

# Kudumbashree National Resource Organisation

January 2013 - April 2014



Aajeevika  
National Rural Livelihoods Mission  
Government of India



Kudumbashree  
Kerala State Poverty Eradication Mission  
Government of Kerala

Cover Photo taken by **Abhinav Sharma**

Young Professional (Cohort 2), Kudumbashree NRO, while attending a meeting of 'Sagan Sakem Aajeevika Swayam Sahayata Samooh' in Rolagram village of Pakur District in Jharkhand in July 2014

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**Dr. M K Muneer**  
Minister for Panchayats & Social Justice  
Kerala



## Foreword

Thiruvananthapuram  
30.7.2014

It is a matter of immense pride for Kerala to be recognised at the national level for its initiatives in the field of poverty eradication and empowerment of women through Kudumbashree, the State Poverty Eradication Mission. The Government of India, under its National Rural Livelihoods Mission, has acknowledged Kudumbashree as a National Resource Organisation (NRO) for customising and implementing its best practices in domains of convergence between Panchayati Raj institutions and community organisations, and micro-enterprise consultant led livelihood development in other States of India.

Kerala has been a trend-setter in decentralisation of funds, functions, and functionaries to the lowest-tier of governance. This has made the communities in the State responsible for their own progress and has empowered them to take giant leaps towards their socio-economic development.

In a country like India, with the diversity of cultures, customs, socio-economic and political contexts, it is a daunting task to adapt the Kerala experience as per the needs of the partner-State. It is indeed a pleasure to understand that Kudumbashree NRO has taken up the challenge to support NRLM activities in six States so far and shares its invaluable knowledge and experience with them. I understand that more States are in the process of finalising their partnership with Kudumbashree.

I wish the Kudumbashree NRO team well in all their endeavours.

**Dr. M K Muneer**



**T. Vijay Kumar IAS**

Additional Secretary (Rural Livelihood) to Govt. of India  
& National Mission Director, NRLM, Mo RD

## Message

The National Rural Livelihoods Mission (Aajeevika) aims at creating efficient and effective institutional platforms of rural poor women enabling them to increase household incomes through sustainable livelihood enhancements and improved access to financial and essential public services. In enabling this to happen there is a great need to strengthen the implementation capacity of all the State Rural Livelihood Missions (SRLMs), so that they can implement Aajeevika efficiently and effectively.

In building the capacities of the State missions, N.R.L.M is strongly advocating the practice of states learning from each other. Such horizontal learning will help other S.R.L.M s to excel in taking Aajeevika (N.R.L.M) forward. The community resource person (C.R.P) strategy is the cornerstone of N.R.L.M implementation. C.R.P s are community best practitioners. They are women who have come out of the poverty trap with their own efforts and with the support and inspiration received from their S.H.G s and federations along with the support of the State mission's efforts. These best practitioners go as trainers to other states for handholding support and for creation of internal women leaders who in turn become the social capital of the poor in that state to take this initiative further.

Kudumbashree, Kerala has over the years developed a number of excellent models for Community based organizations that are very relevant for the S.R.L.M s in their efforts to implement N.R.L.M. They have stood the test of time. It is a matter of great satisfaction that the Government of Kerala and the Kudumbashree Mission have come forward to support the National Rural Livelihoods Mission in making the best practices available to other States. Kudumbashree has been selected as National Resource Organization (NRO) to provide support to various SRLMs in the areas of P.R.I - CBO Convergence and Micro Enterprise Development. As of now the states of Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Odisha are availing the services of Kudumbashree N.R.O. The N.R.O is doing a yeomen service. I am sure in days to come more states will avail the services of the N.R.O. I am also sure that other initiatives of Kudumbashree will be replicated.

I am confident that Kudumbashree will contribute very significantly to the success of NRLM. I am also equally confident that the work done by Kudumbashree in various states will also enable it to imbibe some of the best practices of other states and improve Kudumbashree further.

**T. Vijay Kumar IAS**

**K B Valsalakumari**  
Executive Director



## From the Executive Director

It gives me great pleasure to present the first progress report of Kudumbashree National Resource Organization for the period from January 2013-April 2014. Kudumbashree NRO was approved to be set up by the Empowered Committee of NRLM in December 2013; the first project of the NRO in partnership with Bihar Rural Livelihoods Promotion Society took off in January 2013. The NRO Secretariat started full-fledged functioning in May 2013. Since then the Kudumbashree NRO has been able to work closely with the National Mission Management Unit and State Rural Livelihoods Missions of six States that have taken up pilot projects.

Kudumbashree National Resource Organization has been able to make its mark as a professional support agency, providing technical and implementation support in its selected domains. Rather than approach the States with ready-made approaches or solutions, Kudumbashree NRO strives to develop context-specific approaches and strategies, in tune with the requirement of the pilot locations. It also focusses attention on developing capabilities of the State, both at the state and village levels.

I would like to acknowledge the support and guidance from Additional Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India and the Mission Director and his team of the National Mission Management Unit, National Rural Livelihoods Mission for the activities of Kudumbashree NRO. State Governments and Mission teams of the State Rural Livelihoods Missions of Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Odisha have been exemplary partners and have facilitated the fledgling team of the NRO to develop their work in an efficient and effective manner.

Most importantly, it is the strength of the community collectives in the villages of Kerala and their close convergence with the local governments that form the basis of the work done by Kudumbashree NRO. The co-operation from the Presidents, members and staff of the various gram panchayats and the leadership of the Community Development Societies, in enabling learning by the NRO as well as partner-States has been commendable. The community network has also provided the NRO with Mentors, who play the anchor role in implementation of the pilot projects in partner-States. Staff of the Kudumbashree State and District Missions have also played a crucial role in facilitating the work of Kudumbashree NRO.

I place on record the appreciation and gratitude from Kudumbashree National Resource Organization to all well-wishers, partners and guides particularly Smt. Sarada Muraleedharan, former COO, NRLM and Sri N. Jagajeevan, former Programme Officer, Kudumbashree for their support and co-operation during the past fifteen months.

I hope that the support and guidance continues as the Kudumbashree NRO faces up to new situations and challenges in its work.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Valsalakumari', with a horizontal line underneath.

**K B Valsalakumari**



# Kudumbashree National Resource Organisation

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Kudumbashree - State Poverty Eradication Mission, Government of Kerala has, over the past sixteen years, initiated several pioneering interventions in the areas of institution building, social development, and livelihoods. The Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), Government of India, under the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM), has recognised Kudumbashree's initiatives and designated it as a National Resource Organisation (NRO) to provide technical and implementation support to States, based on mutual interest.

**Kudumbashree NRO is mandated to provide support to States in three domains:**

1. Enhancing convergence between Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI) and Community Based Organisations (CBOs)
2. Social development interventions, focussed on the most marginalised
3. Micro-enterprise development through provision of on-ground Micro-Enterprises Consultant (MEC) support

## PRI-CBO Convergence

The PRI-CBO Convergence domain is built on the principle that an empowered community exercising its democratic rights through its empowered citizens will make panchayats conscious towards their constitutional roles and responsibilities. A conscious panchayat, in turn, gets empowered in the process of working along with a strong community network of the poor. PRI-CBO convergence approach envisages establishing mutually beneficial relationship between

the panchayat and the community in the process of undertaking poverty eradication measures, and economic and social development of the village. Such linkage of the two could work best towards ensuring the livelihood and social security of the poor and vulnerable in the community.

