

Vanaraja a Bird of Choice for Hill People

Dr. Rakesh Kumar Chaurasia

Programme Coordinator, KVK, Zunheboto, Nagaland University Nagaland 798627

Abstract – Vanaraja birds are becoming very popular among the tribal hilly people. Due to low productivity of desi fowls and high mortality farmers are now trying to adopt Vanaraja birds. In this context comparative study was done where it was found that there was a significant difference ($P<0.05$) in the body weight at day old and five weeks of age. Age at first laying varied from 180-200 in Vanaraja birds to that of 250-280 days in Desi fowls. Higher mortality rate was recorded in Desi fowls. It was concluded that Vanaraja birds were fast growing, having good egg production and low mortality.

Keywords – Vanaraja Birds, Hilly People, Desi Fowls.

I. INTRODUCTION

In Nagaland villages, chicken production under the free range and semi-intensive system is one of the viable alternatives systems for improving the livelihood of rural households which provide additional income and protein supplement in intake in rural areas. There is a wide gap between per capita consumption of egg and meat among the rural and urban people. The per capita availability of egg and meat is 45 and 2.00 kg against the recommended level of 180 eggs and 9.00 kg of meat by ICMR. To meet the growing demands of the population and to improve the per capita consumption among the rural/tribal people, backyard poultry farming in rural/tribal areas is the best alternative. Traditionally *desi* varieties are used for backyard poultry production whose production potential is very low, thus making the backyard poultry less economical. Keeping in mind that Vanaraja birds are popular among the rural/tribal women as one of the income generating activity especially for rural women the Vanaraja birds were distributed to farming community in Zunheboto district of Nagaland. The exploitation of genetically diverse stocks for improving economic traits, such as body weights and annual egg production is one of the approaches in the breeding programmes of chickens. Growth and production traits of a bird indicate its genetic constitution and adaptation with respect to the specific environment (Ahmed and Singh, 2007). In the present study Vanaraja birds developed for backyard farming at Project Directorate on Poultry, Hyderabad, India, were obtained from ICAR for NEHR region Jharnapani centre were procured for evaluation. The present study aimed at evaluating the comparative performances of Vanaraja birds with that of desi birds at farmer's field.

II. MATERIALS AND METHOD

A total of 200 Vanaraja birds procured from ICAR for NEHR Jharnapani centre were distributed to 10 farmers in Zunheboto district at different location. These birds were vaccinated and dewormed at timely interval. Data's

pertaining to growth rate, age at first laying and mortality rate were collected at monthly interval. The data were analyzed as per standard statistical methods (Snedecor and Cochran, 1994).

III. RESULTS

Data pertaining to body weight (Table no.1) at day old and at 5 months old showed a significant difference in the body weight ($P<0.05$) of Vanaraja birds to that of local/desi birds. The age at first laying in case of Vanaraja birds were comparatively very less when compared to local birds. The mortality rate of the birds was 3-5 percent in Vanaraja as compared to 10-15 percent in local birds.

Table 1: Performance of Vanaraja birds

| Particulars | Vanaraja | Local/Desi |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1.Body weight at day old (in gms) | 36.52±0.66 ^a | 22.86±0.93 ^b |
| 2.Body weight at 5 months old | 2514±34.26 ^a | 775.67±13.57 ^b |
| 3.Age at first laying | 180-200 | 250-280 |
| 4. Mortality (%) | 3-5 | 10-15 |

Means with different superscripts within a row differ significantly ($P<0.05$)

IV. DISCUSSION

The result obtained in the present study revealed that Vanaraja birds are one of the popular birds as reported by Prakash *et al.* (2005), Kumar *et al.* (2005) and Gosh *et al.* (2005). They also suggested that Vanaraja birds are more profitable than rearing of local/desi birds. A part of its adaptability potential this bird can be used and is being used for improving the productivity of local/desi birds by crossbreeding. The farmers also reported an increase in profitability of Rs.2000.00-3000.00 per month from selling of these birds thereby helping them to improve their Socio-economic condition.

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