

A Research Study on Overall Performance of Kudumbashree Unit With Reference To Beeranthabail of Kasargod District, Kerala state

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Abstract: *India is one of the newly industrialised economies in the world, but the growth factor is unevenly distributed. Hence inclusive growth of India comes through the financial inclusion. To attain this objective, the Government is initiating various programmes. There are various microfinance institutions, Self Help Groups playing very important role in this regard. The Kudumbashree programme was initiated by Government of Kerala in 1998. The slogan of the mission is "Reaching out to families through women and reaching out to community through families". The concept was developed by NABARD and Government of Kerala through joint initiative as a poverty eradication programme, women empowerment and rural development. Kudumbashree covers more than 60 per cent of the households in Kerala and gives prime importance for the economic empowerment of the indigent masses, especially the poor women of Kerala. Kudumbashree now became benchmark for all other self-help groups in India. Though its efforts to engage women in civil society in development issues and opportunities, Kudumbashree in association with the local self-government of Kerala is charting out new meaning and possibilities for local economic development and citizen centric governance. The present study is a descriptive in nature based on survey method. Non probabilistic convenience sampling technique is used to collect data. 50 samples are collected through a structured questionnaire from members of Kudumbashree unit at Beeranthabail. Data were analysed through simple statistical methods like percentage. The benchmarking strategies for resource mobilisation, granting advances and recovery are the main objective of the study. So, economic development of women leads to development of entire community. Based on the findings of the study some factors can be considered for effective performance of Kudumbashree units.*

I. Introduction

'The God's Own Country' Kerala, is known for highest literacy rate state in India and as a model of development. Despite its poverty, Kerala has achieved human development results that are outstanding in comparison with the rest of India. National Bank of Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) initiated women Self Help Groups (SHGs) in India with the support of local NGOs. The formation of SHGs led to the implementation of Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), launched by the Ministry of Rural Development. In 1988 Government of Kerala introduced Kudumbashree scheme as a comprehensive poverty alleviation programme to focus primarily on poor rural and urban women's. "Kudumbashree" in local language means prosperity of the family which helps enjoy the economic opportunities by a good number of the poor women folks in rural and urban Kerala. It makes every effort to alleviate poverty through an integrated approach which involves an effective convergence of resources and actions, and moreover, the programme is essentially linked to local self-government institutions. Though local government institutions are not organically linked to Kudumbashree, they are active partners in the programme. Today, Kudumbashree is one of the largest women-empowering schemes in the country.

"To eradicate absolute poverty in ten years through concerted community action under the leadership of local government, by facilitating organization of the poor for combining self-help with demand -led convergence of available services and resources to tackle the multiple dimensions and manifestations of poverty holistically" is the mission statement of Kudumbashree Programme. (www.kudumbashree.org)

The grassroots of Kudumbashree are Neighbourhood Groups (NHG in short) that send representatives to the ward level Area Development Societies (ADS). The ADS sends its representatives to the Community Development Society (CDS), which completes the unique three-tier structure of Kudumbashree. Today, there are 2.58 lakhs NHGs, over 19,700 ADSs and 1072 CDSs in Kudumbashree.

Organisation structure of Kudumbashree:

The community structures adopted by Kudumbashree at various levels are listed below:

- Kudumbasree Ayalkkoottam (Neighbour Hood Groups) comprising of 20-40 women members selected from poor families.
- Kudumbasree Ward Samithy (Area Development Society) is formed at the level of ward of local government by federating 8-10 NHGs.
- Kudumbasree Panchayath Samithy (Community Development Society) formed at the village panchayat level or at the municipality (town) or corporation (city) is a federation of ADSs.

Objectives of Kudumbashree Programme

The objective of Kudumbashree programme includes:

- Identification of the poor families through risk indices based surveys, with the active participation of the poor and the communities to which they belong.
- Empowering the poor women to improve the productivity and managerial capabilities of the community by organizing them in to Community Based Organizations.
- Encouraging thrift and investment through credit by developing Community Development Societies to work as informal bank of the poor.
- Improving incomes of the poor through improved skills and investment for self-employment.
- Ensuring better health and nutrition for all.

