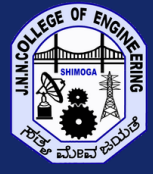




NATIONAL EDUCATION SOCIETY (R)
**JAWAHARLAL NEHRU NEW COLLEGE
OF ENGINEERING, SHIVAMOGGA**

(Approved by AICTE, New Delhi, Affiliated to VTU, Belagavi)

INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE CELL (IQAC)



DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES

JNNCE – MBA Meets Entrepreneurship



Ms. Kavitha
Woman Entrepreneur





Ms. Kavitha

Woman Entrepreneur

Introduction

In the scenic Malnad town of Shivamogga, where lifestyle echos simplicity and tradition breathe through every household, a quiet revolution is taking place—not through protests or politics, but through Chapathis, Rotis, Chatnipudies and Holiges.

At the heart of this transformation is Ms Kavitha, a woman homemaker turned food entrepreneur. She is the founder of SAP Bio Products, a fast-growing food processing unit that blends Karnataka's culinary traditions with modern-day entrepreneurship. Today, Kavitha not only provides employment to other women but has also created a brand that consumers trust for quality, authenticity, and purity.

Here is a snapshot of the focused interaction of JNNCE MBA students, Chandana, Darshan, Kiran, Rahul, Eeksha with Ms Kavitha, a successful budding entrepreneur in Food Industry in Shivamogga.

Q1. Kavitha, what inspired you to initiate transition from homemaker to food entrepreneurship?

Honestly, it began with a passion for preserving and promoting traditional recipes of Masala power, rasam powder—these were less available for affordable price. I started making small batches for friends and neighbors. The response was overwhelming. Meanwhile, as I was in PG Business, I realized that food processing could be my way of contributing to the community, especially women entrepreneurs like me.

Q2. How did you start SAP Bio Products? What were the initial challenges?

I started with very small amount of investments, from my savings and used my kitchen as the production center. Hygiene, packaging, shelf-life—everything was a learning curve. Some Banks were reluctant, and navigating food safety certifications was tough. Later, through the PM-FME scheme, I was able to upgrade to a formal processing unit.

Q3. Tell us about your team. How did you bring rural women into your venture?

Initially, I worked alone. But as demand increased, I reached out to women in nearby places. I trained them in basic food handling, hygiene, and packaging. Many were hesitant at first, but once they saw the steady income, more joined.

Q4. What are the main products you process, and what makes them special?

We primarily process traditional food products rooted in the Malnad region as stated here. These are all made using brand sourced, chemical-free ingredients. What makes our products truly special is the authenticity and focus on health. We adapt the measures to meet modern hygiene and packaging standards. For example, chutney powders are preservative-free but still have a decent shelf life due to careful processing and natural techniques. In short, our uniqueness lies in offering traditional taste with modern convenience, all while supporting local farmers and women workers in the region."

Our flagship products are:

- Chapathis, Rotis and Chutnypowder
- Home Extracted Edible Oil Products
- Holige and other Sweet dishes

Q5. What are your plans for the future of SAP Bio Products?

We propose to set up an eco-friendly packaging line. I plan to open a small outlet in the city. My dream is to turn SAP Bio Products into a national brand that stands for purity and empowerment.

Q6 What advice would you give to other women entrepreneurs looking to benefit from Government Scheme support?

I have been benefited from a couple of government schemes that specifically support women entrepreneurs. One of the most impactful was the Mudra Loan under the Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana, which provided us with the initial working capital to scale up our food processing unit. Additionally, I applied for support through the Stand-Up India scheme, which is designed to promote entrepreneurship among women and marginalized communities.

These grants and schemes not only provided financial assistance but also gave me the confidence to take bold steps in expanding my business. The process involved some paperwork and patience, but it was worth it. I would strongly encourage other aspiring women entrepreneurs to explore these opportunities. Also I have been supported by a prominent public sector bank

Q7. Entrepreneurship involves taking risks. How do you approach risk management in your business, and what strategies have helped you navigate uncertainties?"

