

## Integrated home garden : Assests of Rural Women

Barsati Chaudhary is a Tharu woman living in a mixed community of Pahadi and terai (Vadasha-8, Rupandehi). Her family owns 6 kattha lands in total and depends on the income from wage laboring. They have about 3 kattha land as home garden which, until the project intervention, was not properly managed and used to its capacity. Number and diversity of home garden species was minimal and not sufficient to meet their daily and year round vegetable needs. The family was spending their hard-earned wages to purchase vegetables and other items from Indian vegetable vendor and local markets.

After the project intervention, Barsati Chaudhary, as a member of the project's group, received different technical and resource support to improve her home garden composition and management. With these supports, she has improved her home garden and got maximum benefit out of it. Her home garden now comprises local and diversified species of vegetables, spices and fruits, ornamental, medicinal and fodder species, livestock and kitchen fish pond in a well planned and managed system maximizing the temporal and spatial diversity. She expressed her satisfaction saying, "The size of my home garden is same as it was before, but now with proper management, it has not only saved my money but also has become an important source of income by selling the surplus food. I earned Rs. 5000-6000 per year by selling surplus vegetables, fruits, spices and mushroom from my home garden." She has also established mango nursery with the technical support from the project. She has been raising saplings of different mango varieties. Till now, she has earned Rs. 6000 from the nursery by selling the saplings to the local markets and also to other members within the village. She has developed her home garden as a resource garden in the village. Other members of the community are regularly visiting her garden to learn cultivation practice, space utilization and other management practices. She has been providing technical backstopping to other members of the village to improve their home gardens. Farmers are very happy to have Barsati as well trained and resourceful member of their community. Mrs. Chaudhary, being a woman from Tharu community, has demonstrated herself as a role model and active female member in a society where men still have a dominant social position and traditional divisions of labor and responsibility. LIBIRD has recognized her outstanding contribution in promotion of home gardens for quality livelihood enhancement and honored her "Innovative Women Award, 2006."