

Constraints and Opportunities of Mushroom Value Addition: Case from Jandura, Sri Lanka

I.V. Kuruppu¹, T.P.S.R. Guruge^{2,*}, and D.C. Gurusinghe³

*Department of Plantation Management, Faculty of Agriculture and Plantation Management,
Wayamba University of Sri Lanka, Gonawila (NWP), Sri Lanka^{1,2,3}*

*Corresponding author: guruge84@wyb.ac.lk

Abstract

Mushroom cultivation has emerged as a vital rural livelihood strategy in Sri Lanka due to its low investment requirements, nutritional benefits, and growing consumer demand. While value addition in mushroom production offers significant potential, empirical evidence is limited on the specific constraints and enabling factors influencing adoption of value-added practices at the grassroots level. The objective of this study is to assess both the constraints and the opportunities for value addition in the mushroom industry within a model village setting. This quantitative, cross-sectional study was conducted among 100 mushroom producers selected from Jandura, a model mushroom-producing village in the Angunukolapelessa DS Division of Hambantota District. A structured questionnaire comprising close-ended items was used to collect data and data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and the Relative Importance Index (RII). Although purposive sampling was employed due to logistical feasibility, the findings provide relevant preliminary insights into smallholder-level value addition dynamics. The results revealed that although nearly all producers were aware of value-added mushroom products, only 10% actively engaged in their production. Key constraints identified included financial limitations (RII = 0.910), lack of processing equipment (RII = 0.785), inadequate infrastructure (RII = 0.772), and regulatory challenges such as certification and food safety compliance (RII = 0.721). Despite these challenges, producers acknowledged strong benefits such as shelf-life extension, surplus utilization, and employment generation (each RII = 0.998), underlining high entrepreneurial potential. Demographically, 83% of producers were women, with most aged 31–45 years and having secondary education, indicating a promising entrepreneurial base. Strategic enablers for scaling value-added production included skill development programmes (RII = 0.951), improved technology access (RII = 0.820), and supportive government policies (RII = 0.800). The study recommends management interventions such as cooperative-based processing models, targeted financial support, capacity-building initiatives, and streamlined regulatory processes.

Keywords: mushroom production, relative importance index, small-scale agribusiness, value addition