

**Report of exposure visit of Nodal Officers (IBDLIP) to Kudumbashree Mission, Kerala w.e.f. 1<sup>st</sup> March 2014 to 8<sup>th</sup> March 2014**

The Nodal Officers, Integrated Basin Development & Livelihood Promotion (IBDLIP) Programme were sent for an exposure visit to Kerala w.e.f. 1<sup>st</sup> March 2014 to 8<sup>th</sup> March 2014 with the objective to understand the impact of the Kudumbashree State Poverty Eradication Mission initiated by the Government of Kerala in 1992 upon the livelihood of the rural people.



The implementation of the Kudumbashree Mission is being carried out by the District Mission Office in three tiers:-

- (i) The Neighbourhood Group (NHG) at the grass - root level
- (ii) The Area Development Society (ADS) at the intermediate level and
- (iii) The Community Development Society (CDS) at the top level.

The funding and overall monitoring is being done by the Department of Local Self-Government, Government of Kerala. Some of the major initiatives under this mission which were successful in Kerala included:



Nutrimix unit



Empowering women



Formation of Joint Liability Groups (JLGs)



Balsabha representing the Neighbourhood Children between 8-15 years of age undertaking minor agricultural activities



BUDS School for Mentally Challenged people/children and Ashraya –a special programme to uplift the poorest of the poor



**Findings:** A visit to the District Mission Office, Micro Enterprises as well as the interaction with officers/officials and members of the NGH, ADS, CDS and JLGs under Kudumbashree Mission highlighted the following important findings:

- (i) The success of the Mission is the outcome of the existence of a Local Self-Government Department with dedicated and trained Officers/officials/volunteers which ensures its effective implementation.
- (ii) The existence of a strong Panchayat system is the main reason for its success at the grass-root level. It not only ensures implementation but also accountability by various stakeholders and delegates responsibility accordingly. Besides, it also ensures co-ordination among all stakeholders including government departments.
- (iii) The Panchayats/CDS are allocated sector-specific funds (MEs, JLGs, BalSabhas, Ashraya, etc) for various activities every year by the Department which ensures the success of the various initiatives.
- (iv) Micro Enterprises Consultants are the backbone for setting up Micro-Enterprises (MEs). They not only help in conducting General Orientation Training, Entrepreneurship Development Training and Skill Training but also in preparation of DPRs, Bank-Linkage, setting up MEs and further provide hand-holding support for six months after the establishment of the MEs which is crucial to ensure the growth and development of MEs.
- (v) The Panchayats conduct proper evaluation of only capable NHGs to allocate funds. Panchayat knows better.

**Recommendation:**

- (i) **Allocation of funds:** If specific funds can be provided under IBDLiP Programme to start the various initiatives like Subsidy/Margin Money for setting up MEs, running other institutes, etc , there will be a greater chance for growth and development of MEs.
- (ii) **MECs:** Dedicated and experienced ME Consultants are required who will provide pre-setting up and post-setting up assistance to entrepreneurs.
- (iii) **Panchayats:** The Panchayat system is very important for overall rural development, simply for the reason that the Panchayat is more powerful than our VECs/Sordars/Nokmas.
- (iv) **Co-ordination:** Line Departments are required to attend various meetings/programmes organised by Panchayats from time to time and accountability is sought at such platforms . This is not so in our case as our VECs are not strong and do not command such power and authority.
- (v) **Convergence:** Convergence is possible since the Department of Local Self Government being the apex body ensures that initiatives of the Panchayats are converged. Convergence instructions/guidelines has to come from the Government if convergence is to take place at the District/ground level. In many cases, we experienced that line departments do not want to converge because they have certain targets already planned annually. Co-ordination is a difficult task unless specific funds from each department's budget is earmarked for convergence.

- (vi) **BUDs:** Initiatives like the BUDs School for mentally and physically challenged children/adults are required in each District.
- (vii) **Ashraya:** Identifying the poorest of the poor on certain points-ranking scale and providing intervention to uplift them socially and economically should also be the initiative of the State Government rather than depending on Central Government Schemes like IAY, NBA, etc.

**Constraints in BDU, West Khasi Hills District-vis-à-vis Kerela:**

- (i) Formation of NHGs/SHGs is a difficult task due to lack of coordination and trust among members.
- (ii) Lack of funds with the BDU to assist entrepreneurs to start up micro enterprises.
- (iii) Nodal Officers (IBDLiP) also hold many additional charges. As such, dedication to BDU activities is not possible all the time.
- (iv) Training and exposure visits of Nodal Officers and Interns/Programme Associates is required from time to time to ensure deliverables.