Entrepreneurship development among rural women through vocational trainings on mushroom production technology

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ABSTRACT

Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Bawal, Haryana, established under the aegis of CCS Haryana Agricultural University, is playing a pivot role in economic empowerment particularly of small farmers, farm women, unemployed youth and landless labourers by organising skill-oriented trainings and establishment of small enterprises which in turn would improve the quality of life of rural families. The present study was carried out in Rewari district of Haryana on 100 randomly selected rural women with respect to entrepreneurship development in mushroom production and assess their social acceptability for mushrooms. The study was carried out using a pre-tested structured interview schedule. Economic viability of the mushroom production was proved as the mushroom yield ranged from 70 to 110 kg/100 kg wheat straw and total income from 100 kg wheat straw ranged from Rs 5,600.00 to 13,200.00 with net profit of Rs 3.800.00 to 10,200.00 in six months. Sixty nine per cent rural women socially accepted the mushroom production as an income generation activity.

Keywords: Mushroom; rural women; entrepreneurship; income

INTRODUCTION

Rural women (rural farmers, farm women and landless labourers) play a crucial role in agricultural development and allied fields including crop production, livestock rearing, horticulture, post-harvest operations, fisheries, mushroom production etc. In addition to their role in agricultural production, farmers are gainfully employed in agri-based allied activities like dairying, animal husbandry, poultry, goatery, rabbit rearing, beekeeping, mushroom production, floriculture, horticulture, fruit preservation, post-harvest technology, value-added food products etc. Their roles range from managers to landless labourers. As per Census 2011, 65 per cent of the total female workers in India are engaged in agriculture. Of the total cultivators (118.7 million), 30.3 per cent are women. Out of 144.3 million agricultural labourers 42.6 per cent are women (Anon 2018). But they are under-represented in decision-making positions worldwide (Profeta 2017). While women represent half the global population and one-third of the labour force, they receive only one-tenth of the world income and own less than one per cent of world property. They are also responsible for two-thirds of all working hours (Cohen 2013).

Mushroom cultivation is a farmer-friendly profession. Mushroom growing is an agricultural activity in which rural farmers, farm women and landless labourers can play a pivotal role without sacrificing their household responsibilities. Mushroom cultivation is a simple, low cost, suitable for rural areas, less labour intensive and can provide employment in both the semi-urban and rural areas. Mushroom cultivation can improve the socio-economic condition of farmers and their families and solve employment problems of both literate and illiterate, especially rural farmers, farm women and landless labourers. Mushroom cultivation as an entrepreneurship development among rural women can prove a suitable approach for economic empowerment. This is the possible way to empower rural women by providing resource support such as organizational development, vocational trainings, skill upgradation trainings, entrepreneurship development trainings, financial linkage and technical support so that they get self-

employment and earn good income. The rural women can adopt agriculture-based agribusiness on individual or group level and raise their income and employment opportunities which make them economically and socially empowered.

In this context, an attempt has been made to introduce the mushroom production as an income raising and employment generating activity in Rewari district of Haryana. The study was conducted with the objectives to assess the economic viability of mushroom production by rural women and assess the social acceptability of mushroom production by them.

MATERIAL and METHODS

Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Bawal, Haryana conducted frontline demonstrations and organized vocational trainings on mushroom production for the rural women (rural farmers, farm women and landless labourers) of Rewari district, Haryana. The KVK organised trainings on mushroom cultivation benefitting 360 rural women and conducted 60 frontline demonstrations during 2020-2022. KVK also brought out one technical bulletin and one extension folder on mushroom cultivation. Under frontline demonstrations, beneficiaries were given polythene bags of pasteurized spawn run compost mushroom (variety MC-459). To assess the economic viability and social acceptability of mushroom production, a pre-tested structured interview schedule was prepared and survey was conducted among 100 randomly selected rural women.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

Economic viability of mushroom production

The data in Table 1 indicate that from 2019 to 2023 the mushroom yield was from 70 to 110 kg on 100 kg of wheat straw. The income generated from mushroom cultivation ranged from Rs 5,600.00 to 13,200.00 and the beneficiaries got a net profit of Rs 3,800.00 to 10,200.00 during this period.

