Aadhimalai
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AADHIMALAI PAZHANGUDIYINAR PRODUCER COMPANY LIMITED

Shift the Power to
the Producers

ANNUAL REPORT
2025-2026



Contents

1. About Aadhimalai
2. Our Vision and Mission
3. A Message from the Chief Executive Officer
4. FY 2025–2026 – The Year at a Glance
5. Aadhimalai and its Community
6. Procurement – Connecting Producers to Better Markets
7. Forest Produce and Agricultural Produce
8. Coffee – A Year of Learning and New Opportunities
9. Value Addition and Production Centres
10. Enterprise Hub – Building Women-led Enterprises
11. VDVK Programme – Strengthening Community Enterprises
12. Women, Youth and Community Leadership
13. Governance and the Board of Directors
14. Annual General Meeting
15. Quality, Certification and Compliance
16. Digitalisation and Market Development
17. Training, Exposure and Learning
18. Events and External Engagements
19. Partnerships and Institutional Support
20. Challenges During the Year
21. How We Responded to the Challenges
22. Financial and Business Performance
23. Key Achievements of 2025–2026
24. Priorities for 2026–2027
25. Conclusion



About Aadhimalai

Aadhimalai Pazhangudiyinar Producer Company Limited is a producer-owned company working with indigenous communities of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve. Registered in 2013 with the support of Keystone Foundation, Aadhimalai works to strengthen producer control over their produce, pricing and markets.

The company directly procures forest and agricultural produce, adds value through community-based processing centres and markets finished products.

Today, Aadhimalai has **1,809 shareholders—934 men and 875 women**—across regions including **Hasanur, Arakode, Coonoor, Konavakarai, Pillur and Sigur.**
Its four major production centres at **Bangalapadigai, Pillur, Pudukad and Banagudi** serve as spaces for processing, livelihoods, learning and community engagement.

At its core, Aadhimalai remains committed to one principle:

The producer should have greater control over the value created from their own produce.

Our Vision and Mission

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.



A Message from the Chief Executive Officer

Dear Shareholders, Producers, Partners and Friends of Aadhimalai,
The financial year **2025–2026** has been a year of both growth and learning for Aadhimalai.

Every year presents a different situation for a company like ours. Our business depends on the forests, farms, seasons, weather and markets. Therefore, our work is closely connected to things that are not always within our control. This year, we experienced changes in commodity prices, difficult procurement seasons, irregular weather and cash flow pressures. At the same time, we also saw important achievements in procurement, value addition, enterprise development, governance and quality improvement.

Despite these challenges, Aadhimalai achieved a turnover of **₹1.24 crore** during the year. This is an important achievement because it represents not only sales, but also the continued participation of our producers in a market system that is owned by them.

One of our most important achievements this year was the effort to provide better prices to producers. Across several products, Aadhimalai paid between **20%** and **68%** more than local market prices. For example, coffee was procured at **₹550 per kg** when the local market was around **₹400 per kg**. Pepper was procured at **₹725 per kg** compared to around **₹650** in the local market. Shikakai was procured at **₹75 per kg** compared to around **₹45**, while soapnut was procured at **₹25** compared to around **₹8.**

These differences are important because our objective is not simply to purchase more produce. Our objective is to ensure that the value generated from indigenous produce reaches the producer.

Coffee was one of our biggest learning areas this year. Price fluctuations made procurement difficult, but we still procured nearly seven tonnes of coffee. We also introduced new processing methods and developed Honey Coffee. Training on coffee processing, cupping and tasting helped our team and producers understand the possibilities of improving quality and creating differentiated products.

We also saw good procurement of **amla, shikakai, pepper, turmeric, soapnut, millets, silk cotton and beeswax**. Each product presented a different opportunity and a different challenge.

Another important area of growth was the Enterprise Hub. Women-led enterprises working in baking, spice processing, coffee, upcycling, seed conservation and indigenous nurseries continued to develop. These enterprises show us that livelihood development does not have to depend only on the traditional procurement business. There is space for women and young people to build new businesses while remaining connected to their communities and environment.

Governance also received attention this year. New Directors joined the Board, bringing fresh perspectives and stronger representation from indigenous communities. We believe that the future of Aadhimalai depends on strong community leadership and responsible decision-making.

We also achieved important milestones in quality and compliance, including ISO certification for our soaps, lip balms and balms, a General Manufacturing Certificate and a proprietary licence for Spiced Honey products.

