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**NEDUMPANA APPAREL PARK -
EMPOWERMENT OF RURAL WOMEN -
A CASE STUDY FROM KOLLAM
DISTRICT**

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Abstract

Nedumpana grama panchayat in Kollam district is the best performing panchayat in the district during 2011-12. Eventhough 75 per cent of the total area of the panchayat is suitable for agriculture; the cultivable area is declining day by day. In order to enhance the employment opportunities and living standards of the rural population, the panchayat authorities thinking about setting up of a rural business hub – a concept put forward by Ministry of Panchayat Raj, Government of India, involve the partnership of public-private and panchayat with a view to help the rural mass of India to attain self-reliant livelihood. The traditional handloom sector failed in the area of technological up gradation, value added product development, diversification and effective marketing management. On the backdrop of this pathetic condition Nedumpana Apparel Park paved the way for the upgradation of handloom industry and other textile products as per the demand of the modern market by which the income of the traditional weavers increased and helped to sustain the traditional industry substantially besides providing employment opportunities for rural unemployed, especially for unemployed women among BPL and SC families. The objectives of the present study are, to examine the impact of the programme on the socio-economic condition of the beneficiaries of the scheme (before and after), to find out how far this programme helps in the reduction of unemployment among the rural women especially in Nedumpana panchayat and to examine how far the apparel unit has succeeded in empowering rural women especially the marginalised groups.

The major findings of the study are

- Women empowerment through apparel park enhance employment, especially in rural women, it improves the standard of living of the people in Nedumpana panchayat (directly and indirectly).
- It helps in the creation of entrepreneurial qualities among rural women.
- It paved the way for the production of diversified products, and self-sufficiently among women.
- It increases the income of the rural women.
- Marketing facilities increased.

- It helps in the upgradation of handloom industry in Nedumpana panchayat.
- Empowerment of women through apparel park helps to reduce gender inequality, it helps to reduce the poverty among rural poor in Nedumpana panchayat.
- The interference of Kudumbashree units helps in the production of high quality products.

The important suggestions are

- The management has to find out alternative source of raw materials in order to ensure uninterrupted supply.
- The Kudumbashree units have to provide training facilities to each and every worker in the unit for making better quality products.
- The panchayat authorities has to provide women friendly environment in the unit.
- The government should provide financial support for the widening of the unit.
- The management has to find out alternative marketing sources to sell their products.

Disclaimer

This working paper has been prepared by Smt. Manju P, Research Assistant, District Planning Office, Kollam. The facts and figures in the report are based on quick field survey done by the author and do not reflect the views or policies of Kerala State Planning Board. The purpose of this document is to provide a comprehensive overview of the scheme/projects implemented by the Local Self Government during XI Five Year Plan.

NEDUMPANA APPAREL PARK – EMPOWERMENT OF RURAL WOMEN – A CASE STUDY

Introduction

Nedumpana grama panchayat in Kollam district is the best performing panchayat in the district during 2011-12. Nedumapana grama panchayat comes under Mukhathala block panchayat with a total area of 28.06 square kilometres. The panchayat has a total population of 47488. Out of this, male population is 23224 and female population is 24264. Total scheduled caste population in the grama panchayat is 5770. Nedumpana grama panchayat has 23 wards.

After the commencement of people's campaign for decentralisation of power in Kerala since 1996, Nedumpana grama panchayat has taken earnest effort to translate the dream of self-sufficient villages of Mahatma Gandhi into reality. During the initial stages of decentralisation itself, Nedumpana grama panchayat identified its strength and weakness and focused on two important sections to achieve social security and inclusive growth - Agriculture and allied sectors and industrial sector.

Statement of the Problem

Even though 75 per cent of the total area of the panchayat is suitable for agriculture, the cultivable area is declining day by day. The spread of rubber cultivation has adversely affected the cultivation of paddy, coconut and others. In order to enhance the employment opportunities and living standards of the rural population, the panchayat authorities thinking about setting up of a rural business hub – a concept put forward by Ministry of Panchayat Raj, Government of India, involve the partnership of public-private and panchayat with a view to help the rural mass of India to attain self-reliant livelihood. The rural resources both human and natural will be judiciously managed to enhance the employment opportunity and living standards of the rural population.

