



## Household Desi Backyard Poultry Lays the Path to Prosperity

*The Nemali Dega cock in Savara Kittamma's Backyard*

**S**avara Kittamma (42 years) and Bayappa (45 years) residents of Savara bangiguda village in Seetampeta block of Srikakulam district in Andhra Pradesh, belong to the Savara caste. Originally from Chintada, they migrated to Savara Bangiguda a decade ago. He is mason and earns a daily wage of Rs.450 when he finds work. But work is not regular. Some months are good with work available for 15-20 days. But some months go by without any work. And hence family income is very unstable.

Savara Kittamma and her husband have always reared backyard poultry (about 5 hens and 1 cock) for the family. The birds foraged in the backyard, and took shelter on the trees. They did not know about vaccinations or medicating the birds. They were left to survive the vagaries of nature. So once in a while they lost quite a few birds to predation and viral diseases.

In October 2017, they happened to attend a gram sabha in the village. ARTS, a local NGO partner of WASSAN (the lead technical spoke about desi backyard poultry (BYP) as an income source, about





vaccination and medication using ingredients available in their kitchens and how that would make a big difference to the survival of the birds.

A common interest group (CIG group) was formed in the village and they got 5 desi chicks as part of the programme in October 2018. They began vaccinating the birds regularly, following the suggestions for supplementary feed and also built a night shelter. This reduced mortality from predation and disease and also improved the health of the birds.



*Savara Bayappa providing supplementary feed to the birds*

At the weekly shanty, they were able to bargain for a better price, as the birds looked healthy and robust. They were able to sell the birds for anything between ₹ 400-700 depending on the demand. During local festivals, they were able to bargain for a higher price. They realized that desi backyard poultry was indeed a good source of income.

Bayappa (Kittamma's husband) realized during his visits to the shanty that the Aseel variety of birds were much preferred for their robust and impressive physical characteristics. They are mostly used for cock fights or as breed stock. They also sold for a much higher price, anywhere between ₹4000-5000, for one cock and 3 chicks. He added a few birds of Nemali Dega breed (Aseel variety) to his flock. Now he has sellers from as far as Rajahmundry (East Godavari district) come to him to buy them as breed stock.



*Savara Kittamma and Savara Bayappa at the pucca night shelter built in the 15 cents of land.*

The night shelter built as part of the program is no longer sufficient to accommodate kittamma's flock. So they built a pucca shed with cemented walls on 15 cents of land with cashew trees that they own close to their home. They now have a flock of about 40 birds that he wants to sell in January during the Sankaranthi festival. He hopes to get a good price.

Some of his savings from desi backyard poultry have gone into getting a pucca slab house and night shelter built. Over the course of the year, he has been able to earn ₹ 80000. Some of this high income may be attributed to his ability to read the market and incorporate the Aseel breed into his flock. He also bought 50 cents of dry land close by with the money saved from desi backyard poultry.

Kittamma and Bayappa got their daughter married after she finished her degree. They have two sons studying at the tribal hostel in Srikakulam (one son is studying in first year degree, while the other is in first year intermediate). They are proud of where they have reached and with his sons receiving an education, they believe they are on the path to prosperity.

