Methodology 1: Promotion of Agri-Entrepreneurship and Rural Enterprises for Sustainable Livelihood– Theni, Tamil Nadu

Background:

Theni district has approximately 2,100 ha under grape cultivation, primarily in the Cumbum Valley, known as the "Grapes City of South India." The dominant variety is *Panneer Thratchai* (Muscat Hamburg), which accounts for 85% of grape production in Tamil Nadu. Of the total grape output, 71% is consumed fresh, 27% dried for raisins, 1.5% used for wine, and 0.5% for juice. During peak harvest, grape prices fall due to perishability and limited post-harvest processing knowledge. Farmers, lacking awareness of value addition, often sell at low prices to middlemen.

KVK's Impactful Interventions (2023–24)

To address these issues, KVK Theni implemented impactful interventions focusing on value chain management in grapes, banana, and millets to enhance shelf life, promote value addition, and increase farm profitability.

1. Awareness Programmes

- Two awareness sessions on the importance and scope of value chain management conducted with line departments.

2. Formation of Farmer Groups

- 3 Farmers Interest Groups (FIGs):
    - Appipatti FIG (Grapes)
    - Manjari FIG (Banana)
    - Manjari1 FIG (Banana Handicrafts)
- 1 Joint Liability Group (JLG):
    - Millets Minar JLG (Millets)

3. Capacity Building Trainings

- Grapes (25 participants):
  Training on "Zero Waste" product development: grape juice, pomace powder, raisins, raisin concentrate, and bakery products.
- Banana (30 participants):
  Value-added products: banana flour, flower pickle, banana honey fig, fibre extraction, and handicrafts.

- Millets (25 participants):
  Products: biofortified millet milk powder, malt, flakes, brownies, and amylase-rich mixes.

4. Exposure Visits

- Grapes: NRCG Pune & Sahyadri Farms, Nashik. Interacted with experts and learned advanced value chain techniques.
- Banana: Exposure visit to Banana Fibre Handicraft Unit, Madurai.

5. Critical Inputs & Support

- Distributed mini solar dryers, vegetable cutters, and pulverizes to 3 FIGs and 1 JLG.
- Assistance with FSSAI, MSME-Udyam, and ZED certification, branding, labeling, and marketing outlets.

6. Linkages with Departments

Established partnerships with:

- NRCG, Pune
- KVIC & DIC
- MSME
- Department of Railway (for 'One Station One Product' initiative)
- Nationalised Banks

Outcomes & Impact

KVK Theni has taken an effort and to implement the impactful interventions in Theni district for promoting entrepreneurship. Zero waste technology and innovative products were developed and disseminated for different age groups from child to geriatric.

Table 2 Impact of interventions towards knowledge and adoption level (N=100)

Particular	**Impact**	
	Before Interventions (%)	**After Interventions (%)**
Post-Harvest Technology	12	72
Safe storage methods	14	68
Value chain management	13	72
Formation of FIGs	4	81
Primary Processing	6	76
Secondary Processing	13	69
Licensing FSSAI, MSME	16	81
Labelling	8	65

Marketing strategies	7	56
Financial Assistance	9	64

Empowering women through Entrepreneurship Development under Impactful Interventions

Brand Name	**Unique Products Name**	**Critical Inputs/ Financial Assistance**
Vahin Homemade Food Products	Biofortified Millets Milk Powder and Instant Mixes	Rs. 15,00,000/- under PMEGP in DIC
RR Food Products	Banana Malt (Instant Mix)	Rs. 3,80,000/- under PMFME in DIC
Sri Sai Swashini Foods	Raisins, Grape Pickle, Grape seed products.	Rs. 3,55,840/- under PMFME in DIC
Amuthasurabi	GI tagged seeded dry grapes, Raisin products, Grape halwa	Using KVK Demo Unit for making products
MS Organics	GI tagged seeded dry grapes	Given Solar Dry to the FIGs for making dry grapes by KVK
Manjari Food Products and Manjari Handicrafts	Raw banana powder, nutrient dense Ready to use (Rtu) multigrain banana mixes Banana Fiber Handicrafts items	Given Solar Dryer, vegetable cutter and Pulvarizer for preparing banana powder based products by KVK
Millets Minar	Biofortified (Fe, Zn rich) Amylase Rich mixes	Provided Pulvarizer for making millets ready to instant mixes

Additional Impacts

- Waste Reduction:
    - Grape waste reduced by 45%, banana waste by 37% through value addition.
- Entrepreneurial Mindset:
    - Women gained skills in product development, branding, marketing, and financial planning.
    - Many became self-reliant, earning more than traditional farming, and making independent decisions within families.

Recognition

- Participation in India International Science Festival (IISF), 2023 at Faridabad.
- Showcased products at State-Level Conference hosted by the Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu (Feb 2024).

Distribution of solar dryers to the SHGs by KVK, Theni