Kudumbashree

Gender Self Learning Programme

Status Report
2007-2015

State Poverty Eradication Mission
Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala
Introduction

Kudumbashree emerged in 1998 as a product of the then development scenario enlarged by constitutional amendments of 1993 that led to revitalization of local self government institutions and peoples plan campaign. Mandate for poverty alleviation, expansion of civic services and local economic development became the prime interventional areas. Self Help Group Model was adopted in Kerala during this time with the support of NABARD. The major features like thrift and credit activities, gradation process, bank linkages, availing of centrally sponsored schemes, availing of back end subsidy and training were implemented. The groups were formed on the basis of the physical proximity of the people in the neighborhood.

Participation of women collectives became imperative in setting targets, strategic plans, implementation procedures and evaluation. This brought them into decentralized planning. The interventions were instrumental for Grama Sabhas to rejuvenate and helped in routing women component plan and other local plan funds for meaningful utilization.

Background

On the backdrop of the set target of eradicating poverty in 10 years, Kudumbashree’s efforts in allocating multi pronged strategies through concerted community action for comprehensive alteration of socio-economic and political picture is laudable. Nevertheless, the present team when inducted in 2006, NHGs/CDS did not have proper accounting system. It was identified that the community structure did not possess transparency. CDS and Panchayat stood in different poles without reciprocity. Limited knowledge of the byelaw, absence of a uniform byelaw created chaotic situations in the grass roots.

As the preamble of any self help group movement suggests establishing entrepreneurial opportunities for the poor, here the funds could support only about 100 micro enterprises, many of which engaged in dairying and poultry. The community as well as the implementing agencies had a vague picture of the micro enterprises. So the prime agenda of the team was to view poverty eradication as an empowerment process. At this juncture, the objective of the organization was deconstructed to bring in ownership and administering rightful community action.

It was noticed that mere dependence on thrift and credit would increase consumerism that hinders the sustenance of the movement. In order to leverage the spirit of the movement, income generation activities were found inevitable according to the skills and demand of the community. The phase also recognized social development as an imperative mode of delivery channel through which empowerment is possible. With the intervention strategies for marginalized and children through Ashraya, Buds, Balasabha, Holistic health, ST special projects, Kudumbashree has enabled to redefine the role of citizen in development process. The team’s initiatives to integrate local bodies in the economic and social development are also noteworthy. The sustenance of good governance depends on the maximum utilization of resources. Now built on the strong foundation of micro finance activities, Kudumbashree’s each step towards poverty eradication straps on improving the situation of women and guarantees fundamental rights and equality.

Creation of employment opportunities through micro enterprises, land holdings on leases through extensive agricultural activities, opportunities in production and service sectors have deconstructed the traditional roles of women.
The massive women collective with 2,61,475 Neighborhood groups representing 41 lakh families reap multiple benefits of the programme. The economic empowerment initiatives of Kudumbashree have certainly created a range of potential local women entrepreneurs in the State. But sustainable economic independence and empowerment is hampered when related to the established patriarchal norms, male centered knowledge base and inaccessibility to the constitutional and legal provisions. The micro statistical reports with regard to female work participation, health and nutritional level of women, participation in decision making, participation in governance, role in planning to implementation and evaluation in development process seemingly position women as ‘beneficiaries’. In this juncture, Kudumbashree realized a space for women to identify rightful combination of collective, monetary and intellectual support so as to assure the quality of the poverty eradication programme. This paved way to redesign the strategies and set a new methodology that directly intervene in women’s issues.

**Gender Self Learning Programme**

In 2007, in reference to the flagship programme of the Government of Kerala, Kudumbashree put forward an innovative concept called Gender Self Learning Programme. The primary objectives of the learning process are to

- Convey the messages of women’s status, rights, equality and justice
- Enhance the platform for participation in local development
- Initiate women to have access and control over assets
- Equip women against domestic violence and to strengthen the network beyond collectivization.

Gender Self Learning Programme could be regarded as the first social educational process that would have direct implications on rights and entitlements of women in grass roots. Unlike conventional women empowerment programmes that adhere to awareness classes, gender self learning programme aims at facilitating neighbourhood groups on discussions that reflect on discrimination, violence and inequality. Each woman represented in the network is regarded as a participant, information provider and knowledge creator. Though the learning process does not suggest any immediate response to the predicaments of women, it throws sparks for a detailed analysis of the scenario with the help of real life experiences.

**Methodology**

A new and novel methodology is devised where learning modules are prepared through mass participation. Rich life experiences of women are assimilated through block level and district level workshops based on themes like employment, health, education, power, environment, sexuality and so on. It is then developed into readable formats. The readable formats include conversations, articles, poetry and sometimes adopt creative performances. The readable formats are called modules and these modules are finalized by the State Mission. Special efforts are taken to avoid controversies pertaining to religion, caste and politics.
An attempt,
An Initiative

............with a new approach!
Pilot Programme

Gender Self Learning Programme can be considered as a different programme that caters to the women empowerment processes. It does not demand women to be on the receiving end, while it insists women to participate and form collectives for knowledge creation, sharing and management. So it was necessary to start with a pilot programme.

Pilot locales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Blocks / Municipality</th>
<th>Number of panchayats / wards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kasaragod</td>
<td>Kanjjangad</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thrissur</td>
<td>Kodakara</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ernakulam</td>
<td>Aluva (municipality)</td>
<td>26 (wards)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alapuzha</td>
<td>Kanjikuzhy</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trivandrum</td>
<td>Nedumangad</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Resource pool preparation

Since Gender Self Learning Programme is designed in a participatory method, a resource pool from the blocks and municipality was developed. The resource pool consisted of CDS chairpersons, local community leaders, social workers. A total of 50 resource persons were formed in the pools across the pilot locales. Meetings were arranged for introducing the programme. A resource pool coordinator coordinated the pilot programme in each locale.

Block level experience sharing workshops were conducted and attempt was made to develop a module on women and employment. A module of 7 chapters were developed, printed and distributed in the locales. Trainings on dissemination of information, discussion leads were imparted to the resource pool.

The Module based trainings confined to the order in which the learning process would be administered in the NHGs. Emphasis was also given to the information gathering by way of questionnaires and discussions. Special efforts were taken to have communication training as we feared spillage of information as it went down the rung.

Impact of the learning process

The responses of the pilot phase were manifold. The block locales showed mixed trends while the municipal locale emerged with a positive attitude towards the learning process. Though the module based discussions did not make glaring impacts on the unequal wage system or inadequate basic facilities at worksites, it did promote and ignite the dormant propositions women held for all these while. For instance “Kudumbashree should have started the learning process during the inception itself”. “Why are men not included in the learning process? They should be taught first”. “My husband lets me go for NHG meetings. But I am too scared what he will do if he knows about this learning process”. In the suburban locale of Aluva, women powered the programme with one step ahead. Small task groups were formed and they supported women in distress and went for mediation on the outbreak of domestic violence. Anti-liquor initiatives at the local level and isolated interventions against abuses were also
reported. The gender team felt that the module perhaps encouraged women to spot the
differences and discrimination they face in the day to day life rather than debating on
the specifics. Apart from the change in collective consciousness, new leaderships also
emerged as the result of the learning process. Women came forward and endorsed
themselves as ambassadors of the learning process. The opportunities as resource
persons let the windows open for public speaking too.

**State wide implementation**

Realising the space and depth of the programme in today’s context, Gender Self
learning Programme was scaled up in all the districts. A series of steps were taken in
parallel lines for effective implementation. Gender consultants were positioned in all
the 14 districts. Induction programme was conducted for all the team members.

**Positioning of Gender Resource Person Coordinators**

The district level implementation is responsibility of Gender consultants under the
leadership of District Mission Coordinators. Their role is to coordinate the multi layer
resource pool of the concerned district, implement the learning process and prepare
reports of the same. They are also bound to formulate innovations in participation of
the resource pools.

**Network preparation**

A more structured version of the network preparation was formulated. A drive was
inevitable for mobilization of resource persons who could deliver gender-sensitive
strategies to make women visible in different dimensions of social life.

A set of three criteria is used to identify resource persons.

- **Women who are gender sensitive;**
- **Women who have time and patience to guide the learning process at the
glass roots; and**
- **Women with experience in social work, who support the spirit and
philosophy of GSLP and Kudumbashree at large.**

A snow ball process is evolved by including more young and dynamic activists. The
resource pool now comprises different layers—state, District panchayat, ward level
Resource persons and Supporting team members and neighborhood facilitators. At
the strengthening stage, induction training is imparted with the help of a hand book
that show cased the programme, objectives, processes, roles and responsibilities of
resource persons at various levels.

During the initial stage of the scale up, a similar training process was conducted at
multi levels focusing on the logic and importance of the programme. The main tool
for the induction training for resource pool was the hand book. The induction training
saw many emerging and quality trainers at grass root level who took the task of
convening the process in the subsequent lower rungs of the community. Now,
Kudumbashree has 4,33,313 resource persons exclusively for the GSLP.
**Team for GSLP**

Kudumbashree System for Gender

**State Mission**
- Executive Director
- Director
- Programme Manager (1)
- Consultants (2) (Gender) - Technical Consultant (Sreesakthi Portal) (1)

**District Mission**
- District Mission Coordinator
- Assistant District Mission Coordinator
- Gender Consultant

Gender Resource Persons at Different levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender Resource Persons (=No. of CDS)</th>
<th>Core Team (≥10 to 15)</th>
<th>District Resource persons(≥2*No of CDS)</th>
<th>Supporting Team District (= 4* No. of CDS)</th>
<th>Supporting Team CDS (= 4* No of ADS)</th>
<th>Supporting Team ADS (= 2or 3* No of NHG)</th>
<th>Master Trainers (Web Portal)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>State Level</strong></td>
<td>State Resource Team</td>
<td>State Supporting Team (External Members)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**District, CDS and ADS Level**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender Resource Person Coordinator</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core Team (≥10 to 15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Resource persons(≥2*No of CDS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Team District (= 4* No. of CDS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supporting Team CDS (= 4* No of ADS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Team ADS (= 2or 3* No of NHG)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master Trainers (Web Portal)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CDS Level**
- DRP in charge of the CDS
- Gender Corner in charge- 2 Resource persons excluding CDS RP and Supporting team

**Formation of Gender Resource Team (District- CDS- ADS Levels)**
Gender Resource person teams were constituted at different levels is formed and expanded the network including new Gender Resource Persons. They were given Gender Sensitization training and orientation about GSLP activities. Each of them should possess women perspective while working and they should be aware about the women’s issues. They are the ones who Coordinate the programme during the trainings, monitor all the self learning activities.