The traditional handloom sector failed in the area of technological upgradation, value added product development, diversification and effective marketing management. On the backdrop of this pathetic condition Nedumpana Apparel Park paved the way for the upgradation of handloom industry and other textile

products as per the demand of the modern market by which the income of the traditional weavers increased and helped to sustain the traditional industry substantially besides providing employment opportunities for rural employed, especially for unemployed women among BPL and SC families.

Objectives

1. To examine the impact of the programme on the socio-economic condition of the beneficiaries of the scheme (before and after)
2. To find out how far this programme helps in the reduction of unemployment among the rural women especially in Nedumpana panchayat.
3. To examine how far the apparel unit has succeeded in empowering rural women especially the marginalised groups.

Methodology

Sample Design

The study is exploratory in nature and the study was done based on a structured questionnaire

Data Source and Sample Size

With regard to the objectives stated a sample size of 35 was chosen from the employees of the apparel unit in Nedumpana grama panchayat.

Methods of Data Collection

Field visit was conducted to collect the data based on the questionnaire and focus group discussion was also done.

Statistical Methods

The collected data was recorded, tabulated and edited accurately and percentage analysis was done in all cases to bring out clear indicators.

Limitations

The study is exclusively based on primary data. Therefore, all the inherent limitations of primary data constitute its limitations.

Apparel Park - An Overview

Cotton Industry in India is the largest organised and broad based industry which accounts for about 40 per cent of GDP, 14 per cent of manufacturing value added and 13.5 per cent to total export earnings. It provides employment to millions of skilled and semi skilled workers.

The textile industry's predominant presence in the Indian economy is manifest in its significant contribution to the industrial production, employment generation, and foreign exchange earnings. The textile industry is a key area where India has an opportunity for success on a global scale, given the low cost of labour. Conversely, textile is labour intensive industry which has the potential to generate jobs for a large number of people. Currently, it adds about 14 per cent to the industrial production and about 4 per cent to the GDP and 16 - 63 per cent to the country's export earnings. The textile industry is the second largest provider of employment after agriculture. It provides employment to about 35 million persons.

Thus the growth and all round development of this industry has a direct bearing on the improvement of the economy of the nation.

Two flagship schemes of the Ministry of Textiles, namely, the Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme (TUFS), launched in 1999, and the scheme for Integrated Textile Parks (SITP), launched in 2005, had been approved for continuation in the Eleventh Five Year Plan.

In order to encourage garment exports a centrally sponsored scheme, entitled 'Apparel Parks for Exports Scheme' has been launched for setting up of apparel manufacturing units of international standards at potential growth centres. Under this scheme, nine Apparel Parks are envisaged at Bangalore (Karnataka), Ludhiana (Punjab), Kanchipuram (Tamilnadu), Surat (Gujarat),

Thiruvananthapuram (Kerala), Tirupur (Tamil Nadu), Tronica City in Kanpur (U.P) & Vishakhapatanam (Andhra Pradesh).

The clothing sector is an export intensive sub-sector and contributes about 40 - 50 per cent to total textiles exports. It is a low investment and highly labour intensive industry. The growth of the garment industry had been hamstrung by the reservation of garment manufacture for the small scale industry.

The first Apparel Park in India has been established in Tirupur (Village Attivarayampyallam) in Tamil Nadu for boosting the exports of readymade garments. This village has been renamed as New Tirupur.

The National Textile Policy was announced on 2nd November, 2000. The basic objective of the policy is to take care of the challenges and opportunities presented by the changing global environment to the domestic textile industry. The strategic thrust areas identified by the policy are technology upgradation, product diversification, increase in exports, innovative marketing strategies, financing arrangements, maximising employment opportunities and integrated human development.

