



Annual Report 2021-22





our mission

Pioneering sustainable living choices by connecting communities and markets

We believe that the spirit of the forest is about growth that is meaningful, balanced and contributing. For the *au courant* seeking aesthetic and socially responsible solutions, Last Forest is a sustainable marketplace that provides eco-friendly, thoughtful and meaningful options that directly involves communities.

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11

YEARS

45

LOCAL SUPPLY GROUPS



150

PARTNER VILLAGES

6500

IMPACTED INDIVIDUALS



1 FOREWORD

The last year has been like no other for the modern world, that was left reeling after the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Social enterprises had just started recovering at the wake of 2021 when the deadly Delta variant of COVID-19 hit India, bringing with it longer lockdowns, forcing small producers and retailers to remain closed. Despite this worldwide adversity, the Last Forest team refused to give in, taking the lockdowns and its impact on the tourist seasons in the Nilgiris as challenges that were ready to be overcome.

Things started turning around, and key avenues of marketing, began opening up. We onboarded on CRED, an app that targets the crème de la crème of society by onboarding members with a high credit score. Going live on their site ensured not only a spike mid-year, but a steady stream of continued revenue. It was challenging, being a deep discounting platform but we chose not to follow that model. Flipkart was another new platform that invited us this year. Though we have not seen it bear much fruit, the opportunity has potential.

Our overseas friends Layla, from El Puente, Germany and Jane, from The Netherlands, have continued to be a source of immense strength. The compliance processes, in keeping with EU Regulations, proved

to be tough. Previously, we met the product testing requirements, but this year we had to test each ingredient and then ensure all vendors had their supply chains sorted out. It required detailed and exhaustive discussions with them, explaining the end result of this laborious process.

Our collaboration and partnership with Elements, based in Kerala, India, bore fruit after years of exchanging ideas with Tomy. Elements took over distribution of honey in the state of Kerala and has slowly and steadily expanded our market by adding new stores. We believe that this relationship with another fair trader will grow in the coming years.

Special thanks to Simran (Impprintz), who took time to understand our needs and create products that have drawn instant acclaim wherever presented. We are grateful to be able to work with like minds, who understand our work and align it to the needs of the market.

Rushabh (Meraki Studios) was another such person we are grateful to work with, whose attention to detail while leading our e-commerce foray, both on our website as well as on Amazon, has been incredible. Rushabh worked patiently with our team to ensure

that no effort was spared in making our products visible with the right messaging.

We were grateful to have Madhumita join us. Her engagement all the way from Rwanda, her valuable inputs, which came effortlessly, helped us greatly with our catalogues, information cards, and inserts. Suraj's photography captured our work. It was pleasure.

Ronald and Supriya (Women On Wings) worked hand in hand with us - helping us to explore and plan our work. And how could we forget, Amanda from Catalyst Markets - her energy and enthusiasm are infectious!

As we move forward, we are confident that Last Forest, with its strong team, will remain true to what it was created for.

- Mathew John, Managing Director, Last Forest



2 PRODUCER FOCUS - AADHIMALAI



Overview

Aadhimalai is our major producer. This year, efforts were made to increase the produce taken from them. Their involvement with the team was on par with previous years. The World Fair Trade Organization witnessed the audit conducted at all Aadhimalai production centres, where over almost 70% of all our products come from. The efforts made to involve and provide livelihoods to the women working in these centres took centre stage, and orders saw a gradual increase through the year.