Under NRLM, the PRI-CBO Convergence project will complement the ongoing implementation of institution and capacity building processes by bringing in an entitlement-based approach for the women's collectives.

## Social Development

Social development interventions, focussed on the needs of the most marginalised, is an area where Kudumbashree has developed pioneering interventions. The *Asraya* model of community based identification of destitute families, developing family-wise rehabilitation plans, and collaborative implementation by panchayats and CBOs reflects some best practises that could be adopted by many States across the country.

## Enterprise Development

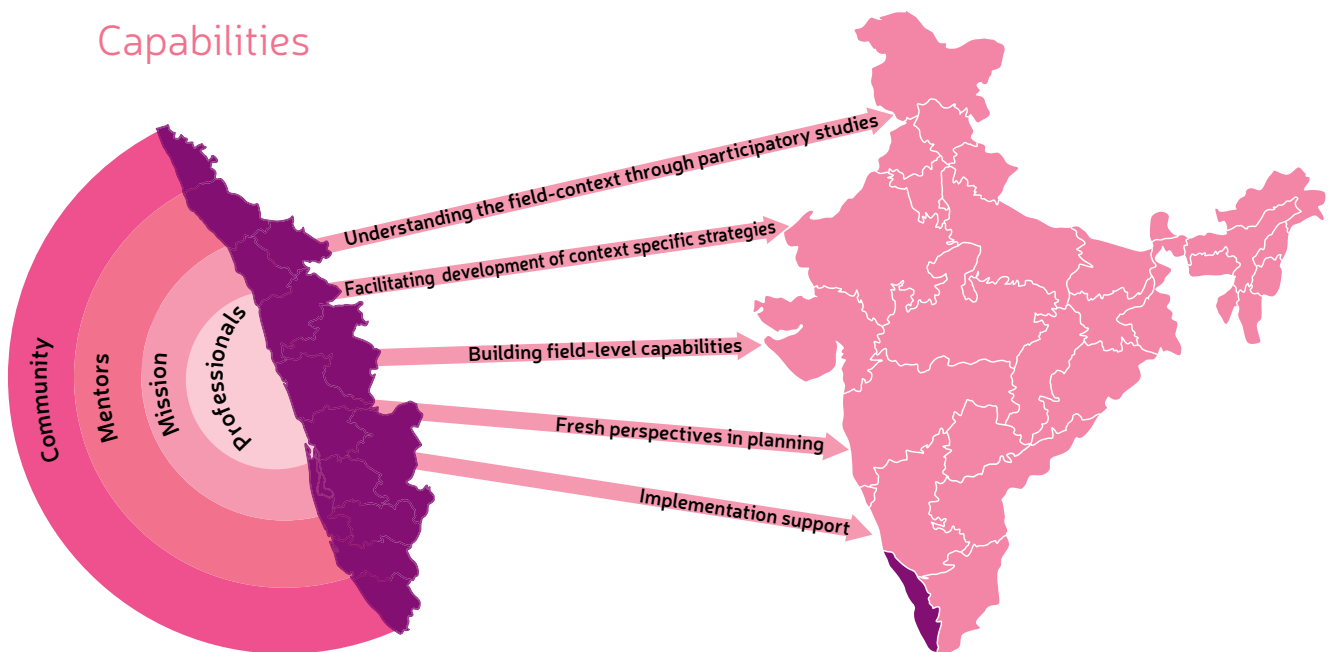
Micro-enterprises promoted as part of various poverty alleviation programmes face serious operational challenges, affecting their viability and effectiveness. One-time support for establishing micro-enterprises is not sufficient to enable the poor to build a sustainable livelihood. This indicates a need for sustained hand-holding, capacity building and skill-training support to ensure that these enterprises develop into sustainable sources of livelihoods.

Kudumbashree has proved that micro-enterprises of the poor can be profitable and sustainable through its pioneering MEC model. MECs are men and women from the community who are trained in business management and are deployed in the field to assist the micro-entrepreneurs. The work of MECs, through their acquired business acumen, is to provide multi-dimensional support to enterprises in the field. Such a support structure of locally trained consultants is not only able to empathise with the condition of small enterprises but is more accessible and affordable than typical business development service providers.

### Kudumbashree NRO's support to partner-States is built on these guiding principles:

- Each State has its own capabilities and potential to design and implement interventions specific to its local context
- There is a need to build upon and strengthen the indigenous resources and expertise to produce long-term results
- NRO will support States to take up pilot interventions, as proof of concept and developing local-specific approaches

## Capabilities



### Experiences of the Community

40 lakh Kudumbashree women, who have gained economic and social empowerment, working with the gram panchayats towards poverty alleviation provide the base of experiences and motivation for Kudumbashree NRO

### Hand-Holding by Mentors

Mentors drawn from Kudumbashree's community resource pool support field level planning and implementation in partner-States

### Mission Support

Kudumbashree NRO derives its values, knowledge, and capabilities from Kudumbashree through the support provided by State Mission and the District Mission

### Professional Capabilities

Team of senior development professionals with rich domain experience for overall management and guidance, supported by Young Professionals from reputed institutes who add vigour and fresh perspectives



# Services

## Planning and Strategy Formulation

**Scoping Studies:** The NRO initiates and supports its partner-States in conduct of scoping studies and feasibility analysis. It is an essential first level study as experiences from Kerala cannot be customised to other states without knowing the local context, the place, and the people.

**Strategy Formulation:** NRO assists the partner-States in preparing a strategy for planning, customising, and implementing the projects. NRO shares experiences from its vast repository of internalised knowledge, and enables its partners to develop strategies with precision.

## Mobilisation and Capacity Building

**Designing Awareness, Mobilisation, and Capacitation Campaigns:** NRO believes in active engagement of the people who the project seeks to benefit. Awareness and mobilisation strategy alone is not the solution for bringing people together; they need to be capacitated to be able to constructively participate in the development process.

### Development of Trained Local Community

**Cadres:** Kudumbashree, in Kerala, greatly relies on local support for implementing its programmes. It builds cadres from the community to take the project forward, learn from the field, and make relevant modifications in the programme over time. This method of project delivery has made the communities in Kerala self-sufficient. Inspired by this, NRO aims at developing community cadres, capacitate them, and support them till they become confident to take the project forward on their own in their respective States.

## Support for Implementation

**Professional Support for Mobilisation, Institution Building, and Business Development:** NRO leverages

on Kudumbashree's invaluable associations with academicians, development practitioners, panchayat representatives, and consultants to blend development theories with practical understanding to enable partner-States prepare realistic implementation plans.

### Expert Support for Hand-Holding Community

**Cadres:** To provide its partners with ground level support, NRO extends the expertise of its Mentors. The Mentors have a rich experiential base working as community resource persons under various initiatives undertaken by Kudumbashree. Their insight into various programmes and on-field judgement would be of great support to the partner-States in implementing the pilot projects.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

Once the project starts in the partner-States, instating a regular monitoring and evaluation mechanism becomes imperative. NRO provides its services to the partner-States to establish offline as well as online systems.

