



## A STUDY OF KUDUMBASHREE NHGS AND ITS IMPACT AT THE GRASS ROOT LEVEL

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### ABSTRACT

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. The area selected for the present study is VattavadaGramapanchayat comes under the Devikulam block in Idukki District. There are 120 NHG units were functioning in VattavadaPanchayat out of them 10 NHGs were randomly selected, from that 10 members from each NHG were selected randomly. Thus the sample size makes 100 to know the functions of Kudumbashree NHGs and its impact of each NHGs in this particular area of study. Interview schedule and empowerment scale was used to collect the information from the respondents. The collected data were coded, analysed and presented in frequency tables by using descriptive and inferential statistics through SPSS package v.22. The data were collected from November to December 2018. It could be observed from the study, majority (71 %) of the members attained medium level of empowerment followed by low level empowerment (14 %) and (15 %) high level empowerment.

**KEYWORDS :-** Kudumbashree, Idukki District, Social, Political, Economic empowerment

### Introduction

Kudumbashree, a unique programme of poverty alleviation with full participation of women, especially poor women, was launched formally by Government of Kerala on 17th May 1998. KDMS is a Malayalam word, which means prosperity to the family. KDMS is a Mission working for the fulfillment of a shared vision. Its Mission Statement is "to eradicate absolute poverty in ten years through concerted community action under the leadership of Local Self Governments, by facilitating organisation 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." KDMS is women-oriented participatory approach for community development and poverty reduction. It aims at the prosperity of the economically backward families in the state of Kerala with various programmes. These programmes are mainly related to creation of opportunity for their social security and empowerment: physical, social, economical and political. Information dissemination, awareness creation, capacity and confidence building are also included in these programmes (John, 2009).

Selvi and Pushpa (2018) explored that, the programme has 39.97 lakh members and covers more than 50% of the households in Kerala. The grassroots of Kudumbashree are Neighbourhood Groups (NHG in short) that send representatives to the ward level Area Development Societies (ADS). The ADS sends its representatives to the Community Development Society (CDS), which completes the unique three-tier structure of Kudumbashree. Today, there are 2.58 lakhs NHGs, over 19,854 ADSs and 1,073 CDSs in Kudumbashree. The very motto of Kudumbashree is based on women empowerment through Community Based Organisations. The main aim Kudumbashree is to "Reach out the Family through Women and Reach out the Society through Family".

### Objective of the study

The main objective of the study is to assess whether there is any significant change in empowerment of rural women through Kudumbashree.

### Methodology

The locale selected for the present study is high range mountain landscape of Devikulam Taluk, which is located on the eastern slopes of Western Ghats. The study area comprised of 11 Village Panchayats with population of 1,77,621 persons in 2011 Census. Area wise lists of

Kudumbashree units were obtained from the CDS office. From the list ten Kudumbashree units were selected randomly. One of the criteria for selection of the respondents is that they must be the member of Kudumbashree units at least three or five years in order to get valid and reliable information. Therefore the lists of members were obtained from the NHGs a total of 100 samples were selected randomly. An interview schedule was used to elicit the socio economic status of Kudumbashree members; a three point empowerment scale was developed and used by the researcher to assess the level of empowerment of the respondents. The collected data were statistically analysed and interpreted by using appropriate statistical tools.

### Results and discussion

#### A. Socioeconomic profile of the Respondents

Table 1 explains socioeconomic profile of the Respondents.

**Table 1: Socio-Economic Profile of the Respondents**

Sl. No	Socio-Economic Factor	Categories	N=100 Percentage
1	Age	20-25	34
		25-30	50
		30-35	16
2.	Caste	Forward Caste	33
		Backward Caste	67
3.	Religion	Hindu	78
		Christian	14
		Muslim	8
4.	Type of family	Nuclear family	70
		Joint family	30
5.	Type of house	Owned house	75
		Rented house	25
6.	Size of the family	3-4	59
		4-6	41
7.	Education	Illiterate	15
		Primary	55
		Secondary	27
		Graduate	3
8.	Occupation		

Labour	9
Private employee	46
Government employee	2
House wives	43
Below 7000	4
7000-10000	27
Above 10000	69

Source: Field survey (2018).

Regarding the age, half (50 %) of the members belonged to the age group of 25-30 years. The caste wise breakup reveals that more than half (67 %) come from Backward caste. Regarding the religion, nearly 78 % of the members are the followers of Hinduism. It was heartening to note there couldnot be religious and caste discrimination. Majority (70 %) of the members belonged to the nuclear family and maximum (75 %) of them had own houses. Nearly (59 %) of them have family size ranges between of 3-4 members. Out of 100 respondents 15 per cent were illiterate nearly half (55 %) of the members studied up to primary level. Regarding the type of occupation, 46 % were private employees. It was found that 69 % of the members have an income of above Rs.10000/-per month.

