

Face to Face at World Cashew Convention 2017

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Ms Vidya Kamath, Bola Raghavendra Kamath & Sons

*An Exclusive Interview with Ms Vidya Kamath, Bola Raghavendra Kamath & Sons,
at the World Cashew Convention, 09-11 Feb, 2017, Singapore*



You have been the part of women panel which attracted a lot of attention and appreciation, how do you feel about it?

It was a very humble experience for all the honour they received, it was very good, you brought out the issue of women and it was an eye-opener, especially in the cashew industry, where we in spite of being family-oriented, there are no women who have been given a chance to come out. In Karnataka, even Kerala a lot of family oriented business is there from very long time, but women are hardly given any chance to grow in the industry, maybe this panel in WCC acts as an eye opener for many people out there in the industry.

What are the challenges you faced initially as a women entrepreneur and how did you tackle them?

Initially the transition from being a housewife to a business entrepreneur was a different experience, in the same way studying and understanding the business part was more of a challenge. Being a business management graduate helped me a lot. When you look back, learning everything as you go on maybe the benefits of the family. So you already have everything set, there are no time limit to work, but the main thing was turning around of already successful company we had, that was the challenge for me.

What kind of recognition you get from the westerners and could you please share your experience with us?

We are basically into the Middle East market and today we have well-recognised “BOLA brand “in the Middle East. They are very forthcoming, especially most of them are men, but they really appreciate and respect, that's what I felt. And once they get to know you and the brand you represent, which is known for quality, they would like to work with you on a long-term basis and most of the brokers have been part of the business since 2005.

As ‘BOLA’ brand is known for its quality, what are the steps taken to ensure to enhance the quality further?

We work mainly on grading of cashew kernels and maintain standard, because of our quality we usually get a premium over the market price, especially in the Middle East. We have to take care to retain the same position and trust that we have maintained over years. Our main motto is to give good performance and in the long-term perspective so we try to maintain hygiene and all those things and then we're going in for an expansion to have full automation of our factory.

How easy or difficult for women to handle financial transactions?

Since I handle the transactions and deal with banks, it is not very difficult these days when compare to that of yesteryears. Today the banks are more open, they come to your doorstep, it's all changed. Initially being a man or women doesn't make a difference because they come across saying they will give you all benefits and ease but once the part of all the documentation starts and then it's a different story as it's not very easy, transaction between banks involves lot of processes, paperwork but there's a lot of new technologies to ease financial transactions, we have the Forex advisors who provide good inputs.

What according to you are the challenges faced by an exporter in India today?

Exporter's today have to manage all the risks involved such as FOREX, price fluctuations, volatility, quality and then we have to complete with Vietnam. With the new technology any change in price circulates very fast. Basically being Indian we have to compete with the Indian domestic market and a lot of new exporters coming in and we who are already established brands have to face more challenges because they might apply one or two containers but we export in large quantities have to complete a lot it's a very tough job but going on well. Being a well known brand is an added advantage we have, so performance at the end of the day counts.