



Constraints and Suggestions elicited by Rice farmers under Collective farming of Kudumbashree in Kannur district, Kerala

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted in Kannur district of Kerala State, to know the constraints and suggestions elicited by rice farmers under collective farming project of Kudumbashree. An ex-post-facto research design was followed for the study conducted in the purposively selected blocks of the district. (Thaliparamba and Kaliasseri). A sample of 120 farmers were selected using proportionate sampling procedure and information was gathered and analyzed. Majority (81.67%) of the respondents stated that 'Lack of experience in storage and transformation of information' was the major problem faced by the rice farmers. Major suggestions given by the rice farmers were, Training to be specific and given on a need oriented basis' followed by reducing the workload assigned to the functionaries of the Kudumbashree (73.33%).

Key words: *Collective farming, Kudumbashree.*

Kudumbashree", meaning 'Prosperity of the family' was inaugurated on 17th May 1998 by the former Prime Minister of India, Shri. Atal Bihari Vajpayee in Malappuram district of Kerala, initiated by the Government of Kerala for de rooting the absolute poverty from the state. It is a holistic and participatory women oriented innovative poverty reduction approach implemented through Local Self Governments. With more than 37 lakh members, Kudumbashree had created a well knit network of women in every village, town and city of Kerala. Through concerted and continuous action sustainable livelihood options for the poor are being developed. Persistent efforts to reach out to the most vulnerable and reached among the poor are also underway (Economic Review, 2009).

Rice cultivation has been the part and parcel of Kerala's culture and it is the state's major food crop. Despite these facts, the area and production of paddy continues to be declined over the past 20 years. In spite of the fact that Kerala is a thickly populated state and there is shortage for land, large areas of cultivable land is kept idle in the state due to the waning interest in agriculture. On the other hand, thousands and thousands of poor families who are ready to do anything for a livelihood do not have land to venture into agriculture sector. When paddy cultivation became a non-lucrative affair, farmers of the state deserted

paddy fields. Kudumbashree found this as an opportunity. Neighbourhood Groups of the mission were given encouragement to start paddy cultivation. Many groups have identified the immense potential of lease land farming. Lease land farming is beneficial both to the landless poor women of Kudumbashree and the landowners who are not interested in paddy cultivation (Jacob, 2009).

In 2004, the programme on 'Collective Farming' by Joint Liability Groups was started under the Kudumbashree Mission which assists poor women to lease land in a group and thereby create an income source for them. Originally the term "lease land farming" was used for such group cultivation. Now it is called "collective farming."

Raghavan (2002) in his case study on Kudumbasree projects in Kerala reported that Kudumbasree has become the lifeline of poor women in the state and has helped 2,42,489 poor women turned into micro-entrepreneurs. Status of the women in families and communities has improved considerably and Kudumbasree has gained national and international acclaim as an ideal and workable model of participatory development for eradicating poverty.

The domestic constraints identified were as no one to help at home, unsupportive husbands and low family income. Social constraints were adherence to traditional role, expectations of society

and dependence on male support and their psychological constraints consisted of high achievement, need for high risk-taking and low affiliation. (Nirmala, 2003).

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present research was carried out for knowing the constraints faced and the suggestions given by the of rice farmers under the collective farming of Kudumbashree in Kannur district of Kerala state This region was purposively selected for the study as Kannur district is one of the districts in Kerala where the collective farming under the Kudumbashree has been successful in its attempt. The samples of 60 respondents were each drawn from Thaliparamba and Kaliasseri blocks of Kannur district. Thus, in all 120 farmers were selected with the help of simple random sampling method which constituted the sample respondents collected through personal interview method with the help of interview schedule in an informal atmosphere either at home or at field. The mean, standard deviation and correlation co-efficient were worked out for interpretation of results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION CONSTRAINTS FACED BY THE RICE FARMERS:

A perusal of the Table 1. indicated that the majority (81.67%) of the respondents stated that 'Lack of experience in storage and transformation of information' was the major problem followed by other problems like 'Increasing workload of functionaries and mounting aversion to voluntarism' (75.83%), 'Lack of need-based training' (54.17%), 'Lack of coordination between panchayaths and Kudumbashree units' (48.33%), 'Low extension and media contact' (45.00%), 'Inadequate knowledge about Government policies and schemes' (36.67%), 'Irregular meetings' (35.00%), 'Inadequate knowledge on market information' (31.67%), 'Disturbance from the daily household works' (29.17%), 'Low education level of farmers' (27.50%), 'Less participation in social functions' (22.50%), and 'Lack of proper marketing place' (15.00%).

The problem of 'Lack of experience in storage and transformation of information' might be due to the less usage of internet and modern

ICT tools by the respondents. The problem of 'Increasing workload of functionaries and mounting aversion to voluntarism' might be due to the reason that the office bearers of Kudumbashree are bound to perform many tasks and duties, considering the fact that most of Kudumbashree members are housewives having family obligations, continuous multiplication of task could be counterproductive. The problem of 'Lack of need-based training' might be due to the reason that the training imparted to Kudumbashree members is too general to be of use to the immediate needs.

