

A Study On Strategic Leadership Styles Among Kudumbashree In Promoting Agricultural Business

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Received 28 February 2017; Accepted 22 March 2017; Available online 25 April 2017

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ABSTRACT

The present study focuses on three Kudumbashree units in Niranam Panchayat of Pathanamthitta District of Kerala. The units carrying agricultural activities only have been selected for the study. The objective of this study is to assess the nature and pattern of agricultural activities in the selected units of Kudumbashree and find out strategic leadership styles among Kudumbashree in promoting agricultural business and also to identify a leadership model suitable for Kudumbashree units. Kudumbashree is a female oriented community based poverty reduction project of the Government of Kerala. The vision of Kudumbashree in Kerala is to empower women from the low level income group as well as suppressed or sidelined sections of women in the villages of Kerala. Empowerment of women is considered as an important responsibility of every government. Recently very little attention has been given to empowerment issues. This is possible by providing them labour and instill in them leadership qualities. Through the Kudumbashree activities the mental, physical as well as financial status of these women got empowered enthusiastically. It also focus how these Kudumbashree units help to promote agricultural business leading to an innovative work behavior.

KEYWORDS: Kudumbashree, Empowerment, leadership, strategic leadership

INTRODUCTION

Learning, labour and leadership are the three major aspects of women empowerment. As the proverb says “if you educate a girl you educate a society”. Proper and timely education helps a girl child to use her potential effectively and to help the economic growth of a society. In a developing country like India, many girl children are either denied of education or are given only basic education. The most literate state in India, Kerala too is not an exception. This situation is conspicuous in the villages of Kerala. The father of our nation Mahatma Gandhi believed that India lived in our villages. For the comprehensive development of India, he believed, the villages of India should be given initial priority.

Exodus rural villages to the cities in search of jobs began even before the Independence of India. This process is still continuing. But a nation attains sustainable development only through the utilization of man power and resources of its rural areas too. This utilization only can guarantee the economic growth of a country in totality. Employment generation in rural area helps income generation and vice versa. Self-help groups aided and funded by government can generate employment and thereby income to families in rural areas of India. This leads to the social development of the poor, sidelined, suppressed and neglected families of the villages. In short, self –help groups formed in rural India not only generate income, employment & social development, but

they can also generate social & cultural unity within the members of the groups & in the society. The concept of self-help group was introduced in Kerala in the 1980s.

Kudumbashree is a self-help group formed on May 17, 1998. Kudumbashree means prosperity of the family in Malayalam, the language spoken in Kerala. Kudumbashree is a female-oriented community based, poverty reduction project of the Government of Kerala state lying in the south-west part of the Indian sub-continent. The Community Development Societies (CDS), Area Development societies (ADS) mobilized the women farmers for lease land farming from Neighbour hood Groups (NHGs) the grass root level organisation¹ Kudumbashree put an effort to mobilize women farmers from the NHGs either for individual farming or organized to groups. Most of these women farmers are landless or having only marginal lands, they were motivated to take up the fallow land on lease. Care was taken to process all the application without delay and incentives distributed for the all eligible ideas and preliminary discussion for organizing the collective farming groups into Joint Liability Groups (JLGs) also started by 2010. The vision of “Kudumbashree” in Kerala is to empower women from the low level income group as well as suppressed or sidelined sections of women in the villages of Kerala. This is possible by providing them labour and instill in them leadership qualities. To do any business, it needs leadership. Promotion of an agricultural business needs strategic leadership skills and planned activities envisaged by leaders and their styles. It is true that women sometimes lack the confidence to match their competence. But they need to change that mind set. So it is essential that women be ready to “dare the difference “to take risk and step outside their comfort zones. Sharpening the leadership skills will enable a women to rise fulfill their innate abilities and talents. There are different leadership styles; they are namely autocratic, democratic, laissez faire and transformational leader.

This particular study focuses on how the different activities of Kudumbashree units of the seventh and tenth wards of Niranam Panchayat help to provide labour leadership trainings and thereby help the economic growth of the villages. It also focuses how these Kudumbashree units help to promote agricultural business leading to innovative work behaviour.

The name of the seventh ward is Kezhakummuri .There are around 390 families in this ward and the population is around 2100. There is a famous temple named Munnutti Mangalam situated in this ward. SBT, Electricity office, Post office, Homeo dispensary, Ayurveda hospital and three Anganavadis are the major institutions of this ward and have been 14 Kudumbashree units working in this ward since 2000 Jan 26. 245 women of 240 families are members of Kudumbashree in this ward. Most of the members are from BPL families.