**Offline Systems** would be in the form of regular reporting by Mentors and establishing procedures through which the local community cadres can send routine updates. Partner-States have also proposed the idea of creating a baseline at the beginning of the project against which the progress of the project can be tracked at regular intervals. The NRO plans to make this a formal part of its projects.

**Online System** is envisaged as a performance tracking system for the enterprises that the MECs would cater to. The service user would feed information on a regular basis through an IVR or an SMS, which would get fed in software. The programme implementing agencies and other stakeholders can consistently track the performance of project variables.



# Kudumbashree NRO







January 2013 - April 2014

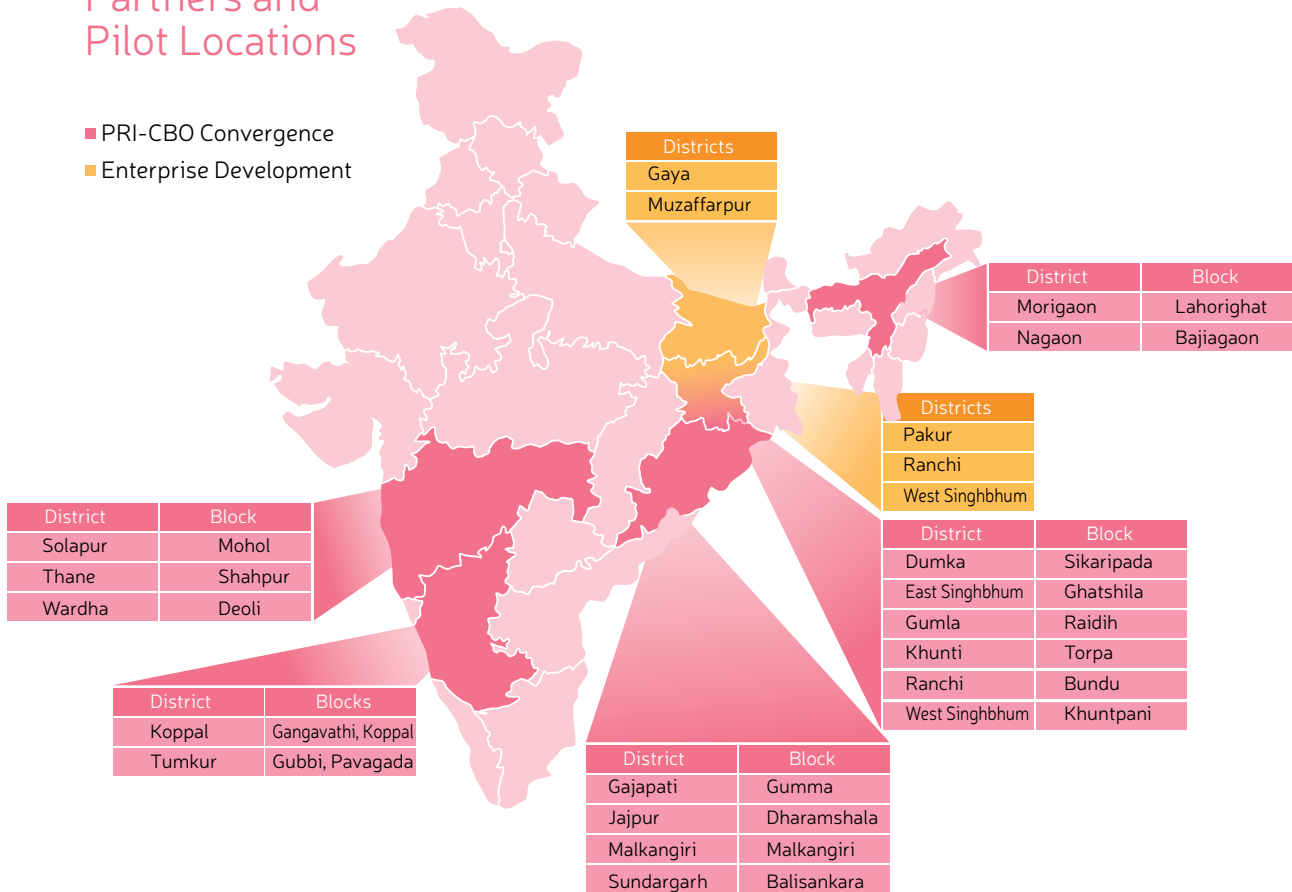


# Ongoing Partnerships

During January 2013 - April 2014, Kudumbashree NRO has entered into partnership with six States for pilot interventions in the two domains of PRI-CBO Convergence and Enterprises.

## Partners and Pilot Locations

- PRI-CBO Convergence
- Enterprise Development



“ The insights which Kudumbashree provided under the PRI-CBO Convergence pilot has made OLM look beyond the conventional ideas of convergence. It has almost been a year since we have been working with Kudumbashree NRO and their relentless support in each phase of the pilot is highly commendable. The conceptualisation of the convergence pilot would have been impossible without the ideas and support from Kudumbashree. There is a lot to learn from the professionalism of NRO team. We are looking forward to engaging with Kudumbashree more intensively in future. ”

- Dr. Babita Mahapatra, Deputy CEO, Odisha Livelihoods Mission (OLM)

# Resource Material Development

The NRO aims to establish a system for continuous inflow of learnings and experiences from Kudumbashree and simultaneous documentation of the same. It also seeks to consolidate and share learnings, best practices, and innovations gained from other States with its parent organisation.

Work in the domain of PRI-CBO Convergence has so far focussed on studying the process of convergence from its genesis in Kerala to where it stands today. This study of organic evaluation of strengthening of democratic participation in Local Self Governance in Kerala is the quintessential component in building the framework of convergence projects in partner-

States. The NRO has attempted to break down the process of convergence and its evolution in rural Kerala into a series of achievable steps for the benefit of its partner-States. Designing scoping studies and developing handbooks on Kudumbashree and its programmes have been some of the significant works taken up over the year.

The Enterprises project is, at present, drawing inferences from experiences gained in the existing partner-States to build a repository of resource materials on the implementation of the project for its new partners.

## Manuals and Guides Prepared

|                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Activity Map</b>                 | A detailed activity map of the PRI-CBO Convergence project has been formulated and standardised for the pilot. The activity map has been approved by the National Mission Management Unit (NMMU), NRLM and has formed a part of the MoU. An activity map outlining the various stages in the implementation of the Enterprises project has been recently prepared by the NRO   |
| <b>Implementation Support Guide</b> | A guide which details out the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders, provides for better planning through lists of preparatory activities, and cautions against the expected challenges, has been developed by the NRO for the PRI-CBO Convergence project. The guide has been shared with the five partner-States. The NRO is presently preparing an Implementation Support Guide for the Enterprises project  |
| <b>Kudumbashree Handbooks</b>       | Kudumbashree NRO has undertaken the task of preparing different resource materials, which will be useful for both Kudumbashree Mission as well as for the partner-States in understanding the Kudumbashree model. The NRO has so far developed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Kudumbashree Handbook - A book on the history and evolution of Kudumbashree model in Kerala</li><li>• Handbook on <i>Asraya</i></li><li>• A document on CDS Byelaw and Election Handbook</li></ul> |
| <b>Scoping Study Handbook</b>       | Scoping study is designed to understand the status of PRIs, CBOs, and government departments in partner-States. A detailed questionnaire and a handbook for scoping study have been prepared by the NRO.<br><br>The tools to be adopted for the scoping study were piloted in Khuntpani block of West Singhbhum district in Jharkhand. Scoping study has been completed in Maharashtra and Assam and is ongoing in Orissa and Jharkhand.   |

## National Workshop on Validation of NRLM Activity Map

A tentative mapping exercise was undertaken by NMMU and the activity map developed by NRO was to be taken through a validation workshop wherein all the States implementing the PRI-CBO Convergence project were invited.

