

Farmers' perception on the relevance of training programmes on mushroom cultivation

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ABSTRACT

The study conducted on randomly selected 50 respondent trainees of two training programmes on mushroom cultivation revealed that the main sources of information for the trainees were extension functionaries of state departments of agriculture and horticulture and fellow farmers. Fellow farmers and scientists of the university and Directorate of Mushroom Research were more credible and trustworthy sources of information for them. It was found that for a majority of trainees the course content on mushroom cultivation was quite relevant. A majority of the mushroom trainees wanted to become commercial mushroom growers and had a desire to earn an additional income in order to improve their socio-economic status. Overall mean relevancy score based on all the topics was found to be 4.45 which implied that the respondents perceived the course content as quite relevant.

Keywords: Extension functionaries; fellow farmers; commercial growers; relevance

INTRODUCTION

Training is an essential component for human resource development. It is helpful not only in updating the knowledge and skills but also in increasing the efficiency of manpower in an organisation. Thousands of rupees are spent on the training programmes every year without getting feedback from the trainees whether the contents of these programmes have been relevant for them or not. Keeping this in view the present study was undertaken to find

out respondents' source of information and purpose of training on mushroom cultivation and to determine their perception on the relevance of course content at Chambaghat, Solan, Himachal Pradesh.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted at Chambaghat, district Solan of Himachal Pradesh. A random sample of 50 trainees of two training programmes organised by

an organisation (name kept confidential) was taken for the study.

The relevance of the course content was measured by taking the perception of the respondents on five point continuum scale viz highly relevant, relevant, undecided/can't say, somewhat irrelevant and completely irrelevant by giving a score of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The course content consisted of fifteen topics and the response of the respondent trainees was obtained on each topic under the respective continuum scale. The total score of each respondent was calculated by multiplying the frequency with their respective scores and accordingly the mean score on each topic was determined.

The data were collected with the help of well-structured and pre-tested interview schedule by personally interviewing the respondents and analysed by applying suitable statistical tests.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

Source of information about the trainings

The respondents were asked from which source they had taken information for the training programmes attended by them and the responses have been given in Table 1.

It was observed from the data that 46 per cent of the respondents used extension functionaries of state departments

followed by fellow farmers (34%) as sources of information of training programmes. Those who consulted university/DMR scientists were 16 per cent. Local newspapers and Panchayat members were used as sources of information by only 4 per cent each of the respondents.

This implies that fellow farmers and scientists of the university and Directorate of Mushroom Research were more credible and trustworthy sources of information for the trainees.

Purpose of training

It was observed that 46 per cent of the respondents wanted to become commercial mushroom growers. About one-third of them reported that they attended the trainings on mushroom cultivation to earn an additional income; 12 per cent took training for diversification of agriculture while the remaining 10 per cent just wanted to add to their qualification or just wanted to get certificate. This implies that a majority of the mushroom trainees wanted to become commercial mushroom growers and had a desire to earn an additional income in order to improve their socio-economic status (Table 2).

These findings are in agreement with those of Suharban et al (1991) who reported that majority of the respondents (45.45%) joined the training course to adopt mushroom growing as an occupation and 43.18 per cent because they wanted to learn more about mushroom growing

Farmers' perception on relevance of mushroom trainings

Table 1. Respondents' distribution on the basis of sources of information of training programmes

Source	Respondents	
	Frequency*	Percentage
Local newspapers	02	4.0
Extension functionaries of state departments	23	46.0
Panchayat members	02	4.0
Fellow farmers	17	34.0
University/DMR scientists	08	16.0

*Multiple responses, DMR= Directorate of Mushroom

Table 2. Respondents' distribution on the basis of purpose of training

Purpose	Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage
To earn additional income	16	32
For diversification of agriculture	06	12
To become a commercial mushroom grower	23	46
Just to obtain certificate or to add to qualification	05	10

techniques either for consumption or just to gain more knowledge about mushrooms. Similarly Koshti and Vijayaraghvan (2007) also reported that one-third of the respondents joined training programme to adopt mushroom cultivation as an occupation.

Relevance of course content

A perusal of the data (Table 3) indicates that though all the topics of the training programmes on mushroom cultivation were found to be quite relevant yet some of the topics like cultivation of white button mushroom with mean

relevancy score (MRS) of 4.80 followed by history, nutritional and medicinal value of mushroom (MRS= 4.62) and insect pests and diseases of mushroom and their control (MRS= 4.6) were found to be highly relevant. Similarly the other topics like compost preparation by short method (MRS= 4.58), departmental schemes of horticulture and mushroom cultivation (MRS= 4.58), farm design of commercial button mushroom (MRS= 4.54) and preparation of casing soil (MRS= 4.54) were also found to be quite relevant. Overall mean relevancy score based on all the topics was found to be 4.45 which

Table 3. Respondents' response on the relevance of course content

Topic	Perceived response					Total relevancy score	Mean relevancy score
	Highly relevant	Relevant	Undecided/ Can't say	Irrelevant	Completely irrelevant		
History, nutritional and medicinal value of mushroom	34	13	03	0	0	231	4.62
Compost preparation by short method	34	13	02	00	01	229	4.58
Farm design of commercial button mushroom	33	14	01	01	01	227	4.54
Cultivation of white button mushroom	42	6	02	00	00	240	4.8
Departmental schemes for horticulture and mushroom cultivation	35	11	03	00	01	229	4.58
Preparation of casing soil	35	11	02	00	02	227	4.54
Insect pests and diseases of mushroom and their control	37	08	04	00	01	230	4.6
Overall mean relevancy score							4.45

implied that the respondents perceived the course content as quite relevant.

Koshti and Vijayaragavan (2007) reported that the topics such as spawn growth, fruiting bodies, input requirements, climate requirements, sterilization of straw, bed setting etc were perceived to be quite relevant by the trainees of mushroom course.

CONCLUSION

It was observed from the study that a majority of trainees found the course content on mushroom cultivation as quite

relevant. Their sources of information were extension functionaries of state departments followed by fellow farmers and their main purpose for obtaining training was to become commercial mushroom growers and to earn additional income.

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