

Find out how these women transformed their home into coffee plantation!

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Run by women, the idea of Halli Berri started with a coffee shop but did not stop there. Boski Gupta throws light on the journey of four women who transformed their home into coffee plantation and a tourist resort

The famous advert punch line – a lot can happen over coffee – seems to come true for the Kariappa women. What started as a nondescript coffee shop became a major tourist attraction of Chikmagalur near Bangalore. The Coffee Barn Cafe started by Nalima Kariappa and her three daughter Maanavi, Anusha and Tejini has earned itself a 5 star Trip Advisor rating for four years consecutively now.

Their venture, Halli Berri, deals in coffee plantations, supplies gourmet coffee and the estate also works as a resort with the family developing cottages for travellers in their premise. The name Halli Berri was discovered over a cup of coffee. ‘Halli’ in the local Kannada language means village and ‘berri’ means coffee. ‘Halli Berri’ means village berry!

Trial period

Interestingly, it all started with an experiment. “So this one summer when my eldest sister was down from the US, she decided to give the ground Arabica coffee a ‘trial’ period which was an overnight success. They were flying off the shelves like hot cakes

and before we knew it, our demand was more than our supply and we were in business!” explains Tejini.

Known as the Chikmagalur’s ‘Blink and Miss Café’ the shop is located amidst the silver oak trees in the Bababudangiris. “The coffee business at large was pre-dominantly a wholesale business carried out by my forefathers. However, today we are revamping our business model by trying to achieve one part of our produce into retail – sales within the country and exports in the year to come,” shares Tejini.

Unplanned trajectory

The girls were busy in their lives while the parents enjoyed their stay in the county home. But life had some other plans for them. “We started the coffee shop as an avenue for my mother to keep busy after my dad passed away. Before you knew it people would come by to grab a cup of coffee and would love the place so much that they would request to stay one night at our home. Obviously it was not viable to let a stranger to our homes so we built cottages that have today become an integral part of our hospitality which is an extension of the coffee shop. Retailing the ground coffee happened between all of this,” says Tejini, adding, “Sometimes the best things in life happen when you go with the flow.”

Team work

While mommy Nalima handles all on ground operations at the plantation from inventory to QC check and management of the hospitality, cottages and the coffee shop, the sisters along with their team, based out of Mumbai, handle marketing, PR and all strategic initiatives taken to build the brand positioning at large.

“Like bricks of a building, we meticulously look into every aspect of the company be it legal, finance, marketing or supply chain management. As a team we are fiercely determined to make things happen, and fortunately each of us has this trait. With our efforts bearing fruit, we witnessed the growth of the brand organically,” says Surabhi Kim Andrade who’s a part of the marketing team.

Women’s show

The Halli Berri team is owned, managed and run by women. On the coffee plantation as well, more than half of coffee pluckers are women. “My mother believed in educating the women on our plantation as it was far more progressive and lucrative in terms of overall development of our community. We were able to better manage the nutrition, hygiene, savings among them,” says Tejini.

But like any other venture, Halli Berri too had its share of problems. “We faced a lot of obstacles from the local panchayats, the police and the neighbouring competition. Perhaps even more because we were a women-run organisation,” she says.

However, the indefatigable girls are ready for another challenge. “We are now looking into strategic placement and distribution of our retail ground coffee specific to our

target [market](#). We are also planning to export and expand our retail café this year,” she says.