

**ICC26127**

## **Balancing Growth and Trust: A Case Study Of Keerai Kadai Ventures Limited In A Cost-Sensitive FOOD**

---

**K. Chandrabose**, Assistant professor, International Business, Dr N.G.P. Arts and Science College, [chandrabose@drngpasc.ac.i](mailto:chandrabose@drngpasc.ac.i); **Varsha R**, [252ib020@drngpasc.ac.in](mailto:252ib020@drngpasc.ac.in) and **Sivasakthi S**, [ssivasakthi106@gmail.com](mailto:ssivasakthi106@gmail.com) prepared this case solely as a basis for classroom discussion. This case is not intended to serve as an endorsement, source of primary data, or illustration of either effective or ineffective managerial decision-making. Certain names and other identifying details have been disguised to protect confidentiality

---

### **Abstract**

Keerai Kadai Ventures Limited is an Indian wellness enterprise built on the belief that everyday food can play a preventive role in health and well-being. Drawing inspiration from India's long-standing tradition of plant-based nutrition, the company converts indigenous greens, herbs, and medicinal plants into convenient products suited for modern lifestyles. As the organisation expands its reach, it encounters a fundamental strategic challenge: achieving scale in a highly price-sensitive market without eroding product quality, farmer relationships, and consumer trust. This case study analyses the firm's journey, operational choices, and strategic dilemmas, highlighting how value-driven enterprises attempt to balance commercial growth with cultural and ethical commitments.

**Keywords:** *Wellness entrepreneurship, Indigenous food systems, Ethical supply chains, Cost-sensitive markets, Determination-driven strategy*

### **Introduction:**

Food has historically served not only as sustenance but also as a form of preventive care in Indian households. Indigenous greens, herbs, and plant-based remedies were once integral to daily diets, passed down through generations as practical knowledge rather than formal medicine. Over time, rapid urbanisation, changing lifestyles, and the increasing availability of processed foods have weakened these traditional practices. Keerai Kadai Ventures Limited was established to reconnect modern consumers with this forgotten food wisdom. The company seeks to make traditional greens and medicinal plants relevant again by presenting them in easy-to-use formats that suit contemporary routines. While the idea resonates strongly with health-conscious consumers, translating cultural knowledge into a scalable business model introduces complex managerial and strategic challenges. This case explores how Keerai Kadai attempts to address these challenges while staying true to its founding values.

### **Origins and Organisational Development:**

The origins of Keerai Kadai Ventures can be traced to a small, locally focused initiative that sourced fresh greens directly from farmers and sold them to nearby consumers. The early model emphasised freshness, trust, and community relationships, but it also faced practical limitations such as short shelf life, geographical constraints, and fluctuating demand. Recognising these constraints, the founders

gradually shifted toward value-added products that retained the nutritional essence of traditional greens while improving convenience and durability. Products such as powdered greens, herbal infusions, and ready-to-cook mixes allowed the company to reach a wider audience beyond local markets.

This transition marked a critical phase in the firm's evolution. It required new capabilities in processing, packaging, quality control, and branding. At the same time, the company remained committed to its original purpose of supporting farmers and promoting plant-based wellness. Today, Keerai Kadai has grown into a structured organisation serving a large customer base while maintaining close links with its sourcing communities.

### **Value Proposition and Business Model:**

Keerai Kadai's value proposition is shaped by the intersection of tradition with practicality. Rather than positioning itself as a luxury wellness brand, the company focuses on everyday nutrition that is affordable and accessible. A central element of the business model is product authenticity. The company emphasises the use of native plant varieties and avoids artificial additives or preservatives. Processing methods are designed to retain nutritional value while meeting safety and regulatory standards.

