

IMPACT STUDY ON VIGILANT GROUP



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Introduction

The aim of Kudumbashree scheme is to improve the standard of living of poor women in rural areas by setting up micro-credit and productive enterprises. It is a community based self help initiative involving poor women. The aim of the Kudumbashree Mission is to empower women as a strategy for Poverty Eradication. Kudumbashree also focused on female safety and empowerment. Peace, safety, and security are necessary and indispensable requirements for development and the attainment of good quality of life for any human society. In the wake of rising cases of atrocities against women, Kudumbashree has decided to constitute vigilant groups at the ward level in all panchayaths, municipalities, and incorporation.

The vigilante group serves the community interest in crime prevention and maintaining peace. Vigilant groups are an informal group of community members to discuss community problems face-to-face, identify their root causes and consequences, and develop local solutions and referrals. It is a participatory group that focuses to prevent gender-based violence, as well as their ideas on what should be done about it. The aim of forming such groups is to create a safe neighborhood, locality and ensure freedom of movement and protect women and children from violence and atrocities.

Objectives

The aim will be to ensure child and women-friendly wards. For this, the vigilant group is keeping an eye on the suspicious activities and crime suspects among other things. The vigilant group consists of 10 to 15 female and male members of the particular ward. Most of our programs consist only female members however it's been decided to get male participation in vigilant group activities. Men have to take a stand and act as the change agents to end this social ill call gender-based violence and atrocities in the community. The role of the vigilante group is to prevent the atrocities and provide immediate assistance through Snehitha, police, and Jagrathasamithi. A vigilante group is keeping careful watch for possible danger or difficulties which can affect women and children of the particular ward. Kudumbashree has 19770 vigilant groups across the state.

Formation of Vigilant Groups

Kudumbashree has developed three modules on the basis of GSLP (Gender Self Learning Program). First is Women and Employment, second is Women and Health, and third is Women and Mobility. As part of GSLP third module a topic called 'Atrocities against Women and Children' was taken up. It was about the gender-based violence faced by women and children. Therefore Kudumbashree initiated different mechanism and activities to prevent gender-based violence in the community. Snehitha Gender Help Desk is one of the preventive mechanisms of Kudumbashree to address atrocities and violence.

To make development a success, each person in the community both female and male must be included; they must take an active part in creating development in their own lives and communities. So Kudumbashree decided to develop informal groups in NHG locality and it should be vigilant to prevent gender-based violence and create a safe environment for women and children in the community. And the concept of the vigilant group came up. By starting the vigilant group, we gave the responsibility to the community people to take initiatives, precautions and necessary action to prevent atrocities.

'Vigilant Group' is an activity group with 5 to 10 people as its members. Each vigilant group comprises of CDS members, social workers and those people who are interested in partnering in social activities. In the first phase, we gave awareness about such a gathering in the ward level and formed these groups. In the second phase, we gave training to the group members in the Local Self Government Institution level and at district level.

Process

At the initial stage, vigilant groups were formed at the panchayath level across the state. And then it was formed in all the wards of panchayath. Vigilant group formation opened a way for women to use public space and other services.

Our Vigilant group members, with support from Snehitha and home department, carry out discussions, campaigns that educate people about the roots of GBV, its harmful consequences and about women and children's rights. Vigilant group also recognizes the

crucial role that men play in preventing GBV.

Trainings

A training program for vigilant group allowed strengthening those skills that each member needed to improve. Aim of vigilant group training was to improve their performance, find out the weakness and get it sort, and to make them aware about the law and order. Kudumbashree has given state-level training to vigilant group members of each district. Apart from this district missions are also conducting capacity building training for vigilant group members. We have transgender members as well in vigilant group. One of the TG from Wayanad district participated in state-level training and shared experience that how they are been honored by Kudumbashree by getting membership in a vigilant group.

Target

The primary target is to form vigilant groups at each ward of local bodies in Kerala. 'Vigilant Groups' had already been formed in 19,770 wards in Kerala with 1,36,062 people (both male and female) as its members.

Achievement

At the initial stage, vigilant groups were formed at Grama Panchayath level. After the Panchayath level formation, vigilant groups were formed in each ward of a Grama Panchayath. Vigilant group members are providing voluntary services for the community. This itself explains that how people are taking initiatives to prevent violence to create their locality women and child-friendly. Today we have total 19770 vigilant groups in 19,770 wards across the state.

Methodology

Source of Data

a) Primary Source of data- The respondents are Kudumbashree Gender team officials, CDS Chairpersons, Vigilant group members etc. Information collected through the interaction with respondents.

b) Secondary source of data-Data from various books, Articles, Magazines, Journals, Websites etc..

Impact in the society

By forming vigilant group in locality we came to know that how communities within situations of violence and atrocities can find creative ways to prevent it and how they are or pro-actively advancing child and women-friendly localities. By forming the vigilant groups, the number of anti-social activities and social evils has been reduced to an extent. People became more vigilant and have started to address the violence and atrocities happening around. At the grass root level, people don't walk to the police station directly to report the issues. They either tolerate the violence or share with their very close relatives only. Since the survivor hesitates to complaint the atrocities, the abuser carries over with the same nature of abuse. Vigilant group came up as the voice of the oppressed, group members keen an eye over to the families where the chances of atrocities are high. The group pays individual attention as well to create peaceful surrounding. As the impact of vigilant group, districts have started new initiatives as part of vigilant group activities. Thrissur district mission's "NATTUKOOTTAM" and "TWO WHEELER ARMY" Kozhikode District's "PINK TASK FORCE", and Kollam District's "NIRBHAYA" are the best practices of vigilant group formation.

Suggestions

- Create women and child-friendly wards across the state.
- It is mandatory to maintain full fledged vigilant groups at ward level to prevent all social evils.
- Vigilant groups can do IEC activities at ward level to make an awareness regarding gender based violence
- State Mission and District mission should give more priority to vigilant groups functions at ward level.
- Keep confidentiality in the cases which are handling by Vigilant groups
- Utilize the service of Balasabha members to find out any kind of violence among the family members.

Testimonials

