Quest for equality and empowerment

NRLM’s work with tribal and particularly vulnerable tribal communities in Attapady, Palakkad, Kerala

NRLM aims to work with the most deprived and vulnerable communities to achieve accelerated pace of economic and social development. The tribal and particularly vulnerable communities have experienced multiple levels of deprivation with respect to all indicators. In India, the tribal population of the country is-

- 10.43 crores, constituting 8.6% of the total population (Census, 2011)
- Literacy gap is 14.03%, with literacy of the community at 58.96%
- Educational attainment of 11.0% at the primary level, 8.7% at the upper primary level and 6.46% at the secondary level (Statistics of school Education, MHRD, 2010-2011).
- Infant mortality is 62.1%, neo-natal mortality at 39.9%, pre-natal mortality at 40.6%.
- Childhood vaccination is only 33.1%.
- Children receiving services from anganwadi is 49.9%.
- Households covered by health insurance schemes are 2.6%.
- Drinking water is available only to 19.7% within the premises (NFHS- 3, 2005-2006)
- 77.4% do not have toilets.
- 87.5% use smoke-emanating fuel
- Electricity is available only to 51.7%
➢ 44.98% have attained financial inclusion (Statistical Profile of Scheduled Tribes in India, 2013, Ministry of tribal affairs).

These indicators make it imperative to initiate work with the communities to achieve inclusive growth and progress. The emphasis would be on comprehensive development in the areas of livelihood, education, health, nutrition, sanitation, gender, etc. Capacity building of women, social, economic and political empowerment would be the base and the focus would be on accessing rights and entitlements, equitable access and ownership over natural resources and assets and increased access to credit, markets and bank linkages. Children, youth and elderly would also be addressed through various programmes to achieve improved outcomes. There would be a sub-assignment in SRLM’s with a tribal predominant population with dedicated budgetary provisions. A national pilot is being implemented in Attapady block, Palakkad district of Kerala to effectively design and implement the programme. Modules, protocols and operational strategies and non-negotiable would be designed for carrying forward the lessons to other tribal and particularly vulnerable areas of the country. The lessons from the Attapady block would be upscaled to other parts of the country.

**Vision**

The project aims to alleviate the social and economic status of Irula, Muduga and Kurumba tribal communities of Attapady. Sustainable livelihoods like agriculture and allied activities need to be developed where the community can be self-reliant. Women’s institutions would be built up strongly to be able to lead towards total financial inclusion leading towards poverty alleviation and social development. Awareness generation would be enhanced on all issues for the
communities to be able to access all entitlements and schemes. The institutions would enable women to access credit, engage in sustainable livelihood, build up entrepreneurship, marketing and negotiation capacities and capacity to assert their agency in all realms from the domestic front to the various forums like the area of work, panchayath, various departments, etc. The social, economic and political status would be enhanced and they are able to assert their cultural identity as tribal community. The project area would be an immersion site for the community resource persons from the most vulnerable tribal communities of India. Similarly, the community resource person’s in this area can engage in the mobilization and institution building processes in other parts of the country. Modules and protocols would be developed for building the capacities of the community resource person’s and professionals for this upscaling process. The needs of the other vulnerable areas would be understood before the mobilization processes are undertaken.

Expected Achievements

- **Strong and effective exclusive institution of women from the tribal communities which would develop negotiation power, ability to critically analyze their own situation and collectively work towards social transformation**
- **Institution at the ooru level and panchayat level for tribal women would enable them to access all entitlements and schemes of each department and engage in the proactive process of preparation of tribal sub-plan.**
- **Institutions ensure availability of nutritious food, access to health care, education, etc.**
Institutions prevent social issues like child marriage, domestic violence, trafficking and other forms of violence which affect the status of women

- Skill training to youth
- Livelihoods in agriculture and micro-enterprises that would lead to economic development
- Funds disbursed to the community
- Attappady developed as the immersion site for the community resource persons and professionals working in the extremely vulnerable tribal areas of the country

Attapady- Socio-economic profile
Attappady, awe-inspiring and ethereal, alluring to any human being was in the midst of controversy for extremely contradictory reasons in 2013-2014. A magical surreal world which holds charm and lessons for any learner in natural eco-systems and diversity of life has been the location for designed exploitation and poverty for several decades now.

Blessed with diversity in flora and fauna, it is located in the east sloping sub-plateau in Kerala nestling below the southwestern corner of the Nilgiri segment of the Western Ghats and in between the pristine beauty of Silent valley and the Nilgiris. The tribal community reveres the Malliswara peak and the traditional beliefs even prior to the Madhav Gadgil and the Kasturi Rengan report protecting the eco-sensitive Western Ghats were prevalent; one of them being was that the houses can only be constructed from the valley where they can see the Malliswara peak.

One of the few tribal predominant blocks of Kerala, the block has Irula, Muduga and Kurumba communities. The population of Irulas is 26521, Mudugas is 4668 and Kurumbas is 2251. The tribal population which was 100% in 1931 has at present reduced to 40.98% in 2001. (Adv Clifton D’Rozario; Deaths of unnamed children: Malnutrition and Destitution among Adivasis in Kerala, May 2013).

Series of development programmes from the Kundas soil conservation plan in the 1950s, Malliswara project and Area hill area development society had been designed for the development of Attappady. The programmes have succeeded in regenerating ecological base, natural resources conservation, preventing soil erosion, improving the quality of life and to some extent livelihoods but not brought substantial change in the lives of the tribal community.
The programmes designed for the community by all the government departments intrinsically have entrenched interests. Land alienation and vesting of power and authority in the settlers has deliberately inflicted exploitative mechanisms into every programme. Every development programme seems to have been implemented for the improvement in the lives of the settlers. Exploitation and unjust practices bound in the attitude, practices, behavior, design, and implementation of every single programme.

I) Comprehensive tribal and particularly vulnerable tribal development programme
In the context of infant mortality deaths which took place in 2013, NRLM designed a pilot project which aimed at building institutions of the community, enhancing solidarity and capacity to assert their identities and claim their spaces in all public forums and institutions and access their rights and entitlements. The project would also serve as the immersion site for the rest of the country. Protocols and modules were to be developed for upscaling work among tribal communities in the rest of the country.

Despite the decentralization experience which had been successful in all parts of the Kerala, it was a disaster in Attappady where there was not a single programme which was favorably designed for the community. A review of the Kudumbashree programme before the initiation of the project showed extremely poor results in outreach. Community Developed Society and Area Development Society indulged in the same prejudiced behavior and practices and deliberately saw to it that no programme benefits the community. Despite Government Order which clearly stipulates reservation for Schedule Caste /Scheduled Tribe communities in CDS and ADS, this was not adhered to. Even in Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme, it was seen that the community does not benefit and the work benefits the settlers. It was a severe case of developmental corruption in all arenas.

II) Initial entry point activities

a) Participatory design of the project

The pilot project which was initiated in 2013 began with the delegation of a mission staff to the block to understand the social, economic, cultural background of the area, the issues and dynamics behind the development disaster. The design
of the project was undertaken after making field visits and residing in the villages. Residing in the villages, having food with the community and spending quality time discussing the socio-economic issues and understanding the cultural background can be a major breakthrough in building confidence and trust.

b) Understanding the imminent needs of the community

The interest to listen, respect and acknowledge without a judgmental approach is a non-negotiable. There is no need to jump into conclusions. Dialogues and discussions with patience to understand the complexities and socio-economic-political context in which developmental programmes were designed and implemented would give fair idea of what the imminent needs of the community are and how it can be prioritized. There needs to be faith in the community’s innate capacity to prioritize their needs.

It is important and imperative to acknowledge the opinion of all important stakeholders- the village elders, the traditional healers, the women, the men and the youth, adolescents and children (people in all life-cycle stages) and the traditional and cultural institutions to be able to design an effective programme.

Mobilization in Attappady began by visiting all hamlets, listening to the community’s needs, residing with them, understanding their lives needs, issues and talking to all local and cultural institutions. Starvation and malnourishment was identified as the primary issue. Infant mortality was the burning issue at that point of time and the major reasons traced were malnourishment, starvation, child marriages, poor reproductive health, poor spacing in between children, adolescent health, anemia, alcoholism and resultant domestic violence. In order
to improve the lives and health condition of women and children, it was decided to initiate community kitchen.

III) Community kitchen- Addressing right to food and malnourishment

Community kitchen was conceived and designed to cater to the imminent need of the community in order to prevent malnourishment and infant mortality. It led to massive mobilization. The first meeting convened in the community health centre hall had 300 participants. NHGs were formed to start community kitchens and basically for neft transaction of amount to the NHGs for procurement of vegetables, firewood and cooking, etc. Social mobilization was achieved rapidly
and the ownership of the community was overwhelming. The faith reposed in the women of the community to manage the kitchen, handle money and maintain accounts had far yielding results.