For giving a boost to the sector by improving infrastructure, the government proposes to develop 10 additional textile parks by 2012 under the scheme for Integrated Textile Parks. Thirty textile parks have already been sanctioned.

Even though 75 per cent of the total area of the panchayat is suitable for agriculture, the cultivable area is declining day by day. The spread of rubber cultivation has adversely affected the cultivation of paddy, coconut and others. So, in order to enhance the employment opportunities and living standards of the rural population, the panchayat authorities thinking about the setting up of a rural business hub - a concept put forward by Ministry of Panchayat Raj, Government of India, involve the partnership of public-private and panchayat with a view to help the rural mass of India to attain self-reliant livelihood. The rural resources both human and natural will be judiciously managed to enhance the employment opportunity and living standards of the rural population.

The traditional handloom sector failed in the area of technological upgradation, value added product development, diversification and effective marketing management. On the backdrop of this pathetic condition Nedumpana Apparel Park paved the way for the up gradation of handloom industry and other textile products as per the demand of the modern market by which the income of the traditional weavers increased and helped to sustain the traditional industry substantially besides providing employment opportunities for rural unemployed, especially for unemployed women among BPL and SC families.

About the Project

The project involved the setting up of a cluster centre for apparel manufacturing mainly readymade garments, kids wears, uniforms, textile carpets etc. The cluster centre has a facility to engage a minimum of 50 skilled entrepreneurs with modern automatic electric sewing, cutting, packing machineries and technologies. The infrastructure was provided by Nedumpana grama panchayat in the 1st phase. Machineries, tools and other movable assets were installed with the help of Kudumbashree Mission. Training and capacity building components were executed by Kudumbashree and Syndicate Institute of Rural Development (SIRD), Kottiyam, Kollam (Establishment of Syndicate Bank). Besides this 50 employees got intensive finishing training from Kinfra Apparel Park, Kazhakkootam.

Project Components

- Identification and selection of beneficiaries

The Nedumpana grama panchayat had identified and selected 50 beneficiaries within the age group of 20-40 suited for the project with tailoring skill and artistic talents, among BPL and scheduled caste families.

- Training and Capacity Building

Training for both entrepreneurship development and skill development were arranged by Kudumbashree mission in association with SIRD,

Kottiyam and the Sewing Machine Operators. They have also undergone intensive finishing training from:

1. Apparel Training and Design Centre, KINFRA Thiruvananthapuram
 2. Isha Learning Systems Pvt Ltd, Bangalore
- Establishment of production centre

Basic Infrastructure

The grama panchayat had provided land and building free of cost

Land: 600 m²

Office room and two storied show room and godown building @ 25 m² each

Permanent workshed (250 m²), generator, sanitation facilities and other tools and furniture

- Machineries and Fittings

Electrical fittings, machineries, tools and furniture had been made available by Kudumbashree where 10 per cent through bank finance and 90 per cent by grant from Kudumbashree mission. The sources of fund are given in Table 2.

Table 2
Source of Fund

(₹ In lakh)

Sl No	Item	Local Self Government			Kudumbashree Mission	Bank loan	Total
		G.P portion	B.P portion	D. P portion			
1	Land & Building	3.10	7.00	7.00			17.10
2	Machineries	21.50	1.00		17.00		39.50
3	Training, R&D, Marketing & Consultancy	2.00			2.50		4.50
4	Tools, Furniture and Installation	14.00			3.00		17.00
5	Working Capital		0.34		17.50	12.50	30.34
Total		40.60	8.34	7.00	40.00	12.50	108.44

Source: Nedumpana grama panchayat

- Raw materials/Working capital

Raw materials are supplied by private partners according to their needs for finished goods and whenever necessary the unit will procure directly from concerned factories/agencies and the working capital is arranged through bank finance.

- Administration

Cluster centre is managed by a committee(Managing Committee) chaired by the Panchayat President, comprising of the charge officer, Chair Person of CDS, two representative of the employees and one nominee of the Panchayat Committee. They will manage the unit under the general direction of the District Level

Governing Body chaired by the President, District Panchayat and co-chaired by District Collector. District Mission Co-Ordinator, Kudumbashree will be the Convener. President of the Nedumpana panchayat, General Manager DIC, President of Ithikkara block panchayat and BDO are the other members.

