

Trainings and Employment; Limitations of Kudumbashree

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Abstract—This study argues that, women in Kudumbashree had been encouraged to enter in Agricultural work through JLG (Joint Liability Group) of farming with more liberal bank support. They were getting good trainings in agriculture through Kudumbashree and members liked to stick on this primary sector more than on micro-enterprises largely. However women were less observed in skilled areas of this sector. Kudumbashree employment training cannot supply skilled workers to the deficient sectors or it cannot transfer the members who accumulating on the elementary agriculture as skilled/semi-skilled workers in the same field. Besides, it has limitation to satisfy the women who are main earners of the family economically inside its employment planning in terms of trainings and types of employment.

Keywords— Training, Employment, Gender, Kudumbashree

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the main objectives of SHGs in general and Kudumbashree in particular is to address poverty by generating income-earning opportunities for the women. An important component of any SHG is trainings and skill development. Besides it is very important to bring out hidden talents and capacities of members (N.Borhade 2016). In this study above 75 percentage of respondents reported that they got the opportunity to participate in various trainings and classes. It would be very informative to know the details of the trainings they attended.

II. DATA AND METHODS

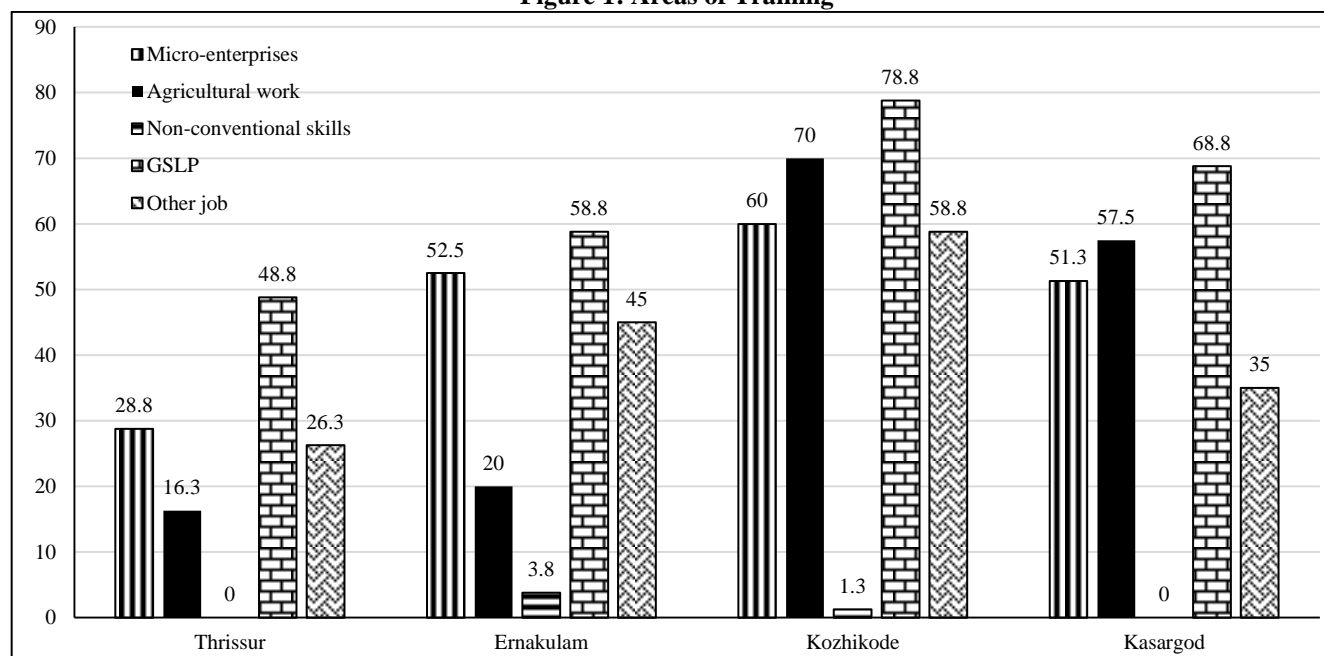
This paper is part of a broader study on the existential realities of the women members of the Kudumbashree programme in Kerala, with special reference to their social capital and quality of life. Data for the broader study have been collected from four districts namely Thrissur, Ernakulam, Kozhikode and Kasaragod (eight CD blocks) using mixed methods.

