

Present Status of Rural Home Gardens and their Impacts on Rural Livelihoods: A Study on Balangoda DS Division

S.U. Pinnagoda and S.H.P.Malkan^{thi}*

Department of Agribusiness Management, Sabaragamuwa University, Belihuloya, Sri Lanka

This study was conducted to investigate the present situation of home gardening in the Balangoda DS division and study their impacts on rural livelihoods. A sample of 150 households was randomly selected from farmers' lists of five GN divisions and data were collected using a survey from July to September 2017. Descriptive statistics and regression analysis were used to analyze the data. Results showed that most of the households are engaged in home gardening. In evaluating plant species available in home gardens, 18 species of vegetables and 17 species of fruits were found. Majority of the respondents are less likely to use chemical fertilizers and are preparing compost by themselves. They gain knowledge through their own experience. The two severe problems they face in home gardening are water scarcity and wild animal attacks. Furthermore except Imbulamura Grama Niladhari (GN) division, other four GN divisions are capable of fulfilling the minimum dietary requirement from the products of home gardens. In analyzing relationships, no relationship was found in between saving and the earnings from the home gardening. According to regression analysis, there is a negative relationship between purchased items from the market and farmers' time involvement in home gardening. Therefore, purchase items from the market to meet the minimum dietary requirement have reduced with increase in the time involvement in the home gardening. As per the mean analysis, majority of rural households have positive attitude towards home gardening and they are willing to develop it furthermore in future as it is highly contributing to enhance the nutrition intake of households. Proper plan for water supply in drought period and a plan to decrease the wild animal problem with the government support are the timely important factors to improve the home gardening in these areas.

Keywords: Food security, Home gardening, Minimum dietary requirement, Ratnapura district, Rural livelihood