



A a d h i m a l a i  
ஆதிமலை

# ANNUAL REPORT

AADHIMALAI  
PAZHANGUDIYINAR  
PRODUCER  
COMPANY LTD

YEAR OF REPORT 24-25



# Executive Summary

A broad range of strategies and tactics to promote products or services through digital channels.

## Vision

To create sustainable and equitable livelihoods for indigenous communities by strengthening producer-owned enterprises rooted in traditional knowledge, sustainable practices, and collective governance.



## Mission

To enable indigenous producers to add value to forest and farm produce, establish fair and transparent markets, and empower women and communities through collective ownership and decision-making.



# In Loving Memory of Janaki Amma

Janaki Amma, a cherished and respected Director of Aadhimalai Pazhangudiyinar Producer Company Ltd, passed away on 20 August 2024, leaving behind a profound legacy of wisdom, compassion, and leadership.

As one of the founding Board Directors since Aadhimalai's inception in 2013, Janaki Amma played an instrumental role in shaping the company's vision and growth. Her contributions went far beyond governance—she was the heart and soul of the organization. Her leadership extended deeply into the field, where she stood as a pillar of strength and guidance for the producers, especially the women and younger members of the indigenous communities.

A proud and respected elder of the Kurumba community in the Nilgiris, Janaki Amma was renowned for her deep knowledge of traditional practices, forest produce, and natural healing. Her understanding of the land and its rhythms was profound, and she shared this wisdom generously, nurturing both people and nature alike. Through her commitment, she bridged traditional knowledge with sustainable livelihood initiatives, ensuring that her community's heritage remained alive and relevant in a changing world.

Her life was a testament to dedication and humility. Whether at community gatherings, company meetings, or in the forest paths she loved so dearly, Janaki Amma embodied the values that Aadhimalai stands for—respect for nature, dignity of labour, and the strength of collective effort.

Her passing is a deep loss to Aadhimalai, Keystone Foundation, and the entire Nilgiri Biosphere community. Yet, her spirit continues to guide us—through every forest product harvested sustainably, every woman empowered through enterprise, and every effort made to protect the land and its people.

Janaki Amma leaves behind a legacy of resilience, care, and an unbreakable bond with the Nilgiris. Her memory will forever remain etched in the hearts of all who had the privilege of knowing her.



# Message From The Board



**The financial year 2024–2025 has been a year of both challenges and achievements for Aadhimalai. While we experienced the natural cycles of forest produce and market fluctuations, our community’s resilience and commitment enabled us to achieve a turnover of ₹1.4 crore. This milestone is not just a financial achievement but also a strong reflection of how indigenous producer-owned enterprises can thrive when supported by sustainable practices, transparent governance, and collective effort.**

# From The Field

Procurement during this year was shaped by both the cyclical nature of forest produce and unexpected market dynamics. Coffee procurement proved particularly challenging, as daily price fluctuations created severe cash flow concerns. Despite these difficulties, APPCL managed to procure nearly 3 tons of coffee, offering producers a significantly better rate of ₱450 per kg compared to the local market price of ₱320.

Spices performed steadily with both clove and pepper maintaining strong demand and fetching premium prices, with pepper being procured at ₱550 per kg against the local market's ₱400. The year also brought record-breaking procurement of Amla, with over 12 tons collected, priced at more than double the local market rate, reflecting new opportunities in diversification.



Shikakai, which yields only once in two years, naturally recorded a lower harvest, though APPCL was still able to procure it at ₱55 per kg compared to the local market's ₱40. In contrast, Soapnut experienced an exceptionally high yield, contributing significantly to revenues. This was procured at ₱25 per kg, more than three times the local market price of ₱8.

Other produce such as millets, silk cotton, and beeswax also showed healthy performance, each fetching higher rates than the local markets. Beeswax, for example, was procured at ₱300 per kg, offering producers a 33% increase. The only exception was honey, where APPCL's procurement rate was lower than the local market due to external competition and pricing fluctuations.

This pricing strategy reflects Aadhimalai's commitment to ensuring fair compensation to producers. On average, APPCL offered between 20% to 68% higher rates than local markets across various products, ensuring that indigenous gatherers and farmers could realize tangible livelihood improvements.

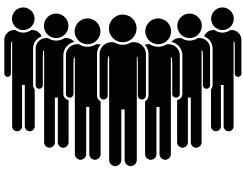
# PROCUREMENT REPORT

In the Anaipallam area, Malliyammal has been instrumental as a collection agent, coordinating with local producers to facilitate the supply of coffee, pepper, and shikakai.