The workshop was conducted on December 16, 2013 at the National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD), Hyderabad as part of the 10-day workshop organised by NRLM. A four-member team from NRO participated in the same and made a conceptual presentation on the Convergence project as has been visualised by NRO and the partner-States.



# Process Development

The NRO has been involved in preparing type-designs for certain processes, which would be duly customised and applied in its partner-States

## Scoping Study for PRI-CBO Convergence

The scoping study methodology guides its user to conduct the study at three levels; the State, the PRI, and the CBO level. NRO has also facilitated the conduct of the scoping study as per specific requirements of State Rural Livelihood Missions (SRLMs). During the period, NRO supported the SRLM in Assam, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, and Odisha for planning and conduct of scoping studies.

The scoping study in Maharashtra was conducted by two teams – one at the State level and the other at the block and village level in the three pilot blocks. In each of the blocks, five gram panchayats were selected for conduct of the scoping study. The field level data collection was done over a period of 12 days. All three block teams came together for a State-level write-shop to consolidate and analyse the findings of the study. The field level teams comprised Community Resource Persons (CRPs), block and district level personnel of Umed-Maharashtra SRLM.

The NRO team was involved in conduct of secondary research through study of PRI Acts and Rules, and relevant Executive Orders. Along with a member of the Umed State Mission team, NRO also supported conduct of interviews and interactions of state and district level functionaries of relevant Government departments and agencies.



Validation of Scoping Study modules and training for conduct of the study was carried out in Maharashtra during February 26-March 2, 2014 in Navi Mumbai

“ MSRLM-NRO Kudumbashree partnership in PRI-CBO Convergence pilot is exercising new dimensional overview of inter-relationship between PRI's and CBOs in Maharashtra. Scoping expertise of NRO, various interventions by Kudumbashree in social empowerment will definitely add more values to Maharashtra's efforts in poverty reduction in the State. We are hopeful to achieve success in developing PRI-CBO Convergence.”

- Manik Dive, Deputy Director – Convergence, Umed-MSRLM

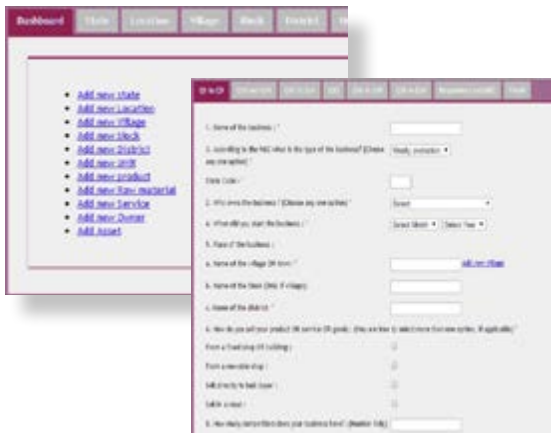
## Enterprise Benchmarking

Micro-enterprises of the poor operate in a very specific business environment. However, the larger market and legal conditions are such that they do not distinguish between micro, small, or large enterprises for most matters related to the business. In conventional businesses, the enterprise and the entrepreneur are taken as separate entities, but this does not hold true in case of micro-enterprises. Here, the socio-economic, political, and financial situation of poor rural entrepreneurs, particularly women entrepreneurs, has serious implications on viability of their businesses. Thus, as the two types of businesses substantially differ from each other, established industry performance standards to assess enterprise performance do not work for micro-enterprises.

In this context, Kudumbashree NRO offers its

expertise in developing benchmark standards against some parameters to assess micro-enterprise performance. To arrive at benchmarks, data would be collected from existing enterprises from each pilot district by the MECs and fed into software which would calculate values for a given parameter.

It is envisaged that these benchmarks would still not be representative of performance of women-run enterprises as such businesses are rare. One of the objectives of the SRLM's enterprise promotion policy is also promotion of self-employment opportunities among women using thrift and credit from the community structures, which they are a part of. Once these businesses commence, the benchmark values would be revised further and more made relevant to the context.



A snapshot of enterprise benchmarking software

Benchmarking exercise is underway in Bihar. A tool for data collection has been administered in about 600 enterprises covering two pilot districts and data entry is ongoing through software developed by the NRO's service partners

The benchmarking exercise will provide values in each district for parameters, such as:

- Net profitability for various types of businesses
- Profit for business owner by individuals or groups
- Income by level of investment in the business
- Income earned per owner
- Operating profit by location of the business

(the list is indicative)

# Resource Pool Development in Partner-States

Every community has the social capital of rendering mutual help to each other. It is imperative that every partner-State would have some of the best and innovative community practices existing within. The people from the community are familiar with the local culture and are aware about the internal dynamics and the existing power relations. Forming a resource group with motivated people from the community helps in not just the facilitation of the project activities but also in the long term sustenance of the intervention.

- **Micro-Enterprise Consultants (MECs):** They are locally rooted, trained business management consultants to initiate, sustain, and nurture micro-enterprises in a set of pilot districts in the partner-State. The MEC provides a wide-range of services to both potential and existing entrepreneurs. Identification of business opportunities, preparation of business plan,

liaison with financial institutions, information and linkage on suppliers and markets and support for book-keeping and accounting are the key services provided by the MECs.

This pool of local men and women is selected by administering a series of tests to gauge their business acumen and tact. These MECs are then divided into two groups solely for the purpose of capacitation. The first group undergoes a course, known as Course in Rural Enterprise Administration and Management (CREAM), to acquaint them with various aspects of business management which is spread over seven months. The first group then trains the other (larger) group through a shorter version of CREAM known as Teaching Enterprise Administration and Management (TEAM) over a period of six months. So far, about 170 MECs in Bihar and 140 MECs in Jharkhand have been capacitated.



MECs from Gaya and Muzaffarpur districts on completion of CREAM course were awarded certificates at a ceremony in Bodhgaya in September 2013

“ With the learnings of CREAM, I have tried helping a group of women from two SHGs to open up a Kirana Shop. I prepared their business plan, helped them get the loan, select customer segment, and product list. It has been two months and the shop has been running fairly well. I am in constant touch with the group and it gives me confidence to see that I am able to apply the learnings in the class to the field and move towards the role as an MEC.”