The proposal submitted to the Kerala State government was entitled community kitchen and resource hub. The programme was supported in a cyclical manner by Integrated Tribal Development Programme, Kudumbashree Mission, Social Security Mission and Social Justice Department. The state government earmarked and disbursed 6 crores annually for the past three years. Following discussions with the community, community kitchen was conceived as the revival of earlier custom of having food together, sharing food especially delicacies like pig meat, deer meat and edible leaves. Cultivating in the fields and sharing food was the way of life. This was followed by attam and pattu (musical and dance performance). The cultural performances revived led to the resurgence of solidarity and assertion of tribal identity.

The community kitchen provided a platform to revive the traditional practice of sharing and caring. The idea was to provide food to pregnant and lactating women, senior citizens, children upto 6 years of age, mentally ill, physically challenged, etc. The food cooked were traditional items like kali, which is a mix of ragi and rice and pulses. Cooking kali in huge quantities and using kada kol (rod used for churning) to stir it brought in immense happiness. The food was served to a population of 10 to 100. The community kitchen also served as a platform for women and the community to come together and discuss their issues. At present the community kitchen caters to
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of community Kitchens</th>
<th>175</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Beneficiaries</td>
<td>15049</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Community kitchen was managed by Integrated Community Development Society in the beginning but discrepancies in the community receiving food provisions due to irregular receipt of food provisions by Maveli (supply co) and corruption in payment of wages to the community, it was shifted to Kudumbashree Mission.

Community kitchen enabled-

- Addressing the right to food and countering malnourishment
- Mobilizing the community into institutions
- Questioning and claiming the services of the Anganwadis
- Providing/extending source of livelihood, community kitchen as a tool

Community kitchen was run as a self-managed micro-enterprise where the neighborhood groups from the hamlets purchased provisions from Maveli, collected firewood, purchased vegetables and cooked for the beneficiaries. They are paid through NEFT transaction and all the NHGs manage the kitchen.

Though in the beginning, the food was cooked only in the evening, it was later extended to provide food three times a day. Following the educational intervention programme called Munnetam, it was learned that children did not
have access to food three times a day and breakfast was provided in the morning through bridge courses.

In the fourth year, the community kitchen is being transformed into nutritional education centre. Nutritional Education centre would be a platform for knowledge dissemination about nutrition, food, traditional recipes with millets like ragi ada, ragi vada, ragi puttu, ragi upma, chama upma, chama rice, bajra rice, jowar rice, maize, edible leaves of ash gourd, pumpkin, amaranthus, cowpea, etc, sanitation, hygiene, menstrual hygiene, organic agriculture, pesticides, etc. It is also reinforcing the traditional knowledge related to diversity of food, nutrition, agriculture and agricultural practices related to it. Community kitchen would be managed as nutritional catering centre with special care of pregnant, lactating and anemic children. Special focus would be on addressing specific nutritional deficiencies. The responsibility of identifying the deserving and catering to their nutritional deficiencies will be the responsibility of the oorusamithi.

It enhanced women’s mobility, visibility to places like the banks, supply co. shops, Kudumbashree office and the great opportunity to manage a programme and enhance leadership qualities. The seeds of inclusion and social empowerment were sown as community kitchen was the platform for initial capacity building programmes.
IV) Resource hub

The proposal was designed as community kitchen and resource hub. The community constantly spoke about how there was a lag in the allocation of projects and its utilization/implementation. Most of the projects, schemes and services lapsed as the community was not informed about it. The officers in charge of implementation never informed the community about it and they never claimed any schemes or services. There was no knowledge and information dissemination about policies, rights and entitlements and hence the community would not claim or access them. Hence, the right to know their rights and entitlements and developing capacity to access and claim came up as an emerging
need. Though oorukoottams are the sole authorized agency to make tribal sub plans, the participation is minimal and the schemes have been constantly lapsing.

Newspapers like Mathrubhumi and Manorama and employment news were provided in the hamlets and the community started using these papers. The community kitchen and resource hub was used as a platform by the animators to mobilize the community into institutions.

It could be seen that young men and women started reading newspapers and this also paved way for PSC coaching. Some hamlets witnessed collective reading.

Block Resource centre is the evolution of the resource hub and aims at knowledge management and dissemination.

V) Social Mobilization

As the imminent need of the community was addressed, there was a leap of faith and the idea of exclusive tribal neighbourhood groups was introduced. As neighbourhood group was a non-negotiable for the management of community kitchen, women came forward to form community kitchens. Visits were made to all hamlets to mobilize and explain the significance of institution building and need for solidarity to access rights and entitlements and achieve empowerment.

The success of mobilization was due to the solidarity of the traditional institution and the kinship which existed, the project which was designed exclusively for the tribal communities and catered to their vulnerabilities, community cadres who belonged to the community, were well versed in understanding the cultural
context and spoke the language of the community. Participatory planning is the base on which the entire project rests.

VI) Animators and community resource persons (Community cadres)

Community resource persons were selected from the community. The criteria in selection were that they should belong to the community and should have prior experience of working with the community, language and ability to understand the social, economic and political context and convince the community about the rationale behind mobilization and institution building. Community Resource Persons have acted as catalysts in mobilization, institution building and capacity building. Capacities have been enhanced to a great extent as the trainings have been in the language of the communities. In Mahila Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP), community resource persons have been elderly women who have been engaged in the traditional form of cultivation and can inspire farmers to undertake cultivation. Literacy had not been the criterion for selection of community resource persons.

Review and reflection and constant discussion on various themes has been the guiding force behind capacity enhancement of community resource persons. At present there are 120 animators and 62 community resource persons. The community cadres have become specialists in various themes like Institution Building, capacity building and social audit, social development, education, health and livelihoods comprising of Panchayati Raj, mnrega and agriculture, cattle rearing, ntfp and convergence. Their capacities and vision regarding the themes have been built up and they would be resource persons for training various resource groups of women in the institutions.
VII) Institution Building

a) Exclusive four tier institutions

A Government Order (G.O.) was issued by Kerala state government which explicitly states the concept and rationale behind building exclusive institutions for the tribal community, roles and responsibilities of the institutions. The GO created an enabling environment in building institutions of tribal communities.
Despite 50% reservation for tribal and dalit communities stipulated in Kudumbashree, the tribal communities have not been included. The Community Development Societies and Area Development Societies of Kudumbashree were dominated by settlers and there has been elite capture of all welfare programmes and schemes and services and entitlements. All the institutions to be built from the NHGs to the block samithi were exclusively for the tribal community only.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Particulars</th>
<th>Agali</th>
<th>Pudhur</th>
<th>Sholayur</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood groups</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oorusamithis</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of members</td>
<td>2694</td>
<td>2357</td>
<td>2236</td>
<td>7287</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Four tier institutions have been formed with 589 nhgs, 120 oorusamithis, 4 panchayat samithis and one block samithi. A special panchayat samithi has been formed for the pvtg communities. The nhgs cater to total saturation rather one member from one family norm. Senior women, mentally ill women have been included. At present, NJGs of elderly men are being formed.

The savings has increased to Rs 1,37,01,447 in 2017. Internal lending has increased to Rs. 1, 07, 82070 in 2017. The repayment has increased to Rs. 40, 08, 624. Social audit conducted in 2015 shows that the internal savings in being effectively used for consumption needs, education and health needs judiciously and is being effectively utilized. There is considerable reduction in the dependence on micro-financiers.
| Total Savings | 60,87,793 | 28,61,950 | 47,51,704 | 1,37,01447 |
| Internal lending | 54,87,498 | 15,73,823 | 37,20,749 | 1,07,82070 |
| Repayment | 21,64,732 | 5,14,343 | 13,29,549 | 40,08,624 |

b) Organizational structure

The neighbourhood group can comprise from 5 to 15 women depending on the population of women. Among the particularly vulnerable tribal groups with smaller population, they can have small groups with minimum of 5 women to 10 women. Due to large distances, the women living in proximity can come together. The village organization called the oorusamithi is a consolidation of NHGs and panchayat samithi is a consolidation of oorusamithis exclusively of tribal communities. The executive committee can comprise of President, Secretary, Vice-President, Treasurer and thematic volunteers would be on health, education, work, panchayati raj, mnerga and convergence and social development including gender. The panchayat samithi comprises of office bearers like president, secretary, joint secretary, treasurer and thematic volunteers of health, education, panchayati raj, etc. The block samithi is consolidation of panchayat samithis and the executive committee can comprise of President, Secretary, Vice-president, treasurer, joint secretary and thematic volunteers.

c) Process of formation of village organization, panchayath level federation and block level federation

In workshops and through participatory exercises like natural resource mapping and group discussion on roles and responsibilities of institutions, the village
organization was formed and executive committee of the oorusamithis was selected.