In the Kodampally and Gudalur regions, Rangasamy's recent efforts have been very promising, and we look forward to strengthening those relationships in the coming years. Additionally, Mani and his team in Kodampally have done an exceptional job with our first wild amla procurement venture in that area.

We continue to value the consistency of producers like Mitchi from Baviyur, who has supplied coffee, pepper, and silk cotton since Aadhimalai's inception. We also recognize Palraj, a PGS-certified farmer from the Aracode region. He manages significant volumes of coffee, spices, and NTFP, serving as a role model for the youth in his village.

## KEY IMPACT NUMBERS



1024 men

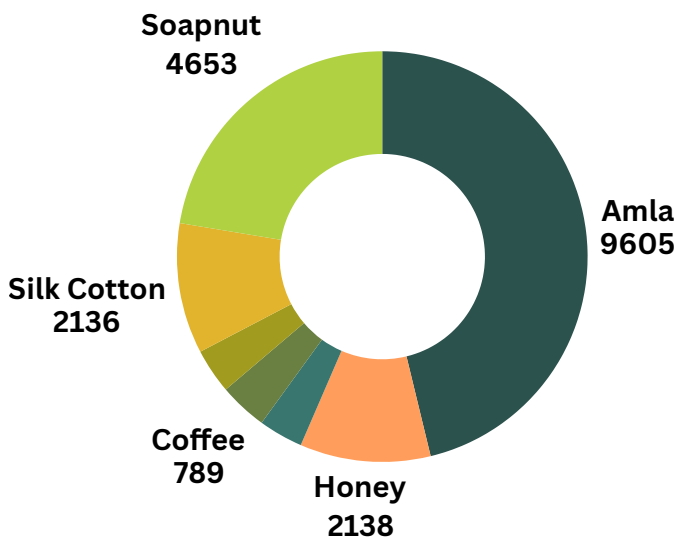


884 women



90+ Villages

### Major Procurement in Kgs



# TECHNOLOGY AND INFRASTRUCTURE



Aadhimalai made significant strides in integrating technology into community-based enterprises. With the support of Selco Foundation and Keystone Foundation, solar dryers were installed in Banagudi and Bangalapadi. These dryers have reduced post-harvest losses, improved quality, and lessened dependence on weather conditions.

In addition, several new machines and equipment were purchased to modernize production units, improve hygiene, and meet higher quality standards. The Banagudi Production Unit was also extended, creating more space for processing and expanding employment opportunities for women in the community.



# WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND LEADERSHIP

This year marked an important shift in women's leadership within Aadhimalai. Two women from Pillur, Selvi and Mallika, became directors on the Board of Aadhimalai. Their journeys are especially inspiring because they represent the core values of indigenous self-governance and empowerment. Mallika, who began her association as an employee in the Pillur Production Unit, rose to become a Board Director. Her story has now become an example of how women can grow from being producers to leaders, breaking barriers and inspiring many others.



Currently, women make up the majority of Aadhimalai's workforce across collection, production, and governance. Their growing involvement ensures that the enterprise not only provides income but also strengthens women's voices in community decision-making.

# ENTERPRISE HUB

In 2024–2025, Aadhimalai strengthened livelihood diversification through the Enterprise Hub, a collaborative initiative with Keystone Foundation that brings together community-owned enterprises rooted in sustainability, fair trade, and indigenous empowerment. The Hub is supported through institutional funding to Keystone Foundation from the Chapple Family Foundation (USA), enabling enterprise incubation, capacity building, and scaling. Keystone provides long-term technical guidance, training, and governance mentoring, while Aadhimalai anchors producer ownership, value addition, and marketing of NTFPs and farm produce.

Last Forest plays a key role in market access, product positioning, and sales outreach, along with training enterprises on quality control, branding, packaging, and market readiness. Their focused support to honey gatherers on sustainable harvesting, quality handling, and post-harvest hygiene has significantly improved product quality, traceability, and consumer confidence. Together, Aadhimalai, Keystone Foundation, Last Forest, and the Chapple Family Foundation form a strong collaborative model that combines community ownership, technical expertise, market linkages, and catalytic funding to build resilient, women-led indigenous enterprises



