

ROLE OF WOMEN IN HOUSEHOLD FOOD SECURITY THROUGH HOME GARDENING: A CASE STUDY ON KANDYAN HOME GARDENS OF SRI LANKA

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Home gardening is a proven way of household food security. There were only few micro level studies were done which analyzed food security and women's role at household level in the Sri Lankan context. Hence, this study examined the women's role in home gardening for assuring household food security using a sample of 130 women (home gardeners and non-home-gardeners) selected from households in Medadumbara divisional secretariat in Kandy. Multistage sampling and snow ball sampling were used to select the sample size and unit of data collection, respectively. A pre-tested questionnaire was administered for data collection. Data was analyzed descriptively and statistically. The Household Dietary Diversity Scale was used to measure household food security. There were nine socio-economic factors of women studied as variables affecting household food security. The results revealed a higher dietary diversity among home-gardeners ($\mu=7.4923$) compared to the medium dietary diversity among non-home-gardeners ($\mu=5.692$). Among home-gardeners, 45% have occupations while it was 84% among non-home gardeners. A 59% of women sell foods from the home gardens and 95% of that income spends to purchase foods unavailable at household. Monthly expenditure is low among home-gardeners compared to non-home gardeners ($P<0.05$). Lower food expenses range per month (μ_1 7474, μ_c 10408) and higher saving range per month ($\mu_1=4508$, $\mu_c=3168$) were recorded in home gardener sample compared to non-home gardener sample, respectively. According to the regression analysis, education level and monthly income significantly affected the household food security in both samples. Furthermore, non-home-gardeners' household food security depended very strongly ($r_s = 0.93669$) on monthly income while it was lesser among home-gardeners ($r_s = 0.60892$). These findings confirm the importance of home gardens in household food security while highlighting the role of women who contribute to food production, earning income, dietary quality and consumption diversity. Therefore the food security policies should facilitate capacity development among women for home gardening.

Keywords: Economic value of women, Home gardening, Household food security, Women's role