As we enter the next financial year, our focus will be on strengthening the systems behind our growth. We want to improve traceability, strengthen digital systems, develop the leadership of women and youth, increase value addition and build stronger markets.

Aadhimalai belongs to its producers. Every achievement of the company is therefore an achievement of our shareholders. I thank all our shareholders, Board members, staff, producers, partner organisations and supporters for their continued trust and contribution.

Together, we will continue to shift the power to the producers.



Jestin Pauls
Chief Executive Officer

FY 2025–2026
The Year at a Glance

The year can be remembered through a few important milestones:

Business

- Turnover of **₹1.24 crore**
- Nearly 7 tonnes of coffee procured
- Around 2 tonnes of wild amla procured
- Around 13 tonnes of shikakai procured
- Around 2 tonnes of soapnut procured
- Approximately 1 tonne of Arabica coffee fruit procured
- Around 1 tonne of silk cotton procured
- Around 1 tonne of ragi procured
- Continued procurement of pepper, clove, turmeric and beeswax

Producer Benefit

- Better procurement prices offered for most products
- Producers received approximately **20%–68%** higher prices than local markets for several products
- Continued direct procurement from producer communities





Value Addition

- New coffee processing methods introduced
- Honey Coffee developed
- Coffee processing training conducted
- Continued production of powders, spices, cosmetics and other value-added products

Governance

- Three new Directors elected
- Board strengthened with representation from indigenous communities
- AGM conducted across community locations

Quality and Compliance

- ISO certification obtained for soaps, lip balms and balms
- General Manufacturing Certificate obtained
- Proprietary licence obtained for Spiced Honey products
- FSSAI and other compliance requirements addressed

Enterprise Development

- Enterprise Hub continued supporting women-led enterprises
- Upcycling, baking, spice processing, coffee, nursery and seed conservation activities strengthened

Digital Development

- Farmer Database digitisation initiated
- Stock digitisation initiated



The Community

Aadhimalai is different from a conventional business because the people who supply the raw materials are also the owners of the company.

This changes the way the company looks at business.

When Aadhimalai purchases coffee, honey, amla, shikakai, pepper or other products, the objective is not only to obtain raw material for production. The procurement is also an opportunity to improve the income of the producer.





The company works across indigenous communities in different parts of the Nilgiris and surrounding landscapes. The current shareholder data shows a strong representation of women, with **875 women shareholders** out of **1,809 shareholders**.

This ownership structure is important because it gives community members a role not only as producers but also as shareholders and decision-makers.

Procurement

CONNECTING PRODUCERS TO BETTER MARKETS

Procurement is at the heart of Aadhimalai's work.
Forest produce and agricultural produce are seasonal. The availability of each product changes from year to year depending on rainfall, flowering, fruiting, harvest conditions and local circumstances.Therefore, procurement requires strong relationships with producers and a good understanding of local conditions.

During FY 2025–2026, procurement teams worked across different regions to collect products from shareholders.

The company continued to focus on **three principles**:

Fair Price

Where possible, producers were paid better than the local market.

Direct Market

The company reduced dependence on middlemen by procuring directly from producer communities.

Value Addition

The company worked towards processing and marketing products instead of selling raw produce wherever possible. This approach allows a greater share of the final value to remain within the producer-owned system.





Forest Produce and Agricultural Produce

Amla

Amla procurement was one of the highlights of the year. More than two tonnes of amla were collected, with procurement prices more than double the local market rate. The increased procurement shows the potential for Aadhimalai to diversify beyond its traditional products, bringing new additions in the value chain.

Shikakai

Shikakai had a strong harvest during the year. Aadhimalai procured approximately 13 tonnes at ₹75 per kg, compared to a local market price of around ₹45 per kg. Shikakai continues to have strong potential because it can be processed into powders and other value-added products.

Soapnut

Soapnut had an exceptionally low yield during the year. Despite low availability, Aadhimalai procured approximately two tonnes at ₹25 per kg, compared to around ₹8 per kg in the local market. This is an example of how procurement prices can make a difference even when production volumes are low.

Pepper

Pepper continued to perform steadily. Aadhimalai procured pepper at approximately ₹725 per kg compared to around ₹650 per kg in the local market. Pepper remains an important agricultural product for the company and has potential for further cleaning, grading, processing and packaging.



