

## **Impact of mushroom cultivation on socio-economic conditions of rural women of Patiala, Punjab**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Twenty five women mushroom growers of Patiala district of Punjab were selected to study the impact of mushroom cultivation on their socio-economic conditions and the constraints faced by them. The study revealed that 72 per cent of women mushroom growers had improved their occupation followed by improvement in standard of living (64%), better saving (60%), knowledge and attitude (52%) and social status (24%). As perceived by the farm women, they faced the maximum constraints in value added items and minimum in lack of awareness in mushroom cultivation. Eighty eight per cent of the respondents stated that untimely supply of quality spawn and high cost of cultivation were the major constraints for successful mushroom entrepreneurship.

**Keywords:** Mushroom; spawn; SHG; farm women

### **INTRODUCTION**

Females play multi-dimensional role in the production in agriculture chain from seed selection to post-harvesting. Their work as producer is neither reflected in the statistics nor recognized by the society. National agricultural extension system worldwide including India has undergone major changes during the past 2 or 3 decades (Swanson 2008). The long neglected women power in the field of agriculture and allied enterprises drew attention of socio-brain banks. It was observed that contribution of farm women in all activities in the system was appreciably higher than that of male counterparts. This

fact gives birth to women empowerment strategy. Mushroom cultivation is a women friendly profession as it is the one agricultural activity in which women can play a vital role without sacrificing their household responsibilities. Mushroom growing has been appreciated as a technically feasible and profitable venture and widely accepted by the researchers as a good venture for higher income, employment generation and rural development (Kapoor and Behl 1983, Chauhan and Sood 1992). There is an urgent need to impart technical knowhow to women in order to adopt mushroom production as an income generating activity for enhancing their income.

Keeping in view the above facts the present study was conducted to find out the impact of mushroom cultivation by the rural women of Patiala, Punjab wrt changes in their socio-economic conditions and constraints faced by them in mushroom growing.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The study was conducted in district Patiala, Punjab. Twenty five farm women mushroom growers were selected as respondents from different villages. The variables viz age, education, caste, family size and mode of cultivation were taken under the socio-economic profile of women mushroom growers. The data were collected by using pre-structural interview schedule through concurrent evaluation and open ended questionnaire and were subjected to statistical analysis.

### **RESULTS and DISCUSSION**

Majority of farm women were within the age group of 26-45 years (56%) and illiterate (76%). Most of them were SC/ST (44%) and were living in small families. Their mode of cultivation was individual (80%) (Table 1).

The impact studies on socio-economic status of mushroom growers (Table 2) showed that 72 per cent of the women mushroom growers had improved their occupation which ranked first followed

by improvement in standing of living (64%), increase in savings (60%), change in knowledge and attitude (52%) whereas the improvement in social status was the least (24%).

Many studies have been made on socio-economic variables influencing the adoption decision. The socio-economic factors impacting the adoption of mushroom cultivation enterprise were not consistent with one another. Age has no significant relationship in adoption of mushroom cultivation (Rogers 2003, Pattanayak et al 2003).

Data on the constraints perceived by women mushroom growers are given in Table 3.

It was found that the value added items in mushroom and non-availability of quality spawn were the main problems as 64 per cent of them opined that women entrepreneurship through mushroom farming could be successful only if value added items in mushroom were given due importance as well as availability of good quality spawn was available. Other constraints perceived by respondents in order of importance were lack of storage and preservation facilities (60%), exploitation by middlemen (44%), marketing (36%), bargaining in prices (32%) and lack of awareness regarding training programmes on mushroom cultivation (28%).

## Impact of mushroom cultivation

Table 1. Socio-economic profile of women mushroom growers (n= 25)

| Personal attribute         | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------------------|-----------|------------|
| <b>Age (years)</b>         |           |            |
| Young (up to 25)           | 8         | 32         |
| Middle age (26-45)         | 14        | 56         |
| Old age (46 and above)     | 3         | 12         |
| <b>Education</b>           |           |            |
| Illiterate                 | 19        | 76         |
| Primary                    | 3         | 12         |
| Middle                     | 2         | 8          |
| High                       | 1         | 4          |
| Secondary                  | -         | -          |
| <b>Caste</b>               |           |            |
| SC/ST                      | 11        | 44         |
| OBC                        | 9         | 36         |
| General                    | 5         | 20         |
| <b>Family size</b>         |           |            |
| Small                      | 13        | 52         |
| Medium                     | 8         | 32         |
| Large                      | 4         | 16         |
| <b>Mode of cultivation</b> |           |            |
| Group (SHG)                | 5         | 20         |
| Individual                 | 20        | 80         |

Table 2. Impact of mushroom enterprise on the socio-economic conditions of rural women (n= 25)

| Parameter                           | Frequency | Percentage | Rank |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|------------|------|
| Improvement in occupation           | 18        | 72         | I    |
| Improvement in standard of living   | 16        | 64         | II   |
| Better saving                       | 15        | 60         | III  |
| Improvement in knowledge & attitude | 13        | 52         | IV   |
| Better food, clothing and shelter   | 13        | 52         | IV   |
| Creation of employment              | 8         | 32         | V    |
| Improvement in social status        | 6         | 24         | VI   |

The suggestions made by the respondents to improve the mushroom enterprise are tabulated in Table 4.

Majority of the respondents suggested that quality spawn may be supplied in time, inputs should be

Table 3. Constraints perceived by rural women in mushroom cultivation (n= 25)

| Parameters                                                          | Frequency | Percentage | Rank |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|------|
| Value added items                                                   | 16        | 64         | I    |
| Non-availability of quality spawn                                   | 16        | 64         | I    |
| Lack of storage and preservation facilities                         | 15        | 60         | II   |
| Exploitation by middlemen                                           | 11        | 44         | III  |
| Fluctuation in marketing rates                                      | 9         | 36         | IV   |
| Bargaining in prices                                                | 8         | 32         | V    |
| Lack of awareness about training programmes on mushroom cultivation | 7         | 28         | VI   |

Table 4. Suggestions given by respondents in improving mushroom enterprise

| Suggestion                                                                                            | Frequency | Percentage | Rank |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|------|
| Quality spawn may be supplied in time                                                                 | 22        | 88         | I    |
| Inputs should be available on low price                                                               | 19        | 76         | II   |
| Management practices be improved                                                                      | 15        | 60         | III  |
| Training programmes may be conducted in Mushroom cultivation and their should be regular field visits | 15        | 56         | IV   |
| Demonstrations may be laid on mushroom growing technologies                                           | 14        | 56         | IV   |
| Practical manual on mushroom growing be provided                                                      | 13        | 52         | V    |
| Storage, preservation and value added aspects be given due importnace                                 | 12        | 48         | VI   |

available on low price and management practices in mushroom cultivation be improved for making the enterprise more remunerative.

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