# ENTERPRISE HUB

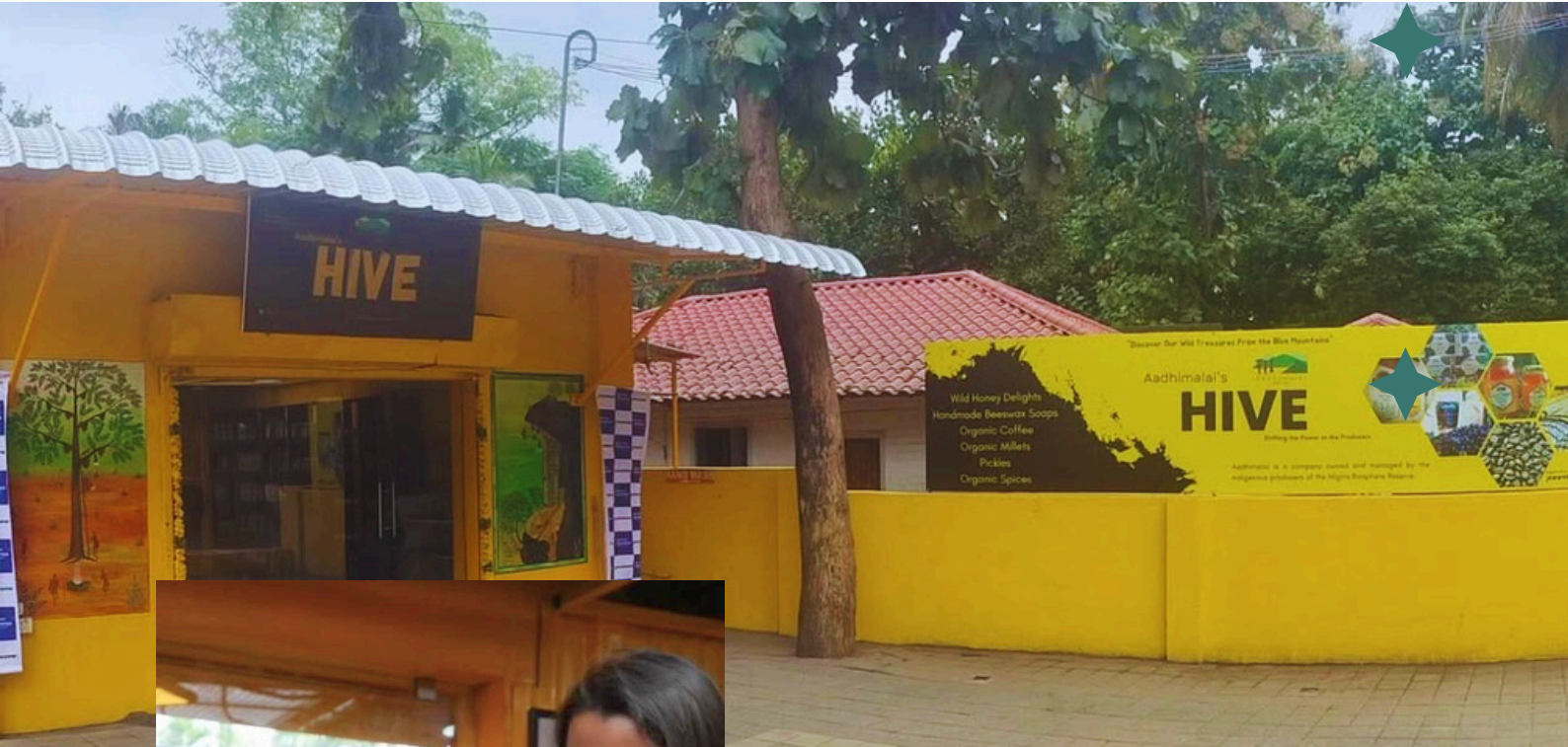
The Enterprises that have emerged from this collaboration are diverse, each responding to local needs and opportunities while upholding environmental responsibility:

- **Upcycling Enterprise (Aadhimalai):** Focused on recycling and repurposing discarded cloth pieces, plastic and glass, this enterprise is led by women's groups who transform waste into usable household and decorative products. It tackles two pressing issues at once—waste management and livelihood generation—while setting an example of circular economy practices in the Nilgiris.
- **Bake n Take:** Women-led baking units produce traditional snacks and catering services, reviving traditional grains while catering to modern tastes. By promoting traditional snacks, this enterprise not only generates steady income but also strengthens local food security, livelihood and nutrition.
- **Thalir:** This unit handles coffee roasting, grinding as well as spice cleaning, grinding, and packaging. These activities ensure that value addition happens at the community level, increasing margins for farmers and establishing indigenous brands in the regional market.
- **Melseemai FPO:** This includes value addition of products like soapnut, shikakai, amla, and honey into eco-friendly and market-ready products such as candies, powders, and pickles.
- **Indigenous Nursery:** The Indigenous Nursery nurtures native plant species that are vital for forest restoration and community use. It supplies saplings for agroforestry, home gardens, and ecological regeneration across villages. Women and youth play an active role in managing the nursery, ensuring traditional knowledge is passed on. Beyond livelihoods, the nursery strengthens the bond between communities and their landscapes.
- **Live Seed Bank:** The Live Seed Bank conserves and multiplies indigenous crop varieties that are fast disappearing. It serves as a community-led resource, providing farmers with access to resilient and diverse seeds for cultivation. By protecting biodiversity, the seed bank safeguards food security and cultural heritage. It stands as a living archive of traditional agricultural wisdom for future generations.



