CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

An earnest attempt has been made to collect literature from varied sources. Information pertaining to the status of women, women and empowerment and Kudumbasree are enlisted under this head.

Jain Devaki (1980)\(^1\) in her case study of ‘Painters of Madhubani’, a District in Bihar opines that the women painters of Madhubani District are unable to think of organising around their skills against their family interests, to enhance their power within the household. She suggests that only well organised women’s organisations adhering strictly to women’s upliftment can succeed in enhancing the status of women.

Commenting on the low level of participation of women in Panchayat Raj Institutions, in her case study in three Panchayat samitis in Andhra Pradesh, Manikyamba (1992)\(^2\) enlists the hindering factors namely economic dependence, traditional constraints, political unawareness, personal inhibitions, and defects in the functioning of local level institutions. She also


opines that women active in other social organisations are not so in local political institutions.

Weiss Anita (1992)\(^3\) in her study on the working women in the old city of Lahore narrates the factors- poverty, illiteracy and the influence of social values posing hurdles in the way of women’s successfully engaging in economic activities outside the home environment. As a remedy to ease the problem of low paying jobs and non-availability of jobs, she recommends the setting of a co-operative net work and extending financial support to launch their own units by cashing in on their abilities.

Benton Jane (1993)\(^4\) while relating women’s organisations and community development by initiating a case study in Bolivia finds that participation of women in women’s groups have eased to a certain extend their sufferings and hardships. Attending group meetings has aided to nurture and boost their hidden talents. The study specially highlights the significance of education in assisting to recognise the rights and voice protest in case of denial of rights.

Chaudhari Sangamitra Sen (1995)\(^5\) in her case study on “Women and Politics in West Bengal” notes that the quantitative participation of women in political affairs marks some improvement though it is unmatched with


qualitative improvement. Women still dwell in the dark with the dearth of persons to raise their social problems and seeking an early redressal.

Jha (1995)\textsuperscript{6} in his paper on women’s employment in India, remarks that the lag in implementing the women’s development programmes in the right perspective pave the road towards their continued weak status in the society. Programmes intended for women suffer from marginal attention, resources and inadequate monitoring besides lack of support services, all those attributing mainly to the non-recognition of women’s contribution in the national development.

Lucy (1995)\textsuperscript{7} remarks in her study on women empowerment for sustainable development, that the society, both national and international will miss a lion’s share of it in development if it disregards the contribution of women in sustainable development. For empowerment to become real, she advocates the need to bring in a change in the mindset of men who can aid in establishing gender equality. She further suggests that investing in human capabilities and enabling them to exercise choices is the surest way to contribute to economic growth and overall development.

Morilee Karl (1995)\textsuperscript{8} in the book entitled “Women and Empowerment; Participation and Decision making”, opines that women participation in the society is pivotal in sensing true democracy, attaining


goals and evolving a need based society. Qualitative participation of women in the decision-making arenas in the household, workplace, communities and Government will contribute to empowerment of women.

Gopalan Sarala (1997)\(^9\), in her case study, of Andhra Pradesh pens that it is knowledge and awareness rather than mere literacy that counts for empowerment. For amassing strength and accessing information, she suggests organising people into group.

Marilyn Carr et.al (1997)\(^10\) in their collection of case studies on economic empowerment of women in South Asia suggest that properly organised women collectives can be instrumental in effecting material changes in the psychological temperament of women. Specially focusing on the positive aspects of women’s initiatives, Marilyn Carr et. al reveal that the newly acquired skills of self confidence, fearless temper and the ability to speak out at all levels can ultimately pave the way to the redressal of their grievances.

Dutt Som (1999)\(^11\) is of the opinion that women are the invisible actors in providing and maintaining food security. They shine almost in all arenas namely, domesticating crop plants, pioneering the techniques of farming, producing and trading of food products and food processing among several others.

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Gopalan Suseela (1999)\textsuperscript{12} notes that empowerment of women with job opportunities and earning capacity is highly essential for alleviating discrimination. She further cites that high literacy rate has not influenced the status of women.

