

Meet the pickle-preneurs of Kolar, Karnataka's mango capital

Rathnamma A.V., a homemaker and a member of Women's Farmer Producer Organisation from Kolar's Srinivasapur taluk, started a small mango pickle-making unit in 2017 with 10 members producing 50 kg of pickle a month. Today, she has a 50-person team and produces 2,000 kg of pickle a month.

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MINI TEJASWI



Rathnamma (right) and her team members at their mango pickle unit in Kolar, on August 30, 2025. | Photo Credit: K. Murali Kumar

Kolar district, the mango capital of Karnataka, has nurtured a bunch of pickle-preneurs who have created a round-the-year earning opportunity from a seasonal fruit — mango.

exporters and entrepreneurs apart from hundreds of women who make a living out of the fruit.

Kolar's story of organised pickle-preneurship began in 2017 when Rathnamma A.V., a home-maker and a member of Women's Farmer Producer Organisation from Srinivasapur taluk, started Sri Vaibhava Siridhanyagala Swasahaya Sangha, a small, manually-run, mango pickle making unit which produced just 50 kg of mango pickles a month. However, Rathnamma and her team of 10 women wouldn't settle for the micro nature of their business. They had big dreams and fire in their bellies.

Expanding the dream

Soon, Rathnamma brought scores of women from various Self Help Group to the pickle unit, and the team gradually built a sound market connection for their products with the help of the Department of Horticulture and various Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) in Karnataka.

Six months down the line, the unit grew to making 450 kg mango pickles per month. Today, with a team of 50 women workers, a semi-automated 'Vaibhava' makes over 2,000 kg of pickles and each member takes home not less than ₹15,000 per month.

The team comprises SHG members, women mango farmers, differently-abled women (Persons with Disabilities) and students of Krishi Vigyan Kendra. Directly and indirectly, Vaibhava currently touches the lives of over 1 lakh people, according to Ms. Rathnamma.

"Plenty of mangoes, of wide varieties, were getting wasted during the season. We thought of doing something small to preserve mangoes. The enthusiasm, encouragement and energies this venture received from fellow women were incomparable. From 50 kg to 2,000 kg, the scale up wasn't a big challenge for us. Today, each SHG member makes a decent monthly earning for her family. Earlier, it was a zero-income situation for many of these women," Ms. Rathnamma added.





Vaibhava was recognised as the “Best Women’s Self-Help Group” by Plan India in 2023. | Photo Credit: K. Murali Kumar

Growing as a brand

Pumping in more passion into this spirit of entrepreneurship in 2019 was United Way Bengaluru (UWBe), an NGO focusing on health, education, sustainable living and financial stability of underprivileged communities, with the help of FPOs and Farmer Interest Groups (FIGs) in Kolar.

According to Ratnamma, the support she and her friends received from all quarters has given a great fillip to their confidence and helped the team move in a positive direction, encouraging them to take more risks and focus on details — quality, quantity, building customer relationships, knocking on the doors of different departments and efficient marketing.

“We want our products to create a brand of their own, reach the urban markets, and to the plates of consumers who have a taste for local, homemade mango pickles and products,” said Chennamma, one of the team members working at Vaibhava, who belongs to Maha Ganpathi Mahila Swasahaya Sangha.

‘Best Women’s Self-Help Group’

Ratnamma believes that each jar of Vaibhava pickle, made and marketed as per Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) norms contains the ambition of local farmers and women who have embarked on a new path of entrepreneurship and social and economic development.

She and her team have also trained women from 13 SHGs in Kolar and hundreds of women from 1,000 SHGs in entrepreneurial skills through SHG Federation.

Vaibhava was recognised as the “Best Women’s Self-Help Group” by Plan India in 2023, and the unit has been playing a key role in influencing and encouraging more women to plunge into various entrepreneurial ventures, claimed Ms. Rathnamma.

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