

ADOPTION OF HOME GARDENING PRACTICES BY HOUSEHOLDS THROUGH SCHOOL NURSERY PROGRAMME IN TRINCOMALEE DISTRICT

A.D. WANASINGHE, C.SIVAYOGANATHAN AND R. SINGARAYAR¹

Department of Agricultural Extension, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya, Peradeniya.

¹*Integrated Food Security Project, Trincomalee*

The school garden-to-home garden programme is one of the activities supported by the Department of Agriculture and the Integrated Food Security Project, Trincomalee to increase the availability and accessibility of food. From the year 2000 to date, 55 schools participated in this programme. The school garden-to-home garden programme combines theory and practical experience. Agricultural clubs were formed in each school consisting of eight students and a teacher. Basic agricultural training was provided to the students by the Department of Agriculture. Vegetable plant nurseries and school gardens were established in the school premises and the vegetable seedlings were sold to households. This study was conducted to determine the overall adoption level of home gardening practices by the households in Trincomalee district as an impact of the school garden programme. Primary data were collected from a total of 40 students in 5 selected schools and from 50 households around the selected schools.

The results are encouraging. Seventy two percent of the students had given information to their family members whereas 68% to junior students. Also, 90% of the students planted the seedlings at home. The major problem that they encountered was fencing (61%). Knowledge (90%), practical skills (61%) and opportunities for self-employment (32%) were the main benefits gained by students. The highest proportion of households (30%) had the attitude score of 34 to 36 (out of 50) towards the school nursery programme. Eggplant (brinjal), Chilli and Capsicum were the seedlings preferred by the households (42%). The mean extent of the home garden was 0.69 acres. More than one-third of the respondents had to travel 21 to 30 km to buy the necessary inputs. The highest proportion of the households (30%) received information from the agricultural instructor in the region and about 16% from the students, that is, from their children.

For the selected agriculture practices, 36% of households scored in the range of 14 to 17 for knowledge (maximum score of 27). Also, 32% of them scored in the same range for adoption of selected agriculture practices. Almost all the students and 58% of households wanted the programme to be continued; 88% of households used home gardening for their daily food requirements. The majority (60%) of households had an overall adoption score of 7 to 9 out of 15. Inputs were the critical factor in doing home gardening. Significant positive correlations of the overall adoption score were found with information received for 'sound agricultural practices' (SAP) and knowledge levels of SAP. Knowledge and adoption of the SAP were also positively correlated. Cultivation pattern (*Yala* and *Maha*) had an association with the overall adoption.

The study concludes that students could be instrumental in disseminating agricultural information. The services of the private sector need to be promoted for a better supply of required inputs. Strengthening of agricultural clubs and continuous monitoring of its activities will ensure better adoption of home gardening practices.