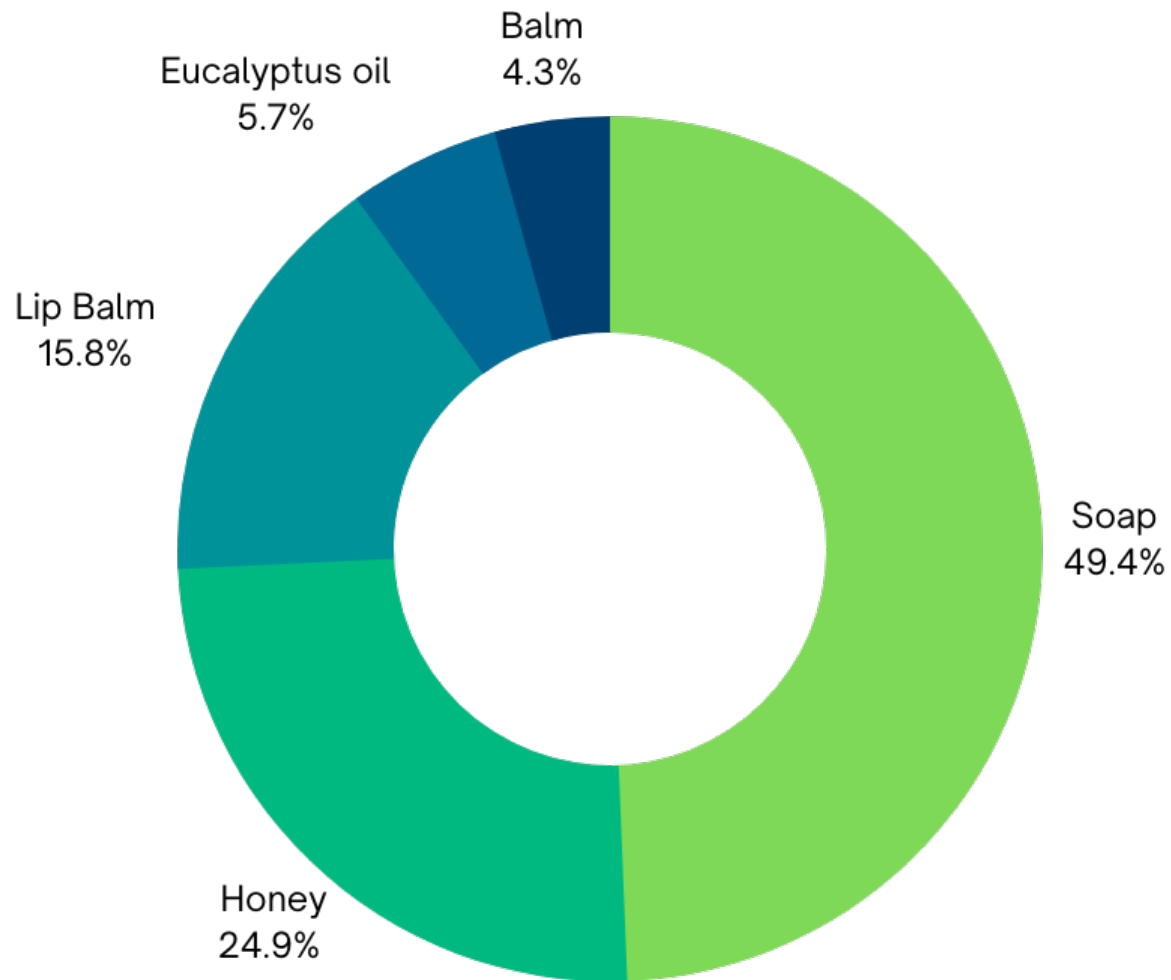
Under the same PGSOC umbrella

We are now an associate member of the PGS Organic Council (PGSOC), a body for the purpose of promoting alternative approaches to guaranteeing organic produce for the market for the benefit of small and marginal farmers within the country.

Keystone and Aadhimalai have been supporting its cause for a while now. This membership now affirms us as a separate entity under the PGS family. We believe that our membership is a key component of building producers' access to markets. We will continue to promote and advocate the PGS philosophy with our producers and customers.



Total Purchase



3 COLLABORATIONS & JOINT EFFORTS

Conservation Community Enterprise Learning Program

As part of an eight-week learning program organized by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and Impact Hub, Nandan and Madhu were part of a participant cohort of social entrepreneurs engaging in interactive sessions to explore how to build greener, more innovative, and resilient enterprises. This program focused on various areas of exploring, developing, and testing models, especially when the COVID-19 pandemic had disrupted activities towards community-led enterprises. Other sessions of the program included engaging the learnings with the team and our stakeholders.

Transformation program with Women on Wings

Teaming up with our partners at Women on Wings, we held weekly meetings through the year to revisit our business strategies and scale our business. These sessions were instrumental in bringing many aspects of the organisation forward, like its strengths, dreams, and points of improvement, which translated into executable action points in given timeframes to reenergise ourselves and rethink strategies. The Women on Wings Joint MD Shilpa Mittal visited our office in Kotagiri to get a closer look at our workspace and processes. With a shared goal of increasing and creating livelihoods for women, we look forward to continued fruitful times.



