4.1 Introduction

Kudumbashree is the project launched by the Government of Kerala (GOK) with the help of Government of India (GOI) and NABARD, aimed at wiping out of absolute poverty from the state in a holistic and participatory way within a period of ten years. This is implemented through the LSGs established by the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments. Kudumbashree is a multifaceted programme that provides poor women information, capacity and confidence and also provides them opportunities for better social security. In brief, this project aims to empower them physically, socially, economically and politically.

The mission statement of the Kudumbashree states in clear terms:

“To eradicate absolute poverty in 10 years through concentrated community action under the leadership of LSGs by facilitating organization of the poor combining self-help with demand led convergence of available services and resources to tackle the multiple dimensions and manifestations of poverty holistically”.
The programme was inaugurated on 1998 Mar 17th by the then Prime Minister of India Sri Atal Bihari Vajpayee in Malappuram district and started implementation from 1st April 1999 in urban local bodies of the state. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, the development project of the post independent era of our country to tackle the poverty situation, was ‘top down’ in approach, the estimation of poverty was inaccurate, insufficient and directionless. As described by Sen development without participation is a sin (Sen.1999). The earlier anti- poverty programmes had several handicaps.

4.2 Genesis of Neighborhood Group Movement at National and International Levels.

In the modern world there are rich experiences of grassroot mobilization and social change. Participatory democracy, through micro level organizations like NHGs, is functioning in many countries. Following is a brief description on the NHG experiences in some countries.

The history of the NHGs can be traced back to the Ancient City State Ur.¹ The ancient Mesopotamian city of Ur consisted of a “series of more or less coherent neighborhood in which smaller shrines and temples serve for the house holder” (Mumford, 1961). The temple, Mumford states, was the focus of the neighborhood unit. During the 7th Century BC the Greek Planners also were aware of the concept of

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¹ Ur was a City State of Mesopotamia.
neighborhood. Mumford is of the opinion that, this appears to be the first historic example of a deliberately fabricated neighborhood unit.

Another example of an early community organization was the Cincinnati unit experiment established in 1970 by the famous social worker Allinsky. “This was to give its people, partial control over their immediate social and economic life and was to provide a way for residents themselves to deal with social problems” (Betten: 1990). The selected women for this organization were educators and interpreters; interpreting unit programmes to the people and relaying the people’s desire and need to the unit administration.

In order to improve the conditions in small areas during the recession of 1970s and 80s a number of Community Developmental Corporations [CDCs] and many other neighborhood groups were established in USA. Now there are almost 2000 CDCs functioning there. Housing, rehabilitation and construction are the main activities of most of these groups (NCCED, 1991).

In Japan, the traditional rulers grouped six to ten households in to groups called ‘Kumi’. Leadership of “Kumi’ was rotated annually (Acqua 1982).

In rural Tanzania, under the initiative of the ruling party, ten households were grouped in to cells to facilitate communication and small group action. Above the cells, there are Village Health Communities (VHCs) composed of elected members. These committees work under the guidance of their respective Ward
Development Committees (WDCs) operating at the locality level. Above the WDCs there are Divisional Development Committees and District Development Committees.

All these bodies have both elected and appointed memberships. Above them there are regional and national coordinating committees. The committees are vested with the main activities of child survival and nutrition. These organizations had a substantial impact on child health (Jonsson, Lijungqvist and Yambix 1993)

In Brazil, Micro level Groups namely Special Budget Fora have been established to discuss projects and priorities in annual budget of the municipalities. This provides large-scale transparency in the budget process. This provided awareness to the citizen, what was supposed to happen. In Brazil, through Participatory Budget (PB), the local neighborhood organizations have invented a way of linking the power of community organizing with the formal legitimacy of an elected council. Through this process, a re-distribution of wealth has been achieved and the lives of the poor have been improved with the support of the middle class (Wright 2002)

In India, village farmers after day long hard work assemble at one particular place for entertainment. These meetings are very informal and there is no fixed time for these gatherings. The meetings were held to redress the problems of the farmers. Membership of these groups was based on caste and community. The agenda of
discussion varied from agriculture to personal affairs, rural
development and national and other issues (Narain 1998).

The main shortcomings of these groups were that they were based on caste or class. The women and backward class people were kept out of these organizations and they often worked as a tool for exploitation and alienation of these weaker sections of the society. Dr. B.R. Ambedker had little appreciation of these village communities. He was of the opinion that these village communities had played no part in the destiny of the country. Even with all these drawbacks India had a great tradition of village republics, autonomy and decision making.

The British administration proposed the establishment of the net work of rural local bodies in India in 1882 (Hooja and Hooja 2001)

4.3 NHG Movement in Kerala

Kerala was also a caste - ridden society. In the northern part of the state (Malabar) poor pariah was not allowed to pass through the same street as the high caste men. Swami Vivekananda criticized this and remarked that Kerala is a lunatic asylum [Vivekananda 1896]

It is obvious that the social reform movement in Kerala led by Sri Narayana Guru, modernisation, independence movement, Communist movements, trade unionism, literacy movement etc changed Kerala in to a place of communal harmony. In Kerala, the first step for a NHG initiation was taken by a Gandhian called D Pankajakshan in Kanjippadam near Ambalapuzha in Alappuzha
district. He with his friends organized a group namely ‘Darshnam’ and propogated the formation of a micro level organization in the village. Members of ten homes formed as a group called “Tharakkoottam”. Ten such ‘Tharakkoottam’ made an ‘Ayalkoottam’. Ten such ‘Ayalkkoottam’ made a ‘Gramakkoottam’, a Village Assembly (Pankajakshan1989). From the experience of ‘Tharakkoottam’ many initiatives in the area of Self Help were organized. NHG initiatives were made by National Service Scheme at Nalpathimala, Kottayam under the leadership of the Programme Co-ordinator Thomas Abraham (Abraham1993). Another SHG initiative was made in Kottayam district at Pullarikunnu under the initiative of Constantine Manalel. These experiments tried to bring together all sections of society (John and Chathukulam 2002)