Black Dhoopa





Turmeric

Turmeric was procured from Pillur, Aracode and Konavakarai.

Approximately **₹25 per kg** was paid to producers, compared to local market prices of around **₹18–20 per kg.**

The turmeric was processed through the Bangalapadi and Pillur Value Addition Centres.





Beeswax

Beeswax was procured at approximately ₹300 per kg, providing producers with around a 33% increase compared to local market rates.

Beeswax also supports Aadhimalai's value-added product range, including balms and other products.

Millets and Silk Cotton

Millets also continued to be procured, with ragi being an important product. Approximately one tonne of ragi was purchased, mainly from the Hasanur region. Around one tonne of silk cotton was also purchased. Silk cotton procurement was affected by local circumstances in some villages. In Kodagur, following the death of a tribal community member in an elephant attack, villagers decided not to harvest silk cotton during the year.

This reminds us that procurement is closely connected to the social and ecological realities of the communities we work with.

Coffee

A YEAR OF LEARNING AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES

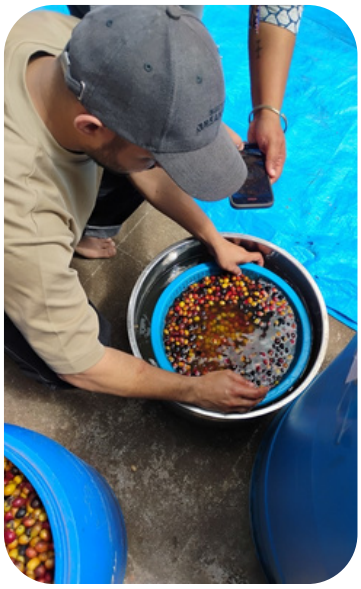
Coffee was one of the most important products during the year.

Coffee procurement was also one of the most difficult areas because market prices changed rapidly. These fluctuations created cash flow pressure and made it difficult to decide the right time and price for procurement. Despite this, Aadhimalai procured nearly seven tonnes of coffee.

The company paid around **₹550 per kg** compared to a local market price of approximately **₹400 per kg**, giving producers a substantially better return.

Aadhimalai also procured around one tonne of Arabica coffee fruit at approximately ₹80–90 per kg.













The coffee fruit was processed at the Bangalapadi Production Unit. A new processing method was introduced to the community and the team developed Honey Coffee as a new value-added product.

Coffee was not only a procurement activity this year. It became an area of learning. A coffee cupping and tasting workshop was conducted in Kotagiri by **Black Baza**. The procurement team participated in the programme and gained a better understanding of coffee quality.

Another coffee processing workshop was organised at Bangalapadi for women. Coffee farmers were also invited and given an opportunity to taste coffees from different regions.

These experiences helped producers and staff understand that coffee can be differentiated through processing, quality and storytelling rather than being treated only as a commodity.

Value Addition and Production Centres

Aadhimalai's production centres are an important part of the company's business model.

The four major centres—Bangalapadigai, Pillur, Pudukad and Banagudi—serve as processing and community spaces.

The centres allow raw materials to be cleaned, processed, packed and prepared for markets closer to where the produce is collected.

This reduces the need to transport raw produce over long distances and creates employment within the communities.

During the year, value addition included:

- **Coffee processing**
- **Turmeric processing**
- **Shikakai powdering**
- **Spice processing**
- **Millet processing**
- **Honey-based products**
- **Soap and balm production**
- **Amla-based products**
- **Other forest produce-based products**

Value addition is particularly important because it allows Aadhimalai to move from being only a raw material buyer to becoming a producer of finished products.





Enterprise Hub

Building Women-led Enterprises

The Enterprise Hub continued to be an important part of Aadhimalai's livelihood development work.

The Hub is a collaboration between Keystone Foundation and Aadhimalai, with support from the Chapple Family Foundation. It supports green micro-enterprises led mainly by indigenous women across the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve.

The enterprises work at the intersection of:

- **Livelihoods**
- **Women's leadership**
- **Traditional knowledge**
- **Biodiversity**
- **Waste reduction**
- **Local production**
- **Sustainable markets**

Upcycling Enterprise

The upcycling enterprise works with discarded cloth, plastic and glass and converts waste materials into useful products. The initiative addresses two issues at the same time—waste management and livelihood generation. It also provides women with an opportunity to learn new skills and develop products that can be sold in the market.