**B. Extent of Empowerment attained by the Respondents**

Women Empowerment is basically the creation of an environment where women can make independent decision on their personal development as well as shine as equals in society. The researcher indentod to analyse the empowerment achieved by the respondents in VaattavadaPanchayatthrough Kudumbashree activities.

**Table 2 :Economic Empowerment**

SL.No	Components of Empowerment	A	UD	DA	Total
1	Thrift habit among women is developed	77	29	4	100.0
2	NHG members fund management skills has been developed.	85	13	2	100.0
3	Rural entrepreneurship through NHGs micro credit has increased	78	15	7	100.0
4	Repayment of loans through peer group pressure is guaranteed	92	8	0	100.0
5	Interest earnings are stored collectively	50	33	17	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2018

Table 2: reveals that economic empowerment of the respondents has greatly improved after joining Kudumbashree. Great improvement has happened in the case of thrift saving (77 %), Fund management (85 %) and repayment of loan (92 %) compared with other statements.

**Table 3:Social Empowerment**

SL.No	Components of Empowerment	A	UD	DA	Total
1	The NHGs act as platform for racing social issues	86	3	11	100.0
2	Grass root planning with active involvement of the people is assured	55	26	19	100.0
3	Exploitation by non-institutional source is averted	62	10	28	100.0

4	The attitude towards progressive outlook and development can be changed	76	19	5	100.0
5	Solving the problems in the group tactfully and efficiently	65	12	23	100.0
6	Decision taking ability increased	91	8	1	100.0
7	Going to public meeting without any hesitation	46	38	16	100.0
8	Talking to Govt. officials without any hindrance	40	22	38	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2018

Table 3: reveals that social empowerment of the respondents has greatly improved after joining Kudumbashree. Great improvement has happened in the case of Decision making (91 %) attitude change (76 %) and problem solving (65 %) compared with other statements.

**Table 4:Political Empowerment**

SL.No	Components of Empowerment	A	UD	DA	Total
1	Women act as a leaders of the group	89	2	9	100.0
2	Group serve as forums for sharing of ideas and skills	77	12	11	100.0
3	Freely and frankly speaking in NHG meetings	91	9	-	100.0
4	Group members contested in Panchayat election	32	-	68	100.0
5	Women ability to take political decision has increased	55	14	31	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2018

Table 4: reveals that political empowerment of the respondents has greatly improved after joining Kudumbashree. Great improvement has happened in the case of speaking ability in meetings (91 %) women act as a leader (89 %) and sharing ideas (77 %) compared with other statements.

**C. Level of empowerment of the samples**

An empowerment scale was developed and used by the researcher to find out the level of empowerment of women in Kudumbashree units. It includes 18 statements regarding economic, social and political empowerment. The response of the samples was marked in a three point scale (Agree, Undecided and Disagree) and was given a score of 3, 2, and 1 respectively. Thus the maximum score obtained by a sample for the empowerment scale was 54and minimum score was 18. Further the scores, obtained for the empowerment scale were categorized in to low level (less than 65%) medium level (65-70%) and high level (above 70%). The details regarding the empowerment of the members in selected Kudumsree units are discussed Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Empowerment Level**

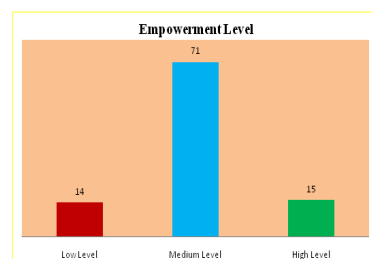


Figure 1 revealed that majority (71 %) of the members attained medium level of empowerment followed by low level empowerment (14 %) and (15 %) high level empowerment. Thus the analysis found that empowerment of women through Kudumbashree will undoubtedly have long term socio-economic benefits.

### Conclusion

Women in Kerala are a valuable, healthy and educated resource and can contribute effectively in all aspects of development of the state. An attitudinal change can be brought about by highlighting successful endeavors of women and by providing support systems for the multiple tasks they take up. The present study inferred that, majority (71 %) of the members attained medium level of empowerment followed by low level empowerment (14 %) and (15 %) high level empowerment. Economic empowerment greatly happened in case of thrift saving (77 %), Fund management (85 %) and repayment of loan (92 %). Social empowerment attained by the member is decision making (91 %) attitude change (76 %) and problem solving (65 %) and political empowerment attained by them is speaking ability in meetings (91 %) women act as a leader (89 %) and sharing ideas (77 %). Thus the study could be concluded that empowerment of women through Kudumbashree will undoubtedly have long term socio-economic benefits.

### References

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