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“Filling gaps and removing traps  
for sustainable resource management”

## Does Mushroom Cultivation Sheds Light on Household Livelihood Security?

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### Abstract

Mushroom has been praised as the food of God on an account of their nutritive value, special flavour and medicinal property. Promotion and development of agro-based enterprises in the rural sector can play an important role in diversification of economic activities and generation of employment opportunities for the rural youth. Mushroom cultivation is an emerging agri-business venture, which uses agriculture residue as raw material to yield protein rich food and creating employment and income generation opportunities. Cultivation is simple, involves low cost and labour intensive. Hence, it can provide employment in both rural and semi-urban areas. India in general and Karnataka state in particular, where vegetarians forms a predominant share, every attempt should be made to popularize a vegetable protein source like mushroom. Due to absence of proper handling techniques estimated loss during pre and post harvesting is up to 20 percent. Therefore, adoption of proper harvesting technique is essential. Farmers face the problem of getting a remunerative price due to their non-involvement in marketing and also lack of good marketing infrastructure, complex trade chains, timely availability of necessary inputs, technological knowhow and financial support hinders mushrooms cultivation. Hence, there emerges the need to study the existing value chain and find the hotspots where sustainability can be brought in. The study revealed that mushroom production enhanced the livelihood security of marginal farmers through generating regular income and employment generation. However, unorganised market structure, non availability of basic raw materials and lack of technical and financial support were major constraints in adoption of this technology. Hence, there is need to bridge mushroom producers to consumers through co-operatives, credit institutions, logistics, chilling and processing plants.

**Keywords:** Mushroom cultivation