Institutional Pathways and Strategy Exercise

We are part of an ecosystem of organizations that support and play vital roles in each other's processes and growth. The exercise of developing institutional pathways in the coming years is being actively pursued by a team of members from each of the organizations in the ecosystem. Last Forest, Keystone Foundation, and Aadhimalai Producer Company had the opportunity to interact with Mr. Gopinath Ramakrishnan on campus in a series of activities to strengthen the links between the organisations. Through his visit and carefully executed SWOT analysis of the institutions, action plans and tasks are being planned through regular sessions, channelling our energies collectively to reach our institutional goals.

Stanford SEED Transformation Program

We were part of the Stanford Transformation Program, a yearlong leadership program for entrepreneurs and businesses that focus on developing the skills and tools of the enterprises towards growth and impact on communities. We have been using the tools from the transformation program for some time, helping us address our strengths and weaknesses. We now feature on their website for our work that directly contributes towards achieving UN Sustainable Development Goals through social impact.



4 STORIES FROM THE COMMUNITY

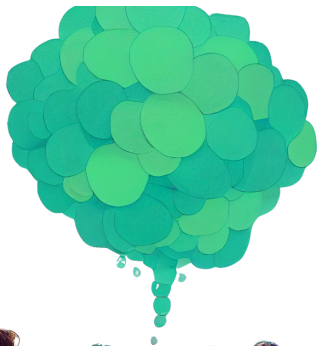


She leads the way!

We celebrated the 2022 International Women’s Day on the 8th of March, along with the Fair-Trade community, this year’s theme being #SheLeadsTheWay. The theme recognized and celebrated women leaders in the Fair-Trade community who have been exceptional in paving the way for others, leading by example in their different fields of Indigenous knowledge, circular economies, capacity building, women refugees, climate justice, COVID response and artisanal knowledge. In the days leading up to International Women’s Day, their stories were highlighted and shared all over. The celebrations carried on through the month in collaboration with Keystone and Aadhimalai, with stories showcasing how women #BreakTheBias across all program activities in the organizations, with various challenges and success stories being highlighted.

Chhattisgarh visit

Miller and Mala travelled to Narayanpur village in Chhattisgarh, in March 2021 as a sequel to Chhattisgarh Food Product’s (CFP) visit to our campus in February 2021. The team from CFP visited our various production centres, learning about our ecosystems, processes, and honey harvesting. On Miller and Mala’s visit to CFP, they had an exposure visit to the areas where honey gathering is being practiced. The different flowers from where the bees forage, vegetation, and the ways of life of the Gond community stood out. This was a first time for Mala on a visit to these communities, she said that the flowers, landscape, houses – all reminded her of her hometown here in The Nilgiris!



IFOAM Asia General Assembly

A special mention to Mathew who was elected as the President of the Asian Organic movement (IFOAM Asia) at its General Assembly. The movement looks to engage in advocacy work and especially engage with young people going forward in the organic world.

Virtual Conferences

During the monsoon season, some members of our team were part of virtual conferences, training sessions and hosted podcasts. Mathew hosted a virtual session on the collection of honey in The Nilgiris. This was hosted by the Asian Pollinators Initiative Alliance (APIA) where our journey over the years in finding markets for honey was discussed over an interactive session.

ALGOA Summit

Mathew and Teny were part of the Asian Local Governments for Organic Agriculture (ALGOA) summit, in South Korea where local governments committed to organic agriculture come together to participate in talks and interactive sessions. Teny took the lead on the topic of communication in one of the sessions.



5 WORLD FAIR TRADE ORGANIZATION



**LAST FOREST
GUARANTEED
FAIR TRADE**



WFTO Audit

We had our WFTO audit, which is due every four years, after some unavoidable delay. The audit was conducted by Ram Bhat, who visited Aadhimalai's production centre in Pudukkad; the primary centre where our beeswax products are handcrafted. He held discussions with the team on the working conditions, transparency, and books. They also discussed Fair Trade and what it meant to the organization and the producers, as well as the impact of the pandemic on the women at the centre. Following the visit to the production centre, a thorough inspection of all supporting documents was also audited. He also visited the Shalom Welfare Society, one of our key suppliers. Improvement plans based on several observations and suggestions will be the next step to be taken.