The figure 1 indicates that the training in which majority of the respondents participated was Gender Self Learning Program (GSLP) organized by Kudumbashree Mission. Respondents from Kozhikode were observed as participated in this program more (78.8 percent) followed by Kasaragod (68.8 percent). In Thrissur and Ernakulam, relatively less percentage of respondents participated in GSLP training (48.8 and 58.8 percent respectively).

The next major area of training was ‘other job trainings’ which constituted of different skill trainings outsourced by Kudumbashree to other agencies/resources such as coaching centres of government jobs, training of *Deen Dayal Udhyan Grameen Koushalya Yojana* (DDUGKY) -a youth employment scheme of Government of India- etc. A large share of the women had been participating in such trainings in all districts. Here in total above 40 percent of women had reported that they had participated in such trainings. Here also respondents from Kozhikode district were observed more (58.8 percent). 45 percent of respondents from Ernakulam and 35 percent of them from Kasargod participated in these kinds of training.

The extended participation in training related agricultural works reflected in employment also. This fact is evident from the detailed analysis of the employment pattern of the group of respondents who were employed (65 percentage). It was observed that the large share have involved in agriculture works through JLG (Joint Liability Group) of farming and MGNREGA (27.2 percentage). That means the major share of employment under ‘elementary occupation’ which they were engaged in have been covered by these two types of works. Employment as labourers in building construction, well/pond-digging, etc. have seen (very few numbers) in Ernakulam and as sweepers in Thrissur and Kasargod (0.6 percentage). The accumulation of members mainly in unskilled agriculture work in terms of elementary occupation was also is evident from this analysis.

Figure 1: Areas of Training



Source: Fieldwork in Kerala, 2019

According to the report of skill gap study of National Skill Development Corporation in Kerala, people are expected to be moving out of the employment in primary sector and in 2021-22, the share of employment across the primary sector in Kerala is expected to decline considerably. At the same time secondary and tertiary sector contributions are expected to increase too. Employment such as building and construction, trade, hotels and restaurants and manufacturing are expected here to arise more. As a result the main and significant demand for human resource is expected in semi-skilled segment and the second major demanded area will be of skilled segment. (skilled, semi-skilled and minimally skilled are three segments). Semi-skilled segment is expected to emerge as the largest category of supply over this period and it is closely followed by minimally skilled work force. This study put forward the need of skill development trainings which linked with specific employability and the warning this report put forward is the trainings should be aligned with industry demand. The excess demand in significant number of the workforce (8 Lakhs) is expected to exit from the agriculture sector between 2012-22 and added to the incremental supply of workers in this period. From a skilling perspective, this is an important target segment for reskilling so that they can positively contribute to the economy. This study identifies many qualitative skills in different areas such as in building and construction, communication, manufacturing etc. too.

The study of National Skill Development Corporation in

Kerala further finds out that the Local Self Government Department has been using Kudumbashree in conducting skill development programs to impart low-end skills for semi-skilled and minimally skilled personnel through the Kudumbashree Mission. There are Organization Training- focuses on leadership and management skills for women, Enterprise Training- Skill development and Orientation programs to enhance business capabilities of individual and group entrepreneurs, Financial Services Training- Training in Micro Finance to support communities in engaging with financial institutions effectively and Social and Gender Empowerment Training: Training on life skills and self-awareness targeted at the marginalized communities. The assumption is that these initiatives will be focused on sectors with huge shortage of manpower such as agriculture-allied activities and informal sector activities such as home-based services. (Final Report National Skill Development Corporation)

However it was found that the enterprise trainings of Kudumbashree limitedly only instill the needed confidence among them to use advanced technologies of this field. Only in Ernakulam and Thrissure district under few CDS this study finds training has been given in building construction, plumbing, wiring, well digging, interiel decoration etc. This dearth of human resource (in skilled, semi-skilled and minimally skilled) which is ready to supply to fill the above mentioned forth coming vacancies in agriculture or to the secondary sector employments like building construction,

trade, hotels and restaurants from Kudumbashree will be solved in large extent if Kudumbashree focus trainings based on advanced skill level (skilled, semi-skilled and minimally skilled) in accordance with the education qualifications of the members.