4.4 A  Brief History of Kudumbashree in Kerala

Kudumbashree was not a project which was started in the state all of a sudden. In India, the idea of providing credit to the poor goes back to the co-operative movement (Oommen 2007). As the earlier projects like IRDP (Integrated Rural Development Programme) launched by the GOI in the early 1980s failed because of a multitude of reasons like lack of choice by the beneficiaries over the purpose and amount of credit, lack of participation by them etc...( Dev and Ravi 2007). It was in this background that NABARD took the initiative of group lending by promoting self help groups during 1986-87, with the help of Mysore Resettlement and Development Agency(MYRADA). In 1991 NABARD launched an SHG - linked
banking project. Kudumbashree of Kerala is an outgrowth of the broad micro finance initiative in the country. The basic idea was to evolve a poverty eradication mission identifying the poor women through a multiple criteria and form them in to a Community Based Organization (CBOs)

The present form of Kudumbashree has been developed from a number of CBOs. The Kudumbashree has been evolved from the following basic structures.

In 1987 participatory developments programme i.e. Urban Basic Service (UBS) was sponsored by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the GOI. This was a programme for those living in slums. Later this programme was expanded to USBP i.e; Urban Basic Service for the Poor .This was based on the fundamental principles of Community participation in identifying needs, planning, prioritizing, implementing, monitoring and feedback (Kadiyala 2004).

4.5 Alappuzha Community Based Nutrition Programme (CBNP)

In 1991 Alappuzha Municipal Urban Basic Service for the Poor (UBSP) initiated a Community Based Nutrition Programme (CBNP). The specific objective of the project was to improve the nutritional status of the children of 0-15 age group and women of 15-45. A survey was conducted to identify the multiple factors that cause malnutrition. For the identification of the poor, nine risk factors were selected. Out of this nine, families with four or more were classified as Below the Poverty Line (BPL). The following are the risk factors.
1. Kutcha house
2. No access to safe drinking water.
3. No access to sanitary latrine.
4. Illiterate adult
5. Not more than one earning family member.
6. Family getting only two meals a day or less.
7. Presence of children below age 5
8. Alcoholic or drug addict.
9. SC/ST family.

Families identified as poor were organized into NHGs. Each NHG consisted of 20-45 BPL families. NHGs were federated to ADSs and the ADSs were federated to CDSs, at the municipal levels.

During 1993-94, the CDS system was extended to all 36 wards in Alappuzha Municipality. This urban model of CDS was extended to the entire urban area of the state in December 1994 (John, 2009).

After the formation of the Kudumbashree, the nine point index has been modified as follows.

1. No land / less than 5 cents of land
2. No house/ dilapidated house.
3. No sanitary latrine
4. No access to safe drinking water within 150 meters.
5. Woman headed household/ presence of widow, divorce/abandoned lady/un wed mother
6. No regularly employed person in the family.
7. Socially disadvantaged groups (SC/ST).
8. Presence of mentally or physically challenged person/chronically ill member in the family.
9. Families without colour TV.

4.6 The Main Activities of CDS

4.6.1 Participatory Planning and Implementation.

The members of the NHG i.e., the bottom layer of the CDS prepared a micro plan based on their needs. The ADS governing committee received all the NHG micro plans, integrated them, and prepared the mini plan. The mini plans were given to the town CDS, which integrated them into ‘CDS town plan’ or action plans. The CDS plans formed the anti poverty sub plans of the municipality.

4.6.2 Thrift, credit and micro enterprise

The NHGs were encouraged to form thrift and credit societies (TCS). Every week, thrift or small savings were collected from the NHG members by the NHG income generation volunteer. The collections were used for lending for contingent and consumption as well as financial assistance to start income generating activities. These NHGs were extended financial assistance by NABARD by linkage banking scheme. Under these NHGs that met the 15 point index were
provided financial assistance. Those NHGs that met the criteria of NABARD were linked to commercial banks. Banks charged the NHG members an interest rate of 10.5 percentage on loans. NABARD refinances commercial banks at the rate of 6.5 percentage.

4.6.3 Convergence

In order to benefit the community as whole, the CDS sought to bring under a single umbrella all departments and agencies. This helped to address the multiple causes of poverty. For example, the GOI issued guidelines to CBNP as a launch pad for SJSRY (Sorna Jayanti Swahari Rozjar Yojana), an urban poverty alleviation programme. After the extension of the CDS structure throughout the state by the GOK in 1994, the Alappuzha municipality CDS won the “We the peoples; 50 communities” award initiated in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the UN in 1995. The success of the experiment initiated in Alappuzha municipality inspired the GOK to extend the scheme to the entire district of Malappuram in North Kerala. Malappuram is one of the 90 most underdeveloped districts in India (Kudumbasree. 2003). The district has the highest fertility rate and the highest infant mortality rate (40/1000 live births/year) in Kerala. The district has the lowest per capita income of Rs.1257 (Planning Board 2002). Due to the mass literacy campaign of the early 1990s the district has an impressive literacy rate of 88.6 percentage. The female work participation is only 6.6 percentage.