Fair Trade in difficult times

Fair Trade organizations over the years have supported each other to highlight the importance of Fair Trade in world markets. The solidarity shown by the Fair-Trade organizations in the face of the pandemic has also been a strong point which has helped Last Forest stay on course in its operations.

Through the Fair-Trade network, our products have been listed on Faire, a marketplace to help small, independent businesses and entrepreneurs connect with buyers online, especially in the US, UK, and Canadian markets.

We have been closely working with El Puente, our Fair-Trade partners from Germany, who have been placing orders on a regular basis in spite of the challenges of the pandemic. A batch of handmade beeswax soaps was recently shipped and is now on their website, available for all European markets. In the Netherlands, Jane has been a pillar of tremendous support by distributing our products through Dutch Fair Trade stores. Jane has become an immensely popular name among the team.



F A I R E



WFTO Asia AGM 2021

The WFTO Asia's Annual General Meeting (AGM) for the year took place over two days in November 2021. On the first day, WFTO Asia's Business- to- Business virtual expo commenced with a live virtual exhibition that featured Fair Trade enterprises across Asia. Along with other WFTO Asia members, we showcased our unique products and the work they do towards a fairer world. We featured our beeswax-based lip balms and beeswax food wraps. The AGM concluded with resolutions on climate crises and promoting and strengthening Fair Trade membership growth across the globe.

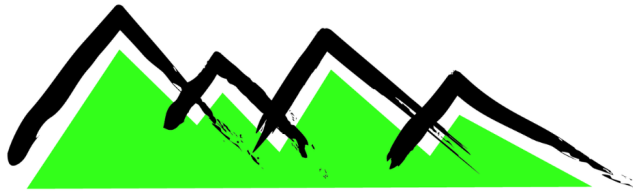


Beyond Beautiful

'Beyond Beautiful' is a curated collection of artisanal products from verified Fair Trade Enterprises around the world. Our listing has now officially gone live through the World Fair Trade Organization's website. Our collection on Beyond Beautiful now features exceptionally handcrafted wood work from WorkTree, Auroville who have used the acacia trees that were destroyed during a cyclone in the year 2011. They have been a critical part of our portfolio.



6 MOUNTAIN PARTNERSHIP



Mountain Partnership



11 December

**International
MOUNTAIN DAY
2021**



Mountain Partnership Member

In May 2021, we became a member of the Mountain Partnership (MP), a United Nations voluntary alliance of partners dedicated to improving the lives of mountain people and protecting mountain environments around the world. This partnership provides a platform for the exchange of knowledge, information, and resources with the global membership, to help us carry out our vision of improving quality of life and sustaining a healthy environment in the Blue Mountains of the Nilgiris. We are working together to develop a Mountain Partnership narrative label which will tell the story of each product's origin and cultivation, processing and preservation methods, nutritional value and role in local cultures, enabling customers to make informed, inspired and intentional purchases.



Catalyst 2030

We are a part of the India chapter for Catalyst 2030, as well as Catalyst Market Global. Catalyst 2030 is a global movement of social entrepreneurs and social innovators from all sectors who share the common goal of creating innovative, people-centric approaches to attain the UN Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. In the course of the coming months, we will be sharing Last Forest's stories of commitment towards the Sustainable Development Goals through our activities and collaborations with various institutions. This will be done through the 'People's Report', a comprehensive collaboration with Catalyst 2030 that aims to use data and insights as a catalyst for discussion, representation, and decision-making at the United Nations.





NFLC 2022

The Nilgiris Field Learning Centre (NFLC) returned! The program, a collaboration between Cornell University and Keystone Foundation, included sessions by Last Forest for the students as part of their course. Monica spoke in depth on the story of Last Forest, its origins, operations, and the various principles we follow as an organization. Teny held a session on Sustainability of a Social Enterprise, our supply chain management, involvement in the Fair-Trade world. Dinesh focused on our value systems, including the networks of Fair Trade, PGS, Slow Food and organic agriculture. Pravin and Madhu dealt with the world of branding and communications, while Miller explained the different terms used in an Indian market, methods, units of measurement and the common tools, commodities in these markets and a session about honey. We ended the two-day program with a visit to the Green Shop where Miller was assisted by Kokila for the group session on customer engagement. It was a refreshing exercise for the staff and students alike.

