RESEARCH REVIEW JOURNALS
Volume-03
Issue-11
November -2018

ISSN: 2455-3085 (Online)
RESEARCH REVIEW International Journal of Multidisciplinary
www.rrjournals.com [UGC Listed Journal]

Economic constraints faced by women mushroom growers

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ARTICLE DETAILS

Article History
Published Online: 10 November 2018

Keywords
Agri-business, constraints, technology adoption, mushroom entrepreneurship, agriculture

ABSTRACT

Mushroom cultivation is a remunerative agri-business. Mushroom entrepreneurship being technologically intensive agri-business, its success in a country like India is contingent upon the technological and institutional support available to it. Present study was carried out to assess the constraints faced by women mushroom growers in Kashmir. The sample comprised of 450 randomly selected respondents trained by mushroom development department. The structured schedule was developed for data collection. The constraint analysis revealed that inadequacy of capital for purchase of materials, lack of support from society, non- availability of spawn, non-availability of required chemicals and fertilizers, high cost of inputs, irregular purchase of mushrooms, were the major constraints. The study revealed that 'High cost of materials required in mushroom cultivation' was the most important economic constraint responsible for mushroom cultivation. For mushroom cultivation to pick up the pace, there is need for capacity building of agricultural scientists, extension personnel's, village level workers about improved low cost cultivation technology for disseminating the same among the farmers and supply of quality spawn by state departments.

1. Introduction

A wide range of agro-climatic conditions in India is very much suitable for growing large number of agricultural crops as a means of diversification in an eco-friendly and suitable for efficient land use, optimum utilization of resources, creating opportunity for employment generation particularly unemployed youth and women. Despite all the favorable conditions mushroom farming is not spreading fast. There are certain inherent constraints which hamper fast speed of mushroom farming in India (Samantaray et, al 2006). India has several benefits over other mushroom growing countries as far as cultivation is concerned. Being an agricultural country, a variety of raw materials are available. The climate is also diverse and congenial for cultivation of various species of mushrooms.

India has great potential for production of mushrooms from abundantly available recyclable agro-waste like cereals straws, enormous domestic market, cheaper manpower, congenial climate, strong technical base and government support. In this context, there is a widespread agreement among agri scientists to the importance of adoption of subsidiary occupations in rural area. Among these, mushroom cultivation constitute an important and crucial segment for increasing food production, which provides extra income to the farmers. Therefore, there is an urgent need to provide the facilities for setting up viable units for mushroom cultivation and they should be equipped with latest technologies (Nasib et al 2008).

Women have long had an important role in agriculture. However, their contribution is not well recognized to extent that society and women themselves, perceive their work as wifely duty rather than as an economic contribution. In some regions, due to socio-cultural factors, women's involvement in marketing is considered as improper. ((Nedret,1994).

Rural women play multiple crucial roles in all spheres of development activities. They are not only involved in every stage of food production but also shoulder the responsibility of processing, storage and marketing. Mushroom cultivation is a space confined technology and require marginal investment. It utilizes agricultural residue as substrate for mushroom production. Mushrooms are also a good supplement as they contain minerals and vitamins. Mushroom have both nutritional and medicinal value. Men determine decision over land use and control over farm produce while mushroom comes within domain of women, which attracts many landless and marginal farm women to adopt mushroom cultivation as an income generating activity (Pattnaik and Mishra 2008). .

2. Review of literature

Samantaray (2006) reported that inadequate training, inadequate demonstration, lack of soil testing facilities, lack of post harvest technology, poor quality seeds, untimely availability of inputs, lack of experience, inadequate follow up services were the technical constraints in cultivation of mushroom .

Rath (2006) in his study revealed that lack of knowledge about post- harvest technologies, inadequate training and demonstration support, lack of storage facilities, lack of timely guidance were the major constraints of the growers.

Singh (2008) observed that some of the constraints faced by farming community today were slow pace of technology adoption as per the changing scenario, lack of availability of improved agricultural inputs, lack of market information for different agri-produce, poor capital and credit support, lack of inputs and resources, poor participation of women as stakeholder, poor and untimely help from government agencies.

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Uwagboe et al. (2010) found that majority (70%) of the respondents faced economic constraints like inadequate capital (finance) as the most severe constraint while lack of storage facilities was ranked by few (5.50%) of the respondents. This could be attributed to difficulty in obtaining loan from the banks due to collateral while storage facilities constraint could be attributed to the fact that the cashew farmers in the study area do not store their produce for processing.

Deepika and Gyanendra (2015) observed that women mushroom growers faced personal, technological, infrastructural, economic, social constraints, lack of awareness, interpersonal communication, marketing and manpower as major constraints.

Mahantesh et al. (2016) revealed that women mushroom growers faced major constraints like non-availability of spawn, lack of technical information, inadequacy of capital, shortage of chemicals and fertilizers, lack of marketing and higher cost on electricity.

