

A Journey from Pharmaceutical Marketing to Profitable Mushroom Entrepreneurship: A Karnataka Entrepreneur's Inspiring Success Story

Before entering agriculture, Shri N.M. Nandish Kumar worked in the private pharmaceutical sector as a Marketing Head, managing business operations across nearly 21 countries. During his professional visits to his friends mushroom farms in Pune and Goa, he became deeply inspired by the immense commercial potential of hi-tech Button Mushroom cultivation.

Motivated by the opportunities available in modern horticulture and encouraged by the financial assistance schemes of the National Horticulture Board (NHB), he decided to venture into commercial mushroom cultivation in Karnataka.

His vision was clear to establish a sustainable, technology-driven and profitable farming enterprise capable of producing premium-quality mushrooms throughout the year irrespective of climatic conditions.

Establishment of the Hi-Tech Button Mushroom Unit

With technical guidance from the National Horticulture Board and financial assistance from Union Bank of India, Kuvempunagar Branch, Mysuru, Shri Nandish Kumar established a fully automated Button Mushroom production unit with a production capacity of 200 MT per annum as per NHB standards and specifications, started during 2024-25 at Nagawala village, Ilavala Hobli, Mysore District, Karnataka-571130

The project was scientifically designed to create a fully controlled environment ensuring year-round production of high-quality Button Mushrooms with high production and freshness.



Shri N.M. Nandish Kumar



Button Mushroom unit at Nagawala village, Ilavala Hobli, Mysore District



Infrastructure Created Under the Project

The entrepreneur established the following facilities under the project:

- Six automated growing rooms
- One compost yard
- Two bunker tunnels
- Working area shed
- Automation control panels
- Wash room facilities
- Handling equipment
- DG shed and Advanced packing machines



The mushroom growing rooms are equipped with advanced automation systems that maintain ideal temperature, humidity and ventilation conditions essential for superior mushroom growth and quality production.

Financial Assistance and Institutional Support

The total cost of the project Rs. 209.14 lakh.

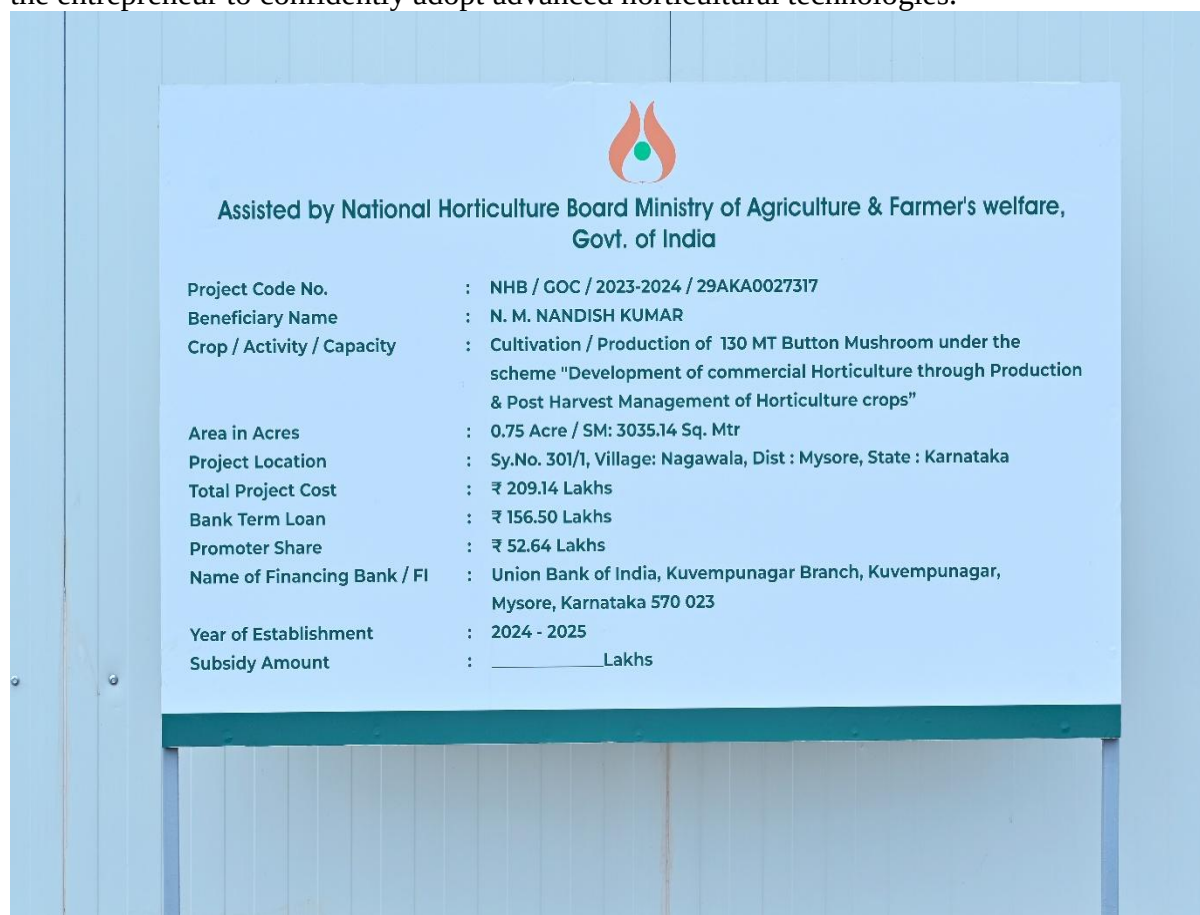
Term loan from bank Rs 156.50 Lakh

Promoter Margin Rs 52.64 lakh

Central Government Subsidy Support

A major boost to the project came through the 40% back-ended capital subsidy available under the National Horticulture Board protected cultivation scheme. Under this scheme, the entrepreneur received subsidy assistance of Rs. 30.00 lakh from NHB.