**Figures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SI No</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>No of R.P</th>
<th>No of Support Team</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Thiruvananthapuram</td>
<td>6670</td>
<td>4000</td>
<td>10670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Kollam</td>
<td>6,270</td>
<td>69037</td>
<td>75,307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Alappuzha</td>
<td>8922</td>
<td>5532</td>
<td>14454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Pathanamthitta</td>
<td>5461</td>
<td>21051</td>
<td>26512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Kottayam</td>
<td>6375</td>
<td>36064</td>
<td>42439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Idukki</td>
<td>4170</td>
<td>3267</td>
<td>7437</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Formation of Core team (June 2010)

Each district is advised to form a core team that would assist the Gender Resource person coordinator in her day to day activities. Their major duties include spreading the messages of the learning process to every nook and corner of the district throughout the district and subsequent levels of resource pools. District wise innovative programmes are also framed according to their opinions and suggestions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the District</th>
<th>Number of members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thiruvananthapuram</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kollam</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathanamthitta</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kottayam</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alappuzha</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ernakulam</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idukki</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thrissur</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palakkad</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malappuram</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kozhikode</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kannur</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wayanad</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kasaragode</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Formation of Documentation team

Documentation team was formed in districts including the selected resource persons. They have given training on Documentation, which helped resource persons to contribute effectively for the learning module development. Documentation trainings should be conducted frequently participating newly selected gender resource persons.

Formation of Kala Team

Kala teams were formed in districts, Kannur, Ernakulam and Alappuzha which made efforts for gender sensitization to NHG members.
Formation of Community Theatre Team
A team of 26 members was formed to perform a theme based play throughout Kerala. The team containing Gender Resource persons were trained by Nireeksha women theatre, the only women theatre group in Kerala. The script was developed by them. The team was split into two performing play “Bheri” in selected centers throughout Kerala. They performed in 120 stages in 22 days. The programme was organized as a part of 14th Kudumbashree Anniversary celebrations on behalf of a programme named Pusthakayathra.
District level theatre team was formed every district for disseminating a message on usage of non conversional energy resources as a part of Kudumbashree’s new project “Oorjashree”. There was team performance in every CDS.

Strengthening of Gender Resource Team (District- CDS- ADS Levels)
Gender Resource person’s teams were constituted at different levels and expanded the network including new Gender Resource Persons. They were given Gender Sensitization training and orientation about GSLP activities. Each of them should possess women perspective while working and they should be aware about the women’s issues. They are the ones who take classes during the trainings, monitor all the self learning activities.
District level resource person’s pools were created in the entire 14 district and there is a core team who coordinate Gender programmes at the district which consist of 10 – 15 members. They are the back born of GSLP to co-ordinate all the programmes under women empowerment with the support of GRPCs. Also there are resource persons at the CDS and ADS level.

Formation of Support Team (District- CDS- ADS Levels)
District level Support team were formed in the entire state, which consist of 4 representatives from a CDS and CDS level support team consist of 4 representatives from ADS. These groups give all the support for the programme implementation to the resource persons. Idea of supporting team formation came in connection with the planning of third module dissemination. There should be a support system to mentor the NHG level activities and to support the entire module process. Thus different level of support team were formed and given training to them. So there is a representative from each NHG to involve in the gender programmes. In future they will capacitate to be a person who is engaging in gender programmes and in issues of women and children.

CDS and ADS level Support Team Development
Self Learning Modules
Modules for Self Learning

Modules and handouts were prepared by the Gender team to help the Kudumbashree members learn by self. The different topics included in the modules were discussed in the NHG meetings. This helps them think and learn their living situations, possibilities to grow, solve problems and opportunities.

Rationale of a topic based module

The modules are developed on the basis of topics that have implications on discrimination and violence. Society is not complete without addressing the problems of women. The topics identified for the learning process include - women and employment, women and health, women and environment, women and power structure, women and sexuality, women and education, women and media, women technology and so on. If we take any of these above stated topic, it is evident that it would have implications on discrimination and inequality.

A module has 3 parts-
- Content based on the broad theme
- Quantitative questionnaire based on the content
- Points that helps to conduct discussions in the NHGs.

The module content is disseminated through NHGs and information is collected from NHGs, consolidated at points like ADS and CDS for the preparation of status reports. This method enables women to get a better understanding of the ground realities. The realistic figures that arrive through the process is an aid for learning the self. For example: If a question like this is posed to NHG regarding to the long journeys they make for employment – “How many NHG members have decided not to take up employment because of long journeys?” The quantitative information we get out of it would be of use in such a way that it facilitates both visible and invisible implications.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visible implication</th>
<th>Invisible implication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The member to raise her problem.</td>
<td>• Questioning cultural settings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Since the content of the module is based on a real life experience, acquired from</td>
<td>• Established norms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the grass roots, the members also understand that women in general face these</td>
<td>• Dominance of patriarchy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kinds of predicaments.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The figure prompts the members to discuss the issue in detail and reaches out for</td>
<td>• Dignity of labor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the underlying factors for this problem.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The members might consult other NHGs and discuss these issues</td>
<td>• Importance of an employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The consultations may capacitate the members to take action and look for solutions.</td>
<td>• Relationship between meager wage and the effort for sustaining employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Role as a decision maker</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Learning Process

Gender Self Learning Programme focuses on fundamental latent factors that have been purposefully covered and defied to discuss in a collective platform. The NHG level discussion refers to a gender analysis format carried out by the participants itself. The weekly meetings of the NHGs are utilized for the learning process too. The facilitator of the NHG reads explains and initiates women to discuss on the issue which is presented in the module. ADS and CDS meetings consolidate the status and findings of the NHGs for status report preparations.

Experiences are consolidated into readable formats consisting of a general introduction, contents pertaining to unequal wage, inadequate basic facilities, exploitation, upgradation of skills and dual burden. The contents have questionnaires and a few discussion points attached to it. Suitable illustrations are also added in each chapter.

The chapters are set by the resource persons from the grass roots; modified and approved at the State level. Gender Self Learning Programme represents the new age educational system where a participatory pedagogy is developed. Participation in such an educational process gives women an edge to convert their practical wisdom into knowledge creation. The system also urges to bring about a new line of creative writers from the grass roots.

The printed modules are distributed in the network. Module based trainings are conducted in the blocks and the resource persons are instructed to carry out module reading and discussions at the NHG level. Guidance related to the time specifics and usage of module is given in prior.

General guidelines to be observed

- In NHG level, suitable time will be identified to incorporate learning process during their weekly meetings.
- A chapter will be read by the facilitator. She would explain the chapter and initiate discussions.
- Questionnaires would be filled in by the facilitator in accordance to the response of the NHG (not the individual).
- The questionnaire would be then torn through the perforation of the page and then handed over to the ADS level committee for consolidation.
- ADS would consolidate the ward level information of each question, discuss the points and present it to the CDS level committee.
- CDS would come out with the consolidation of the Panchayat and prepare it for the development of status report.
Module- I
Theme- Woman and Employment
Centralised Module Development

Parallel to the induction training, it was decided to start working on a module that could be disseminated across the state. A centralized core team was against the earlier decision of having decentralized module development teams at districts. The renewed decision was made so as to give a logical picture for the next phase of module development that would be of a decentralized one. So an in depth module on ‘Women and Employment’ was suggested. The selection was approved in the view of many points.

- Women have now been placed in numerous employment sectors.
- Majority of them work in unorganized sector.
- Accessibility to legal and constitutional rights is a concern and topics to be addressed.
- Documentation of experiences and success stories of women in employment is the need of the hour.

MNREGS in GSLP

When we say that women are placed in numerous employment sectors, most of them or rather 90% of the women in grass roots is engaged in one or other work under MNREGS. Perhaps MNREGS could be accounted as an ideal employment entry point for women in the state. The gender specific components like availability of crèche, equal wage for equal work done in general and accessibility to individual bank account and service of ‘mate’ in Kerala context has acclaimed wide propaganda for the scheme in the state.