3. Methodology

The study was based on the primary data collected from the mushroom growers. The present study was conducted in purposively selected districts of Kulgam, Anantnag and Pulwama. From each selected district, a list of mushroom growers was obtained from district mushroom development office of the concerned district. 197 mushroom growers from district Anantnag, 150 from Kulgam and 103 from Pulwama district were selected randomly. Thus, in total 450 mushroom growers constituted the study sample. The data was collected with the help of a structured schedule by personal interview method with respondents. The constraints perceived by mushroom growers were studied and data so collected was tabulated and analyzed.

4. Results

Table no.1 Economic constraint with respect to district of the respondents

	District								x^2	p-value
	Anantnag		Kulgam		Pulwama		Total			
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Irregular and untimely supply of loans for mushroom business										
Yes	40	20.3%	20	13.3%	15	14.6%	75	16.7%	3.40	0.18
No	157	79.7%	130	86.7%	88	85.4%	375	83.3%		
Total	**197**	**100.0%**	**150**	**100.0%**	**103**	**100.0%**	**450**	**100.0%**		
High rate of interest for loans sanctioned										
Yes	67	34.0%	34	22.7%	33	32.0%	134	29.8%	5.56	0.05*
No	130	66.0%	116	77.3%	70	68.0%	316	70.2%		
Total	**197**	**100.0%**	**150**	**100.0%**	**103**	**100.0%**	**450**	**100.0%**		
Inadequacy of capital for purchase of materials										
Yes	89	45.2%	56	37.3%	47	45.6%	192	42.7%	2.62	0.27
No	108	54.8%	94	62.7%	56	54.4%	258	57.3%		
Total	**197**	**100.0%**	**150**	**100.0%**	**103**	**100.0%**	**450**	**100.0%**		
High cost of materials required in mushroom cultivation										
Yes	70	35.5%	50	33.3%	33	32.0%	153	34.0%	4.13	0.81
No	127	64.5%	100	66.7%	70	68.0%	297	66.0%		
Total	**197**	**100.0%**	**150**	**100.0%**	**103**	**100.0%**	**450**	**100.0%**		
Lack of financial support										
Yes	5	2.5%	0	0.0%	1	1.0%	6	1.3%	4.30	0.11
No	192	97.5%	150	100.0%	102	99.0%	444	98.7%		
Total	**197**	**100.0%**	**150**	**100.0%**	**103**	**100.0%**	**450**	**100.0%**		

**Significant at 0.05 level*
Source: Based on field survey
N =450

The table depicts that 20.3% women in district Anantnag, 13.3% from Kulgam and14.6% in district Pulwama faced irregular and untimely supply of loans for mushroom business as the main economic constraints. Further, it was noticed that for 34.0% women from district Anantnag, 22.7% from Kulgam and 32.0% women from Pulwama,high interest rates of loans sanctioned were the economic constraints. More than forty percent (45.2%) of women from district Anantnag, 45.6% from Pulwama and 37.3% from district Kulgam said that inadequacy of capital for purchase of materials was the main constraint. 35.5% women from district Anantnag, 33.3% from Kulgam and 32.0% women from district Pulwama disclosed that high cost of materials required for mushroom cultivation was the economic constraint faced by them. The main constraint faced by women was lack of financial support for starting and operating an enterprise. This is because most women do not possess property right in their name to provide as collateral. Also, financial organizations have low confidence in women's capacity to repay and they see risks in financing. There are high risks facing entrepreneurs at the initial stages of enterprise establishment.

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Table no. 2 Economic constraints with respect to type of family

	Type of Family						$x2$	p-value
	Nuclear		Joint		Total			
	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Irregular and untimely supply of loans for mushroom business								
Yes	36	16.7%	39	16.7%	75	16.7%	1.0	0.00
No	180	83.3%	195	83.3%	375	83.3%		
Total	**216**	**100.0%**	**234**	**100.0%**	**450**	**100.0%**		
High rate of interest for loans sanctioned								
Yes	63	29.2%	71	30.3%	134	29.8%	7.4	0.78
No	153	70.8%	163	69.7%	316	70.2%		
Total	**216**	**100.0%**	**234**	**100.0%**	**450**	**100.0%**		
Inadequacy of capital for purchase of materials								
Yes	83	38.4%	109	46.6%	192	42.7%	3.05	0.81
No	133	61.6%	125	53.4%	258	57.3%		
Total	**216**	**100.0%**	**234**	**100.0%**	**450**	**100.0%**		
High cost of materials required in mushroom cultivation								
Yes	73	33.8%	80	34.2%	153	34.0%	1.08	0.93
No	143	66.2%	154	65.8%	297	66.0%		
Total	**216**	**100.0%**	**234**	**100.0%**	**450**	**100.0%**		
Lack of financial support								
Yes	4	1.9%	2	0.9%	6	1.3%	8.49	0.35
No	212	98.1%	232	99.1%	444	98.7%		
Total	**216**	**100.0%**	**234**	**100.0%**	**450**	**100.0%**		

Source: Based on field survey
N =450

The table No. 2 depicts the constraints faced by women with respect to the type of family in which they reside. The table reveals that by and large the beneficiaries from both nuclear and joint do not face any major constraint with respect to economic aspects of mushroom cultivation. As can be observed from the results, not much differences is observed between the responses provided by women from nuclear and joint families.

