

Success Story of a Trainee of Mushroom Research and Training Center, Pantnagar

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Abstract: Encouraged by profitability of edible mushroom many people are growing mushrooms. Mushroom Research and Training Centre (MRTC) located at the G.B. Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Pantnagar is actively involved in conducting training programmes on edible mushroom cultivation. Main objective of training programmes on mushroom production is to promote mushroom production as a self employment venture which can ultimately improve the socio-economic condition of the poor. A research namely 'Success story of a trainee of Mushroom Research and Training Center, Pantnagar' was undertaken to find out various factors involved in the success of a ex- trainees of MRTC, Pantnagar. The study was conducted a villages of Udham Singh Nagar district of Uttarakhand. The study revealed a positive outlook of a woman towards mushroom cultivation and also depicts various phases of her struggle.

Keywords: Trainee, training programme, mushroom production

1. Introduction

Various approaches of Human Resource Development (HRD) like mobilization, organization, technical support, system management and training etc. were adopted as a tool to empower human resource. However, the world is changing very fast with the latest development in almost all the sectors of economy including agriculture, but the people who derive their livelihood from agriculture are becoming poorer day by day. Agriculture all over the world is going through a phase of transition. As a result, the priorities, action and the way we plan are also changing. Now in this changing scenario, agriculture is taking new shape and expanding its scope beyond the limits of mere crop cultivation and animal husbandry for livelihood of rural population. Terms like diversification, value addition, precision farming, high-tech agriculture, agri-preneurship, global marketing, organic farming etc. are gradually getting due attention of people involved on redefining agriculture. Agri-preneurship is an employment strategy that can lead to economic self-sufficiency of poor people. Realizing the importance of Human Resource (HR) and Human Resource Development (HRD) for the upliftment of rural poor, Wpresent the *Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana* (SGSY) is the major on-going programme for self-employment of the rural poor. The basic objective of the SGSY is to bring the assisted poor families (*Swarozgaris*) by providing them income-generating assets through a mix of Bank Credit and Governmental Subsidy. India has a tremendous potential for the growth of agro-based industries and presently one of the focus- segment is mushroom production and processing. The demand for mushroom is increasing, because the nutritive value of mushroom has been rediscovered and it is recognized as a richer source of protein, than most of other forms of cereals, pulses, fruits and pulses. Mushroom cultivation is an ideal complementary enterprise for poultry farmers, since it can be grown within a limited space and short intervals (**Sawant et al., 2001**).

Mushroom - an edible fungus is grown worldwide for its palatability. Out of 2000 species of prime edible mushrooms, only 4-5 species are grown on commercial scale throughout the world having an annual production of 3.763 million metric tones (**Paul et al. 2001**). Mushroom cultivation is the most economic way of upgrading lignocellulolytic waste and hence, is the way to increase the income of the farmers other than field crops, which ultimately increase the human resource directly or indirectly (**Singh et al., 2003**).

Training in mushroom cultivation is one of the important and crucial segments for mushroom growers because it involves some highly technical skills having many complex stages during cropping cycle and it is entirely new crop to majority of the farmers. Even innovative farmers do not know much about mushroom and its cultivation.

2. Methodology

Uttarakhand state of India constitutes the universe of the proposed study. Mushroom Research and Training Centre (MRTC) of G. B. Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Pantnagar established on its main campus was selected as is the only centre in the state which has been engaged in imparting mushroom cultivation training of seven days in collaboration with development department of the state to BPL families under *Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojna* (SGSY) from 2001 to 2004. The ex- post-facto research design was used to meet out the objectives set forth for the study. Interview schedule, case study and observation were taken as a tool for data collection after pretesting. One of ex- trainee of MRTC, Pantnagar was selected as respondent for the study. Data was collected with the help of interview schedule from October, 2007 to February, 2008. Respondent was personally interviewed by the researcher in the study area. During each visit to selected village researcher used to maintain a field diary. Researcher also tried to document the facts in photo and video format

which enabled to have a closer look on the various aspects the study. To maintain the confidentiality, name of the respondent and place have been changed. The data thus collected were tabulated and statistically analyzed to interpret the result.

Findings: As a finding, success story of a woman trainee is presented here:

Trainees' Profile: Sita, an illiterate lady belongs to backward caste in Narayanpur village of Udham Singh Nagar district. She was married into a joint family at the age of thirteen and shouldered household responsibilities from a tender age. Labour was the main source of livelihood of the family, her husband Shyam and three sons were engaged in the same but income from this occupation was not sufficient to meet the expenses. She herself started working as farm labour to support her family.