This opportunity was tapped for the module development process as MNREGS is the exclusive employment sector that women can relate with. A 10 member group was formed for module development.
Process of Module Development

The creation of a matrix which described the number of chapters, topics, information in each content, links, discussion points and data collection points was the first task of the team prior to the module development workshop. A total of 13 topics were identified in the matrix created for the start up of the process. They were-

- Right to work
- Equal wages for equal work
- Provision for owning bank A/C
- Basic facilities at work sites
- Medical facility and security
- Wage disbursement
- Unemployment wage
- Fading intermediaries
- Supervision-mate service
- Conservation of environment
- Technical support-bare foot engineers
- Social audit
- Participation apart from physical labour

Based on the available topics, the team converted 21 experiences into readable formats. The draft was taken for expert consultation. The first level consultation led us to include concerns, problems and ignorance faced by women. A holistic yet analytic approach was adopted. The following points gave more scope for incorporating different dimensions of discrimination, exploitation and violence against women. The major inputs included-

- The module should be informative as well as transformative.
- Women’s work rights should be termed as a basic human rights issue.
- Need to work on Kudumbashree’s opportunity- converting the network into a movement building.
- Need to stress on women and public work. Most of the times women are invisible in civil work. She is deprived of a legitimate wage in accordance with the physical labour she does that ultimately leads to different kinds of exploitation.
- Stress on feminisation of poverty to feminisation of development and capacitate them to initiate the next logical step in the rung.
- Certain concepts to be defined. Gender needs- practical and strategic needs. It could be illustrated with examples.
- NREGA has been formulated by including the provisions of Payment of Wages Act, Right to Information Act, Minimum Wages Act, Equal Remuneration Act and bits from International Labour Laws.
- No intermediaries at all.
- Inclusion of community contracting- civil work participation.
- Mate service- ADS as a representative of community structure.
- Women and organising work- participatory and transparency.
- Shelf of projects-popular estimate-initiation clinic-photos-citizen information board-jagratha samithi-site diary- could be scrutinized by any one.
- Food, water and life security.
Now on the whole it is decided to divide the module into 4 heads, alter and integrate the chapters according to the title.

- Women, Employment and NREGS
- Employment and Organisational skills
- Development and Transparency
- Sustainable development.
- Planning-Employment for whom, when, where
- Preparation of labour budget
- Entitlements, Accountability, Penal provision and Solution to be collated from the Act and to be made in detail.

The matrix was modified and fixed according to the consultations.

**Chapter-1**

**Topic**-Right to work

**Content**-Recognition of women as an employee; Gender issue as a basic human rights issue

**Issues to be discussed**
Do you feel responsible to understand, identify and take initiatives to bridge the gap with regard to acquiring rights?
Do you think that mere presence in employment would enhance the overall development of women?
Do you feel that gender issue is a human rights issue?

**Chapter-2**

**Topic**-Equal wages

**Content**-Shift from traditional sector; Parity in wages in organised sector; Aiming for wage parity in other unorganised sectors; Heavy physical labour and unequal legitimate wages lead to exploitation

**Issues to be discussed**
Elicit wages prescribed in different local sectors of employment and discuss the reasons for disparity.
Does education make a difference in obtaining equal wages?

**Chapter-3**

**Topic**-Transition from passive onlooker to active participant

**Content**-Feminisation of poverty; presence in development; Participation in development process; NREGS as an opportunity

**Issues to be discussed**
Would you take Sini as a role model?
What would you suggest for a change to actively participate in development process?
Have you utilized your platform to the maximum? If no then Why?

**Chapter-4**

**Topic**-Women and NREGS

**Content**-Women components of NREGS; Comparison with other employment sectors

**Issues to be discussed**
Is it possible for the NHG to take up an activity or programme of the ward and analyse whether it is gender inclusive

**Chapter-5**

**Topic**-Gender needs (Practical needs)
Content—Concept; Examples from basic and medical facilities provided in NREGS

Issues to be discussed
Have you tried to take any steps to understand practical needs?
Observe the basic facilities provided in your Panchayat and analyse whether it is gender inclusive?
What steps would you take to press the authorities for attaining the practical gender needs?

Chapter-6
Topic—Gender needs (Strategic needs)
Content—Concept; Examples from NREGA that helps to understand the ways for adopting more space in public domain.

Issues to be discussed
Have you tried to take any steps to understand strategic needs?
What kind of strategic needs have you obtained for sustainable employment opportunity?

Chapter-7
Topic—Exploitation
Content—Exploitation in work sites; same aspect in NREGS

Issues to be discussed
What kind of reforms would you suggest for curbing different kinds of exploitation?

Expert consultations, 4-5 rounds of reading within the team and field test brought the experiences into a module on women and employment. The field test was imminent in understanding the knowledge of the groups in which the module would be administered. It gave us prospects to work towards preparing the training needs for implementing the learning process in the field.

An Example of a Chapter (module for discussion in the NHG)

Let us also be part of society

The women of Chemmeenthura are now happy. Do you know why? It was their long-cherished dream to have a vehicle of their own for the trips they make up and down at night to sell fish. This has materialised. A brand new vehicle for this purpose has been bought by the panchayat.

It was Leelamma’s privilege to sit on the front seat beside the driver. She sat there with a triumphant smile, like a warrior coming home after a successful battle.

“Yes ... it is after a prolonged battle that we got our vehicle,” Leelamma retorted with pride to a remark made by Mahesan, a panchayat member. “We are ready for more battles!” all the women shouted enthusiastically.

Then came Roshini, with Omana. They were surprised to see the vehicle. “Very good!” exclaimed Roshini. “Such an immediate response. Actually the standing committee chairman had asked us to wait for a few more days. Anyhow, we have got it at the right time before the rains. Now one of us should learn driving. That would make the picture whole.”
Poor Omana could not clearly understand what all the excitement was about. Why? Why were all the women now in a new bus? They had usually resorted to auto rickshaws or state transport buses to vend fish.

Roshini began explaining things to her; what had made them demand a vehicle exclusively for their use. The hardship they had had to face during the journey to and fro everyday; the robbery Reethamma had suffered on her way back home at night; and the bitter experience Jameela and Rani had had while they were held up in the city due to an unexpected traffic jam. Santha had been attacked by her drunken husband for being late. She was totally exhausted after a hectic day of selling fish and shopping and her husband initially did not even open the door. “Don’t you think these are sufficient reasons for clamouring for a vehicle for our own use?”

The pains they had taken were immense. A mass petition was prepared and they had to run from door to door in several offices. “And now we realise, the more united we stand, the easier it is for us to achieve our goals.”

Omana felt sorry. She never known about the struggles and troubles her friends had to face. She was busy with her National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) work, which offered her equal wages, a bank account and unemployment benefits.

But this is not the only way of learning. Women can work together in many other fields. There are a number of schemes by which they can make a living. We should be aware of all the opportunities that help women to alleviate poverty and improve their standard of living and this can be done through organised efforts and bargaining.

You know something? By improving the position of women in society, they become more responsible and actively involved in its day-to-day activities.

**Data Collection**

Name of the NHG: Ward; Panchayat; District:
Total number of NHG members:
Total number of participants in the discussion:

1. How many NHG members have decided not to take up employment because of long journeys?

2. What are the supporting factors that a woman needs for taking up a new job?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Husband’s support</th>
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<td>Family’s support</td>
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<td>People with an identical mindset</td>
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<td>Enabling environment</td>
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<td>Other factors</td>
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Discussion point: What are the anticipated changes one foresees due to elevating the social status of women?
The field test formed a critical analysis of the draft module. It appeared that the module alone could not cater to the women from different backgrounds. Propaganda tools and other facilitation tools were imperative and creation of such tools became add on responsibility.

Suitable illustrations were added to each chapter and proof reading was done in the State Mission. Subsequently an additonal proof reading was recommended in the districts so as to include the local dialect of the district. The printing was done in the districts and the module was distributed through the resource channels of the respective districts.

A separate hand book on the different employment acts, rights and laws were also prepared for the facilitators to supplement in the NHGs.

The problems and concerns of women in urban locales are different. They have more employment opportunities that lead to more discrimination, exploitation and violence. So a separate module was developed as per the process adopted for the rural module to cater the urban NHGs.

Propaganda tools

Propaganda tools like announcements for special NHGs revealed the seriousness of the learning process. Rallies were taken out to convey the messages of the learning process. Since the patriarchal sparks could be identified with the proverbs and local usages itself, the slogans were rewritten with gender specific phrases.

Kalajatha teams at Ernakulam, Kannur, gave fervor to the learning process. The Panchayat visits of the kala teams became vital in conveying the messages of learning process. The resource teams involved in creative writings and in some instances as in Thrissur, the chapters of the module was converted into skit and it was performed before the community. Propaganda tools are developed by the district resource pools according to their specifics in a participatory manner.

Guidelines for implementation

- Each NHG will have a facilitator who would lead the learning process. The selection can be on a rotation basis as it the learning process should not be blocked because of the absence of the facilitator.
- The facilitator would explain the content and data collection format. The facilitator would be responsible to make entries in the data collection format. The entries would be the suggestions and opinions of the respective NHG and not of an individual.
- NHGs should place GSLP as one of its major agendas, and allocate at least 1 hour for the learning process.
- The Panchayat level resource pool would look after the activities under the learning process.
Consolidation of the data entries from the NHGs would be done and made available for status report preparation. Gender Resource Person would take initiative in delivering the consolidations at ADS and CDS levels.

Module- II
Theme- Woman and Health
Decentralised module development

For a learning process to be effective; it should be continuous, interesting and innovative. Different from the process we adopted in the first phase, it was decided to have modules, which would be developed by the resource pool from the grass roots. In effect the learning process would have 14 different context specific modules based on a common topic. We selected Employment and Health as the broad topic for decentralized module development. Continuous guidance and directions were given from time to time for the participants involved in the module development.

In August 2010, simultaneous to module based training and NHG reading and discussions, a lecture series was organized in all the 14 districts giving an outline on the present situation of different health issues pertaining to various employment sectors. The lecture series was led by doctors, officials from health sector etc. An overview of the health institutions, different diseases caused in different employment sectors and statistics supplementing the facts were delivered.

Subsequently, a detailed plan was made in the core team meeting to identify the prominent employment sectors. Based on the enlisted sectors, the district resource pool was divided into teams. The teams went out and collected data on health issues through surveys, focus group discussions, key informant interviews etc.