New Listings

Big Basket

Efforts in November were also focused on onboarding several online platforms and stores, out of which Big Basket was a significant onboarding process. Right now, our honey collections of Nilgiri honey, pollen enriched honey, natural spiced honey and herb infused honey are live on the Big Basket website under the honey category

Common Objective

Last Forest is now listed as a brand in ‘Common Objective ‘under the WFTO hub on their website! The World Fair Trade Organization Hub on Common Objective features sustainable Fair Trade brands, suppliers, products and materials, providing all members of the WFTO with case studies, guidance and tips for fair trade sourcing.

Good Market

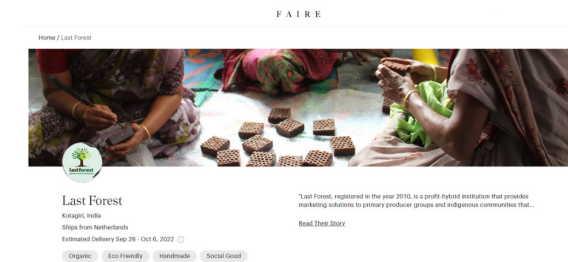
Another promising venture is with The Good Market, a curated platform, based in the USA, tailor-made for connecting social enterprises, cooperatives, and responsible businesses working towards a fairer, better world.

SustainKart

An ecommerce marketplace exclusively for sustainable products that aims at revamping households with conscious products. Their mission is to change the spending pattern of Indians for their lifestyle commodities.

Flourish

A curated marketplace that believes in creating meaningful experiences with a range of unique products, designed to make sure the origin and story of the products are celebrated. Our products are on their website!



Last Forest creates sustainable livelihood opportunities by connecting communities in the Nilgiri hills with fair trade markets for organic and wild forest products. They specialize in wild honey from indigenous honey hunters who have been collecting from the same areas for thousands of years. Over time, their product range has expanded to include soaps, body balms, lip balms, beeswax food wraps, coffee, tea, herbs, spices, essential oils, and more. Village level production centers are managed and operated by local women who no longer have to leave their communities to look for work. Last Forest supplies more than 100 outlets including their own retail shops in Koragiri, Coonoor and Dooty.

NEW MARKETS



Amazon Store Front

It is always a great feeling when something we have been pursuing for a long time comes to fruition! Setting up our Amazon brand store was one of these dreams that got realized this year. With our newly branded Amazon store, we look forward to going a step further on Amazon to reach all the corners of the country with our products. The store design took a while since Amazon has a set of rules and regulations that had to be adhered to, but it is now live, ready for you to check out, and has us excited for our space on Amazon.in.

CRED listing

Small social enterprises like us, have a lot of challenges stacked against us almost every day - especially with a small team, limited resources to get through, and genuine prioritization of sustainability in our minds. The pandemic was such an intense example. The grit of the team was tested at every level as we got through the lockdown. Survival was the primary aim, and when that was assured through the turbulent months, building back and going one step better was next in the itinerary.

On the 25th of September, 2021, we went live on the CRED platform, orders immediately began storming in! The whole team worked hard to fulfil the orders that kept coming in. It wasn't all smooth sailing - there were frustrations of delay and breakages during transit, which we have taken on in resolving with our customers.

The packing, organizing, booking, and shipping of these orders commenced and continued for almost two weeks, with work going on well into the night as we looked to fulfil all the orders we received. We now have shipped all the CRED orders to various parts of the country!

Green Shop Changes

Our Green Shop in Coonoor, which has been a novelty landmark over the years. Our Coonoor shop went through some changes due to a drop in revenue. The bottom floor that once stocked handcrafted goods, garments and pottery, which was later converted into an organic, super food setup had to close. All products have now been shifted and displayed on one floor. This transformation happened quickly during the lockdown with dedicated efforts from everyone involved, including carpenters and our staff.