Bake n Take

Bake n Take is a women-led enterprise focused on traditional snacks, baking and catering. The enterprise connects traditional food knowledge with modern markets. The work also creates opportunities for women to earn income while working within their communities.





Thalir
Thalir works on coffee roasting and grinding, spice cleaning, grinding and packaging. By carrying out value addition closer to the producer, the enterprise can capture more value from locally available products.

Melseemai
Melseemai Pazhangudiyinar Producer Company is another important community enterprise. It works with products such as honey, amla, soapnut and shikakai and develops market-ready products including powders, candies and pickles.

Indigenous Nursery

The Indigenous Nursery supports the conservation and propagation of native plant species. The nursery provides plants for agroforestry, home gardens and ecological restoration. It also provides opportunities for women and youth to remain connected with local ecological knowledge.



Live Seed Bank

The Live Seed Bank works to conserve indigenous crop varieties. Traditional varieties are not only agricultural resources. They are also part of the food culture and knowledge of indigenous communities. By conserving these seeds, the community protects biodiversity and strengthens future food security.

Together, these enterprises demonstrate that livelihood development can also support environmental conservation.

VDVK Programme

Strengthening Community Enterprises

During the year, Aadhimalai continued to work as the mentoring agency for the Tribal Welfare Department's **Van Dhan Vikas Kendra programme** in the Nilgiris.

Three VDVKs were developed:

Aadhimalai VDVK
Masinagudi VDVK
Nelakkottai VDVK

The groups received support to purchase and install machinery for value addition. The purpose of the programme is to enable forest produce collectors and indigenous producer groups to process their produce locally and generate better income.

Aadhimalai's role has included mentoring, coordination, technical guidance, product development and connecting the groups to markets.



A village meeting was also conducted at Masinagudi, where DADWO Mr. Peter Gnanaraj chaired the meeting. Such meetings were important because they allowed government officials and community members to directly discuss the needs and opportunities of the producer groups.

The VDVK programme has created an important bridge between government support and community enterprise development.

Women, Youth and Community Leadership

Women are an important part of Aadhimalai's ownership and enterprise activities. The shareholder structure includes 875 women shareholders, demonstrating the significant participation of women in the company.

Beyond ownership, women are increasingly involved in:

- **Processing**
- **Packaging**
- **Enterprise management**
- **Product development**
- **Quality control**
- **Coffee processing**
- **Baking**
- **Upcycling**
- **Nursery management**
- **Seed conservation**
- **Governance**

The Enterprise Hub has further strengthened this participation by providing women with opportunities to run small enterprises.



Going forward, Aadhimalai wants to strengthen women's participation not only in production but also in leadership and decision-making. Youth leadership is another important area for the coming years.

Governance and the Board of Directors

Aadhimalai's ownership model makes governance particularly important.

The Board of Directors represents the interests of the shareholders and provides direction to the company.

During FY 2025–2026, **P. Chandran** from the Kurumba community, **Lalitha** from the Irula community and Chitra from the Irula community were elected as new Directors.

Two existing Directors, **Nagaraj** and **Palani**, stepped down due to age and health-related reasons.

The Board currently has **six Directors.**

The new Directors bring fresh experience and stronger representation from the producer communities. Aadhimalai believes that governance should remain close to the communities it serves.



BOD Meeting

Board of Directors



Ponnan Lingan
From Coonoor's misty slopes, Lingan brings youthful energy to the board. In his 30s, he was the youngest director, yet a man of ancient traditions. A honey hunter by heritage, he still climbs cliffs and trees for wild honey, while cultivating coffee and pepper. He also collects forest produce like shikakai, soap nuts, kadukkai, and dhupa resin. As a panchayat member too, he carries the voice of the forest and community into every boardroom conversation.

Suresh Mallika
Mallika's journey shows how opportunity can spark transformation. She began as an employee in one of Aadhimalai's production units, contributing to value addition. Over time, her natural leadership became evident. She was later elected panchayat leader of Nellithorai, where she helps local families, especially women, access loans and government schemes. In 2024, she joined Aadhimalai's Board, completing her rise from the production floor to decision-making spaces, a role model showing other tribal women their leadership matters.