Khan Farhana (1999)\textsuperscript{13} in her paper on the status and education of Indian women attributes the credit of comparatively better status adorned by Indian women to, the spirit of freedom, the progressive laws, the enlightened mind and the democratic environment. She has volunteered to enlist measures such as winning to afford an attitudinal change in the society towards women and their stressing the utmost urgency of kindling legal awareness in them.

Commenting on the political empowerment of women, Kulathoor Nair Prema Kumaran (1999)\textsuperscript{14} lists factors like unsuitability of political work in the grass root level, fear of demoralisation, mental harassment and political assault, that force women to refrain from political participation. He categorizes the obstacles in this connection under three heads -namely money, mafia and manipulation

Sengupta Nilaljan (2000)\textsuperscript{15} in his study on the socio-cultural dimensions influencing the status of rural women in West Bengal, outlines that the changing roles and opportunities of women mounting to structure the present

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\textsuperscript{14} Kulathoor, Nair, Prema Kumaran, S.V., “Empowering Women, To Be or Not to Be”, Kerala Calling, Vol. 19, No. 5, 1999, P .7-9.
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socio-cultural environment succeeds in entailing rural women an elevated status in the family and society. To materialise the changes apprehended at the cognitive level, the researcher suggests ways of enforcing gender sensitisation aspect along with empowerment of women, creating political and legal awareness, imparting vocational, technical and professional training and instituting a Joint Action Forum at the village level to assist rural women accomplishing their targets.

Cherian Jaya (2001)\textsuperscript{16} in her thesis on ‘empowerment of women through SHGs’ in Thrissur district finds that organising women into SHGs and involving them in micro entrepreneurial activities would accentuate the pace of empowerment. She further notes that micro entrepreneurs, office bearers of SHGs and educated women showcase higher levels of empowerment than their other counterparts.

Desai Neera and Thakkar Usha (2001)\textsuperscript{17} in their look out into the woman’s occupying a back seat in the Indian politics, roped on a heap of factors. The exhaustive list comprises of elements as their compulsion to do justice to the dual standards of femininity and modern roles, backward consciousness, economic dependence, lack of knowledge and information, inability to shoulder the huge election expenses, current political culture and above all the subordination of women and the consequent lag in public exposure


In an attempt to analyse the changing roles of women, Padmavathy (2001)\textsuperscript{18} pens that gender affects performance to restrict women to unpaid productive roles in the family, refraining them from taking strategic decisions, further overburdening with the additional role of an economic provider. She invites the attention of the Government to effect positive environmental change with policies and programmes focusing on all members of the family, to assist mobilising human capital.

Sundaram Satya (2001)\textsuperscript{19} in the study on participatory rural development emphasizes that the quantitative and qualitative participation of people in Government’s development programmes at different stages of its implementation will eventually result in minimizing leakages, better implementation of programmes, mobilisation of local resources and empowerment of poor and marginalised. He has also set forth certain concrete measures designed to ensuring active participation of people namely, decentralised planning, democratic leadership, effective motivation, fulfilling the information needs of poor and providing supportive institutional framework to the poor.

Saxena Radha Rani (2001)\textsuperscript{20} while examining the changing roles of women in Indian society, maintains that the process of urbanisation, westernisation, and industrialisation have made substantial changes in Indian society assigning women new challenging roles and status. The study reveals

that factors like advancement in science and technology, education, national awareness, health consciousness and change in the social attitudes of women have attributed towards the progressive change of women.

Shalu Nigam (2001)\textsuperscript{21} in the article on empowering women, discloses that the influence of socio-economic changes especially consumerism, migration, urbanisation and liberalisation has led to a rise in single parents’ family breaking the traditional joint family structure. This has led to apparent evils of domestic violence, insecurity and increased divorce rates. Further, the dream of empowering society and enriching the family can witness early accomplishment only with empowering the major constituent of the family that is women.

Declining sex ratio indicates high female mortality rate, which Sinha Archana (2001)\textsuperscript{22} accounts to differential health care, education, nutritional status and existing cultural beliefs and practices. Categorically describing the inter-related influencing factors as cultural social and biological, she calls for strategic measures like providing universal education, adopting antipoverty programmes specially targeted at the poor and mainstreaming gender perspective in all policies and programmes in order to eliminate discrimination and uplift the health and social status of a girl child.