Name of the tenth ward is PHC ward, Public Health Centre is situated here. There are around 375 families in this ward and population is around 2400. Major part of this ward is yyamkonaripadashakaram. One Orthodox church, two Anganavadis and one small temple named Kottarathil temple as situated here. There are 11 Kudumbashree units working in this ward since 2000. There are around 212 women family members of Kudumbashree in this ward. They too are a part of Kudumbashree. The main agricultural related activities of these Kudumbashree units are vegetable and paddy cultivation.

In 2000, when Kudumbashree started, the aim was poverty eradication, but now the mission changed to poverty simplification. At that time, the member’s financial status was poor, through the kudumbashree activities, the mental, physical as well as financial status of these women got empowered enthusiastically.

In promoting agricultural business, the effective strategic leadership of Kudumbashree has a pivotal role with reference to Niranam Panchayat.

Statement of the problem:

This study is about strategic leadership skills and styles among Kudumbashree in promoting agricultural business. The nature of this study is descriptive and analytical. Strategic leadership means manager’s potential to express a strategic vision for the unit or a part of the organization and to motivate and persuade others to acquire that vision. Strategic leadership can also be defined as utilizing strategy in the management of employees. The different strategic leadership skills are delegation, communication, sense of humor, confidence, honesty, motivation etc. A leadership style is a leader's style of providing direction, implementing plans, and motivating people. There are many different leadership styles proposed by various authors that can be exhibited by leaders in the political, business or other fields, such as autocratic, democratic, laissez faire and transformational leadership styles.

This study has been conducted to verify that if the leaders follow a particular leadership styles at the Kudumbashree units, it will help in promoting the agricultural activities.

Objectives of the study:

1. To assess nature and pattern of agricultural activities in the selected units of Kudumbashree.
2. To find out strategic leadership styles among Kudumbashree in promoting agricultural business.
3. To identify a leadership style suitable for Kudumbashree units.

Research Methodology:

The present study focuses on three Kudumbashree units in seventh and tenth ward of Niranam Panchayat in Pathanamthitta District. The units carrying agricultural activities only have been selected for the study. Agriculture is prevailing in “six” units of Niranam Panchayat. Out of these three have been selected for the study. The names of these units are Sreelekshmi, Anugraha and Sthrisakthi. This study is mainly based on primary data and the secondary data is used to supplement and support the primary data .The primary data was collected from “15”respondents by direct interview method. Secondary data was collected from books, journals, articles, periodicals and websites .Through stratified sampling Ernakulam district was chosen and clustered sampling method was used for selecting the Kudumbashree units. Through simple random sampling method members from each unit were selected for the study. The study is both descriptive and analytical in nature. Each Kudumbashree formed Joint Liabilities Group (JLG) for their agricultural activities consisting of five members. SPSS software was used to analyses the field data.

Analysis, Suggestions and Conclusion:

The present study focuses on three Kudumbashree units of Niranam Panchayat in Pathanamthitta district. The name of these units are Sreelekshmi,Anugraha and Sthrisakthi.The units carrying agricultural activities only have been selected for the study.Agriculture is prevailing in six units of Niranam Panchayat. Out of these three have been selected for the study. Each Kudumbashree units formed Joint Liability Group (JLG)for their agricultural activities. Each group consist of 5 members.

Sreelekshmi and Anugraha are from tenth ward in Niranam Panchayat. The main activity of Sreelekshmi is agriculture. For agriculture purpose this unit introduced JLG group consisting of 5 members. This group concentrates only on agricultural activities such as poultry farming and animal husbandary. These units also do paddy farming in 9 acres of land. They have planted 1000 banana trees and 1 acres of land they are cultivating vegetables. They are using manure for agricultural activities. As the group members have the animal husbandry, they will get some more cow dung and therefore it is used as another input and fertilizer for the agriculture of banana trees, vegetable trees etc. They sell bananas and vegetables in the market. They give paddy to supplyco. Every year they sell the products in the Onam market under the guidance of Kudumbashree. This unit started agricultural activities by the last 25 years and they started JLG group by the last 15 years. They are given incentives by the Panchayat president

Anugraha unit is mainly doing paddy farming and vegetable farming. They are using manure for agricultural activities. They give paddy to supply co. They sell vegetables directly. Every year they also sell the products in the Onam market under the guidance of Kudumbashree. These two units have linkage with the union Bank Thiruvalla. Sreesakthi is working in the seventh ward of Niranam Panchayat. They are mainly doing cultivation such as paddy and vegetables.

This study reveals that 40% of the individuals are in between the age limit of 35-45, it also shows that least number of people is in the age limit of 25-35,in these group 53% of the people have passed plus two, 27% have passed high school, therefore it is understood that majority of the members have average education. All the members under study were married.67% of the members under study are Hindu and 33% are Christians there is no muslims.67% people have poor economic status. They are from BPL families.93% of the members belong to general category and also this study reveals that 73% members are housewives and they have no specific job .