The exercise on natural resource mapping gave a clear idea about enabling the community to reflect on the availability and depletion of natural resources, the area in which cultivation can be undertaken and the dependence on agriculture, cattle rearing and collection of non-timber forest produce and medicinal plants, kind of crops whether traditional crops like millets, pulses, vegetables, edible leaves or cash crops can be cultivated. Livelihoods and availability of sustained income were clearly understood. In the workshop one of the discussions clearly outlined their social issues and their perception about the role of the institutions in resolving social issues.

With respect to adherence to panchsutra, the particularly vulnerable tribal groups could also start savings using seeds or grains. As their recourse to cash was extremely limited and understanding of a monetized economy was farfetched and their value for seeds of millets, pulses, honey and medicinal plants was highly placed, they were encouraged to start savings using their own valued resource.

The barrier in building institutions was the resistance by CDS and ADS in the formation of exclusive institutions. The CDS and ADS exerted power on the tribal community and discriminatory behavior was meted out and collection of MIS and meeting for collection of MIS was a point for location of exercise of power.

Educated animators from the community formed the main catalysts in mobilizing and forming of exclusive institutions despite severe resistance by CDS and ADS. Training of animators in facilitation of workshops for formation of vos and panchayath level federations was conducted and the mobilization was complete.
in all oorusamithis. It was a difficult task to separate women who were earlier part of NHGs with the general community. The women from the general community dissuaded them not to form exclusive institutions as they feared that tribal women would receive the benefit of the project that they are not part of. The attitude of the women had to be changed as there were stereotypical perceptions that tribal women cannot manage their own institutions, cannot write books and cannot have their own accounts. These erroneous perceptions were overcome.

Opening bank accounts was a difficult task as the bankers felt that the tribal communities did not have the capacity to manage their accounts. The NHGs and oorusamithis had to write their minutes several times before the bank accepted their minutes. The problem had to be taken up with the local self-government Principal Secretary and discussion initiated at the SLBC for resolving the issue. At present all the NHGs, oorusamithis, panchayath level federations and block level federations have their own accounts and they are involved in NEFT transaction.

As part of the communitisation efforts, the community resource persons, co-ordinators have been transferred to the panchayat samithi. The project management unit has been transferred to the block samithi and the co-ordinators and the young professionals work under the block samithi. The honorarium is provided by the panchayat samithi and block samithi respectively.

A separate operational manual explicitly stating the roles, functions and financial responsibilities has been drafted and published. A financial manual has also been issued to explicitly state the functions, roles and responsibilities of the PMU.

The NHG meets every week and the executive committee of the oorusamithi, panchayat samithi and block samithi meet once a month. In the Minutes book, the financial resolutions are mentioned and along with those social developmental issues like education, health, panchayati raj, gender issues, etc. are clearly mentioned. There is constant follow-up of all action to be taken.

VII) Capacity Building
Capacity building would enhance knowledge and information to enable access to rights and entitlements. Attaining social, economic and political empowerment was the main goal of the programme. Social empowerment would include decision making with respect to education, health, fertility, bodily control, marriage, etc. to improve quality of life and well-being. Similarly, economic empowerment would include improving livelihoods, enhancement of income, equal wages for equal work, control over income and earnings, access to credit and market linkages, value addition, etc. Political empowerment would include decision making with respect to participation in gram sabha, working group, development seminar and integration in gram panchayath development plan. It is enhanced capacity to plan and vision for their own panchayaths and access rights and entitlements from various institutions.

Orientation, awareness building, training, social action are key components of capacity building. Orientation is inevitable as the cadres from the community come from the same socio-economic –cultural milieu where entrenched interests have induced exploitative and stereotypical thinking that has subjected them to lack of self-confidence in themselves. There is a need to break the prejudices and stereotypes imposed on the community and undertake an analysis of poverty and vulnerability and the socio-economic condition that they are placed in, understand the dynamics and interrelation of how vulnerabilities are augmented due to inequitable distribution of resources, flaws in the design and implementation of developmental programmes and the inevitability of a plan designed by people experiencing vulnerabilities and deprivation.
The orientations began with community cadre who can be endowed with the capacity to critically think, analyze and break the barriers of stereotypical thinking and prejudices. They were oriented and trained to make an analysis of poverty, vulnerability and its relation to their socio-economic condition. They were oriented and trained in the importance of building exclusive institutions due to the capture of all schemes and services by the existing institutions like the CDS and Ads and lack of inclusiveness. The exploitation emanating from issues like land alienation and capture of all schemes and services is reflected in all institutions. It was important to enhance self-confidence, break stereotypes and convince the cadres that the community has the capacity to build its own institutions and undertake both financial and social management of its own institutions.

The community resource persons were trained in the basic mission and vision of NRLM like revival of identity, enhancing solidarity, building institutions of the community to capitalize on all resources, rights and entitlements, enhancing capacities that will enhance the agency of women and enable them to make their own decisions, developing plans with a bottom-up approach and funds to the community for meeting vulnerabilities, developing livelihoods and enhancement of income.

Revival of identity and enabling the realization that respect for their culture and livelihoods and socio-economic values and philosophy of life was most significant. The notion that the monetized economy and culture of the mainstream that it is superior and they need to imbibe this superior culture was strongly imposed on them. Hence, unlearning of the conditioning that their culture was inferior and
through mainstream education they would be able to imbibe values of the superior culture; was imperative. Hence, unlearning and revival of faith in their own identity and the fundamental tenets of their vision and philosophy was focused upon through trainings of the community cadres.

As mobilization could not begin homogeneously by adherence to non-negotiable of the panchasutra, mobilization into solidarity groups for combating malnourishment through community kitchen and curbing infant mortality rate was emphasized. Mobilization of infants and children for health care in the nutritional rehabilitation centre for screening of malnourished children and improving the nutritional and health status was also an entry point activity.

Cadres were trained in the importance of institutions in achieving social and economic progress and gaining access to rights and entitlements. Trainings in basic non-negotiable of regular savings, regular meetings and internal lending and repayment and maintaining books of accounts have been imparted. The importance of regular savings was imbibed in short duration as they were dependent on micro-financiers with exorbitant rates of interest. Hence, breaking this dependence was a major outcome in instilling faith in non-negotiable.

Capacity building on social development issues like health, food, nutrition and gender was integrated with the training on non-negotiable. This enabled women to understand that enhancement of decision making was important for strengthening institutions and leading to economic progress.

Thematic trainings with respect to natural resources management and agriculture (organic methods) were facilitated from the level of community cadres to the NHG members. Due to various developmental programmes, the community had
lost faith in their own traditional method of cultivation. The farmers in the block had hardly any support from the agriculture department due to non-payment of taxes and lack of individual property rights. Hence the focus was on revival of panchakrishi (traditional form of cultivation using mix of millets, pulses, vegetables, tubers, edible leaves which would focus on ensuring food security and enhancement of nutritional security. The training focuses on the interrelation between agriculture and natural resources and how significant it was to protect forests, avail of common property resources and protect agricultural land from wild animal attack. The relevance of their earlier methods using natural pesticides would be revived. Capacity building about impact of use of chemical fertilizers and significance of multiple cropping could be impressed upon the participants.

Training in use of natural fertilizers and pesticides have been imparted / facilitated at the oorusamithi and NHG level using demonstrations. In the second year, discussions have begun about seed rate and gradually moving from broadcasting to SRI methods.

Capacity Building in social development issues whether related to access and control over basic assets, natural resources, health care and health services, education, livelihood, income, issues like child marriages, education of girl child, trafficking, institutions for children, child rights and life skills and violation of child rights, domestic violence, trafficking, substance abuse and alcoholism has been imparted and discussions on these issues has been integrated in ongoing review and reflections.

Workshops with respect to gender focused on gender and natural resources, gender and poverty and vulnerability and gradually moved to concepts of gender
division of labour and violation of rights including domestic violence, child marriages, lack of retention in school, lack of inclusive environment, etc.

Capacity building programmes have been held in the component of health with respect to maternal and child health, sexual and reproductive health, menstrual health, sanitation, mental health, various kinds of illnesses and treatment methods. The health animators were provided training and they had to facilitate sessions at the vo and shg level.

