

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Food security is a fundamental element of the community health. Home gardening has the potential to provide an important support for individual, household and community food security. This study was aimed to assess the contribution of home gardening towards household food security.

Methods: A total of 50 home garden practicing households from 10 GN divisions of Jaffna district were covered in this cross sectional study. Direct observations and depth interviews were used to collect the information. An interviewer administered questionnaire was used to collect the information regarding the socioeconomic and demographic status of the households, food consumption patterns, and food security of the household from the housewife of each household. Univariate and multivariate regressions were performed to identify the potential risk factors for food insecurity.

Results: The prevalence of food secure, food insecure without hunger and food insecure with moderate hunger in Jaffna district was 70%, 26% and 4%, respectively. The energy contribution from home garden to the usual intake of the households was 23%. The contribution from home garden to macronutrient intake such as carbohydrate, protein and fat was 22%, 34% and 57%, respectively. The contribution from home garden to micronutrient intake such as calcium, iron, zinc, Vitamin A and Vitamin C was 71%, 44%, 35%, 54% and 64% respectively. Contribution of home garden to the Recommended Dietary Allowances to protein, iron, calcium, Vit A, and Vit C was 39%, 39%, 92%, 81% and 78% respectively. Food ratio (3.214, CI= 2.478-14.756) was positively associated with food insecurity. The Number of income generators in the household (OR=0.156, CI=0.058–0.418), mother's education level (0.233, CI=0.090-0.604), and household income (0.303, CI= 0.967-0.989) were negatively associated with food insecurity of the households.

Conclusion: Majority of the home garden practicing households in Jaffna district were food secured. Contribution to the dietary intakes of macro and micro nutrients from home gardens was significant. Home gardens significantly contribute to fulfill the Recommended Dietary Allowance of the households. Higher food ratio contributes to food insecurity, while higher income, higher education level of mother and increased number of income generators in the household provides a protection against household food insecurity. Households with home garden show higher dietary diversity score.

Key words: Home garden, household food security, nutrient intake