



INTERVIEW

Dignity, Respect and Income

The Interview with S.Harikishore, Executive Director Kudumbashree, Director IAPFD



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Kudumbashree, the State Government's poverty alleviation and women empowerment movement which has turned out to be the hope of hundreds of thousands of women from the marginalised sections are making giant leaps. The crises like floods and Covid pandemic have in fact invigorated its efforts to cross over the challenges through innovations and experiments. Kudumbashree is not only empowering its over 40 lakh members, but it is also turning out to be the guardian for sustaining their dignity. Kudumbashree's Executive Director S. Harikishore IAS speaks about the silent revolution in an interview given to N.V. Ravindranathan Nair for Femina Calling.



Excerpts of the interview
You have been leading probably the world's largest women organisation recent

for women empowerment for over four years. How do you evaluate this experience?

My four years stint with the Kudumbashree has been a fulfilling experience. Being a vast system, maintaining an

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momentum was important. We have 3 lakh neighbourhood clusters, 6 lakh members, over 1000 CWC chairpersons, 20,000 ADS chairpersons and 2 lakh Neighbourhood presidents.

Kudumbashree got the opportunity to be part of the operation of Kochi Metro, probably the only metro being run by women in the world. Our steps in waste management, efforts to rehabilitate disaster families, finding jobs in Health Schools, Agri and Animal Husbandry sectors were all challenging tasks.

Now we are training women in 28 states. We went to Azerbaijan, Tajikistan & Uganda to train women. Some African countries have sent four people to get trained. Now we are the Nodal agency for 7 Central Government projects. We are also into Geriatric care. Our members comprise the Health Services, Management of railway parking, KRETC market booking, our focus areas can be seen in several sectors. Kudumbashree is not being to the hopes of thousands. It makes us happy.

Kudumbashree has been part of the poverty alleviation programmes for over two decades. How do you see this journey?

We have succeeded in attaining many of our goals. Our network is our strength. Our connect with the Local Bodies have been mutually beneficial. If a pandemic strikes to become fallow land from, their immediate resolution in ensuring the tasks with the Kudumbashree.

The 827 'Sandhya tohidi' we started during lockdown are providing meals at Rs. 21. Here 2,00,000 people find work, as part of women empowerment initiatives like Sandhya centres are focusing on the protection of women in

distress with giving them counselling and short-term facility through the National Resource Organisation. Kudumbashree encourages other states to train the people there.

As part of evolving into an organisation which can deal with future challenges, we are converging with the Government departments.

During the Covid pandemic, the role played by Kudumbashree has widely been appreciated. Could you explain the activities you have undertaken these days?

When there was a scarcity for masks, 70 lakhs cloth masks were arranged through 350 tailoring units. Our of the 1300 community Kitchens opened during lockdown, we were managing 1100 of them. Under the Government's 100 days programme, Kudumbashree is finding job for 15,000 people. In association with the KSL, we plan to bring laptops at Rs.5,000 to each family.

Under the 'Start Women's Entrepreneurship' scheme 25 lakh women have created the loan of Rs.8,000 each. Under the National Kerala Initiative also we could avail Rs.250 crore for rehabilitation. During the flood we implemented Rs.10,000 crore loan scheme 'Matruvarama' was another scheme to bring money to the beneficiary's door steps to help women from primary money lender's exploitation. Rs.300 crore was disbursed as loan.

Kudumbashree's own Pan fund has grown to the size of Rs.600 crore. Since the outbreak of Covid, we started 100 lakh school, 9000 mentally challenged children study there.

Kudumbashree is also a neighbourhood bank. What

is its net worth? What is the percentage of repayment on the loans?

For us, women empowerment includes economic empowerment. Our Neighbourhood savings bank amount to Rs.4000 crore. We have Rs.12,000 crore worth internal funding. The bank linkage is Rs.2,000 crore. Rs.2000 crore loan was made during Covid time at 4 per cent interest or for no interest has economically empowered the women to a certain extent. The repayment on bank loans is 98 per cent.

Adding to one's dignity is integral to the real empowerment. How do you plan to empower educated women?

While linking local jobs through self-employment, many of the programmes are for wage jobs. For them, we plan 150 job-oriented courses under Central HRD -GKY. Already we have funds for setting 30,000 or more people. Already 1 lakh members have enrolled for these courses.

Political empowerment happened among Kudumbashree members these years is remarkable. 7000 of the 20,000 elected Local body members are from Kudumbashree. 200 Local body chairpersons out of 1000 are Kudumbashree members.

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'അന്തസ്സും, ആദരവും വരുമാനവും' അതാണ് കുടുംബശ്രീ

പാർശ്വവൽക്കരിക്കപ്പെട്ട ജനസമൂഹത്തിലെ ലക്ഷക്കണക്കിന് സ്ത്രീകളുടെ പ്രതീക്ഷയായ കേരളത്തിലെ ദാരിദ്ര്യ നിർമ്മാർജ്ജന, സ്ത്രീ ശാക്തീകരണ പ്രസ്ഥാനമായ കുടുംബശ്രീ ഇക്കാലയളവിൽ വൻ കുതിച്ചുചാട്ടമാണ് നടത്തിവരുന്നത്. കേരളം നേരിട്ട മഹാപ്രളയങ്ങളും കോവിഡ് -19 പ്രതിസന്ധിയുമെല്ലാം കനത്ത വെല്ലുവിളികളെ നൂതന മാർഗ്ഗങ്ങളിലൂടെയും പരീക്ഷണ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളിലൂടെയും മറികടക്കാനുള്ള കുടുംബശ്രീയുടെ ശ്രമങ്ങളെ ഊർജ്ജിതപ്പെടുത്തി.

40 ലക്ഷത്തിലേറെ വരുന്ന അയൽക്കൂട്ടാംഗങ്ങളെ ശാക്തീകരിക്കുക മാത്രമല്ല, അവരുടെ അന്തസ്സ് കാക്കുന്ന

കാവലാളായും കുടുംബശ്രീ മാറിക്കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നു. കേരള കോളിങ് മാസസിനുവേണ്ടി മുതിർന്ന മാധ്യമപ്രവർത്തകനായ ശ്രീ. എൻ.വി. രവീന്ദ്രനാഥൻ നായർക്ക് കുടുംബശ്രീയെന്ന കേരള സമൂഹത്തിലെ സുപ്രധാന ചാലക ശക്തിയെക്കുറിച്ച് നൽകിയ അഭിമുഖം ഇന്നത്തെ Making an Impact ൽ നൽകട്ടെ. എല്ലാവരും വായിക്കുകയും അഭിപ്രായങ്ങളും നിർദ്ദേശങ്ങളും അറിയിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുമെന്ന് പ്രതീക്ഷിക്കുന്നു.

ഈ ലേഖനം <https://www.kudumbashree.org/pages/183> എന്ന പേജിലെ ആർട്ടിക്കിൾസ്/ഇന്റർവ്യൂ എന്ന വിഭാഗത്തിലും നൽകിയിട്ടുണ്ട്.