Anand Jaya (2002)\(^{23}\) in her case study on the performance of selected SHGs and NHGs in empowering women acknowledged that NHGs and SHGs were instrumental in effecting an attitudinal change in women. She has also hinted on the factors; distrust in leaders, autocratic leadership style, inability to evolve suitable income generating activities and the inability to lend the required skills, in total hindering the successful functioning of groups.

Baruah (2002)\(^{24}\) identifies and groups the factors hindering the advancement of women under four broad divisions-individual, organisational, societal and cultural. Women must realise, Baruah opines, their hidden potentialities and participate vigorously in policy formulation and implementation in order to contribute their maximum.

Das Srimathi (2002)\(^{25}\) points out that even after effecting constitutional guarantees and penal enactments women remain victims of exploitation, alienation and dehumanization. They are the objects of discrimination in the womb, at home and at the work place. She has also hinted on other inequalities; economic, political, social and educational, which women have to counteract.

Dash Satya Prakash (2002)\(^{26}\) in a case study on decentralised planning and Gram Panchayats, records that participating the poor and vulnerable in


the planning and development process can alter their position. This enables them to occupy pertinent seats in the decision-making arena.

Ghosh Chitra et. al. (2002)\textsuperscript{27} in their study on the current position of Indian women underlines that the traditional concept of good women being efficient in managing the affairs of the family alone, should undergo revision. Women’s excelling in decision making especially in the political arena signal their awakening and in turn, that of the society. They further emphasised the need for women’s education, organisation and constitutional support to grab new opportunities and conferring a special image.

Grover Anju (2002)\textsuperscript{28} notes as findings of a study initiated by National Commission for Women concentrating on gender equity that in spite of attempting sufficiently large number of development programmes for women betterment, they still continue to inherit the same disadvantaged position. The lapses at the implementing stage, coupled with deficiencies in designing the programmes are attributed to cause such a state of being

Murugaiah (2002)\textsuperscript{29} in his paper ‘Women’s Work and Empowerment’ identifies four major tenets of empowerment-collectivisation, capacity building, ownership and mediation. He suggests the need of four types of interventions, namely, activity networking, up gradation interventions,

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generating better returns and initiating new activities to enhance women’s income.

Paricha (2002)\textsuperscript{30} in an attempt to prescribe the strategies for empowering women in Panchayat Raj Institutions has put forth an array of measures. They include creating awareness among women, winning to effect men’s mental transformation in favour of women’s emerging equal partners, imparting training to the elected representatives to discharge their duties, organising women from the poorer households especially and granting them a minimum financial assistance to enable them to associate with Panchayat activities.

Inviting our attention to female health care, Pattanaik (2002)\textsuperscript{31} opines that health care of a man means health care of an individual, but health care of a woman means health care of the family, society and nation. He adds that ensuring the reproductive health rights of women and their right to decision making regarding the number of children through empowerment, would assist in population stabilization.

In a historical perspective of the nature of Grama Sabha, Sibi Joseph (2002)\textsuperscript{32} outlines that NHGs can play a contributory role in restoring the identity of Grama Panchayat through increased participation, promoting the spirit of mutual trust and co-operation, self reliance and self sufficiency, all

helping to reach power to grass roots. But he opines that the effectiveness depends very well on the attitude and quality of support of local level management.

Srivastava Ramesh (2002)\textsuperscript{33} in his article, “Policies for Socio-Economic Development of Women”, points out that the full-fledged development of a country is possible only if it utilises the potentialities and capabilities of women to the fullest extent. He depicts the essential role of empowerment in making women self reliant and self confident. He further puts forth the necessity to instill social awareness and motivation among women and men in all women empowerment efforts.

Vasudeva Rao (2002)\textsuperscript{34} in a conceptual analysis of empowerment notes that empowerment cannot be restricted merely to sharing or distribution of power; it also involves changes in social, economic and institutional arrangements, political ideologies and traditional practice. He stresses the significance of participation of marginalised group especially women in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of policy decisions reminding further that both uncritical and safe distance participation would not benefit women.

