

LEADS DEVELOPMENT MODEL

Sustainable Livelihood Promotion Initiative

MODEL: BACKYARD POULTRY

Background

Jharkhand has a long tradition of backyard poultry rearing, particularly among tribal and rural households. It serves as an important source of supplementary income and household nutrition. However, traditional poultry practices are often characterized by low productivity. Poor-quality breeds, inadequate housing, irregular vaccination, and limited technical knowledge are some of the major constraints. As a result farmers earn low returns despite the growing demand for country chicken and eggs in both rural and urban markets.



Backyard poultry is a low-cost livelihood activity requiring very little land and investment. It can easily be managed by women and family members alongside agriculture and other household responsibilities. The adoption of improved poultry breeds, scientific management practices, timely vaccination, and proper market linkages can significantly improve productivity and profitability. It also provides a regular source of income throughout the year while improving household food and nutrition security. Among the improved breeds, Sonali, has emerged as one of the most suitable for rural livelihoods in Jharkhand. The breed is known for its higher survival rate, faster growth, and better adaptability to backyard production systems. The breed also enjoys strong consumer demand in local market making it a suitable livelihood option for small and marginal farmers.

Concept

The Backyard Poultry model is a community-based livelihood model that promotes sustainable income generation through scientific poultry rearing using improved Sonali birds. Under this model, each selected household receives 25–30 vaccinated day-old Sonali chicks. Beneficiaries also receive technical training, vaccination support, and regular handholding for scientific poultry management.

The chicks are reared under a semi-scavenging system. They utilise locally available feed resources while receiving supplementary feed during the brooding and growing stages. This approach reduces production costs and improves profitability.

The model follows a Community Revolving Asset Mechanism, to expand its reach. After the first successful production cycle, each beneficiary household transfers 10–15 healthy chicks to another eligible household. The new beneficiaries are identified by the Village Development Committee (VDC) or Self-Help Group (SHG). This revolving approach enables more families to benefit without repeated project investment. It also strengthens community ownership and ensures long-term sustainability of the programme.



Steps of Implementation

Step 1: Household Selection — Beneficiary households are identified through Gram Sabha / Village Development Committee meetings. The selection prioritizes economically vulnerable families from among the landless, small and marginal farmers. It prefers a women-led group and encourages formation of the same.

Step 2: Poultry Shed Preparation — The shed preparation follows the standard protocols and accordingly beneficiaries construct a simple 8 ft × 10 ft shed from locally available materials, with ventilation, drainage and predator protection for 25–30 birds.

Step 3: Distribution of Chicks — Each household receives 25–30 vaccinated day-old Sonali chicks, along with feeders, drinkers, starter feed and essential inputs.

Step 4: Brooding & Capacity Building — During the first 21 days chicks are reared under proper brooding conditions, while beneficiaries are trained on housing, feeding, vaccination and flock management.



Step 5: Feed & Health Management — Birds are managed under semi-scavenging system, supplemented with local grains, kitchen waste and mineral supplements. They are timely vaccination (ND, IBD, Fowl Pox) and undergo deworming treatment to ensure high survival rate.

Step 6: Flock Development — Households retain healthy breeding birds for breeding while selling surplus eggs and growers. This approach helps in maintaining a productive flock through scientific breeding.

Step 7: Revolving Asset Transfer — After the first breeding cycle, each household transfers 10–15 healthy chicks to another eligible household, expanding the programme without requiring additional investment.

Step 8: Marketing & Enterprise Development — Beneficiary households sell eggs, growers and mature birds through village markets, local traders, hotels and institutional buyers. They retain adequate breeding stock to ensure continuous flock development and sustainable income generation.

Outcome for Sustainability

25–30 to 50–60	₹20,000–30,000	₹60,000–80,000
Birds per household within 12–18 months	Estimated income in Year 1	Annual income from Year 2 onwards

1. Every household establishes a backyard poultry enterprise with 25–30 Sonali birds, naturally expanding to 50–60 within 12–18 months through scientific flock management.
2. Each household transfers 10–15 healthy chicks to another eligible family, ensuring continuous programme expansion without additional project investment.
3. Women become the primary managers of the enterprise, strengthening household income, financial decision-making and livelihood security.
4. Poultry manure is utilised as organic fertilizer, reducing cultivation costs and supporting integrated farming practices.

5. The model strengthens village-level poultry production and creates sustainable, year-round livelihood opportunities.

LEADS Experience

LEADS has successfully promoted Backyard Poultry as a sustainable livelihood intervention across rural and tribal communities in Jharkhand with support from Government departments, CSR partners, and development agencies. To date, more than 850 households have been directly supported with Sonali backyard poultry units, enabling women and vulnerable families to establish sustainable poultry enterprises. The intervention has improved household incomes, enhanced nutritional security through increased consumption of eggs and poultry meat, and strengthened women's economic participation. Through the community revolving asset mechanism, beneficiary households continue to transfer healthy chicks to new families, ensuring the gradual expansion of the programme and creating a self-sustaining, community-owned livelihood system

Concluding Remarks

Backyard Poultry is a low-cost, scalable, and sustainable livelihood model that can be successfully adopted by rural households with limited resources. By combining improved breeds, scientific management, veterinary services, and a community revolving asset mechanism, the model generates regular income, strengthens household nutrition, empowers women, and creates self-sustaining village-level poultry enterprises. With minimal external support after the initial investment, the intervention continues to expand through community participation, making it an effective strategy for long-term rural livelihood promotion.

Note: With proper brooding management, scientific feeding practices, timely vaccination, regular health monitoring, and adherence to the recommended management protocol, a bird survival rate of 90–95% can be achieved. Under normal conditions, the flock can expand from 25–30 birds to 50–60 birds within 12–18 months, enabling beneficiary households to establish a sustainable poultry enterprise while supporting additional families through the revolving asset mechanism.