Mani Selvi
The newest member, elected in 2025, Selvi comes from Kodiyur village in Pillur region. A housewife and farmer, she runs a banana farm, and most prominently, a cattle homestead that supplies milk to nearby communities.
Her friendly and fearless nature made her a natural choice. Known for asking bold questions and speaking up for her people, Selvi ensures that the voices of ordinary women farmers are represented at the table.



Ponnan Chandran

A founding shareholder of Aadhimalai, Ponnan Chandran was elected director in 2025, recognition of the trust producers place in him. From the Kurumba community, he has gathered honey for years, carrying deep knowledge of the forest, bees, and seasons. Young people turn to him to learn how honey is gathered and the forest read, a role model for how tradition and leadership can coexist. He champions sustainable harvesting and keeping Kurumba culture alive, seeing both as the same responsibility. As director, he brings the voice of an indigenous honey gatherer to Aadhimalai's decisions.

Chitra

From the Aracode region and Irula community, Chitra was elected to the board in 2025, its youngest member, a sign of trust in a new generation of leaders. She speaks on climate change, bringing the lived understanding indigenous communities carry from being closest to shifts in weather and land. Known for surprise visits to the Bangalapadi centre, she wants to see operations firsthand and meet the people working there on an ordinary day, a real strength for a producer-owned organisation. Her journey to the board reflects Aadhimalai's values: young people from the community with a seat at the table.





Lalitha

From the Sigur region and Irula community, Lalitha has been a shareholder since Aadhimalai's inception. She works extensively on Forest Rights, helping communities understand and secure recognition of their rights over forests they've lived in and cared for across generations, alongside other social work in the region. Well known and trusted, she's often the first person people turn to with a problem, trust built over years of showing up and listening. Her long association with Aadhimalai reflects what it's built on: producers who are owners, carrying their people's voice into every space.

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting is one of the most important democratic spaces in Aadhimalai.

The AGM held during **September 2025** brought together shareholders, village elders, Vana Kuzhu representatives, former forest officials, Keystone Foundation representatives, Board members and Aadhimalai staff.

Meetings were held at different community locations including Bangalapadi, Pillur, Coonoor and Konnavakarai.

Financial reports from the previous year were presented and future strategies were discussed.



The AGM also provided space for shareholders to discuss governance, challenges, production and the future direction of the company. This community-based AGM model is an important part of Aadhimalai's identity. Rather than expecting shareholders from remote villages to travel to a central location, the company takes the AGM closer to the communities.

The meeting ended with a community lunch, reflecting the collective nature of the organisation.

Quality, Certification and Compliance

As Aadhimalai enters larger markets, quality and compliance are becoming increasingly important.

During the year, the company achieved several important milestones.

ISO Certification
ISO certification was obtained for soaps, lip balms and balms.
This provides a stronger foundation for expanding the cosmetic product range and entering new markets.

General Manufacturing Certificate
A General Manufacturing Certificate was obtained for the products.



Proprietary Licence
A proprietary licence was obtained for Spiced Honey products.

Regulatory Compliance
FSSAI and other compliance requirements were also addressed during the year.
Compliance required significant effort from the team, but it is essential for the company's long-term growth.

Digitalisation and Market Development

Aadhimalai began strengthening its digital systems during the year. One important step was the digitisation of stock management.

Better stock records will help the company understand:

- **Raw material availability**
- **Production quantities**
- **Finished stock**
- **Sales**
- **Product movement**
- **Inventory requirements**



The company also continued to develop online marketing.Digital platforms provide an opportunity to reach consumers beyond the immediate geographical market.

The next stage will be to connect digital stock systems, production records, traceability and online sales more closely.

Training, Exposure and Learning

Learning was an important part of the year.
The company participated in and organised several training and exposure programmes.

Wild Amla and Soap Making – Thailand
In January 2026, Jestin, Shiny from Keystone Foundation and Madhu from Last Forest participated in a training programme in Thailand in partnership with AFOCO. The programme focused on wild amla harvesting, value addition and soap making.

Coffee Cupping and Tasting
The procurement team participated in a coffee cupping and tasting workshop in Kotagiri conducted by Black Baza.

Coffee Processing Workshop
A processing workshop was conducted at Bangalapadi for women. Farmers were also invited, allowing them to taste coffees from different regions and understand the importance of processing and quality.

These programmes helped bring new ideas back to the production centres.



Events and External Engagements

Aadhimalai participated in several events during the year.