Social empowerment has been the base on which the entire development programme has been designed. The programme has led to greater solidarity, enhancement of articulation skills, capacity to critically look at their own status, developmental programmes and its flaws and the impact on their lives. It has enhanced confidence to express themselves.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capacity Building</th>
<th>Number of trainings</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  Training NHG members</td>
<td>466 trainings</td>
<td>9320 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  Training NHG members for Oorousamithi formation</td>
<td>131 trainings</td>
<td>5170 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  Training NHG leaders</td>
<td>19 trainings</td>
<td>1358 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  Training Oorousamithi</td>
<td>42 trainings (83)</td>
<td>1568 participants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Training Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Program Description</th>
<th>Trainings/Programs</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Training Vo accountants</td>
<td>42 trainings (83 oorusamithis)</td>
<td>1568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Training Panchayat Samithi leaders</td>
<td>6 trainings (3 batches)</td>
<td>308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Training in micro-plan</td>
<td>47 trainings</td>
<td>1724</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Training CDS and ADS</td>
<td>2 trainings</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Training PRIs</td>
<td>3 programmes</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Training bankers</td>
<td>3 programmes</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Training stakeholders from various departments</td>
<td>3 programmes</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### VIII) Funds to the community

#### Criteria for disbursement of fund

NRLM believes that the institutions have the capacity to plan for their own development and enhancement of livelihoods. There are variety of funds which are disbursed to the community using micro-plan. Micro-plan is the plan for each
family prepared by the institution and it looks at aspects like access to food, nutrition, drinking water, educational level of the family, drop-out, health issues, access to health facilities, malnourishment, infant mortality, maternal mortality, institutional delivery, livelihoods, income, assets like house, land, equipments, etc. The funds are disbursed to the institutions and then disbursed to the members. This enables the community to plan and decide for their own development.

**Revolving fund**

Revolving fund at the rate of Rs 10,000 was released on the formation of the NHGs and subject to auditing at the PMU to see that they are adhering to panchsutra and at present the auditing is done by the oorusamithi. The revolving fund has been used for basic consumption needs, education and health and tide over vulnerabilities.

**Vulnerability Reduction Fund**

Vulnerability reduction fund is disbursed to the oorusamithis on the basis of the micro-plan prepared. An amount of one lakh is released to the oorusamithi and in turn an amount of 37000 Rs or 37500 is released to the NHGs based on vulnerability index. Vulnerability indicators have been designed and vetted by the oorusamithis. The vulnerability index comprises of indicators like being a widow, deserted, divorced, single, differentially abled, chronically ill, mentally ill, illiterate, having only girl children, unemployed labourer, landless, etc. These indicators are clubbed with economic indicators. The oorusamithi in turn will disburse it to the NHGs based on the large number of members with severe vulnerabilities and the NHGs disburse it to individual members who are more
vulnerable. The amount disbursed would be Rs 15000 to Rs 17500 each member. The amount has been disbursed as revolving fund and mainly used for education, health and livelihoods. The criterion for repayment has been fixed as two and half years.

**Community investment fund**

Community Investment fund is disbursed to the panchayat samithi and this is in turn given to the NHGs. An amount of Rs 60,000 is released to each NHG and this is basically for enhancement in livelihood and augmentation in income. The amount is revolving and has to be paid to the panchayath samithi in a period of 5 years. The NHGs have to submit their micro-plans and business plan to the oorusamithis which appraises and gives approval and submits to PMU. The business plan comprises of the details about the livelihood or enterprise that they will undertake, the resources available, the raw material required, the capital required, the market linkages, value addition that can be achieved, labour costs, etc. CIF has been mainly used for agriculture, cattle rearing and goat rearing.

**Livelihood Fund**

Livelihood fund has been disbursed to the panchayat samithi and this in turn will be disbursed to the NHGs. The NHGs and oorusamithi have been selected on the basis of their record of engagement in livelihood and micro-enterprises and augmentation of income. The NHGs or the oorusamithi will submit their business plan and the NHGs and the oorusamithi will be provided the amount after grading. The rest of the amount required for the business will be extended
through bank linkage or convergence. The amount would be revolving and returned through the panchayath samithi.

The below mentioned table shows the amount of funds disbursed to the NHGs, oorousamithis and panchayath samithis, the purpose for which it was utilized and its repayment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funds</th>
<th>2015-2016</th>
<th>2016-2017</th>
<th>2017-2018</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CORPUS FUND</td>
<td>29,50,000</td>
<td>15,20,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>44,80,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Producer Fund</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start-up cost</td>
<td>67,50,000</td>
<td>37,00,000</td>
<td>10,50,000</td>
<td>1,15,00,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulnerability Reduction Fund</td>
<td>63,00,000</td>
<td>55,69,000</td>
<td>27,30,000</td>
<td>1,45,99,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Investment fund</td>
<td>75,60,000</td>
<td>2,36,33,548</td>
<td>2,16,76,701</td>
<td>5,01,10,257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livelihood Fund</td>
<td></td>
<td>29,00,000</td>
<td>39,50,000</td>
<td>68,50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,35,60,000.00</td>
<td>3,73,22,548</td>
<td>2,94,31,701</td>
<td>9,03,14,249</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**IX) Social Development**

Social inclusion, social development and social empowerment have been the key focal areas of the project. It is based on the assumption that addressing social development would lead to economic progress and development. Hence, areas of food, nutrition, health, education and working on social issues like domestic violence, child abuse have received sustained attention. Human development intervention has been the prime focus.
Health interventions

In 2013, as part of the Jatak and Janani scheme, it was found that there are 500 severely malnourished and moderately malnourished children. The Jatak system was developed by Riddhi Foundation for National Health Mission. The children’s weight and length was to be measured. There was great reluctance on the part of the community to go to hospitals due to the alien environment and the indifferent behavior and attitude of JPHNs who were from the general community. With the list generated in Jatak system all children were mobilized to PHCs and Nutritional Rehabilitation centre. The most reluctant mothers were cajoled to come to primary health centres and their weight was recorded.
Pregnant women from most remote hamlets were mobilized for regular check-up and institutional deliveries conducted. This was done successfully by the project.

The project began with mobilization for RSBY. Most of the community members obtained RSBY cards. At present, health interventions are being made in the areas by mobilizing children who are anemic and mentally ill women to hospitals. Women with mental health illness have been taken to mental hospitals in Thrissur medical college for treatment. NRLM could ensure mobilization and access of all sam and mam children into NRC’s and instill faith in the health services.

**X) Block Resource centre-**

Block resource centre has been envisaged/ visioned as a centre / platform which would disseminate information on the rights and entitlements, schemes and services of various departments. Rights with respect to right to education, right to work, right to food and nutrition, health, forest rights act, protection from social and economic exploitation would be discussed. Laws with respect to domestic violence act, POCSO, dowry act, child marriages, etc. would be discussed. Tribal sub-plan, plans of the local self-government. It would also focus on preparation of vulnerability reduction plan and integrating with gram panchayat development plan and tribal sub plan. The knowledge available with respect to natural resources, agriculture, cultural aspects would be documented and preserved. Good practices with respect to institution building, capacity building and social development would be documented. Capacity building has been facilitated with respect to rights and entitlements and information has been disseminated. There has been data collection from various departments on schemes and services.
XI) Centres of excellence

Capacity building to build resource groups of women on various themes like gender, education, health, legal rights

Eight ooru samithis are being developed as centres of excellence, two under each panchayat samithi in order to conduct trainings. The oorusamithis are being entrusted with the responsibility of undertaking trainings in all aspects like the basic concepts of the institutions, funds to the institutions, social development and livelihood issues. The ooru samithis would also be demonstration sites where the functioning of NHG, oorusamithis, social development and livelihood interventions can be seen.

Capacity building is being undertaken to build resource groups of women on themes like gender, education, health, natural resources, agriculture, legal rights, etc. They would be given in depth training till they become thematic experts. A series of social action and interventions would be initiated with respect to each theme to attain social development.

Women from the NHGs would be trained in themes like health, education, livelihoods including agriculture, cattle rearing, non-timber forest produce, Panchayati Raj, Nrega, social development including gender. The trainings would be residential and would be facilitated by thematic experts. The women from each NHG who are thematic volunteers would come together to form the resource group on each theme after the training. Resource group refers to a group of women who are trained, have knowledge and information specific to the theme and are equipped to work on action plan and series of activities related to the specific theme. They would have received knowledge and information specific
to their theme and would also engage in activities and action related to their theme.

The Panchayati raj resource group of thematic volunteers from NHGs would work on strategies to achieve convergence in the plan of the panchayat and how it can be implemented to address the vulnerability reduction plan of each panchayat. Similarly, the resource group of women would work together at the level of the oorusamithi and the panchayatsamithi and engage in initiating action and activity with respect to their specific theme.

The health resource group would be trained in aspects of health, reproductive health, sexual health, maternal health, nutrition, mental health, health care and services. They would meet regularly at the hamlet level to have discussions on the health issues in the hamlet and to initiate series of action and activities to address health issues.

The resource group on education would be trained in the fundamental aspects of Right to Education, enrolment, retention, infrastructure, quality, inclusive environment and provision of mid-day meals, action and activities to ensure universalization of good quality school education. It would also be trained in life-skills and rights for the children and need for continuous mentoring and support for them. The resource group would ensure action and activities in building a child tracking mechanism and see that the rights of the children are ensured and initiate action and protection for children in need of special care and protection.

