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The Cultivation of Vegetables in the Central Hills and Mountains of Nepal — Implications for Poverty and Food Security

GANESH RAJ JOSHI¹, LILA KARKI²

¹*Department of Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Government of Nepal, Nepal*

²*Justus-Liebig-University Giessen, Institute of Agriculture and Food Systems Management, Germany*

Abstract

The vegetables and potato are the important crops in terms of nutrition and income in Nepal. These crops share about 7 percent of the total gross cropped area. The area and production of these crops is increasing in the recent years especially in the mountains and hills with the development of roads and marketing infrastructures.

A study was undertaken with a view to identify the factors that determine the area allocation decision under vegetables and potato by 176 farming households in the mountains and hills of the central development region of Nepal. The study reveals that on an average, a household allocated 0.25 hectare area to these crops and also these crops contributed about 27 percent to the total cash income of the household. The area allocation decision of the household was analysed by using a two-limit tobit procedure because about 7 percent of sampled household did not allocate any area for these crops. The analysis showed that the education of the household head, nearness of the villages to the road heads and markets and the training imparted to farmers on vegetable crops have significant and positive effect on the area allocation. On the other hand, the area under the competing crops such as wheat during winter season and the maize during rainy season has negative significant effect on the vegetables' area allocation. This is because farmers' in these regions especially in the inaccessible areas still prioritise the cultivation of staple crops from the perspective of household food security. The findings of this study have important implication for reducing poverty and strengthening food security. This can be achieved through developing and improving the roads and markets, strengthening the technical capability of the farmers by education and imparting trainings and strengthening existing extension services and network.

Keywords: Cultivation, food security, Hills, Mountains , Vegetables