

## Good Practice Brief

# The Satpuda - Champion Synthetic Improved Hybrids: Replicas of Native Chicken in Rural Poultry Production

### Summary

A well organized pro poor initiative of a private company, to produce and sell a productive synthetic hybrid bird suitable for rearing in harsh agro-climatic rural has proved to be a valuable source of income for the poor households. This practice has promoted participatory, sustainable development of backyard and small scale poultry farming in the Vidharbha area of Maharashtra and bordering States of Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Madhya Pradesh in India.

This Good practice shows

- ✦ A successful effort of a private hatchery to produce a replica of Native (*Desi*) bird that looks like *Desi* but is more productive in terms of eggs laid (150-200) and body weight gained under semi scavenging system.
- ✦ Enhanced income as the beneficiary is able to earn an average of Rs 39 per bird, equivalent to 150% returns. A flock of 20 Satpuda gives an approximate annual net income of Rs 2,730 from eggs while raising 4 batches of 20 birds each for meat purpose fetches Rs 3,120 annually.
- ✦ A 700% increase in the number of households benefitted in the past 4 years; number of households rearing Satpuda rose from 5,000 in 2006 to around 40,000 in 2008 reflecting the acceptance of bird by fe/male poultry farmers.
- ✦ Easy access to meat and eggs helps to combat protein malnutrition especially amongst children.
- ✦ Contributes to the self employment of women and development of their entrepreneurial skills which in turn contributes to their empowerment. Moreover constant after-sale contact through free advisory services helps in giving confidence to new poultry rearers, facilitates capacity building and mitigating risks.
- ✦ 14 lakh (1.4 million) Day old chicks produced in 2008 and projected annual sale to cross the 15 lakh (1.5 million) mark in 2009, which clearly highlights the success of the bird.



## Background

This good practice comes from the Vidarbha region of eastern Maharashtra in Central India, a region with harsh terrain and extreme climatic conditions. In the year 2000, a private company-Yashwant Agritech Pvt Ltd (YAPL), Jalgaon introduced, Satpuda bird, a hybrid poultry bird suitable for backyard and small scale poultry production in the Buldhana District of Maharashtra. Soon the birds became successful because of their cost effectiveness and speedy returns. Since then, YAPL have been supplying DOC to Backyard and small scale poultry farmers and the number of households being impacted is increasing steadily over the past 9 years.

## How did the Good Practice Work?

The practice began with the aim of tapping the *Desi* bird<sup>1</sup> market by introducing a replica of the Native (*Desi*) bird. They worked on the concept of 'Replica of Native Fowl' that had better growth rate during the juvenile period, produced more eggs and ensured greater survivability and adaptability in rural environments. It was hypothesized that this improved bird would contribute to livelihoods of both backyard and small scale poultry farmers. YAPL developed the Satpuda bird to allow for an improved production profile under semi scavenging system. They produced two varieties of Satpuda chicken-Satpuda *Desi* for meat and Satpuda SPK for egg production.

Initially, YAPL spread awareness about the Satpuda birds through the medium of village meetings and pamphlet distribution. The inherent quality of resistance to adverse climatic conditions and its adaptability to harsh terrain with minimal inputs made the Satpuda bird a good choice for the small poultry farmers. It proved to be a good source of supplementary income and security for small land holding farmers, at times when the region experienced crop failures due to various agro-climatic and socio-cultural reasons. Availability of ready market for the table birds and eggs facilitated lucrative returns for its rearers leading to more farmers taking up the practice.

### Characteristics of Satpuda *Desi*

- ⊙ Body Conformation like Indigenous *Desi* chicken.
- ⊙ Hardy, dependable with low mortality.
- ⊙ Multiple colour mosaic plumage.
- ⊙ Pinkish skin, dull blue thinner shanks and single combed.
- ⊙ Higher ratio of muscle to bone as compared to *Desi*.
- ⊙ Leaner and less watery carcass suitable for people of all ages with more edible meat than *Desi* chicken.
- ⊙ At farms grow to 1.0 kg body weight from 2.6 kg feed. A 200-250 gm grower takes 50-60 days to attain 1 kg body weight under scavenging system.
- ⊙ Better feed conversion ratio when compared to *Desi*

