



Capacity Building: An Effective Tool for Augmenting Poultry Production in Himachal Pradesh

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INTRODUCTION

Hamirpur, the smallest district of Himachal Pradesh is known for its high literacy rate and highest road density in the country. In agriculture sector, maize and wheat are the main cereal crops while in dairy sector, buffalo is the preferred milch animal. The situation in field of poultry rearing isn't encouraging as depicted by 2007 census data wherein the entire poultry population in the district was a meager 4,488 birds. There is no poultry brooding unit in the district neither under government nor in private sector and the demand for day old chicks is being met from the Govt. Hatcheries located in other parts of the state under different government schemes. Further, due to insufficient knowledge of poultry husbandry, there is heavy mortality in chicks at the farmer's level, thus discouraging the farmer to undertake poultry farming as an avenue for self employment. Hence the present intervention was planned to address these problems for augmenting poultry production in the district.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In 2008, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Hamirpur started imparting vocational trainings to potential poultry farmers at the KVK campus of six days duration covering important aspects of poultry husbandry. Similarly, few off campus trainings of one or two day's duration were also conducted to meet the demand of existing poultry farmers. Resource persons from College of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, Palampur and Central

Poultry Development Organization, North Zone, Chandigarh were invited for providing wholesome training to the stakeholders as well as farmers. During training course, besides theoretical lectures, the trainees were also taken to exposure visits to local poultry farms and were provided hand on experience on brooding of chicks, handling of birds, symptoms of healthy/sick bird and guided about the importance of balanced feeding and record keeping. The trainees were linked to Department of Animal Husbandry for various benefits being provided through different schemes like 200 chick scheme, backyard poultry scheme etc.

Table 1. Number of participants and vocational training courses organized on poultry farming at KVK, Hamirpur.

Year	Number of trainings	Participants
2008	01	20
2009	03	150
2010	02	104
2011	02	62
2012	02	58
2013	02	57

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As per Census 2012, the poultry population in district Hamirpur was 43,073 showing a tenfold increase in population in comparison to 2007 census. The increase in population was observed both in backyard and as well as commercial sectors.

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Table 2. Poultry population in district Hamirpur, Himachal Pradesh.

Poultry Population	2007	2012		
		Backyard	Commercial	Total
Hamirpur	4,488	10,492	32,581	43,073
Himachal Pradesh	8,08,431	2,54,498	8,49,978	11,04,476

Source- Livestock Census 2007 and 2012

The backyard poultry population stood at 10,492 while the poultry in farm/hatchery was 32,581. The poultry population during this period has increased both at national (12.4%) and state level (36.6%). In majority of the districts in Himachal Pradesh, poultry population has revealed a growing trend but there is no parallel to the sharp increase reported in district Hamirpur. The Department of Animal Husbandry and Mid-Himalayan Watershed Development Project were involved in promoting backyard poultry rearing and providing day old chicks to farmers in the district and the population recorded during census 2012 reflected their genuine efforts. There is no organized farm or hatchery under government or public sector in the district so the poultry population of 32,581 under the head farm/hatchery reflected the birds being reared commercially by progressive poultry farmers. These chicks were being provided by private companies/hatcheries like Venkys, Shivalik and Rainbow etc. Katoch et al (2010) reported that most important production system prevailing in the state was traditional poultry production system since commercial scale poultry enterprise has failed to pick up.

Training is a vital component for starting and successfully running an entrepreneurship in agriculture and allied sectors. In poultry farming also rearing a large commercial flock or a small backyard flock need sound knowledge and technical support. So the vocational trainings imparted by Krishi Vigyan Kendra has created a skilled workforce for rearing poultry and the poultry population figures put forth by recent census 2012 amply supports these claims. Poultry farming is now being looked upon by youngsters as a lucrative avenue to earn livelihood in district .

A momentum in favour of poultry rearing was evident in the period from 2007 to 2012. Similar trainings could not be organized at other Krishi Vigyan Kendra for want of resource person/ extension specialist of concerned discipline so it is believed that if such capacity building programmes would have been organized at other places this growth might have replicated in other districts of the state as well.

CONCLUSION

Capacity building of farmers is an effective tool to augment poultry production and such trainings should be organized at regular interval to sustain the enterprise.

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