

Nutrition Garden, an epitome of balance diet

When market driven agriculture is exerting pressure over the rural agriculture, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV), Hindoli, Bundi stands to respond to the critical phenomenon. The school has developed a nutrition garden to demonstrate chemical free agriculture and serve a new means to save money. Looked after by the girls of KGBV the garden is a source of diverse vegetables which constitutes balance diet. Cultivation of the vegetables has also addressed the dryland farming practice which will be further promoted as a good agriculture practices in the community. The initiative was taken by the Head Mistress (HM) of the school when she was empowered to ponder over to make such progress with the support of "Project Prajwala." Project Prajwala is a joint initiative of National Stock Exchange Foundation and Rajasthan Elementary Education Council, being implemented by Centre for Environment Education (CEE) as knowledge and implementation partner and UNICEF as technical partner.

To inculcate the practices among the girls the Child Cabinet and Adolescent Girls Groups need to be formed. The institutions through their ministers will ensure the good habits practiced by the girls. For the Environment Minister of Child Cabinet it becomes mandatory to invigorate school environment. This can be done by developing a nutrition garden. According to the Head Mistress "they had already a garden set up in their school campus". "To address the health disorders caused due to application of chemical fertilizers the garden is a best case to demonstrate the use of organic manure", she added. A compost pit is functional to decompose the wet waste.

A WASH Kit provided to school further provided seeds of spinach, coriander, brinjal, chilli, tomato, bottle gourd, and ridge gourd to the school, consisting of 108 girl students. Onion, beet root and fenugreek were added by the school, says the Warden of the school. The environment minister engaged other girls in seed sowing in the new area designated in front of the entrance gate.

The cabinet members say "we started with nursery raising for brinjal, chilli and tomato. We dig plant beds with the help of school guard and cooks. The seedlings were transplanted to the beds designated for each vegetable. Coriander and spinach were sown directly in the beds". Beet root was planted on the ridges raised around the plant beds. For proper identification and uses of the vegetables name plates were placed in front of the vegetables. Cabinet members water the garden during evening and plough the soil to maintain aeration. Weeding is assisted with school guard. "We are daily harvesting vegetables from the garden which we use in cooking", says a cook.

Adding a new chapter to the balance diet the garden epitomizes intake of balance diet for girls and women from the community. The cultivation method will help girls in future to enhance livelihoods as it is one of the good agricultural practices to increase the agricultural yield and addresses climate change in arid regions.



Nutrition garden at KGBV, Hindoli



Girls engaged in weeding exercise at Nutrition garden



A cook harvests vegetable from the nutrition garden for cooking