Referring to the meagre political representation of women in central and state legislatures regardless of rise in the number of female voters,


Eashwariah (2003)\textsuperscript{35} opines that only congenial management and proper encouragement can persuade women to effectively participate in the political arena. Eashwariah speaks in favour of effecting 33.33 per cent reservation for women in legislatures.

Karuna Nirmala (2003)\textsuperscript{36} in her discussion paper series asserts that the desire to own a source of livelihood, rather than the craving to engage in micro entrepreneurial activities, prompt women to divert to the entrepreneurial arena. She attributes the causes for entrepreneurial failures to lack of proper planning and entrepreneurial training. For tasting success, she adds, the support from all corners, backed by good personal traits are most wanting.

Nanavathy Reema (2003)\textsuperscript{37} advocates from SEWA experience that an effective empowerment strategy should assign the income deprived the status of workers, planners and managers besides assisting them to earn their livelihood. She has appraised the integrated approach of SEWA to attain a state of full employment through unions and co-operatives in building collective and organisational strength, providing social security and capacity to face competitive market.

\textsuperscript{37}Nanavathy, Reema, “Empowering Women by the Women, for the Women, the Sewa Experience”, Women’s Link; Vol. 9, NO. 3, 2003, pp 16-19.
Nandal Santhosh, (2003)\textsuperscript{38}, in a critical analysis of Women’s Empowerment Perspectives, remarks that only a multi-dimensional approach can assist in achieving, women empowerment, economic, social and political. He further holds that mere passing of social legislations and making them worn out without change in the attitudes of persons responsible for implementing will not accentuate empowerment.

Tucker Veena (2003)\textsuperscript{39} in her perspective analysis of empowerment has laid down the processes involved for empowerment at individual and community levels. Individual empowerment calls forth community involvement, developing skills, taking decisions and solving problems independently. Accessibility of Government media and other community services contribute towards empowerment at community level.

Abraham Joseph (2004)\textsuperscript{40} in his case study on “Participatory basis and women orientation in the Urban NHGs of Poor Women in Kerala” reveals that majority of the municipal councilors and officials are not assisting NHGs at the Grass root level for micro plan identification and preparation; the position stands better at CDS level. The study also brings to light certain other inadequacies as awareness of members with regard to procedures of loan disbursement, dissatisfaction with the risk identification factors specified for selecting beneficiaries and the ineffectiveness of ADS in the CDS sub system.

\textsuperscript{40} Abraham Joseph, "Participatory Basis and Women Orientation in the Urban NHGs of Poor Women in Kerala - A Case Study", Women’s Link, Vol.10, No. 4, 2004, pp.30-33.
He underlines the need to enhance the human resource content of all parties involved in the Programme.

Bala Madhur and Monga (2004) reveal through an impact study on Women’s Employment on Decision making in Himachal Pradesh that employed women enjoy greater role in decision making in families than unemployed ones. They concluded the study with the remark that employment enhances economic independence leading to elevated status and enhanced ability to influence the decision making process.

Evelin Hust (2004) in a study on political representation and empowerment in India, from the experiences in Orissa, underlines that though women participation in politics especially the quota system has a favourable accretion on empowerment, it has to be supplemented by additional credentials like awareness raising, literacy campaigns and economic independence. Political participation in a congenial setting can procreate efficient women leaders.

Projecting the importance of traditional communication systems in empowerment, Kaul Malvika (2004) quotes, “The hype created over Information Communication Technology (ICT) has often overshadowed the remarkable changes—street plays, puppetry, padayatras and jansunwais (public hearings) can bring in poor people’s lives”. Further, public meetings act as a

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strong weapon to form public opinion, public hearing and suggesting remedial solution

Kishor Sunita and Gupta Kamala (2004)\textsuperscript{44} have recorded from the evidence from National Family Health Survey (NFHS-2) that the status of women, depend on the quality of gender existing in the society. Gender quality, they conceive, on the other hand revolve around the clearly defined sex differentiated rights. They identified the role of empowerment in dictating the health and nutritional status of the household, quality and quantity of human resources available for development and opportunities for realizing their potential.

