Covid-19 - Study report on the challenges faced by Kudumbashree Micro Enterprises and Farming Groups

We are going through yet another phase of lock down due to the spread of corona virus. Public has been facing huge challenges during the lock down, which was notified to contain the spread of covid-19 pandemic. Kudumbashree entrepreneurs are also facing many challenges during this time. Kudumbashree, the Poverty Eradication Mission of Kerala functions aiming at alleviating poverty through women empowerment. Through Kudumbashree various livelihood opportunities are introduced for women aiming at their financial empowerment. Kudumbashree mainly rely on micro enterprises and group farming for helping them find livelihood opportunities. We have made a study and prepared a detailed report on the after effects of lock down in these sectors.

1. The condition of the micro enterprises during covid-19 lock down
There are 23,789 micro enterprises under Kudumbashree. The study was carried out jointly by by Shri. Sajith Sukumaran, Chief Operating Officer, Kudumbashree National Resource
as they couldn’t sell the agricultural products or have had to sell the same for lower prices. 48,940 farming groups did cultivation aiming at the vishu market. Those who did farming at faraway places could not go to their farms, make proper irrigation or apply fertilizers and give necessary care due to lock down. This also became a reason for loss. As they could not store the agricultural products and so they had to sell the products in lower prices. Most of the farmers who did paddy cultivation got the help of either the ‘Pada shekhara Samithi’ or Supplyco for storing the paddy. Out of the total farming area, 75 % to 80% is taken on lease. Most of the farming groups meet the expenditure for farming and leasing by taking loan. These farming group members will have to face the financial burden due to the loan during lock down.

Entrepreneurs from small scale-medium scale value addition units, agri-business enterprises, bio pharmacies, plant nurseries etc also has to face loss during lock down period. The study regarding the same would be carried out and the loss would be calculated later.

Based on this report, activities for rejuvenating the enterprises and farming groups is progressing.

2. The loss faced by the Kudumbashree farming groups during lock down period, issues and its after effects

3,38,202 NHG members are doing farming in 50,000 hectares of land under Kudumbashree through 68,388 farming groups. Shri. C.S Dathan, Programme Officer, Agriculture had made a brief study on the issues caused in the agriculture sector due to lock down. It was found out from the study that the farming groups had to face loss of Rs 3.67 crores. 864 tonnes of agricultural products, which were cultivated aiming at the vishu market couldn’t be harvested. Loss of Rs 2 crores was recorded only from this. Loss of Rs 1.67 crores was recorded...