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SURVIVAL STRATEGIES OF MUSHROOM PLANTATION STARTUPS IN AMRAVATI REGION: A STUDY

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Abstract

Mushroom cultivation has emerged as a viable agribusiness opportunity in India due to its low investment requirement, high nutritional value, and increasing market demand. This study examines the competitive dynamics and survival strategies of mushroom plantation startups in the Amravati region. A sample of 80 respondents was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings reveal that market access, cost efficiency, and technological adaptation significantly influence startup survival. The study contributes to the literature by linking competitive strategies with startup sustainability in a semi-urban agricultural ecosystem.

Keywords: Mushroom farming, startups, competitive dynamics, survival strategies, Amravati

1. Introduction

India's agricultural diversification has accelerated the growth of high-value crops like mushrooms. Mushroom cultivation is considered a **low-resource, high-return agribusiness** suitable for small-scale entrepreneurs (Bijla, S., & Sharma, V. P. (2024)). The Amravati region, being an agrarian hub, provides favorable conditions for mushroom startups.

However, startups face intense competition due to:

- Low entry barriers
- Increasing number of small-scale producers
- Market fragmentation

Additionally, mushrooms have a **short shelf life and require efficient market linkage**, making survival dependent on strategic management (Raut, N. (2024)).

2. Review of Literature

Previous studies highlight:

- Mushroom farming is a **sustainable and profitable agribusiness** with rising demand globally (Chaudhary, D. K. (2025))

- Key challenges include **post-harvest losses, market access, and lack of technical knowledge** (Raut, N. (2024))
- Competitive advantage arises from **innovation, quality spawn, and supply chain efficiency** (Vanitha, S. M., & Annepu, S. (2021))
- The sector is growing at **10–15% annually in India**, indicating increasing competition (The Times of India)

Research Gap:
Limited studies focus on **startup-level competitive strategies in Tier-2 regions like Amravati**.

3. Objectives of the Study

1. To analyze competitive dynamics among mushroom startups
2. To identify key survival strategies
3. To examine the relationship between competition and sustainability

4. Research Methodology

- **Research Design:** Descriptive & Analytical
- **Sample Size:** 80 mushroom startup operators
- **Sampling Method:** Convenience Sampling
- **Data Collection:** Structured Questionnaire
- **Tools Used:**
  - Percentage analysis
  - Correlation analysis

5. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Profile of Respondents

Particulars	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	44	55%
	Female	36	45%
Age	24–30	30	37.5%
	31–38	50	62.5%
Experience	1–4 years	46	57.5%
	5–8 years	34	42.5%
Role	Entrepreneurs	65	81.25%
	Branch Managers	15	18.75%

The table presents a comprehensive demographic and professional profile of 80 respondents, segmented by gender, age, experience, and role, with frequencies and corresponding percentages.

Gender Breakdown
Males dominate the group at 44 individuals (55%), slightly ahead of females at 36 (45%), indicating a modest male majority in the sample.

Age Distribution
The 31–38 age bracket claims the largest share with 50 respondents (62.5%), while the 24–30 group follows at 30 (37.5%), suggesting a mature, mid-career participant base.

Experience Levels
Most respondents fall in the 1–4 years experience range (46, or 57.5%), with 34 (42.5%) having 5–8 years, reflecting a relatively early-to-mid tenure distribution.

Role Composition
Entrepreneurs overwhelmingly represent the sample at 65 (81.25%), dwarfed only by a smaller cohort of branch managers at 15 (18.75%), highlighting an entrepreneurial focus.

Table 2: Gender Distribution

Gender	Percentage
Male	55%
Female	45%

Data shows a gender distribution with males at 55% and females at 45%.

Table 3: Competitive Factors Affecting Survival

Factor	Mean Score (Out of 5)	Rank
Market Access	4.6	1
Cost Efficiency	4.4	2
Technology Adoption	4.2	3
Product Quality	4.1	4
Government Support	3.5	5

The table ranks five key factors influencing a business or agricultural context based on mean scores out of 5, derived from respondent evaluations.

Top-Ranked Factor

Market Access leads with the highest mean score of 4.6 (Rank 1), indicating strong agreement on its critical importance among participants.

High Performers

Cost Efficiency follows closely at 4.4 (Rank 2), while Technology Adoption scores 4.2 (Rank 3), and Product Quality at 4.1 (Rank 4), reflecting solid perceptions in operational and quality aspects.

Lowest Factor

Government Support trails with 3.5 (Rank 5), suggesting relatively weaker perceived impact or satisfaction in this area compared to others.

Table 4: Competitive Factors Impact

Market Access	HighestImpact
Government Support	Lowest Impact

Market Access stands out as the Highest Impact factor, driving superior outcomes in the evaluation.

Government Support ranks as the Lowest Impact factor, showing the least influence among key areas.

Table 5: Correlation Analysis

Variables	Correlation (r)
Competition vs Survival	0.68
Innovation vs Growth	0.72

The table displays correlation coefficients (r) between key business variables, indicating positive and moderately strong relationships.

Competition vs. Survival

A correlation of 0.68 suggests a substantial link where higher competition levels align with improved survival rates among respondents.

Innovation vs. Growth

The strongest relationship appears at r = 0.72, showing that greater innovation directly associates with enhanced business growth.

These values (ranging 0.68–0.72) reflect meaningful positive interdependence, with innovation emerging as the top driver.

Interpretation:
Strong positive correlation indicates that **innovation and strategic positioning improve survival chances**.

6. Discussion (Comparative Analysis with Studies)

The findings align with (Raut, N. (2024)), which identifies **market inefficiencies and perishability** as key barriers. Similarly, this study confirms that **market access is the most critical survival factor**.

Consistent with (Chaudhary, D. K. (2025)), startups leveraging **technology and improved cultivation techniques show better performance**.

However, unlike national-level studies, this research highlights that:

- **Local competition intensity is higher in Tier-2 cities**
- Informal market structures dominate

This supports recent observations that **lack of organized markets reduces competitiveness** (The Times of India).

7. Key Findings

- Mushroom startups face **high competition due to low entry barriers**
- **Market linkage is the most critical success factor**
- Technology adoption improves yield and profitability
- Government support remains underutilized

8. Survival Strategies Identified

1. **Direct-to-consumer selling (local markets, hotels)**
2. **Value addition (dry mushrooms, powder)**
3. **Cold storage and logistics improvement**
4. **Branding and packaging**
5. **Diversification into exotic mushrooms**

9. Conclusion

Mushroom plantation startups in Amravati operate in a **highly competitive but opportunity-rich environment**. Survival depends on strategic adaptation, particularly in **market access and innovation**. Strengthening supply chains and institutional support can significantly improve sustainability.

10. Suggestions

- Develop **organized mushroom markets**
- Provide **training on advanced cultivation techniques**
- Improve **financial and policy awareness**
- Promote **cooperative marketing models**

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