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Rural Entrepreneurship Through Mushroom Farming in Balasore District

Prabin Kumar Roul, a native of Langaleswar GP under Baliapal block was engaged in paddy cultivation to support his family but due to frequent natural calamities, he was facing heavy loss every year. His visit to KVK and knowledge gained about mushroom farming motivated him to give it a try. After attending the training programme, Prabin Roul, aged 33 started mushroom farming in his backyard. Mushrooms are edible fungus which can be grown by using plant, animal and industrial waste. In Odisha, either paddy straw or oyster mushroom is produced by using paddy straw as substrate. Amongst all the enterprises, it is the only farming which can double the income within a fortnight thereby strengthening the livelihood along with improving the nutritional security of marginal farmers. At first, he has started paddy straw mushroom cultivation on an open area followed by oyster mushroom cultivation. His produce is regularly sold in the local market of Langaleswar, Nayabazar market of Balasore & Baripada market, with remunerative price.

INTRODUCTION

Mushrooms are edible fungus that can provide several important nutrients & its special flavor, nutritional value, medicinal properties makes it popular amongst today's generation. Mushrooms are a rich source of protein, vitamins, and minerals (*Qumio et al., 1990*). In a short time with low technology and little investment mushroom cultivation can be done (*Easin et al., 2017*). Socio-economic condition of marginal and landless farmers can be improved through mushroom farming which can also solve the employment problems in rural areas. Mushroom cultivation can increase food and nutritional security

followed by uplifting the standard of living of the farmer through earning of additional income

A five days skill development training programme on 'mushroom cultivation' was conducted for 20 nos rural youths at Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Balasore during 26th -30th July, 2016. Along with rural youths from different blocks of Balasore district, Prabin has been trained successfully on scientific mushroom cultivation, types of mushroom cultivation, its production, marketing and value addition practices. Also to upgrade his skill, frontline demonstration on Paddy straw cultivation & Humidity management through fogger installation is conducted at his farm. At various point of time, he has procured quality spawn of paddy straw & Oyster from KVK for mushroom cultivation. KVK, Balasore helped him to establish the 9000 sqft Mushroom unit by supplying shade-net, Fogger system, mushroom spawn and other essential components.

Table 1. Income Generated from Different Enterprises per Annum

Enterprise	Area (No. of bed per annum)	Production (q)	Gross Income (Rs.)	Net Income (Rs.)
Paddy Straw Mushroom	4000 bed	36.0 q	540000.00	300000.00
Oyster Mushroom	450 bed	12.2 q	70000.00	60000.00

INCOME

He is producing around 36.0q paddy straw mushroom during April to October & 12.2q oyster mushroom during November to March from 4000nos. & 450nos. bed, respectively & sold it in the market at a price of Rs. 150-200/kg. He is earning around Rs. 360000 every year through mushroom cultivation.

ADOPTION OF SCIENTIFIC TECHNOLOGY

Prabin acquired the scientific knowledge behind straw treatment and mushroom bed preparation. He also improved his skill on use of different substrates use and handling of spawn bottle. He also gains knowledge about oyster mushroom cultivation in winter season & use of the spent straw for compost preparation.

HARVESTING AND PACKAGING OF PRODUCE

This training helps him about proper harvesting and packaging of mushroom in Polythene & polyester packing tray.

HUMIDITY MANAGEMENT

After the training, he established a shade net unit and installed fogger system for proper humidity management.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

The training also helps him about use of crumple straw (straw after threshing by combined harvester) for mushroom cultivation.

HORIZONTAL SPREAD

The practice adopted by Prabin has influenced other youths and farmers of nearby villages. Budding entrepreneurs, SHG members Baliapal & Basta block also come to her unit for learning technical skills on mushroom farming. Around 23 nos. of farmers visited his farm to learn about mushroom cultivation. He is also helping new mushroom growers on marketing of produce in distant markets like Baripada.



CONCLUSION

As production rate is high and disease infestation is very low, mushroom cultivation is gaining immense popularity among farmers & women SHG members. Due to the fact that income can be doubled within fifteen days period, new age entrepreneurs have shown immense interest for this farming. The case of Prabin from Balasore district of Odisha proves that mushroom farming can help to reduce poverty, provide self-employment and strengthen livelihoods of marginal farmers through reliable source of income along with enhancing the nutritional security of the family.

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