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Knowledge level of backyard poultry farmers towards improved housing and feeding management in Bihar

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Abstract
Poultry keeping is being practiced by majority of the poor and marginalized rural households as one of the promising subsidiary enterprise all over India. It is a proven enterprise all over the world due to its adaptability to varied agro-climatic conditions, low investment per unit, rapid growth rate and short generation interval. Under the existing production systems, farmers are struggling to improve their backyard poultry productivity and sustainability owing to many reasons. Hence present study was done with the objective to find out the knowledge level of the backyard poultry farmers and their determinants. The present study was conducted in three purposively selected districts. Two blocks were selected out of which 50 respondents were randomly selected. Total 300 respondents were selected for the research study. The study indicated that majority (39.33%) of the respondents had high knowledge level regarding housing management followed by 35.67 per cent had medium level and 25.00 per cent had low knowledge level. It was also found that majority (39.00%) of respondents had medium knowledge level in feeding management followed by 34.67 per cent had high knowledge level and 25.33 per cent had low knowledge level. The extension agencies, public and private organisations, NGOs and various self –help groups etc. should concentrate on these variables for bringing about improvement in knowledge level of backyard poultry farmers.

Keywords: Backyard poultry farmers, knowledge level, housing, feeding

Introduction
With the recent and updated estimated population of 14, 000, 00 birds, poultry constitute the largest group of livestock share, mostly chicken, duck, and turkey (FAO, 1999) [7]. According to 19th Livestock census, total poultry population in our country is 729.2 million in which backyard poultry population contributed to only 2 per cent. Desi fowl shares 28.00 per cent in layer population in India. Total egg production in India is around 88139 million in which backyard poultry contribution is 21 per cent of total egg production. The total meat production is estimated to be about 7.4 million tonnes and poultry contributed 47.32 per cent of total meat production.

Poultry keeping in backyard is a good old practice in rural India. It is being adopted by many of the poor and marginalized rural households all over India. Most of the backyard poultry production comprises rearing of indigenous birds with poor production performance. The potentiality of indigenous birds in terms of egg production is only 70 to 80 eggs/bird/year and meat production is also very less. However, the backyard poultry production can be easily boost up with adoption of improved varieties of chicken and can promise a better production of meat and egg. To improve the socio- economic status of the traditional farmers, backyard poultry is a handy business with low- cost initial investment, but high economic return along with providing nutritional security for underprivileged community through good quality animal protein for eggs and meat. Backyard poultry farming by and large is a low input or no input venture and is characterised by indigenous night shelter, scavenging system, with little supplementary feeding, natural hatching of chicks, poor productivity of birds, local marketing (Saha, 2003).

Under the existing production systems, farmers are struggling to improve their backyard poultry productivity and sustainability owing to many reasons. For backyard poultry production to be effective and efficient, farmers need to be equipped with the necessary knowledge about poultry production, poultry by products and their economic importance as well as information on poultry marketing. Hence, the present study was taken with the objective to find out the knowledge level of the backyard poultry farmers of Bihar.

Materials and Method

The present study was conducted in three randomly selected district *viz*; Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga and Nalanda. Two blocks were randomly selected out of which 50 respondents were selected from each block, thus totalling a sample size of 300 respondents. An interview schedule was prepared to collect information from the respondents. To check its validity the interview schedule was pre-tested on 10 respondents randomly selected. The schedule was finalised after making necessary amendments in the light of pre testing experience. The data thus collected were coded for the precise conclusion.

Result and Discussion

The purpose of this study was to analyse the knowledge level regarding housing management and feeding management respectively of the backyard poultry farmers in aforesaid districts. The basic objectives of this study were to identify the knowledge level of poultry farmers possessed required level of knowledge and construct some suitable suggestions for poultry farmers.

Table 1: Knowledge level of Poultry Farmers towards improved housing practices in selected districts (N-300)

Sl. No.	Housing knowledge	Muzaffarpur (n = 100)	Darbhanga (n = 100)	Nalanda (n = 100)	Total (n = 300)
1.	Low (0-3)	21 (21)	33 (33)	21 (21)	75 (25.00)
2.	Medium (4-6)	31 (31)	46 (46)	30 (30)	107 (35.67)
3.	High (7-10)	48 (48)	21 (21)	49 (49)	118 (39.33)

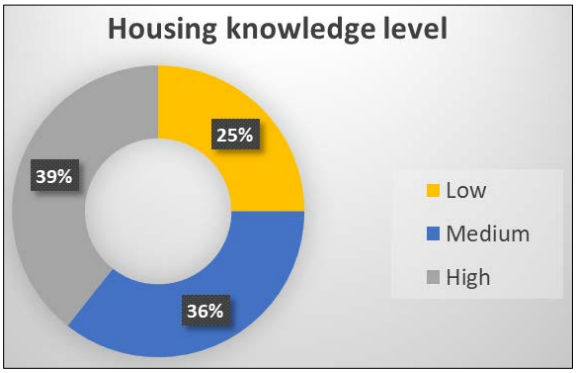

Fig 1: Figures in parenthesis shows percentage

The above Table 1 shows that the majority (39.33%) of the respondents had high knowledge regarding housing management followed by about 35.67 per cent of the respondents having medium knowledge and 25.00 per cent of the respondents had low knowledge. This might be due to the fact that backyard poultry is done mostly in free-range and had the knowledge of roofing materials, flooring, litter bed and proper ventilation. However, Nalanda district possess large no. of the respondents having high knowledge might be due to it is situated close to Patna from where respondents have greater access to the institutional services.

Table 2: Knowledge level of Poultry Farmers towards improved feeding practices in selected districts (n = 300)

Sl. No.	Feeding knowledge	Muzaffarpur (n=100)	Darbhanga (n=100)	Nalanda (n = 100)	Total (n = 300)
1.	Low (0-3)	20 (20)	23 (23)	33 (33)	76 (25.33)
2.	Medium (4-6)	27 (27)	49 (49)	41 (41)	117 (39.00)
3.	High (7-10)	53 (53)	28 (28)	23 (23)	104 (34.67)

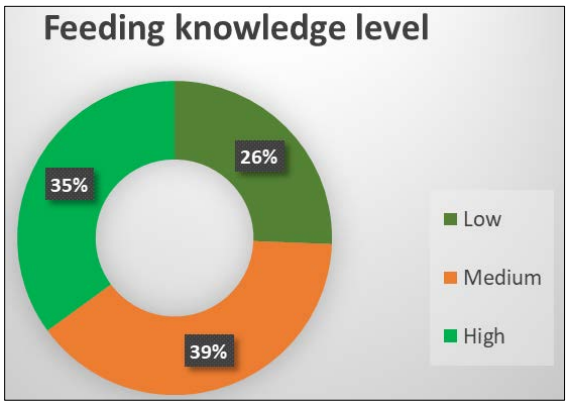

Fig 1: Figures in parenthesis shows percentage

The data in Table 2 depicts the knowledge level of the respondents in feeding management area of the backyard poultry. Pooled data reveals that about 39.00 per cent of the respondents had medium level of knowledge followed by 34.67 per cent had high level of knowledge and only 25.33 per cent had low level of knowledge. However, collectively

about 64 per cent of the respondents had low to medium level of feeding knowledge. This might be evident due to the fact that mostly in BYPF, the poultry birds are mostly reared upon vegetable waste and kitchen residue. They do not require any essential supplementary feeds.

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