The resource group on gender would be trained on gender and poverty, gender and vulnerability, gender division of labour and economic empowerment, gender and violence, patriarchy, stereotyping, empowerment, etc. They would initiate
action and activities with respect to social issues like domestic violence, child marriages, alcoholism, substance abuse, etc.

The resource group on agriculture, cattle rearing and ntfp would be trained in natural methods of farming, enhancement of agricultural production, processing, branding, marketing, growing medicinal plants, social forestry, utilization of common property resources, processing, cattle rearing, training in veterinary services for women in cattle rearing, backward-forward linkages, etc.

**XII) Nutritional Education Centre**

Community kitchen are being transformed into nutrition education centre. Nutritional Education centre aims at enhancing knowledge and awareness about traditional food which comprised of millets like ragi, chama, jowar, bajra, vegetables, edible leaves, pulses and tubers and the cultivation for achieving self-reliance with respect to consumption. NEC has begun with the training of trainers which consists of community cadres who would in turn train the community in centres of excellence. The module comprises of aspects like food, nutrition, organic cultivation, junk food, 1000 days, health and hygiene, menstrual hygiene, traditional recipes, etc. NEC will provide training and through the oorusamithi ensure that the most deserving category of the population like the pregnant woman, lactating mothers, children, adolescents are consuming tri-coloured food three times a day. It will promote production of organic cultivation of pancha Krishi to ensure food self-reliance for the community in food production. It will ensure that pregnant women and lactating mothers are taken care of and their health and nourishment ensured during the first thousand days. It will ensure that children get nutritious food and rescued from the risk of malnourishment.
The women and children in risk will be administered clinically to improve their health. Adolescent children will be extended life skills training in order to understand the importance of menstrual hygiene. They will be taught the importance of menstruation in their lives and respect for their own body and selves and protection from all forms of abuse.

XII) Educational Interventions
A study was conducted regarding the educational status of children. Thousand children were interviewed. It was found that most of the children studied in the hostels in Attappady and in hostels spread over the state. Several children were also drop-outs. There were no details about children and no child tracking system had been developed. Due to lack of inclusive environment in the schools, several children dropped out of education. The hostels were overcrowded with no basic facilities for children like bathrooms, toilets, study rooms, etc. Children also studied in private schools and hostels throughout the state without basic facilities and many children were subjected to partiality and discrimination and various kinds of abuse.

This study was presented before the Agei (education committee) and the women presented their opinions about the study. Agei (mother’s) committee comprises of women looking after education in the executive committee. They were trained in the basic tenets of Right to Education and how the mothers committee can function like the school management committee to look at infrastructure in the school, student teacher ratio, absenteeism of students, lack of toilets and purified drinking water, lack of teachers, lack of inclusiveness leading to dropping out of children, lack of quality in education.

A) Munnetam- Supplementary education for 10th standard

Education has been identified as the formidable determinant for social transformation. Quality in education is badly affected and there is denial from the education department that the system has maintained status quo by affirming the stereotypes and entrenched interests and lack of efforts to make systemic changes. After several rounds of deliberations with education department and
sub-collector, NRLM decided to develop a model catering to quality of education and breaking the stereotypes that tribal children are not capable of learning and are lazy. So supplementary education was provided for 10\textsuperscript{th} standard on Saturday and Sunday and the resource support came from Centre for Information and Guidance. Children were academically trained in subjects like Mathematics, English, Hindi, science and social studies and the score of children has excelled. Children would be seen learning throughout the day and early hours of the day. It broke the stereotype that children were poor in learning and lazy and showed how concentrated effort could improve the quality of education. The children have excelled in learning.

**B) Agei Committee (mothers committee)**

Agei committee comprises of women from the education sub-committee of women. The agei committee is being trained to look into educational aspects like implementation of RTE like infrastructure including toilets, classrooms, learning aids, proper provisioning of food like ensuring quality in mid-day meal, infrastructure in hostels, quality meals, library facilities, sanitary napkins, inclusive classrooms, regularity of teachers etc. The agei committee will observe, initiate action and contribute to the school development plan.

**C) Suicide prevention among adolescents**

Suicide rate among adolescent girls was very high in 2013. The reasons for the suicide being love affairs and sometimes associated with land alienation. Low self-esteem of girl children is a major reason for the incidence of high suicide. Programmes related to life-skills and child rights were facilitated for girl children in all wards and panchayats. Focused group discussion was held to understand the
issues and one to one discussion was also conducted to realize their issues. This was followed by a series of action by counseling children, preventing child marriages. Focused group discussions helped children to be able to ventilate their emotions and the hope that there would be a mechanism to express their emotions.

D) Child Resource Centre

This was followed by setting up child resource centre. Child Resource Centre is a platform, forum and space where children can express themselves, their anxieties, pain and suffering and a space to explain their joy and creativity. It is a platform to express their talents and creativities. The child resource centre will also disseminate information and awareness on child rights and skills. A theatre workshop was held to train youth, children and women in the production of a play which was performed in all hamlets. The play Nammude Jadd focused on the issues of child marriage, alcoholism and suicide prevention. It synthesizes traditional form of music and dance and integrates it with theatre. The theatre proved effective in raising discussions on the issue of child marriage, suicide prevention and alcoholism in hostels, schools and hamlets. Children reacted sharply that they would prevent child marriages and fight against alcoholism in their families. This was followed by workshops for children on the issue of child rights and life-skills. The theatre group performed in various districts.

Child resource centre has taken consistent steps in preventing child marriages by ensuring that both the girl and boy children are brought back to education through bridge course and bridge school and counseling the parents and extended relatives and impressing upon them the importance of education.
sexual abuse prevention is also focused upon and children who have suffered abuse are extended succor. The children who were mal treated in Ashramam school were brought from juvenile home and mainstreamed through bridge school. The Kurumba panchayat samithi raised the issue as the children had been maltreated by their teachers and they were booked falsely under POCSO. The entire Kurumba community raised their voices and the Kurumba panchayat samithi could rescue the children.

XIII) Bridge school
Bridge school is an attempt to integrate drop-out children into mainstream education. Due to lack of inclusiveness in the school environment, attitude and behavior of teachers, absenteeism, social issues faced by children, the children tend to drop-out and retention becomes extremely difficult. Bridge school provides residential facilities to children who have been pushed out of education. It is an endeavor to extend academic inputs to the children. It began in the camp mode to attract children to learning. Resource persons like Dr. Satishchandran and Dr. Santhi S, Natural scientists, Gopalakrishnan and Vijayalakshmi, Educationists, Dr. Amitabh Bachan, Natural scientist, Ganesh, Theatre expert, Rangchetna, C.R. Das, Chairperson, child rights commission and writer. Varieties of capacity buildings have been held for children in arts, theatre, writings, crafts, academic work, etc. Teachers from the community have been trained to teach the children. At present, Vidyavanam has been selected as resource agency for training teachers and children in activity based learning. Children have been registered under the equivalency examination and they will appear for 10th Standard examination.

Bridge school aims at integrating children who have been dropped out into mainstream schools. 203 children were admitted in the bridge school out of which 71 children were mainstreamed to schools, 11 completed seventh equivalency and 33 10th equivalency examination, 40 appeared for 10th and 12th say examination and 34 students were mainstreamed into skill development. Three students have been mainstreamed to degree classes. There are social workers, wardens and teachers for each subject who perform the role of mentors and facilitate the learning process of the child. The bridge school is being
managed by the oorusamithis in turn. The oorusamithis who managed the bridge school were Nagupathi, Chalayoor and Kalakara respectively.

**XIV) Bridge courses**

Bridge courses were conducted in the summer camps for children in the hamlets with the objective of improving quality of education and building institutions of children to improve life skills and build creativities and talents. The bridge courses are being held in hamlets involving children of all ages upto 10\(^{th}\) standard. Facilitators were appointed in each hamlet to facilitate classes. The classes would focus on reading, writing and arithmetic. The morning sessions focused on dividing children into groups and engage in peer learning to enhance quality of education. The teachers were imparted workshops in philosophy and concept of education, activity based learning and enhancement of thematic knowledge.

Bridge course in education has been initiated to mainstream drop-out children into education. One hundred and twenty courses bridge courses are being managed in 120 hamlets and caters to children of all ages. They would provide a model for education of children. Educational intervention, universalization, retention, creation of inclusive environment in schools and attainment of quality in education would address educational barriers. The bridge school and course is an attempt to reflect on the attainment of quality in education and compel the department to take up action, giving up denial and presenting stereotypes and justifying poor standards. The bridge course focuses on food, nutrition, sanitation and menstrual hygiene and extends a congenial environment for children for learning. The bridge course is also a space where children are organized into institutions at the hamlet level called the bal gotra sabha, at the ward level and
then at the panchayat level. The focus is on building the skills and assets of the child and recognizing the assets whether it be cooking, cleaning, sweeping, swabbing, taking care of siblings, swimming, running, climbing trees, engaging in agriculture, etc. The focus is on letting the child be and creating a space for fostering the innate talents of the child. Health survey is being undertaken with the support of MSW students from Sree Sankara University, Payyanur. The traditional vaidyas are also conducting the health camps and providing traditional medicines. The focus is on anemia, menstrual issues and worm infestation. Around 74 children also participated in the admission for sports hostels in Kerala.