The information was put into a matrix (like the one which was framed for the first module). Important employment sectors and health issues emerged from it were
entered in the matrix. This gave the resource persons an idea to chapterise the topic according to the severity of the problem. The task was completed in earlier November 2010.

Creative writers from the network were chosen to write the chapters. The guidelines for the framework of the module was given-

- The length of the content
- Number of quantitative questions
- Number of qualitative questions

The opportunity to write a district module on Gender Self Learning bypassed all the guidelines, giving the Gender RPCs and Consultants to go on an editing spree.

**Module editing workshop**

The uploaded modules were edited in a participatory manner. This exercise was conducted in January, 2011. The 2day workshop was attended by all the Gender consultants from the districts. About 95 chapters went for first level editing. The first level editing included rejecting the chapters also. For a smooth conduction of the workshop, the chapters were brought under broad categories like service sector, production sector, tribal sector, reproductive rights, issues of adolescents, issues of aged and general health issues of women. The editing work was guided by certain prescribed rules-

- Gender Sensitiveness of the content
- Connection between content and data formats
- Language
- Avoidance of sensational items.

**Observations from the first level editing**

- Modules were infested with the writers’ emotions.
- In some modules, facts were missing.
- Importance to socio economic background of the character depicted in the chapters.
- Health issues just in a paragraph or so.
- More than the employment related health issues, the experiences addressed inability to cope with sectors because of lack of skills.
- Glorification of mother hood was extensively seen in almost all the modules.
- Misinterpretation of facts.
- Unaffordable remedies and solutions.
- Animosity towards the employers.
- Overload of information.

The above said problems were addressed in detail. Chapters were returned to redraft according to the guidelines. It was also advised to hire chapters from other districts. Instructions were made to upload the existing drafts and then the altered drafts in the Sreesakthi portal as versions. February and March 2011 was utilized for state level modification of the module at the state level. A special review of the Gender consultants was called for the final modification of the modules. It was directed to make a pre final draft of the module before the state meeting of the core team.

**Module finalization workshop**
The workshop was conducted in April 2011. This was attended by the core team members of the districts. A total of 117 core team members attended the training programme. As said earlier in the report, the decentralized module development is a mandatory step in the learning process. The decentralized methodology motivates women to take ownership in the learning process and gives an edge to work forward in developing similar materials in the future. The workshop emphasized in group work. The group work comprised of many steps-

- Brainstorming for remembrance- Being core team members who were part of the module development process, what did each one of them expected from this exercise as an outcome?
- Reading the module of the own district in the respective district group.
- In parallel to the above step, Gender RPCs noted down gists of the chapter’s prepared in the districts and displayed it in the hall.
- Each group walked around the hall and tried to comprehend the modules of other districts.
- The groups then rejects or replaces their chapters with those of the other districts.
- Discussion on aptly replacing the chapters according to the context of their respective districts.
- Reporting of the 14 districts based on the group work.

Observations from the group work
- Each participant in the meeting had a claim over the modules created.
- Creativity was highlighted.
- Though it was not manifested, the participants did not want to share the chapters or module.
- A product of the collective effort.
- Few districts claimed that they will not change the module so as to retain the entity.
- Since they knew the field better, we could give only suggestions which really took the module development process to a next level.

Later the theme of the module was changed from “Women and Employment” to “Women and Health” The module has chapters based on the following health issues.

- Health & Domestic labour
- Mental Health
- Health problems of aged
- Health care during pregnancy
- Health issues related to rearing domestic animals
- Health issues faced by women workers- Coir/ fish peeling/ agriculture estate/ cashew workers
- Adolescence
- General information related to health (Insurance schemes/ legal provisions etc)

The module was disseminated to all the NHGs. At present, module reading and discussions are going on. Consolidation of questionnaire is about to start. Facts
derived as a result of NHG level discussions are posted to Sreesakthi portal in its discussion thread. Consolidation of the questionnaire will be done through the web portal.

Along with the dissemination of Module, **Health resource mapping** is done in CDSs to understand the present status of health care system and health care providers. The report of the same is submitted to LSGI so that they can take necessary actions to improve the health care facilities.

**Health Resource Mapping**

**Aim**
- As a tool for module based training
- Understand gaps between resources and demands
- Knowledge sharing and creation among the participants

**Parameters**
- Infrastructural capabilities- health facilities
- Availability of such facilities
- Access and control to facilities

**Infrastructure**
- PHCs
- Sub centres
- Clinics and dispensaries

**Forums and committees**
- Health and sanitation committees
- Local forums
- Voluntary organizations

**Individuals**
- Doctors
- Health volunteers
- Para medics

**Local bodies/Kudumbashree**
- Programmes and schemes
- Fund allocations
- Monitoring systems

**Employment sectors**
- Health Insurance schemes
- Medical assistance
- Reimbursements
- Working conditions

**Natural Resources**
- Herbal, indigenous system of medicines
- Environmental hazards
- Commonly found ailments
Methodology

1. Divide the participants into groups comprising of 5 to 10 numbers each.
2. Ensure ample numbers of chart papers and bright colored sketch pens.
3. Demographic details pertaining to women and children - proportion of women in the panchayats, proportion of children in the panchayats, literacy rates (women), political or any type of formal participation (number of women panchayat members), composition of SC/ST. This could be elicited from the basic data of panchayats' plan document. This enables them to understand the facilities according to the number of people; access and control to these facilities according to the education level of women; the same according to the level of formal participation in the development process.[The information to be made available by the facilitators]
4. Draw a matrix on the chart paper; indicating 4 titles- (1) Resources, (2) Description of the resources, (3) Viability of the resources, (4) Defects of the resources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Viability</th>
<th>Defects</th>
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5. List down maximum possible resources-institutions, collectives, individuals, agencies and so on.
6. Describe each one of it in a sentence or two.
7. List down the most important positives of the resources.
8. List down the most important defects of the resources.
9. Listing down of the above points should be associated with the availability, access and control to the resources.
10. The mapping should be followed by discussions on the viability factor (both positives and negatives).
11. The causal factors could be listed down on a separate piece of chart paper.

Now try to analyse the causal factors and gender sensitiveness of each point

Consolidation of first module

During the dissemination of the first module, due importance was not given to consolidation of the learning. This was due to many reasons.

- Right based educational process as first of its kind
- Women started using NHGs as platform for discussing explosive issues.
- The discussions directly led to collective action which gave more visibility.
- The structured data assimilation methodology at that point would affect the excitement of the women in grass roots.
- Absence of a technical assistance to assimilate data.
A deliberate attempt was made to provide support on framing questions, data mining, data analysis and status report writing. Examples from practical experiences from the field were brought in for greater understanding. This training was given to 117 members of the core team. As a follow up, it is now instructed to rope in data from the panchayats for status report writing. This training could be viewed as the first class of the proposed gender school.

One day workshop for Training Methodology Development
The module finalization workshop gave Gender team to initiate a workshop on training methodology. The methodology used in previous module based training was simple. But we felt that the participants were not keen in reading the chapters completely. Since it was the only activity used for module based training, dissemination of the facilitation tool was a bit dry.

Contrary to the first phase, the team decided to give a long rope to the resource persons who participated in the module development process to prepare a suitable methodology for module dissemination.

Guideline was given regarding the conduct of the workshop. It was instructed to start off the preparatory work by piloting the new module in the NHGs.

The preparatory framework is as follows:
- Piloting of the newly set module.
- Preparation of a critique on the basis of the piloting.
- Developing a draft training methodology as a reserve.
- Planning of one day workshop.
- Conduct of one day workshop.
- Fixing a training methodology on the basis of the gap analysis of the first phase.
- Additional training requirements needed for the trainers.
- Suitable trainers from the district to be made available for additional training.

Second Level Module “Women and Health” formulated and distributed to all 14 districts by uploading the final version in Sreesakthi Portal.

Module Dissemination

Printing of the second module is completed in 14 districts. The number of modules to be printed statewide is 2,33,800. All the districts that printed the module started the learning process. To ensure the effective dissemination of the information included in the module, service of Anganwadi workers and Asha workers is ensured. They were provided with GSLP orientation training and module training.

- District level module training conducted in 14 district
- These Districts started Panchayat Level Training and the NHGs under CDS who completed Panchayat Level training started their learning process based on theme, women and health
Process Documentation

Process documentation of Module development is done by Gender consultants in District and the same is consolidated in State level. It helps to get idea of different approach to develop learning module and the time required. The limitations can be identified well and can be avoided when we go for the next module.

Extra reading material

Extra reading material has been prepared for the support of second module *Women and Health*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Name of Topic</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Gramasabha</td>
<td>Utilising Gramasabha in a collective way. Include health component and women friendly environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Double Burden</td>
<td>Comparison of quantum of work, division of work</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tribal Equality</td>
<td>Hypothesis to fact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Schemes</td>
<td>Contribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Domestic Violence Act</td>
<td>Utilisation of the Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Mental Health</td>
<td>Group Counselling and Collectivism (NHG)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Contraceptives and Abortion</td>
<td>Decision Making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Adoption and over medication</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Menopause</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Lifestyle diseases</td>
<td>eg: Santhwanam, Self Medication..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Fertilisers</td>
<td>Alternatives</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Old Age</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Balanced Diet</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Environment</td>
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Module- III

Theme- Woman and Freedom for Mobility

Theme for third module is ‘Women and Mobility’. A thread on Women and Freedom for mobility is posted in Sreesakthi portal so that the CDS members can participate in discussions. More than 1000 posts have been received. A consolidation report is prepared from the opinions made by Kudumbashree members and some of the opinions/ worries are selected as points for discussion in the IIIrd module which will be action oriented. Through the Implementation of this module Kudumbashree focuses on the creation of “Safe NHG localities”, and avail all the services to the community to prevent the Gender Based violence and other exploitation. Last two modules were prepared as a hand book and distributed to NHGs for discussion but third module will prepare after the discussions and activities held at all the levels of Kudumbashree net work. Third module implementation is planning through activity oriented learning process and sensitization on different gender related issues. In the first phase of process it is concentrating on the understanding of Social constructions and impact on girl and boy child. Programme dissemination is divided into four phase, in each phase state & district mission will give capacity building and thematic training to the RPs. Implementation and monitoring of the programme will be through the resource person’s and the support team.

