

MUSHROOM CULTIVATION USING AGRICULTURAL WASTES AS A SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD ALTERNATIVE FOR RESOURCE POOR SC/ST RURAL WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

Emancipation of women is an important indicator of economic development. Rural women are well organised in recent years through Self-Help Groups (SHGs), but no significant efforts are made for them to venture into entrepreneurial activities. The study was undertaken to know the impact of extension intervention in adopting mushroom cultivation among the resource poor scheduled caste / scheduled tribe (SC/ST) rural women using locally available agricultural wastes in four districts of Karnataka State viz., Shimoga, Mandya, Hassan, and Tumkur where agricultural wastes such as areca husk, coffee husk, sugarcane trash and coconut coir pith are available respectively, in abundant quantity. The results revealed that there has been an appreciable improvement in the mean score of knowledge on all aspects of mushroom cultivation before-and-after the interventions. They got fairly good crop and the average yield of mushroom per spawn pocket that ranged from 0.90 kg to 1.10 kg with the sale price lying between Rs.40 and Rs.52 per kg. Based on the study, it is recommended to promote mushroom cultivation through capacity building, extending facilities for creating the required infrastructure and developing local markets for mushrooms in the mid-day meal scheme, hospitals, hostels and prisons.