



FACTORS AFFECTING ATTITUDE OF RURAL WOMEN TOWARDS MUSHROOM FARMING: A CASE STUDY IN NUAPADA DISTRICT OF ODISHA, INDIA

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KEYWORDS: Mushroom farming, Attitude, Rural Women, Enterprise

ABSTRACT:

A study was conducted in Nuapada district of Odisha, India to identify the factors attributing to the attitude of rural women towards mushroom farming. An attitude scale comprising of nine statements on mushroom farming was developed and applied to 80 number of rural women farmers of Nuapada district of Odisha. The results revealed that a majority of the respondents were middle aged (65%) had educated up to high school level (48.75%) and had high level information seeking behaviour (57.05%). Almost an equal number of

respondents belonged to both middle and lower income groups, had both agriculture and other occupation and lived in both nuclear and joint families. The distribution diagram concerning their attitude showed that, majority belonged to the “favourable” category (65%) followed by “highly favourable” (18.75%). In addition, it was found that, a niggardly proportion (5%) of them belonged to “unfavourable” category owing to the social constraints. When the relationship between the six independent variables and attitude of the respondents was studied, “family-type” ($t=2.5832$) and annual income ($t=4.3779$) had a positive and significant relationship with attitude. Based on the findings implications were drawn for the stakeholders involved in promotion of mushroom farming.

INTRODUCTION: Mushroom farming plays an important role by providing earning from organic waste and farm residues. It also provides plant based protein ensuring nutritional security for rural women. In rural area accessibility, decision-making and ownership on resources is mostly male dominated (Hoque and Itohara, 2008). Thus, women in farming community having less opportunity for maximization of their earning. As the mushroom farming based on very low investment and organic waste as raw materials, assuming that women has more control in this particular agro enterprise i.e. mushroom farming considered as the most evolving remunerative income generating activities for farm women leading to their sustainable financial as well as nutritional security . It depends on women’s personal attributes, which contribute to her agro entrepreneurial activities. Though, many personal qualities affect their capacity and vice versa. Attitudinal attribute is one of the most important among all. Attitude has been described as an evaluative disposition towards some object or subject, which has consequences for how a person will act towards the attitude object (Van den Ban & Hawkins, 1986). Taking these points in consideration, the need for learning about the attitude of farmwomen towards mushroom farming was felt. Hence, the present study was taken up with the following objectives:

- **To study socio** personal profile of women farmers involved in mushroom farming in Nuapada district of Odisha.
- **To find out** their attitude towards mushroom production and the factors associated with it.

METHODOLOGY:

In the present study, attitude was operationalised as the mental disposition of respondents about mushroom farming with different levels and degrees of favourableness or unfavourableness. An Equal Appearing Interval scale (Thurstone & Chave 1929) consisted of randomly arranged nine statements (Table-1) to measure the attitude of farmwomen, which was developed Prathap, 2004 was adopted with title modification to measure the attitude of farmwomen towards mushroom farming. The Scale was administered to eighty (80) randomly selected women farmers of Nuapada district of Odisha.

Data were collected with the help of a Pretested Interview Schedule by personally interviewing the respondents. They were asked to give their views on a three points continuum viz. “Agree”, “Undecided” and “Disagree” against each item of the scale. The scores obtained are considered as “individual’s attitude score”. Further based on discussion with extension experts and review of literature, the independent variables viz. age, education, occupation, annual income, family type, innovativeness, and the dependent variable viz. attitude were selected. The respondents rated each item in the scale, thus conveying their attitude towards the object under study that is mushroom farming. Finally their ratings were summed up to get a score for the individual statistical techniques employed in the study included simple percentage, correlation coefficient and regression on analysis.

Results and Discussion:**Socio Personal Profile:**

The socio personal details of the respondents were collected and they were distributed based on those information presented in Table-2.

It could be conclude that majority of rural women involving mushroom farming were middle age and had studied up to high school. The results also revealed that a majority of respondents had agriculture and allied fields as their main occupation and belongs to low to medium level of annual income. This might be the basis for most of them had taken interest in mushroom farming as an additional income generating activities. Coming to the type of family, it could be observed that joint family system was predominant owing to the well structure social set up in the rural areas of agricultural community. This may be a reason

for the existence of high information seeking behaviour of the respondents since they are living with all age group family members.