Table No. 3 Economic constraints with respect to educational qualification of respondents

	Educational Qualification												X^2	p-value
	Illiterate		Primary		High School		Graduate		Above Graduate		Total			
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Irregular and untimely supply of loans for mushroom business														
Yes	16	14.4%	20	18.2%	22	15.4%	15	34.9%	2	4.7%	75	16.7%	15.50	0.00*
No	95	85.6%	90	81.8%	121	84.6%	28	65.1%	41	95.3%	375	83.3%		
Total	**111**	**100.0%**	**110**	**100.0%**	**143**	**100.0%**	**43**	**100.0%**	**43**	**100.0%**	**450**	**100.0%**		
High rate of interest for loans sanctioned														
Yes	31	27.9%	38	34.5%	31	21.7%	30	69.8%	4	9.3%	134	29.8%	47.37	0.00*
No	80	72.1%	72	65.5%	112	78.3%	13	30.2%	39	90.7%	316	70.2%		
Total	**111**	**100.0%**	**110**	**100.0%**	**143**	**100.0%**	**43**	**100.0%**	**43**	**100.0%**	**450**	**100.0%**		
Inadequacy of capital for purchase of materials														
Yes	45	40.5%	51	46.4%	61	42.7%	28	65.1%	7	16.3%	192	42.7%	21.91	0.00*
No	66	59.5%	59	53.6%	82	57.3%	15	34.9%	36	83.7%	258	57.3%		
Total	**111**	**100.0%**	**110**	**100.0%**	**143**	**100.0%**	**43**	**100.0%**	**43**	**100.0%**	**450**	**100.0%**		
High cost of materials required in mushroom cultivation														
Yes	34	30.6%	45	40.9%	44	30.8%	25	58.1%	5	11.6%	153	34.0%	24.32	0.00*
No	77	69.4%	65	59.1%	99	69.2%	18	41.9%	38	88.4%	297	66.0%		
Total	**111**	**100.0%**	**110**	**100.0%**	**143**	**100.0%**	**43**	**100.0%**	**43**	**100.0%**	**450**	**100.0%**		
Lack of financial support														
Yes	1	0.9%	2	1.8%	2	1.4%	1	2.3%	0	0.0%	6	1.3%	1.26	0.86
No	110	99.1%	108	98.2%	141	98.6%	42	97.7%	43	100.0%	444	98.7%		
Total	**111**	**100.0%**	**110**	**100.0%**	**143**	**100.0%**	**43**	**100.0%**	**43**	**100.0%**	**450**	**100.0%**		

**Significant at 0.00 level*
Source: Based on field survey
N=450

Table 3 highlights the constraints faced by women with respect to their educational qualification. It is observed that illiterate women face more economic problems related to mushroom business than the above graduates, but graduates also face economic problems as can be clearly observed from the table. Statistically there was a significant difference with

respect to irregular and untimely supply of loans for mushroom business, high rate of interest for loans sanctioned, inadequacy of capital for purchasing of materials and high cost of materials required for mushroom cultivation.

5. Conclusion

Mushrooms are highly perishable. It needs quicker disposal. Therefore marketing network is essential. Marketing of mushroom play a vital role in the production process. The efficient marketing provides higher return to the producers and greater satisfaction to the consumers by the way of reduction in marketing cost. It is clear from the study that the major economic constraints like high cost of interest for loans, high cost of materials required in mushroom cultivation and inadequacy of capital for purchase of materials were faced by the growers. The study has confirmed that irregular and untimely supply of loans for mushroom business were also contributing to low production. Notwithstanding the importance of mushroom as a health food and its cultivation as a remunerative agri- business, it is yet to find desired importance in India. The regular supply of quality spawn, loans with low interest and subsidy in mushroom cultivation are the most important intervention that needs to be addressed for mushroom entrepreneurship to flourish. Mushroom farming in our country may flourish like mushroom growth in the coming years if the constraints identified and attended regularly and remedial measures are undertaken at the earliest. The process has already begun and gained momentum during the last decade. The rural and urban masses are showing much interest in mushroom cultivation and eager to adopt it as an occupation. Scientists who are working in the state governments and KVK most people effective and intensive training to the rural women to enhance their knowledge which in turn, will enable women to preserve mushroom by value addition.

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