The timely financial support significantly reduced the financial burden and encouraged the entrepreneur to confidently adopt advanced horticultural technologies.



Sustainable Innovation Through Organic Compost Production – “SoilRaja™”

Apart from mushroom cultivation, the project strongly emphasizes sustainable agriculture through the production of premium organic compost marketed under the brand name “SoilRaja™”.

The compost is prepared through scientific curing of spent mushroom compost for nearly 150 days after mushroom harvest. This natural process converts agricultural waste into a nutrient-rich organic soil conditioner containing beneficial microorganisms such as: Trichoderma, Bacillus, Pseudomonas, Azotobacter, Phosphate Solubilizing Bacteria (PSB) and Actinomycetes

These beneficial microbes improve: Soil fertility, Root growth, Nutrient availability, Soil microbial activity and Long-term soil health.

As a circular economy initiative, SoilRaja™ helps recycle agricultural biomass, reduce waste, support sustainable farming, and create rural employment opportunities.

Exceptional Production and Income Generation

The project has achieved highly encouraging economic results.

From the hi-tech Button Mushroom unit, nearly 200 MT of premium-quality mushrooms are produced annually. Due to superior quality, freshness, hygienic production, and efficient management practices, the enterprise generates nearly:

- Annual Turnover: Rs. 3.00 crore
- Estimated Net Profit from Mushroom Production: Rs. 1.00 crore
- Additional Annual Income from Organic Compost: Rs. 20 lakh

The integrated business model has transformed the project into a highly sustainable and profitable agri-enterprise.

Strong Market Presence Under the Brand “MustEAT”

Fresh, nutritious, and hygienically packed 200-gram Button Mushroom packs are marketed under the brand name “MustEAT”.



The products are supplied to major markets including: Mysuru, Bengaluru, Mangaluru. Mandya, Shivamogga, Haveri, Erode, Vellore, Kochi etc, The brand has gained recognition for quality, freshness, taste, and reliable supply.

Key Factors Behind the Success

According to Shri N.M. Nandish Kumar, the major factors contributing to the project’s success include:

- Scientific mushroom cultivation practices
- Advanced automated growing systems
- Efficient post-harvest management
- Strong market linkage and branding
- Modern infrastructure facilities

- Institutional financial support
- Timely NHB subsidy assistance
- Sustainable production practices

International Recognition and Technical Training

The project has attracted international attention, including visitors from Bhutan who visited the unit to understand the advanced technologies and premium mushroom production systems.

The entrepreneur also actively supports aspiring mushroom growers by providing free practical training and technical guidance.

One such beneficiary, Shri Hitesh from Raipur, whose project loan has already been sanctioned by Bank of India, is currently establishing a similar mushroom unit after receiving technical support from Shri Nandish Kumar.

Collaboration with Horticulture University

Dr. Vishnuvardhan, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor of the University of Horticultural Sciences, Bagalkot, visited the project site to explore opportunities for collaborative research and development under a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model.

The proposed research focuses on developing sustained-release compost supplements capable of increasing mushroom yield by nearly 10% while reducing dependence on imported supplements from the Netherlands.

Skill Development and Student Training

The entrepreneur is actively contributing to skill development and practical education in horticulture. A 21-day internship programme was successfully conducted for 11 students from Mysuru Horticulture College under the University of Horticultural Sciences, Bagalkot.

Internship Programme Students

Such industry-oriented training programmes are planned to continue every year, helping students gain valuable practical exposure in modern mushroom cultivation technologies.



With Dr. Vishnuvardhan, Vice Chancellor

An Inspiration for Modern Agriculture

The inspiring journey of Shri N.M. Nandish Kumar clearly demonstrates how scientific farming, entrepreneurship, institutional support and technological innovation can transform agriculture into a highly profitable enterprise.

His success story serves as a powerful inspiration for progressive farmers and young entrepreneurs who aspire to shift from traditional farming towards high-value commercial horticulture and protected cultivation.

The project highlights the immense potential of modern agriculture in generating sustainable income, employment opportunities and long-term rural development.

Conclusion

The remarkable journey of Shri N.M. Nandish Kumar is far more than a story of successful Button Mushroom cultivation, it is a shining example of how innovation, determination and government support can revolutionize Indian agriculture.

Through the adoption of advanced mushroom cultivation technologies under the guidance of the National Horticulture Board, he has established a sustainable and profitable horticulture enterprise that stands today as a model of progressive farming in Karnataka and across India.

His achievements continue to inspire a new generation of farmers and entrepreneurs to embrace modern horticulture, improve productivity, adopt scientific farming practices, and contribute towards building a stronger and more sustainable agricultural future for India.



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