

Influence of Kudumbasree on Rural Women Empowerment: A Study

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Abstract- Women empowerment is an important factor for the uniform growth of nations. It includes the process of increasing the social, spiritual, political, and an educational, gender or economic strength of individuals and communities that are a label to be the dimensions of women empowerment. Kudumbasree is the poverty eradication mission of the state of Kerala. Kudumbasree project was started in Kerala in 1998. The programme has 37 lakhs members and covers more than 50% of the households in Kerala. **Methodology:** The study conducted in various Kudumbasree units at Puthenchira Grama Panchayat, Thrissur district, Kerala. Data collected from 60 respondents using the self-structured questionnaire. Researcher used sampling method as probability and design simple random sampling. Data analysis is conducted using SPSS. **Findings:** The Kudumbasree influence the empowerment of women in various levels. It is found from the study that, the saving pattern and avenue of the respondents have shown a considerable increase after joining Kudumbasree unit. The social status of the women also increases. The study indicated that Kudumbasree and its activities increase the social and personal skills of the women and also able to understand the rights.

Keywords- Empowerment, Poverty eradication, personal and social skills, decision making, knowledge and awareness.

I. INTRODUCTION

Women empowerment is an important factor for the uniform growth of nations. It includes the process of increasing the social, spiritual, political, and an educational, gender or economic strength of individuals and communities that are a label to be the dimensions of women empowerment. Empowerment of women is also called gender empowerment, has become a significant topic of discussion in regards to development and economics. Entire nations, business, communities and groups can benefit from the implementation of programs and policies that adopt the notion of women empowerment. Empowerment is one of the main procedural concerns when addressing human rights and development. The women achieve more self-respect and confidence by their contributions to their communities. Simply including women as a part of a community can have sweeping positive effects.

In a study conducted by Bina Agarwal women were given a place in a forest conservation group. Not only did this drive up the efficiency of the group, but the women gained incredible self-esteem while others including men, viewed them with more respect. Participation which can be seen and gained in a variety of ways as been argued to be the most beneficial form of gender empowerment. To empower a female 'sounds as though we are dismissing or ignoring males but the truth is, both genders desperately need to be equally empowered' (Dr. Asha Don Brown). Empowerment occurs through improvement of conditions, standards, events, and a global perspective of life.

Empowerment of women and their participation in the development process has been considered an essential feature of development. It is presumed that real development is possible only if the women and men work in equal terms. Gender equality and empowerment of women is recognized globally as a key element to achieve progress in all areas. Jawaharlal Nehru commended "in order to awaken the people, it is the women who has to be awakened first. Once she is on the move, the household moves, the village moves, the country moves and thus we build the India tomorrow". But the present position of women in developing and underdeveloped countries is not considered good. Rural women are regarded as voiceless and defenseless. Rape cases are appearing in the newspapers every day. Even politicians are not supporting them. So they are to be empowered to fight against the evils faced by them. There had been intensive efforts in nineties to bring the women-folk, especially those belonging to the weaker sections and poor, who had been economically and socially underprivileged within and outside the family, to the forefront and empower them through specific programmes and thereby empower the entire family and community. Ensuring justice to women was one of the prime objectives of the development agenda of the People's Planning Campaign initiated in 1997. Kudumbasree, a Malayalam coinage, means prosperity of the family. It is an innovative programme of the Government of Kerala introduced for the eradication of absolute poverty in ten years through concerted community action under the leadership of local self-governments. Kudumbasree is the poverty eradication mission of the state of Kerala. Kudumbasree project was started in Kerala in 1998.

The programme has 37 lakhs members and covers more than 50% of the households in Kerala². It has built around three vital components, micro credit, entrepreneurship and empowerment. Women empowerment is one of the important objectives of Kudumbasree along with poverty eradication. 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. Empowerment of women and poor women driving their development is a powerful strategy to alleviate poverty. The Kudumbashree Community based organizations are acting as social safety nets, increasing access to entitlements and providing avenues for political participation.

II. REVIEW OF LITEATURE

Venugopalan. K (2014) The study indicates that majority of the members of Kudumbasree units are working on daily wages and their total income is low. The women empowerment has achieved only a limited extend by Kudumbasree members.

Mercy vargese(2012) observe that thrift and credit operation of kudumbasree acts as the prime strategy of women empowerment.

Gurumoorthy (2000) reveals that empowering women contributes to social development. Economic progress in any country whether developed or underdeveloped could be achieved through social development. The self-help group disburses micro-credit to the rural women for the purpose of making them enterprising women and encouraging them to enter into entrepreneurial activities.

Puhazhendhi and Satyasai (2001) in their study attempted to evaluate the performance of SHGs with special reference to social and economic empowerment. The findings of the study reveal that the SHGs as institutional arrangement could positively contribute to the economic and social empowerment of rural poor. The impact on the later is more pronounced than on the former. Though there has been no specific pattern in the performance of SHGs among different regions, the southern region could edge out other regions.