Thus the very less share of accumulation on employment like construction works too does not go with claims of Kudumbashree in 'upgradation of skills' in this regard. The trainings were almost exclusively focussed on conventional feminine skills. Only in Ernakulam and Thrissur districts, members, albeit very few, were trained in building construction/water well digging, wiring/plumbing etc. Another important observation is that although the respondents from Kozhikode and Kasaragod reported various types of trainings being provided through workshops and classes, it is from these districts where most of them reported that these trainings were not much helpful in promoting economic self-reliance.

The next major single employment they have engaged was tailoring (9.4 percentage) which comes under in 'craft and related trade works' in occupation wise. There are very few (.2 percentage) members seen in printing job in this category. Animal keeper (1.6 percentage) (under Skilled Agricultural and Fishery Workers) and micro-enterprises like poultry egg, catering, packed food, 'home shop marketing' (Service and Sales Workers) together cover a considerable share (12.5 percentage). In addition to these a few number of beauty parlor, Yoga training centre also exists in the occupational category of Services and Sales Workers.

The category of 'Technicians and Associate Professionals' involves CDS workers and Chairpersons, animators, resource persons, accountants, Haritha Karma Sena volunteers etc. 'Clerks/Clerical Support Workers' is constituted by bank employees and 'Professional' by teachers, medical lab technicians, pharmacists, artists (actors, chinkarimelam - group instrumental performance, ornaments making, stage decoration. Interestingly one driver is also there under 'Plant and Machine Operators, and Assemblers'.

Trainings Employment and Challenge in Gender Norms

Most of the trainings provided by the Kudumbashree focussed on generating petty skills that did not fetch sufficient economic revenue. Nearly half of the respondent women were trained in management of different kinds of MEs of making pickle, curry masala, snacks, processed food items, paper bags, organic vessels and tumblers etc. These were rarely profitable and frequently put their respective entrepreneurs in debt trap. The high level organisation and participation of/in GSLP training could not bring its

reflections in employment trainings in terms of challenging the gendered norms.

Not only the small scale MEs but even group MEs reportedly mostly did not meet with success due to lack of cooperation and concerted effort among the members. Highest percentage of respondents in Kozhikode and Kasaragod districts expressed their dissatisfaction about this kind of nature of trainings. At the same time, the non-conventional occupation which found in Ernakulam were reportedly found durable and go well with market demand. The words of some respondents are like this;

Sakunthala (52 year old) from Kothamangalam block in Ernakulam who got training (the first and only District where the training in building construction program was initiated) observed:

At the time of entering to this field we did not know anything about construction work, but this work made our life different. We became confident to undertake any works if we get proper trainings. We have constructed several small houses mainly of 'home project' of Kudumbashree itself.

Anuja (49 year-old) from same block who is member of work group of her NHG says

Our group is doing work of '*ferro-slab*'- Almar setting-. Now we are getting many work contracts and people are very satisfied with our work. There are no male members in our group and we did not ever feel any difficulties in climbing on the wall or anything. We got training in drilling, fixtures and so on and I feel proper training is the only requirement in any kind of job.

Santhamma (56 year old) from the same district was doing well/pond digging successfully. In her own words

My group is now enjoying the work. There are many wells and ponds in this block made or cleaned by our group. We are getting lots of work contracts and I feel this is the a better work I ever did in my life economically. We got proper training from technical institute nearby. Besides I am also managing to take contracts of works of stage settings for big functions like marriages.

Further, most of the micro-enterprises (MEs) of Kudumbashree criticized as come largely under the concept of traditional gender roles and these facts point out that Kudumbashree is primarily designed for women who lead the heterosexual conjugal married life. Besides, single women/parent or women who have to find the main (not supplementary) earning for the family were reported their inconvenience to stick on the MEs of Kudumbashree due to its uncertain sustainability in terms of durability and profit (Thiruvoth, 2020). The fact was that major share of the trainings offered by Kudumbashree was constituted by

gender counselling. However, the respondent women reportedly were not able to implement the lessons learnt in their intimate spaces. They failed to question the gendered status-quo within the families and continued to live an unequal life. For instance, many of them had reported that it was impossible to negotiate for getting permission to use land 'surety' to get loans for starting MEs even if the land is of their personal ownership. One of the main reasons of the trend of accumulation of members on unskilled agriculture work was observed as many of the women were not interested to continue as laborers of heterogeneous group (of men and women) in the mainstream due to the gendered exploitations. Instead of challenging the status quo they accumulate in the unskilled homogeneous group of women workers.

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