

Grama Kiranam – Annual Maintenance Contract

The Grama Kiranam Programme launched by Kudumbashree District Mission of Kasaragod stands out unique because of the innovative idea that it put forward. The District Mission thought out of the box and brought about this noble yet path breaking initiative. Fighting back all the gender issues, the district mission equipped the women of Kasaragod to prove themselves the sheer confidence that they have within. Unleashing the strength within them, the Kudumbashree Women of Kasaragod started climbing the electric posts and making LED lamps! The novel initiative put forward by Kudumbashree Kasaragod District Mission has not only bring about the women to the forefront but also proved that no task is impossible for women and in short, gender is not even a barrier for women to succeed. Two years after the launch of the initiative, it had made notable achievements too. Let's see what had what difference they had brought in.

What is Grama Kiranam Programme?

The Grama Kiranam Programme initiative is the new innovative programme put forward by Kudumbashree Kasaragod District Mission. The Grama Kiranam programme enables the women to make LED Bulbs and repair the street lights in their own localities. The innovative idea put forward by Kasaragod District Mission would enable the women to repair the street lights leaving behind all the gender discriminations. The noble idea of Grama Kiranam was put forward by the District Mission Co-ordinator of Kudumbashree Kasaragod District Mission.

Why LED Lamp?

The light-emitting diode (LED) is one of today's most energy-efficient and rapidly-developing lighting technologies. An LED lamp is an electric light or light bulb for use in light fixtures that produces light using light-emitting diodes (LEDs). LED lamps have a lifespan and electrical efficiency which are several times greater than incandescent lamps, and are significantly more

efficient than most fluorescent lamps, with some chips able to emit more than 300 lumens per watt. Quality LED light bulbs last longer, are more durable, and offer comparable or better light quality than other types of lighting.

LED is a highly energy efficient lighting technology, and has the potential to fundamentally change the future of lighting. Widespread use of LED lighting has the greatest potential impact on energy savings also.

The story so far

The programme envisioned equipping the women to take up jobs that were considered suitable only for men. LED Bulb making and street light repairing can be done by anyone who are properly trained in the same. The selected women were given training in making LED lights and repairing street lights. The women were given proper training, both theory and practical sessions.

Gramakiranam, the novel micro enterprise unit formed in Kasaragod district of Kerala proved that nothing is impossible for women. Gramakiranam units are now engaged in LED bulb manufacturing and also in street light repairing sector in which women hardly attempts to work. 'Why can't Kudumbashree units start making LED bulbs?'- It is from this thought, Gramakiranam unit was launched during 2017. After providing extensive training for 15 days, Gramakiranam units were started at Mangalpadi and Pilikkode Panchayaths of Kasaragod district. On completing two years, the unit members of the Gramakiranam units have now grown into master trainers. Also Gramakiranam LED bulbs registered good sales.

The Gramakiranam unit functioning at Pilikode unit has 10 women and 4 men as members. They are able to produce an average of 700 bulbs a day. They are extending their services in 6 Panchayaths and 2 Municipalities. They have completed the orders worth Rs.44.53 lakhs till date. The Gramakiranam unit at Mangalpadi has 13 women and 3 men as members. The unit is able to produce an average of 650 bulbs. They have earned an income of Rs. 6.1 lakhs until now. This unit is taking up the orders of 2 Panchayaths and 1 municipality.

‘What are the livelihood activities that could be identified along with bulb making?’ It is from this thought of the Gramakiranam unit, the idea of streetlight servicing was evolved. As per the Panchayathi Raj Rule, the Gramapanchayaths are responsible for maintenance of street lights and for the timely replacement of the same. This is a sector which possess greater challenge. Though, Panchayath allocates substantial amount of money for setting up new street lights and repairing activities, many complaints arise from among the public. On this background, the thought aroused that if Kudumbashree would be able to intervene in this sector, it would make a sustainable change and it would become a livelihood opportunity that would help many women. It is on this background that Gramakiranam team decided to enter into street light servicing sector.

In the first phase, Kudumbashree was able to secure the Government Order (GO) which enables the Panchayaths to give the work order for street light servicing to the Gramakiranam units without any tenders. This GO was handed over to the district team and based on that, the meeting of different panchayaths was conducted at Kasaragod. Following that, Kudumbashree received work orders / service contracts (street light servicing) from Pallikkara, Pilikkode, Ajanoor, Thrikkariyappoor, Mogral, Puthoor, Valiyaparamb Panchayaths and Kasaragode, Kanhangad and Neeleshwaram municipalities of Kasaragod district.

Annual Maintenance Contract

The Gramakiranam units had secured Annual Maintenance Contract for ensuring the maintenance of the existing street lights at Peelikode Panchayath, Kanhangad and Neeleshwaram Municipality. At first the Annual Maintenance Contract for the Peelikode Panchayath was secured during August 2019 and following that the Annual Maintenance Contract for Neeleshwaram Municipality and Kanhangad Municipality was secured during November 2019. The maintenance for the existing street lights would be done and would be replaced with the LEDs with Light Dependant Resistor (LDR) sensors. The Annual Maintenance Contract is valid for 1 year from the commencement of the date of contract.

The payments for the Gramakiranam units are given after the counsellor certify their work. The list of the street lights which are not working would be entered into the register and the same

would be checked on 15th and 30th of every month and the works would be allocated according to that list. In the Annual Maintenance Contract, the bills would be submitted once in a month.

Scope of the Programme

Kudumbashree perceive the launch and development of Gramakiranam initiative as a great start. By achieving the Annual Maintenance Contract for Peelikode Panchayath, Kanhangad Municipality and Neeleshwaram Municipality, the Gramakiranam units have entered to the next level of growth.

If we would be able to take up the street light servicing and other repairing activities of all the Panchayaths in Kerala, it would help many women earn livelihood. Also, servicing the streetlights regularly without fail will result in public convenience. Thereby the complaints could also be reduced. Kudumbashree also aim at extending Gramakiranam units all across the state, which would be able to produce and supply LED bulbs and by securing Annual Maintenance Contracts they could ensure a regular work for the entrepreneurs as well.

As the GramaKiranam programme became operational and had made path breaking developments, these micro entrepreneurs of Kudumbashree have started break all the stereotypes of gender and are moving forward with sheer confidence and greatest enthusiasm.