

NIRMAN

An Initiative for
Sustainable Development

The Fungi that changed lives



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Story of Mamata and her mushroom journey

During the Khariff season, Mamta Pradhan would wake up at 5 o'clock and head straight to the field, along with her husband, Kailash. These 6-7 months would set the course for the remaining year, their income, expenditure, saving, were all dependent on how much can they produce in this short period of time. Despite being in possession of an acre of land, it thoroughly remained unirrigated for most of the year, due to erratic patterns of rain, forcing Kailash to work as a labourer in nearby towns for more than 6 months. These collective sources still fetched little income for the growing family of 4, with one son, and another one daughter. The rising income insecurities had given rise to problem of inaccessibility to good health, education, social welfare, etc. Meanwhile, Mamata had little or no say about income generation activities that she could involve herself in to diversify the income base for the family due to lack of exposure.

Seeing the condition of the family, Mamata was incorporated in a training module for income generation organized by Nirman, a voluntary organisation working in Nayagarh District of Odisha. The module was directed to make unconventional farming like Mushroom cultivation, a mainstream source of income. Owing to the availability of land, Mamata willingness to try something new, and the burgeoning scope of mushroom, this module proved to great hit, in the reluctantly rainfed district of Nayagrah Odisha. Within months of the training, both Mamata and Kailash had learned bed preparation, cutting, wetting sterilizing straw with inputs supportspawn and polythene, - a low-cost technology for mushroom propagation.

Initially, Mamata started in a small scale of 3 beds, harvesting about 5-6 kg in a duration of 15 days. After she got good harvest, she expanded her business, by taking a loan support Rs, 20000/- from her own SHG and cultivated about 20 beds. The average expenditure per kg in Rs.70/- and selling price in Rs.120/- in Nayagarh market. From each bed, the harvest is about 1.5 kg in only 15 days' time.

Mamata and Kailash, now runs a highly productive mushroom business and has created good market linkages. At present, Mamata earns Rs, 45,000 per month from 20 beds, and this fungi has alleviated the overall lifestyle of the family, including good education for the children, and other social benefits.

“ What she says

"I am extremely grateful to Nirman for providing us so much support. Now we don't only produce mushroom but are also in a position to train other people in taking up mushroom cultivation. We were blessed with land, but never knew what to do with it in dry seasons, and neither did we know anything about mushroom and its demand. Now, every week, buyers directly purchase it from our farm, and take it to the market."