Marketing

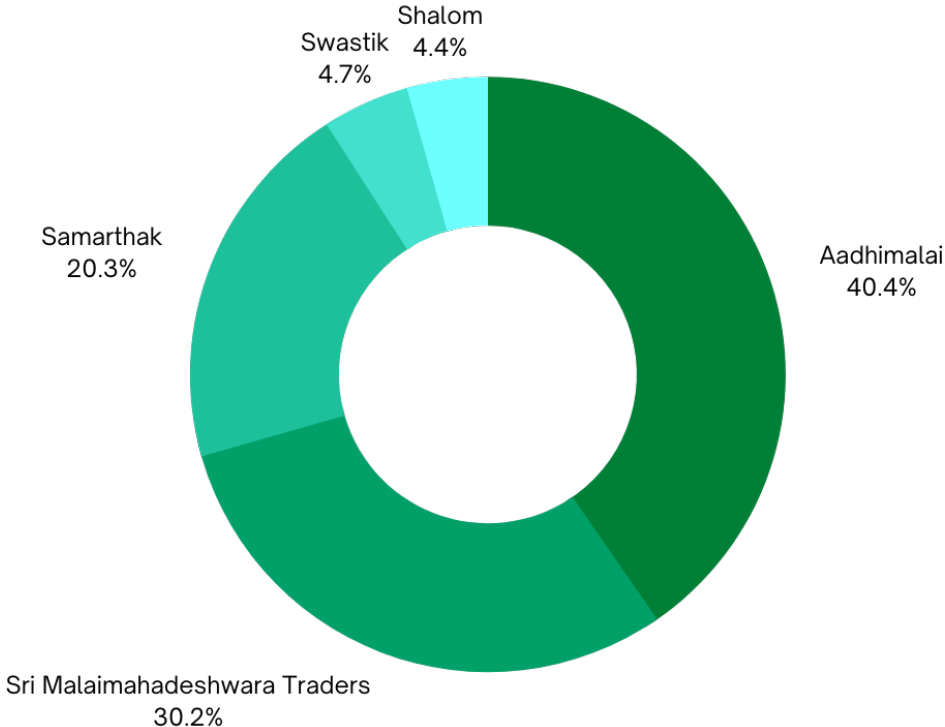
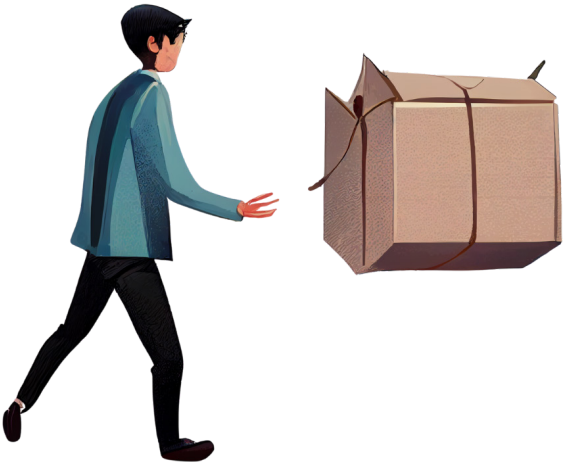
This year, we made special visits to our longtime friends and partners to show appreciation to our support systems who stood with us since our inception, like Antony in Salem, our top dealer, Kriti, our distributor in Pondicherry and Murali, a proprietor of Modern stores in Ooty and Coonoor. Special heartfelt mementos were given to them to celebrate our long running relationships as we look forward to many more years of their support.



Procurement

The team also visited suppliers and dealers after a long break due to pandemic restrictions. They also sought potential new stores to stock our products. Immanuel visited Pondicherry and Madurai, where he visited Yaadhum and Yellow Bags. The former is a group working with local farmers in Madurai who produce millets, personal care products, and handicrafts. Yellow bags deals with upcycling of material to make bags. We will be collaborating with them in the coming days!