13% of them are coolies and 6.7% is self-employed. The family of 80% members consisting of 2-5 members. The family of rest of 20% of members consists of more than 5 members, therefore it reveals that the size of the family of the members is not small, most of the members are common members. About 60% of the members have more working experience in Kudumbashree. That is 10to15years.The motivation of the 73% of the members for joining Kudumbashree is to improve their standard of living and 27% of them are motivated for saving purpose.73% members annual income is below 100,000.So it can be concluded that they are from poor families. They depend only on Kudumbashree.

Table 1: UNITS

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Sreesakthi	5	33.3	33.3	33.3
	Sreelekshmi	5	33.3	33.3	66.7
	Angara	5	33.3	33.3	100.0
	Total	15	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary data

Table 2: AGE

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	25 -35	1	6.7	6.7	6.7
	35 -45	6	40.0	40.0	46.7
	45-55	5	33.3	33.3	80.0
	55 -65	3	20.0	20.0	100.0

	Total	15	100.0	100.0	
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Source: Primary data

Table 3: Educational Qualification

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	primary school	1	6.7	6.7	6.7
	High school	4	26.7	26.7	33.3
	plus two	8	53.3	53.3	86.7
	Degree	2	13.3	13.3	100.0
	Total	15	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary data

Table 4: Marital Status

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Married	15	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary data

Table 5: Religion

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Hindu	10	66.7	66.7	66.7
	christian	5	33.3	33.3	100.0
	Total	15	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary data

Table 6: Economic Status

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	BPL	10	66.7	66.7	66.7
	APL	5	33.3	33.3	100.0
	Total	15	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary data

Table 7: Community

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	General	14	93.3	93.3	93.3
	OBC	1	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	15	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary data

Table 8: Occupation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No specific job	11	73.3	73.3	73.3
	coolies	2	13.3	13.3	86.7
	self-employed	1	6.7	6.7	93.3
	others specify	1	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	15	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary data

Table 9: Size Of Family

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2 -5 members	12	80.0	80.0	80.0
	more than 5 members	3	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	15	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary data

Table 10: Positional Status

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	secretary	3	20.0	20.0	20.0
	members	12	80.0	80.0	100.0
	Total	15	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary data

Table 11: Duration Of Members In Kudumbashree

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	5-10	6	40.0	40.0	40.0
	10-15	9	60.0	60.0	100.0
	Total	15	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary data

Table 12: Reason For Joining Kudumbashree

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	For improving the standard of living	11	73.3	73.3	73.3
	For savings	4	26.7	26.7	100.0
	Total	15	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary data

Table 13: Annual Income

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	below 100000	11	73.3	73.3	73.3
	100000 -200000	3	20.0	20.0	93.3
	200000-300000	1	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	15	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary data

Table 14: Autocratic Leadership Style

A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9	A10	A11	A12	A13	AT
5.00	1.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	3.00	1.00	3.00	1.00	4.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	3.69
3.00	1.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	5.00	5.00	2.92
4.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	5.00	1.00	4.00	3.00	5.00	4.00	3.00	3.00	5.00	3.38
													10.00

Source: Primary data

Table 15: Democratic Leadership Style

B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	B7	B8	B9	B10	B11	B12	B13	B14	BT
4.00	5.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	5.00	4.00	4.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.00	4.00	4.43
5.00	4.00	5.00	3.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.57
5.00	5.00	5.00	3.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	3.00	2.00	2.00	4.00	3.00	1.00	4.00	3.50
														12.50

Source: Primary data

Table 16: Laissez Faire Leadership Style

C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10	C11	C12	C13	CT
4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	1.00	4.00	4.00	2.00	4.00	5.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	3.69
4.00	4.00	4.00	3.00	1.00	1.00	5.00	2.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	5.00	5.00	3.54
5.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	5.00	1.00	5.00	5.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	5.00	4.08
													11.31

Source: Primary data

Table 17: Transformational Leadership Style

D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	D8	D9	D10	D11	D12	DT
5.00	5.00	5.00	4.00	1.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	3.92
4.00	5.00	3.00	4.00	1.00	5.00	5.00	4.00	3.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	3.75
3.00	4.00	5.00	3.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	4.00	5.00	1.00	4.00	2.00	3.58
												11.25

Source: Primary data

Leadership styles among Kudumbashree:

Autocratic leaders (Authoritarian leadership):

Autocratic leadership, also known as authoritarian leadership, is a leadership style characterized by individual control over all decisions and little input from group members. Autocratic leaders typically make choices based on their ideas and judgments and rarely accept advice from followers.

