

### **4031 Chicken Bank**

Our chickens are given to poor Adivasi families, living in the Nilgiris in South India. The Adivasis were hunter-gatherers, whose way of life was disrupted by the clearing of virgin forest for the planting of tea and coffee estates in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Adivasi were reduced to day labouring (a polite way of saying they had no regular jobs, but relied on casual work, such as coffee and tea picking).

The Adivasi families have been given small land grants, from the Indian government. Many plant some tea bushes and may have livestock such as a cow (see our Milch cow gift – code 3009). Many have chickens, if they can afford them.

The chickens are special 'country' chickens. They are small, and lay about 50 eggs a year. They are the antithesis of battery chickens. The country chickens roam freely and forage for their food. They, like bantams, can fly into the trees to escape predators.

They have to be given protection from night-time predators (hence our chicken coops) but otherwise lead very independent lives. The chickens command a premium price in the market because of their flavour! Generally, a family will build its flock and sell a chicken to meet specific bills, such as a child's school uniform or school fees.

One feature of Adivasi life is the strong co-operative consensual method of resolving communal issues. An Indian NGO, Ashwini ([www.ashwini.org](http://www.ashwini.org)) have set up a health programme for the Adivasi. This includes a health insurance premium. Those who get a chicken bank give a number of eggs to the newly established egg marketing co-op (set up as part of the chicken bank programme). The sale of these eggs pays for health insurance for the whole community – and the children get an egg a week. We hope that through your investing in a chicken bank every family can have health care.

Delivery through Ashwini