

## Entrepreneurship development for farm women through mushroom cultivation

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### ABSTRACT

*One hundred farm women of Pipili block of Khurda district of Orissa were selected to impart training on mushroom cultivation. Then impact assessment was done to know the socio-economic development after mushroom cultivation, constraints face by them and future suggestions. The study revealed that 70% of women mushroom growers had improved their occupation followed by improvement in 'standard of living' (36%), 'better saving' (30%), 'knowledge and attitude' (24%) and 'social status' (10%). As perceived by the farm women, they face the maximum constraint in 'value added items' and least problem in 'lack of awareness in mushroom cultivation'. Sixty percent of the respondents stated that lack of 'quality supply of spawn bottle', 'practical manual for cultivation' and 'insurance' were the three major constraints for successful mushroom entrepreneurship.*

*Key words: Mushroom enterprise, SHG and farm women*

India produces about 273.3 mt of crop residues annually and if only 0.5% of it is utilized for mushroom production then we can produce about 300000 tones of mushroom. But mushroom cultivation was restricted in certain rural villages especially among women folk due to some social constraints like family restriction, ethos, rituals and superstition. If we are able to eradicate such problems and motivate women self help groups (SHG) to manage their mushroom units in the form of entrepreneurship then farm women will be empowered socially, economically and nutritionally through self employment. Keeping in view the prosperity of mushroom enterprise, the present study was undertaken to know the socio economic profile of women mushroom growers, to assess the impact of mushroom technology and to identify the constraints faced by women mushroom growers.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in Pipili block under Khurda district of Orissa. One hundred women paddy straw mushroom growers were selected as respondents from five Self Help Groups (20 members from each SHG). The variables viz; age, education, caste, land holding, annual income, family type, family size and mode of

cultivation were taken under the socio economic profile of women mushroom growers. The data was collected by using pre-structured interview schedule through concurrent evaluation and open ended questionnaires.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Majority of the farmwomen were within the age group of 36-45 years (36.00%), having educational level up to 10<sup>th</sup> standard (24.00%) and land size up to one acre (48.00%) (Table 1) . Most of them were from other backward class (OBC) (44.00%) with medium annual income of Rs.10001to Rs.20000 (40.00%) and were living in nuclear families (80.00%) having 5 to 7 family members (40.00%). Their mode of cultivation was through Self Help Group (70.00%). According to Matthai (1978) rural entrepreneurship developed on group or cooperative basis is more effective, fruitful and durable. It is found that mutual reinforcement in group or cooperative entrepreneurship reduces various risks involved. The impact assessment was done to evaluate the enterprise and the response collected is presented in Table 2.

The impact studies on socio-economic status of mushroom growers showed 70.00% of women

**Table 1. Socio economic profile of the women mushroom growers (n=100)**

Socio economic profile	Frequency	Percentage
1. Age		
i. Young age (up to 25)	10	10.00
ii. Middle age (26-35)	30	30.00
iii. Adult (36-45)	36	36.00
iv. Old age (46 and above)	24	24.00
Total	100	100.00
2. Education		
i. Illiterate	16	16.00
ii. Pre-primary (up to 5 <sup>th</sup> std.)	24	24.00
iii. Primary (5 <sup>th</sup> to 7 <sup>th</sup> Std.)	20	20.00
iv. Secondary (8 <sup>th</sup> to 10 <sup>th</sup> std.)	24	24.00
v. College (+2 and above)	16	16.00
Total	100	100.00
3. Caste		
i. SC / ST	16	16.00
ii. OBC	44	44.00
iii. General	40	40.00
Total	100	100.00
4. Land holding		
i. Up to 1 acre	48	48.00
ii. 1-1.5 acre	24	24.00
iii. 1.6 – 2.5 acre	10	10.00
iv. 2.6 – 3.5 acre	10	10.00
v. 3.6 – 5.0 acre	8	8.00
Total	100	100.00
5. Annual Income (Rs.)		
i. Low (Up to 10000)	24	24.00
ii. Medium (10001 – 20000)	40	40.00
iii. High (20001 – 30000)	36	36.00
Total	100	100.00
6. Family type		
i. Nuclear	80	80.00
ii. Joint	20	20.00
Total	100	100.00
7. Family size		
i. Small (Up to 4)	28	28.00
ii. Medium (5-7)	40	40.00
iii. Large (>8)	32	32.00
Total	100	100.00
8. Mode of cultivation		
i. Group (SHG)	70	70.00
ii. Individual	30	30.00
Total	100	100.00

mushroom growers had improved their occupation which ranked 1st, followed by improvement in 'standard of living' (36.00%), 'savings' (30.00%), 'knowledge and attitude' (24.00%) whereas the improvement of social status was the least (10.00%).