These included:

- **HDFC partner event in Chennai**
- **Slow Food Asia Pacific meeting in the Philippines**
- **TRIFED VDVK - Tamilnadu meeting at Chennai**
- **Vegetable Show at Nehru Park, Kotagiri**
- **WRI RESTORE 2025 event at Delhi**
- **International learning and exchange programmes**

At the Vegetable Show, Aadhimalai displayed its products and served traditional payasam made using Samai and Thenai. The event provided an opportunity to demonstrate indigenous food traditions to a wider audience.

Participation in external events also helped Aadhimalai share its experience and learn from other organisations.









Partnerships and Institutional Support

Aadhimalai's work is strengthened by partnerships.

Keystone Foundation
Keystone Foundation continues to provide technical, institutional and mentoring support. The relationship has been important since the formation of Aadhimalai and continues through enterprise development, governance and capacity building.

Last Forest
Last Forest supports market access, product positioning, quality, packaging and sales. Their support has also helped strengthen honey-related quality and post-harvest practices.

NABKISAN
NABKISAN continued to provide financial support through loans, helping Aadhimalai manage procurement and working capital requirements.

Tribal Welfare Department
The Tribal Welfare Department has been an important partner in the VDVK programme and appointed Aadhimalai as the mentoring agency for the Nilgiris VDVKs.



Chapple Family Foundation
Support through Keystone Foundation from the Chapple Family Foundation has helped the Enterprise Hub develop green micro-enterprises. These partnerships demonstrate that community ownership can be strengthened when combined with appropriate technical, financial and market support.

Challenges During the Year

FY 2025–2026 was not without challenges.

Working Capital
One of the biggest challenges was cash flow during procurement seasons. Forest and agricultural produce often becomes available within a limited period. Producers need to be paid when they bring their produce. However, market prices can change rapidly and sales may happen much later. This creates a gap between procurement and sales.

Market Fluctuation
Coffee and spice prices changed frequently. This made it difficult to predict procurement prices and plan cash requirements.

Competition from Local Traders
Local traders sometimes offered changing prices to producers. This created competition and made procurement planning more difficult.

Climate Change
Weather patterns continued to affect production. Irregular rainfall affected harvesting and drying. In coffee, some beans were smaller than expected, resulting in quality issues. Longer drying periods also caused weight loss in coffee, pepper and soapnut.

Compliance
Meeting FSSAI, ISO and other compliance requirements required considerable time and effort. However, completing these requirements has strengthened the company's systems.



How We Responded to the Challenges

Aadhimalai responded to these challenges in several ways.

Better Communication
The company maintained communication with producers regarding market conditions and procurement prices.

Better Processing
Training and improved processing methods were introduced to improve quality.

Value Addition
Instead of depending entirely on raw material sales, the company continued to explore value-added products.

Quality Improvement
ISO certification and improved production practices strengthened the company's quality systems.

Diversification
Aadhimalai continued to procure and develop several products instead of depending on one commodity.

Financial Planning
The company continued working with financial institutions and partners to manage working capital needs.

These measures will remain important as the company grows.





Annual report

PROFIT AND LOSS	2025-2026 (₹ Lakhs)	2024-2025 (₹ Lakhs)
INCOME		
Revenue From Operations	124.85	78.74
Other Income	0.09	0.01
Total	**124.94**	**78.75**
EXPENSES		
Cost of Materials Consumed	48.32	61.45
Direct and Indirect Expenses	80.19	71.06
Profit / (Loss)	-3.57	-53.76
Total	**124.94**	**78.75**
BALANCE SHEET	**2025-2026 (₹ Lakhs)**	**2024-2025 (₹ Lakhs)**
EQUITY & LIABILITIES		
Capital Fund	52.91	57.32
Current Liabilities	138.06	66.19
Total	**190.97**	**123.51**
ASSETS		
Fixed Assets	52.09	60.37
Other Non-Current Assets	16.65	19.16
Current Assets	122.23	43.99
Total	**190.97**	**123.51**

Financial and Business Performance

The financial year 2025–2026 closed with an approximate turnover of:
₹1.24 CRORE

This represents continued business activity despite significant challenges in procurement and market conditions. However, turnover alone does not capture the full impact of Aadhimalai.

