

Success story of an Cashewpreneur



The cashew industry in India has been thriving with the country processing almost half of the global cashew kernels and consuming 40% of the global output. The success story of Mr. Ashwath Hebbar, a cashew farmer from Perdoor Village, Udupi district, is a testament to the potential of the cashew ecosystem. Ashwath, who hails from a farming background, completed his bachelor's degree and developed a passion for photography. He ran a successful studio instead with a keen interest in the cashew ecosystem, He decided to venture into the world of cashew processing business with an aim to establish in his own start-up.

Seeking guidance and support, he approached the Agri-Business Incubator (ABI) at ICAR-Directorate of Cashew Research, Puttur, to gain knowledge on processing and value addition of cashew kernels. Putting his newfound knowledge into action, he started processing raw cashewnuts during the season using ABI facility and then launched a small-scale business, offering a variety of value-added products made from cashew kernels and other fruit products. These products included different flavoured and masala-coated cashew kernels, as well as cashew apple halwa. Besides, he diversified his business by incorporating other fruits based value-added products viz., Jackfruit and Guava Halwa.

One of the unique aspects of his business is the use of homemade masalas for coating cashew kernels which impart a distinct and delightful flavour and peculiar taste that has become a signature element of his brand. The cashew apple halwa, made from a mix of

different varieties such as Bhaskara, Vengurla-7, VRI-3, and UN-50, has also garnered praise for its rich taste and texture. Usually, large quantity of cashew apple discarded after detaching the nuts, but with innovative mind set a good product has been prepared out of waste. Initially, he faced challenges in selling cashew kernels, but adopted a multi-pronged approach, engaging in business-to-business (B2B) and Business-to-Customer (B2C) marketing, as well as utilizing online platforms developed for better marketing link in and around Karnataka. Today, with a brand name of 'Samagra Cashews', its food products are now in high demand in big towns and urban areas and gaining popularity in the market.

Ashwath's success has inspired many farmers in the surrounding areas of Perdoor village to switch over to cashew cultivation and start-up business in cashewnut processing. The difference due to value addition has attracted large consumers to the business. More importantly, it is highly motivating the budding entrepreneurs and farmers alike towards the potential and opportunities of the cashew industry in India.

