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“Super humans. We read about them, watch them and admire them in the virtual world - but I live with a superhuman. She is my mother.

My mother, Mrs ChitrarekhaDinde, is my role model. She inspires and motivates me to grow without any barriers. It seems to me that this woman looks at life as a challenge and wholeheartedly intends to seize the day every day.

My mother looked after me and supported me in every part of my life. Right from childhood she has been with me like my shadow. It had been riddled with hurdles and difficulties, but she has managed to cross them all to because of the amazing and independent person she is.

Being physically challenged I am not able to move by myself and because of this I have not been able to do daily routine activities since childhood. At the beginning this was a hardship for my mother, but she was determined to make it work.

She not only helped me whenever I needed but she also taught me to help myself. She taught me to keep myself clean and neat, how to eat and how to know how much to eat. She says, "a child does not learn from what parents say but from what parents do".

I have had three operations and various therapies on my spine but none have been successful. I was rejected from schools because of their lack of infrastructure and facilities. I was finally admitted to one school.

My mother had to be there with me the whole day, but at the same time she also had to handle our home life. So she started tailoring and working during school hours. That is how she was able to satisfy financial needs in the home.

Now I've graduated in Business Administration and I'm pursuing a Masters.

Whenever I look at my mother I see an ordinary person but when I think about what she does and how she does it she becomes divine and the reason of my smile!

The experience of my life so far has truly brought things into perspective. My mother has taught me that hard times can be overcome and that losing battles can be won. She has taught me more than I could have learnt from any book.

She sets an inspirational example to me teaching me how to live life and make wise choices, even in the most uncertain situations.

I respect her a lot. She is my inspiration, my role model.”

These are the words from **Diksha Dinde**, a 23-year-old student and activist from India. She is 84% differently abled, trying to break the stereotypes related to disabled people. Be it teaching underprivileged children from the slums near where she live or raising awareness to break taboos around menstruation, she has been doing her part to make this world a better place to live.

You may be wondering why this testimony in the report for ***Kudumbasree** – the State Poverty Eradication Mission....*

The above was an indication to what a mother can be. With its three strategic domains - economic empowerment, social empowerment & women empowerment, ***Kudumbasree*** is directly or indirectly aiming at moulding such strong mothers who can be the real role models for the daughters and even sons, thus architecting a healthier generation. Flexibility & convergence gives it a seamless working platform to attain the goal.

To get a first-hand feel of this realm of *social engineering* the author visited :

- An NHG
- A CDS
- 3 Micro Enterprises
- 2 JLGs
- 2 Ashraya Beneficiaries

1. **Neighbourhood group:** The author visited '*Navajeevan*' NHG under the Chengannoor ULB CDS. Out of 19 members, 12 attended the meeting. After introducing the author the meeting proceeded as per the agenda.



Observations:

1. Though the group meets every week, a rapport based on unity and togetherness among the members was lacking.
2. No initiatives for a micro enterprise
3. The Secretary seemed to be not enthusiastic in disbursing credits to members claiming that the members wont repay the loan. As a result the amount remains idle in the bank account
4. Members found passive & reluctant to be open to the possibilities the Kudumbasree throws in front of them. In short, the group remained for name sake

Suggestion:

1. Mentoring & constant support for those NHGs that remain passive.

2. **CDS:** The author visited two urban local body CDS, Chengannur&Mavelikkara. Attended one governing body meeting at Chengannur CDS.



Observations:

1. Inter personal skills is a major hurdle even ADS as well as CDS members need to be sharpened at.
2. When it is clearly mentioned that the working fund for CDS can be collected through donations, grants from government/PRI's/other organisations/individuals & financial institutions or through earnings from economic activities, CDS seemed to be suffocating with a minimal amount of affiliation fee as well as the annual subscription fee of the NHGs.

Suggestions:

1. Mentoring & constant support to ADS as well as CDS members
2. Fund raising mechanisms to be introduced to create a large working fund for the CDS to ensure their economic empowerment.
3. **Micro Enterprises:**Met 3 entrepreneurs - a young widow who runs a hotel in Chengannur; a lady who runs a DTP centre in Mavelikkara& the third one who prepares building plan & estimates.



Observation:

1. All three found to be happy with their enterprise and the author found the support from Kudumbasree marked a turning point in their lives

Suggestion:

1. More creativity has to be brought in with varied forms of enterprises that ensures sustainable development
2. Convergence has to play the major role in reaching out to more ladies.

- **JLG:** Joint Liability Group performed '*sanghakrishi*' with great enthusiasm. The author visited two groups – one in Chengannur & the other in Mavelikkara



Observation: The groups seemed to be enthusiastic

Suggestions:

1. More youths should be attracted thus creating a new agriculture culture among the young women in Kerala.
 2. Scientific techniques with sustainable development as the long term plan should be introduced
- **Ashraya Beneficiary:**Met 2 beneficiaries in Chengannur.

Observation:

1. Single, aged and with no proper support system
2. Complaining and unsatisfactory about the insufficient amount of Rs. 150 for nutrients' supply
3. Whatever stationery the beneficiaries get, seemed to be shared among their relatives

Suggestion:

1. The beneficiaries were tagged as 'agathis' and this stigmatisation is in effect creating a side lining rather than the strengthening of the downtrodden.
2. Apart from the monthly ration emotional support is very essential. Social Case work as a technique can be applied in case of Ashraya beneficiaries.
3. To ensure nutritional support, rather than giving coconut oil, or coffee powder, which will be inadequate for the whole month, a mix of jiggery, ground nuts gingely seeds etc can be made as sweet balls – *kappalandimuttayi*, a value added product. The production unit can either be an enterprise in the CDS, (which will help the CDS to earn income also) or the distribution can be ensured with the help of ICDS Anganawadis. Daily supply of egg and a glass of milk can be considered.
4. Empathetic listening is the most essential support for the beneficiaries. Youngsters from nearby colleges NSS volunteers etc can be channelized as '*chat mates*', who can visit them once a week.
5. Those who are healthy can be utilised as *story tellers* in Anganawadis where they can relate easily and happily with children. This can make them more lively. A feeling of *wantedness* will give hope in life.

To conclude, ***Kudumbasree***, the scientific platform of social engineering while expanding has to make sure that no loopholes are created. Whatever given are reaching the grassroot level with passion and without much dilution.