

Gender Resource Centres of Thrissur

To organize and implement programs and projects to address gender issues and to build gender equality in governance by promoting leadership, decision making abilities and challenging power relations is the aim of Gender Resource Centres. Thrissur district has already set up Gender Resource Centres at 3/4th of the CDSs in the district. The Gender Resource Centres are functioning addressing every issues of women in the society. The issues of the women are given the attention it calls for and by opening Gender Resource Centres in almost every Panchayath in the district, the District Mission of Thrissur is taking the issues to the next level and helping them find solutions for the same. Let us know, how Kudumbashree's Gender Resource Centres of Thrissur were evolved and how they are addressing their issues and resolved the same.

What are Gender Resource Centres?

Through Gender Resource Centre Kudumbashree emphasizes to address the women's inequality manifests itself in many forms such as gender discrimination in terms of declining male-female sex ratio, Social stereotyping, Gender based violence, health and nutritional status, limited access to resources, etc. Also aims to work for holistic empowerment of women in the state cutting across sectors and to serve as a nodal agency for all gender related initiatives in the state and in the community. Gender Resource Centres attempts to develop and make available the resources at a single place to share them across organizations in order to make their efforts in the sector more streamlined, efficient and effective. It can be act as a centre for making Poverty free Panchayaths in Kerala through various interventions.

Resource centreshelp Grama Panchayat to formulate Projects and Programmes under Women Component Plan. It can be act as a nodal point for the support of survivors of violence or exploitation and also the centre take initiative in strengthening and supporting Jagratha Samithis formed at the LSGs. It can develop a team of Gender Resource Group as technical

team at the Panchayat level for the project formation, handholding support to the survivors and also as a facilitating team of different activities. Through the interventions Kudumbashree aims to increase the participation of women in local development and governance.

Objective of GRC

- Enhancing the participation of women in governance process
- Develop an engendering Panchayath by bringing more women in local economic development and governance
- To act as a catalyst for making community safe for women through social legal and economic empowerment
- Prevention of violence against women & children and community participation or convergent actions.
- To impart skill for specific trades and to provide forward and backward linkages enabling women to be a part of productive work force obtain good remuneration.
- Developing a system that is facilitating Women Component Plan of Grama Panchayath
- Identifying the vulnerabilities existing in the community and address them through convergent actions of Grama Panchayaths
- Connecting Community Resource Persons and community counsellors with the universities and colleges who are offering courses related gender and women studies.

Evolution of Gender Corners of Thrissur

Gender Corners could be considered the primitive form of the Gender Resource Centres. Gender Corners were formed in Thrissur District during 2013. It was started in all the 100 CDSs in the district. A supporting team was developed for running the Gender Corners. Regular meetings were held every month which has 4 members from the CDS, 2 members each from ADSs and NHGs. They were introduced new topics every month. Awareness classes were arranged about domestic violence, legal classes, health awareness, topics related to social justice etc.

The first of its kind Gender Resource Centre in the district was opened in Panjaal Panchayath during 2013 and the block level GRC was opened at Pazhayannoor block. GRCs were opened at five other locations during then. It is following the crime mapping, the GRCs were opened.

Though Gender Corners were opened as a place to gather and discuss women related topics, women began coming forward with the cases and it began to evolve into a platform. And later Gender Corner Help Desks were formed. During then, Snehitha gender Help Desk was not opened at Thrissur. Cases were started reporting to the Gender Corner Help Desks. The meetings of the officials were called. Even then there wasn't any way for arranging temporary stay for those who were facing issues, the women themselves came up with a solution by themselves. Few of them came forward to occupy the women in their own houses.

Soon after, the proposal of Gender Resource Centre was given to the respective Panchayaths. Panchayaths started allotting fund in the Women Component Plan of 2015-16 and 2016-17 and GRCs were opened at Nadathara, Varavoor and Velookkara. As the Panchayath' guideline called for the service of qualified counsellors, they were posted in the Gender Resource Centres, along with the service of the community counsellors. The GRC at Panancherry is the result or impact of the Vulnerability Mapping held during 2016-17.

Gender Resource Centres had been set up at 70 CDSs out of the 100 CDSs in the district. The activities for setting up of the Gender Resource Centres is steadily progressing in the remaining CDSs.

Libraries at Gender Resource Centres

Libraries are also set up at the Gender Resource Centres, where the women can come in and spend quality time. Children also accompany their mothers to the Gender Resource Centres and lend books. The books at the Gender Resource Centres were bought out of the Panchayath fund. Book collection drives were also conducted to collect the books. Periodicals and Newspapers are also made available at the libraries at Gender Resources for the women to read. It had undoubtedly brought in an attitude shift even within the neighbourhood group members of Kudumbashree, on how they should look at themselves.

How Gender Resource Centres work?

A complaint register is set up at the register at Gender Resource Centres and solutions are ensured for all the cases reported there at the GRC. The service of community counsellors is ensured 2 days a week.

The main uses reported at the Gender Resource Centres are related to the alcoholism and domestic violence. The issues reported at the Gender Resource Centres are solved in the Gender Resource Centre level by counselling process. If the issue is needed to be reported to the police, it is reported to them directly, and if short term stay is needed, it is arranged at the Snehitha Gender Help Desks.

Scope

Women's role, in a wide range of traditions and in theoretical work influenced by them, has typically been associated with the "private" realm, and men's role with the "public" realm. The public/private distinction has been thoroughly criticized as being in many ways misleading and untenable. Nonetheless, it continues to influence both theoretical and empirical work, with the result that women's efforts to gain a voice in governance have often been ignored. However, Kudumbashree made it successful since two decades. Women in Kerala are has started thinking out of box.

For this reason, the academic study of women, which used to take place in programs and departments of "Women's Studies," now increasingly, takes place in programs and departments of "Gender Studies," dedicated to understanding the entire system through which societies constructed. It highlights the significance of starting Gender resource centres for enhancing the activities that focuses on gender equality in all the sections of the society. We could undoubtedly say that the district mission of Thrissur had succeeded in setting up ways to address the gender related issues of women in its truest senses.