Programme dissemination is divided into four phase. In each phase one main topic selected and activities based on that will happened in the field level. likewise four topics were selected and the topics are-

A. Society and Mobility
B. Mobility and atrocities
C. Mobility and Opportunities
D. Mobility and Rights

Fourteen sub topics were selected for NHG level Discussion in the First phase of the Module implementation, Mobility and Society, and the topics are

1) Influence of education on Mobility
2) Influence of Religion on Mobility
3) Influence of Information on Mobility
4) Influence of Attitude on Mobility
5) Influence of Media and Communication on Mobility
6) Influence of Physical infrastructure on Mobility
7) Influence of Public Sphere on Mobility
8) Influence of Personality and Social Construction on Mobility
9) Influence of Self and Physique on Mobility
10) Influence of Social Structure on Mobility
11) Influence of Social Institution on Mobility
12) Influence of Power relation on Mobility
13) Influence of labour and work participation on mobility
14) Influence of Culture on Mobility

Through R. P training each district prepared a support material training module based on the topics allotted for their district. Consolidated copies of these 14 materials were given to R.P’s for their next level training and programme implementation. Based on the selected topics following trainings were conducted.

Training at various levels - District, CDS, ADS, NHG family meets, Capacity Building and Thematic Training for Resource persons and Support team members, NHG level piloting and Family meet ADS/CDS based activity group formation and activities related with the subject - society and mobility etc happened in the field level as part of First level implementation of Third module.
After the discussion and activity each CDS will prepare a module/ material based on the programmes in each phase.

Pusthakayatra

Pusthakayatra was a programme organized to collect the books published by Kudumbashree CDSs containing life experiences of Kudumbashree members during their course of Kudumbashree activities. These experiences can be regarded as a learning material for Kudumbashree members themselves, research material for those who want to study about Kudumbashree and a study material for Kudumbashree to revise the existing programmes. Moreover, these experiences are highly motivational to every woman to understand their status, limitations, opportunities and their wisdom. 8-10 CDSs join a centre with a procession carrying their book called Pusthakayatra. It was started from both northern (Hosankady, Kasargod on 9th September 2012) and southern (Udayankulangara, Thiruvananthapuram on 10th September 2012) ends of Kerala and joined at Ernakulam (October 1st, 2012). A total of 1048 Books of experiences were published at Ernakulam. For this programme, every NHG members were asked to write their own experiences and read it in their NHG meeting. There they decide which experience could be selected for self learning, and select some of the experiences from their group and hand over to ADS-CDS levels. At CDS level, Editorial Board is formed including only women members, who select different experience which can be regarded as the best in their CDS and prepare a book. At the welcome points of procession, a meeting was arranged and some of the best experiences were presented. The programme was organized as a part of 14th Anniversary celebrations in which the modules containing life experiences of Kudumbashree members had been collected from two ends of Kerala through a procession accompanied by a theatre programme named “Bheri”. Which tell the discrimination faced the women in different areas of their life and the need of prevent it. There had experience sharing by selected members and honoring them. 1048 books were published. A 26member Team was formed to accompany Pusthakayatra in State level. The team consisted of Gender RPs were given training to present the theatrical play, the unique feature of the activity was that the theme and script of the theatrical play was developed by the team itself. The team was divided into two and they performed in 120 stages in 22 Days. The theme of the programme included different kinds of issues faced by women and children in receiving the services of Government. This activity lead to the formation of Community theatre groups in Kudumbashree.

Status report Formation

Experiences included in CDS’s module are analyzed at CDS level and a status report is prepared showing the status of women in that CDS. This explains the status of women in the area mainly says the changes happened to the women due to their social and economical involvement. Also it gives the issues of women and what were the struggles
they faced earlier. Status reports are discussed and presented at CDS level or Block Level and can be used as a reference material to develop projects for women and to develop tools for intervention. CDS level status report will help the Kudumbashree women empowerment programmes and the Local Self Governments planning and project development. Two day workshop for Analysis of Experiences was conducted at District level and a draft book of experiences is prepared.

Analysis of selected experiences is analyzed at State level (July 2013). The book prepared at State level is proposed to contain analysis details and it can be a reference manual for GSLP. In the year 2014 – 15 Kudumbashree compile the status report and will formulate book on status of women in Kerala by the analysis of their life experiences. on the Occasion of 16th Anniversary of Kudumbashree State level status report was published by Hon: Panchayaths and Social Justice Minister Kerala.
Nirbhaya
Introduction

On behalf of Government’s initiative to combat atrocities against women and children, policy “Nirbhaya”, has introduced. Social Justice Department was the Nodal agency for implementing the project in grassroots level. Kudumbashree had a great task of sensitizing women about the Gender relation of atrocities and measuring the degree of atrocities faces by women. In this circumstances Kudumbashree is selected as an implementing agency of Nirbhaya project in Kerala. Though atrocities are registered in respective departments, most of them are not being taken any followup or action has been taken to address. There is no social system to combat atrocities or to support the victim. Being the largest and strongest women collective in Kerala, Kudumbashree has a lead role in the project Social Justice Department give half of the project cost to organize Gender sensitization trainings and Crime mapping as a part of Nirbhaya. During the first phase, the activities are organized at 77 selected CDSs which include 70 rural and 7 urban CDSs of all the districts. All the interested CDSs are asked to participate in Nirbhaya initiatives during the second phase.

Kudumbashree and Nirbhaya

Gender Sensitization Trainings were organized by Kudumbashree at State and District Levels for Gender Resource Persons, elected representatives of LSGIs and CDS representatives. The same is organized at CDS level participating LSGI staff members. All these efforts aimed to create a safe environment for women and children in the particular CDS.

The second but main intervention as a part of Nirbhaya is Crime Mapping. It is a tool developed by Kudumbashree Gender Team to assess the details of atrocities faced by women of selected 77 CDSs. The process includes issue mapping and crime spotting. Though crime spotting give places where atrocities happen and issue mapping give detailed picture about atrocities.

Trainings organized at State, District, Regional and CDS levels so that we can spread awareness about Nirbhaya policy, type of atrocities against women and children, importance of Jagrata Samiti initiatives, agencies working to combat violence against women and children, gender relation of atrocities, need of local level planning, convergence between departments to combat sexual violence against women etc.

Gender team developed a handbook comprising the information regarding the activities that Kudumbashree can undertake as part of Nirbhaya, what Panchayat can do, support systems for the victims of atrocities, relevance of the project in Kerala etc.

Crime Mapping
It is a participatory tool for preventive interventions. For this a questionnaire is distributed to all women in the panchayat. They are asked to fill up the same. Places where crimes occur are spotted by both men and women in a map of the concerned panchayat. The same map is then super imposed to get a clear picture about crime spots. Crime mapping helps in identifying the vulnerable spaces and time that lead to violence against women and children; in locating the nature and impact of violence; in assessing and addressing the socio-economic variables in gender based violence and child based violence; and in equipping the citizens to resist violence against women and children in their respective panchayats. Crime mapping helped in identifying the vulnerable spaces and time that lead to violence against women and children; locating the nature and impact of violence; assessing and addressing the socio-economic variables towards gender based violence and child based violence; and equipping the citizens to resist violence against women and children in their respective panchayats.

Kudumbashree’s engagement in crime mapping and Nirbhaya activities, helped resource persons foreground several instances of unreported as well as reported crimes which in turn facilitated the resource persons’ interventions with the help of different service providers/institutions (Panchayat, Jagrata Samiti, Police Dept, CWC, Social Justice Department, NGOs, Institutions providing legal aid, health, education etc.). This exercise brought home forcefully the need for a support structure within the system, and thus was born the Gender Help Desks in three districts. In this financial year 2013 – 14 Kudumbashree completed crime mapping in 64 CDS and the data entry also completed. The report will publish as part of Kudumbashree annual celebration.
Trainings
Training

Training plays a vital role in the entire activities of Kudumbashree. In particular to Gender Self learning programme- an educational process, training helps in conceiving the concept in the resource pool. The training was conducted in all the 14 districts. The training session was divided into two parts depicting the logic and importance of the programme. The need for repeating from the very beginning was essential at that point of time as many women voluntarily joined the resource pool due to its innovativeness.

The specific training session on module dealt with the reading of the content, explaining the content, data entry in the data collection formats and initiating discussion in the NHG levels. An elaborate attempt to convey the approach of the educational process emphasizing on the NHG level reading and discussion.

Training was imparted in 4 different levels-
District- comprising of representatives from different blocks.
Block- comprising of representatives from different panchayats within a block.
Panchayat- comprising of representatives from different wards within a panchayat. In some districts, NHG facilitators were directly brought into the panchayat level training programme. This was done to avoid communication spillage.
Ward- comprising of facilitators from the NHGs within a ward.

For district and block level trainings, a one full day was utilized covering an introduction lecture on gender self learning programme; a group work on reading and discussing the topic; and a separate session on filling the data formats attached under each chapter.
Half day training programmes were organized for panchayat and ward level. Though the training programme included all the components addressed for district and block level trainings, it was given in capsule form.

