

Constraints Encountered in Participation of Women in 'Kudumbashree' Activities

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ABSTRACT

In Kerala state of India, 'Kudumbashree' programme was introduced with the intention of uplifting and empowering women engaged in agriculture and allied activities. A study was conducted to analyse the constraints experienced by women in 'kudumbashree' activities in Alappuzha district of Kerala. Ex-post facto research design was followed with a sample size of 120 women. The results revealed that 'overloading of work', 'delayed services of local government', 'lack of economic empowerment', 'health problems' and 'Unsustainable micro enterprises,' were the major constraints.

Keywords: Constraints, Women Participation, 'Kudumbashree Programme'; Kerala

Kerala, a highly literate state remains a forerunner in women empowerment, according to the census report of India in 2011. Programmes like 'Kudumbashree', 'Janashree' were introduced in this state to enhance the status of women engaged in agriculture and allied activities. The main advantage of women empowerment is that there will be an overall development of the society (Islam and Sarmah, 2014). The world economy suffers a lot because of the unequal opportunity for women (Bhat, et.al 2014) 'Kudumbashree', meaning 'prosperity of the family', is a poverty eradication mission initiated by the Government of Kerala for eradicating poverty. 'Kudumbashree' envisages

prosperity of the poor families in the state with multiple programmes that will provide them opportunity for better social security and empower them physically, socially, economically and politically. 'Kudumbashree' has been found to be effectively empowering the women in Kerala (Anwar et.al 2017). Despite the participation of women in the planning and implementation process of various anti poverty programmes, they also face various constraints. These constraints remain as obstacles in their empowerment process. Hence an attempt was made to analyse the constraints faced by the rural women in the participation in 'Kudumbashree'

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activities.

METHODOLOGY

Expost facto research design was followed for this study. Haripad block of Alappuzha district of Kerala state was selected an collective farming under the *kudumbashree* programme has been successful in this area. Six villages were identified based on the number of *kudumbashree* participants. A sample size of 120 was considered, based on the recommendation of the statisticians. Thus 120 women respondents who have more than 10 years of experience in *kudumbashree* activities were identified from six villages based on proportionate random sampling method. The data were collected from

the respondents with the help of a well-structured and pre-tested interview schedule in an informal atmosphere in their homes. The collected data were subjected to statistical analysis like mean, percentage analysis and Garrett ranking method.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Constraint is the state of being checked, restricted, or compelled to avoid or perform some action. The constraints commonly faced by the respondents in the participation in *kudumbashree* activities are presented in Table1.

It could be noticed from Table1. that “overloading of work” was ranked as the

Table 1.
Constraints Experienced by the Women Respondents in Participation in Kudumbashree.

Sl.No.	Constraints	Mean Score	Rank
1.	Overloading of work	51.67	I
2.	Delayed services of local government	41.67	II
3.	Lack of economic empowerment	33.33	III
4.	Health problems	31.67	IV
5.	Unsustainable micro enterprises	25.00	V
6.	Struggle for power	24.17	VI
7.	High interest rate in housing programmes	22.50	VII
8.	Lack of coordination in group ventures	20.83	VIII
9.	Marketing problems	18.33	IX
10.	Politicization	17.50	X
11.	Biased preparation of BPL list and selection of beneficiaries	16.67	XI
12.	Cross borrowing and indebtedness	16.00	XII
13.	Lack of guidance in micro credit	12.50	XIII
14.	Problems in maintaining micro enterprises	8.33	XIV
	Mean Percentage	24.29	

first constraint reported by the majority of respondents (51.67 per cent). Other major constraints reported were "Delayed Services from local government" (41.67 per cent), "Lack of economic empowerment" (33.33 per cent), "Health Problems" (31.67 per cent), "Unsustainable micro enterprises" (25.00 per cent), "Struggle for Power" (24.17 per cent), "High interest rate in Housing Programme" (22.50 per cent), "Lack of Coordination in Group Ventures" (20.83 per cent), "Marketing Problems" (18.33 per cent) and "Politicization" (17.50 per cent).

More workload is assigned to the functionaries of the *Kudumbashree* members. According to the respondents, if the *Kudumbashree* units are not overloaded with work they would perform more efficiently. This result is in line with the findings of Shihabudheen (2013). "Delayed Services from local government" was ranked as the second major constraint as reported by about two-fifths (41.67 per cent) of the respondents. Delaying the release of funds to *Kudumbashree* by the local governments and even diversion or non-release of funds meant for the programme are reported as bottlenecks. "Lack of economic empowerment" was ranked as the third important constraint as reported by one third (33.33 per cent) of the respondents. The women had to depend on their family for their economic assistance. Economic empowerment is considered as an important measure of poverty eradication and empowerment. This is in accordance with the reported findings of Oommen (1999). "Health Problems" was ranked as the fourth major constraint (31.67 per cent). In general,

women face a lot of health problems during late thirties and early forties. The increased domestic and social activities in this age put them to more health problems.

"Unsustainable micro enterprises" was ranked as the fifth constraint as reported by exactly one-fourth (25.00 per cent) of the respondents. Many of the microenterprises are promising the earlier stages. But they are unviable in the later stages because of the marketing problems. This result is in line with the findings of Oommen (1999). "Struggle for Power" was ranked as the sixth constraint as reported by about one-fourth (24.17 per cent) of the respondents. This might be due to the reason that the *Kudumbashree* units have become powerful in mobilizing people and in accessing funds. "High interest rate in housing programme" was ranked as the seventh constraint according to about one-fifth (22.50 per cent) of the respondents. The recent increase in the interest rate has dampened the spirit of many poor families in availing of the benefits of the scheme. "Lack of Coordination in Group Ventures" was ranked as the eighth constraint according to one-fifth (20.83 per cent) of the respondents.

It was found out that various problems were encountered by the women respondents in operating *Kudumbashree* units. Still the women enthusiastically participated in various activities of *Kudumbashree* units and related entrepreneurial activities. The suggestions put forth based on the study are reducing the official workload of the participants, accelerating the speed of the services of the local government, providing additional avenues

for increasing economic returns, establishing special health support insurance schemes for women, promoting sustainable profit oriented micro enterprises and providing crystal clear guidelines for micro -credit may be considered favourably by the policy makers, planners and officials associated with *kudumbashree* activities.

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