Social acceptability of mushroom cultivation

Table 2 indicates the social acceptability of mushroom production by the respondents. Ninety per cent respondents were satisfied with the high return they fetched from mushroom cultivation followed by the fact that it required lesser time and space (88%), it was a profitable enterprise (81%), it required less capital (78%) and less labour (76%) and its processing was very easy (76%). In overall, 69 per cent respondents socially accepted the mushroom production as an income generation activity.

Kavitha et al (2019) in a study in Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu observed that 63.88, 59.72 and 55.55 per cent of the trainees were deviating knowledge on types of mushroom, preservation techniques and importance of casing after trainings. They reported that trainings had increased their knowledge related to all the sub-components of mushroom production. The trainees succeeded in acquiring knowledge after exposure to trainings on mushroom production.

In a study in Bangaladesh, Shakil et al (2014) reported that mushroom cultivation can open a new opportunity for landless and unemployed people as it does not require any cultivable land and can be grown in a room by racking vertically. One can earn nearly TK 4-5 thousands a month by investing only TK 10-15 thousands. So, it is possible to make a handsome profit by investing a small amount of capital and labour in mushroom cultivation.

Bashir et al (2018) reported that mushroom can be grown in the small space of a farmer's own house for small scale production and generate income that aids in the family support. In their study conducted in Kashmir, they found that the majority of women were of the opinion that their income had increased after adopting improved practices and were able to fully support the family due to increased income through mushroom cultivation. It was revealed that there was a sound improvement in the annual income of the respondents before and after training.

In a study conducted in Ambala, Kurukshetra and Yamunanagar districts of Haryana, Aditya and Bhatia (2020) revealed that by adopting mushroom farming as a profession, there was no need for farm women to go outside home for work as sufficient work opportunity was available at home.

Singh et al (2018) in a study in Patna district, Bihar revealed that exposure to trainings, frontline demonstrations, technical bulletins, extension literature etc increased the knowledge of rural farm women regarding all the sub-components of mushroom production. Their mushroom yield ranged from 80 to 120 kg/100 kg wheat straw and total income from 100

Table 1. Economic analysis of mushroom production on 100 kg of wheat straw

Year	Yield (kg)	Cost (Rs)	Income (Rs)	Net profit (Rs)
2019-2020	70	1,800.00	5,600.00	3,800.00
2020-2021	80	2,000.00	6,400.00	4,400.00
2021-2022	90	2,500.00	7,200.00	4,700.00
2022-2023	110	3,000	13,200.00	10,200.00

The price of mushroom during the study period was Rs 120/kg

Table 2. Social acceptability of mushroom production by the rural women

Parameter	Respondents					
	Yes		No		Uncertain	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Mushroom is a pure vegetarian food	68	68	22	22	10	10
It has high nutritive value	58	58	26	26	16	16
Mushroom strengthens our immune system	53	53	28	28	21	21
It is a profitable enterprise	81	81	16	16	03	03
Its production helps to use waste farm produce	55	55	29	29	16	16
It is good for environment	43	43	31	31	26	26
It requires lesser time and space for its production	88	88	10	10	02	02
It requires less labour	76	76	20	20	04	04
It require less capital	78	78	12	12	10	10
Its processing is very easy	76	76	17	17	07	07
It fetches high return	90	90	08	08	02	02
Its recipe preparation is easy	62	62	23	23	15	15
Mean	69	69	20.17	20.17	11	11

kg wheat straw ranged from Rs 6,400.00 to 12,000.00 with net profit of Rs 4,650.00 to 12,000.00 in six months. Sixty one per cent farm women socially accepted the mushroom production as an income generation activity.

Mishra (2008) in a study in Pipili block of Khurda district, Odisha, found that 70 per cent 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%).

Singh et al (2021) reflected that the mushroom cultivation training generated a remarkable attitude among the trained rural farm women and also increased the socio-economic level of beneficiaries who took on it as a primary source of livelihood activity. They also observed the economic viability of oyster mushroom production as mushroom yield varied from 140-150 kg per cycle from 100 blocks/cycle/unit with gross income from Rs 40,000.00 to 45,000.00 having net profit of Rs 30,000.00 to 32,500.00 within two months.

It is concluded that mushroom production for economic empowerment of rural women is a profitable activity. There is an urgent need to impart technical knowhow to rural women in order to adopt mushroom production as an income generating activity for enhancing additional income of their family. Rather, it has been regarded as an effective means for poverty alleviation due to its potential for a quick high return of profit on a small investment.

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