- Deepika Hembrom, CREAM MEC, West Singhbhum, Jharkhand



- **Local Resource Group (LRG) for Convergence Projects:** This group of people would be formed from within the community to be the leading anchors in the social mobilisation and sensitisation of the community. Persons from the community willing to take part in the mobilisation campaign based on their interest and experiences would be the members of this group. Identification of LRG is presently underway in PRI-CBO pilot-States.
- **State Resource Group (SRG) for Convergence Project:** It is formed as a supporting agency for the PRI-CBO Convergence project at the State level. This group includes representatives from the academic and civil society, experienced elected representatives, and women elected representatives with experience and interest in working with the local communities. SRG gives its inputs to customise the intervention plan made for the project based on their understanding and experience with the local community. This group would remain as a permanent resource within the State to scale up the project in other parts of the State.

With its formation, an orientation session is scheduled for the SRG to familiarise about NRLM, the work of the concerned state SRLM, the role of Kudumbashree as NRO in piloting the PRI-CBO Convergence project. These are essential for the SRG to help them develop a thorough understanding of their role as a significant body in the implementation of the project.



Orientation workshops for SRG conducted in Odisha in February 2014 and Maharashtra in April 2014

# Mentors

Mentors are persons with ample experience in the field of PRIs, CBOs, development of livelihoods, and micro-enterprises in Kerala. They have been selected by the NRO to provide handholding support to the two projects in the partner-States. Mentors are an integral human resource of the NRO, as they represent the organisation values of NRO and partake in activities with the communities in the partner-States.

The current pool of Mentors underwent a rigorous selection process in which their field-based knowledge and capabilities were tested. The skills considered for the selection of Mentors were their

expertise in the areas of PRI-CBO convergence, livelihoods, micro enterprises, and their willingness and ability to work in teams in the various partner-States. In addition to this, their passion to share their experiences in Kerala with the local communities in the other States was also assessed.

The Mentors also underwent capacitation programs to get a better understanding of the two projects that NRO offers, enhance their knowledge on PRIs and micro-enterprise development in Kerala, and Kudumbashree. It helped them chisel their skills as trainers to conduct capacitation programs in the partner-States.

For the convergence project, the Mentor resource persons have completed their immersion visits in five partner-States of NRO. This was executed to understand their context and situations. In Jharkhand, Maharashtra, and Odisha, the Mentors have also contributed substantially in the training of trainers for the scoping study and also in its conduct.

In the Enterprises project, the Mentors have supported the selected MECs in the CREAM and TEAM training programmes in Bihar and Jharkhand. In Bihar, they are presently contributing to the process of formulating business plans for MEC groups in the field as well.

## Mentor Selection and Training Workshops

The selection workshop for Mentor Resource Persons (for PRI-CBO Convergence project) and Mentor MECs (for Enterprises project) was held in the month of July 2013. Since then, regular capacitation workshops have been conducted to prepare the Mentors to work in the partner-States.

The methodology of all these capacitation workshops was participatory learning through discussions and group activities. A written exam was administered separately for the two domains to test their knowledge and comprehension skills. Apart from this, there were activities such as extempore to test their communication, knowledge and language; group games such as making human machine and bamboo huts with limited material, and crossing barriers blindfolded to test their leadership qualities, team effort, and organisation skills.



*Orientation and training of Mentors included variety of interactive activities*

Intensive Hindi training programme was organised and conducted in the month of March 2014 to polish the spoken Hindi skills of the Mentors. This was conducted to communicate and connect with communities in partner-States better.

A special Mentor group selection was undertaken in Kasaragod district, where Kannada is widely spoken, to select Mentors exclusively for the project in Karnataka.

# Partnership Development

## Exploratory Visits

Since every region in India has its own dynamics, replicating Kudumbashree's model of convergence and micro-enterprise development in partner-States is not advisable. It is essential to understand the conditions, communities, customs, and culture in each State and develop an appropriate strategy for promoting and enhancing project specific activities in the State.

Before signing the partnership agreement with respective States, NRO undertakes exploratory field visits to understand the structure and functioning of the PRI, status of SHGs, federated structures, and micro-enterprises. The visiting team also assesses the potential of the people from the community for becoming CRPs. This is relevant for NRO to get an overall understanding about the institutions that can provide support for strengthening the PRIs, CBOs, and micro-enterprise development process during the course of the projects. So far, exploratory visits have been undertaken to Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Odisha. Karnataka, and

## SRLM Staff Orientation

At the time of project initiation as well as during its course, it becomes critical to focus the energies of the SRLM staff at the district and block level towards the activities taken up. These workshops are also a platform for bringing various stakeholders together to enable them build a rounded understanding of the project and the potential it offers in strengthening activities in the area of their interest. Representatives of various potential client groups participate in the workshop.

SRLM staff orientation workshops have been conducted for block level representatives of Bihar and Jharkhand respectively in February 2014 to acquaint them with the ME development project in their area and the support required to enable the project meet its stated objectives.

## Project Plan and MoU

NRO has prepared a detailed activity map for both its projects to give its partner-States a snapshot of the project components it has to offer. It is on the basis of this document that both the parties negotiate on the activities to be taken up in the project pilots. The activity map for PRI-CBO Convergence has been approved by the NMMU, NRLM and has formed a part of the MoU. NRO has also prepared MoUs for both the projects, which are duly customised and subsequently signed by the concerned parties.

## Write-shop for Implementation of PRI-CBO Convergence

A write-shop was organised by NRO in November 2013 at Thiruvananthapuram to support the partner-States in preparing the project plan and budget for the PRI-CBO Convergence project.

NRO provided support to the participating States – Assam, Jharkhand, Karnataka Maharashtra and Orissa – through resource documents to help them plan a timeline and have a clearer understanding of the project. NRO personnel also facilitated discussions within the State-groups. The write-shop led to project approval by the NRLM Empowered Committee later that month.

“ I attended the PRI-CBO Convergence workshop at Thiruvananthapuram during November 2013 and got to know about the concept and strategy of the program. The capacity and knowledge of NRO staff is commendable and the hand-holding support from NRO is good. There is clarity among the NRO staff regarding strategy for the program. The presentation of the supporting documents for the project is excellent.”

- M.K. Ali, State Project Manager, Sanjeevini, Karnataka SRLM



MoU for PRI-CBO Convergence project with the SRLMs of Assam, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Odisha was signed on January 20, 2014. The formal handing-over ceremony of projects took place on January 21, 2014 in the presence of the Hon. Minister of Rural Development, Mr. Jairam Ramesh, the Hon. Chief Minister of Kerala, Mr. Oommen Chandy, and the Hon. Minister of Panchayati Raj of Kerala, Dr. M.K. Muneer.



