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Socio economic profile of Kudumbashree members in Kollam District

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Abstract

Empowering women does not mean to give them power to dominate others or to use power to establish their superiority over others. Therefore, empowerment of women in reality is to empower themselves. Empowerment means empowering the self-recognition of one's own capacities and contribution to the family, community and society at large in order to create a positive self-image. Empowerment of women is considered as an important responsibility of every Government. In this regards, Government of Kerala introduced the new women empowerment programme known as, "Kudumbashree." The very motto of Kudumbashree is based on women empowerment. Thodiyoor is the Grama Panchayat comes under the Karunagappally block in Kollam District was selected for the present study. There are 452 NHG units functioning in the Thodiyoor Panchayat out of them 10 NHGs were randomly selected, from that 10 NHG presidents were selected purposefully to know the performance of Kudumbashree and to assess the effectiveness of each NHGs in this particular area of study. Interview schedule was used to collect the information from the respondents. The collected data were statistically analyzed and interpreted using appropriate statistical tools. The data were collected between February to March 2017. It could be concluded that the Kudumbashree mission is one of the most effective schemes for the upliftment of rural women of Kerala. The kudumbashree model of women empowerment could be followed by other states in India will definitely improve the development of rural women in many ways.

Keywords: Kudumbashree, NHGs, empowerment and kollam district

Introduction

Kerala is the only state in India where women outnumber men with a higher sex ratio since 1951. There is a modern trend in Kerala that more and more women are ready to work outside their home and enter into all kinds of economic activities. Majority of them are engaged in traditional activities such as agriculture, animal husbandry, chips making, pickle making, garment making, etc. Such activities are always characterized by traditional technologies, low capital, seasonal work, etc. Women engaged in these activities have more unexplored potential inherent in them. But these potentials neither admired nor explored within the family or by the society. They are the mostly vulnerable to various types of exploitations and atrocities. Therefore, it is quite inevitable to make them empowered in all respects to get them involved in various economic activities with great confidence (Economic Review, 2010) [1].

Kudumbashree is the transformed form of poverty alleviation scheme with special emphasis on women empowerment through their co-operation, mobilization of their small savings and utilization of these savings for starting micro-enterprises. This is intended to make them and their families self-dependent. This poverty eradication project was officially launched in the state on May 17, 1998. This was experimented first in an urban setting in Alappuzha, which was later scaled up to selected panchayaths. Removal of poverty by the year 2007 is the declared goal of this programme (Meera, 2010) [4].

The mission statement of Kudumbashree is: "To eradicate absolute poverty in ten years through concerned community action under the leadership of Local Self-Governments, by facilitating organization of the poor combining self-help with demand led convergence of available services and resources to tackle the multiple dimensions and manifestations of poverty holistically". (<http://www.kudumbashree.org>)

The aim of the Kudumbashree scheme is to improve the standard of living of poor women in rural areas by setting up micro-credit and productive enterprises.

It is a community-based self-help initiative involving poor women. Kudumbashree was conceived as a joint programme of the Government of Kerala and NABARD implemented through Community Development Societies (CDSs) of Poor Women, serving as the community wing of Local Governments. The aim of the Kudumbashree scheme is to empower women as a strategy for Poverty Eradication. (Venugopalan 2014) [3].

Kudumbashree is also a nodal agency for implementing various Centrally Sponsored Programmes in the State. The programmes like National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDUGKY), Start-up Village Entrepreneurship Programme (SVEP) and Mahila Kissan Sasakthikaran Pariyojana (MKSP) were successfully implemented in rural areas through Kudumbashree. (Selvi and Pushpa, 2019) [5].

Scope of the study

The study is conducted in Thodiyoor Panchayat of Kollam District in Kerala state focusing on Kudumbashree strategies for empowering the women in the particular panchayat. There are 6 blocks consisting of 69 panchayats, 3 municipalities and one municipal corporation and 104 villages in the district. Thodiyoor Panchayat comes under Karunagappally block consisting of 23 wards. The recent past, "Kudumbashree" has influenced a drastic change in the life of women in the Thodiyoor Panchayat. This development of the women community through the activities of Kudumbashree in various fields and their improved standard of living motivated the investigator to conduct the study. The main intention of the study is to elicit the socio-economic profile of the respondents and to understand their participation social media, community participation.

Objectives of the study

1. To elicit the socio-economic status of Kudumbashree members.
2. To understand the members community participation and social media participation.

