply of batches, batch sizes and total birds supplied per family were not as per the scheme guidelines. 85% of the sampled beneficiaries did not get 45 birds as envisaged under the scheme. The other inputs namely bio shelter, feeders, waterers etc. were not supplied at all.

3. Follow up by the Department on health and life of birds

Although the department officials claimed that regular follow-up of the scheme was done, its impact of follow up was not visible. Beneficiaries maintained no follow up was done by the department.

4. Production performance

The Giriraja bird didn't perform up to the standards claimed/publicized. The average body weight of adult males and females (24 weeks) was 3.53 Kg. and 3.16 Kg., respectively and the average egg production per Giriraja hen was 104 eggs/year. These were lesser than the figures published by UAS Hebbal, regarding weight of adult male, adult female and annual egg production being 4.5 Kg, 3.5 Kg and 140 eggs, respectively. The average body weights of males and females, as also egg production differed significantly at 1% level of significance. The average egg weight was 64 gm as against 65 gm claimed in UAS leaflet. This difference was also significant at 1% level of significance.

5. Mortality

The major causes of bird mortality were predation (23%) and diseases, including stress (27% of all mortality). In stray cases (Maddur Taluk) there was high mortality due to overcrowding while transporting the birds from Taluk Headquarters to the beneficiary's villages.

6. Scheme Benefits

The nutritional and financial status of the family is believed to have improved result of scheme. But it was not possible to measure and report the extent to which this happened in the evaluation. The income from meat (including spent hens) was higher than from eggs.

7. Radiatory/Demonstration effect

The scheme didn't motivate other people in the beneficiaries' neighborhood to take up the backyard poultry farming with improved fowl (Giriraja).

8. Self-sustainability of the enterprise

All the beneficiaries expressed their willingness to continue with the Giriraja birds, provided the birds and other support services are made available.

9. Utilization of progeny of birds

Giriraja is a synthetic strain of poultry and cannot breed true in farmers' fields. The hens are poor sitters. Hence, ideally, it is alright, if the farmers have to depend on breeders/intermediaries for replacement/parent stock/fertile hatching eggs.

10. The good and bad qualities of Giriraja

The good qualities indicated by the beneficiaries include, inter alia, better/faster growth, higher body weight gain, bigger sized eggs, premium price for both meat and eggs, higher production of both meat and eggs, better taste of meat, early maturity, and persistency in laying.

The beneficiaries also indicated that the Giriraja birds are sluggish/ lazy, have strong smell and always required attention. Beneficiaries also opined that Giriraja birds are prone to predators due to lack of self-protection ability. It was felt by the beneficiaries that Giriraja birds have low resistance power against diseases.

11. Performance of the scheme since inception

During the three year implementation period, 1.79 lakh birds were distributed in six districts of the State. Out of these districts, data on target was not available for two districts viz. Bengaluru Rural and Bengaluru Urban. In the remaining four districts the overall achievement was 55% with reference to number of families covered, and 35% with reference to number of birds distributed. The aggregate target for supply of birds in these four districts was 2, 90,475 birds (6455 families @ 45 birds per family). Against this 1, 00,655 birds were supplied. Out of the 247 families only 36 families (around 15%) received a total of 45 birds i.e. full quota envisaged under the scheme.

12. Improvement in scheme implementation

There is a lot of scope for improving the scheme implementation for its success. The major areas could be proper selection of beneficiaries and scheme area, capacity building of

beneficiaries/ departmental staff, adequate arrangement for transport of birds, extension and health services. There is a need for privatization of extension and bird health services.

13. Continuity of the scheme

Notwithstanding the deficiencies observed in scheme implementation, the programme is worth up scaling in the State of Karnataka as it resulted in nutritional and economic wellbeing of the BPL families. Incidentally GOK has proposed to implement the scheme for distribution of Giriraja for all the 27 districts excluding Mandya, Tumakuru and Shivamogga on 75%- Central share and State 25% share. (Annual Administration Report 2014-15 of DAH&VS, para 3, page no. 66)

14. Backyard poultry on entrepreneur mode

Out of the 247 beneficiaries except one all others expressed their willingness to contribute their own margin ranging from 20-50% of the cost involved. Thus, there is a huge scope for up scaling the scheme through entrepreneurial mode.