By 1994, UNICEF extended the CDS approach to the entire district. Like in Alappuzha model, CBNP was implemented through
Community Development Societies of women, who belonged to poor families. Here also, nine slightly modified risk indices were formulated to suit the regional peculiarities of the Malappuram District.

The non economic risk indicators adopted for Malappuram Model are

1. Families with sub standard houses and huts.
2. Families with no sanitary latrines.
3. Families having no safe drinking water supply within at least 300 meters.
4. Families having more than 6 members.
5. Families with only one earning member.
6. Families belonging to SC/ST.
7. Families having illiterate members.
8. Families having only 2 meals or less a day.

Like in Alappuzha in Malappuram also, at the bottom layer of the community structure, there was the NHG which consisted of 15 to 40 women belonging to risk families. NHG prepares Micro Plan, based on the needs and requirements of the families in the group.

ADSs were constituted in Malappuram District at the village panchayat ward level. ADSs were constituted by the representatives
of each ward. ADSs prepare the Mini Plans, integrating all the NHG Micro Plans.

Like in the Alappuzha Urban Model, Panchayat, Municipal Community Development Societies (CDSs) function as apex bodies of all ADSs.

At the Block level, there was the Block CDS, which acts as the coordinating body of all the CDSs in the Block Level, integrating all panchayat CDS plans.

The District CDS is the apex body, which is comprised of all the Block CDS and town CDS presidents. The District CDS CBNP co-coordinator acts as the member secretary of the CDS. The District CDS prepared plan at the District level, integrating micro and mini plans (Raghvan 2006)

The Malappurum CDS conducted a variety of activities ranging from District CDS and awareness programme for women and children to informal banking through TCS and SHGs. As part of training more than 1, 00, 000 CBNP/CDS functionaries were given training on various aspects. More than 4300 community volunteers were given community health care. More than 12,000 CBNP functionaries were trained and deployed for base line survey. About 15,000 CBNP/Literacy workers were trained and deployed for the conduct of poverty index survey. In the area of sanitation 5600 sanitary latrines were provided to poor families; in addition, 20 bore wells and 10 open wells were also provided to the needy people. So far as the thrift and
credit operations were concerned, Malappuram CDS mobilized Rs 150 lakhs through thrift savings, provided Rs 135 lakhs to CDS members as loan for income generation as well as for consumption purposes. It created 12322 cases of self employment through loans /revolving funds. In the area of self employment, Malapuram CDS established coir training centre to train 150 SC women in coir making and set up one defibering unit (Raghavan 2006).

CBNP base line surveys in 1992 showed that 86 percent of households in Alapuzha and 78.9 percent in Malapuram had kutcha house.In 1999, 44.2 percent of NHG households surveyed in Alapuzha and 42 percent in Malappuram had kutcha houses. The findings of other studies on women empowerment, social, economic and political, are very positive (Gopalan, Bhupathi 1995, Raja and Oommen. 1999).

4.7 Towards Kudumbashree

The GOK decided to extend the CDS approach to the entire state of Kerala under the name ‘Kudumbashree’ in 1998. For this purpose, the GOK created the Poverty Eradication Mission under the Local Self Government. Now there are 2,52,912 NHGs, 19560 ADSs and 1072 CDSs Kerala, under the organisation of Kudumbashree.

4.8 Structure of Kudumbashree

For the effective functioning of the Kudumbashree programme the community - based organization consists of a three tier structure. The lowest stratum of NHG consists of 20-40 women members selected from poor families. NHG meets every week in the house of
NHG members. In the meeting various issues faced by the group members are discussed and the emerging problems are resolved. Various Government schemes exclusively for the Kudumbashree members are explained by the government officials who participate in the NHG meeting (Siwal.2008). In the weekly meeting all members bring their thrift which is collected and recycled for internal lending. In each NHG, from among the BPL women, five volunteers are selected for various functional responsibilities.

4.8.1 Community Health Volunteer

This person looks into the various health-related aspects of the group members including children, women and the aged. The community health volunteer is also responsible for the convergence of various programmes undertaken by health and social service departments.

4.8.2 Income Generation Activity Volunteer

The Income Generation Activity volunteer bears the responsibility for the collection, consolidation and maintenance of books of accounts and registers of NHG. She also attends to the training programme imparted by NABARD for increasing their capability.

4.8.3 Infrastructure Volunteer

Under the leadership of the volunteer infrastructural backwardness of the group may be tackled. This is performed with the help of various governmental programmes. She will liaison with the local bodies and act as a catalyst for local development.
4.8.4 Secretary
The secretary plays a pivotal position. She records the proceeding of the meeting. Necessary follow up motivation and teambuilding are the responsibilities of the secretary.

4.8.5 President
She presides over the weekly meeting and imparts necessary leadership and guidelines to the team members

**Figure 4.1**
Organization structure of Kudumbashree

The second tier is the Area Development Society (ADS), which is formed at the ward level by federating 10-15 NHGs.

The activities and decision in the ADS are decided by the representatives of the poor elected from various NHGs. ADS functions through general and governing body.

The general body consists of the president, secretary and three sectoral volunteers such as Health, Income Generation and Infrastructure volunteers of federated NHGs. The governing body
Kudumbashree has a linkage with the Local Self Government Institutions. At the rural level, the ward member acts as the patron of the ADS. In Urban Local Bodies, a separate monitoring and advisory committee is constituted with ward Councilor acting as the chairperson. This structure facilitates the fixation of priorities by the poor in tune with the policy framework of the Local Self Government.