# The Hive

One of the most significant milestones of the year was the inauguration of our HIVE retail outlet at Kallar. The store was formally opened by Mrs. Shwetha Suman, Honorable Additional Collector, Coimbatore, and has since become a dynamic platform for showcasing the products of indigenous producers. More than just a retail outlet, HIVE embodies our vision of creating spaces where community products meet discerning consumers, including both local residents and tourists.



The HIVE store serves not just as a retail space, but as a vibrant platform to exhibit the craftsmanship and efforts of our community, especially the women and indigenous producers who form the backbone of our work. Beyond commercial success, HIVE has played a vital role in strengthening local livelihoods by offering producers a reliable and visible market presence. It has fostered a deeper appreciation for the rich heritage embedded in our products—be it wild honey, forest herbs, handmade soaps, or sustainably harvested spices. The growing popularity of these products among both local and tourist customers highlights a shifting consumer mindset toward ethical consumption and cultural preservation.

# Partnerships and Institutional Support

- Nabkisan continued its financial support through timely loans, enabling APPCL to manage procurement even during challenging cash flow situations.
- The ISO certification process, initiated in March 2025, is an important step towards preparing our products for international markets.



Fair Trade and Last Forest conducted intensive training programs with women producers on team building, skill development, and collective decision-making, further deepening the spirit of cooperative enterprise.

# EXPOSURE VISITS AND TRAINING



Aadhimalai was honoured with the Best FPO Award during the Birsa Munda Festival organized by NABKISAN on Janjatiya Gaurav Divas 2024. The award, presented by Ms. Sharmila, CEO of NSTFDC, was received by Director Mallika on behalf of the company. This recognition celebrates Aadhimalai's commitment to empowering indigenous communities through sustainable and inclusive enterprises.

A visit to Yercaud allowed producers to gain practical experience in garden management and silk farming.



In Marayoor, Sumithra and Chellamal trained the Hill Puliya community in soap-making. Their effort has resulted in the formation of a women's self-help group (SHG) that has grown from two to eight members, successfully running their own retail outlet.



# Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The AGM, held in September 2024, was a memorable day that combined governance with community spirit. The gathering paid heartfelt homage to Late Mrs. Janaki, senior director, whose contributions remain invaluable. The event also marked the introduction of the two new directors, Selvi and Mallika.



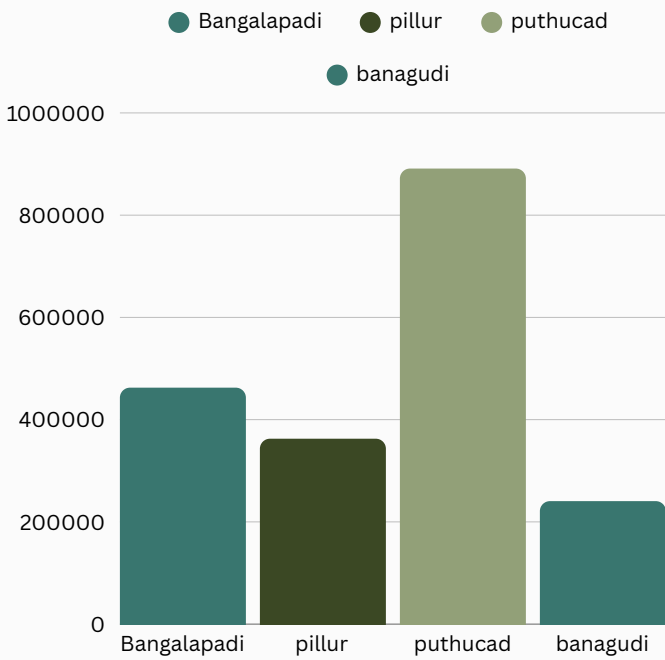
Financial reports of the previous year were presented, and strategies for the future were discussed openly with shareholders. The AGM brought together a wide cross-section of the community – including shareholders, village elders, VFCs, retired forest officials, Keystone Foundation teams, founders, BOD members, and staff of Aadhimalai. The event concluded with a grand community lunch, symbolizing unity and collective celebration.