Training Experience: In 1998 her second son, was inspired by a mushroom grower. He learnt basics of mushroom production technique from his friend and started growing mushroom on small scale within his own house. In the mean time, he got a job in private company. As a result, he could not continue mushroom cultivation along with his job and had to discontinue it. Although Sita had learnt many things about mushroom production by continuously working with her son, she was not confident enough to continue the venture left over by his son alone. She showed some interest in this venture so that she can contribute to the family income. She realized that she needs some training for skill refinement so that she can restart and manage mushroom cultivation on her own. One day in the year 2001, she was informed by her son that mushroom production training was scheduled to be conducted at MRTC, Pantnagar and her name was nominated by the block office as one of the trainees for the training as BPL beneficiary under SGSY. Probably it was the opportunity Sita was looking for. After getting consent from his husband, she attended the training with the primary objective of getting trained in mushroom cultivation. She attended all the sessions of seven days training course with full attention and lots of enthusiasm. Despite being illiterate she did not find any problem in the course content and methodology. She was satisfied with the context of the training programme and trainers' behaviour. After successful completion of training, she got Rs. 2500/- from MRTC to meet the expenses during training programme and came back to her village with an urge to start mushroom cultivation.

Post Training Phase: At this stage, she started making efforts to get a loan from bank to initiate this venture. After primary resource assessment by bank officials, loan was sanctioned and disbursed in the year 2002. She invested the whole amount in arranging the inputs for her enterprise and started mushroom unit in the month of November 2002 with 50 bags and some mushroom beds in her own house. She also arranged straw, compost, poly bags, chemicals etc. from the village and arranged spawn from MRTC, Pantnagar. Other family members, including her husband, also helped her in running this venture successfully. Since the unit was small, she did not hire any labour.

She supplied her first crop of button mushrooms to friends and relatives. Whole produce of successive mushroom crops was supplied to Rudrapur market where it was in good demand and prices were high. She started earning Rs. 3,000-4,000 per month (as net income) from this enterprise. In the mean time she also faced many problems related to it. One was negative attitude of society towards women entrepreneur for starting a venture but with the support of her family, she ignored all these and continued it. She also faced the problem of pest infestation in mushroom crop and to overcome this problem she arranged a visit by an expert to her unit on payment basis. After one year, in 2003 she shifted her unit in the outskirts of the village by hiring of land on rent basis. In the year 2004, the unit became handicapped when the MRTC, Pantnagar stopped supplying spawn to mushroom farmers of Shimla Pistaur due to unavailability of advance money for spawn. Consequently she had to buy the spawn from a Delhi based supplier. Even for the consultancy, she had to contact this agency. Established as small unit in 2002, her mushroom unit had grown into a big unit yielding up to 150 bags producing 15 kg mushroom per day and earning a net monthly income of Rs 20,000-24,000 per season. She does not sell any value added product of mushroom because of its low demand. She has also expanded her market and now supplies the produce to the wholesaler of Rudrapur and Haldwani. She feels that media has helped boost the mushroom market. Numerous articles in newspapers and magazines and documentaries on television have contributed a lot towards making general public aware of nutritional as well as medicinal values of mushrooms. Now she is of 38 years with 10 years of experience with mushroom. Her advice to all budding mushroom farmers is that "*Treat mushroom as a delicate child, with lots of dedication and care*".

Remark: Savita's commitment towards her venture is reflected from her achievement. This case shows that after facing negative attitude of society, she did not feel discouraged but continued her mushroom unit with full enthusiasm and zeal. She knows mushroom is a delicate commercial crop and takes care of this with full dedication.

3. Conclusion

In the present paper, an attempt has been made to review the success story of a rural woman in cultivation technology of edible mushrooms. It also revealed different constraints faced by her and her positive outlook towards life.

4. Future Scope

- The findings of the study can be utilized as feedback by the stakeholders involved in promoting tendency of self employment through training.
- These findings may also be utilized by the trainers involved in designing and conducting effective entrepreneurship training programme in future.
- The findings may provide the insight to policy makers and planners about the outcome of SGSY training. This may enable them to review and redesign such training programme in better way.

- The same study can be conducted on a larger scale with expanded locale and more parameters, including other agri-preneurship training programmes.
- Action research can be done for promotion of mushroom cultivation as an enterprise

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Author Profile



Deepika Verma, the authoress was born on March 04, 1984 at Dharchula (Uttarakhand). She passed her High school and Intermediate examinations 1999 and 2001, respectively. She joined G.B. Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Pantnagar and successfully completed her Bachelor of Science (Home Science) in 2006. During the same year she joined the College of Post Graduate Studies, at G.B. Pant University of Agriculture and Technology in the Department of Agricultural Communication to pursue her Master's degree with major in Agricultural Extension and Communication. She had Teaching Assistantship during her M.Sc. programme. After completion of her Master's degree in the year 2008, she joined Central Himalayan Rural Action Group (CHIRAG) organization and worked as a Development Associate. In the year 2010, she registered for Ph. D. (Agricultural Extension and Communication) in the same department and completed all the requirements in August 2014. The authoress was recipient of University Meritorious Fellowship during the Ph.D. programme. She has qualified NET examinations organized by UGC in December, 2011 in the subject Adult Education including Continuing Education.