"Risk is an inevitable part of entrepreneurship – especially in the food processing industry, where we deal with variables like raw material availability and quality, labour availability, market demand, regulatory changes, and even climate-related factors. I approach risk management with a mix of careful planning and flexibility.

First, I always maintain a buffer – whether it's in terms of inventory, finances, or time. Second, I closely monitor market trends and customer feedback. Being proactive helps us adapt quickly – whether it's modifying a product line or pivoting our marketing approach. Lastly, I believe in calculated risk. I take the time to do feasibility studies before launching new products or investing in machinery. And I always consult mentors and industry experts – it's a huge help in minimizing blind spots.

For any entrepreneur, especially women stepping into business, managing risk isn't about avoiding it – it's about preparing well and staying agile."

Q8. What marketing and promotional strategies have been most effective in growing your business, especially as a woman entrepreneur in a competitive market?"

"Word-of-mouth" has been the most powerful and cost-effective marketing tool for my business – especially in the early stages. In smaller towns and close-knit communities like Shimoga and other parts of the Malnad region, trust plays a huge role in purchasing decisions. When one satisfied customer shares their experience, it naturally brings in more people.

I focus on building strong customer relationships. I personally follow up on orders, ensured product quality, and respond to feedback. This makes my customers feel valued – and they, in turn, recommend us to their friends and even other food organisations

Over time, we saw that our most loyal customers were also our best promoters. Their genuine recommendations brought in repeat buyers and new leads – something no ad campaign could match in authenticity. Even today, we encourage happy customers to share reviews and testimonials, and we sometimes reward referrals with discounts or small gifts.

In my experience, if you deliver consistent quality and care, your customers will do the marketing for you."

Q9. Who are your primary customers in your wholesale food processing business?"

Our primary customers are PG accommodations, small hotels, and lodges, especially in and around Shimoga and the Malnad region. These businesses require bulk quantities of ready-to-cook or ready-to-eat items that are consistent in taste, hygienic, and cost-effective. We also take special care to ensure quality control, hygiene, and shelf life, which are critical for institutional buyers.

Most of these clients have come through referrals or local networks, and we work hard to maintain those relationships by being reliable and responsive. In this line of work, consistency is key – one delay or compromise can cost you a client. That's why we treat every order with utmost professionalism.

Q10. What advice would you give to aspiring women entrepreneurs, especially in food processing?

Start with what you know. Our kitchens are full of business ideas. Keep your quality high and never compromise on hygiene. Join SHGs, take training, and don't fear small beginnings. It's okay to fail. Every mistake teaches something. Also, use digital tools—they are powerful!

Q11. How do you handle competition from big food brands?

We can't match their marketing budgets, but we can offer what they can't—authenticity, freshness, and personal touch. Our customers trust us because they know we use no shortcuts.

Q12. What role has technology played in growing your business?

Technology has been a game-changer. We use WhatsApp Business for order-taking and updates. However, I propose to adopt digitalisation for my business.

Q13. If given an opportunity to mentor other women, what would your message be?

My message is simple: don't wait for perfect timing—start with what you have. Use your local resources, your family support, and your traditional knowledge. Learn continuously, don't be afraid of digital tools, and most importantly—believe that you deserve success. Every home kitchen has a hidden business inside it.

Closing Remarks

Kavitha's journey is a glowing example of how business knowledge, when combined with entrepreneurial grit, can uplift not just one woman, but an entire community. In a state where rural unemployment and women's economic dependency are challenges, her story offers both hope and direction.

As India's food processing sector booms, stories like Kavitha's remind us that the most meaningful growth is that which nourishes both palates and people.

The interview was conducted by Ms Chandana and a team of students and the program concluded with felicitating Ms Kavitha, the interviewee and founder of SAP Bio Products.

Dr C Srikanth, Director, JNNCE-MBA, Dr Shanthi Kiran, Asst. Professor, Mrs. Anuradha C K, Asst. Professor, Dr. Harsha C Mathad, Asst. Professor and Dr Subhadra P S, Asst Professor were present during the occasion.



Glimpses of Interview



Dr. C Srikant
Director, JNNCE-MBA

Dr. Y Vijaya Kumar
Principal, JNNCE