### **Future Growth Pathways:**

Looking ahead, Keerai Kadai faces multiple growth pathways. One option is a gradual, region-by-region expansion that prioritises relationship building and operational learning. Another option involves faster scaling through partnerships with retailers or wellness platforms. All pathway presents trade-offs between control and reach, speed and sustainability. The firm's strategic choices will determine whether it evolves into a mainstream wellness brand or remains a niche but trusted play

### **Ethical Considerations and Cultural Responsibility:**

Commercialising traditional knowledge raises ethical questions about ownership, representation, and benefit sharing. Keerai Kadai operates at the intersection of business and cultural heritage, making ethical responsibility a core strategic concern. The company must ensure that traditional food knowledge is not oversimplified or misrepresented for commercial gain. Respecting cultural origins while adapting products for modern markets requires careful communication and responsible branding. Failure to manage these ethical dimensions could result in reputational risks and loss of legitimacy among both consumers and sourcing communities.

**Role of Innovation and Digital Enablement:**

Innovation is central to Keerai Kadai’s attempt to manage growth responsibly. Digital tools such as traceability systems, farmer databases, and consumer education platforms can enhance transparency without significantly increasing costs.

However, adopting technology introduces new challenges, including upfront investment, training requirements, and the risk of excluding smaller farmers who lack digital literacy. The firm must decide how to integrate innovation in a way that supports inclusion rather than efficiency alone. The case highlights the tension between low-cost operations and the strategic use of digital infrastructure as a long-term enabler of trust and scalability.

**Supporting a Complete Wellness Ecosystem:**

When you buy from Keerai Kadai, you are supporting far more than a single wellness product you are becoming part of a complete and responsible wellness ecosystem. Your purchase directly supports farmers by ensuring fair and premium pricing, stable incomes, and the protection of native greens that are slowly disappearing from everyday diets. It also contributes to careful processing and quality testing, where traditional methods like drying and blending are combined with scientific filtration and laboratory checks to ensure every product is pure, safe, and effective. Significant investment is made in innovative and sustainable packaging, including zero-microplastic dip bags, whole-bud teas, eco-friendly envelopes, and travel-friendly sachets that protect both health and the environment. Your support further enables efficient logistics and fresh stock delivery, ensuring products reach customers in the best condition. Beyond production, Keerai Kadai actively invests in awareness and education initiatives, such as farmer-led programs, clean nutrition campaigns, exhibitions, and community engagement activities. Every rupee spent across these areas is essential to maintaining high quality. Any compromise at any stage would affect purity, which is why Keerai Kadai follows a strict no-compromise policy delivering uncompromised quality from farm to packet.

**No Pesticides & No Harmful Chemical Preservation:**

Many plant-based products available today are grown and preserved using chemical pesticides and artificial preservatives to control insects, prevent spoilage, and increase shelf life. These chemicals can leave residues in food and reduce its natural nutritional value when consumed regularly. We consciously avoid such practices. Instead, we ensure purity through careful sourcing, natural drying methods, scientific processing, and strict laboratory testing. By not using harmful pesticides or chemical preservatives, we protect the original goodness of the plants and make sure the food remains safe, clean, and closer to nature, just as it was traditionally meant to be consumed.

**Promoting Traditional Leafy Greens Through Keerai Kadai Ventures:**

Keerai Kadai Ventures works with over 120 varieties of indigenous greens (keerai) sourced from different regions of India. These include commonly consumed greens such as Murungai Keerai, Sirukeerai, Arai Keerai, and Ponnanganni Keerai, as well as lesser-known traditional varieties like Manathakkali Keerai, Vallarai Keerai, Agathi Keerai, and Thandu Keerai. In addition to leafy greens, the company also incorporates medicinal leaves, herbs, flowers, roots, and stems used in traditional food and wellness practices. This wide range allows Keerai Kadai to preserve regional food biodiversity while developing diverse plant-based wellness products.