To know the constraints perceived by women mushroom growers during mushroom cultivation, the women respondents' feedback were collected through

several open ended questions and also was asked to rank their constraints in a systematic order.

It was concluded that the value added items in mushroom is the 1<sup>st</sup> problem as 80.00 % of them opined that women entrepreneurship through mushroom farming can be successful only if value added items in mushroom can be given due importance. Similarly the other constraints perceived by the respondents in order of importance were, non-availability of quality spawn (70%), lack of storage and preservation (64%), marketing (60%), lack of information (44%), exploitation by middlemen (44%), unhygienic condition (36%), fluctuation in market price (30%), ecological imbalance (24%) and improper training (20%) respectively. Training need is a very important aspect for the enterprenurers and a study undertaken by NRC for Mushroom indicated that majority of enterprenurers (70.48%) perceived all the aspects of mushroom cultivation as "most needed training needs" followed by "needed" (27.85%) and "least needed" (1.67%) (Annual report NRC for mushroom, 2004-05).

The women respondents gave their suggestions for developing mushroom enterprise (Table 4). It was concluded that quality supply of spawn, practical manual for cultivation and insurance are the three major suggestions as 60.00% of the respondents viewed that without such component mushroom entrepreneurship can not be boosted up. Besides, 56.00% of the respondents suggested small scale entrepreneurship to be set up for the value added products of mushroom against 50.00% who suggested marketing aspect of mushroom to be covered thoroughly. Market research is needed to identify the need of the customers as market research helps in planning the future requirements of the enterprise coping with the fast changing environment (Dwar 1986).

The global trade of fresh and dehydrated mushroom is only 10 per cent of the total business. So there is a wide gap between demand and supply of mushrooms. Hence development of women entrepreneurship through mushroom farming is the need of the hour and in order to utilize their leisure time and become self sufficient. To empower the women and their entrepreneurship, public finance systems should finance such profitable ventures. Women's cell in rural bank branches is expected to increase women's access to institutional credit. These provisions will help to

**Table 2. Impact assessment of mushroom enterprise on the socio-economic condition of farm women (n=100)**

Parameters	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Improvement in occupation	70	70.00	I
Improvement in standard of living	36	36.00	II
Better saving	30	30.00	III
Improvement in knowledge and attitude	24	24.00	IV
Purchase of land	20	20.00	V
Better food, clothing and shelter	20	20.00	V
Creation of employment	20	20.00	V
Improvement in home appliances	16	16.00	VI
Purchase of farm machinery and animal	16	16.00	VI
Improvement of social status	10	10.00	VII

**Table 3. Constraints perceived by the farmwomen in adopting mushroom cultivation technology (n=100)**

Parameters	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Value added items	80	80.00	I
Non availability of quality spawn	70	70.00	II
Lack of storage and preservation	64	64.00	III
Marketing problem in village and near village	60	60.00	IV
Distress sale	60	60.00	IV
Bankable loans for commercial cultivation	60	60.00	IV
Exploitation by middle man	44	44.00	V
Lack of proper information	44	44.00	V
Unhygienic condition	36	36.00	VI
Fluctuation in market rates	30	30.00	VII
Climatic fluctuation/ ecological imbalance	24	24.00	VIII
Improper training	20	20.00	IX
Bargaining price	20	20.00	IX
Lack of awareness about training programme on Mushroom cultivation	16	16.00	X

**Table 4. Suggestions given by the respondents in developing mushroom enterprise (n=100)**

Parameters	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Timely supply of quality spawn	60	60.00	I
Insurance of the crop	60	60.00	I
Practical manual provided	60	60.00	I
Establishment of small scale entrepreneurship	56	56.00	II
Marketing aspects should be covered thoroughly	50	50.00	III
Proper transport facility	44	44.00	IV
Reducing cost input	40	40.00	V
Hygienic condition	40	40.00	V
Improved management practices	36	36.00	VI
Training programme and regular field visit	30	30.00	VII
Demonstration	30	30.00	VII
Storage, preservation and value added aspects	20	20.00	VIII

increase women's participation in economic development of the family as well as the society.

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