



# THE CASHEW FIELD THROUGH THE EYES OF A YOUNG WOMAN

*Cherif Ibn Achta*

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## ***Taking after her father***

Daughter of one of the pioneers in the cashew sector in Côte d'Ivoire, Ms. Cherif Ibn Achta is a quality controller for Caro Nut, an American purchasing company of Cashew Kernels. She experienced cashew through her late father Mr. Cherif Ibrahima who was the President of the Cashew Exporters Cooperative and promoter of the Agri Business Company.

Thus, it was through her father that she was introduced to the cashew field and developed a liking towards it.

## ***Qualified and well equipped***

Aged twenty nine, she holds a bachelor's degree in Management from the University of Abidjan and has worked in the cashew industry for six years now. She also graduated at the end of October 2016 from the Master Program training of ComCashew ACA after a 7 months' duration.

## ***Providing a link***

She works full time as an employee and is in charge of quality control of kernels, price negotiation and the monitoring of shipping on the boats for the American firm Caro Nut. The goal of Caro Nut is to offer a chance to industrial sector of African cashew processing to have access to the American market.

## ***Love for travelling***

Speaking of her hobbies, she says she is passionate about traveling and loves to explore and discover various countries across the globe, while gaining experience all along.

## ***Her previous encounters***

Before joining Caro Nut Company, Ms. Achta has worked as production supervisor in a processing company in Ghana. She has learnt the necessary tools on quality control and food hygiene.

## ***Motivated to look ahead***

Her determination and desire to move forward are motivational elements to progress in her field. Her family is her

main support. She is the sole woman in the branch based in Côte d'Ivoire, which makes her all the more admirable.

### ***Her biggest goal***

For her, working in the cashew sector is a real pleasure and a dream come true. She hopes that with the years' experience in the cashew sector, she will also be able to achieve one of her biggest dreams which was also her late father's vision, that is to own a cashew processing unit.

### ***Women can succeed if they aim for it***

According to her, there is no barrier for women to become pioneers in the cashew sector. Proving her point, she says there are already some women who are Chief Executive Officers in the cashew sector. In Côte d'Ivoire, for example, there is Madam Kone and Kanate Namaro who is the Manager of CajouIndustrie. Madam TOURE Massogbe Diabaté, CEO of SITA-SA and Madam Kone Minata of SOTRIA-B in Burkina Faso are also influential.

### ***Hoping to better with every passing day***

In the years to come, she aims to accomplish a higher responsibility which is of decision making. To help achieve this she would also like to reinforce her abilities in the field of financial management, of safety control audit, and hygiene of agro-nutrient products.



## **“Saphalam”, an initiative towards Women Empowerment in the Cashew Sector**

Saphalam is a livelihood promotion initiative taken by Kudumbashree Mission in Kerala implemented in Kasargod district. Kudumbashree, conceived as a joint programme of the Government of Kerala and the NABARD, implemented through Community Development Societies (CDS's) of poor women serving as the community wings of local governments to promote the collection and processing of cashew grown in the district by the local women living in the rural areas.

Around 36 processing units and one cashew apple processing unit are being set up involving 12 grama panchayats with a project cost of INR 151.45 lakhs and expenditure of INR 123.36 lakhs supporting 36 beneficiaries with an income of INR 3700/month. At present, there are 12 units and 1 grading and packaging center and has processed and sold around 15 tonnes of cashew nuts for INR 45 lakhs under the brand name 'PARANKY NUTS'.

Saphalam Vanita Kasuvandi samskarana samiti, Chattanchal (Saphalam Women's Cashew processing Society) comprises of 80 members out of which 78 are women. The women of the society in the 12 primary processing centers located in 12 different taluk panchayats are engaged in the procurement of cashew directly from the cashew farmers in their respective geographical areas. The members negotiate the prices, wherever possible with the cashew farmers, pay the price on the spot and then transport the raw cashew nuts to the processing units for first level processing. After completion of primary processing, they supply the cashew from their respective village centers to the central processing unit in Chattanchal for further grading and packaging. The members of the society are also engaged in direct door to door selling of cashew nuts which generates 40% of the total sales revenue through this mode.

The supply of cashew is on decline, but the success of intervention for the promotion of workers critically depends upon scaling up of operations, market expansions and development, introduction of technology and infusion of huge working capital. An approach to enhance the availability of cashew is to have the cashew growers a part of the entire value chain by enrolling them as members of the society and ensuring equitable returns to the farmers and adequate income to worker members. Lastly, the intervention can be sustained only if the operations are managed along sound business lines professionalizing the entire value chain.