XV) Institution Building for children

Children’s gotra sabha is being formed at the hamlet level where children’s institutions are formed on the basis of age. Children below 12 years of age are formed into one institution and children in between 13 to 18 as another group. There can be 10 to 12 children in a group. The groups are formed not prioritizing micro-credit and savings but focusing on acknowledging life skills, creativities and talents and a forum to share joys and sorrows. The life skills could acknowledge capacities to cook, draw and fetch water, washing clothes, looking after siblings to dancing, singing, drawing, painting, crafts making, athletics, sports, etc. It would also include literacy skills like writing short stories, poems, essays, etc. The institutions would be forum and space for expression of joy and sorrows and fostering friendships among children.

The ward level institution would be a consolidation of children’s groups at ward level and have sub-committee of health, education (academic) and non-academic i.e. extra-curricular activities. The children would look at each aspect allotted to
them. Gotra panchayat is a consolidation of children’s ward level institutions at the panchayat level. The executive committee comprises of the president, secretary, vice-president, joint secretary, treasurer and thematic lead.

Arts and painting festival was held in collaboration with Lalitha Kala Academy. Children interested and who excelled in painting and arts were selected from all hostels and they participated in the workshop where different faculty members gave classes in painting, drawing, crafts and clay-modeling. The children also participated in the Binnale painting competition held in Ernakulam.

Children’s parliament was held in Attappady where elected representatives of three panchayats participated. Children prepared presentations about their issues with respect to each domain and presented as Ministers and the officials from various departments had to respond. Children’s parliament was conducted in Thiruvananthapuram where the education Minister participated and directors from various departments responded to children’s queries about the various departments. Children have gained immense self-confidence to be able to raise issues and respond without any hesitation or fear. The institutions have enabled them to understand their rights and critically view the situation they are placed in. Changathi kootams have been friendly spaces for children to meet and express their creativities. Library books have been collected for developing the habit of reading books and enhancing their knowledge.
Youth Resource Centre is a centre and focal point to mobilize the youth and build their institutions to revive and assert tribal identity, enhance solidarity and building capacities to access rights and entitlements enhancing social consciousness and building skills to improve livelihoods and augment income.

The endeavor is on building youth clubs at the hamlet level which would focus on enhancement of skills, creativity like sports and games and awareness on social development and enhancing social consciousness and building livelihoods. The second-tier institution would be at the ward level and the ward level institutions
would be consolidated at the panchayat level. There would be 4 panchayat level resource centres, 3 for 3 lsgds and one for the pvtg, kurumba community. The formation of youth clubs in Kurumba hamlets and the election has been completed. Their main demand was livelihood enhancement and public service commission coaching.

Public service coaching had commenced with the support of Brilliance, the best institute in Kerala for PSC coaching. Thirty-five students are engaged in the coaching. Second batch had commenced for the Irula youth with around 60 youth attending. There are several government positions which are unoccupied by the tribal communities.

The students who excel in the two batches will be developed as trainers and they will train other students in Attappady for PSC coaching. At present, youth clubs are being registered in all hamlets and labour bank is being formed. The institutions for the youth would be youth clubs at the hamlet level, consolidation of youth clubs at the ward level and the youth resource centre at the panchayat level. The resource centre would comprise of President, Secretary, Joint secretary, treasurer and volunteers looking after thematic issues at the level of the resource centre.

The labour bank would be a forum for the youth to register their details like name and skill profile, their specialization and the employers can contact the bank. The registration is at present being undertaken. The labour bank is an attempt to create an organizational structure for the youth regarding their livelihoods, counter exploitation and a forum to attract employers.
Skill training has been provided by NTTF, SP Global and Apollo Pharmacy for students in welding, drilling, through hole assembly, pharmacy, nursing assistant, plumbing, electrician, etc. Two hundred and thirty students have been trained and placed. Government order has been issued by local self-government department for setting up labour bank where all the youth with their qualification and expertise have been registered. The concerned departments can contact the labour bank and request for labourers to complete the work.

Cultural festival of the youth with performances of their art forms was held in the Malliswara temple during Sivaratri. This was an attempt to mobilise youth. Film festival was held with the support of Chalchitra academy to mobilise and organize youth into institutions. Football matches, marathon have been conducted for mobilization of youth.

**XVII) Gender Resource Centre**

Gender Resource Centre is a forum for information and knowledge dissemination and capacity building on issues of gender. It would aim at engendering the programme, institutions, financial inclusion and MKSP. The capacity building programmes would include gender and natural resources, gender, poverty and vulnerability, gender concepts, gender division of labour, issues like gender based violence, child marriages, etc. Thaikula sangha, the tribal women’s organization has been sought as the resource support for the gender resource centre.

Social action programmes against beverage was initiated under the gender resource centre. Women identify alcoholism as the major barrier in social
development/ progress and for that no economic development or proper fund utilization for livelihood would be possible if only action is initiated against beverage and consumption of alcohol.

The block samithi, panchayat samithi and oorousamithi launched a concerted struggle against Annakatty beverage till it was closed down. They are still continuing with raids in all hamlets which include house to house visits from hamlets where complaints have been received of illicit distilling and sale. Intervention was initiated in issues of domestic violence and child marriages.

Short stay home is being managed under the gender resource centre to provide support to victims of domestic violence to heal themselves and also ensure legal assistance.

XVIII) Social action
The oorusamithis and community cadres have raised and intervened in social issues. Action has been initiated on issues of child marriage, adolescent affairs and resultant attempts at suicide, alcoholism and domestic violence, dropping out of children from schools and trafficking etc.

The oorusamithi leaders, Thaikulasangha leaders and social development functionaries take initiative to intervene in these issues. With respect to child marriages, both set of parents are advised and children have been sent for further education to bridge school. There have been instances of trafficking in which men who have been responsible for land alienation have developed relation with mother and later with the daughter. These relationships begin in the garb of having love affairs. Hence, counseling and discussion on adolescent related changes, affairs have been discussed and children are counseled with respect to the importance of gaining higher education.

Alcoholic men have taken for de addiction and pressure has been exerted on men for stopping/deflecting from violent behavior. Children who have dropped out from education have been mainstreamed to schools through bridge school.

The most significant action programme was against the beverage in Annakatty in the Tamilnadu state from the border. There have been 116 deaths in the past two years. Data was collected for the past two years. Thaikula sangha and Ojara block samithi undertook strategic planning to have demonstration and strike against the beverage. It was held in Annakatty for a month and women participated in the strike in large numbers. The administration like the collector, SP, TASMAC authorities in Tamilnadu and politicians in both states were given petitions. Several politicians visited their strike site and offered support. Finally, they
conducted a hartal and blocked road on both sides of the checkpost at Kerala and Tamil Nadu and there were police arrests of the tribal women. The media covered all the aspects live and the hartal was success and as the election time was utilised, it was decided to close down the beverage by the Tamilnadu government. The confidence of the tribal women was boundless as they had defeated the liquor mafia. This was the largest and prolonged social action programme undertaken by Thaikulasangha and blocksamithi.

**Resource groups of women**

Resource groups of women are being formed with respect to the themes of education, health, panchayati raj, nrega and convergence, gender and livelihoods. The women are being trained in the themes for knowledge enhancement, accessing rights and entitlements and engaging in social action to resolve their issues. The resource groups are formed in each oorusrithi by bringing together thematic volunteers from each neighbor group. The resource groups will work in convergence with various departments, agencies and local self-government to see that the issues are incorporated in the plan and implemented in favour of the community. They would also be involved in the preparation of vulnerability reduction plan which incorporates the vision for the ooru/ hamlet for a period of five years. These plans would be consolidated and submitted to the government and all departments and it would be used an instrument for advocacy.
Livelihood intervention began with the formation of producer groups of farmers, women engaged in cattle rearing and non-timber forest produce collection. A workshop was held with the support of Achintaya Ghosh of Pradhan. The animators were taught preparation of action plan which transformed thinking. Every family was interviewed about the action plan – the kind of agriculture they would undertake, the area in which traditional method of cultivation including millets, pulses, tubers, vegetables and edible leaves would be undertaken, the relevance of using the cultivation for enrichment of nutrition and food security, area dedicated for cash crops and enhancement of income, the indebtedness the family has incurred and the income obtained from nrega. After the action plan
was completed in various hamlets, the producer fund was released to NHGs. This was followed by the purchase of seeds. Varieties of seeds were brought from Sahaja seeds, a network of farmers. The local seeds were sourced from the seeds of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamilnadu. The seeds of groundnuts, millets like ragi, maize, foxtail millet, finger millet, little millet, green gram, vegetables like ash gourd, pumpkin were sourced and cultivation undertaken in several acres of land.