Jairam Ramesh, Former Minister for Rural Development, Government of India handing over signed MoU to Dr. M K Muneer, Minister for Panchayats & Social Justice, Government of Kerala during the International Conference on Deepening Democracy at Thiruvananthapuram in January 2014



MoU between Kudumbashree and State Rural Livelihood Missions were signed by Executive Director Kudumbashree and representatives of partner-SRLM in the presence of Mission Director, NRLM at Thiruvananthapuram in January 2014

“We are very delighted to state that the association between ASRLMS and Kudumbashree has been very meaningful. The technical support and guidance provided by Kudumbashree NRO has been very effective in rolling out the PRI-CBO Convergence project in Assam. ASRLMS has been very fortunate in drawing and benefitting from the rich experience of Kudumbashree, both at policy and grassroots level. The untiring effort of Kudumbashree NRO in assisting ASRLMS with regards to the Convergence project has been very assuring. The calibre of the NRO team has been exceptional and will have a major impact in guiding ASRLMS work in the years ahead. The innovative ideas and work approach put forward by Kudumbashree has been very successful in energizing ASRLMS about the road to be covered in the coming years for carrying the project to the next level. This association is a source of pride and inspiration for ASRLMS. I on behalf of ASRLMS, would like to thank Kudumbashree NRO for inspiring the ASRLMS PRI-CBO Convergence team to carry out the project in right direction and as per the plan.”

- Binay Kumar Deka,  
State Project Manager(Livelihoods), Assam State Rural Livelihoods Mission Society (ASRLMS)

# Exposure and Learning Visits

Exposure visits aim at enhancing people's knowledge through exposure to best practices. It is to create a positive environment of learning from unique models. While States come to visit Kudumbashree carrying their own experiences, they receive a relative understanding of the potential activities for PRI-CBO

convergence and micro-enterprise development in their respective States.

NRO organised 15 exposure visits in the past year. Visits were customised according to the area of interest and profile of the participating groups.

| Period            | Partner State / Team  | Objective  | District(s) Visited                      |
|-------------------|---|--|--|
| July-13 (2 days)  | Jharkhand State Livelihoods Promotion Society (JSLPS) (4 persons)               | Exposure visit (Enterprises)                       | Kozhikode                                |
| Aug-13 (3 days)   | The Livelihood School, Meghalaya (20 persons)                                   | Exposure visit (Enterprises)                       | Pathanamthitta                           |
| Aug-13 (2 days)   | National Academy of RUDSETI, Karnataka (3 persons)                              | Exposure visit (Enterprises)                       | Kasaragod                                |
| Aug-13 (10 days)  | CREAM MEC Team, Bihar (39 persons)  | Exposure visit (Enterprises)                       | Ernakulam, Kollam, Thrissur, and Wayanad |
| Sept -13 (5 days) | Chhattisgarh Civil Service Cadre (5 persons)                                    | Staff immersion                                    | Thiruvananthapuram                       |
| Sept -14 (5 days) | Elected Representatives, Jharkhand (20 persons)                                 | Exposure visit (Convergence)                       | Ernakulam and Kottayam                   |
| Oct-13 (5 days)   | Professional Assistance for Development Action (PRADAN), Jharkhand (30 persons) | Panchayat Apprenticeship Program                   | Thrissur                                 |
| Oct-13 (4 days)   | Karnataka SRLM (11 persons)   | Exposure visit (Convergence)                       | Kasaragod and Kottayam                   |
| Nov-13 (3 days)   | Tamil Nadu NRO (5 persons)  | Exposure visit (Kudumbashree NRO)                  | Thiruvananthapuram                       |
| Jan-14 (5 days)   | PRADAN, Jharkhand (18 persons)  | Exposure visit (Convergence-Focus on ST and NREGA) | Kollam and Wayanad                       |
| Jan -14 (3 days)  | COO, NRLM (1 person)  | Exposure visit (Kudumbashree and NRO)              | Pathanamthitta and Thiruvananthapuram    |
| Jan-14 (5 days)   | Gujarat Livelihoods Promotion Company (8 persons)                               | Staff immersion                                    | Idukki                                   |
| Jan-14 (5 days)   | Meghalaya Civil Service Cadre (8 persons)                                       | Exposure visit (Enterprises)                       | Ernakulam                                |
| Feb-14 (10 days)  | CREAM MEC Team, Jharkhand (39 persons)  | Exposure visit (Enterprises)                       | Ernakulam, Kasaragod, and Kollam         |
| Feb-14 (6 days)   | PRI-CBO Convergence Team, Odisha (69 persons)                                   | Exposure visit (Convergence)                       | Alappuzha, Ernakulam, and Idukki         |
| Apr-14 (2 days)   | Karnataka SRLM (5 persons)  | Exposure Visit (Convergence)                       | Thiruvananthapuram                       |



*Delegations from Meghalaya and Tamil Nadu interacting with Kudumbashree units during their exposure visits*

## Workshop for Understanding Decentralisation in Kerala

A workshop was organised by Kudumbashree NRO in January 2014 to understand decentralisation in Kerala by tracing the history of the process of decentralisation and devolution of powers to PRI.

The participants in the workshop were a group of professionals from a grassroots organisation called PRADAN, who had come from different districts of Jharkhand in which the PRI-CBO Convergence project is being implemented.

The methodology adopted for the workshop was a mix of conceptual presentations and discussions with experts who have been a part of the movement for advocating decentralisation in Kerala since the very beginning. Field visits were also organised to some gram panchayats in Thiruvananthapuram and Kollam districts to develop a deeper understanding of the practices adopted in the field and to corroborate what was talked about in the classroom sessions.

“ Our experience with Kudumbashree NRO has been one of deeply enriching our development perspective. PRADAN has been exploring evidences around improving local governance engaging with women collectives and panchayats. In this regard, our exposures, meetings and initiatives through PRI-CBO pilot project under NRLM have been very educative journey till now. The institutional knowledge of Kudumbashree with lived experience of democratic decentralization through significant role of women in Kerala context is certainly a national asset!”

- Binju Abraham, PRADAN



NRO has also been flexible in its design of exposure visits and ventured to develop a highly successful special visit in the form of a Panchayat Apprenticeship Program (PAP). PAP is a five day program designed by Kudumbashree NRO for officials and representatives from other states who are specifically interested in knowing and learning about the Panchayati Raj system, its structure and functioning in Kerala. Prime target is the elected representatives of gram panchayats in other States.

In October 2013, a team from PRADAN, Jharkhand visited Kerala and attended the PAP in two panchayats, Varavoor and Adat in Thrissur district of Kerala. The exposure visit team was divided into two and placed in a particular panchayat for the entire time period. They were oriented on general functions of the panchayat, the functions and duties of elected representatives, panchayat committee, standing committees and steering committees, and functioning of gram sabhas. They were also taken on institutional visits - to anganwadis, schools, PHCs, agricultural office, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) work sites etc. The program also included sessions on plan formulation of the panchayat that stressed on initiatives of the gram panchayat, interaction with Kudumbashree members, special interaction with women elected representatives etc. On the last day, there was a de-briefing session where the PRADAN team interacted with the NRO team and shared their experiences and learning. This also included mapping of the institutions and resources identified in the gram panchayats in Kerala and a comparison with the existing situations in their state. This helped in identifying areas which required attention on their return to their State. The session concluded with reflection from each of the participants.



