ABSTRACT

A STUDY ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN KERALA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KUDUMBASREE PROJECT

Every nation can rank high in the international arena if the capabilities of women, which hitherto remained underutilized, are put to utmost use. Empowerment resembles an apt solution to their lop-sided status-quo. Kudumbasree, the Poverty Eradication Mission of Kerala, strives to alleviate poverty and achieve women empowerment through Community Development Societies of poor women. The main objective of the present study is to assess the extent of empowerment achieved by women through Kudumbasree. The specific objectives are to assess their empowerment at individual, community and group levels besides identifying the problems confronted. The study has been designed in the form of an exploratory model. The sample population comprises 324 NHGs from three Districts,--Pathanamthitta, Thrissur and Kozhikode. Comprehensive interview schedule forms the main tool of data collection. Satisfaction index, paired ‘t’ tests, chi-square tests, co-efficient of correlation and regression analysis are the major tools applied in the analysis. Individual and group empowerment levels indicate a healthy trend. Individual empowerment maintains a positive tie with community level participation. The major recommendations for strengthening women empowerment initiatives include-strengthening micro-entrepreneurial activities through the active group support of the three-tier structure of LSGIs, forming group clusters, properly chartering the duties and obligations of ADS and CDS functionaries and earnest efforts to nurturing the awareness standards of members.

KEY WORDS:- KUDUMBASREE, WOMEN, GROUP ACTION, EMPOWERMENT, SELF-HELP.