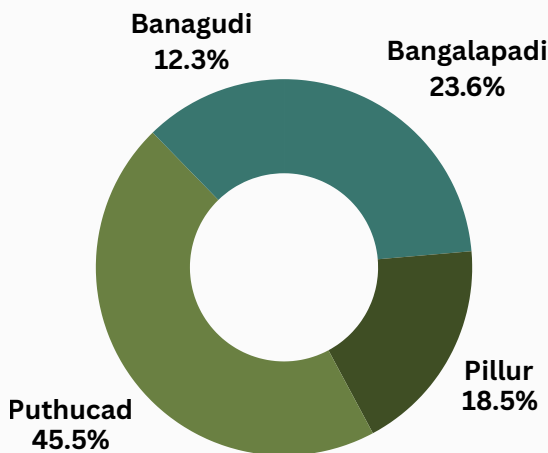
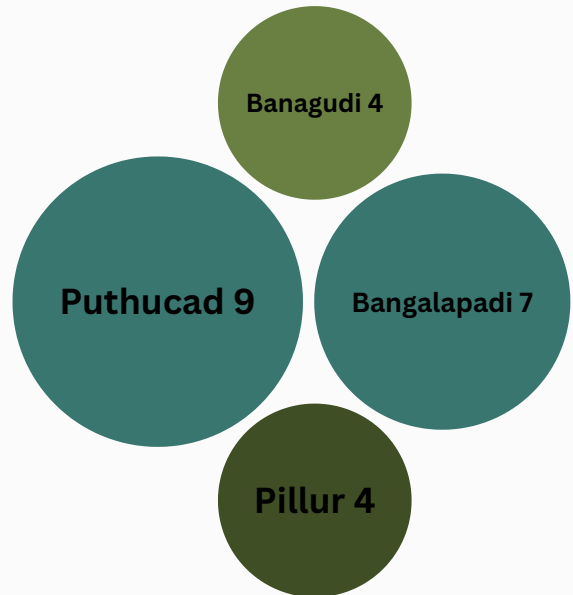
# LABOUR DAYS

Aadhimalai empowers indigenous women, who make up over 90% of its workforce, by involving them in every step of the value chain—from harvesting to marketing. This has helped them gain diverse skills, financial independence, and improved social status. By promoting traditional knowledge and sustainable practices, Aadhimalai also contributes to preserving the region’s rich biodiversity.

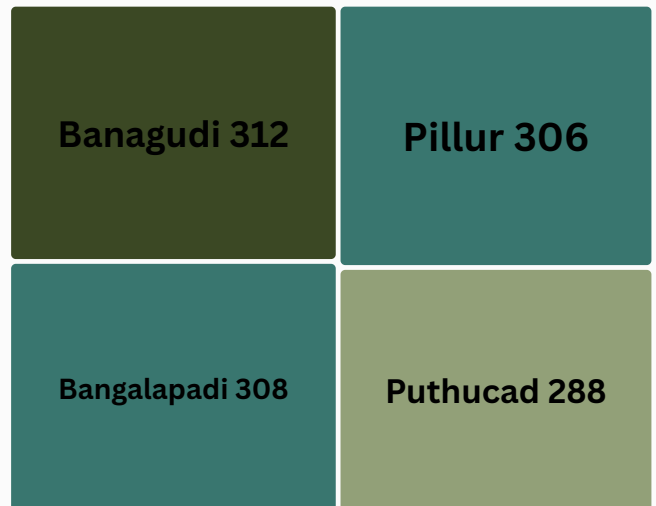
## SALARY 2024-25



## PRESENT WOMEN STAFF



## TOTAL WORKING DAYS



## TOTAL SALARY DRAWN BY EACH UNIT 24-25

# GOVERNANCE AND BOARD

Strong and accountable governance remains central to Aadhimalai's identity as a producer-owned company. The Board of Directors (BOD) plays a critical role in providing strategic direction, ensuring transparency, safeguarding the interests of indigenous shareholders, and upholding the values of sustainability and equity. The inclusion of women directors from within the producer community has further strengthened grassroots representation and collective ownership.

Looking ahead, strengthening governance is a key priority. Aadhimalai plans to bring in new directors, including youth ensure strong community representation. Greater emphasis will be placed on active engagement of Board members, moving beyond periodic meetings to deeper involvement in strategy, mentoring, and oversight of enterprises. Regular orientation and capacity-building sessions for directors will be introduced to improve understanding of business performance, legal responsibilities, and long-term planning.

