

IMPACT OF NUTRITION GARDEN AND IEC TRAININGS ON NUTRITIONAL STATUS OF FARM FAMILIES

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ABSTRACT

Information Education & Communication (IEC) trainings on nutrition garden were conducted to create awareness and willingness among rural women to establish nutrition garden in order to increase availability of fresh fruits and vegetables for their families and to obtain cost effective means of solving micronutrient deficiency. Fifteen families were convinced to establish nutrition gardens in their backyard to enhance their nutritional status and after one year its impact was seen on the diet and nutrient intake of families. Majority of the families (46.66%) were belonging to lower socioeconomic status. All the families had negligible vegetable and fruit cultivation. The hemoglobin level of adult women and adolescent girls was found low because of lesser intake of green leafy vegetables and fruits resulting into lower intake of iron and vitamin C. After establishment of nutrition garden, average intake of micronutrients viz. calcium and iron was found to be increased.

Key words : Nutrition garden, IEC trainings, Hemoglobin,
Micronutrient, Calcium, Iron

Since time immemorial women have been playing a key role in society by conserving the basic life support system e.g. land, water, food etc. Rural women play a crucial role in agricultural development and allied fields including crop production, livestock production, horticulture, post harvest operations, storage and preservation of foods and food management for family etc. The role of mother is very important in making children consume the right amount of food of good quality at the right time. But in India, rural diets are mostly not diversified as they depend on their own produced crops for family food and further rural women are not aware of the importance of fruits and vegetables in their daily diet. As a consequence, their diets show a very small share of fruits and vegetables resulting in multi-micronutrient deficiency. So IEC programmes on nutrition garden and various other aspects of foods and nutrition were conducted with an objective of creating awareness and willingness among rural women to establish nutrition garden in order to increase availability of fresh fruits and vegetables for their families and to obtain cost effective means of solving micronutrient deficiency.

METHODOLOGY

A sample of 15 households was selected from the adopted village Jainagar of Uttarakhand state. Information

on nutritional status indicators like anthropometry, dietary and nutrient intakes, hemoglobin level of vulnerable group was collected from selected families in order to analyze the situation before intervention. Information regarding general profile of the families was taken in terms of family size, type of housing, land holding, income, crops grown and social participation. Anthropometric measurements were recorded using standard procedures (Jelliffe, 1969). Food intake was studied by 24 hour recall method (Gibson, 1990) and nutrient intake was calculated and data was expressed per adult consumption unit (Gopalan et al, 1990).

IEC programmes (lectures and demonstration) were organized on importance of nutrition garden, their management, use of green leafy vegetables, diet during pregnancy and diet during lactation in the adopted village. A training of two days was also conducted on control and prevention of anaemia among the rural community in which rural men, women and adolescent girls participated. In the training, lectures on causes, food sources of iron and ways to control anaemia were organized. Besides this a video cassette on anaemia available in the department was also played for the rural women. Then the selected families were convinced and encouraged to establish nutrition garden in their backyard or unutilized area of household to enhance their micronutrient status. Demonstration and instruction on preparation of bed, layout, planning, seed sowing and crop rotation to give them basic idea about gardening and enhancing the yield were given prior to setting up of nutrition garden. After