Trainers

Gender Self Learning programme thrives on the resource pool for its learning process. The resource pool becomes trainees and trainers at different points of time. The district level trainer gets training straight from the state level and they impart to the subsequent levels of the resource pools. This pattern gives an opportunity to exhibit their public speaking skills and take on as ambassadors of GSLP at district/block/panchayat and ward levels.

NHG level reading (June 2010 onwards)

The training was followed by NHG level module reading. In some districts, it was directed to all the NHGs to start the learning process in one single day so that the effort could be marked as a start of a new era of women empowerment and social education process. In most of the districts, NHG reading and discussions started soon after the module based trainings. Gender Resource Persons at panchayat level coordinated the NHG level reading sessions which are attached to the regular weekly meeting of NHGs. Propaganda tools were also widely used in parallel to the modules.

The districts received the learning process with much enthusiasm.

- The learning process was conducted in 1011 CDS. About 50 CDS did not take up the learning process due to spite between CDS and governing council of local body, absence of CDS and lack of interest of CDS.
- The module initiated women to discuss discrimination and inequality faced in different employment sectors. In some places women collected themselves and proceeded for wage increment.
- It is noted that alcoholism is a major problem that affects women and family in general. Collectives for restricting alcoholism were formed in many corners of the state. In Alapuzha, the police gave women extensive support to curb domestic violence.
- The action based on irregularities in employment rights were addressed but not highlighted. Instead the module or rather the ‘green book’ which was popularly known gave women a platform to get collected and start working towards knowledge creation through experience sharing.
- The experiences shared ranged from dispute to violence in matrimony, conflicts in power sharing, conflicts in decision making and so on.
- Women regarded this occasion as a stepping stone towards acquiring leadership or multiple leaderships.
- When the NHGs seriously took time to read chapters one by one; there were NHGs which read all the 8 chapters at one go and filled all the data collection formats in one sitting.
- Inability to put the learning process as agenda of the CDS.
ICT and Women empowerment

This is an era in which rapid advancements in ICT is changing the way knowledge/information is developed, acquired and communicated. A working knowledge in the use of new communication technologies is fast becoming a must in every sphere of life. The development sector is no exception to this. Gender equality and women’s advancement is imperative to social development. Accessibility to, and knowledge of, ICT enable women to build up new thinking and learning skills that can be used to develop more effective ways of working and solving problems individually and collectively. ICT has been used in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of women’s development programmes. New methodologies have been, and are being, developed, modified, adopted, and disseminated worldwide for ICT-enabled women’s empowerment.

Training for Support Team (Asha, Anganwadi workers & SC/ST Promoters)

The trainings are organized at district level in all districts which included orientation on GSLP and second Module. These people are included in the RP Team of GSLP so the information’s in module which is related to health could be effectively disseminated to the grass root level and some joint actions should be evolved to improve and create women friendliness in the health sector.

CDS Trainings

GSLP and Sreesakthi portal is presented in State level trainings for CDS Chairpersons and Vice Chairpersons. CDS level trainings were conducted for CDS Resource persons and CDS level supporting team members. If a new initiative were taken up by the gender team Trainings were given to these people including CDS committee members. CDS level training is one of the most important step for implementing the project and programme in the field level, because these CDS R.P’s and Supporting team were going to take ADS level training and they Monitor the NHG level activity in the respective CDS.

KELSA Training

In addition to the mass learning process conducted by Kudumbashree, services of Kerala Legal Service Authority have been inducted to Gender Self Learning Programme. The book called ‘women and law’ published by KELSA was reprinted with the introduction of the Executive Director of Kudumbashree that depicted Gender Self Learning Programme.

The book was introduced in the network in the view of propagating Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005. The resource pool of GSLP at block levels was given mass legal literacy classes with the prescribed book. Trainers were hired from KELSA.

Nirbhaya Trainings

Different trainings were organized for the effective implementation of the programme.

State Level Training

1. CDs representatives, LSG representatives and District Kudumbashree Mission representatives
2. - Gender consultant, ADMC who are in charge of Gender Programme in District, One Representative from training group and core team members
3. 3 Representatives from Selected 77 Panchayaths
4. 77 Selected representatives from different Training groups under Kudumbashree
5. LSG President / Chairperson from Selected 77 Panchayaths/ Municipality

**District and CDS Level Trainings**
1. Selected resource persons training in District level
2. Selected Resource persons training in Regional level – Three Regions- Southern, Central, Northern
3. Selected Ads level resource persons gender sensitisation training at CDS level
4. Remaining Elected representatives from 77 LSG training at District level
5. LSG Officials, and transferred institutions officials gender sensitisation training
6. Gender Sensitisation training at CDS, ADS and NHG level
7. NHG Level Family meet

**Crime mapping and Allied Campaign works and Trainings**
GSLP Initiatives

Vanita Sabha (April-May-June 2010)
The NHG level reading and acceptance of NHG as a platform for experience sharing paved way for developing another facilitation tool called Vanita Sabha.

Vanita Sabha, a platform for women to discuss their grievances publicly, was organized in all districts as part of the 12th Anniversary of Kudumbashree. As an extension to the discussion of the module, the theme of Vanitha Sabha was ‘Women and Employment’. About 3530 women participated in the Vanitha Sabhas, where they got the opportunity to air their opinion on the problems and challenges faced in various employment sectors. Experts and influential personages from various employment sectors participated in the Sabha’s where they gave instructions and solutions to the problems surfaced. These public figures also got an opportunity to understand Kudumbashree more. The success and acceptance of Vanitha Sabhas was overwhelming that an instruction to organize the programme every year has been given.

A detailed guideline for the conduction of Vanita Sabha was prepared at the State Mission. It indicated many steps.

- Vanita Sabha will act as a platform for exchanging ideas.
- Vanita Sabha to be conducted in different levels from ward to district.
- Participation assurance of experts within the district
- A statement of issue would be prepared and read in the Sabha.
- Efforts would be taken to acquire information on maximum numbers of employment sectors.
- A panel consisting of 3-5 persons to control the Sabha procedures.
- Women would organize and lead the Sabha.
- Vanita Sabha will aim at formulating right based strategies and interventions.

As said in the above paragraph, Vanita Sabha was directed to conduct from the ward level onwards. But in most of the districts, it was noted that the Sabhas did not indicate any heated discussions on employment. Participation was low and an incessant guidance was required at each point including probes for discussion. Panchayat level Vanita Sabhas did make a difference with the interference of Panchayat governing councils and local leaders. While the district level Vanita Sabha redefined the concept of Vanita Sabha. It was transformed from a facilitation tool to that of a problem solving mechanism.

The major intervention of Vanita Sabha was made in Pathanamthitta. The mandatory inclusion of women representatives from various walks of life in the Vanita Sabha gave the women of this district a chance to express their grievances before experts. The district mission of Kudumbashree mediated efficiently and the Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) authorities of Pathanamthitta have now allotted space for a cloak room and toilets for women bus conductors.

**Lab Panchayat**

In all the State’s 14 districts, a panchayat is selected exclusively for testing the tools of the learning process. A panchayat that shows a moderate level of results is chosen
for this purpose. This enables the teams to modify the tools according to specific needs. The modules and questionnaires are tested in these panchayats before they are disseminated throughout each district.

**Gender School**

To gain theoretical knowledge, to have an understanding of different schools of thought, and to advance effectively at the grass-roots level as well as influence policy decisions, gender schools are necessary. It is proposed to set up gender schools at the block level. The syllabus of gender schools will be sequenced in such a way that it focuses on self-analysis, participation, interaction and management of the self in the public sphere, conceptualising gender. It will further take participants through the emergence of women’s movements, familiarise them with data sources and enable them to make sense of the available data through preparing status reports. Gender Schools can be operated only with practical examples as it gives more sense to the theoretical implications of a concept. So the preparation of resource material for gender school should be simple by giving numerous examples from grass roots.

**Gender Resource Centre**

The concept is an integral part of Gender Self Learning Programme. The aim is to have an outreach centre where women can come; spend time creatively by reading; accessing net facilities and can have dialogues on development issues. It can also be utilized for consultation services for those who need legal or psycho and social support. Library facilities, place for recreational activities for women and children is also another aim of Gender resource Centre. In Trivandrum there are 12 resource centres spread across 11 blocks namely- Aryanad, Ottasekharamangalam, Ottur, Karavaaram, Kizhuvilam, Pothecode, Karode, Anad, Nellanadu, Maranallur, Malayinkeezhu, Kottukal. In Trivandrum each Gender Resource Centre is managed by the ADS of that particular ward. So regular ADS meetings are conducted in the centre. Apart from this, in certain centres they have library facilities and women have also contributed for buying books for children. In Thrissur, 3 Gender Resource Centres are functioning- Kodakara, Chavakkad and Kodungallor and in Kozhikkode a Gender Resource Centre is being set up in Kakkodi.

**Health Resource Mapping**

- It is a tool to identify the health resources available in panchayat and the accessibility of resources, institutions, health providers and services. Through this process we could find out the accessibility of the community and women friendly approach of the resources available in panchayat
- It is also a supporting tool for the second level module Women and Health
- No. of panchayat conducted HRM- 101

**Nirbhaya and Kudumbashree**

Kudumbashree is going to provide Gender Sensitisation Trainings at different levels for creating an environment that promote effective implementation of Kerala Government’s project Nirbhaya, an initiative to address sexual violence against women.

**Vilkalamela (Kannur)**
The vilkalamela, a folk art performance, was one way of propagating the messages of equality and justice among members of the Kudumbashree network. A traditional story pertaining to oppression, limited social mobility and isolation was recreated and the evolution of Kudumbashree was incorporated as the basis for communicating the messages.