ADS coordinates and monitors the functioning of NHGs under its jurisdiction. It provides proper guidance regarding micro enterprises based on the strength of each NHG; ADS also supports in getting bank linkages.

In some cases the certificate of ADS is required to avail bank facility under government / bank scheme. For example it is the responsibility of the ADS to examine the application for availing loan under Bhavana Shree (Housing) scheme. The ADS consolidates the micro plan and integrates a mini plan at the ADS level.

ADS forms Balasabhas and teenage club. The executive Committee of ADS meets every month to evaluate the activities. It also integrates the activities and accounts of all the NHGs in the respective wards. ADS reports various activities of each NHG and submits their relevant documents related to finance and administration to CDS.
Figure 4.2
ORGANOGRAM - Kudumbashree

CHAIRMAN
Minister Local Self Government

VICE CHAIRMAN
Secretary to Local Self Government

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DIRECTOR SOUTH
DMC
Trivandrum
Kollam
Pathanamthitta
Alapuzha

DIRECTOR CENTRAL
DMC
Kottayam
Idukki
Ernakulam
Thrissur
Palakkad

DIRECTOR NORTH
DMC
Malappuram
Kozhikode
Wayanad
Kannur
Kasaragode

DIRECTOR (Fin & Adm)
Adm Officer
Accounts officer
Prog. Officer (4 Nos)

Source: Kudumbashree mission

Figure 2.2
Figure: Structure of CBOs in Kudumbashree

NHG
5 Member Volunteer Team

ADS
Seven Member Leadership

CDS
General Body

Monitoring & Advisory Committee

Governor Body 9
Member Committee

Source: Kudumbashree mission
4.8.6 Community Development Society

The highest strata of the Kudumbashree structure is the Community Development Society (CDS), a registered body under the charitable societies Act. CDS is formed by federating various ADSs. The CDSs have the following organization structure.

4.8.7 General Body

The General Body consists of all ADS Chairpersons and ADS Governing Body members along with representatives of Resource Persons and the officers of the Local Body who are involved in various poverty alleviation and women empowerment programmes.

4.8.8 Governing Body

Governing Body consists of President, Member secretary and five selected committee members. The President will be elected whereas the member secretary is the project officer of the UPA Programme. Other Government officials and representatives of Resource Persons will be nominated by the Governing Body.

4.8.9 Monitoring & Advisory Committee

Municipal Chairperson/President of the Panchayat will be the Chairman of the Monitoring & Advisory Committee which is convened by Municipal Secretary/Panchayat Secretary as Convener. In urban areas the Urban Poverty Alleviation (UPA) Project Officer will be the Joint Convener.

Even though the CDS acts as an autonomous body, it has effective linkage with the LSGs. The President of the Grama
Panchayat is the patron of the CDS. The Standing Committee (welfare) Chairman, all women members of the panchayat and the secretary of the Gram Panchayat are the ex-officio members of the CDS. The Block Panchayat member/members of the respective Block division/divisions are also ex-officio members of the CDS. The elected functionaries are all paid a honorarium on the basis of certain criteria like number of SHGs formed, linked, amount of thrift collected, amount of loan disbursed etc...

CDS monitors the thrift and credit activities of the NHGs at the panchayat or municipal level. It takes necessary steps to improve its operations. It takes loans and disburses to each NHG or its members under bank linkage scheme and Bhavanasree Scheme. It also plays an important role in identifying barren land and promotes lease farming under the Harithasree programme. CDS also take the responsibility of identifying entrepreneurs for starting micro enterprises (www.kudumbashree.org)

4.9. Programmes for Economic Empowerment under Kudumbashree.

4.9.1 Micro finance

4.9.1.a. Thrift and Credit

Kudumbashree promotes Neighbourhood Groups (NHGs) of 10-20 poor women members. NHGs are instrumental in thrift mobilization, encouraging the poor to save and to avail low cost formal credit. The amount of loan to members and the purpose for which the loan should be utilized are decided by the NHG. The
restitution is collected weekly during the NHG meetings. It is estimated that the thrift mobilized is on an average Rs 40 per month per member.

4.9.1. b. Linkage banking

NHG-Bank linkage scheme is one of the flagship programmes of Kudumbashree. NABARD SHG-Bank linkage grading procedures are applied while selecting the eligible NHGs for availing loan. CDS assists NHG in getting graded by the bank. Bank will provide loans to those NHGs who pass 80% of marks in the grading. Loan amount to a NHG is linked to thrift amount mobilized and retained within the group as internal loans. Maximum loan amount possible for a NHG is four times of its thrift.

In some cases, CDS borrows from the bank as bulk loan for lending to eligible NHGs. In Bulk linkage, CDS charges 1 or 2 percentage points more than the bank’s interest rate. A certain date is fixed by the bank within which NHGs are required to repay the amount to CDS. CDS in turn pay the collected amount to bank.

