

**THE DYNAMICS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT  
THROUGH KUDUMBASREE**

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**Abstract**

Women empowerment is utmost important in achieving the goal of sustainable development. Equal treatment irrespective of men and women and equal opportunity to all without any gender difference are to be considered as signs of a developed nation. SHGs through kudumbasree play a revolutionary role in empowering women, particularly the rural women. This paper examines the role of kudumbasree in empowering women and bringing sustainable development.

**Key Words** Empowerment, 2. Kudumbasree, 3. Sustainable practices, 4. Social Capital

**Introduction**

The goal of development is empowerment of the people in the society. Women empowerment is vital for the sustainable development of our society because it gives voice to the voiceless and equal opportunity to all citizens of the state. The most important goal of development along with income growth is to improve the quality of lives of all sections of the society especially the marginalized group like women. During the late 1980's the concept of sustainable development got momentum in the sphere of development economics. Provision of gender equality is very crucial for achieving sustainable economic growth and social development. Sustainable development is a pattern of resource use that aims to meet human needs while preserving the environment. The Brundtland commission, defined "Sustainable development as development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." Sustainable development is the central theme of today's development activities. An analysis of gender related development indicators of Kerala reveals that the state's performance outstands other states in India. The female literacy rate (91.98 per cent), Infant Mortality Rate (13) and sex ratio (1084 females per thousand males) showed a better condition of women in the state, but low work participation rate, poor access to resources, scanty political activity, etc showed poor status of women in Kerala. To mitigate the marginalization of women in the development process, Kerala has started sustainable development initiatives through its decentralized planning. In 1992 Kerala added the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> amendment to their constitution to decentralize government by creating a third, local form of government called Panchayats. Creating local governments throughout the state of Kerala has made development processes more sustainable by allowing local residents to participate in those processes. The sustainable development programme has been practicing widely by the local self governments of various districts of Kerala. The sustainable development initiative started at Kodakara block in Thrissur district in Kerala is "susthira vikasana paddhathi". "Susthira Vikasana Paddhathi" aims at the development of all sectors and also the welfare of the local community associated with the kudumbasree units functioning successfully in the panchayath. Sustainable development initiatives of Kodakara gave importance to the development of connections within and between social networks. Social capital is a necessary pre-condition for successful development. Social capital as shared norms or values promote social co-operation. A strong social capital is necessary for strong democracy and strong and rapid economic growth. Sustainable development programme helps to increase the social connection between different sections of the society. Connection within and between Kudumbashree helps women to attain economic security and employment security. Influence of social capital is seen in the activities of kudumbasree and it has succeeded in providing better future for women and in building kudumbasree a well-knit enterprising unit.

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