Mandal Kalyan Sankar (2004)\textsuperscript{45} in his comparative study of two anti poverty programmes in Hooghly District of West Bengal, acknowledges that empowerment plays the key role in receiving assistance from anti poverty programmes, which the poor and vulnerable rarely inherit. Even the receipt of assistance does not characterise anything unless it is accompanied by accrual of income from the assisted amount. He further points out that the poor can be empowered only by organising them as they are deprived of other empowering tools, especially property.

In an analysis of women engaged in grass root level welfare services delivery systems in Aligarh district of Uttar Pradesh, Mohammad


Noor and Shahid Mohammad (2004)\textsuperscript{46} find a direct relationship among women’s participation in outdoor socio-economic and political activities, empowerment and gender equality. They note that enhanced outdoor participation can ignite the empowerment process leading to state of gender equality.

Although independent income is the sole factor enabling women the capacity to guard against discrimination, Panda Snehalata (2004)\textsuperscript{47} learning from Orissa experience where patriarchy is pervasive, asserts that income should be coupled with ownership of permanent assets. She observes an actual gap between legal rights and actual ownership on the one hand and ownership rights and actual control of land on the other which necessitate Government intervention.

Praveena Kodoth (2004)\textsuperscript{48} reports that several factors like diversification of income, greater male occupational mobility and out migration in Kerala have forced women to assume increased responsibility for farming operations. She opines that increased participation in land related work at the cost of paid employment does not suggest anything about enhanced property rights of women. She further remarks that women are put to utter confusion with reduced rights to inherited and earned resources on the one hand and the urge to remain ‘invisible’ under a marital framework of property on the other.

Ramanathan Malathi (2004)\textsuperscript{49} infers from Lijjat experience that though economic empowerment is much more than an earning capacity, the capacity to earn one’s livelihood and the resultant self confidence can provide a strong foundation to the empowerment -initiatives of women.

Connecting education and empowerment from experiences in India, Ramkumar Usha (2004)\textsuperscript{50} reiterates the role of education in making women economically, politically and socially empowered. She adds that education equips women to participate in development programmes and be there competitive and productive.

Renganathan (2004)\textsuperscript{51} in his article on Women’s Empowerment through Development Programmes, opines that women participation in development programmes, by engaging them in participatory planning can pave the way for their empowerment. He also suggests measures like, strengthening people’s institutions; institutional arrangements to cater to their needs and field based applied research, for ensuring effective people participation.

Rosa (2004)\textsuperscript{52} in her thesis on “Empowerment of Women through Employment “, notes that, though overall empowerment of a person enhances with employment, empowerment in the societal matters do not exhibit any sign of hope. She further pens that income is not the sole factor determining the empowerment of a person.

Singh Surat (2004)\textsuperscript{53}, in his attempt to analyse the empowerment status of women representatives in Panchayati Raj Institutions in Haryana, comments on their minor involvement in the decision making and other activities of Local Self Government Institutions. He attributes this to their low level of awareness, lack of confidence and low socio-economic status. He also recommends the need to bring about an attitudinal change of men towards women besides advocating the necessity of providing training to women leaders in managing responsibilities and their maintaining contact with outside world.

Sood Archana (2004)\textsuperscript{54} emphasises that empowerment especially of rural women has a decisive role on factors governing sustainable development of a country. Women’s status in the society can be raised through capacity building, developing leadership traits and social interventions.

Bhowmick, Pradip (2005)\textsuperscript{55} in a study on empowerment of rural women across three states, Jharkhand, Orissa and West Bengal, finds that level of empowerment stands highest in West Bengal though the state ranks last in economic empowerment. Orissa stands second leaving behind Jharkand, which merits second in the economic arena. Variables relating to social, political and economic aspects were identified for judging the level of empowerment.

Emphasising the significance of information technology in the realm of development, Bishoyi Depak (2005) \(^{56}\) outlines that an effective policy towards initiating socially acceptable, economically and practically viable IT projects will be a major step towards materialising the dream of empowerment of women: social, economic and political.