As the production enhanced, marketing space was found and the goods were sold in Thrissur collectorate, a town where the demand for organic products was high and the purchasing power is better. As the production was undertaken without the use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides the products were sold at multiple rates higher than the local prices. The community was impressed with the revival of agriculture. The products were sold in the name of Malliswara and many products were processed and packed and labeled. Every Monday the products were sold in Thrissur and enhanced the confidence of women.

Following this, a breakthrough was achieved in Ntfp collection. The women were selling the medicinal plants at very low prices and this nexus by traders was broken. Care Keralam, a pharmaceutical was contacted and the medicinal plants were directly sold to the pharmaceuticals. Products like kuronthotti sold for 12 Rs started selling for 79 Rs and farmers/ collectors started earning multiple rates. As the goods have been processed, there is an effort to get a permanent shop/outlet and market space to sell the goats once a month. At present, arrangements have been made with pharmaceuticals like Kottakal, Vaidya Ratnam and Oushadi.
There is severe exploitation and nexus in the sale of goats especially Attapady black which is a well-known genre. There is an effort to get space in the market place in Thrissur city to sell the goats. This is basically to reduce dependence on traders and have access to the market. Livelihood fund is dispersed after preparation of business plan by the oorusamithi. The business plan consists of components of the rationale behind their plan, objectives, available resources, skills, capital required, bank linkages, market, value addition, etc. and grading is done by the oorusamithis designated for social audit. The livelihood fund is disbursed based on the business plan and the effort is to develop micro-enterprises.
Three panchayat samithis are now engaged in their respective business like the Agali panchayat samithi has taken up the goat village business, Pudhur ntfp collection and its sale and Sholayur the collection and processing of agriculture produce. In addition, there is an effort to develop 47 village-level enterprises in each ward. Agali panchayat samithi is managing a goat village and sold goats and the community has received worth Rs 10 lakhs in four months’ time. The payment is made to the community through electronic transfer to the customer who is selling the goats. This enables direct sale to the institution without exploitation of the middle men.

The mill is managed by Sholayur panchayat samithi and engages in the processing of little millets, pepper, coffee powder, etc. and the sale is being made in Thrissur collectorate. Supply co. has also agreed to directly procure from the mill.

Pudhur panchayat samiti has agreed to collect, process, cut and dry ntfp and the sale will be made to pharmaceuticals and the sale is being streamlined to pharmaceuticals like Oushadi, Kotttakal, Vaidyaratnam, etc.

**XX) Convergence**

Community kitchen is being managed with the support of Social Justice, Integrated Tribal development programme and Kudumbashree Mission. An amount of 6 crores is being allocated by the state government for the programme.

The panchayat samithi has been crucial in interface with sanitation mission for construction of community toilets with the technical support of PMU and provision of water by jalnidhi in the hamlets facing severe crisis of water. Both
these proposals were submitted to the respective departments and the projects have been accepted. The institutions can play a formidable role in conscientisation, social action and social pressure building mechanisms. The institutions can initiate collective livelihood activities and gain lucrative margins which will lead to augmentation of income.

XXI) Social audit

Social audit is a tool to measure the economic and social progress and to develop plans to address the gaps in implementation and budgetary allocation. Workshops were held with animators to explain the concept and train in the use of the tools. Indicators have been developed to conduct social audit and the animators have undertaken audit of oorusamithis. The indicators look at adherence to non-negotiable, disbursement of funds based on vulnerabilities, purpose and repayments, enhancements of livelihoods and income, social progress like enhancement in level of education, decrease in the drop-out, reduction in child marriages, domestic violence, countering alcoholism, etc. The reports are prepared by the social audit animators. The oorusamithi and NHGs are present with their books when the social audit process is taking place.
Conclusion-

- The programme has to succeed in building the faith of the community and designing the programme with their genuine participation. Inclusion is highly essential for the community to enhance participation and ownership.
- There is need for government to take policy decisions involving all departments for acceptance and validation of the programme.
- Exclusive institutions at the neighbourhood, village and cluster level would be required/ necessitated if the existing institutions have capitalized on all resources and do not permit representation as office bearers or involvement in the decision- making processes and access to resources and entitlements is denied.
- There should be relaxation and leniency of rules in adhering to non-negotiable like regular savings, internal lending and repayment, maintaining books of accounts and meetings.
- The programme will have to identify the imminent needs of the community associated with their health and survival and develop programmes in convergence. Solidarity group may have to be built up first to fulfill imminent rights and then slowly develop into NHGs.
- The savings can begin with anything which is considered valuable for the community like seeds or grains and slowly move on to cash.
➢ There is need to build community cadres from the community who can speak the same language and understand the socio-economic and cultural needs of the community.

➢ The exclusive institutions for the tribal and pvtg community would have separate bank accounts.

➢ Livelihood initiatives and social development interventions can be undertaken simultaneously with institution building and capacity building for strengthening of institutions.

➢ Trainings have to be imparted in book-keeping by practicing and the basic non-negotiable and the role, relevance and concept of each tier of the institutions.

➢ Thematic trainings have to be imparted in all social development issues and livelihoods.

➢ Capacity building has to be undertaken with respect to financial inclusion and disbursement of funds to the community, the purpose and procedures related to it.

➢ Continuous convergence is essential to make the programmes effective, reduce vulnerability and poverty and achieve empowerment of the most deprived communities.

➢ Rights based approach and philosophy is essential to enhance self-reliance, solidarity and empowerment.

➢ Committed and sensitive staff is a pre-requisite and sub-mission at the state level with budgetary provision is inevitable.
Annexure

Constitution of the Neighbourhood Group

The neighbourhood group of tribal women is the basic institution in the hamlet. The neighbourhood group will comprise of women in the same hamlet living in a contiguous locality and will have 10 to 15 members. Every woman from the age of 18 years to the most elderly woman would be member of neighborhood group irrespective of their social and economic status. Hence there is a possibility that there could be 2 women from the same family staying under the same roof like daughter and mother or daughter-in-law and mother-in-law or sister-in-laws.

The neighbourhood group will have office-bearers consisting of the President, Secretary, Treasurer, Joint secretary and other members who would work as volunteers looking after themes like agriculture, education, health, skills and self-employment and MGNREGS, women and child issues, entitlements and legal aid, decentralization and micro-plan and tribal sub-plan, etc. The term of the office-bearers would be for a period of two years and they would be unanimously identified by the group. The office bearers would be identified based on their literacy levels, capacity to read and write, leadership and initiating taking qualities, their personal history of adherence to the non-negotiables like regular saving, attending the meeting regularly, regular borrowing and repayment, maintenance of books, etc. The other thematic volunteers would be identified based on their knowledge and interest in the respective areas.

The neighbourhood group would adhere to the mandatory activities like regular savings, bank linkage, maintenance of books and accounts, regular meetings and documenting the minutes and resolutions, internal lending and regular
restitution. The Community Operational Manual of NRLM would be the guiding
document and its provisions would have to be adhered to.

**Constitution of the Oorusamithi**

The NHGs would be networked to form the oorusamithi. The oorusamithi general
body would include all women members of the NHGs in the hamlet as members.

The executive committee would comprise of the President, Secretary, joint
Secretary, Treasurer and different thematic leaders as in the case of NHGs. The
President, secretary and office –bearers are selected based on the pre-requisites
like their ability to read and write, adherence to the non-negotiable of NHG,
leadership and initiative taking quality and knowledge and expertise in the
thematic area. The President, Secretary, Joint Secretary, Treasurer would be
elected from among the Presidents, Secretaries and a member of the NHG
specially nominated by NHGs. Thematic leaders would be elected from among
the respective thematic volunteers of NHGs according to their specialization. This
would comprise the executive committee of the oorusamithi. They would be
elected by the general body of the oorusamithi in the workshop held for the
oorusamithi formation. The term would be for a period of one year.

Thematic sub-committee would be formed involving the members of the
oorusamithi under the thematic leaders. Gender and ecology would be cross-
cutting themes to be addressed by every committee.

**Election of office-bearers of the oorusamithi**

The executive committee would be elected by the general body in a workshop
convened for the constitution of the oorusamithi. The workshop would be
convened either in the community hall or anganwadi of the hamlet. The workshop would have sessions on the significance of collectives, the social issues they face which can be resolved through the strength of the collectives, possibilities for agriculture, land and water resources, other livelihood options, significance of oorusamithi and description of the projects being implemented.