**Vilambara jatha (Alapuzha)**

In November 2009, about 1,000 ward-level vilambara jathas, or processions, were conducted for propagating the aims of the GSLP. Women carried placards that had pro-gender slogans on them and the jathas started from one point of each ward and concluded at another with a meeting presided over by the ward member. The processions succeeded in motivating many panchayats to accept the GSLP.

**Snehitha - The Gender Help Desk**

In order to support women in need, 3 regional centres are starting at Thiruvananthapuram, Ernakulam and Malappuram. Women who are victims of violence can get immediate assistance from Shehita centres with name itself meaning “friend”. The main aim of the centre is to provide help and support to those women and children who were in distress for a short duration of time and facilitating the women in distress to access the service of other institutional agencies to address the issues. The Help Desk initiated by Kudumbashree Mission is working on the principle of convergence, which is followed by a close interface and collaboration with the registered service providers of the state. Total 2313 cases were registered in Snehitha (3 centers) directly and over phone. The HELP Desk and its activities will expand to 4 districts (Alappuzha, Idukki, Wayanad and Palakkad) in the coming year.
**Gender Corner**

Gender corner give a creative space in the CDS for women and children and for the active initiative of women empowerment programmes of Kudumbashree. It is a local body to keep up a link between CDS and Snehitha. 2 RPs and 2 CDS members are in charge of gender corner; also they are directly involving in the issues of women and children and resolving it locally with the support of Jagratha Samithi and other departments and agencies. 943 CDSs formed gender corner and took initiative in more than 1000 cases reported to gender corner during the year.

**Anti Human Trafficking (AHT)**

Kudumbashree started Anti Human Trafficking Centres in three districts of Kerala – Idukki, Palakkad and Wayanad with the financial support of National Rural Livelihood Mission, Government of India. Kudumbashree as a community based organisation with strong interface with the LSGs can address the multiple and complex issues of trafficking, and can respond to this issue from a socio-economic perspective. The economic perspective includes the ways and means to facilitate the affected persons in trafficking to engage in various livelihood options, whereas the social interventions include providing facilitative support in education, health, counseling and legal awareness, and ensuring a support system that would help them to cope with and to overcome the trauma of trafficking. The programme implementation in field is started with the convergence meeting, and the consultation meeting. Situational analysis mainly focusing on identification of the vulnerable groups, high risk families and Escapees & Resistors through the FGDs. Snehitha Gender help Desk will start in these three blocks as part of AHT Programme.

**Convergence programmes**

Convergence meeting were organized in every districts with regard to Nirbhaya programme implementation and Snehitha –Gender Help Desk formation. District Collector / District Panchayath President were the Chairperson of the Committee.
Representatives from different Government, non governmental agencies/ departments/ institutions, Local self government representatives, representatives from NGO’s are the members of the committee. The support and services provided by this committee are very helpful for the successful implementation of Kudumbashree programmes. Convergence meetings are conducting at all levels (State, District, and CDS). Convergence platform creation in the panchayath level is one another important step taken as part of the convergence programme. This will help to ensure the support and services from all other departments and agencies availed.

Community Counseling Programme in collaboration with CDC

420 Counseling Educators were selected from all the 14 Districts. And given training based on a module developed by the counseling experts. As primary initiative Kudumbashree will conduct a counseling day at the grass root level with support of LSGIs. Later these 420 counselors will be the community counselors of Kudumbashree and will work with Gender Corner and Snehitha Gender Help Desk

District initiatives (Some Points)

- Awareness programmes related with different topics- Kollam, Kannur, Wayanad,
- Health camp for clean well workers, Legal Adalath, collecting data of divorcees, widows, mother earned families, un organaised women workers, health status etc, Joint Programmes with Janamaithri Police- Alappuzha
- Documentary preparation related with Western Ghats Development programme and awareness class for school going students- Ernakulam
- Initiatives for starting Gender Resource centre under WGDP programme-Wayanad.
- Gender Help Desk formation in selected 40 CDS- Thrissur- Act as a link between Snehitha and Gender Help Desk and Gender Corner
- Convergence programmes with Seethalayam- Kollam
- WGDP- Documentary making and other gender sensitization programmes till NHG level- Eranakulam
- Kootukari- A complaint/suggestion box in all Panchayaths - Idukki
- Gender Year 2014- We are planning to observe 2014 as Gender Year our slogan: "Cultural Equality through Gender Equality".
The Web Portal
www.sreesakthi.org
Sreesakthi for Kudumbashree

On a larger context, the concept is derived for sharing, creating and managing knowledge for development. The multiple memberships acquired through different roles in the network have certainly demanded an interface with new technology. Model practices they initiate, the experiences they have in the field and the qualitative data that emerge through different activities needs to be documented. In Toto, Sreesakthi materializes as a knowledge hub for women in grass root.

Specific to Gender Self Learning Programme, the portal enables the learning process to enter a higher plane. Complete module development process would be web based. The lecture series conducted in the districts can be supplemented by the online discussion forums. It enables to grasp more and varied ideas, thoughts and practices on a single concept. Creation of technical resource pool within the network provides unlimited scope for taking on information technology to the last person in the grass roots.

Developed with the support of the Centre for Development and Advanced Computing (C-DAC) and the Department of Information Technology, Government of India, the Sreesakthi web portal has been put up to help make the GSLP a productive and successful initiative. This portal provides a useful venue for discussing issues and ideas, creating modules, collating programme reports, clearing doubts, and, most importantly, helping women become computer and technology savvy.
Specialties of the Sreesakthi portal

- Sreesakthi is bilingual—Malayalam and English;
- Public and private pages are available;
- Separate privileges for State-level, district-level and CDS-level administrators;
- Discussion forum for GSLP module development and transactions;
- A space for clarifying queries; and
- The use of a Unicode font—Panini.

Portal launching

Sreesakthi portal along with MIS of Kudumbashree was launched in Alapuzha. The hand book on basic computer was handed over to the trainees.

Tie up with Akshaya

Kudumbashree has now engaged in disseminating Sreesakthi portal in the network. MoU was signed between the Disirector of Akshaya and Executive Director of
Kudumbashree. As per the MoU, Akshaya would impart basic computer education and training on portal for the members of the network. A systematic work plan was prepared for the implementation of the Computer training. The work plan included:

- Development of hand book on fundamental of computer. (Jointly developed by Akshaya and Kudumbashree).
- Background preparation of 30 hrs of computer and portal training.
- Development of portal operational manual.
- Maximum of 5 members each from 1061 CDS was selected (CDS chairperson, vice chairperson, convener of the social development sub committee, 2 gender resource persons from the panchayats) and directed to give training in the first phase.
- Development of a combined monitoring system at block level
- Review of the training at district and state level.
- Conduction of exam
- Distribution of certificates.

In order implement the project effectively, an array of training was organized at state and district levels.

- The concept of Master trainers was brought in.
- Workshops on portal navigation was given
- Documentation workshops were also given
- Efforts to train Akshaya instructors also done.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Workshops</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GRPC</td>
<td>1*14 (14)</td>
<td>2 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master Trainers</td>
<td>5*14 (70)</td>
<td>2 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master Trainers</td>
<td>2*14 (28)</td>
<td>3 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akshaya instructors</td>
<td>1*2000 (2000)</td>
<td>1 day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core team members</td>
<td>10*14 (140)</td>
<td>2 days</td>
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</table>

A total of 2250+ trainers are now equipped to transact portal in the grass roots at the initial level.

**Training Statistics- First level Training**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Number of CDS</th>
<th>Expected number of participants</th>
<th>Number of participants completed the training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trivandrum</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kollam</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathanamthitta</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alapuzha</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kottayam</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idukki</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ernakulam</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thrissur</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palakkad</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malappuram</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kozhikkode</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wayanad</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kannur</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kasaragod</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>1058</td>
<td>5290</td>
<td>4375</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Second level training**

In continuation of the first level training given to the 5 members from each CDS, now it has been approved to give similar training to next set of interested 5 members from each CDS.

**Impact of the training**

Sreesakthi portal now has 3500+ registered users. We have been receiving 4000+ posts in the online discussion forum and 350+ queries pertaining activities of Kudumbashree and other government schemes.

Selected local Akshaya centres would impart training on basic computer and training on the usage of Sreesakthi portal for 10 days. The training will adhere to appropriate training modules, course material and operational manual for the portal which has been designed by us. A test will be conducted and certificates issued at the end of the training programme.

**Portal Navigation**
Portal navigation activity was done by the district to ensure the participation of CDS.

- User friendly portal operation Manual is prepared
- Now Four active threads are in web portal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thread</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Views</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freedom to Travel</td>
<td>Data collection for third module</td>
<td>1248</td>
<td>23024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women and Health</td>
<td>To collect the feedback, learning experience etc</td>
<td>1028</td>
<td>15963</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relevance of Nirbhaya Project in Kerala</td>
<td>Introduce the programme and its aim, and collect the reflection from public</td>
<td>1754</td>
<td>35121</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inclusion of Women in Political parties of India</td>
<td>main reasons for the low level of women’s nomination by parties, difficulties that women face in moving from local level to State Level</td>
<td>7944</td>
<td>19228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevention of Human Trafficking Kudumbashree Initiatives</td>
<td>AHT programme Implementation piloting in Three blocks, analyse the awareness of the issue and status and condition of society</td>
<td>9926</td>
<td>25557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sreesakthi Portal Training Learning and Experiences</td>
<td>Experiences of Portal Training</td>
<td>20265</td>
<td>46791</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Active threads in discussion forum are “Inclusion of Women in Political Parties of India”, Relevance of Nirbhaya in Kerala Society - Prevention of Human Trafficking Kudumbashree Initiatives etc. Web portal participation by CDS varies district by district. We have to develop a new team for web portal navigation. The team should include gender resource persons, CDS members ADS members-NHG level. For the same, we have to conduct different level of trainings. CDS level portal training is almost completed in districts. Next level training (ADS level) is started and will be completed in 2015-2016 financial year.