III. METHODOLOGY

Significance of the study

Women comprise half of human resources they have been identified as key agents of sustainable development and women's equality is as central to a more holistic approach towards stabilizing new patterns and process of development that are sustainable [Birendra Kumar Jha, 2009] . The role of micro-credit is to, improve the socio and economic development of women and improve the status of women in households and communities. Self Help Group's micro credit mechanism makes the members to involve in other community development activities. Micro credit is promoting the small-scale business enterprises and its major aim is to alleviate poverty by income generating activities among women and poor. Therefore, they could achieve self-sufficiency.

Aims-The aim of the study will be influence of Kudumbasree on rural women empowerment

Objectives

- To identify the sociodemographic profile
- To findout the influence of Kudumbasree on the acquisition of personal and social skills in the women
- To determine the participation in group activities
- To analyse the development of knowledge and awareness of their rights

Research Design

The descriptive research design is used in the study to describes the characteristics of the population or phenomena that is being studied

Sampling design

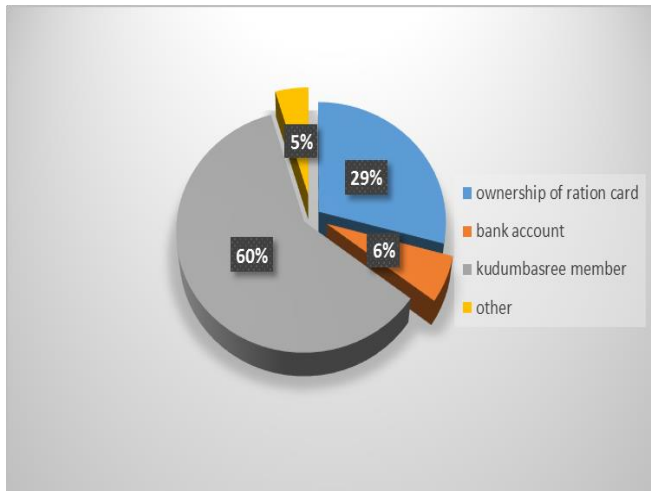
Probability sampling is used in this study. The simple random sampling is used , every member get equal chance to be selected

Data analysis

The social change which bring the women in the front of the society

The pie chart gives the idea that the influence of Kudumbasree in their living and social status provided by the Kudumbasree. The 60% of them respond that the social change bring them in to the front of the society is the membership in the Kudumbasree. The recently introducing the

ration card in the name of women is considered as the social change by 29% of women. Only few of them believe that the bank account in their name, or positions in the religious group etc.



Women empowerment

SL.NO	ITEMS	Mean
1	Personal skills	1.0954
2	Group participation	1.388
3	Awareness of rights and benefits	1.0256

Above table shows that moderate value is seen in the case of personal skills and awareness of rights and benefits. The higher value greater than the total is seen in the group participation

The women are more interested to participate in the group activities of the NHG such as entrepreneurship, discuss about the current affairs and also develop the JLG.

By considering all factors of women empowerment it is found that the moderate value is 2.45. The average value of two factors namely acquisition of personal skills and decision making power is greater than the moderate value. But all others factors value is less than the moderate value. Hence by considering majority factors it is found that women empowerment after joining Kudumbasree has attained only a low level basis.

Acquisition of personal skills, Power to take decisions, knowledge about their rights and privileges, self-confidence and Awareness are necessary parts of empowerment. Awareness of rights is required for a person to develop his capacity of self-control, self-strength and self-reliance and to build freedom of choice and action. It is a process of change by which the individuals and groups with

little or no power gain the power and ability to make choices that affect their lives. Women empowerment is a process whereby women become able to organize themselves, to increase their own self-reliance, to assert their independent right to make choices and to control resources which will assist in challenging and eliminating their own subordination. In this study it refers to empowerment of women especially the women residing in rural areas

IV. FINDINGS

- Nearly half of the respondents(41.5%)having the age group of 40-50 years. 33.8% of the respondents having the age group of above 51 years and 23.1% of the respondents having the age group of 29-39 years. Remaining 1.5% of the respondents belongs to age group of 18-28 years
- Most of them are house wives and depend on their family for weekly savings
- The saving habit and many other personal skills developed in the individuals
- Women skilled in cultural and creative activities. The programs conducted by the panchayat and Kudumbasree units give more opportunities to them
- The women get opportunity to express their opinions in the family
- The Kudumbasree units help to learn about the importance of group living and group activities
- From the comparing of mean values, the group participation attains the high score when comparing with others.
- Respondents are satisfied with the activities of the Kudumbasree
- The members can acquire various positions such as panchayat president and the participation
- Most of them given the idea that the participation in Kudumbasree bring them in to the front of the society

V. SUGGESTIONS

- Entrepreneur development programme should be started and proper training should be given to members in this respect
- Give more awareness to the members in the unit about their functioning
- Active participation of the members must be checked

VI. CONCLUSION

The study provides the information about the role of Kudumbasree in the empowerment of the women. It helps to

acquire various personal, social skills and the classes conducted or programs conducted by the Kudumbasree provide education about the rights of women. The women empowerment plays an important role it helps the women come Infront of the society and raise voice for their well being

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