

DEVELOPMENT OF A SELF-LEARNING CD-ROM TO PROMOTE THE KITCHEN GARDEN CONCEPT AMONG THE RURAL HOUSEHOLDS

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Home-gardening has been identified as a successful mean to improve household food security in resource poor communities. "Kitchen gardening" is a concept of home gardening with less inputs and minimal production factors. This research project was conducted with the main objective of developing a CD-ROM as a self-directed learning material to promote and disseminate the "kitchen garden" concept. Prior to the production of the CD-ROM, a preliminary survey with a sample of 60 randomly selected households from three purposively selected Gramasewa Niladari divisions in the central province was conducted to investigate the feasibility, identify the content and presentation style of the CD-ROM. A sequence of activities namely the technical message development, script writing, recording visuals and narration, audio mixing and editing were undertaken in product development phase, based on the findings of the preliminary survey. Thirty five randomly selected households from the same Gramasewa Niladari divisions were selected to pre-test the CD-ROM by comparing the knowledge and perceptions on home gardening before and after the exposure to the CD-ROM. Majority (80%) of the rural households own a CD/DVD player. Nearly 43% of the respondents suggested the self learning CD-ROM is an excellent method to disseminate agricultural information. Findings showed the level of knowledge of the respondents on all aspects of the "kitchen garden" concept has significantly changed as per the "Wilcoxon signed rank" test. Pre-test further revealed that the interest towards home gardening of rural households have increased from 41% to 72% after the exposure to the contents of the CD-ROM. Study reveals the CD-ROM is capable of disseminating information and motivating people towards home gardening. Recommendations can be made to improve the production by incorporating interactive features and making a Tamil version of the CD-ROM. This would be needed to expand its potential user base.

Key words: CD-ROM, Kitchen garden, Self learning