

Original Research Article

Upheaving Livelihood Avenues through Training: Assessment of knowledge domain as training effectiveness indicator

ABSTRACT

Capacity building programme on cultivation of oyster and milky mushroom was conducted for farmers of Malappuram district, Kerala. Ninety trainees were imparted training on cultivation of Oyster and Milky mushroom. In order to evaluate these training programmes, present study was undertaken to find out knowledge gain by the participants. Maximum gain in knowledge (94.44% and 93.33%) was observed for harvesting practices of mushrooms and identification of mushroom species, respectively.

Key Words: Mushroom, training assessment, knowledge gain, socio-economic profile

1. INTRODUCTION

Malnutrition among population is raising severe social problem in India, which may undo all the progress made towards development. The problem of malnutrition is critical especially in case of women and children. Being a nation with large number of malnourished and underweight children, providing a nutrient dense diet is absolutely essential. To overhaul daunting challenge of nourishing the vulnerable population in the wake of ever-increasing population, depleting agricultural land, climate extremities, food safety concerns and water shortage, it is important to diversify the agricultural activities. Indian diet is primarily based on cereals (wheat, rice and maize), which is deficient in protein. Mushroom is a panacea for protein deficiency woes and a comparable alternative to the non-vegetarian food.

Mushroom cultivation offers promising entrepreneurial avenues capable to weaken vulnerabilities of poverty and strengthen livelihoods through quicker and stable income generation opportunities. Owing to its inherent qualities including no land for cultivation, mushroom cultivation is a viable and attractive venture for both rural and urban farmers. Small-scale growing does not include any significant capital investment. Mushroom substrate can be prepared from any clean agricultural material in temporary clean shelters. Indirectly, mushroom cultivation delivers opportunities for improving the sustainability of small farming systems through recycling of organic matter as a growing substrate, which in turn is returned to the land as manure. Mushroom being rich in protein, vitamins and minerals can form an important food ingredient for a balanced diet. They have been shown to promote immune function, boost health, lower the risk of cancer, inhibit tumour growth, help balancing blood sugar, ward off viruses, bacteria, and fungi, reduce inflammation, and support the body's detoxification mechanisms.

Mushroom can be grown indoor, independent without sunlight, do not require fertile land and can be grown on a small scale as it does not include any significant capital investment [1]. Mushroom cultivation will improve the socio-economic status of farm families and solve unemployment menaces of both illiterate and literate people. In the above context, Krishi Vigyan Kendra Malappuram has been ventured into training the farmers of the district on mushroom cultivation with regular intervals. Gauging the effectiveness of training is necessary to wipe out any errors in trainings conducted and scale up potentials of the programme. An attempt has been made to evaluate the knowledge gain among participants of mushroom cultivation training programme. An evaluation study of employment-oriented programme would help to throw more light on the possibility of improving the programme in future.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

A total of ninety respondents from different blocks of Malappuram district who attended training programme on oyster and milky mushroom cultivation during 2022 were evaluated to assess the knowledge gain. The training programme was conducted in local language and audio-visual aids were used for better understanding of mushroom cultivation. Hands-on-practice session was included in each module. A questionnaire was formulated comprising of general information, background of participants and a set of 10 questions related to different kinds of mushrooms, nutritional importance of mushroom, diseases affecting mushroom, storage and harvesting of mushroom were used to evaluate the knowledge of trainees. For each correct answer one mark and for incorrect zero marks was given. All the questions were of multiple choices based and maximum attainable score of an individual was ten marks. A pre-training assessment was conducted to know the level of knowledge of participants regarding variety, diseases of mushrooms as well as their storage and preservation etc. Similarly, after completion of the training course, post training evaluation was performed in order to assess the knowledge gained by the trainees and effectiveness of training. The scores obtained from pre and post-test were evaluated as per gain in knowledge level by the participants and it was calculated by the standard formula as per [2]. The data were tabulated and analysed using frequency and percentages.

The trainees were classified based on their socio-economic profile as illustrated in Table 1.

$$\text{Gain in knowledge} = \frac{\text{Post training score} - \text{Pretraining score}}{\text{Pretraining score}} \times 100$$

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-economic profile

The participants differed in age, education, occupation and landholding. In these training programmes majority of the participants (57.78 %) were males in consonance with the study of Singh and Tanwar (2018) [3] and Sohi *et al.* (2020) [4]. The data (Table 1) showed that the age of participants was between 21 and 70 years. Only 7.78 per cent of trainees were in age group of 21-30 years whereas 18.89 per cent were in-between 61-70 years. Information with respect to caste showed that

participants irrespective of caste system were involved in the training. The number of participants from OBC (73.33 %) and general category (16.67) was higher followed by scheduled caste (8.89 %) and scheduled tribe (1.11 %). Education level of the participants indicated that 58.89 per cent of participants studied upto higher secondary followed by 33.33 per cent participants were graduated and 5.56 per cent studied upto primary level. Only 2.22 per cent of the participants were illiterate. Family type of participants revealed that 68.89 per cent belonged to nuclear family and 31.11 percent came under joint family type. More than half of the trainees (62.22 %) have marginal land holding whereas very few farmers (1.11 %) were large landholders. Further, 36.67 per cent participants were from landless category and thus it was evident that mushroom farming enterprise does not require much land and therefore, landless farmers were found to be interested to adopt this enterprise to supplement their family income. About 75.56 per cent of the participants were from panchayath areas and 24.44 per cent form municipality areas of the district. These findings are in accordance with the study of Sohi *et al.* (2020) [4] and Singh and Tanwar (2020) [5].

