

Abstract

The association of own food production in rural home gardens to the food security of households was investigated. Home gardening is known as a small scale farming practice to facilitate direct access by households which facilitate to achieve diversity of nutritionally rich foods. This ensures household food security which is defined as availability, accessibility and utilization of safe and nutritious foods in all time. Objectives of this study were to compare the food security level of households having organized and without organized home gardens, to determine the relationship of daily intake of nutrients and home gardening practices and to find out the contribution of home gardening to household food security. A cross sectional study was carried out using 60 households having at least one child less than 5 years of age with organized (n=30) and without organized (n=30) home gardens in Aluthgama village, Nawalapitiya in Kandy District. Socio demographic data, information about home gardening, knowledge and attitudes and practices were collected using questionnaires. USDA Food Security core module was used to determine the household food security status. Diet diaries and Food Frequency Questionnaires were used to obtain daily nutrient and food intakes, respectively. Nutritional status of children was assessed using anthropometry.

Among the households with organized home gardens, 93% and 7% were food secured and food insecure without hunger, respectively. Among the households without organized home gardens, 79%, 7% 14% were reported as food secured, food insecure without hunger and food insecure with moderate hunger, respectively. The results show that there is no significant relationship of socio demographic factors with household food security in the study population. Daily intakes of energy (OR=26.6), calcium (OR=5.8), thiamin (OR=12.5), vitamin A (OR=8.2) and vitamin C (OR=36.6) were significantly related to home gardening practices ($p < 0.05$ at 95%CI). There was no significant difference between the mean dietary diversity score of households with organized home gardens (9.5) and without organized home gardens (8.1) ($p > 0.05$ at 95%CI). There was a significant difference in household food security status between households with organized home gardens and households without organized home gardens ($P = 0.001$ at 95% CI) in this study population.

Key words: home gardening, household food security, association