The Hindu (2005) \(^{57}\) reports, as cited by Jose, the decentralisation process has assisted to make Kudumbasree a success. Kudumbasree, in turn, the report adds, has aided to accelerate the growth pace of decentralisation by ensuring participation of members in Grama Sabhas and helping to identify the real beneficiaries. It further claims that Kudumbasree has succeeded in its efforts to provide income, employment and enterprise to poorer households, besides utilising the opportunities for participation in planning and governance thrown open by the decentralisation process.

Joshi Uma (2005) \(^{58}\) subscribing to the view of Vasudeva Rao, records the necessity to bring an attitudinal change in the society to enforce laws in favour of women. Women’s long term fight, she reminds, is against hardened attitudes and entrenched interests. In her view, political will is required for the implementation of all kinds of policies and programmes.

Kelkar Govind (2005)\(^{59}\) in line with Panda Snehalata and Sinha Archana has revealed that more than a source of income, access to property rights enhance women’s risk bearing abilities. About the measurement tools of Gender Development Index and Gender Empowerment Measure, he opines that they are unable to grasp the real achievements of women.

The Kerala Human Development Report (2005)\(^{60}\) prepared by the Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram, as stated in Hindu, underlines the need to include social sector projects like Kudumbasree under Employment Guarantee Scheme to enhance the employability of young adults in poorer households. The report further notes that higher incidence of deprivation is concentrated in the unskilled manual and low wage occupations, which calls forth the need for skill formation and upgradation among the young age population.

Leithabhai (2005)\(^{61}\) in her article on “Women Empowerment and Panchayat Raj”, lists the major issues in women empowerment namely male dominated administrative structure, illiteracy, male-based value system, unemployment and lack of gender consciousness among masses.

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Based on a comparative analysis of two micro credit programmes, NGO and State led, Lakshmidevi and P.P. Pillai (2005)\textsuperscript{62} inscribe that both have a positive impact on poverty alleviation and empowerment of women though state led programmes maintain an upper hand. Admitting the improved economic gain and the resultant additional self-esteem, self-confidence and autonomy, they reiterate that the changed income is too small to either raise the economic status or push them out of poverty.

Highlighting the strategic role of empowerment of women in poverty alleviation, Meena Acharya and Puspa Grimire (2005)\textsuperscript{63} elucidate, “Since poverty is a result of as much a lack of voice and power as of material resources, empowerment of women and other disadvantaged groups is a pre condition to breaking the vicious circle of poverty and voiceless status”. They also make a special note of varied forces of exclusions- economic, social, cultural, geographic and rural, to which the poor is exposed.

In a critical analysis of micro finance on women empowerment, seeking evidences from the findings of South Asia, Naila Kabeer (2005)\textsuperscript{64} opines that though micro finance is effective in making some economic and social contributions, it does not automatically empower women any more

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than other interventions like education, political quotas, access to waged work or any others do.

Nair (2005)\textsuperscript{65}, as quoted in the Hindu, reports from the preliminary inputs for Planning Board’s performance review of local bodies, about the major pitfalls of low growth rate in the productive sector, inability to effectively appropriate the sanctioned funds and name sake Grama Sabha meetings. At the same time, the report appreciates the empowerment efforts of local bodies affected especially through Kudumbasree movement

Oommen and Buddhadeb Ghosh (2005)\textsuperscript{66} while examining the linkage of Kudumbasree programme with the LSGIs found the necessity of projecting the poor and marginalised as agents of their development. Then only a direct association between decentralisation and poverty reduction can be established.

Omvedt Gail (2005)\textsuperscript{67} holds that women can be empowered by engaging them in managing community resources, where greatest scope for participation of women exists. Though in principle Omvedt Gail agrees that increase in political representation can change women, it cannot be assumed that a quota system alone can lead to it, as women competing only against women may limit their experience.

\textsuperscript{65} Nair, N.J., “Growth Rate Low in Productive Sector- Preliminary inputs for Planning Board’s Performance Review of Local Studies”, The Hindu, Kochi, Saturday, August- 27, 2005, p 5.
Pattnaik Satyanarayana and Trupti Mayee Pradhan, (2005)\(^{68}\) while relating empowerment and violence inscribe that empowerment of women is the urgent need of the hour for ending violence and atrocities committed against them. Strengthening women in leadership roles, involving them in decision making and increasing their access to education and control over resources will pave the way towards empowerment of women assisting in turn to minimize discrimination and violence.