The delivery chain involved hatchery personnel, distributors, small scale and backyard poultry farmers, retailers and rural and urban consumers. The *modus operandi* followed is that interested farmers contact the hatchery or the local distributor to place orders or address their queries. Marketing personnel, with the distributor, ensure chick supply at their door step. The DOCs are vaccinated against Marek's disease at the hatchery before being delivered to the distributors<sup>2</sup>. The distributors supply DOC to smaller farms (up to 500 birds) that serve as mother units to brood 3-8 week old chicks which are given to women poultry rearers who raise them for eggs and meat, after vaccination against Newcastle Disease on the 7th or the 8th day. The small scale poultry units have direct and indirect access to semi-urban markets, highway budget eateries and consumers while the backyard Poultry keepers sold live birds from their door-step or from village markets.

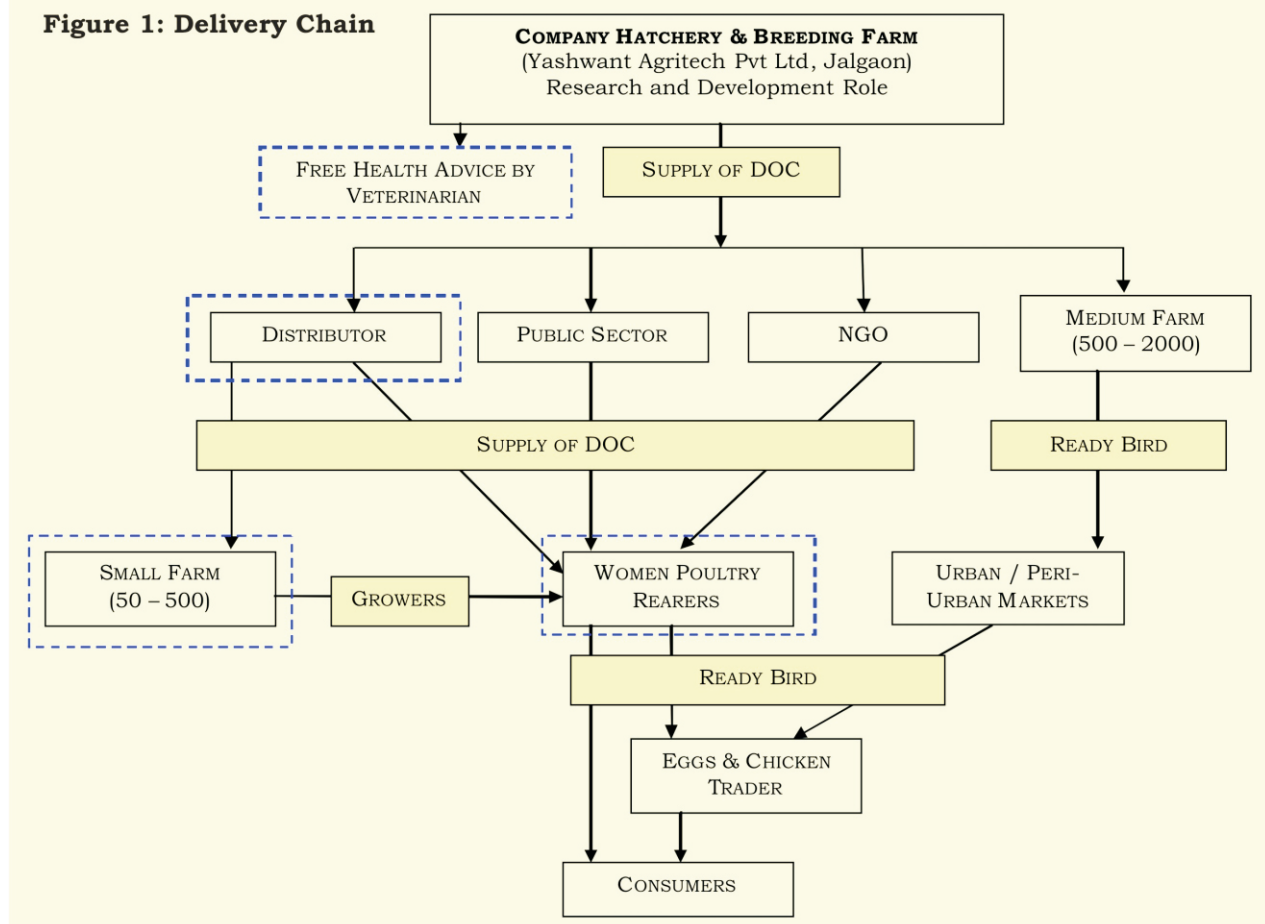
Rearers had access to free advice on basic poultry health issues by the veterinary doctor provided by YAPL and basic health services from informally trained distributors. In conjunction, farmers meetings and gatherings were arranged thrice a year, where poultry management tips and advice were given. As a result of such service and a platform for experience sharing, there was knowledge generation that benefited all the stakeholders.