*PRADAN team from Jharkhand during their Panchayat Apprenticeship Program in Thrissur in October 2013*

## Other Events

### National Workshop on NRLM and MGNREGS: Inter-linkages in PRI-CBO Convergence for Enhanced Access of the Rural Poor to Livelihoods and Entitlements

In August 2013, JSLPS with the intellectual support of Kudumbashree NRO organised a national-level workshop on convergence between MGNREGS and NRLM at Ranchi, Jharkhand. The aim of the workshop was to explore opportunities of convergence of the above two programmes through PRIs and the CBOs of the poor. The deliberations looked into the mutually beneficial relationship MGNREGS has had with the institutions of the poor in some the States and how panchayats can play an effective role in scaling up both the programmes in the States

Functionaries from the MGNREGS, SRLM, and SIRD from the States, who had come forward to take up pilot interventions on PRI-CBO Convergence under NRLM participated in the workshop. In addition, experts from the civil society and field practitioners who had been working on the MGNREGS and rural livelihoods were a part of the same. In the two days, the workshop had presentations, panel discussions, and interactive engagements exploring the theme areas.

*Session on 'Panchayats Working Together with Community Institutions of Poor Women' at the ICODD was attended by Mission Director, NRLM and former-COO, NRLM*

### National Workshop on Participatory Identification of Poor

In October 2013, the Tamil Nadu State Rural Livelihoods Mission (TNSRLM), also known as, Pudhu Vazhvu Project, organised a national workshop with support from NRLM on Participatory Identification of the Poor (PIP). Pudhu Vazhvu Project has been identified as an NRO to handhold States for PIP under NRLM. A five-member team from NRO had participated in the PIP workshop and the group shared the experience gained in the same for the benefit of the NRO team

### International Conference on Deepening Democracy (ICODD)

The Local Self Government Department of the Government of Kerala had organised a Global Conference on Deepening Democracy through Local Governance in Thiruvananthapuram during January 19-21, 2014. A significant session on 'Panchayats Working Together with Community Institutions of Poor Women' was facilitated entirely by Kudumbashree NRO by virtue of its years of experience of working on the same. This session highlighted the key aspects of convergence platforms and processes that are being built as part of the NRLM. It brought together conceptual, policy-level, academic and field-level experiences to a common platform to add value to the deliberations in the conference. A presentation was made by the Program Manager-Convergence of the NRO on the aforesaid thematic area.





# YP Programme and Internship

## YP Induction

Under the Young Professional (YP) Programme of NRLM, Kudumbashree recruited 18 post-graduates from reputed academic institutes in 2013. These YPs belong to the field of rural management, social work, development practices, and governance. The YP Programme in Kudumbashree is designed to provide an opportunity to the young academicians and practitioners to learn from the experiences of a very successful poverty eradication programme and apply their professional knowledge and field experience to support Kudumbashree and other State Missions.

The eight-month induction training was aimed at enabling the first batch of YPs to become capable of providing professional services to Kudumbashree and NRO. Since most of them came from states other than Kerala it was important to acquaint them with the context as it exists here and understand Kudumbashree and its interventions in the field. The induction program included field immersion, understanding of Kudumbashree programs, visit to partner-States and an active engagement with NRO domains.

## Interns

- Three interns from Institute of Rural Management, Anand (IRMA) successfully completed their internship project in August 2013. Two interns worked on developing a preliminary framework for district level enterprise viability framework as part of the Enterprises project; and one intern worked on assessing the capacity building needs of Mentors from Kudumbashree
- One intern from Rutgers University, USA completed a three-month internship in November 2013. She had worked with the Gender team at the Kudumbashree State Mission
- Four interns from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) completed one-month internship in November 2013. They worked along with the NRO YPs on tasks including developing training modules

## NRO Retreat

The induction training of the first batch of the YP Programme ended in January 2014, with the NRO retreat in Munnar. The retreat reviewed the progress of the YP Programme and developed a revised Induction Programme plan for forthcoming batches. The future architecture of the NRO Secretariat was also discussed and drawn up at the retreat. Activities in the retreat included team building games, exercises and psycho-analysis of the team so that they would be able to understand themselves and other team-members better. The NRO team also attempted and succeeded in scaling the Chokramudi peak, among the tallest peaks in South India. Thoughts Academy, an external HR agency, facilitated the retreat.



*Young Professionals of the first batch engaged in a team building activity during the NRO Retreat in Munnar in January 2014*

# Review and Planning

A workshop for the review and planning for the upcoming work in the different partner-States was organised during April 2-4, 2014. The objective of the workshop was to bring together the Program Manager, Program Co-ordinators of Convergence and Enterprises projects, YPs, Mentor Resource Persons, and the Mentor MECs at a single platform to discuss and plan the future course of action.

Ms. Sarada Muraleedharan, former COO, NRLM had come to talk about the concept of convergence between the Panchayats and CBOs and the approach that the NRO should take to share the experiences in the partner-States. CDS Chairpersons from select panchayats across Kerala had also participated to share their experiences.

The workshop included elaborate presentations and discussion on NRO's work in the first year, its various activities, and the current status of work in the partner-States. The CDS Chairpersons from various districts were invited to share

their Kudumbashree experiences during the workshop. State-wise discussions were organised to understand the challenges encountered by the Mentors in the partner-States. These challenges were then classified according to NRO's core themes – CBO Structure, Gram Sabha, Livelihoods, Social Development, and Schemes. The solutions to these problems were discussed with CDS Chairpersons who had the experience of dealing with similar scenarios in their respective CDS'.

A learning-chart activity was conducted to enable the Mentors self-analyse their present performance and areas for improvement. Based on their evaluations and inputs from the NRO team, field immersions were planned for the Mentors to various panchayats across Kerala. Mentors were split into groups of five to six and each group was sent to the field for a period of five days towards the end of April 2014.

# Plan and Achievement 2013-14

The NRLM Empowered Committee, in its meeting on December 6, 2012, approved the three-year plan for the NRO Secretariat in Kudumbashree with adequate human resources to plan and execute various activities. The first partnership, for the MEC Project in Bihar, began in January 2013. The NRO Secretariat in Kudumbashree formally began its operations on May 1, 2013.

The actual achievements by KS-NRO against the plans that it had made for 2013-14 was affected by delays in starting of pilot projects. The work done during the period has helped lay strong foundation for enhancing the pace of work and improving its quality.

## Target and Achievements as of March 31, 2014

| Particulars                                | Target | Achievement |
|--|--------|-------------|
| Number of PRI-CBO Convergence Pilot Blocks | 16     | 19          |
| Mentor Resource Persons Deployed           | 120    | 35          |
| MEC Project Districts                      | 12     | 5           |
| Number of MEC Trainings Started            | 1200   | 446         |
| Mentor MEC Deployed                        | 60     | 21          |

## Financial Progress of the NRO Secretariat

| Parameter                        | Amount (Rs. Lakh) |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Total Allocation Approved        | 546.30            |
| Amount Released                  | 301.35            |
| Expenditure as of March 31, 2014 | 182.31            |
| Project Advances                 | 41.02             |
| Total Fund Utilized              | 223.34            |
| Per cent Fund Utilisation        | 74.11%            |