Table 1. Socio-economic profile of the respondents (n= 90)

Sl. No.	Particulars	Frequency (N=90)	Percentage (%)
1.	Gender		
	Male	52	57.78
	Female	38	42.22
2.	Age		
	21-30	7	7.78
	31-40	25	27.78
	41-50	21	23.33
	51-60	20	22.22
	61-70	17	18.89
3.	Education		
	Illiterate	2	2.22
	Primary 1-7	5	5.56
	Higher secondary grade 8-12	53	58.89
4.	Graduation	30	33.33
	Caste		
	General	15	16.67
	OBC	66	73.33
	Scheduled caste	8	8.89
	Scheduled tribe	1	1.11
5.	Family type		
	Nuclear family	62	68.89
	Joint family	28	31.11
6.	Agricultural land holding		
	Landless	33	36.67
	Marginal (<1ha)	56	62.22
	Small (1-2 ha)	1	1.11
7.	Resident		
	Panchayath	68	75.56
	Municipality	22	24.44
	Corporation	0	0

3.1. Increase in level of knowledge

In pre-training assessment test, the knowledge range of different participants was 32.22 per cent regarding techniques used in mushroom production and 74.44 percent in case of knowledge about nutritional importance of Mushrooms. The overall knowledge level of respondents was found to be changed after the training. In post training evaluation it was observed that maximum knowledge gain of 94.44 per cent was observed in harvesting practices of mushrooms followed by knowledge gain of 93.33 per cent in identification of mushroom species. It was thus noticed that pre training knowledge score was not much satisfactory for all the aspects of training programme. However, the knowledge score gained by participants after training was more satisfactory in all aspects. Thus, it can be inferred that exposure to training had increased the knowledge of respondents with respect to all the sub-components of mushroom production. The reason behind the satisfactory gain in knowledge can be attributed to the educational background of participant, and interest shown by them. The factors which motivated the respondents to join the training programme were to adopt mushroom cultivation as an enterprise and to learn about mushroom growing techniques for self-consumption due to its nutritional importance.

Table 2. Gain in knowledge by the participants before and after mushroom cultivation training

Particulars	Pretraining assessment (PTA) Score	Per cent	Post training evaluation (PTE) Score	Per cent	Gain in knowledge
Identification of mushroom species	40	44.44	84	93.33	110.00
Medicinal properties of Mushrooms	33	36.66	73	81.11	121.21
Seasonal cultivation of Mushrooms	54	60.00	78	86.66	44.44
Harvesting practices of Mushrooms	39	43.33	85	94.44	117.94
Techniques used in Mushroom production	29	32.22	77	85.55	234.48
Nutritional importance of Mushrooms	67	74.44	73	81.11	8.95
Knowledge about spawn production	50	55.55	78	86.66	56.00
Pest and disease infestation in mushrooms	22	24.44	74	82.22	236.36
Storage practices of various kinds of mushrooms	15	16.66	72	80.00	380.00
Knowledge about new varieties	13	14.44	56	62.22	330.77

4. CONCLUSION

Health of citizen is a key indicator of the progress of the nation. Ensuring a nutritionally superior diet is pivotal to combat malnutrition dilemma faced by the country. Supplementing the diet with protein sources could pave a way to overhaul protein deficiency induced under-nutrition woes. Incorporation of mushroom as protein supplement explicates the dietary challenges and opens up entrepreneurial avenues for the growers as well. As such, KVK has been periodically offering mushroom cultivation trainings to the farmers of the district. The present study assesses effectiveness the training programmes conducted for the knowledge gain aspect. It can be concluded from the study that training is a very good tool for skill development of trainees and excellent training provides needed information to trainees and guidance to start and flourish mushroom enterprise. Due to low initial investment and high-income generation potential, mushroom production can be adopted by even landless farmers. Mushroom cultivation can be taken up by the farmer as cottage industry and thus it can be a source of additional income.

REFERENCES

1. Chadha KL, Sharma SR. Mushroom research in India History, infrastructure and achievements. Ins: *Advances in Horticulture*, (Eds. Chadha KL, Sharma SR.). Malhotra Publishing House, New Delhi;1995. 13: 1-29.
2. Ansari MR, Chandargi DM. Effectiveness of induction training programme organized for Assistant Agricultural Officers (Farm Women). *J Ext Educ*. 2000; 11(1): 2645-2650.
3. Singh K, Tanwar PS. Impact analysis of vocational training programmes on knowledge gain of ornamental fish culture trainees. *Int J Pure Appl Biosci*. 2018; 6(3):509-512.
4. Sohi HS, Tanwar PS, Singh K, Matharu KS. *Int J Curr Microbiol App Sci*. 2020; 9(8): 3297-3303.
5. Singh K, and Tanwar PS. Impact of integrated fish farming vocational trainings on knowledge gain by trainees. *J Entomol Zool Stud*. 2020; 8(3):510-513.