

Home Garden: A Food-Based Strategy to Achieve Sustainable Impact on Household Nutrition of Resource-Poor Families in Nepal

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Abstract : Nepal has been putting its efforts into securing food and nutrition security for its citizens adopting different models and approaches. Home Garden approach, that integrates vegetables, fruits, small livestock, poultry along with other components like fish, honeybee, mushroom, spices for the promotion of nutritional security of resource-poor and disadvantaged groups was implemented during March 2009 to July 2013 spreading over 16 districts of Nepal covering 115 farmers groups, directly working with 3500 households. Sustained long-term impact of development interventions targeted to the resource-poor and disadvantaged groups has been a recurrent issue for donors, policymakers and practitioners alike. Considering the issue, a post-project evaluation was carried out in a selected project group (Dangibari of Jhapa) after four years of project completion in 2017 in order to evaluate the impact and understand the factors associated with its success. Qualitative information was collected through focus group discussion with group members and associated local institutions. For quantitative information, a quick survey was carried out to the same group members only selecting few indicators. The results are compared with the data obtained from the baseline study conducted by the project in March 2009. The impact of project intervention was evident as compared to the benchmarks established during the baseline, even after four years of project completion. The area under home garden is increased to 729 m² from 386 m² and average food self-sufficiency months increased to 10.22 from 8.11. Seven to eleven fruit species are maintained in the home gardens. An average number of vegetable species grown increased to 15.85 from 9.86. It has resulted in an increase in vegetables self-sufficient month to 8.74 from 4.74 and a huge increase in cash income NPR 6142.8 (USD 59.6) from NPR 385.7 (USD 3.9) from the sale of surplus vegetables. Coaching and mentoring including nutrition sensitization by the project staff at the beginning, inputs and technical support during the project implementation phase and projects effort on the institutional building of disadvantaged farmers were the key drivers of home garden sustainability and expansion. Specifically, package of home garden management trainings provided by the project staff, availability of group funds for buying inputs even after the project, uniting home garden group members in a cooperative, resource leveraging by local institutions through group lobbying, farmers innovations for maintaining home garden diversity and continuous backstopping support by few active members as local resource persons to other members are some additional factors contributing to sustain and/or improve the home garden status by the resource-poor and disadvantaged group.

Keywords : food-based nutrition, home garden, resource-poor and disadvantaged group, sustained impact

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