

Success Story

Nutri Garden- A rich source of nutrition for rural women

¹Nishi Kumari, ²Mohit Sharma and ²Jaya Sinha

¹Project Assistant, Pradhan, ²Assistant Professor, Dr. Rajendra Prasad Central Agricultural University, Pusa Samastipur

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6615012>

Nutri garden or Poshan Vatika means that small piece of land where the people of the house grow vegetables to make sure that all in the family specially children and women should not become victim of mal-nutrition. Nutri-garden is advanced form of kitchen garden in which vegetables are grown along with fruit, herbs, spices and other useful plants such as medicinal plants as a supplementary source of food and income. For small and marginal farmers, nutri-garden produce can make a critical contribution to the family diet and provide several other benefits, particularly for women.



Setting up of Nutri Garden

Usually a nutri-garden can be established in the backyard of house where there is enough water availability. A rectangular garden is preferred to a square plot. Nearly 200 m² land is sufficient to provide vegetables throughout year for a family consisting of five members. Layout and crop allotment in nutri-garden can be modified depending on climatic and seasonal changes. Perennial vegetables should be allotted to one side of the garden so that they may neither create shade for the remaining plot nor they interfere with intercultural operations. Shade loving vegetables may be planted in perennial plots. Compost pits can be provided on the corner of nutri-garden for effective utilization of kitchen waste. After allotting areas for perennial crops, remaining portions can be divided into 6-8 equal plots for growing annual vegetable crops. By following scientific practices and crop rotation, two to three annual crops can be raised in the same plot.

For effective utilization of plot accession cropping, inter cropping and mixed cropping can be followed. Walking path should be provided at the center as well as along four sides. Since fresh vegetables from garden are directly utilized for consumption, organic manure should be used which is abundant in villages. However, in order to harvest good crop free from pest and diseases, chemicals can be utilized in limited amount. It is important that preference should be given to long duration and steady yielding crop varieties than high yielding ones.

Women empowerment and improved health status in tribal region:

Like other farm families in the remote pocket village of BHASKI Panchayat, Jaridih Block of Bokaro District Jharkhand, Mrs. Meena Devi was earlier practicing traditional subsistence farming and produced food not enough to sustain the family. She had two daughters and a son. She is a member of "Lakshmi mahila mandal" and she belongs to "Mahli" community. This community main occupation is making basket from bamboo and the major source of earning is this only. As she also belongs to same community, so doing the same activities for surviving and as a source of income. She can't even afford proper essential diet as well as daily needs for all the family members. Once in Tondra village there was a Gram sabha organised by villagers. In that gram sabha Pradan staff and cadre were also participated. One major discussion of the Sabha regarding Nutrition and Health, and most of the farm women were unaware about this discussion as they don't know how balance diet is important for their health. After the discussion of nutrition and health as a gender perspective most of the women started discussion about their sacrifice in home for food. During discussion in gramn sabha she came to know about poshan vatika. She was very keen to learn about nutrition and other improved practices to enhance nutritional status. This poshan vatika can be set by any person even those who ever having no cultivation land on large scale although they are having small plots in backyard. Through government they will get 12 types of vegetable seed and one millet (among millet they will get finger millet as this is the major source of Iron and calcium). After getting seed they will train by cadre for organic Insect pest management so that they can produce their vegetables organically and control the insect pest and disease organically. Meena took a keen interest in the training of nutri-gardens in her back yard with a land area of 200 m² which is enough for meeting the daily nutrient requirement of her family. She has worked almost single-handedly on her land to achieve the nutrition farming and other allied activities. In the very first season she was able to obtain a good yield of vegetables more than sufficient for home consumption. She also sold vegetables in nearby local markets. Other farmers from nearby villages visited her farm for farmer-to-farmer exchange and learn from her efforts

towards food and nutritional security.

Conclusions

Nutri-gardening is one of the advantageous ways to improve nutrition level in women with minimum investment. Another benefit of this initiative has been the increased awareness of nutritious food among women and their families. Nutri-garden provides a continuous supply of nutritious vegetable for the table throughout the year and additional income to family.

Cite as

Nishi Kumari, Mohit Sharma, & Jaya Sinha. (2022). Nutri Garden- A rich source of nutrition for rural women. *The Science World a Monthly E Magazine*, 2(6), 576–578.

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6615012>