In the coming years, Aadhimalai also aims to improve Board processes and systems, including clearer role definitions, stronger sub-committees (finance, audit, and enterprise development), and more structured decision-making. These changes will help the Board function in a more proactive and positive manner, enabling the company to respond better to market challenges, strengthen accountability, and guide Aadhimalai's growth as a resilient, community-owned enterprise.



# Challenges Faced

The year 2024–2025 presented several operational and external challenges for Aadhimalai. Cash flow constraints emerged as one of the most significant hurdles, especially during peak procurement seasons. Rapid and unpredictable fluctuations in coffee prices made it difficult to plan purchases, and the inability to make upfront payments resulted in lower procurement volumes. At the same time, local traders manipulated procurement prices, creating unhealthy competition and putting additional pressure on producer trust and market stability.



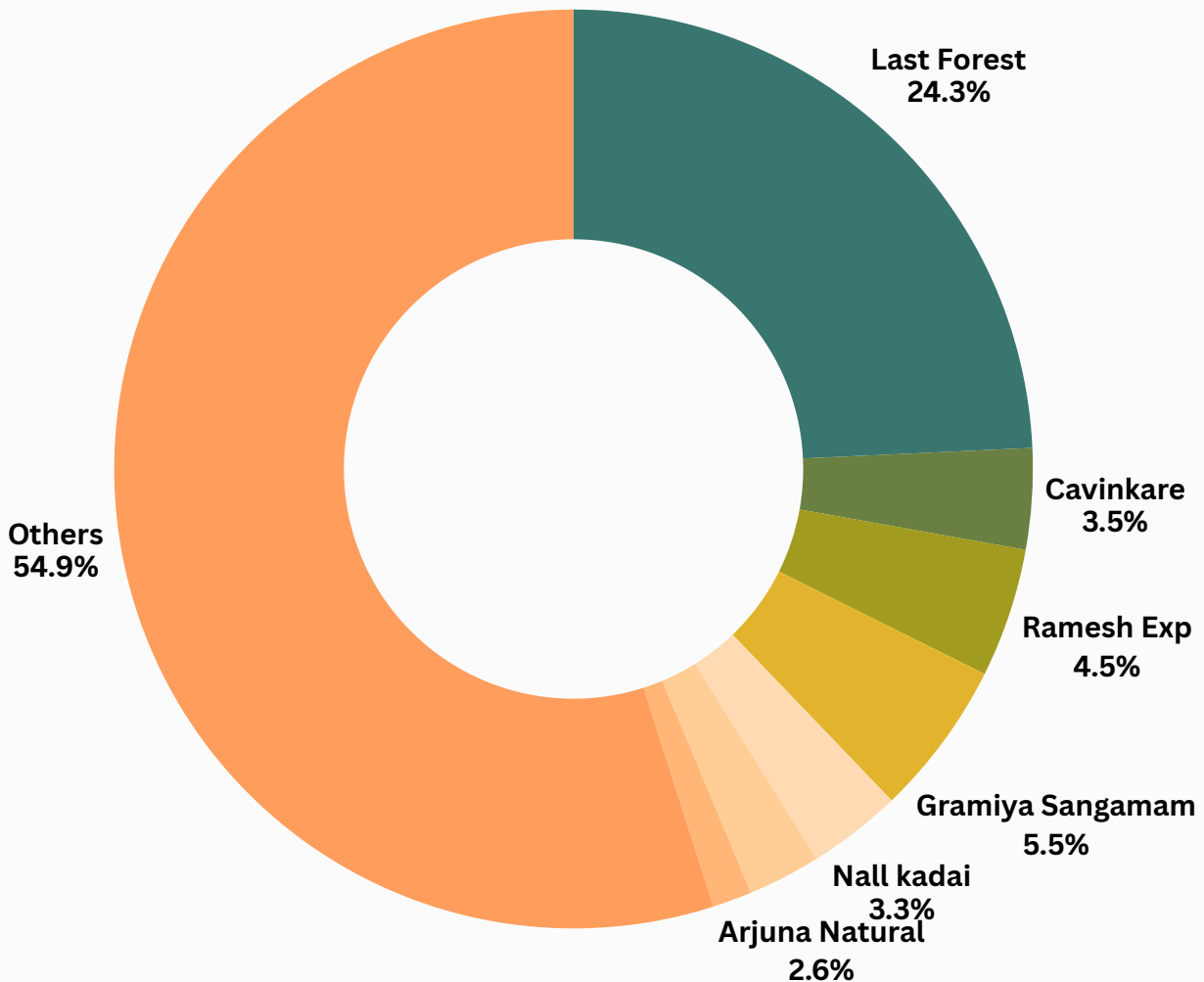
Climate change continued to be a recurring and growing concern. Erratic rainfall patterns affected harvesting and drying cycles, leading to delays and inconsistencies in processing. While crops such as coffee reached ripeness, the bean size was often smaller, resulting in quality rejections and reduced value. Prolonged drying periods due to unpredictable weather also led to weight loss in produce such as coffee, pepper, and soapnut, directly impacting producer incomes and overall procurement efficiency.