Working of Kudumbashree Programme

Formation of Women Collectives

The poor women from families were identified in to the Neighbour Hood Groups (NHGs) representing 15 to 40 families. A five-member team elected from the NHGs will be the cutting edge of the programme. It will be federated democratically in to Area Development Societies (ADS) and then in to Community Development Societies (CDS) at the Panchayath level. The organizational structures will provide opportunities for collective public action.

Meetings

Weekly meetings of NHGs, sharing of experiences, discussions, organized /unorganized trainings etc, will broaden their outlook on better health, better education, better social and economic status. To facilitate economic development, suitable skill up gradation trainings will be given to women.

Thrift Credit Operations and 24 Hour Banking System

Small savings generated at the families are pooled at various levels as thrift and used to attract credit from banks, which will operate as 24- hour bank for the poor, acting as a subsystem of the formal banks. The need identified at NHG level is shaped as micro plans, which are integrated in to mini plans at ADS level and action plan at CDS level. Kudumbasree promote self-help approach for building houses, latrines, etc availing the minimum support from government.

Balasabhas

It is the grass root level groups of the children of BPL families. The mission organizes the children of the poor families of the state in to balasabhas as a part of its holistic approach to wipe-out poverty. Catch them young and nip poverty in the buds is the guiding slogan behind the balasabha movement initiated by the mission. (www.Kudumbashree.org)

II. Review of literature:

The literature pertaining to the current study on “Kudumbashree programme- A bird’s eye view” is discussed below:

‘Kudumbashree project: A poverty eradication programme in Kerala: Performance, Impact and Lessons for other states’ found that Kudumbashree is a unique programme that has an edge over many SHG programmes in other Indian states. He pointed that at first, the membership of NHG under Kudumbasree is restricted to women from poor families while it is open to all to participate in SHG. He further added that micro credit is the only tool for poverty reduction among members of SHGs in states other than Kerala as it remains one of various effective tools in Kudumbasree programme. (John, 2009)

Economic development of women leads to better living status in the family, educational, nutritional, and the health needs of the children were well satisfied. Economic independence through kudumbashree improves the social participation of its members. (Kenneth Kalyani and Seena P C, 2012)

Rural women's empowerment is the best strategy for poverty eradication in rural areas' identified that the aim of the Kudumbashree scheme is to improve the standard of living of poor women in rural areas by setting up micro credit and productive enterprises. (Nideesh, 2008)

Microfinance should be considered an interlinking vehicle between financial inclusion and improving standard of living. There should be deliberate platform to improve the income and earning of the member through participative productive activities (Guha and Gupta, 2005).

In most cases women tend to use the micro financing for the consumption smoothening, the inference of which may be that the poor find it difficult in financing their daily transactions (Rajashekar, 2005).

Corpus resources of the group have influenced the socio economic activities leading social capital formation through training and self-learning apart from mere financial transaction (Anderson et.al. 2002).

Strong social mobilisation should be the basic principle of microfinance based activities. The self-help groups with strong social bondage help in administering hassle free self-employment activities (Ojaha, 2001).

The participation in the micro financing activities helps the poor in maintaining a more stable income than they are not part of the micro financing activities. The most striking advantage is the thrift component, which has totally relieved the group members from the money lender. (Jaya Anand, 2000).

III. Objectives of the study:

- To understand the overall performance of Kudumbashree unit.
- To study the working system of Kudumbashree project.
- To analyse the problems in the administration of the units of Kudumbashree project.

IV. Research Methodology:

7.1 Research scope:

The study was conducted in Beeranhabail ward of Kasargod District of Kerala, who claimed to be the members of Kudumbashree unit. There are 15 NHGs in that ward, out of which 7 NHGs (i.e., 50%) are selected for the study purpose. Data for this study was gathered in August 2015 by primary data collection method through questionnaire administered among members of Neighbour Hood Groups of Kudumbashree.

7.2 Sample Size:

50 samples were used for the study.