So many parameters were used to identify whether the organization follow autocratic leadership. This study reveals that nearly 50% leaders remarks that close supervision is needed among members for their effective performance. Supervision is important because it allows the beginner to gain knowledge, skill and commitment. Supervision is also used to motivate members and develop effectiveness in particular job roles and 50% leader’s remarks that all members are very agile in their group activities.50% leader’s remarks that most members feel insecure about their work. So they need direction.50% of the leaders under study say that the leader himself is the chief judge of the achievement of the members of the group. All leaders have different opinion of their own about the retainment of final decision making authority within the team.50% leaders do not consider suggestions made by the group members as they do not have time for them.25% leaders not allow new members to make any decisions unless it is approved by the leaders.50% leaders tell their members to establish a new procedure when something goes wrong.25% leaders like the power of the position they holds.50% leaders ask members for their vision of where they see their jobs going and then use their vision where appropriate.75% leaders tell their members what has to be done and how to do it.

Democratic leaders (participative style):

Democratic leaders (Participative style) Democratic leadership, also known as participative leadership, is a type of leadership style in which members of the group take a more participative role in the decision-making process. Everyone is given the opportunity to participate, ideas are exchanged freely, and discussion is encouraged.

So many parameters were used to identify whether the organization follow democratic leadership.75% leaders agree that members want to be a part of the decision making process.75% of the leaders say that their help is very necessary to the subordinates for completing their work.25% leaders' remarks that most members often want frequent and supportive communication. Communication plays a vital role in the group activities.50% leaders are not sure that they help the members to find out the members passion.75% leaders ask for members ideas and input for upcoming plans and project.50% leaders have positive opinion and 25% sometimes take members opinion.50% leaders have positive opinion and 25% sometimes take members opinion.50% leaders create an environment for the members to become the owners of the project.50% leaders allow members to participate in the decision making process.50% leaders like to use their power to help subordinates grow.50% leaders will allow the members to exercise self-direction for the completion of work.

Laissez-faire leadership:

Laissez-faire leadership also known as delegative leadership, is a type of leadership style in which leaders are hands-off and allow group members to make the decisions. So many parameters were used to identify whether the organization follow laissez faire leadership.75% leaders are in the opinion that members should be left to work of their own in the complex situations. 50% leaders say that in no way the leaders should interfere members work. 50% leaders here give members complete freedom to solve the problems.50% leaders are in the opinion that in most situations members prefer little input from the leaders.75% leaders opinion that major decisions should be taken jointly by a leader and members.50% leaders delegates task to members to implement a new procedure.75% leaders allow the members to carry out the decision on their work as members know more about their work than the leader.75% leaders like to share their leadership power with their members.

Transformational leadership:

Transformational leadership is a style of leadership where a leader works with subordinates to identify needed change, creating a vision to guide the change through inspiration, and executing the change in tandem with committed members of a group. So many parameters were used to identify whether the organization follow transformational leadership.50% leaders are ready to struggle to know what to do when there is a change in the circumstances.75% leaders are able for planning for the future.50% leaders encourage everyone in the team to work towards the same overall objectives.50% of the leaders do not agree that team members work harder than him.75% leaders expect top notch result from members.75% leaders agree to make some exceptions to the rule and they also agree that expectation is easier than being the enforcer.50% leaders consider people skill and interest when assigning task.75% leaders make the time to learn what people need from him for their success.

Table 15 reveals that most of the people prefer democratic leadership style in the Kudumbashree units. Democratic leadership is also known as participative leadership. In this process every member of an organization or association can take part to select their leader. This is the best process to select a leader. The Kudumbashree units will get economic benefit and advantages if democratic leadership style is followed.

Suggestions and Conclusion:

Proper training should be given for improving their agricultural activities.

The leader should take initiatives for improving the decision making skill among the members

General management strategy should be improved.

The leader should give incentives in every month to the group members for improving their activities.

Kudumbashree units are very helpful in the promotion of agriculture today. Most of the Kudumbashree units undertake agricultural activities like poultry farming, animal husbandry, farming of vegetables, paddy etc.

In the present situation of getting less importance to the agricultural sector, the Kudumbashree units have a prominent role in the promoting agriculture. Kerala is a consumer State. We do not produce anything here. We import vegetables, fruits, paddy etc. from other States like Tamilnad Andrapradesh. In this current scenario making the agriculture a successful one is a very complex and difficult task. To make the agriculture a success, Kudumbashree units needs a good leadership style. Such leaders must possess some qualities and traits. Leaders must be typically excellent at solving complex problems with their ability to work collaboratively with members. Leaders should address issues properly and should encourage innovation to find out solutions to strategic and complex problems. Such leaders should foster a creative environment by encouraging innovation and input among team members. Such leaders should consider everyone's opinions and ideas. All these qualities are seen in the democratic leadership style. Therefore acceptance of democratic leadership style in the

Kudumbashree units will be very helpful for them to undertake the very complex task like agriculture and succeed them. Therefore democratic leadership style is highly suitable for Kudumbashree units.

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