



Special NHGs for the needy - Action plan and way forward

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KUDUMBASHREE SPECIAL NHGs

Central Government has been doing lot of initiatives from ages for poverty eradication. Nothing can bring major changes. In this situation Government of Kerala introduced Kudumbashree Mission which is entrusted with the responsibility of organizing Neighborhood groups (NHGs) of underprivileged community groups. The objectives of Kudumbashree include empowering these NHGs by providing them opportunities for socio-economic empowerment, representation in public policy discussions and developing programs to address their needs in the area of livelihood and development.

Kudumbashree received great appreciation from all over the world because of the work and motives behind it. Problems like gender inequality, discrimination on the basis of gender, caste, religion etc., serious diseases, and violation of human rights create loneliness and depression which is more severe than poverty. This is why along with poverty eradication we aimed at these major problems and decided to start Special NHGs consisting of those who suffer mental and physical challenges (PWDs).

Along with this it is decided to start Special NHGs for Transgender and elderly and the activities regarding that had already been started. Special NHGs come under CDS control and it should work according to CDS rules. Despite of this government had already decided to give some concessions for Special NHGs. Now provision of entitlements and socio-economic empowerment of special NHGs is a critical component of Kudumbashree interventions.

Special NHGs for Transgender

According to Indian Constitution Article 14, all citizens should ensure equal rights, safety and justice. Government should ensure their fundamental rights without discrimination; and that they should receive special benefits in education as well as in employment. Through the formation of special NHGs for Transgender, Kudumbashree help them for their access to all rights, social security measures, benefits, and entitlements thus they can live like any other citizen in the country.

Those who completed 18 years of age will get membership in special NHG for Transgender. According to rules, NHG should consist of 10-20 members. In a CDS, the number of transgender may be very less and they might have spread across the region. So the DMC have the right to give permission to form NHG with less than ten numbers of people. According to their convenience members can select any region to organize NHG. CDS have complete control over the process. Special NHGs limited to one ward under local self government or one or more related wards as of now there are 17 transgender NHGs in our state which include 239 members. The district wise status of special Transgender NHGs is given below.

Districts	Number of Transgender NHGs	Number of TG Members
Thiruvananthapuram	3	52
Kollam	2	22
Pathanamthitta	1	13
Alappuzha	0	0
Kottayam	1	15

Idukki	0	0
Ernakulam	2	40
Thrissur	1	10
Palakkad	0	0
Malappuram	2	21
Kozhikode	2	32
Wayanad	1	4
Kannur	1	15
Kasaragod	1	15
Total	17	239

Persons with disabilities (PWD)NHGs

A disability is a condition or function judged to be significantly impaired relative to the usual standard of an individual of their group. The term is often used to refer to individual functioning, including physical impairment, sensory impairment, cognitive impairment, intellectual impairment, mental illness, and various types of chronic disease. This usage has been described by some disabled people as being associated with a medical model of disability. Persons with disabilities, “the world’s largest minority”, have generally poorer health, lower education achievements, fewer economic opportunities and higher rates of poverty than people without disabilities.

Kudumbashree aims at bringing all PWD members and their families to Kudumbashree and to ensure their safety, health security, livelihood, rehabilitation and so on. Those who completed 18 years of age can take membership in this. Though membership is limited to only one female from a family, mother or a relative of the disabled person can take part in major

discussions and other activities conducted by that NHG. In case if the disabled person doesn't have parents, a close relative can take membership in that particular NHG on behalf of her.

Special NHG can still be formed with less than ten members. CDS has the complete responsibility to form Special NHG. Special NHGs limited to one ward under local self government or one or more related wards

Till now there are 1328 special NHGs with 16,147 members in Kudumbashree. The district wise status of special PWD NHGs is given below.

Sl No	District	Population	PWDs	% of PWDs	No of PWD NHGs in Kudumbashree	PWD members in NHGs
1	Thiruvananthapuram	3,292,001	77,164	2%	35	427
2	Kollam	2,701,439	66,519	2%	90	990
3	Pathanamthitta	1,257,025	30,447	2%	63	856
4	Alappuzha	2,165,780	51,403	2%	366	4,818
5	Kottayam	1,954,534	45,781	2%	60	648
6	Idukki	1,086,745	26,226	2%	74	775
7	Ernakulam	3,134,485	74,127	2%	77	661
8	Thrissur	3,204,882	67,133	2%	33	330
9	Palakkad	2,872,714	62,814	2%	14	135
10	Malappuram	4,489,025	96,447	2%	212	3,194
11	Kozhikkod	3,190,413	78,548	2%	54	601
12	Wayanad	839,539	23,122	3%	181	1,835
13	Kannur	2,711,166	58,535	2%	57	682
14	Kasragod	1,354,338	35,671	3%	12	195

	Total	34,254,086	793,937	2%	1,328	16,147
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Elderly NHGs

The global demographic trend, however, tells us that, with the passage of time, the countries have experienced ageing of population. The proportion of older persons in the population of a country has increased. Due to economic well-being, better health care system, good medicines, etc. there is substantial reduction in mortality in the society. Reduced mortality has led to reduction in fertility too. These factors together have resulted in increasing number of elderly persons in the population. This phenomenon, called population ageing, is a dynamic demographic trend all over the world.

Elderly or old age consists of ages nearing or surpassing the average life span of human beings. The boundary of old age cannot be defined exactly because it does not have the same meaning in all societies. Government of India adopted 'National Policy on Older Persons' in January 1999. The policy defines 'senior citizen' or 'elderly' as a person who is of age 60 years or above.

Elderly group plays a major role in social development by their productive participation and there by the challenges face by them has direct reflection over society. Thus it's our responsibility to ensure their rights, security, freedom and prestige. Kudumbashree aims to make sure whether government plans reach elderly citizen to empower them socially, financially and economically.

Elderly NHG should consist of 10 to 20 people. (NHG cannot be formed with less than 10 members). The specialty in Elderly NHG is that men who completed 60 years of age can also take membership. Concessions are given to

elderly NHGs from normal NHG. Savings and internal lending are not mandatory if needed they can start these activities. Till now 31,359 members are there in 2487 elderly NHGs. The district wise status of special Elderly NHGs is given below.

Districts	Number of Elderly NHGs	Number of Elderly Members
Thiruvananthapuram	4	750
Kollam	77	6924
Pathanamthitta	62	2230
Alappuzha	52	2449
Kottayam	60	1621
Idukki	1	1388
Ernakulam	39	4068
Thrissur	94	3040
Palakkad	10	1100

Malappuram	2	8	1623
Kozhikode	33	1	1371
Wayanad	7	3	424
Kannur	66	2	3976
Kasaragod	0	3	395
Total	487	2	31359

Special NHGs need to convert to community based organization. All the support activities are happening in the background. Special NHGs need to register with CDS in order to avail the benefits from Kudumbashree. As of now registered Special NHGs are eligible to get Corpus Fund Rs. 10,000 for Transgender NHGs, Rs. 5,250 for elderly NHGs and Rs. 10,000 for PWD NHGs from Kudumbashree Mission. NHGs should submit the filled application with the recommendation of CDS in District Mission in order to avail the Corpus Fund benefit.

Discussions are going on to strengthen activities in special NHGs. State Mission had already started to update changes in bylaw and to come up with new guide lines. Hope the efforts of Kudumbashree Mission will help the members in special NHGs to avail all the benefits and could work like any other citizen.

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