4.9.1. c. Matching grant to thrift & credit societies

Matching grant is an incentive provided to NHGs. This grant is linked to amount of thrift mobilized, performance of NHG in the Grading and loan availed from banks. An amount of 10% of the savings of the NHG subject to a maximum of Rs 5000/- is provided as matching grant to each NHG
Table 4.1

Matching grant obtained by the NHGs in five years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No of NHGs (Approx)</th>
<th>Cumulative no NHGs</th>
<th>Matching Grant for the year (Rs in Lakhs.)</th>
<th>Cumulative Matching Grant (Rs in Lakhs.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005 - 2006</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>16.50</td>
<td>16.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 - 2007</td>
<td>1,800</td>
<td>2213</td>
<td>72.00</td>
<td>88.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 - 2008</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>12213</td>
<td>400.00</td>
<td>488.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008 - 2009</td>
<td>7,900</td>
<td>21113</td>
<td>316.00</td>
<td>804.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009 - 2010</td>
<td>43,693</td>
<td>64806</td>
<td>1559.00</td>
<td>2363.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Kudumbashree sources)

For the year 2009-10, Rs.1559 lakhs has been disbursed to 43693 NHGs as matching grant. Achievement in 2009-10 under matching grant is about five times compared to the previous year.

4.9.2. Micro enterprises of the Kudumbashree.

Innovation fund was initiated for supporting innovative micro enterprise. The maximum amount eligible should not exceed 50% of the total project cost including subsidy and innovation fund. Suitable innovative microenterprise projects will be identified by micro enterprise and Samagra teams in Districts and Head Office, who will then submit proposals to the Head Office.

Technology fund is planned to procure advanced and innovative technologies for setting up micro enterprises under Kudumbashree. The cost of technology includes the cost to develop a
new technology, purchase of a technology from research organization, laboratory, individuals, NGOs etc.

The proposal from the District Mission Team will be scrutinized by a screening committee constituted for the purpose at state level. Project proposal for the procurement or development of Technology for micro enterprises are drafted by the District Mission and submit to the screening committee.

The screening committee at the state level constitutes

01. Executive Director – Chairperson
02. Director (A & F) – Convener
03. Programme Officer ME – Member
04. Accounts Officer – Member.

Sustenance of micro enterprise has always been a challenge faced by the Kudumbashree organization. From 2009 onwards, there were some efforts by the state Kudumbashree mission with cooperation of the Local Self Governments (Kudumbashree sources). There functions a micro enterprise team headed by the programme officer under the state Kudumbashree mission and there is a micro enterprise team under the leadership of Assistant District Mission Coordinators in the district levels. In the CDS levels, there is a micro enterprise subcommittee to coordinate the micro enterprise in the panchayats in the ADS and the NHG levels there are income
generating volunteer to co ordinate and lead the micro enterprise in their respective levels.

In the NHG level, the main function done for the development of micro enterprise is the formation of activity groups and provide support to micro enterprises. At the ADS levels there forms the activity groups, spanning more than one NHG and providing support to micro enterprise. At the CDS level, there forms activity groups spanning more than one ADS, and providing financial assistance for micro enterprises. CDS also provide liaison with banks and the Kudumbashree mission, liaison with LSG for financial and infrastructural support, monitoring of enterprises, organizing markets etc. At the district level the district mission forwards application for subsidy, provide training and capacity building for enterprises, taking steps for formation and support of special enterprises, providie support for marketing etc. At the state level, the state mission sanctions subsidy, design of schemes and capacity building programmes, support for market initiatives, feasibility assessment and trouble shooting for Samagra projects etc.
Table 4.2
Rural Micro Enterprise (Individual) year 2009-10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Subsidy (Rs.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thiruvananthapuram</td>
<td>225000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kollam</td>
<td>255000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathanamthitta</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alappuzha</td>
<td>322500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kottayam</td>
<td>292500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idukki</td>
<td>765000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ernakulam</td>
<td>45000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thrissur</td>
<td>480000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palakkad</td>
<td>2032500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malappuram</td>
<td>1426500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kozhikode</td>
<td>1101000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wayanad</td>
<td>22500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kannur</td>
<td>225000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kasargode</td>
<td>1094000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>8286500</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Kudumbashree sources)
Table 4.3
No. of Enterprises for Year 2009-10 as on 31.3.10 Rural Micro Enterprise (Group)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Subsidy (Rs)</th>
<th>No of groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thiruvananthapuram</td>
<td>25292500</td>
<td>432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kollam</td>
<td>7920000</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathanamthitta</td>
<td>4382500</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alappuzha</td>
<td>39125000</td>
<td>767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kottayam</td>
<td>8561625</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idukki</td>
<td>17860000</td>
<td>298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ernakulam</td>
<td>57487650</td>
<td>1095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thrissur</td>
<td>9075000</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palakkad</td>
<td>20010000</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malappuram</td>
<td>19305000</td>
<td>352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kozhikode</td>
<td>8093500</td>
<td>372</td>
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(Kudumbashree sources)

Physical achievement: 1123 individual enterprises & 4492 group enterprises in the financial year 2009-10
4.9.3 Innovative Enterprises under Kudumbashree

4.9.3. a. Solid Waste Management.

Kudumbashree initiated an innovative enterprise namely clean Kerala business. Women from poor families of Kudumbashree are engaged in door to door household waste collection and transport to the transit points fixed by the urban local bodies.

4.9.3. b. Nature Fresh

Kudumbashree implemented a micro enterprise project named ‘nature fresh ‘at edavatti Grama Panchayat of Idukki district and Kannady Grama Panchayat of Palakkad district.

Cows were distributed to women entrepreneurs. The milk produced is delivered to houses within one hour in bottles by a four member women marketing group. To ensure maximum hygiene low-cost cattle shed, designed by experts have been constructed in all the homesteads. Service by a veterinary surgeon and the development officer were also provided. Kudumbashree state mission is trying to extend the project throughout the state.

4.9.3.c Amrutham food supplement.