<sup>1</sup>*Desi* poultry which is extremely popular because of its colourful plumage, taste and agility to ward off predators.

<sup>2</sup>Small scale farmers capable to house 1,000 or more chicks

This model succeeded because the hybrid poultry breed successfully met the cultural, social and financial expectations of the rearers. It proved to be a low-input, low-risk and beneficial investment for poultry farmers as well as all players along the delivery chain. Amongst small scale poultry farmers and distributors, its impact was seen via an **improvement in their livelihood** owing to access to an alternate income. With the backyard poultry rearing women, the practice proved to be a **means of self employment** and an opportunity to develop **entrepreneurial skills** leading to **women empowerment** due to their contribution to the household's **nutritional and financial security**.

**Figure 1: Delivery Chain**



### Critical Findings

This process has proved to be a well organised, decentralised and beneficial private sector initiative that succeeded to promote participatory sustainable development of backyard and small scale poultry farming in rural areas.

**1. Enhancement in the Income of the Poor:** Under the quick return system, the beneficiary is able to earn an average of Rs 39 per bird which is equivalent to 150% returns. The Satpuda gives a net income of Rs 3,120 annually (4 batches of 20 birds each) from meat and Rs 2,730 annually from the egg production, thus providing greater economic returns.

**2.** In the midst of recurrent crop failures when agriculture alone is not enough for the household's sustenance, poultry keeping has been proved to be a valuable source of **alternate income and financial security for small scale poultry farmers**.

**3.** Preventive vaccination at hatchery and Mother unit, access to **advisory services** on poultry health by the veterinary doctor serves as an important and critical link to mitigate diseases.

**4.** Rearing of Satpuda birds allows the beneficiary households to have easy access to meat and eggs and this in turn helps prevent malnutrition and combat protein deficiency.

5. The whole practice involves people's participation and interaction amongst various key players and this contributes to increase in their **knowledge and management acumen**. In certain villages this helps to bring forth their leadership skills, whereby they collectively decide on the selling price for better returns.

6. The presence of these birds has also helped to provide a **sense of well being for the women** and given them **greater presence and self respect** in the family as they steadily contributed to the family income.

### What and Where Next?

The overall success of the Satpuda bird caught the attention of the public sector and NGO's who expressed interest in the Satpuda bird and its impact on food security and income of poor rearers. The Madhya Pradesh Government, through its MP rural livelihoods programme, subsequently formed collaboration with the company to provide Satpuda as a livelihood mean to poor women through SHG schemes. BAIF, an NGO has co-ordinated with the company to supply chicks to poor households in their area of activity in Dhar, Barwani and Jhabua districts of Madhya Pradesh.

This practice has impacted rural population positively and it can be taken further by the enhancement of public and private partnership and linkages to pro-poor government schemes like SGSY and NREGA to increase its out-reach, promote social inclusion of women and enhance their livelihoods. It can also be made more viable by its introduction to women self help groups and the provision schemes that provide financial resources on lower interest rates to set up backyard or small holder poultry. The scaling up of the scheme has the potential for improving livelihoods, preventing malnutrition and offer financial security for the rural households.

## SOUTH ASIA Pro Poor Livestock Policy Programme

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