

## Kudumbashree women shines with Kochi Metro

When the KMRL Managing Director Mr Elias George calls up Kudumbashree office and said "Kudumbashree members are doing a wonderful job for Kochi Metro station management", it was a fulfilment of dreams of Kudumbashree Ernakulam District Mission office and the State Mission office. That was a moment, where Kudumbashree has risen above the perceptions of the common man and elevated itself into a world class work force. The moment filled with pride where Kudumbashree women clad in uniforms with Kudumbashree and KMRL Logos embodied on it, took over the management of all stations of the Kochi Metro.

The Journey started off with the State Mission of Kudumbashree started contemplating that how to enhance the already proven success story of Kudumbashree and take it to next level. The vision started get moulding, when the KMRL approached Kudumbashree for taking over the facility management of all Metro stations. That was a huge challenge for Kudumbashree but also an opportunity to give employment to a huge number of Kudumbashree members in a high class urban transport system.

The Initial phase of planning and research was done by the State Mission. It included visits to the various other metro stations, doing a lot of research on legal aspects, technology to be adopted, financial structure and other contractual terms. The contract formation itself was a gigantic task as it involves two huge stake holders and thus has to be inclusive and comprehensive. The tireless efforts of the state mission in planning and designing has finally resulted in a full-fledged contract and finally made acceptable to both stake holders. This led to the milestone of signing the contract between Honourable Executive Director of Kudumbashree and Director (systems) of KMRL to entrust the station management of all 23 metro stations in the initial phase to Kudumbashree for the period of next three years. It also gave birth to idea of world's first women-led Metro station management.

After the initial phase, the project was handed over to the Ernakulam District Mission for implementation. A new challenge, which was faced never before by a Government Department, which needs to be finished in quick time, included sourcing, selecting, training and on boarding of employees on KMRL. The works got entrusted with Kudumbashree included ticketing, housekeeping and parking. A total of 780 women were getting employed with 530 of them in the phase till Palarivattom and the rest in the phase till Maharajas. A detailed notification was issued mentioning the various eligibility criteria, in major newspapers, in the website and sent to all CDS's. Much to the surprise of the District mission, the number of applications flown in to the tune of 40000 instead of the expected number of 12000. This has further added to the difficulty as selecting staff from this huge number of candidates with limited resources looked like a herculean task. All resources of District Mission including the staff, the CDSs', IT units got into action to do the huge task of entering the data of these 40000 candidates. 8

lakhs data were entered with the combined effort of all stake holders of Kudumbashree in record time of 15 days. Exams dates were scheduled and 39700 admit cards were issued through CDSs' within 5 days. Education department came to our rescue by provided us 100 schools as examination centres. The question paper preparation and valuation were entrusted with Centre for Management Development who has done their job to sheer perfection. The staff of District Mission again joined together for the conduct of exams. They worked in hub and spoke model in the logistics of question papers and answer sheet. The work started in the previous day of exams and completed in the next day night at 10 pm. The sheer passion with which the staff of District Mission worked in these two days was a clear example of commitment and dedication. The results were declared in three days' time and 1077 candidates were shortlisted. The candidates were given soft skill training by Kudumbashree and skill training was given by KMRL.

Finally when all the 530 people were present at the stations during the inauguration ceremony and flag off of Kochi Metro, with lot of happiness and sense of achievement, it was a moment of pride for Kudumbashree. It also has added to its pleasure that the workforce also included 23 transgender, who are also getting a livelihood through this project. Kudumbashree has added another feather in its crown by paving the way for world's first woman led Metro station management.