The company's performance should also be measured through:

- **Prices paid to producers**
- **Number of producers participating**
- **Volume of produce procured**
- **Women involved in enterprises**
- **Value added locally**
- **Employment generated**
- **Products developed**
- **Markets reached**
- **Community ownership**
- **Biodiversity and traditional knowledge protected**

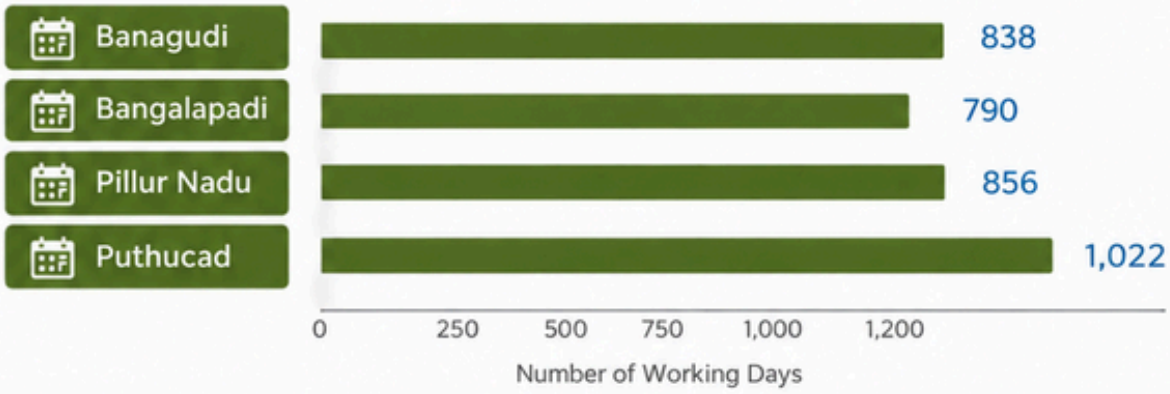
During the year, the company continued to prioritise producer benefit over simply increasing procurement volume.



The Production Centre Playoffs

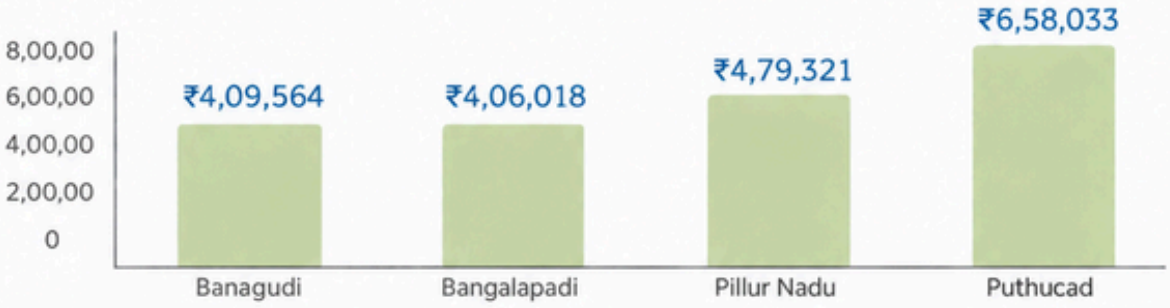
WORKING DAYS GENERATED

More days on the track, more impact.



TOTAL SALARY PAID

Investing in people, powering progress.



WOMEN

People power that drives everything.



Total working days
3,506

Total salary paid
₹19,52,936

Total women
31

Key Achievements of 2025–2026

The year can be summarised through the following achievements:

1. Strong Business Performance
Aadhimalai achieved ₹1.24 crore turnover.

2. Better Producer Prices
Producers received substantially better prices than local markets for several important products.

3. Coffee Development
Nearly seven tonnes of coffee were procured and new processing methods were introduced.

4. New Product Development
Honey Coffee was developed.

5. Record Amla Procurement
More than two tonnes of amla were procured.

6. Large Shikakai Procurement
Approximately 13 tonnes of shikakai were procured.

7. Strong Enterprise Hub
Women-led enterprises continued to grow across different sectors.

8. VDVK Mentoring
Aadhimalai continued as mentoring agency for three VDVKs in the Nilgiris.

9. Stronger Governance
New Directors joined the Board.

10. Quality Certification
ISO certification was obtained for soaps, lip balms and balms.

11. New Licence
A proprietary licence was obtained for Spiced Honey.

12. Digitalisation
Stock digitisation and online marketing were initiated.

13. Continued Learning
Staff, producers and partners participated in national and international learning programmes.



Priorities for 2026–2027

The next financial year will focus on strengthening the systems created during the past few years.