The Amrutham unit produces a baby food supplement developed by central plantation crops research institute (CPCRI) Kasaragod. This has 400 operational units. Wheat required for the production of the food supplement is provided in a subsidised rate of Rs 4.5 per/kg under Wheat based nutrition Programme
4.9.4 Samagra

Samagra is an attempt to address the entire production - supply value chain holistically, by scaling up productive activity both qualitatively and quantitatively and seeking viable supply and marketing opportunity. By implementing Samagra the Kudumbashree is began to think beyond the local market as well as design appropriate wholesale and institutional tie- ups. It also enquires in to other interventions like market research, branding, trade promotions, distribution networks etc. Some of the main projects under Samagra are detailed below.

4.9.4 .a Nendran Banana Project

The Nendran project implemented in Thiruvananthapuram district aims at bringing 2400 hectares of land under Nendran cultivation by generating employment opportunities to 30000 women. The project was implemented under the active participation of district panchayat, Kudumbashree mission, national horticultural mission and private partners. The project cost was 42.66 crores.

4.9.4 .b Harithashree

Harithashree aims at the cultivation of vegetables in the nearby panchayats of Thiruvananthapuram Corporation, to satisfy the demands of the corporation. The project cost was 10.21 crores. Activity groups consisted of five women take up cultivation throughout the year.
4.9.4 .c Nedumpana Apparel Park

Nedumpana Apparel Park is established in the Nedumpana gram panchayat in Kollam district, where a high end semi automated tailoring facility is set up. The unit is providing employment for 96 women. Shirts, house coats, uniform and frocks are stitched based on orders.

4.9.4 .d Madhuram Project

The Smagra project of Pathanamthitta district engaged in bee farming. This aims at providing employment to 10000 women. The rubber plantations in Pathanamthitta provide an encouraging environment for apiculture. The honey production started from February 2009 by 216 groups’ yielded 45.7 tonne honey (Kudumbashree sources).

4.9.4 .e Ornamental fish project.

Ornamental fish project is a micro enterprise by vaikkom block panchayat of Kottayam district. The enterprises were started under the joint initiative of matsyafed, block panchayat and Kudumbashree mission. The project is worth Rs 1.5 crores. Major items of fishes cultivated are gold fish, guppy, platy, molly, angel fish etc..

4.9.4 .f Marari Mushroom (Alapuzha)

Marari Mushroom project is implemented in the Alappuzha district with the participation of Alappuzha district panchayat, Kudumbashree and Marari marketing company. The project aims at producing thousand kilograms of mushroom per day through 50 units consisting of 6 members each, thereby, increasing the income
level of the beneficiaries. The direct beneficiaries of the project are 300 members of 8 panchayats of Aryad and Kanjikuzhi blocks. The project envisages the formation of a model cultivation unit (Training centre), spawn production unit, Vermi compost unit and collection and marketing centre. Technical assistance for the project is provided by the Tropical Botanic Gardens and Research Institute (TBGRI). Marari Mashroom Project was visited by the agricultural experts from Indonesia, Vietnam, Cambodia and Sri Lanka to pick up a few lessons about Marari Mushroom project and garment by the women SHGs (The Hindu 2011).

4.9.4. g Thirumadhuram (Ernakulam)

Thirumadhuram Pineapple is the samagra project formulated by Ernakulam District Panchayat Kudumbashree Mission and Gram Panchayats of Ernakulam to create a production marketing chain with pine apple as the main crop. The project costing 33.3 crores aims to produce 25,000 tons of pine apples by cultivating the crop in 500 hectares of land. Through this process direct employment to 12,500 women was envisaged. A value added product of pine apple juice ‘Pineshree’ was branded and test - launched recently.

4.9.4. h. Poomala Nature Fresh Project

This was implemented in Velliyamattom grama panchayat in Idukki district. The project outlay is Rs. 73.75 (Kudumbashree sources) lakhs, which aims to provide extra nutrition to family members. The objective is to start 1350 backyard poultry units and marketing team.
The above said initiatives in the realm of Kudumbashree helped the poor women to attain freedom, autonomy and self confidence. The organization is not merely a micro finance institution. It is obviously a ‘women - based’ poverty alleviation project. The area of activity of the Kudumbashree has been widened to embrace community health, education, housing needs, sanitation, destitute rehabilitation lease farming etc… Kudumbashree women had taken a leadership in the battle against diseases in Alappuzha. Kudumbashree Mission is now leading to take up door to door healthcare activities under the supervision of the Health Department and District Panchayat (The Hindu. August, 4, 2011).

The Kudumbashree Mission is also set to launch a state level garment consortium aimed at boosting the small scale apparel units in Kerala ‘Kudumbashree’ named project i.e. Kudumbashree Apparel Designing and Manufacturing Business Alliance for Revival and Incubation. (Business Line, March 14, 2011)

In the path of empowerment the Kudumbashree had marched a long way. In the area of improvement the Kudumbashree has to create opportunities for ‘location specific’ micro enterprises development for diversifying sources of income. Governmental effort should be facilitated for tapping the export market for ethnic and rural products. The above products must be value - added for improving the market value. Better participation of the community and the poor must be ensured in the poverty alleviation programmes.
4.9.5 Collective Farming

It is a programme initiated by the Kudumbashree. Activities include identification of available land, selection of beneficiaries, clustering them into groups, giving them training, distribution of inputs and release of incentives. The land identified may be government land lying fallow or private land taken up for cultivation.