Attitude of Farm Rural Women:

The respondents were classified based on their attitude scores and results are presented in Table-3

The results revealed that majority of respondents possessed favourable attitude (65%) towards mushroom farming. It shows that the farmwomen have a positive attitude towards mushroom farming at their homestead, which may be because they were convinced of the benefits of it and it requires less space with minimum investment. Analysis of the table shows that there are substantial portion (16.25%) of respondents belongs to either neutral or having unfavourable attitude towards mushroom farming. The reason for this may also be assumed that the farm women are still not fully convinced of all aspects of mushroom farming owing to the social constraints and that they do have apprehensions on its advantages.

Factors Influencing the Attitude of Rural Women towards Mushroom Farming:

To find out relationship between the socio personal characteristics of the respondents and their attitude, it was felt obligatory to explore the factors responsible for their relationship and simple correlation coefficient and multiple regression analysis were engaged for this purpose. The results concerning to this are shown in Table-4.

The results revealed that 6 variables taken together could explain for around 63% (R^2 Value being 0.638) of variation in the dependent variable, attitude. Among the 6 variables, "Occupation and Family type" had a positive and significant relationship with attitude. All other variables viz. age, education, annual income and information seeking behaviour did not show any relationship with the variable under study. The results were in accordance with a similar study by Ganpat & Bhol Singh in 1999, who have found that education was positively associated with attitude towards farming, while age was not significantly associated. The results would indicate that farmers who have joint families with more members tend to have a favourable attitude towards mushroom farming. Since mushroom farming needs less care and management, experts feel that it can be managed by family labour alone and this might have resulted in significant relationship. Those farmers with joint families might have been convinced that mushroom can be managed with family labour alone. Similarly, Kulkarni (1973) and Ghosh et al (2005) had reported that

family type was significantly associated with the adoption of agro enterprise i.e. livestock production technologies.

Conclusion

The result of the study showed that the farmwomen had a high level of favourableness towards mushroom farming and that the attitude of the farm women differed based on their “family-type”. Based on the finding of the study the following implications were drawn.

- Since the farmwomen are middle aged and literate, information on mushroom farming technologies could be disseminated through print media and the farmwomen can be taken on field trips and exposure visit to build up confidence in this venture.
- Since people living in joint family had a positive attitude towards mushroom farming, it can be assumed that they had less labour constraints in maintaining their units. Hence, farmwomen living in joint families could be identified and advised to take up this at small scale initially, as they can be convinced that they could manage with family labour.
- Since the women, farmers are highly innovative, they can be taught about the market strategies to obtain more income from their farm produce.

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Table-1 "Attitude Scale"

Sl.No.	Statement	Nature of the Statement
1	Mushroom production at homestead in a nuisance	Unfavourable
2	Housing cost of mushroom production is too costly	Unfavourable
3	Mushroom production at homestead is having less production capacity	Unfavourable
4	There is less market potential for mushroom	Unfavourable
5	Mushroom available in natural environment are more price fetching	Favourable
6	Homestead based mushroom farming needs less labour	Favourable
7	Mushroom production at time provides good quality protein for the family members	Favourable
8	Homestead based mushroom farming provides gainful self-employment	Favourable
9	Mushroom production in off season fetch high price	Favourable

Table-2: Distribution of respondents based on their profile

Sl. No.	Demographic Factor	Frequency	Percentage
1. Age			
	Young	18	22.5
	Middle	52	65
	Old	10	12.5
2. Education			
	Illiterate	4	5
	Primary	22	27.5
	Middle	8	10
	High School	39	48.75
	Higher Secondary	7	8.75
3. Occupation			
	Agriculture and Allied	46	57.5
	Others	34	42.5
4. Annual Income			
	Low	34	42.5
	Medium	35	43.75
	High	11	13.75
5. Type of Family			
	Joint	64	80

	Nuclear	16	20
6. Information Seeking Behaviour			
	Low	7	8.75
	Medium	27	33.75
	High	46	57.50

Table-3: Distribution of respondents based on their attitude score

Sl. No.	Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Highly Unfavourable(Very Low)	0	0.00
2	Unfavourable(Low)	4	5.00
3	Neutral	9	11.25
4	Favourable(High)	52	65.00
5	Highly Favourable(very High)	15	18.75

Table-4: Relationship between the independent variables and attitude

Sl. No.	Independent Variables	“r” Values	“t” Values
1	Age	0.0041	-0.4416
2	Education	0.0785	0.7549
3	Occupation	-0.0715	0.7359
4	Family Type	0.4463*	2.5832*
5	Annual Income	0.5248*	4.3779*

6	Information Seeking Behaviour	-0.1343	-0.0770
R² Value: 0.638; F=4.452*			
* Significant at 1 percent			

