

Home Gardening and Household Food Security - Women Empowerment Issues in Urban Spatial Limits

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Abstract -- This paper explores the need for creating awareness about empowering women with household food security through home gardening. Home gardening is a new and innovative urban agriculture concept with positive advantages to women. Home gardening provides self sufficiency with fresher garden products at door, promotes self confidence among women for being part of nature and affords food security for their respective households. The issues of women empowerment through home gardens can be an effective instrument. But there are several challenges in home garden expansion in metro cities. Urban spaces are constrained by shortfall supply of water, insufficiency of garden spaces, deficit sunlight reach and conflicting land usage pattern as space is shared as apartments and community houses outnumber individual houses. All ages of women can take home gardening seriously and inculcate the advantageous to their total family wellbeing.

Indexed Terms: Home gardening, household food security, women empowerment, Issues

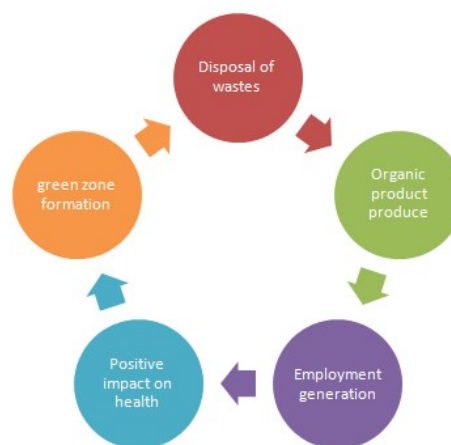
I. INTRODUCTION

By nature women always love and are concerned about their surroundings, environment and green vegetation around them, whether it is huge rural agricultural field or limited spaced roof garden in urban locales, women have been attached to flora and fauna very dearly. A lot of women feel proud to associate themselves with urban farming culture in urban metros. In between their tight schedule and work hours, the women folk wish to keep some time for gardening. Home gardening as a concept is full of advantages to women as it provides self sufficiency, self confidence and food security for their respective households. While speaking about women empowerment home gardens can be very effective tool and if taken seriously by women it can prove highly advantageous to their total family wellbeing.

Urbanization is spreading like wild fire and it is reported that by 2020 nearly 52% of the Indian

population will be residing in urban metro cities, semi urban towns and regions. The rural India cannot cope up with supplying the increasing demand for food from urban centres and home garden in urban localities can be a supportive element in providing positive impact on women health food security. Women in urban areas are suffering from several health hazards and their work hours are so tight that they hardly find time to devote to gardening. Besides spatial constraints of urban houses are also very detrimental to their health management. Home gardening is a part of the urban ecological system and it can play an important role in the urban environmental management system. As shown in this diagram the benefits for women are many

- Disposal of wastes
- Organic product produce
- Employment generation
- Positive impact on health
- Formation of a green zone



II. DISPOSAL OF WASTES

Firstly, a growing urban centre will produce more and more waste water and organic wastes. Disposal of wastes has become a serious problem. Home gardening can help to solve such problems by turning urban wastes in to a productive resource. Women can use this untreated waste resourcefully and support their home garden with organic manure.

Secondly, Quality compost used organic veggies and green leafs can fetch a good price in the urban local markets. Less chemical manure used vegetables grown in home garden have customers in the nearby houses. This also supports clean environment by containing contamination of ground water. Compost always allows an urban farmer to use less chemical fertilizers.

Thirdly, Compost making activities create employment and provide income to women, sitting at home they can engage themselves in compost marketing and selling. This attracts other women too. The use of fresh untreated waste water has the additional advantage for women as it contains lots of m nutrients. Fourthly Women can train other women in compost making, reusing urban waste, marketing and selling organic vegetables. This creates health awareness and this healthy food consumption helps women recover their health problems without visiting a doctor.

Fifthly , Technologies such as hydroponics or organoponics drip irrigation zero tillage etc substantially reduce water needs and health risks and are very interesting for the urban environments an d women can actively engage in these activities.

Lastly, Home gardening also helps with positive impact on greening and cleaning of the city by turning open spaces into garden or green zones. This will support micro climate at home such as shade temperatures sequestration etc. Degraded open spaces and vacant land are often used as informal waste dumpsites and are a source of health problems. Such waste zones can be turned into productive green spaces. It solves unhealthy situations at home and offers good landscaping treat to eyes. Women and children can enjoy the green area. Such activities may

also enhance community self esteem in the neighborhood and stimulate other actions for improving the community's livelihood.

III. WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

1. Home gardening can contribute to creation of awareness about ecology and environment concerns.
2. Women will learn to know about disasters disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate change by reducing runoff keeping flood plains free from concrete constriction reducing urban temperatures change in reducing runoffs, squeezing dust.
3. This also benefits growing and consuming fresh vegetables and leafy vegetable is good for everyday energy and saves from expenditures on medicines.
4. This also helps women to save their energy which is otherwise spent on transport, cooling, processing and packaging.
5. Besides all these benefits, women come to know the facts that productive use of and reuse of organic waste reduces methane gas emission from landfills and energy use in fertilizer production.
6. A Home garden solves detrimental situations at home and offers good landscaping treat to one's eyes. A green zone solves many health related issues.
7. Women and children can enjoy the green area. This also answers women participation in community development and greener pastures awareness programs. As women can find employment through joining hands with NGOs or establishing help line centres to train / facilitate other likeminded women.
8. Such activities may also enhance community self esteem in the neighbourhood and stimulate other such constructive actions for improving the community's livelihood.
9. Women are the harbingers of good habits among family members. Children who learn a lot from mothers can be educated in these good habits and a generation will benefit from good greener inclinations.

IV. CHALLENGES ON HOME GARDEN

Home gardening benefits are more compared to its disadvantages but still there are several challenges for women in application of home garden concept in their homes.

1. Home garden initiatives are slowly spreading in Indian cities and the slow growth is due to lack of awareness.
2. Home garden needs constant care and meticulous supervision. Women who work in offices or small establishment hardly find time to look after gardens.
3. All other member of the family also need to join hands with women in looking after the garden, but in majority of cases it is seen that only the women members take interest and other male members keep distance from maintaining home garden or supporting women in their home garden endeavours.
4. Studies have shown that some women lose interest in home garden soon after initial endeavours fail or gardens do not yield as per expectations.
5. Home garden concept is not that easy to implement in urban Indian homes as spatial limitation play major role in its consistent maintenance and expansion.
6. Local governments can come up with initiatives such as prize money for best maintained home garden, free supply of saplings, free seed supply, projection of home gardens at community functions etc.

V. CONCLUSION

Thus, new and innovative strategies to create sustainable opportunities for women can be conceived through spread of home garden initiative in urban locals. Women can find solace with positive improvements in their health status and positive support to their household expenditure. Women can become more alert about environmental issues. Women love towards home needs and health issues. Women can become more aware of the health issues in the urban limitations. In spite of all challenges of urban living, women are focusing on home gardens

which are a good sign but there are lots of initiatives to be given for women who strive towards achieving greener spaces.

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