

Kalliyoor Greens

How Women Farmers in Kerala Are Adding Value to Agriculture

Richard Joseph

In the International Year of Women Farmers declared by the United Nations, women farmers in Kerala continue to demonstrate how agriculture can contribute not only to food security, improved nutrition, and poverty reduction, but also to sustainable rural development and women's economic empowerment. From cultivation to processing and marketing, women play a vital role throughout the agricultural value chain. Today, many are moving beyond conventional farming by developing innovative, value-added products that improve their incomes and create new opportunities. One such inspiring example comes from Kalliyoor, a village in Thiruvananthapuram district, Kerala.

Agriculture at the Heart of Kalliyoor

Located in the southern part of Thiruvananthapuram district, Kalliyoor Grama Panchayat is a picturesque village where agriculture is deeply rooted in everyday life. The fertile lands surrounding Vellayani Lake are covered with lush green farms, making agriculture the backbone of the local economy. Women farmers have played a crucial role in preserving this agricultural tradition while introducing modern ideas that have transformed local farming.

From Fresh Vegetables to Value-Added Products

Three years ago, Soumya, a full-time farmer from Kalliyoor, and a group of fellow women farmers came up with a simple but innovative idea. Instead of selling only fresh vegetables, they decided to prepare ready-to-cook vegetable packs for popular Kerala dishes such as sambar, aviyal, and thoran.

The concept quickly gained popularity. Fresh, hygienically cleaned and cut vegetables packed at affordable prices made cooking easier for busy households. What began as a small initiative soon evolved into Kalliyoor Greens, a women-led enterprise that has become a symbol of entrepreneurship and innovation among local farmers.

Today, Kalliyoor Greens delivers fresh vegetables and value-added food products across Thiruvananthapuram city through online orders and home delivery. The initiative demonstrates how traditional farming can be combined with modern marketing to increase farmers' incomes.

Kalliyoor Greens, Farm Waves, and Soumya's Bahurasam are initiatives of the RAG Krishi Koottam under the Kalliyoor Krishi Bhavan. While Kalliyoor Greens markets fresh and cut vegetables, Farm Waves produces powdered food products, and Soumya's Bahurasam specializes in ready-to-eat foods.

Humble Beginnings

The venture began in 2023 by preparing just 10 to 15 packets of vegetables each day for sambar, aviyal, and thoran. The aviyal and sambar packs weighed 450 grams and were priced at Rs. 45, while the thoran packs weighed 250 grams and sold for Rs. 35. Vegetables such as spinach, pumpkin, bitter gourd, snake gourd, and others were carefully cleaned, chopped, weighed, and packed before being taken to market.

According to Soumya, customers initially bought the products out of curiosity. However, once they experienced the convenience and quality, demand grew rapidly. As orders increased, production expanded, and online ordering was introduced to meet customer needs.

Today, their products are available through the Ecat.in platform. What started with a few vegetable packs has now expanded into a range of nearly 220 products. These include ready-to-cook vegetable mixes, peeled vegetables, coconut milk, grated coconut, spice powders, banana powder, tapioca powder, pickles, soups, banana chutney, banana halwa, curry powders, and many other kitchen essentials. Customers can browse the app, place their orders, and receive fresh products delivered directly to their homes.

Efficient Home Delivery

The list of products available each day is shared in WhatsApp groups in advance. Orders are accepted through WhatsApp, phone calls, and the online platform.

Products are delivered using the group's own vehicle, and customers receive their bills through WhatsApp. Payments can be made through cash on delivery or digital payment platforms such as Google Pay. Within Thiruvananthapuram city, deliveries are carried out using electric autorickshaws, making the service environmentally friendly as well.

Women Leading the Enterprise

The enterprise is led by Soumya Sagar, who has been actively involved in agriculture for many years. She is supported by Suma, Girija, Sreeja, Komalam, Vanaja, Kumari, and Thanki. Their processing centre is located at Ukkode in Kalliyoor. The vegetables used are organically cultivated, ensuring freshness and quality. Soumya explains that the idea of producing cut vegetables emerged from the realization that value addition was the key to increasing farmers' incomes. By selling directly to consumers without intermediaries, both farmers and customers benefit—farmers receive better prices while consumers enjoy fresh products at reasonable rates.

Innovative Products

Apart from fresh vegetables, the group produces several unique value-added products. One of their most distinctive offerings is banana peel powder, prepared by drying finely chopped banana peels. The powder can be used as a beverage by mixing it with milk or as an alternative ingredient in herbal drinks. According to the group, it retains many of the nutritional benefits of banana peel. While cut vegetables remain their best-selling products, banana peel powder and banana peel pickle have also gained considerable popularity among customers.

Strong Government Support

The success of the enterprise has been made possible with financial and technical support from the Agriculture Department, Kalliyoor Grama Panchayat, and Kalliyoor Krishi Bhavan. Agriculture Officer Mary Latha, Assistant Agriculture Officer K. Ramani, Agricultural Assistants J.S. Anilkumar and S.K. Shinu, and Agriculture Karma Sena Supervisor T. Vidya have supported the women farmers throughout the journey—from cultivation to marketing.

Farm to Kitchen

One of the key strengths of Kalliyoor Greens is its farm-to-home model. Vegetables are harvested fresh each morning based on customer orders, ensuring minimal wastage and maximum freshness. The produce is cleaned, packed, and labelled with the Kalliyoor Greens brand before being distributed in electric autorickshaws. Home delivery is available within a 15 kilometre radius of Thiruvananthapuram city, while value-added products can also be sent to other districts through courier services. Kalliyoor Greens stands as an inspiring example of how women farmers, innovation, and value addition can transform traditional agriculture into a sustainable rural enterprise. Their success demonstrates that with determination, collective effort, and institutional support, farming can become both profitable and environmentally sustainable while creating new opportunities for rural women.