

Ornamental Bird Rearing Empowers Rural Women in 24 Parganas, West Bengal

Sundarban is known to the farmers with extremes of climate and low production in agriculture.



Here, livestock rearing can play a pivotal role for sustaining the rural economy but it depends on so many factors out of which supply of green grass, proper feeding and good quality genetic inputs are the major important factors. Moreover, the area being flood prone makes the animals susceptible to diseases. Rearing poultry, on the other hand, is related to market price fluctuation and input supply. Thus, husbandry practices often lead to economic loss leading to discouragement to that particular enterprise. The landless families having no option for alternative livelihood, used to migrate to city

areas and particularly the womenfolk are to involve in catching prawn seed (meen) from riverine areas or work as maidservant.

Considering the geographical situation as well as the untapped human resources, Ramkrishna Ashram Krishi Vigyan Kendra (RAKVK), Nimpith, South 24 Parganas entered into a new venture of promoting ornamental bird rearing at riverine blocks of Sundarban in particular and district as a whole in general. The new enterprise offers the potential of contributing to more resilient and diverse rural economies by fetching a steady income for the rural family along with risk coverage from crop failure. RAKVK, South 24 Pgs have developed a unit of ornamental birds consisting of budgerigar, cockatiels, love birds, finze both in cage (Fig-A) and in-house system (Fig-B) from where hands-on training programme for the rural womenfolk of remote Sundarban areas are imparted. Within the span of one year, KVK imparted training to 105 numbers of womenfolk and out of them 84 have started their farms with an average monthly income of Rs. 1900.

Besides, KVK through NAIP programme developed a village-Damkal- as ornamental bird village (Fig-C) where more than 50 number of households have been engaged in this income generating avenue and already 6 of them have established themselves as entrepreneur. In this village, the rural womenfolk are earning Rs. 1800-2650 per month from 6th month onwards with initial bird strength of 10 pairs. The RAKVK has also developed the doorstep marketing channel for selling the birds (Fig-D) with continuous monitoring to prevent farmers exploitation from the unscrupulous middleman.

(Source: NAIP Sub-Project on Mass Media Mobilization, DKMA with inputs from Zonal Project Director, Zone- II, ICAR, Kolkata)