Joint Liability Group (JLG) of women farmers are formed under the collective farming initiative to help women cultivators access agricultural credit from the banking system. These JLGs are structured along NABARD guidelines and open bank accounts in the name of JLG. JLGs are brought under the preview of interest subsidy scheme of Kudumbashree (ISS). They become available for ISS when they avail agricultural loans from banks. 5% subsidy on 7% interest agricultural loan is provided by govt. of Kerala through Kudumbashree.

So far 36120 JLGs have been formed and around 1500 JLGs have availed loans so far. Paddy, bananas, Vegetables like bitter gourd, snake gourd, cow pea, bottle gourd, ridge gourd, little gourd etc were cultivated in 27270 hectares.

Through collective farming programme the twin benefits of poverty eradication, food security and financial returns through agricultural production are sought to be accomplished. Financial outflow for farming incentives for the year 2009-10 was 20.11 crores.
4.9.6 Responsible Tourism

This is an initiative led by the state Department of Tourism to make the Tourism industry socially, environmentally and economically responsible to the people. The project has so far succeeded in creating and running tie ups with hotels, for supply of locally produced vegetables and food products. Handicrafts and eco-friendly products are also being promoted through this channel.

4.10 Programmes for social Empowerment under Kudumbashree.

4.10.1 ASRAYA, the Destitute Rehabilitation Programme.

The Asraya project supported by the GOK was tried in 179 Gram panchayats in the year 2001. The state govt. assisted the project with 500 lakhs. Besides the 9 point index another 15 points that lead to destitution are also included in the index for destitute families. The individual needs of the family are identified through participatory need assessment involving the CBO members and the elected representatives.

The project envisaged to address various deprivations faced by the destitute families such as lack of food, health problems, including chronic illness, treatment for life threatening diseases, pension, educational facilities to children, land and home, shelter and shelter upgradation, drinking water, safe sanitation facilities, skill development, employment opportunities etc.

Besides the plan funds of LSGI, Rs. 15 lacs provided under the challenge fund from Kudumbashree. The LSGIs have to mobilize
funds from other sources including contributions from individuals and donors.

The project was implemented in 890 Gram panchayats and 32 urban local bodies. 72116 destitute families have been identified and projects worth 41075.82 lakhs have been prepared and were in various stages of implementation (www.kudumbashree.org).

4.10.2 Buds - Special school for mentally and physically challenged children

The project was started at Venganur village Panchayat in Thiruvananthapuram district for physically and mentally challenged children. This problem was identified by the CBOs of poor by taking part in the Anti Poverty Sub Plan (APSP) preparation process. The parents who are marginal workers, agricultural labourers living below the poverty line, find it difficult to address the special needs of their children.

There are 31 buds schools in the state. These schools are registered under the People with Disabilities Act. These children battle with disabilities including autism, cerebral palsy, blindness deafness and speech impairments due to cleft palates. They are provided with medical attention, physical and mental therapy, mobility equipment, hearing aids, and individual vocational and educational training skills.

The Kudumbashree mission has been involved in improving the quality of service provided through the BUDS schools with the assistance of LSGs.
4.10.3 Gender self-learning programme

Kudumbashrees have been working on a programme that aims at getting to discuss the gender dimensions of their issues. Locally contextualized modules on issues such as women and work, women and health, women and mobility, women and entertainment are developed and deliberated in the neighborhood meetings. The different voices of women and their perceptions about the topics of discussion will be captured on a web based portal accessible at the level of local self Government. The portal is being developed with the support of the Ministry of Information Technology, GOI. It was felt that the content would be delivered not through trainings but through discussions related to life and livelihoods, they could relate to, either through a story or through some other format – press writings, poems, skit etc... State level consultants help identify the themes of the learning modules. The content of the modules are prepared by local women resource persons. The women are encouraged to ask questions about themes ranging from work and environment to health, power and power structure. This programme is expected to touch directly the lives of over 35 lakh women in the state.

As a part of women empowerment activities a pilot project of GSL is running in four block panchayats and one Municipality in Kerala, via Nedumangad, Kanjikuzhi, Kodakara and Kanhagad blocks and in Aluva Municipality. In 2009-10 the project was scaled up to the entire state. The Kudumbasree mission has selected 6000 resource persons at various panchayat levels. Modules were prepared
through a long process with the participation of Block/Municipal resource persons. The draft modules were finalized in a state level workshop of three resource persons. The logic behind such workshop is to bring uniformity to the module. Modules were printed and distributed to Ayalkoottams for discussion. Women are finding time to actively debate over the modules. Their voices and findings are being consolidated.

Gender Resource Centre focuses on addressing gender concerns and capacitating Kudumbashree NHGs and LSG representatives to develop gender sensitive policies and to prioritize gender sensitive action. The process of establishing a library and resource centre is also going on (kudumbashree.org).

4.10.4 Special livelihood Programmes

The SLP is a comprehensive livelihood planning approach taken by Kudumbashree Mission in partnership with the urban local governments and the community organizations network in urban areas. The objective of the programme is to enable creation of sustainable employment and enterprise opportunities for the urban poor families. Comprehensive livelihood plans are developed through a participatory and consultative process involving stakeholders from local governments, community organizations, private business, industry associations and government departments and agencies.

The SLP was initiated in Malappuram and Perintalmanna Municipalities in 2009-10. Later, Kanhangad Municipality undertook
SLP. About 25 municipalities are currently in the process of SLP preparatory activities.