# Sales Performance

Sales during 2024–2025 reflected both strong market demand and challenging price dynamics. Coffee continued to witness very high demand, though constant price fluctuations required careful negotiation and timing in sales decisions. Products such as Shikakai, handmade soaps, and coffee maintained steady momentum and were sold in large volumes, reinforcing their position as core revenue drivers for Aadhimalai. A significant new milestone this year was the bulk sale of around 5 tons of wild Amla, marking Aadhimalai's entry into a new product segment and opening up fresh market opportunities. This diversification in sales not only strengthened overall revenues but also expanded livelihood options for producers engaged in emerging forest produce markets.

## Customer Chart



# FINANCIALS

Aadhimalai continues its journey of strengthening indigenous livelihoods, promoting sustainable resource use, and empowering women-led community enterprises across the Nilgiris Biosphere Reserve. Guided by the principles of fair trade and ecological responsibility, Aadhimalai has expanded its operations, diversified production, and deepened its social impact through collaboration with Keystone Foundation and the Enterprise Hub network.

## PROFIT AND LOSS

INCOME	2024-2025	2023-2024
Revenue from Operations	78.74	88.54
Other Income	0.01	0.28
<b>Total</b>	<b>78.75</b>	<b>88.82</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Cost of Materials Consumed	61.45	31.51
Direct and Indirect Expenses	71.06	58.52
<b>Profit /Loss</b>	<b>-53.76</b>	<b>-1.21</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>78.75</b>	<b>88.82</b>

## BALANCE SHEET

EQUITY & LIABILITIES	2024-2025	2023-2024
Capital Funds	57.32	45.09
Current Liabilities	66.19	40.04
<b>Total</b>	<b>123.51</b>	<b>85.13</b>
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Fixed Assets	60.37	12.99
Other Non Current Assets	19.15	4.29
Current Assets	43.99	67.85
<b>Total</b>	<b>123.51</b>	<b>85.13</b>

# Directors



**Ponnal  
Lingan**



**Mari Palani**



**Balan Nagaraj**



**Subramanai  
Janaki**



**Mallika Suresh**



**Selvi M**

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# Advisors



**Snehlata Nath**



**Robert Leo**



**Mallikarjunamoorthy**

# Team



**Esther**



**Jestin Pauls**



**Kaliyappan**

# Team



**Maximillian**



**Rangasamy**



**Raymund Jude**



**Sasirekha**



**Sivakumar**



# Production Units



## Puthucad

Located between Barliyar and Coonoor, Puthucad is a Kurumba settlement. The unit is home to around 12 women who specialize in the value addition of beeswax personal care products. In addition to their production work, these women actively engage in training small groups across the country. The team is led by Sumithra.



## Bangalapadi

Bangalapadi is one of the largest units of Aadhimalai and serves as a hub for processing millets and honey bottling. The unit also handles the ginning of silk cotton, which is then converted into mattresses and pillows. Additionally, hair care products like Shikakai powder are produced here. The unit is overseen by Kaliappan.

# Production Units



## Pillur


Located in Coimbatore, Pillur is the production site for all of Aadhimalai's pickles. The unit is also equipped with a cashew processing facility and supports handloom activities, including the production of banana fiber mats and broom grass mats. The team here is led by Kaliamma.



## Banagudi

Banagudi is a Kurumba settlement situated in Kotagiri. This unit specializes in the production of beeswax soaps, cloth bags, and millet mix products. The unit was inaugurated in April 2023.

