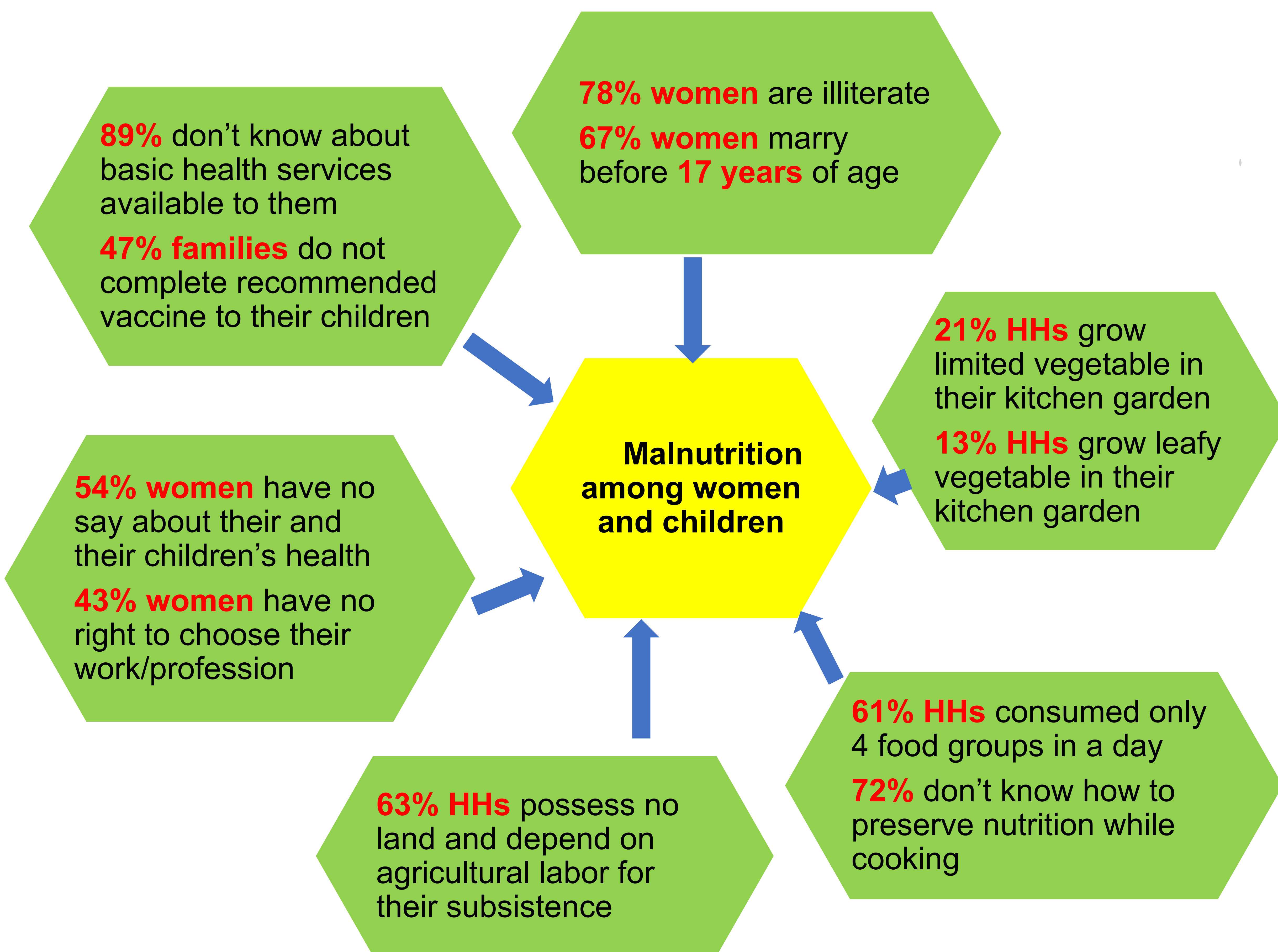


### 1. Objective

To identify drivers of malnutrition among Mushahar children and pregnant or lactating women and seek sustained solutions for better nutritional outcomes..

### 2. Identification of Causes of Malnutrition

In **2020**, CARE Nepal conducted a baseline survey among **92 Musahar** pregnant and lactating women from Sakhuwanankarkatti and Bhagwanpur Rural Municipality in Siraha District. The graphics below illustrate the primary factors contributing to malnutrition among children and women in the pregnant and lactating stages.



### 3. Source of Food and Nutrition Security

For generations, the majority of Musahar community members have faced deprivation of agricultural resources, despite relying on agriculture as their primary livelihood. Women often engage in low-paying agricultural labor, while male members migrate to India for seasonal work due to limited employment opportunities. Alarmingly, approximately **63%** of families do not possess land even for basic shelter, such as small huts.

### 4. CARE's Pathways to Sustained Nutrition and Livelihoods

- CARE Nepal and National Farmers Group Federation (NFGF) empowered landless women farmers, organizing them into groups and providing VSLA training.
- These groups were connected to wider networks, promoting advocacy for their rights in civil spaces.
- Collective efforts granted access to leased land, ponds, seeds, tools, and technical support for diversified nutrition gardening.
- This transition shifted their focus from wage labor to subsistence producers and eventually becoming market-oriented producers.
- Community sessions improved nutritional behaviors and addressed harmful social norms.
- Various events educated women on their citizen rights related to health and nutrition.



### 5. Outcomes

- **654** landless households secured production resources through leasehold efforts, earning an average of **72,000** annually from surplus sales.
- **2,241** nutrition-vulnerable families now maintain diversified nutrition gardens and consume more than six food groups daily.
- Women's groups operate farmer field schools to enhance nutrition behaviors, leading to improved child feeding practices and reduced malpractices, including awareness of the impact of junk food.
- Women are informed about their entitlements and have begun voicing their concerns collectively.
- Out-of-school adolescent girls rejoin after accelerated learning classes, contributing to a significant reduction in early marriage rates with more literate women and girls.