4.10.5 Integrated Housing and slum development Programme (IHSDP)

The IHSD Programme includes all slum development/upgradation/relocation projects including new house construction/upgradation and infrastructural facilities. Components under IHSDP are the Provision of shelter including upgradation and construction of new houses, provision of community toilets, provision of physical amenities like water supply, community bath, widening and paving of existing lanes, sewers, community latrines, street light etc. This Programme also includes community infrastructure and social amenities like provision of community centers to be used for pre-school education, non-formal educational activities and community primary health care buildings, provision of model demonstration projects and slum improvement and rehabilitation projects.

4.10.6 Balasabha.

Balasabhas are group of children at the grass root levels. The mission organises the children of poor families to balasabhas as a part of community development. As on 31-3-2010 there were 50,220 balasabhas throughout the state with 8.65 lakh children as members (Kudumbashree sources). Children of Kudumbashree get an opportunity to learn through activity and interaction with facilitators. Balasabha meets have been held panchayat, district and regional levels.
4.10.7 Bala Panchayats

Kudumbashree initiative of Balasabha and Balapanchayats were organised to impart voice and power to children from poor and vulnerable socio-economic backgrounds. The idea behind the Balapanchayat is the creation of a children’s forum where children’s issues and concerns are brought to the notice of the LSGs.

Balasabhas are federated at CDS levels as Balapanchayats. There are varied activities for Bala Panchayats like awareness programmes on various issues, residential camps, study tours, nature camps, Krishipadam, health programmes etc.

4.10.8 Special Tribal Projects.

The Special tribal project was implemented in ten selected panchayats of four districts namely Iddukki, Wayanad, Palakkad and Kasaragode. In the second phase, the project was extended to selected panchayats of nine districts. Some of the main strategies of the special tribal project are to link up tribal families with MGNREGS, to initiate tribal Asraya projects i.e. special packages for the destitute among tribals, to start Balasabhas for tribal children for greater integration and acceptance among families, to focus on nutrition gap and remedies with the help of the department of community medicine etc. This project was prepared in the background of increased realization of an urgent need to address the skewed development targets of Kerala which has resulted in the marginalization of the weaker sections of the society.
The project envisages setting up of ST NHGs and participation in NREGS in the targeted area. In the year 2008-09 1896 new tribal NHGs were formed and 27471 members have been newly included in Kudumbashree (Kudumbashree sources).

4.10.9 Special SC Projects

The scheme named ‘SHG for Scheduled Caste women’ was approved by the state government. The scheme focused on organisation of poor SC women at grass roots through a process of local mobilization for poverty eradication. In the year 2009 -10, the Kudumbashree was given Rs 99.94 lakhs by the Scheduled Caste Department.

4.11 Vanitha Sabhas

Vanitha Sabha is the first step to bring out the experiences of women at the grass root level. It is an exercise to form creative learning groups that share, understand and conceptualize concerns and solutions which influence policy decisions. Women from different sectors of employment and experts are invited to participate in Vanitha Sabhas at the district level. In the very first attempt 3530 women participated in District Sabhas. As a part of 12th anniversary celebrations of Kudumbashree vanitha sabhas were convened. On a state wide analysis it was found that except the district wyanad, kozhikkode and Pathanamthitta vanithasabhas were not much effective as it was proposed.
4.12 Conclusion

Kudumbashree was launched by the Government of Kerala in 1998 for wiping out absolute poverty from the State through concerted community action under the leadership of Local Self Governments, Kudumbashree is today one of the largest women-empowering projects in the country. The programme has 37 lakh members and covers more than 50% of the households in Kerala. Built around three critical components, micro credit, entrepreneurship and empowerment, the Kudumbashree initiative has today succeeded in addressing the basic needs of the less privileged women, thus providing them a more dignified life and a better future. The performance of Kudumbashree in poverty reduction efforts, particularly the thrift and credit operations, the linkage banking programmes and the enterprises where bank finance is attracted have been functioning to extreme satisfaction of the banking community. In several sectors Kudumbashree has initiated lead role in developing public-private partnership. The presence of Kudumbashree in every sphere of life is visible and it creates enhanced demand for public services, improvement in quality of public service and bottom up pressure for improvement in service delivery. It acts as a delivery mechanism and responds to urgent and imminent needs of the society.

The widespread coverage of community based organisations of Kudumbashree has reached every nook and corner of the state.
There is a state mission with field officers in each district. For effective convergence of the programme, a three tier community based organization (CBO) is in action. These community based organization has made Kerala into a vibrant civil society. Hence social capital has been considerably enhanced. The willingness to cooperate with others, leading to mutual trust, and the trust of the community in the members has considerably increased. Cooperation with representatives of local government has also improved significantly. Kudumbashree thus combines credit support with social capital.

Kudumbashree’s linkage with government enables to have effective monitoring and supervision of all the activities from grass root level. In Kudumbashree the community based organizations are created under the leadership of Local Self Government. Also it enables the mission to exercise management and control in all operations. At present the development schemes of central, state and local governments are channeled through Kudumbashree and now it act as the nodal agency of the NRLM also. This linkage of the government with Kudumbashree is felt as some sort of security. Though Kudumbashree was formed to create gender equality and women empowerment by organizing CBOs, still it has a male dominated structure. Out of the 14 district mission coordinators, only 5 are women. The Women Component Plan has not been operating in a gender perspective but only as a welfare scheme. Lack of democratic commitment at the top level and excessive
bureaucratization are also visible in the present organizational structure.

In conclusion it can be said that the organization is emerging as a women’s agency. In less than a decade the Kudumbashree has come a long way. It seems that it is the right time for the Kudumbashree to re-design itself to meet the future requirements.

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