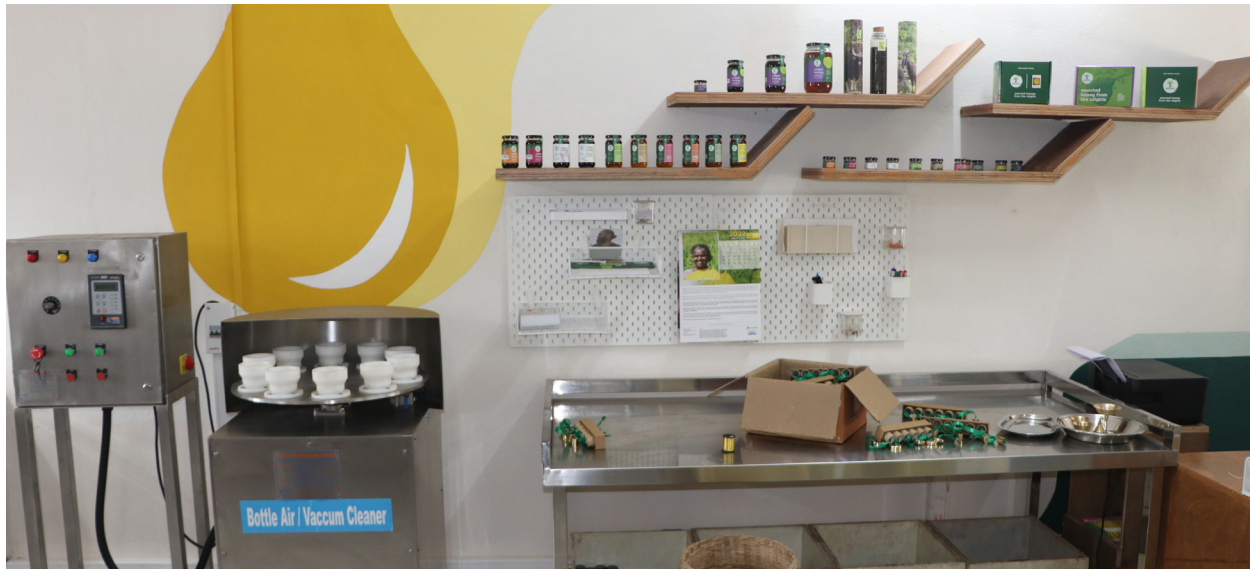
Top Suppliers



13 ADMIN & INFRASTRUCTURE

A shift towards expansion

After long thought and efforts in previous years to find a more apt location for the honey unit operations. We finally shifted our main honey operations to Annur, in the plains of Coimbatore district. This expansion was necessary for easier access to logistics partners, increased space for inventory, and favourable environmental conditions for storage of honey. All the equipment from the hills was shifted, inspections from fssai and labour officers, and all relevant papers for the facility have been put in place. We cannot forget the people who supported us through this: Udhaya and Cibi, who worked tirelessly to ensure that every small piece was put in place for this major transition. Their effort to design and execute was awesome. Girrish, from the Stanford Cohort, ensured that his team meticulously completed all the machinery in time and installed it at our centre. Kudos to them. And finally, thank you to Denis and Carol Bergin. Their support ensured that this dream came true.



Synergies

We capitalized on a sunny afternoon in March to pave way for an invigorating synergies discussion on our next steps for the organization as we came to the end of another tumultuous financial year! We played a numbers game to understand the growth and performance, aspiring to do more. Smaller groups discussed next steps and ensured that everyone's voice was heard and included. The takeaway from the day's discussion was a list of short-term and long-term goals for each employee and the organization. We hope to keep the buzzing synergy alight and growing. This session came as a welcomed follow-up on several sessions, held in previous months, cementing a continuity of reflection that has allowed the team to take a step back from the regular hustle and reflect consistently. What are efforts put forward by everyone, and how can they be channelled to achieve the goals that we have set for ourselves and the organization? In December 2021, Hema conducted a workshop that focussed on team building through fun activities, which led to the team coming together and drawing up a blueprint on how each department will work going forward.



In an all new look!

Assorted Honey Gift Box

This year saw an all-new branding, with colours inspired from the forest, a celebration of the connection between man and nature through the divine goodness of honey from the Giant Rock Bees!

The best gems from Last Forest's collection of honey, in the most apt 25g bottles, can be selected and put into honey gift boxes made with carefully crafted corrugated eco-friendly boxes designed to safeguard both the bottles and the environment.

Beeswax Food Wraps

We launched the Beeswax Food Wraps in November, in our all-new swanky branding! You'll find a set of three handmade wraps, made from pieces of GOTS-certified organic cotton cloth and coated with beeswax. These food wraps are the perfect solution to curb the waste produced by plastic and foil food wraps! The box and the wraps are part of our ongoing revamp of our look and branding, conceptualized by Impprintz, our design partners. Impprintz has been working closely with us to bring to life Last Forest's story, products, and mission to connect markets with communities.

