



Household Food and Nutrition Security through Promotion of Nutrition Kitchen Garden

(*Meenakshi Saxena¹, Neha Kumari², Mohini Saxena³ and D.U.M.Rao⁴)

¹SMS (Home Science), Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Kaushambi, Uttar Pradesh

²Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Extension Education, BAU, Sabour (Bihar)

³PGT Teacher, (Home Science) Delhi Public School, Sector-132, Noida, G.B.N. (U.P.)

⁴Former Principal Scientist, Division of Agriculture Extension, IARI, New Delhi

*Corresponding Author's email: meenakshisaxena801@gmail.com

Malnutrition among children, adolescent girls and boys and women has been an issue of concern and several ameliorative actions are being taken by development agencies, including Krishi vigyan kendras (KVK). This is a success story of four rural women who raised nutrition kitchen gardens in the wastelands of their homesteads with technical support by KVK, Kaushambi. The results were impressive as the rural households reported increase in vegetable consumption in their daily diet leading to balanced nutrition and improved health

Introduction

World Health Organization has estimate that about 2 billion people are undernourished, including micro-nutrients deficiency. According to UNICEF, India ranks 10th globally with respect to most numbers of children that are underweight. Agriculture plays a crucial role in rural households as it provides livelihood security, food and nutrition security. Nutrition security means that all members of the rural household, at all times, have sufficient, safe, and nutritious food for an active and healthy life. Sustainable improvements in the nutritional status of women and their children will only be possible through their balanced diets that provide all the macro- and micro-nutrients they need.

Balanced Diet

Good health depends on good food with balanced nutrition A balanced diet is one which provides all the nutrients in required amounts and proper proportions. It can easily be achieved through a blend of the four basic food groups. A balanced diet should provide around 50-60% of total calories from carbohydrates, about 10-15% from proteins and 20-30% from both visible and invisible fat. Cereals, pulses and oil & butter should in balanced proportion in our diet. In addition, a balanced diet should be rich in dietary fibre, antioxidants and phyto-chemicals which bestow positive health benefits. Spices like turmeric, ginger, garlic, cumin and cloves being rich in antioxidants protect the human body

Nutrition Garden for Nutrition Security

Nutrition is a basic human need and a prerequisite to a healthy life. A proper diet is essential from the very early stages of life for proper growth, development and to remain active. Nutrition gardens are nothing but the improved form of kitchen garden where selected vegetable crops are grown more or less systematically so as to meet the nutritional requirements of the family. Fruits and vegetables in the nutrition garden play an important role in fulfilling dietary and nutritional needs by providing households with direct access to food that can be harvested, prepared and consumed by them on a regular basis. Fruits and

vegetables groups viz., green leafy vegetables, roots and tubers and other vegetables need specific attention for addressing micro-nutrients, vitamins and minerals.

Intervention

Training on nutrition kitchen garden was given rural women of adopted villages in Muratganj block of Kaushambi district. Trials were conducted on Nutrition Kitchen Garden for four farm families with full input support. Rural women cleaned their wasteland surrounding their home, removed weeds and stones and prepared land for vegetable cultivation. They made a layout of nutrition kitchen garden by allocating land for different crops. They were provided with seeds and seedlings of different seasonal vegetables regularly in every season. They have grown several vegetables all three seasons – *kharif*, *rabi* and *zaid*. In their nutrition kitchen gardens, they planted fruit trees including guava, papaya and lemon which are growing well now.

Output

Farm families have reported that their nutrition kitchen gardens could supply around 80 percent of vegetable requirement of their families, thereby saving money and adding to balanced nutrition of their family. Family members' health has also improved due to consumption of wide variety of fresh vegetables. Rural households are happy as their food habits changed, their daily vegetable intake increased, and health and nutrition improved. are consuming more vegetables

Outcome

Nutrition gardens proved to giving double benefits: double returns on their investment and fulfilling family needs of fresh vegetables, thereby saving expenditure on vegetable purchase. Rural women expressed satisfaction with best utilization of their wasteland, fulfillment of family needs of fresh, organic and seasonal vegetables, and increase household nutrition security. Health awareness increase among rural women as they now know the value of vegetables as they are rich in iron, calcium, vitamin A, C, B 12, folic acid, etc., essential for body regulating process and act as immunity booster. In addition, rural households with nutrition kitchen gardens are earning extra income through sale of surplus seeds & seedlings, sale of surplus fresh vegetables to other village families

Impact

On witnessing directly, the benefits accrued in terms of household nutrition security and extra income from nutrition kitchen garden many neighbouring families in the villages are coming forward showing interest to learn and grow their vegetables in their own homesteads. Nutrition kitchen gardens could get social acceptance among rural households. Nutrition kitchen gardens among rural households will impact the knowledge enhancement and maximizes the impact of food and agricultural systems on nutrition security of rural people.

Future Actions

Rural people can be educated on the nutritional quality of common foods, importance and nutritional quality of various locally available foods. Education on complementary foods and its preparation helps in creating awareness about nutritious food. Women in rural households need to be taught to understand and appreciate the:

- Importance of including pulses, vegetables, fruits, milk, eggs or meat in sufficient quantities to achieve nutritional balance in the diet.
- Importance and advantages of growing a kitchen garden for regular and adequate supply of fresh vegetables to enrich their daily diet.
- Developing and promoting appropriate models of nutrition kitchen gardens for rural households will enable will knowledge conceptualization and ultimately knowledge

operationalization on nutritional aspects through nutrition sensitive agriculture. Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture (NSA) places nutritionally rich food, dietary diversity and food fortification at household level for holistic nutritional security of the communities.

Benefits of Nutrition Garden

- It is a source of fresh and nutritious vegetables for the family throughout the year.
- Nutrition Garden directly provides food and nutritional security by making access to food that can be harvested instantly, prepared and fed to family members, daily or whenever required.
- Working in the Nutrition garden refreshes the mind and inspires a positive attitude.
- Helps ensure a quality control in the production so as to maintain the food and nutritional safety of the products.
- It promotes diversity of cultivation in vegetables, fruit trees, legumes and poultry.
- It improves or maintains the whole family well nourished.
- Effective utilization of available land, kitchen waste water and kitchen waste materials

Conclusion

Developing country like India where the diets of particularly pregnant and lactating women and preschool children are deficient in micronutrients. Nutrition gardens can supplement staple-based diets with a significant portion of proteins, vitamins and minerals, leading to an enriched and balanced diet. Hence nutrition kitchen gardens in every home to ensure food and nutrition security among rural households. Nutrition Gardens aim at providing nutritious, organic and diverse fresh vegetables to the families throughout the year. A nutri-garden ensures an inexpensive, regular and handy supply of fresh vegetables, which are basic to nutrition.

References

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