Methodology

Thodiyoor is the Grama Panchayat comes under the Karunagappally block in Kollam District was selected for the present study. The address of the Kudumbashree units in Thodiyoor Panchayat was obtained from the District Mission Office of Kudumbashree, Community Development society and also from the website. There are 452 NHG units functioning in the Thodiyoor Panchayat. An area wise list of Kudumbashree units was obtained from Area Development Society (ADS). From the list, 10 NHG units were selected randomly within the radius of 3-8 kms. The names of the NHGs are Sreelekshmi, Priyadarsini, Vanitha, Vaishnavi, Kairali, Kallumpurathu, Al-ameen, Ponnampuzhethu, Bhagyalekshmi, Vaisamparampu. From the selected NHGs 12 members a total of 120 samples were selected purposefully to know the effectiveness of Kudumbashree activities. On the basis of appropriateness and practicability, the investigator adopted the survey method for this study. Interview schedule was used to collect the information regarding Personal background of the members, Social background of the members, Economic background of the members, Family background of the members, Social participation of the

members, Extension activities of the members and Mass media contacts of the members. The collected data were statistically analyzed and interpreted using appropriate statistical tools. The data were collected between February to March 2017.

Result and discussion

Table 1: Personal background of the Kudumbashree members

Variables	Number of respondents N=120	Percentage
Age (in years)		
20-30	15	12.5
30-40	47	39.2
40-50	33	27.5
Above 50	25	20.8
Total	120	100.0
Marital status		
Married	98	81.7
Unmarried	12	10.0
Widows	10	8.3
Total	120	100.0
Educational status		
Up to primary level	29	24.1
Up to secondary level	56	46.7
Degree and above	26	21.7
Professional	9	7.5
Total	120	100.0

The analysis reveals that 39.2 per cent of the members belonged to the age group of 30-40. Majority of them i.e. 81.7 per cent in the study area were married. Hundred percent of the members were literate. A majority of them (46.7 percent) were with formal education up to higher secondary level.

Table 2: Social background of the Kudumbashree members

Variables	Number of respondents N=120	Percentage
Religion		
Hindu	78	65.0
Muslim	38	31.7
Christian	4	3.3
Total	120	100.0
Caste		
General	36	30.0
OBC	81	67.5
SC/ST	3	2.5
Total	120	100.0

The Table 2 shows the social background of the KDMS members. A majority, (65.1 percent) of them were Hindus. Muslims and Christians constituted 31.7 percent and 3.3 percent respectively. Majority belongs to the Hindu religion and minority belongs to the Christian religion. In this area the majority families were Hindus and Muslims. Caste wise breakup reveals, 67.5 percent of the KDMS members were Other Backward Caste (OBC). 30 percent of the members were General and only 2.5 percent were Schedule Caste (SC). The representation of the higher caste in the KDMS was noticed probably. The representation of women in the forward caste increased. They are coming out of their house and to work with the women belongs to the other castes. The table reveals that the majority, 65.1 percent of them were Hindus. Caste wise breakup reveals, 67.5 percent of the KDMS members were Other Backward Caste (OBC).

Table 3: Economic background of the KDMS members

Variables	Number of KDMS members N=120	Percentage
Occupational Status		
House wife	104	86.7
Self employed	12	10.0
Professional	3	2.5
Labourer	1	0.8
Total	120	100.0
Husband's Occupation		
Unemployed	2	1.7
Self employed	2	1.7
Professional	1	0.8
Government sector	5	4.2
Labourer	82	68.3
Farming	21	17.5
Others	7	5.8
Total	120	100.0
Monthly income (in Rupees)		
5000-7000	10	8.3
8000-10000	83	69.2
11000-14000	11	9.2
Above 14000	16	20.5
Total	120	100.0
Savings		
Yes	4	3.3
No	116	96.7
Total	120	100.0
Assets		
Yes	109	90.8
No	11	9.2
Total	120	100.0
Monthly Expenditure (in Rupees)		
5000-7000	1	0.8
8000-10000	66	55
11000-14000	29	24.2
Above 14000	24	20.0
Total	120	100.0

The majorities of their husband's were labourers. It was found that 69.2 percent of the respondents were having monthly income between Rs. 8000-10000. Thus, the analysis reveals

that 86.7 percent of them were unemployed full time home makers.

