

Mushroom Cultivation

A pathway to economic sustainability in Doon Valley of Uttarakhand

Everything is possible for the women entrepreneurs who are willing to go beyond their traditional boundaries unabashedly and fearlessly. Hiresha Verma who is a well-known mushroom grower and successful entrepreneur in Charba village of Dehradun is now a successful entrepreneur. She owns a mushroom company by the name of “Han Agrocare” Dehradun. Her journey started from being a housewife and changing to an entrepreneur.

Situation analysis/Problem statement: People in the villages were very demoralized as the traditional farming of wheat paddy and vegetables was not lucrative enough to promise a bright future even after putting their best efforts in farming started leaving their villages to seek jobs in cities due to no fixed source of income. Looking in to the problem, Ms. Hiresha, who was basically an IT person thought of switching herself to become an entrepreneur in the field of Agriculture. The great demand of Mushroom in the market and its possibility of growing in the area where she resided, she decided to proceed in this area of production. She visited Dehradun markets and found mushrooms to be priced higher than all other vegetables. Furthermore, as mushrooms are grown indoors it prevents crop loss from natural calamities and wild animals.

Plan, Implement and Support: Before coming to this Industry, she was into IT Industry. Her passion was to be an entrepreneur and do something of her own. She started Mushroom Cultivation in 2013 with Oyster in her servant quarter with 25 bags and got good result. She invested 2000 rupees and earned Rs. 5000. Then she grew Milky mushrooms which gave her encouraging results. This motivated her a lot and decided to take proper training in Mushroom Cultivation.

She underwent training on mushroom farming and got other related technical information about the popular varieties from KVK, Dehradun. In 2014, she also took training from DMR Solan. During training she approached Department of Mushroom, Dehradun for Compost and Seeds. Then she approached NHM and NHB for financial support and got loan sanctioned by Indian Bank. She started actual work in three bamboo huts with 500 bags in each hut for the Cultivation as pilot project at Village Charba, Langa Road, Dehradun

Challenges : Things were not easy, she had to run around to get each and every thing right. Sometimes things didn't work out, got set back also but her strong determination and passion was so much that she overcame all the problems and difficulties that she encountered.

Output. As the work progressed she got the yield of 15% in these huts, and then she did two cycles of Oyster mushroom and for two years did seasonal cultivation while rotating the mushroom types according to the temperature suitable. After doing seasonal growing for four years she got so much confidence to scale up for round the year production.

Overwhelming results motivated her for some new innovation in mushroom cultivation. She went to take help from different institutions in Roorkee, Haridwar, Rajpura, Solan, Sonipat and Mehsana (Gujarat) and learned the technical things and technique to do it in more wider ways. After learning from these institutions she started making her own in house Compost

and now also supplying same to many mushroom growers all over hilly regions of Uttarakhand including the remote places like Gopeshwar.

Outcome: Today the result of her passion and hard work is, that she has a mushroom farm equipped with Modern production equipment and facilities in Charba with the production capacity of 1 ton per day. And she has given employment to 15 people and trained more than 2000 women and farmers on Hills in Mushroom Production. She buy back from them thus providing market for them. Her Business Model is Social Business Enterprises. Diversify in growing Medicinal Mushrooms like Shitake and Ganoderma which are anticancer, antiviral and antioxidant. The basic work on Value Added Products of Mushrooms like Pickle, Cookies, Nuggets, Soup, Protein Powder, Tea, Papad etc. Starting with meager seasonal quantity of 20 kg per day and today now she is true entrepreneur with Round the year production with Scientific line inside 10 AC room and technology equipped plant with the production capacity of 1000 kg per day.

She found Mushroom Growing: -

- A lucrative business
- Can utilize waste products and can produce food which is rich in protein, vitamins and minerals.
- Employment generation for educated and uneducated people.
- It is a good reason to be always close to nature.

Impact: She has not stopped herself to this, but now she is diversifying in growing Medicinal Mushrooms like Shitake and Ganoderma which are anticancer, antiviral and antioxidant. She is also making Value Added Products of Mushrooms like Pickle, Cookies, Nuggets, Soup, Protein Powder, Tea, Papad etc. Along with establishing the plant she had worked out a social enterprise model for her business. She is helping farmers to grow mushrooms in hilly areas of Tehri, Pauri and Garhwal.

Her Vision for 2021

- To impart training to 2000 farmers including women and making them independent and will be training them to produce exotic mushrooms to increase their income.
- As an Entrepreneur she wants to put her utmost effort in the field of Mushroom Production, Consumption and Marketing, so that each and every one who is growing and thinking to grow mushrooms will be benefited.

Objectives for Future are: -

- Spreading technology of Mushroom Production in Uttarakhand.
- Joining more and more people to produce mushrooms so that we can enter exports.
- Awareness of mushroom as Food because it is full of Proteins and the only source of Vitamin D.
- More and more employment generation

- Using small rooms and houses which are vacant on hills and huts to generate additional income for the farmers in hilly areas.

Awards and Honors at National and International Organizations are as follows: -

- BEST Social Enterprise Award - Action for India -2019
- Selected in top 25 Women for Ambassador Programmed by Gold Man Sach and ISB – 2019.
- Selected among 100 Women Transforming India by NITI AYOOG -2019
- Visit of PUM Representative from Netherlands for Mushroom Farming – 2019.
- Selected as Top 10 AGRI Companies in Agri Udaan – 2019.
- incubator in RABIS from ICAR- Govt. of India – 2019.
- Incubator in NEXUS from US – Embassy – USA – 2019.
- Honored as Agri Input Company by DBS – 2019.
- Certificate for Innovation Readiness Series by University of Texas Austin – USA – 2019.
- Awarded Tech Camp – Changing Women Changemakers – US Embassy – USA – 2018.
- WE CAN AWARD – US Embassy – USA – 2017.
- Award from Cherie Blair Foundation for Mentoring Women in Business – 2017.
- CII Innovation Award – 2017.
- National Award for MUSHROOM FARMING by GOVT OF INDIA- ICAR – 2016.
- Awarded Udyog Ratna Award – 2015.
- Awarded Successful Business Women of Uttarakhand in Social Entrepreneurship– 2015.
- State Award for Mushroom Farming – Uttarakhand – 2015.
- Certificate for Training Programme on Medicinal Mushrooms held at ICAR – Directorate of Mushroom Research – Solan – 2015.
- Certificate for Training Programme on Value Added Products of Mushrooms held at ICAR – Directorate of Mushroom Research – Solan – 2015.
- Women of the Decade Award – 2014.
- Women Entrepreneur Award – 2014.
- Certificate for Mushroom Production Technology for Entrepreneurs organized by Directorate of Mushroom Research, Solan – 2013.
- Certificate for Project Planning & Management – 2013.
- Selected on All India Level by ISB for 1000 Women for entrepreneur training in Leadership & Management – 2012.
- Got Stree Shakti Women Entrepreneur Award by ICICI & TIE – 2011
- Awarded Merit Award for Best Work by TATA TELECOM.



Time Line of Mushroom cultivation

