



BREADS
Bangalore Rural Educational
and Development Society

Bits
BREADS in Touch: Snippets

Facilitated by the Women Empowerment through Livelihood and Entrepreneurship (WELive) initiative across Kerala and Karnataka, women from vulnerable and marginalised backgrounds demonstrate the exponential value of the timely investment of money and effort into empowering them with skills and other forms of support to live a decent life with dignity.

In Kerala, 2000 women are being trained and supported to become entrepreneurs. Of these, 500 women start organic kitchen gardens while 1500 start other agri-based or retail enterprises of their choice.

WE LIVE



“The bee is more honoured than other animals not because she labours, but because she labours for others.”

St. John Chrysostom

Manikkam, 62 years, is a hardworking woman rising from challenging socioeconomic circumstances, who has faced many struggles in her life.

Raised in a large impoverished family belonging to a scheduled tribe in Kodom village in Kasargod district, Kerala; Manikkam could only study upto Class I because of her circumstances. She was married at 18 years to a daily wage labourer, later becoming mother to two children as well. Her husband, the sole earning member, was seriously injured in an accident at work, resulting in long hospitalisation, chronic pain, disability and loss of livelihood. Her husband turned to alcohol,

becoming harsh and abusive towards her and the children. Despite these hardships, Manikkam continued to care for her husband and children, also taking on the responsibility of earning money to manage the household. She began to work as a daily wage agricultural labourer, and a kitchen/domestic helper in other houses. The children’s educations were severely impacted and her son was forced to discontinue his education in the 9th grade to apprentice under an electrician to support the family.

Manikkam’s courage and dedication to her family, motivated her active membership in Kudumbashree, a poverty eradication and women empowerment programme of the Government of Kerala.

In 2023, she signed up for the BREADS’ WeLive free training in bee keeping (apiculture) by Don Bosco Chullikara. Along with other candidates, she was trained for 3 days in entrepreneurship skills, book keeping and market linkage. For 5 days, she had hands-on training in apiculture production. She then received bee colonies, the necessary equipment and protective gear to start her own microenterprise.



Manikkam showed great interest, dedication, and hard work in bee keeping. With care and effort, she successfully expanded her activity to 20 bee colonies. Gradually, she started earning an income through honey production and colony division, despite the challenges of her lack of literacy and knowledge of technology.

The honey production season is usually from mid-January to mid-May. Farmers are able to sell their honey at around Rs. 200 per kilogram. Although an average colony may produce up to 7 kilograms of honey, it is not guaranteed every year because honey production is completely dependent on environmental conditions and the survival of the bee colonies.

The WELive initiative had a positive impact on Manikkam's life, improving the financial condition of her family. Today, with the pride and dignity of an entrepreneur, she is able to supplement her income as a kitchen helper with the earnings from her bee keeping microenterprise.

Manikkam's life reflects the strength and resilience of women who struggle against poverty, family burdens, and social challenges. Despite limited education, financial hardship, her husband's disability, alcoholism, and lack of social support, she never gave up. Through determination and the opportunity provided by livelihood training, she is transforming her situation, became a source of hope for her family and an inspiration to other local women.



Watch Manikkam at Work



- All India Don Bosco Inter-Province Football Tournament 2026
- Sports for Change—Motivating Mothers through Awareness
- BOSCO Cup Mannuthy – Celebrating Football Since 2015

“Where there are bees there are flowers, and wherever there are flowers there is new life and hope.”

*Christy Lefteri,
The Beekeeper of Aleppo*



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