- Now 16987 registered users, 46009 posts and 170147 views are there in portal
Impact of Gender Self Learning Programme
Success Stories

**Solution to the problems faced by Pathanamthitta’s Women Bus Conductors.**

During the women’s meetings conducted at district levels as part of the 12th anniversary celebrations of Kudumbasree, the women bus conductors from Pathanamthitta had a lot to say about their working conditions. Apart from the problems they faced in the bus while carrying out their duties, they spoke about the lack of basic amenities at the bus station. The bus station didn’t have toilet facilities for women and there was no room provided for women to change their clothes in. Though the women bus conductors were carrying out their jobs without access to such basic amenities, they were vocal about their demand to bring about changes in this regard.

The District Mission brought this matter to the notice of the KSRTC officials. The result was that Pathanamthitta, the main bus station of the district, now has a changing room and toilet facilities for the women bus conductors. The women bus conductors strongly believe that speaking about their problems at the women’s meeting has brought about this change.

**Brave move by women’s gathering – sex racket in custody**

I am Remani, President of Seethathodu Panchayat’s Ward no. 1 ADS. After working on Employment Guarantee, I was taking a break along with my co-workers Maya and Bindu when we saw an auto enter the road towards the forest area. There were two men and a girl inside the auto. The girl was unconscious and leaning on to the shoulder of one of the men. Something didn’t feel right and we followed the auto. We found the auto next to the forest area and when we reached next to it, only the driver was there. When we enquired, the driver told us that the passengers had gone to Nilakkal Church. We immediately called the priest of the church who told us clearly that the two men and girl had not been to the church. On hearing this, we immediately called up the police and the Ward Member. The police reached immediately and searched the forest area, and they were able to arrest the men and save the girl. On further questioning by the police, links to a sex racket in Ponkunnam were revealed.
Family’s well-being is the right of every woman.
Smt. Remla is the Resource Person (RP) at Panchayat-level of Cherupuzha Grama Panchayat’s Gender Self Learning Programme (GSLP). During one of the GSLP classes discussing the rights of women, Remla said, “The freedom of being a panchayat RP is all thanks to the remand. Once my husband comes home after his remand, there will be no ‘women’s status’ or any ‘self-learning’. At this platform where I get the opportunity to share my experiences, shouldn’t I come clean on this?” When the constant abuse at the hands of her husband gets difficult to bear, Remla makes a complaint at the local police station to get a few days’ respite. Once out of jail, it is the same story all over again. On hearing Remla’s story, the other panchayat-level RPs took a decision before they left. On the day Remla’s husband was released from jail, the RPs went to Remla’s house to meet her husband. They talked to Remla’s husband on the issue of domestic violence and abuse. With constant help from the RPs, the situation at Remla’s home improved. This episode highlights the effectiveness of these training programmes.

Society is for the women too.
Vishwapuram, Ward no. 1 of Pouvoor panchayat, was a sparsely populated place. The Panayam-Vattayam road was a lonely stretch. Women were scared to go through this area even during the day. Men, in bikes and cars, used to come to this road at evenings to drink alcohol. Though these men had behaved badly towards many women, no one was ready to complain against it. The reason was that the men in most of the households in that area were alcoholics. And the local men were scared that any reaction from their part could result in alcohol being denied to them too. The CDS member of that ward decided to find a solution to this problem. She got together 10 women from her ward and sat guard at the road. When the men came to drink, they even talked to them. They said, “We are not asking you to stop drinking, but you shouldn’t drink at this area. Find another place for that. We have a right to live peacefully at our area.” This was continued for many days. The women were not discouraged or disheartened all this while. Through these interventions, there were changes in the situation. After that there were no incidents of drinking in that area reported till date, and this is proudly shared by the CDS member.
Women and Employment – and the Employment Guarantee

Valiyaparambu panchayat is an island panchayat of Kasargod district. A bridge has been under construction here, and the work is still in progress. The only means to reach this place is by means of a boat. The employment guarantee programme is in full force here just like in other panchayats.

Despite the situation, the majority of people of the 5th ward are not open to the idea. Reasons are many. “We women can’t do hard labour like the men; the breadwinner of our family has always been our husbands, so why not continue like that? Men make fun of the women at workplace.” And these things make women shy away from working.

Many efforts were taken to make women come to work. Classes were taken. We spoke with them, individually and otherwise. But no matter what was done, there was no effect.

It was around this time that the GSLP book titled ‘Women and Employment’ was distributed at that ward. The book was read at the neighbourhood groups, discussed and notes were made. They got answers to many questions like ‘What is employment Guarantee programme? Why is it being carried out?’ The days spent in reading the book brought a new awareness to them. They enrolled for employment, got cards and were ready for the Employment Guarantee programme.

Now employment guarantee boards are common at Ward 5. Construction of drainage, Ward 15, Day 16... Now they are at the work place. The drainage that was being constructed as a group activity has brought cleanliness to the surroundings and to the lives of the people, and this has also brought a major drop in health-related issues. They also understand and enjoy the taste of their labours.
Surname

28 year old Latha Kumari, known as Latha Girish, came for the GSLP class that day. After the class, she got up and said, “Madam, I am changing my name from Latha Girish to Latha Kumari.”

“Why is that?”
And the whole group had turned to look.

“What is the point of carrying the burden of a useless surname?”
Nobody understood what she meant by the statement. And then Latha told her story.

“A young, good looking carpenter came to a neighbourhood house for making furniture. We met and liked each other. My father and brother are party workers. When they came to know that I was in love with this man and was planning to get married to him, they didn’t raise any objections. We had a registered marriage. In two years of a happily married life, I became the mother of two children.

Slowly I started seeing changes in my husband’s behaviour. One day in an inebriated state, he told me that he was already married and had a 10 year old daughter. I was not the only one he cheated, he had ‘wives’ at various places; it was fun for him. Our lives went on, punctuated with fights, and then one day he disappeared.

After my husband left, I locked myself in my house. My mother and neighbours forced me to join Kudumbasree. At the GSLP classes, I heard other women talk about their experiences and realised that there were many who had faced similar, or even worse, situations than I had. Slowly there were changes in my life. I became Secretary of Kudumbasree, and became associated with the micro-activities of Kudumbasree.

Today I take land on lease and cultivate vegetables.

I didn’t want to be known as a deserted wife, so I called myself Latha Girish. The term husband also means being a protector, but from now on I don’t want that protection. I made that decision after today’s class. Let people talk whatever they want, they are not the ones taking care of me and my children, are they? I am the one who decides how I will live my life. If I can say all this here, then I can face any problem. The woman that I am has learnt my status on my own.

So, madam, why should I carry the burden of a useless surname? From today I change my name from Latha Girish to Latha Kumari. Through self-study, I have discovered myself.”
The woman who fights injustice is empowered.

I am Suseela. I was born and brought up in Alapuzha district, and am now working as a gender RP in Kannur district. I was living in Alapuzha with my husband and our two children. We shifted to Kannur as part of my husband’s job requirements. We lived in rented houses at first, but later bought our own house and land. From 2002, I was working as CDAS at Narathu grama panchayat. It was then that Kudumbasrees’s GSLP classes began. It was the time that I was carrying on with frontline activities as the district RP.

Around that time, we had a mother and her two beautiful daughters shift into my neighbourhood. The house was close to the road, and that was the start of the problems. The youngsters started to cause trouble by urinating in front of the house, saying abuses and obscenities, smashing streetlights at night, throwing firecrackers, laughing out loud, and singing loudly.

One day as I was taking class on the subject “Women and the development of community” at the panchayat, when a neighbour informed me that two obscene cut-outs were placed on a post in front of Pramila’s house. Nobody was reacting to it as they were scared of the boys. When we talked to the party men regarding this, we didn’t receive much response. They said they can get it removed by night. Pramila and her daughters were very upset and I wanted to do something against this harassment. I told everyone in my neighbourhood group to be there on the road at the time I reached there. After the class when I reached there, everyone had already come there with sickles and sticks in hand. I was overwhelmed by what I saw. I got a chair, got on to it, and with the sickle, I hacked at the cut-outs. Everyone joined in and destroyed the cut-outs. I got phone calls with threats and abuses all through the night, but the women stood united. Everyone was surprised at our unity and strength. After that no one dared to harass the women in any way. I am satisfied that I could show the strength of women is not mere words, but a reality. Now I work as an RP in Alapuzha.
**Future plans**

A decentralized module development process at CDS level and participatory development of training methodology is in the plan process. 100% e-learning mechanism is to be adopted that would be perhaps the first of its kind in a women empowerment process. Access to internet and optimum use of technology to be ensured through the programme.

1. Third module Dissemination and Activity oriented field level interventions

2. Sreesakthi Portal - Separate thread should be included in discussion forum for children and adolescents where they can directly participate and express their issues. We have to modify the module consolidation format, qualitative and quantitative report generation and rectify the errors of data collection, consolidation etc. Comic books with theme gender and related issues should be uploaded in Sreesakthi portal.

3. Counseling educators training - And make them as Kudumbashree Community counselors

4. Anti Human Trafficking Programme - Gender Help Desk related activities, Migration centre formation, Accredited safe home identification, Technical Skilling and economic rehabilitation of the affected or survivors, Project expansion for next three years

5. Gender Sensitisation programme for Officials and resource persons

6. Gender Corner - Legal Clinic, Community counseling, Charge person appointment

7. Snehitha Gender Help Desk - Legal adalath, Crime mapping follow up of Cases identified

8. New initiative - Cancer detection programme Tie up with Regional Cancer Center, Special programme in Coastal area.

9.
THANK YOU...!