Gramakiranam

Gramakiranam, the novel micro enterprise unit formed in Kasaragode district of Kerala is proving that nothing is impossible for women. Gramakiranam units are engaged in LED bulb manufacturing and also in street light repairing sector in which women hardly attempts to work. "Why can't Kudumbashree units start making LED bulbs?" - It is from this thought, Gramakiranam unit was launched during 2017. After providing extensive training for 15 days, Gramakiranam units were started at Mangalpadi and Pilikode Panchayaths. On completing two years, the unit members have grown into master trainers. Also Gramakiranam LED bulbs registered good sales.

Pilikode unit has 10 women and 4 men as members. They are able to produce an average of 700 bulbs a day. They are extending services in 6 Panchayaths and 2 Municipalities. They have completed the orders worth Rs.44.53 lakhs till date. The unit at Mangalpadi has 13 women and 3 men as
members. The unit is able to produce an average of 650 bulbs. They have earned an income of Rs. 6.1 lakhs until now. This unit is taking up the orders of 2 Panchayaths and 1 municipality.

‘What are the livelihood activities that could be identified along with bulb making?’ It is from this thought of the Gramakiranam unit, the idea of streetlight servicing was evolved. As per the Panchayathi Raj Rule, the Gramapanchayaths are responsible for maintenance of street lights and for the timely replacement of the same. This is a sector which posses greater challenge. Though, Panchayath allocates substantial amount of money for setting up new street lights and repairing activities, many complaints arise from among the public. On this background, we thought that if Kudumbashree would be able to intervene in this sector, it would make a sustainable change and it would become a livelihood opportunity that would help many women. It is on this background that Gramakiranam team decided to enter into street light servicing sector.

In the first phase, we were able to secure the Government Order (GO) which enables the Panchayaths to give the work order for street light servicing to the Gramakiranam units without any tenders. This GO was handed over to the district team and based on that, the meeting of different panchayaths was conducted at Kasaragode. Following that, Kudumbashree received work orders / service contracts (street light servicing) from Pallikkara, Pilikkode, Ajanoor, Thrikkarippor, Mogral, Puthoor, Valiyaparamb Panchayaths and Kasaragode, Kanhangad and Neeleshwaram municipalities of Kasargod district.

We perceive this as a great start. If we would be able to take up the street light servicing and other repairing activities of all the Panchayaths in Kerala, it would help many women earn livelihood. Also, servicing the streetlights regularly without fail will result in public convenience. Thereby the complaints could also be reduced. We also aims at setting up Gramakiranam units all over the state, which would be able to produce and supply LED bulbs.