## Plan for 2014-15

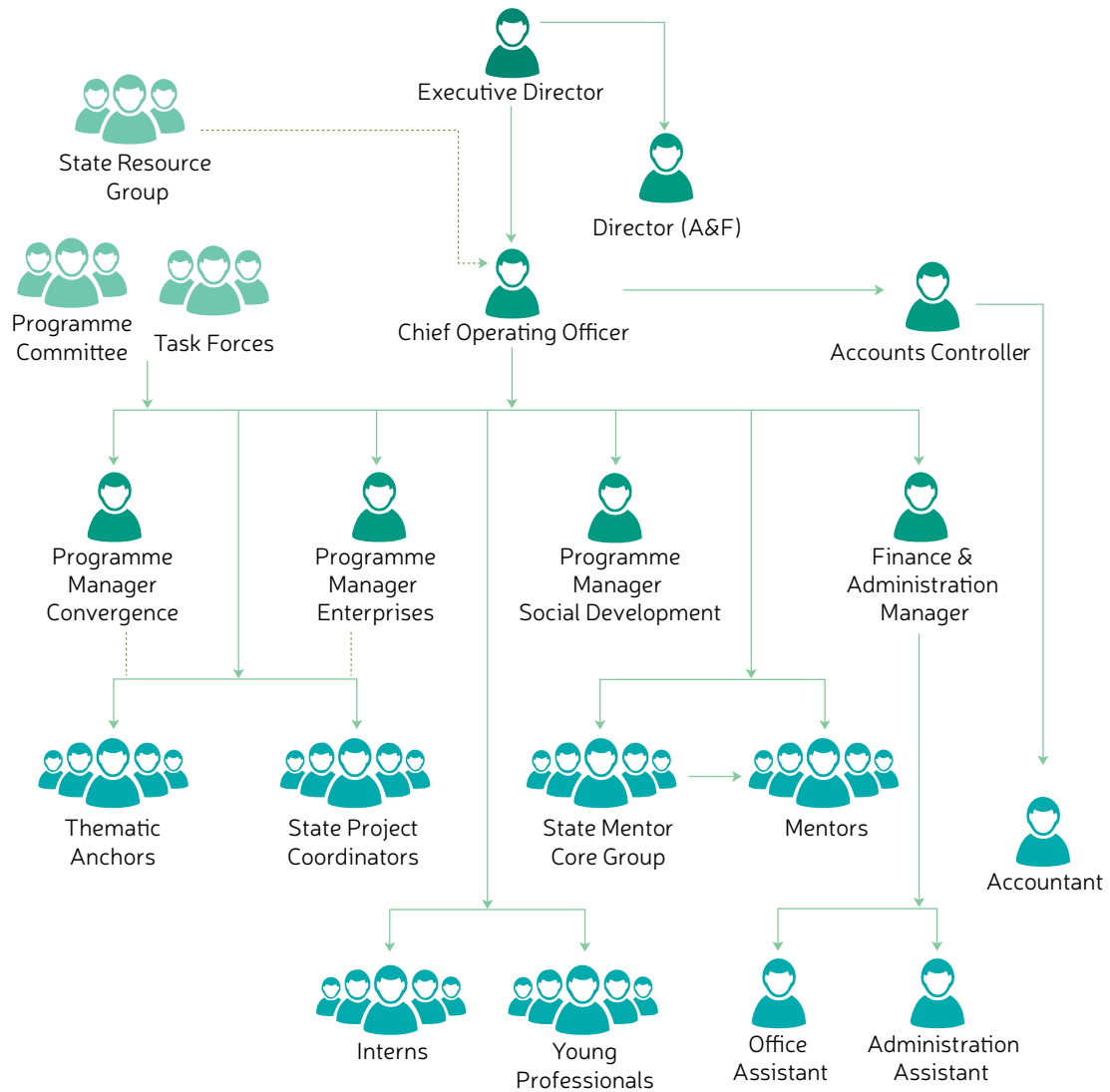
The annual plan for the year 2014-15 of the NRO was approved by the Empowered Committee of NRLM on February 17, 2014. The NRO envisages the following targets:

| Particulars  | Targets |
|--|---------|
| Number of PRI-CBO Convergence Pilot Blocks                         | 25      |
| Mentor Resource Persons Deployed                                   | 70      |
| Number of MEC Pilot Districts                                      | 12      |
| Number of MEC Trained and Positioned                               | 700     |
| Mentor MEC Deployed  | 40      |
| ME Benchmarking Completed (Districts)                              | 12      |
| ME Performance Tracking System Developed                           | 1       |
| Pusthaka Yatra Testimonials Anthology Published                    | 3       |
| Senior Kudumbashree Personnel for Management Development Programme | 40      |
| State Resource Group for Supporting Convergence Projects set-up    | 1       |
| Learning Workshops for Convergence Project                         | 1       |
| District Level Resource Groups for NRO set-up                      | 14      |
| Gram Panchayat Level Resource Groups for NRO set-up                | 60      |
| Panchayati Raj Apprenticeship Programme Conducted                  | 5       |
| Finance and Administration Manager in NRO Secretariat Positioned   | 1       |

The approved budget for the NRO for the year

| Particulars   | Amount (Rs. Lakh) |
|---|-------------------|
| Establishing M&E and Learning Systems, Monitoring & Reporting | 135.00            |
| YP Programme  | 132.80            |
| Programme Management  | 272.68            |
| Capacity Building of the NRO                                  | 152.95            |
| Research Studies and Resource Materials                       | 50.00             |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>743.43</b>     |

# Structure of the Secretariat



## List of staff, as on 30 April 2014

| S.No | Name                | Designation (as on 30 April 2014)                                   |
|------|---------------------|---|
| 1    | Abhishek Sharma     | Thematic Anchor – Convergence – Community Organizations             |
| 2    | Aditi Dey Sarkar    | Thematic Anchor – Convergence – Schemes                             |
| 3    | Adsa Fatima         | Thematic Anchor – Convergence – Gram Sabha                          |
| 4    | Amjad Khan          | State Project Coordinator – Odisha                                  |
| 5    | Arshia Gupta        | Thematic Anchor – Enterprises – Enterprise Performance              |
| 6    | Khudiram Mahto      | State Project Coordinator – Jharkhand                               |
| 7    | Khushboo Sinha      | Thematic Anchor – Convergence – Livelihoods                         |
| 8    | Komal Makkad        | Thematic Anchor – Enterprises – Resources, Monitoring, and Learning |
| 9    | Liby Johnson        | Chief Operating Officer   |
| 10   | Manjita Devi        | State Project Coordinator – Assam                                   |
| 11   | Manju Priya K       | Thematic Anchor – Exposure Visits and Resource Materials            |
| 12   | Manu Sankar S       | Programme Manager, Convergence                                      |
| 13   | Meekha Hannah Paul  | Thematic Anchor – Convergence – Resources, Monitoring, and Learning |
| 14   | Prasanth M P        | Programme Manager, Enterprises                                      |
| 15   | Shraddha Kulkarni   | State Project Coordinator – Maharashtra                             |
| 16   | Shriti Munshi       | Thematic Anchor – Enterprises – Capacity Building                   |
| 17   | Shubha Bhattacharya | Thematic Anchor – Convergence – Capacity Building                   |
| 18   | Sushma K S          | State Project Coordinator – Karnataka                               |





Kudumbashree NRO team April 2014

Kudumbashree  
National Resource Organisation

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