1. Traceability
Aadhimalai plans to develop a stronger traceability system. The aim is to know where a product came from, who produced it, when it was procured and how it was processed. This will increase consumer confidence and strengthen the relationship between producers and consumers.

2. Digital Farmer Database
A digital database of producers will help the company better understand its shareholder base and production potential. It can also improve communication and planning.

3. Women in Leadership
Women will be encouraged to take stronger roles in governance, enterprise management and decision-making.

4. Youth Leadership
Aadhimalai will explore ways to involve young people in enterprise, technology, marketing and governance.

5. More Value Addition
The company will continue to develop products from forest and agricultural produce. The focus will be on products that have a clear market and provide better returns to producers.

6. Stronger Markets
Online marketing and institutional markets will be further developed. The company will explore new markets while strengthening existing ones.

7. Climate Resilience
Improved drying, processing and storage systems will be important in reducing losses caused by unpredictable weather.

8. Peer Learning
Aadhimalai will continue learning from other indigenous communities and producer organisations.



Advisors



Snehlata Nath
Founder Director
Keystone Foundation

Sneh or Sneha Madam works with Livelihoods, Indigenous Peoples Programme and the Hunter-Gatherer Initiative. She supports NGO networks in India around forests and indigenous people. She has also initiated the People and Nature Fund which will be coordinated by Keystone. She advises Aadhimalai on various capacities.

Leo, or "Leo Sir" as the team calls him, joined Keystone during the 1993-94 beekeepers and honey hunters survey and has been part of the work ever since. A native of Kodaikanal, he holds a Bachelor's in Rural Developmental Science and a Master's in Arts, both from Madurai Kamaraj University, and began his career in plantation farming. Starting with beekeeping initiatives among indigenous communities, he moved into traditional farming practices, tackling forest honey quality, sustainability, value addition of honey and beeswax, and community enterprise initiatives across Keystone's project areas



Robert Leo
Deputy Director of Keystone



Mallikarjunamoorthy
Senior Advisor, Aadhimalai

Moorthy Sir as he is fondly called by everyone, has led from the front right from the time the processing centres were set up by Keystone. He led the value addition projects of Keystone and later became the first CEO of Aadhimalai. Now, Moorthy Sir is a Senior Advisor to Aadhimalai, and is helping Aadhimalai come up with new products and maintain producer relationships.
He hails from Sirumugai in Mettupalayam and comes from a weaving family. He has an eye for experimentation and as a result has come up with several new products for Aadhimalai.

Team



Jestin Pauls



Sivakumar



Kaliyappan



Maximillian



Rangasamy



Sasirekha



Miller Ashok



Rajesh Kumar



Raymund Jude



Esther

Conclusion

Growing a Company, Strengthening a Community

FY 2025–2026 has shown that the strength of Aadhimalai lies not only in its products or turnover, but in its ownership.
The company is owned by indigenous producers. Its raw materials come from their farms and forests. Its processing centres create local employment. Its enterprises create opportunities for women. Its Board represents the community. Its markets create a pathway for producers to receive better value.

This year, Aadhimalai faced difficult market conditions, cash flow challenges and the growing effects of climate change. Yet the company continued to procure from producers, provide better prices, develop products, strengthen enterprises and improve its systems.

The achievement of **₹1.24 crore** in turnover is therefore more than a financial number. It represents the continued functioning of a community-owned economic system.

The year also showed that Aadhimalai is moving into a new stage. The Enterprise Hub is opening new possibilities for women-led businesses. VDVKs are creating new local processing opportunities. Digitalisation is beginning to strengthen internal systems. Quality certifications are creating opportunities for new markets. New Directors are bringing fresh leadership into the organisation.

The next phase will require stronger systems, better financial planning, improved traceability, stronger markets and greater participation of women and youth. But the foundation remains strong.

Aadhimalai began with the idea that indigenous communities should have greater control over their own economic lives. More than a decade later, that idea continues to guide the organisation.

The journey is not complete.

There is still much to learn, much to build and many more opportunities to create.

As we move into 2026–2027, Aadhimalai remains committed to its core belief:

Shift the Power to the Producers

Our Auditors
Subramani Santhanaraman, Coimbatore
John Mathew, Udhagamandalam

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