# Future Goals (2025-2026)

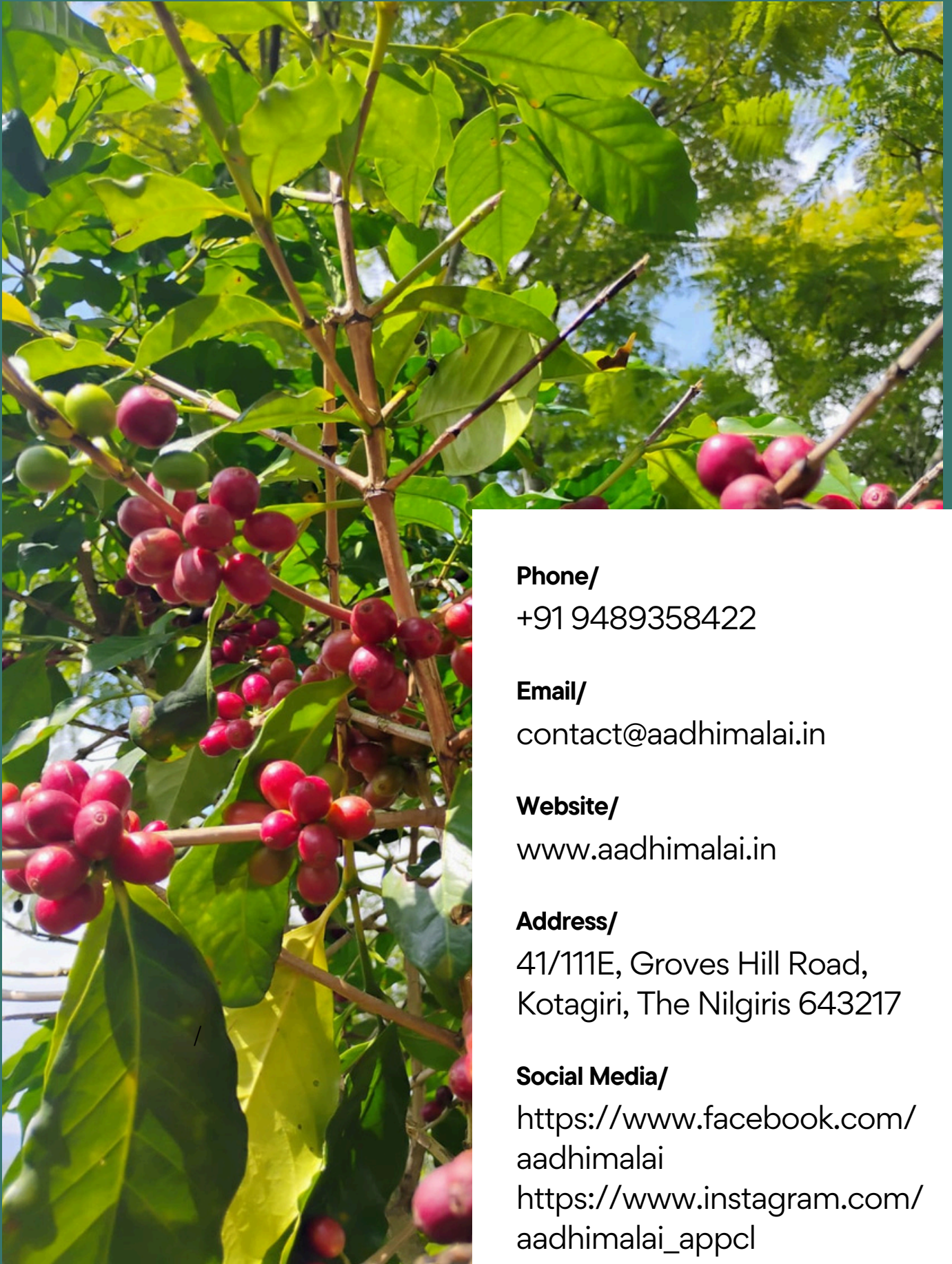
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1. Achieve ISO certification to access global markets.
  2. Establish the Women-Centered Value Addition Center at Kotagiri, integrating NTFP processing, coffee, spices, upcycling, and crafts.
  3. Expand the retail network to more locations in Nilgiris and Coimbatore.
  4. Develop a traceability system to ensure product transparency and consumer trust.
  5. Strengthen youth leadership and build capacity of women for higher governance roles.
  6. Scale up training and peer learning exchanges with other indigenous communities.



# Conclusion

The year 2024–2025 reaffirmed Aadhimalai's role as a pioneering indigenous enterprise. Despite challenges in cash flow and volatile markets, the company has upheld its values of fairness, sustainability, and empowerment. With growing community leadership, institutional partnerships, and innovative retail strategies, Aadhimalai stands strong in its mission to build resilient, women-led, community-owned enterprises.

# CONTACT US



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