SUGGESTIONS GIVEN BY THE RICE FARMERS:

From Table 2. it can be inferred that majority of the respondents (85.00%) suggested that 'Training should be specific and given on a need oriented basis' to overcome the problems in their information management behaviour followed by 'Reduce the workload assigned to the functionaries of the Kudumbashree' (73.33%), 'Computer based knowledge be imparted to all Kudumbashree members' (65.00%), 'Follow-up should be conducted on a regular basis' (61.67%), 'Marketing should be done through co-operatives marketing chain and incorporate new strategies' (50.83%), 'Proper advertisement should be given for the products' (47.50%), 'Good rapport should be established between the Kudumbashree members and Panchayath officials' (45.83%), 'Proper co-ordination should exist between grama and block panchayats' (45.00%), 'Overall monitoring and correcting systems should be introduced' (35.00%), 'Introduce tax incentives to Kudumbashree products' (33.33%) and 'Avoid misuse of Kudumbashree members by political parties' (23.33%).

An array of suggestions had been offered by the respondents to overcome the problems faced in their information management behaviour. The suggestions which stood in the forefront are 'Training should be specific and given on a need oriented basis'. Here it is suggested that a training need assessment report should be prepared by Kudumbashree Mission and based on that future training will be organized. The next major suggestion offered was 'Reduce the workload assigned to the functionaries of the Kudumbashree'. If the

Table 1. Constraints faced by the rice farmers. (n=120)

Sl. No	Problems	Respondents		Rank
		Frequencyn	Percentage	
1.	Low education level of farmers	33	27.50	X
2.	Lack of experience in storage and transformation of information	98	81.67	I
3.	Low extension and media contact	54	45.00	V
4.	Less participation in social functions	27	22.50	XI
5.	Lack of need-based training	65	54.17	III
6.	Lack of proper marketing place	18	15.00	XII
7.	Inadequate knowledge on market information	38	31.67	VIII
8.	Inadequate knowledge about Government policies and schemes	44	36.67	VI
9.	Irregular meetings	42	35.00	VII
10.	Disturbance from the daily household works	35	29.17	IX
11.	Increasing workload of functionaries and mounting aversion to voluntarism	91	75.83	II
12.	Lack of coordination between panchayaths and Kudumbashree units	58	48.33	IV

Table 2. Suggestions given by the rice farmers. (n=120)

Sl. No	Suggestions	Respondents		Rank
		Frequencyn	Percentage	
1.	Training should be specific and given on a need oriented basis.	102	85.00	I
2.	Marketing should be done through co-operatives marketing chain and incorporate new strategies.	61	50.83	V
3.	Proper advertisement should be given for the products.	57	47.50	VI
4.	Computer based knowledge be imparted to all Kudumbashree members.	78	65.00	III
5.	Introduce tax incentives to Kudumbashree products.	40	33.33	X
6.	Overall monitoring and correcting systems should be introduced.	42	35.00	IX
7.	Follow-up should be conducted on a regular basis.	74	61.67	IV
8.	Reduce the workload assigned to the functionaries of the Kudumbashree.	88	73.33	II
9.	Avoid misuse of Kudumbashree members by political parties.	28	23.33	XI
10.	Good rapport should be established between the Kudumbashree members and Panchayath officials.	55	45.83	VII
11.	Proper co-ordination should exist between grama and block panchayats.	54	45.00	VIII

Kudumbashree were not overloaded with work and care is taken not to use the project as a party-based organization, there is great hope for better women's agency in the state.

The other suggestion offered 'Computer based knowledge be imparted to all Kudumbashree members might be because their knowledge about computer was very meager. The other suggestions given by respondents like 'Marketing should be done through co-operatives marketing chain and incorporate new strategies' and 'Proper advertisement should be given for the products' is to make the marketing of products strengthened by ensured quality of products, packing, catching brand name, trade mark etc.

The respondents also indicated the suggestions of 'Good rapport should be established between the Kudumbashree members and Panchayath officials' and 'Proper co-ordination should exist between grama and block panchayats'. The reason behind these suggestions may be because there is a lack of smooth flow of information from the panchayaths to the Kudumbashree mission and vice-versa which created a lag in information dissemination.

The remaining minor suggestions given by the respondents were 'Introduce tax incentives to Kudumbashree products', 'Overall monitoring and correcting systems should be introduced' and 'Avoid misuse of Kudumbashree members by political parties'.

CONCLUSIONS:

Land brought under paddy cultivation has been declining drastically for the past few years. It is in such context that the Kudumbashree mission started the collective farming project with the objective of revamping the paddy cultivated area in the state. Increased financial returns and sustainable employment opportunities have given

the women beneficiaries a sense of security and hope for future. Moreover it has helped in increasing the agricultural production by bringing fallow and cultivable waste land into agricultural production process.

The study inferred that majority of the respondents expressed major problems such as lack of experience in storage and transformation of information, increasing workload of functionaries and mounting aversion to voluntarism and lack of need-based training. Hence Kudumbashree mission should concentrate on resolving these problems.

Majority of the respondents suggested that the training programmes to be specific and need based and to reduce the workload assigned to the functionaries of the Kudumbashree and impart computer based knowledge be imparted to all Kudumbashree

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(Received on 18.06.2016 and revised on 21.08.2017)