Table 4: Family background of the KDMS Members

Variables	Number of KDMS Members N=120	Percentage
Type of family		
Joint	16	13.3
Nuclear	97	80.8
Extended family	7	5.8
Total	120	100.0
Family size		
1-2	1	0.8
3-4	98	81.7
4-5	9	7.5
5-6	12	10.0
Total	120	100.0

The family background of the KDMS members is presented in the Table 4. It presents the family type and size of the members. Two third of the members belonged to the nuclear families i.e. 80.8 percent. Remaining 13.3 percent belonged to the joint family and 5.8 percent belonged to the extended family. The family size of the KDMS members ranged from 2 to 10. The majority of the families were small sized. 81.7 percent belongs to nuclear family. 10 percent of the members

belonged to the extended family. 7.5 percent of the members were in the extended family and eight percent of the members were in the joint family.

Thus the analysis reveals that two third of the members belonged to the nuclear families i.e. 80.8 percent. Nearly 82 percent of the members were from small family with three to four members.

Table 5: Social participation of the KDMS Members

Variables	Number of respondents N=120		Total	Percentage		Total
	Yes	NO		Yes	NO	
Co-operative society	93	27	120	77.5	22.5	100.0
Women's club	3	117	120	2.5	97.5	100.0

* Multiple responses

Thus the analysis reveals that the 77.5 percent of the members has membership in the cooperative society.

Table 6: Extension Activity of the KDMS Members

Activity	Number of respondents* N=120		Total	Percentage		Total
	Yes	No		Yes	No	
Campaign	8	112	120	6.7	93.3	100.0
Seminars	11	109	120	9.2	90.8	100.0
Fairs/Exhibitions	7	113	120	5.8	94.2	100.0
Demonstrations	5	115	120	4.2	95.8	100.0
Field visits	4	116	120	3.3	96.7	100.0

* Multiple responses

The Table – 6 shows the participation of members in the extension activities. Their participation was very less.

Majority of the members were not attended in any of the activities. 93.3 percent of the members were not participated in campaign. Only 6.7 percent of the members participated in the campaign. Coming to the seminars, 90.8 percent members were not attended. 9.2 percent of them attended seminars. 94.2 percent of the members were not attended fairs/exhibitions. 5.8 percent of them attended fairs/seminars. 95.8 percent of members not attended demonstration and only 4.2 percent attended demonstration. 96.7 percent were not went any field visits and only 3.3 percent went to field visit. From this it is understood that the extension participation of the samples is not well in this selected area.

Thus the analysis shows that the participation of members in the extension activity was very less. Majority of the members were not attended in any of the activities. 93.3 percent of the members were not participated in campaign.

Table 7: Mass Media Contact of the KDMS Members

Variables	Number of respondents N=120		Total	Percentage		Total
	Yes	No		Yes	No	
Listening Radio	74	45	120	61.7	37.5	100.0
Reading News paper	101	19	120	84.2	15.8	100.0
Watching TV	110	10	120	91.7	8.3	100.0
Read leaflets	6	114	120	5	95	100.0
Read Magazines	18	102	120	15	85	100.0
Watching movies	22	98	120	18	81.7	100.0
Visit exhibition, fairs	5	114	120	4.2	95.8	100.0
Having FB account	0	120	120	0	100	100.0
Having What's app	2	118	120	1.7	98.3	100.0

* Multiple responses

The mass media contact of the KDMS members are given in the Table 7, Majority of the respondents watching TV and read newspaper. 91.7 percent and 84.2 percent of the respondents watch TV and read newspaper respectively. Only 8.3 percent and 15.8 percent of the members do not have the habit of watching TV and reading newspaper. 61.7 percent have the habit of listening radio. 37.5 percent of the members do not have the habit of listening radio. 18 percent of the members have the habit of watching movies and 98 percent do not have the habit. 95.8 percent of the members do not attend any exhibition and fairs. Only 4.2 percent members visited exhibitions and fairs. 98.3 percent do not have what's app. Only 1.7 percent has what's app. No members have face book account. Thus, the analysis shows that the Majority of the respondents watching TV.

Conclusion

The Kudumbashree Model of organizing women from economically poorer households is indeed a gift of the Alappuzha women that has now encompassed the whole of Kerala and, with some necessary adaptations and improvisations, has also been spreading in other parts of the country. The study concluded that their social status and economic level has been increased after joining in Kudumbashree units. If the Programmes are properly implemented by the agencies concerned, it will definitely improve the standard of living of rural population of Kerala.

The same model of women empowerment could be followed by other states in India.

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