

Café Kudumbashree

Café Kudumbashree is a sub brand of Kudumbashree (State Poverty Eradication Mission) which aims at not only revolutionizing the hospitality sector in the State but also local economic development providing gainful employment to poor women from Kudumbashree families. More than 1000 units serving ethnic delicacies are functioning across the state of Kerala. The units are run by poor women and the all profits are shared amongst themselves the owners, who are Kudumbashree members. Kudumbashree Mission provides supports necessary to capacitate them like regular professional training, partial financial support, marketing avenues and interface with banks for raising capital.

Café Kudumbashree specializes in ethnic Kerala cuisine, prepared by women from various cultures, traditions and customs. Arguably, this is the only brand that brings together the diversity of ethnic Kerala cuisine under one roof. Over the years, Café Kudumbashree has established itself as a strong brand in the restaurant sector, through a series of food festivals organized in different parts of the State in association with prestigious institutions such as Malayala Manorama, Mathrubhoomi ,Kerala Kaumudi, Vanitha, etc. No wonder Café Kudumbashree has received the Gold Medal (2013) and Silver medal (2014) in the India International Trade Fair held in New Delhi.



Kudumbashree in collaboration with Malayala Manorama conducted a **'Gulf Kerala food Fest in UAE'** based on the success of earlier Malayala Manorama – Kudumbashree food fests held in Kerala. The programme was conducted in the month of April (2015) at Abudhabi and Dubai. It was a prestigious event for Kudumbashree as it is for the first time Kudumbashree has set its foot outside the country. The media coverage and the warm support extended by the Keralites received wide global attention.

After conducting a series of food fests collaborating various café units inside the state, Kudumbashree has organized a National Food Fest namely **Café Kudumbashree India Food Court** in the capital city of the state inviting ethnic delicacies of 9 states across the country in association with Kudumbashree - National Resource Organization. The participants from other states were very enthusiastic and served their traditional dishes in traditional attire which grabbed visitor's attention.

Kudumbashree is also engaged in the process of catering online food orders of Indian Railway through IRCTC.

It is evident that Kudumbashree is a strong brand in café sector as it has got opportunity to run Government canteens like University Canteen, Planning board canteen, Secretariat Canteen, PSC office canteen, National Institute of Speech and Hearing, MLA quarters, Paripally ESI Medical college, NABARD .



District wise status of Café Kudumbashree units

District	Cafe Units
Thiruvananthapuram	158
Kollam	113
Pathanamthitta	58
Alappuzha	82
Kottayam	59
Idukki	25
Ernakulam	179
Thrissur	124
Palakkad	100
Malappuram	63
Kozhikode	30
Wayanad	24
Kannur	26
Kasaragod	23
Total	1064



SC Café - a unique model

In order to provide livelihood support to SC beneficiaries, Kudumbashree established a chain of mini cafe units having five SC members each to tap the opportunity of street vending . This is a convergence model in which fund source is SC department. Kudumbashree identifies SC beneficiaries from inside the Kudumbashree network and adequate training, hand holding supports were provided. Take away counters are being established through these minicafes and the first one has been positioned in the way side of Sabarimala, Pathanamthitta district. This will be a wonderful model which can compete with other way side eateries. Two attractive points which make the minicafe differ from other similar project are– The minicafes are made in such a way that it either mobile or can be dismantled which gives the entrepreneurs an additional advantage of grabbing maximum business by changing the area according to the season or potential.

Various convergence

Kudumbashree Mission explored the potential of cooking as a means of livelihood and encouraged Kudumbashree women to start canteen and catering groups across the state. Women managed restaurants are accepted very well which is evident from the various opportunities we received in café sector which are enlisted below

- IRCTC on line food booking service – Kudumbashree canteen units in Ernakulam are delivering food packets to Railway passengers based on online order placed

- Railway Station Canteen, Chengannur
- Govt Press Canteen
- Cochin Refinery Canteen , Cochin
- ESI Medical College canteen ,Paripalli
- Secretariat Canteen, Statue
- Gov.Homeo College Canteen, Airanimuttam
- Public Service Commission Canteen,Pattom
- MLA Hostel Canteen, Palayam
- State Planning Board Canteen,Pattom
- Child Development centre, Medical College
- Institute of management in Government , Vikas Bhavan
- NABARD
- University College Canteen, Thiruvananthapuram
- CMS College Canteen, Kottayam

Training

An enterprise's success depends how well it is managed. Restaurant management involves many different aspects, including public relations, inventory, dealing with other members, hygiene, customer service etc. Having well-trained and committed members who see the possibility to progress in the business and develop their skills with others can make enterprise a successful model. Regular training sessions and handholding support is inevitable to achieve this. Hence members should be properly trained to provide excellent customer service and other attributes required for managing the restaurant. All

staff should be dedicated, hard working, friendly, courteous, and attentive to their customers. Also, they should be able handle customer complaints effectively and with grace. Customers should feel welcome and that their patronage is appreciated.

The main aim of capacity building and handholding is not only knowledge provision which is often a top to bottom process. Instead here we emphasize on the internalizing of knowledge and peer learning process. Kudumbashree already has a team of training groups who have been nurtured within the community space who provide the training and capacity building services.

Branding and Marketing

Even though **Café Kudumbashree** is a strong brand in Hospitality sector, it needs to have a logo and thematic representation of its existence to create special impact. It is important to have a strategy for advertising either through media or through community.

Quality Checking Mechanism

Kudumbashree developed Standard Operating Procedures for Café units, for assessing its quality. All the units are required to stick on to certain bench marking has been fixed so that we can categorize the canteen based on the quality of service and amenities provided. Periodical checking from the side of concerned district missions plays a vital role in quality improvement. Café Management Team or Micro Enterprise Consultants can play a vital role in the same.

Digitalising the brand

Kudumbashree Mission is in the process of developing web-enabled Management Information System, to enable effective monitoring and the implementation of activities which involves geo tagging of café units.

Innovation in café



Kudumbashree is planning to develop an innovative project in collaboration with Kerala State Road Transport Corporation. Here KSRTC will be providing their scrap bus for transforming it into café. Kudumbashree will be developing the model and assign trained people for managing café. The discussion regarding the project is ongoing and it will be implemented soon.

Conclusion

Café Kudumbashree plays a vital role in livelihood sector of Kudumbashree . The expertise and passion of women in cooking has been effectively utilized in Café Kudumbashree , this made the brand popular.