Honeycomb Beeswax Soap

In collaboration with Impprintz, our rebranding exercise is in full swing. Our new range of 'honeycomb' soaps are now hitting the stores and our website, joining our range of classic beeswax based handcrafted soaps and natural 'scrubber' soaps.



Balance Sheet as on 31.03.2022 (in million INR)		
	2021-22	2020-21
EQUITY & LIABILITIES		
Capital Funds	4.3	4.63
Current Liabilities	10.41	7.17
Total	14.71	11.8
ASSETS		
Fixed Assets	0.9	0.9
Other Non-Current Assets	1.16	1.55
Current Assets	12.65	9.35
Total	14.71	11.8
Profit & Loss account for the year ending 31.03.22		
INCOME		
Revenue from Operations	30.12	24.9
Other Income	0.83	0.07
Total	30.95	24.97
EXPENSES		
Purchases	13.2	10.63
Changes in Inventories	-0.72	0.8
Direct and Indirect Expenses	18.67	13.22
Profit/Loss	-0.2	0.32
Total	30.95	24.97





TEAM



AJAY

Packaging Wizard

Assuring the quality of your honey bottle!



ASIA

Packaging Extraordinaire

Bringing you love from the source!



GOPAL

Packaging Master

Blink and you'll miss the genius!



SUGANTHI

Procurement Specialist

The better, the best!



DAYAL

Presiding Sales

Heading the frontline of markets!



KALPANA

Infectious Energy

Quick to spread the cheer around!



FRANCE

Operations Guru

Perfection is key!



JANCY

Packaging Chief

Making sure there is joy through the day!



JOSHUA

Honey Matters

Building the base in the honey union!



MAHENDRAN

Packaging Ace

Getting it done through experience!



MARI

Honey Master

Innovation and Building is must!



KOKILA

Operations Cornerstone

Bringing the versatility to the workplace!



MALA

Honey Virtuoso

Leading the line on all things honey!



MATHEW

Managing Director

Leading from the front!



MADHUSUDAN

Communications Pundit

Lets show you what our story is all about!



MALATHI

Accounting Whiz

Ensuring everything is just perfect!



MILLER

Sales Leader

Putting together experience and novelty all day, every day!



MONICA

Accounts Phenom

Proficiency and expert level command of numbers!



PRAVIN

Marketing Maestro

No challenge too big, no settling on mediocre.



VIJAYA

Retail Anchor

Keeping the avenue of retail going strong!



NANDAN

Development Captain

Driving data head on to results!



TENY

Operations Head

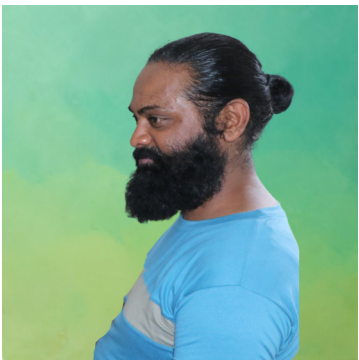
Ensuring smooth pumping of the Last Forest heart!



DINESH

Marketing Pro

Ready to cross the seas!



PRABHU

Honey Pillar

An important force in the most important place!



VICTORIA

Packaging Prowess

Making leaps and bounds through humility.



TEAM

The extended Last Forest family



SIMRAN & RAHUL

Imprintz

Conceptualizing the way we look and feel!



RUSHABH

Meraki Studios

No digital space left unturned!



SURAJ

Suraj's Photography

Capturing the moment!



MADHUMITA

Content Design

Thriving in the world of design!

BOARD

Mathew

Managing Director, Last Forest Enterprises

Pratim

Co-Founder, Keystone Foundation

Sneh

Co-Founder, Keystone Foundation

Sekhar

CEO, Comprehensive Support Services

Bhupi

Proprietor, Bon Appetit

Somnath

Consultant, Disruptor; Coach

Ramya

Photographer; Author - Soul of the Nilgiris

ADVISORS

Sirish

Business Transformation Advisor, Stanford SEED

Vasudevan

Consultant - Human Resource Development, People's Pulse

INTERNAL AUDITORS

Sripriya Sreeram

Aconter Business Solutions, Bangalore

STATUTORY AUDITORS

Shanmugasundaram K

Srivatsan & Gita, Coimbatore

COMPLIANCE AUDITORS

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SAS Partners, Chennai



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Ph: 04266 273887