7.3 Sources of data:

The primary data were collected with the help of a questionnaire framed keeping in view the objectives of the study. The questionnaire consists of two parts, i.e. part-I and part-II. The part I include background details of the respondents and the part-II various information related to the savings, advances, working structure and recovery systems of Neighbour Hood Groups. To supplement the primary data, the secondary information was collected from internet and various Journals.

7.4 Statistical tool used:

Simple statistical tool like percentages were used to analyse the collected data.

V. Analysis of data and interpretation:

As mentioned above, the study is based on a sample of 50 respondents.

Table 1: Showing the demographic profile of the sampled member (n=50)

Demographics	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
21 – 40	27	54
Above 40	23	46
Education		
Below SSLC	21	42
SSLC	21	42
Graduate	08	16
Annual Income		
10000-20000	13	26
20000-30000	09	18
Above 30000	28	56

Table 2: Showing number of year's association with Kudumbashree

Number of Years	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 1 year	04	08
1-2 years	05	10
2-3 years	04	08
More than 3 years	37	74

Table 3: Showing details about benefits to the member

Benefits	Frequency	Percentage
Improvement in savings	16	32
Banking knowledge	12	24
Easy access to loan	20	40
Increase in spending	02	04

Table 4: Showing the details about savings amount per month.

Savings amount	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 500	42	84
500-1000	08	16
More than 1000	00	00

Table 5: Showing the details about mode of saving

Mode	Frequency	Percentage
Weekly	50	100
Monthly	00	00

Table 6: Showing the purpose of loan taken by the member

Purpose	Frequency	Percentage
Agriculture	04	08
Education	10	20
Marriage	13	26
Self-employment	23	46

Table 7: Showing the details of loan amount

Loan amount	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 10000	08	16
10000-40000	27	54
40000-70000	05	10
Above 70000	10	20

Table 8: Showing the details about average attendance in meetings

Option	Frequency	Percentage
More than 90%	29	58
70%-90%	16	32
Less than 70%	05	10

Table 9: Status of loan recovery

Option	Frequency	Percentage
More than 90%	28	56
70%-90%	21	42
Less than 70%	01	02

Table 10: Showing the details about participation in Government programme

Option	Frequency	Percentage
High	25	50
Medium	19	38
Low	06	12

Table 11: Showing the details about general issues in Kudumbashree units

Issues	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of experience and training	20	40
Conflict between members in the unit	15	30
Insufficient Government support	11	22
Other issues	04	08

VI. Findings of the study

- The majority of the group members belong to the age category of 21-40, matriculation and income level above 30000.
- It is found that 74 per cent of the members have more than 3 years of association with the group.
- The study reveals that members are finding easy access to loan compared to the other avenues.
- The majority of the members utilising loan amount for self-employment and other personal matters.
- The study reveals nearly 54 per cent of the members taking loan in the range of 10000-40000 annually.
- The recovery status of loan is quite good. This shows the credibility of members of the group.
- Among the members, nearly 50 per cent actively taking participation in Government programmes.
- The study reveals that 40 per cent of the members demanding effective training and 30 per cent of the members pointed out conflict among the group members.

VII. Policy implications towards the study

- The Government role is very important to support this kind of micro-finance institutions. So, promotion of this kind project throughout the nation and it should cover the unreached population.
- The group members are motivated to take participation in the related Government programmes.
- Guidance may be given to members for effective utilization of micro credit.
- The unit should function with transparent basis and politically neutral.
- Effective training programme can be arranged to create awareness among the members about the new initiatives of the Kudumbashree project.
- Entrepreneurship development programme can be arranged.

VIII. Conclusion

In the present study, an attempt has been made to analyse the working system of Neighbour Hood Group. The performance is satisfactory but there is necessary to take some initiatives to efficient performance of unit. The members admitted that, their socio-economic status improved after joining this unit. Kudumbashree is a largest women empowerment programme in the country and became the life-line of poor women in the state of Kerala. It has got the national and international recognition as an ideal and workable model of participatory development for eradicating poverty. To conclude, women empowerment leads to economic development of the region through the Kudumbashree project.

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