

FEASIBILITY STUDY OF CONVERTING HOME GARDENS INTO AN INCOME GENERATION MODEL IN *ELAYAPATHTHUWA* AREA

W.A.C.B. Wickramanayake, G.A.S. Ginigaddara and A.N. Kodithuwakku

Department of Agricultural Systems, Faculty of Agriculture, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka.

This study was conducted to assess the feasibility of converting unorganized home gardens in the *Elayapaththuwa* area as an income generation model, addressing economic crises, poor health conditions, limited educational access, and family tensions faced by residents. Financial pressures led to the abandonment of agriculture by many families because income from agriculture is seasonal and not sufficient to fulfill household requirements. Data were collected from randomly selected 100 households through a pre-tested questionnaire to analyze socioeconomic characteristics, income generation potential from home gardens, and factors hindering their successful economic utilization. Data were analyzed through descriptive statistics and linear regression using SPSS software. The analysis indicated that the majority of respondents were male (79%) and aged over 40 years (78%), with 69% possessing educational attainment up to the ordinary level. Furthermore, only 25% of respondents were employed in the agricultural sector, while the remaining 75% were engaged in non-agricultural occupations. The average monthly income among respondents was 62,853.00 rupees, and 60% and 28% of this income was allocated toward food and household expenses, respectively. The analysis of home gardening potential in the area shows that all participants have over 0.25 acres of land, reliable water sources, basic gardening tools, and labor availability. However, barriers to income generation include limited market access (85%), lack of extension services (85%), insufficient training (78%), restricted access to seeds (85%) and fertilizers (63%), and challenges with wild animals (100%). Regression analysis indicated that hours spent on home gardening and land size significantly influence higher income generation. The study of successful dry-zone home gardens underscores the importance of strong market access, initial financial support, and enhanced extension and training services. Implementing these improvements could enable the *Elayapaththuwa* area to establish home gardening as an effective income-generation model.

Keywords: Dry zone home gardens, Market access, Sustainable livelihoods