Inspiring efforts from our mentors

It was during my visit to Saras Mela @ Delhi last week. I was walking past Kudumbashree’s stalls, by looking at our products. Suddenly, someone called me from behind. “Sir, are you here?? Do you remember me? I am Aleyamma, Kudumbashree Mentor from Uttar Pradesh.”

Hope you all will recall ‘Making an impact’ article 03, where it was mentioned that Kudumbashree had been recognized as a National Resource Organization (NRO) during 2012. In that article we described about the co-ordination and activities carried out by Kudumbashree in other states through our field coordinators and mentors. Smt. Aleyamma is one among those NRO mentors who is working in Uttar Pradesh.

Aleyamma came to see Saras Mela along with a 10 member team of Community Resource Persons for Enterprise Development (Micro Enterprise Consultants) from Uttar
Shri Pradeep who had been trained by her. “Yeh hamare Executive Director hei. Kudumbashree ka sabse bada aadmi hei!” She started introducing me to those women with her. And we also clicked a group photo. “Sir, you haven’t visited Uttar Pradesh until now” - she registered this complaint before waving goodbye, taking her team to next stall.

Kudumbashree NRO is now functioning in 19 states and 2 union territories. Those women community leaders of Kerala who took lot of initiatives and produced results during their work at Kudumbashree (in various capacities like CDS chairperson, as training team member, as MEC etc) were selected as the mentors for the activities of NRO. 113 mentors are working in different states across the country (68 in Enterprise Development Sector an 45 in the sector of convergence with Local Self Government Institutions) as of today.

To go to a state where you never had been before, reach to an underdeveloped block in that state, stay there for three years, learn the language, select about 50 women from that locality, empower them by training, reach out to more families through them; The job of mentors is not at all an easy one. It is something which call for best co-ordination and leadership skills. Each mentor is functioning overcoming many challenges and limitations like living alone in a different state, facing the issues of language and food, managing responsibilities of their own families etc. And the biggest professional challenge to excel in job by working in an unfamiliar state having a different a governing system than that of Kerala. Despite all these challenges, they always deliver exemplary performance.

During 2012, only 2 states had approached Kudumbashree seeking support for their poverty eradication efforts. But now, Kudumbashree Mission had signed Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) with 19 states and 2 union territories in the country. The selfless efforts of Kudumbashree Mentors and field coordinators, and the results achieved by them made this possible for Kudumabshree.

“As a mentor I got an opportunity to bring in great changes in the life of many poor people. This fact that we are able to help others through our lives, is a major source of happiness and inspiration. I will forget all many personal worries for this mission”. Aleyamma says. This is the attitude and spirit that takes all our 113 mentors forward.