### **Investors of Keerai Kadai Ventures Limited:**

According to available startup funding mentions, some individual investors who have been associated with Keerai Kadai Ventures include:

Keerai Kadai Ventures is run with the support of family members, team professionals, and investors, which helps the business grow in a stable and organised way. The founder, G. Sriram Prasad, leads the company with a clear vision to promote traditional leafy greens and build a strong connection between farmers and consumers. He works closely with his brother, G. Sriram Subramaniam, who takes care of daily operations and logistics, such as sourcing greens from farmers, managing supply, and ensuring products reach customers on time. Along with family support, regional team members like Ramya Gupta contribute to the company's growth by handling sales and operations in areas like Chennai, helping Keerai Kadai reach more customers and understand local market needs. The company has also received support from individual investors such as Jose Charles Martin and Nikhil Singhi, who are associated with early-stage funding and business guidance. Reports mention that Keerai Kadai received around ₹1.1 crore in investment at an estimated valuation of about ₹30 crore, showing that the business has attracted trust and confidence from angel and seed-level investors. With the combined efforts of family leadership, dedicated team members, and investor support, Keerai Kadai Ventures has been able to strengthen its operations, expand its market presence, and move towards sustainable growth while preserving India's traditional food heritage. The company has also received support from individual investors such as Jose Charles Martin and Nikhil Singhi, who are associated with early-stage funding and business guidance. Reports mention that Keerai Kadai received around ₹1.1 crore in investment at an estimated valuation of about ₹30 crore, showing that the business has attracted trust and confidence from angel and seed-level investors. With the combined efforts of family leadership, dedicated team members, and investor support, Keerai Kadai Ventures has been able to strengthen its operations, expand its market presence, and move towards sustainable growth while preserving India's traditional food heritage.

### **Certifications and licensing:**

Keerai Kadai operates with strong compliance to both Central and State Government regulations, ensuring high standards of safety, quality, and legality in its operations. The company holds an FSSAI license issued by the Government of India to ensure food safety and hygiene, and its products undergo laboratory testing at Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) to verify quality and safety standards. Keerai Kadai follows ISO and AMS-compliant packaging material standards to maintain product integrity and quality. It is registered under MSME (Udyam) with the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and is recognised under the Startup India initiative by the Government of India, reflecting its innovation-driven approach. Additionally, the company complies with State Government requirements through GST registration, Trade License issued by local authorities, and registration under the Shops and Establishments Act of Tamil Nadu. Through these certifications and licenses, Keerai Kadai demonstrates its commitment to regulated food processing, quality assurance, and sustainable business practices.

### **Processing Methods**

#### ***1. Careful harvesting and quick processing:***

The leaves are harvested at the right maturity stage and processed soon after collection. This reduces nutrient loss caused by oxidation and prolonged exposure to air and sunlight.

#### ***2. Shade drying / low temperature drying:***

Instead of sun drying or high-temperature machines, the leaves are dried under controlled, low-heat conditions. Shade drying helps preserve heat-sensitive nutrients such as vitamins, antioxidants, and chlorophyll.

**3. Minimal washing and no chemical treatment:**

Leaves are gently cleaned to remove impurities without excessive washing. No chemicals or preservatives are used, which helps retain natural nutritional properties.

**4. Slow grinding into fine powder:**

The dried leaves are ground slowly using methods that prevent excessive heat generation. This avoids nutrient degradation that usually happens in fast, high-speed grinding.

**5. Airtight and light-protected packaging:**

The powdered leaves are packed in sealed sachets that protect them from moisture, air, and light, helping maintain nutritional quality over time.

**Reference**

Keerai Kadai Ventures Limited. (n.d.). Company information and mission on plant-based wellness.

Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Government of India. (n.d.). Overview of India's food processing sector.

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). (n.d.). Guidelines on food processing and safety of plant-based products.

World Health Organisation. (2013). Traditional medicine strategy 2014–2023. WHO Press.

Keerai Kadai: An agriculturalist from Coimbatore is putting the focus on forgotten Indian greens

Quartz India. (2024). A store in Tamil Nadu is reviving forgotten Indian greens