Paul Cithara (2005)\(^{69}\) cites in ‘The New Indian Express’, as the findings of a survey initiated by Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad, that Kudumbasree Mission has failed as powerful women empowerment machinery. The root cause of failure is attributed to confining the activities within the BPL group. The report adds several other limiting factors as lack of management expertise, absence of proper planning, non-availability of raw materials, ineffective marketing strategy, and lack of co-ordination between the Panchayats and the Kudumbasree units besides poor investment in productive sector.

Regarding representation of weaker sections in Orissa Panchayats, Patnaik Partyusna (2005)\(^{70}\) notes that mere nominal representation in figures without contributing anything towards evolving effective participation, cannot guarantee empowerment of weaker sections. By effective participation she

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\(^{69}\) Paul, Cithara, “Kudumbasree Mission Failed to Achieve Purpose”, The New Indian Express, Kochi, September-2, 2005 p.5

implies initiating and involving in discussions and assisting to take decisions. She attributes the low participation levels of women in Panchayats to social restrictions, economic compulsions and household work.

Preetha (2005)\textsuperscript{71}, as cited in the New India Express, reports that the capacity building exercises and the resultant leadership intakes have prompted Kudumbasree women to participate in large numbers in the 2005 civic polls. The dream of political empowerment of Kudumbasree members, she adds, has also materialized.

Rao Nitya (2005)\textsuperscript{72} in her discussion about land rights and gender equality, point out that mere access to land rights alone cannot raise the status of women in society, rather it is to be supplemented by a mix of other opportunities, macro policies and programmes. Although she agrees with the notion that increased land rights can hike access to other resources, she doubts whether it will contribute towards empowerment of women.

Rao Sambasiva and Indira Kumari (2005)\textsuperscript{73} in their study on the impact of Self Help Groups on the social and economic empowerment of rural women pinpoint that mere rise in money income without corresponding change in autonomy levels does not signal enhanced empowerment status. Greater participation in decision making and enhancing their productivity can sustain the pace of empowerment.

\textsuperscript{71} Preetha, T.S., “Kudumbasree Women Sign up for Civic Poll”, The New Indian Express, Kochi, Monday, September-12, 2005, p 5.


Sooryamoorthy (2005)\textsuperscript{74} in his study on ‘Micro Finance and Women in Kerala’ notes that the pattern of savings and credit use of women are related to their marital status and the difference in the pattern portrays the extent of their family responsibilities.

Thambi Binitha and Devika (2006)\textsuperscript{75}, in their impact study of Kudumbasree programmes, emphasizes that Kudumbasree programme assists only in reaffirming and expanding the prevailing male domination in the absence of inclusion of any provision for questioning the male dominated power structures. The success of the programme, they underline, to a large extent depends on the prevailing family and social environment. They recommend that Kudumbasree byelaws should incorporate provisions needed to overcome the restrictions imposed by family society and institutions on women and steps necessary to achieve women empowerment.

Muraleedharan Sarada (2007)\textsuperscript{76} while relating decentralisation and Kudumbasree maintains that the emergence of the largest community based organisation, working in union with LSGIs has contributed to enhancing women representation in decentralised planning and governance further assisting in the planning for local economic development. Women play lead roles in projecting community interests and gender concerns in vital policy matters besides supplying essential data for evolving right decisions on


several issues. She underlines the need to capacitate the CDS, the responsibility of which rests with LSGIs.

The initially set tenure of Kudumbasree, that is 10 years is going to conclude by 2008. Even then comprehensive studies on Kudumbasree centering exclusively on the women empowerment aspect are scarce. The available research literature on the subject is very little. Further most of the existing studies are of comparative ones attempting to identify the efficiency of Government and non-Government sponsored SHGs. Hence, the present study is a sincere attempt to assess the extent of empowerment achieved by women through Kudumbasree endeavour.

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