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Social, Economic and Technical factors responsible for low female agriculture workforce in mushroom farming

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Abstract

50 agriculture participating women were interviewed randomly residing in one of the most agriculture based areas of Jammu district to ascertain their awareness on three factors in context of mushroom farming. Data collected on the basis of a common questionnaire was used as a reference to draw conclusions.

Keywords: Mushroom, Cultivation, Entrepreneur, Education, below poverty Line

Introduction

It is not only the size of labour force but also its composition, especially Female labour participation, plays a central role in the economic development of a country. Women in rural and lower-middle-income societies make an economic contribution to agricultural markets. They are the custodians of traditional knowledge that is of great significance. Mushroom cultivation is an income generating activity. This, on one hand, will develop self-reliance among rural women and on the other hand, will provide them with more opportunities for cultural, societal and technical education in improving the quality of family and community life by income generation.

The main goal of the present paper is to present current position of women regarding alternate agriculture activities for a subsequent response to improve extension activities leading to active roles of women in cultivation of mushroom as an income generation activity.

Description

Jammu province consists of 10 districts. Jammu dist is one of it. Jammu dist is divided under 4 mushroom blocks namely:

- a. Bishnah
- b. Marh
- c. RS Pura
- d. Akhnoor

The study is restricted to Jhakhadi village in Akhnoor block in Jammu distt .the area chosen is supposed to have huge agriculture potential and a large female workforce in various agriculture activities like horticulture, floriculture, apiculture etc. Total population of Jhakhadi village is 250 household. Out of which only 80 families are engaged in mushroom cultivation. The time involved in mushroom cultivation varies from 1 yr-10 yrs.

Discussion

Population

The total population of the village is 250 households. Total population of the village is 1200. Although the population of the village was 1200, but still the families involved in mushroom cultivation was far less. Awareness for mushroom cultivation is not a popular idea for income generation activity.

Socio economic strata

The village comprises of APL and BPL (Below Poverty Line) families.

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36 families are APL families and rest (214) families are BPL families.

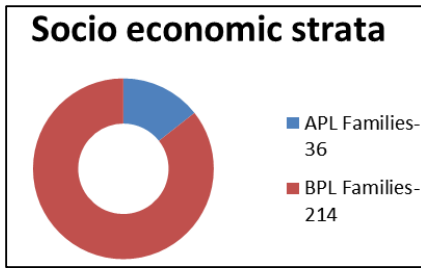


Fig 1

The families belonging to APL category did not have the need to go for alternate source of income. The APL family females do not do agricultural work also. Financial status being strong the APL families feel below dignity to work and go for alternative income generating activities.

Involvement

Although majority of the families fall in BPL category but still very less females have taken mushroom cultivation as alternative source of income. Out of 214 families and 413 females only 33 females are engaged in mushroom cultivation. Rest do not involve in alternative income generation cultivation.

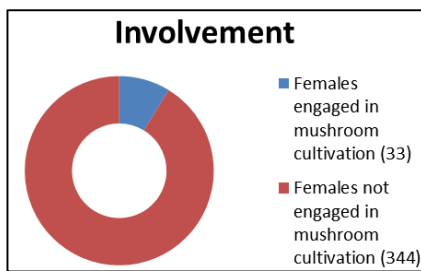


Fig 2

Mushroom cultivation although a promising enterprise for alternate income is not being much popular in the Jammu region. Being non-technical and less laborious job females are not motivated & encouraged

Social factors

1. Social dogmas
2. Family non-cooperation
3. Domestic non-availability
4. Self-confidence and motivation
5. Lack of awareness

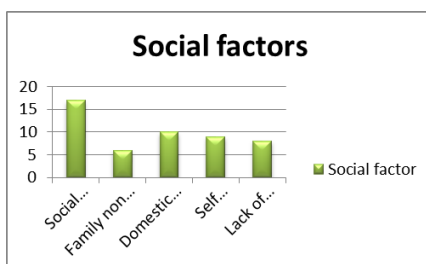


Fig 3

Maximum numbers of females were not willing to start mushroom farming because of prevalent social dogmas like

Females should not sow/harvest mushroom as it effects the growth of the crop. This was followed by lack of time from present daily domestic chores, lack of confidence, little awareness and uncooperative family.

Economic factors

1. Seed money
2. Lack of basic infrastructure e.g. land, permanent or temporary premises, etc.
3. Reduced need for extra income e.g. high income families.

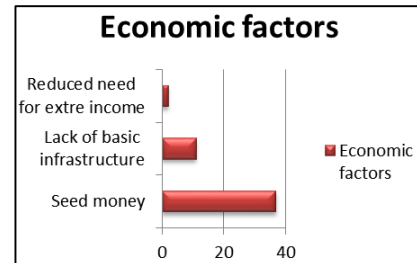


Fig 4

The lack of capital investment was a major obstacle in starting the venture. Percentage of women not having any land, roofed structures as required for mushroom farming were comparatively very less.

Technical factors

1. Lack of technical awareness
2. Inability of technical understanding
3. Lack of enterprise

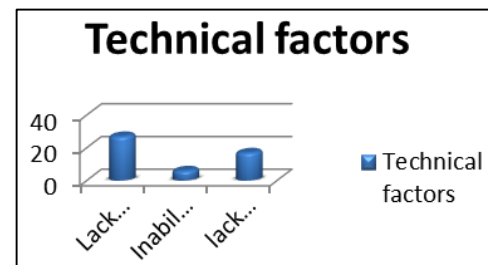


Fig 5

Almost 50% of the females had little or no technical knowledge of the mushroom farming practice and many had no inclination to start a venture of their own. Surprisingly only some had difficulty in understanding the technical aspects of the enterprise.

The study has come up with following conclusions

- a) Before involving women in awareness camps a massive campaign should be undertaken to demystify the targeted society as a whole.
- b) Women especially from BPL families should be provided with 100% capital money to start the enterprise.

Sustained awareness to targeted females should be done along with motivational speeches especially by peer female groups or individuals.