The workshop would be highly participatory with group discussions and presentation and resource mapping. It then proceeds to the selection of office bearers. After the climate is created through the above-mentioned sessions, the presidents and secretaries of all NHGs are invited and a member nominated by each NHG and then the general body elects the office-bearers of the executive committee. The opinion of the entire general body is sought. The ooru moopan would make the inaugural speech and would be present for the election of the executive committee. The election would be recorded in the minutes signed by the general body of the oorusamithi, an observer from the community preferably the community resource person and Project Management Unit staff.

The NHGs would be considered as affiliated to the oorusamithi once it is formed. The oorusamithi would be primarily responsible to ensure that the NHGs are functioning well, maintaining registers and accounts, lending internally and repaying loans, linking with banks and developing micro-plans with priorities of members clearly addressed. They would also ensure that the most deprived are included and receive funds on a priority basis to be able to overcome their basic vulnerability.
Registration of NHG

The executive committee of the oorusamithi would register the NHGs in the prescribed format with the name of the NHG, names of members, and names of the office bearers and the resolution taken to form NHG. The oldest NHG following the non-negotiable norms will act as the loose oorusamithi engaging in registration of NHGs till the oorusamithi is formed. This would facilitate the smooth registration and opening of bank account.

Grading of NHG

The grading of the NHGs would be done by the executive committee looking at their adherence to the non-negotiable, the preparation of micro-plan, absorption of funds and repayment according to the schedule. A manual would be developed which reflects the criteria in the grading process. The basic grade could be understood as achieved when the NHGs are abiding by the criteria. The next grade would be understood as achieved when the NHGs have absorbed the funds and the repayment schedule is fixed on monthly basis and they are able to repay it. The next higher grade is considered to be achieved when the members have taken up livelihood activities along with adherence to the non-negotiable. The next grade would be considered as the phase when the NHG starts accessing credit from the bank, starts accessing all entitlements from panchayath and diverse agencies and departments as a collective. The highest grading would be considered to be achieved when the members have in addition to the above have also been able to take up all their social and cultural issues and all legal rights.

The corpus fund and vulnerability reduction fund would be given through the oorusamithi. The community investment fund and the livelihood fund would also
be given through the oorusamithi till the panchayat samithi is formed. The funds are revolving funds to be repaid to the oorusamithi.

The oorusamithi will open its own bank account. The funds to the community will be disbursed through the bank account of the oorusamithi. The account will be a joint account managed by the President and secretary. The NHGs will submit the micro-plan to the oorusamithi which will be appraised by the oorusamithi and the fund will be disbursed after reviewing the plan. The oorusamithi will also look at the utilization of funds by the NHGs and submit report in the prescribed format to the PMU.

The NHGs will submit a monthly statement regarding their financial status comprising of total savings, lending, repaid amount and interest, bank balance to the oorusamithi. The auditing of the NHGs will be done by the accountant in the oorusamithi along with the community resource person on a quarterly basis. There would be an auditing of the accounts and expenditure statement, the passbook, the financial register, etc. The accounts of the oorusamithi will be audited internally on a quarterly basis by the accountant of the oorusamithi and the Community Resource Person of the Project Management Unit. The accounts of the oorusamithi will be audited by an external auditor annually.

The oorusamithi office bearers will be ex-officio members of the present Area Development Society and participate in the meetings. There will be a co-ordination committee comprising of the presidents and secretaries of the oorusamithi and the community resource person from all the ooru at the ward level. Oorusamithi will be primarily responsible for formulation of Tribal Sub Plan at different levels – village, blocks, district and State. They will also be responsible
to oversee the provision of all rights, entitlements, benefits of all schemes and services.

**Constitution of the Panchayat samithi**

The panchayat samithi would consist of all the oorusamithis and the office-bearers of the executive committee will be selected from the office bearers i.e. President and secretaries of the oorusamithi. It would have the President, Secretary, Joint Secretary, Treasurer, and thematic leaders. While the four main office bearers would be elected from the Presidents and Secretaries of Oorusamithi, the thematic leaders will be from the respective thematic leaders of the Oorusamithi.

The election would have criteria like initiative taking capacity, experience of having risen above poverty levels through their own capacity to build up livelihoods, literacy, being an example in their own ooru samithi in the management of funds like disbursement of corpus fund and revolving fund, adherence to good practices with reference to repayment schedule, livelihood practices in agriculture, cattle rearing, etc. The tenure for each executive committee can be for a period of one year.

The panchayat samithi executive committee will be elected through a workshop with the presence of the entire general body. There will be participatory discussions about the functioning of the oorusamithi, the funds disbursed, the amount recovered, the bank linkages created, the schemes and services accessed, the entitlements accessed, the livelihood and self-employment activities undertaken, etc. After this the significance of the panchayat samithi and its role would be discussed.
The panchayat samithi will be equivalent to the Community Development Society. The office-bearers of the panchayat samithi will be ex-officio members of the Community Development Society and attend quarterly meetings. The panchayat samithi will represent the NHGs from the tribal communities in all meetings of the various departments and play a role in advocacy and planning. They will monitor and evaluate the functioning of the oorusamithi. They would be independently registered. Both the oorusamithi and the panchayat samithi can independently have bank linkages. The oorusamithi and panchayat samithi will continue functioning as independent entities.

The Panchayat samithi will manage the gender resource centre and the youth resource centre and will be responsible in supporting the functioning of the producer federations. They will manage their books and accounts and will be primarily responsible for the disbursement of corpus funds. The internal auditing will be done by the accountant of the panchayat samithi with the support of the community resource person. The panchayat samithi’s accounts will be audited externally by a Chartered Accountant and they will submit their utilization certificate and audited statement to the Project Management Unit.

Functions of the institutions

Neighbourhood Group

The neighbourhood group will

- Engage in the collectivization and mobilization process and discuss social, economic and all developmental issues that affect them as a tribal and a woman.
- Maintain bank accounts and maintain financial register and minute’s books.
- Engage in saving, internal lending and repaying the loan.
- Manage corpus fund effectively and ensure its recovery.
- Prepare the micro-plan and submit it to the ooru samithi.
- Prepare a plan to address their issues and present it before the oorusamithi for concerted and continuous action.
- Regularly meet and submit their registers and minutes to the oorusamithi for auditing and monitoring.
- Regularly attend the meetings of the oorusamithi and submit their micro-plan and financial register.
- Prepare report and constantly keep reporting on issues of education, health, agriculture, livelihoods, self-employment, skill training, alcoholism and other rights and entitlements.

**Oorusamithi**

Oorusamithi will

- Ensure that all the NHG’s are adhering to the non-negotiable like registration, maintaining accounts and book-keeping, internal lending, repayment, regular meetings, etc.
- Assist the NHGs to prepare their micro-plans and submit it punctually.
- Appraise the plans and engage in disbursement of funds.
- Look at the plans and put up the demand for the release of funds.
- Release of corpus fund, vulnerability reduction fund, livelihood fund and community investment support.
- Prior to the panchayat samithi formation, they will look into the disbursement of Vulnerability Reduction Fund, Community Investment Fund and livelihood fund.
- Recommend the NHG which should receive the corpus fund based on the adherence to the non-negotiable and absorption of funds.
- Ensure regular meetings of NHGs and capacity building of NHG members.
- Ensure that all NHG members receive training with respect to accounts, book-keeping and basic tenets of NHGs.
- Engage in forming resource groups for all thematic areas like health, education, gender, violence intervention, etc.
- Engage in auditing of the books and accounts of the NHGs.
- Preparing micro-plan to be made part of Tribal Sub Plan preparation.
- Initiate social auditing of all the processes, activities and fund utilization, etc.
- Initiating and managing nutritional and educational centre, creative learning spaces for children, cultural and extra-curricular activities for children, etc.
- The producers group will be managed by the ooru samithi.
- The farmer’s facilitation centre will be managed by the oorusamithi.
- Maintain MIS.
- The oorusamithi will contact other stakeholders for transmission of information and advocacy with other departments.
Panchayat Samiti

The panchayat samithi will

- Regularly summon meetings of the ooru samithi.
- Monitor and review the progress of each activity and ensure that the performance report is submitted through the results analysis framework.
- Support the implementation of the activities which ooru-samithi cannot take up on its own.
- Review the disbursement of Vulnerability Reduction Fund, Community Investment Support and Livelihood Fund.
- The books and minutes of the oorusamithi will be audited by the panchayat samithi.
- The youth resource centre, gender resource centre and anti-trafficking centre will be managed by the panchayat samithi.
- The producer federation will be managed by the panchayat samithi.
- The fund for the marketing, transportation will be managed by the producer federation run in close consonance with the panchayat samithi.
- The panchayat samithi will also be responsible for social auditing. The panchayat samithi books and accounts will be submitted to the Project implementation unit for auditing.
- The activities will be undertaken with the instruction of the project implementation unit.