- **Marketing**

Marketing is mainly done by private partners and small industrial associations of Kerala. Their branded products will be manufactured as per their standards and parameters. Raw material will be supplied by the agencies themselves.

Products in the brand name NAP STAR is marketed through the marketing section of NAP itself and Kudumbashree state marketing consortium at Calicut. Five beneficiaries were selected for doing the marketing work and they will be given 1 per cent of the cost of sale as incentive. The success story of Nedumpana Apparel Park should be highlighted on the backdrop of retarded growth in productive sector, elsewhere in Kerala.

Analysis and Interpretation

The data has been collected according to the objectives of the study. The results are the following.

Apparel Park- Socio Economic Profile

Here the investigator tried to make an analysis of the socio economic profile of the beneficiaries of the apparel park.

2.1. Age-wise Classification

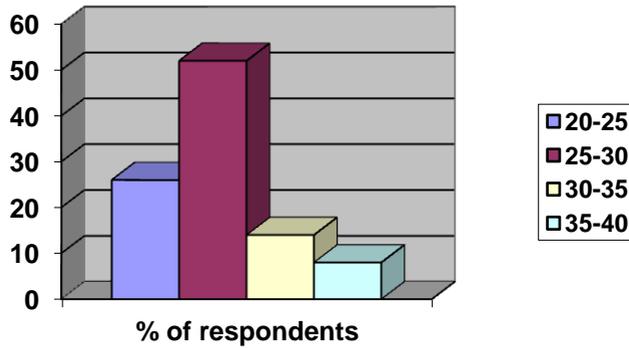
First the investigator tried to find out the age distribution of the beneficiaries. The survey conducted among the sample population of 35 respondents shows that most of the beneficiaries are in the age group of 25 to 30 which constitute 52 per cent of the sample. Only 8 per cent are in the age group 35 to 40. Details are given in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1
Age-wise Classification

Age wise classification	No. of respondents	% of respondents
20-25	9	26
25-30	18	52
30-35	5	14
35-40	3	8
Total	35	100

Source: Sample survey

Figure 2.1
Age-wise Classification



Source: Sample survey

2.2. Category-wise Classification: Social Category of the Beneficiaries

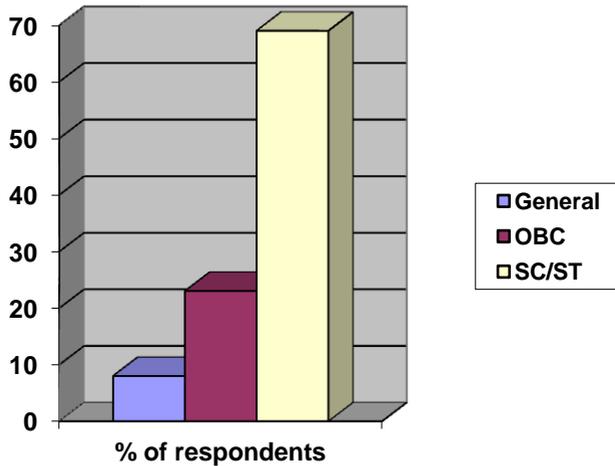
The sociological profile of the beneficiaries was also investigated. The following table gives an analysis of the respondents on the basis of category.

Table.2.2
Category-wise Classification: Social Category of the
Beneficiaries

Category	No. of respondents	% of respondents
General	3	8
OBC	8	23
SC/ST	24	69
Total	35	100

Source: Sample survey

Figure.2.2 Category-wise Classification: Social Category of the
Beneficiaries



Source: Sample survey

From the analysis it is understood that most of the beneficiaries belongs to the SC/ST category, that is, 72 per cent, OBC constitute 24 per cent and only 9 per cent of the respondents comes under general category.

2.3. Educational Qualification

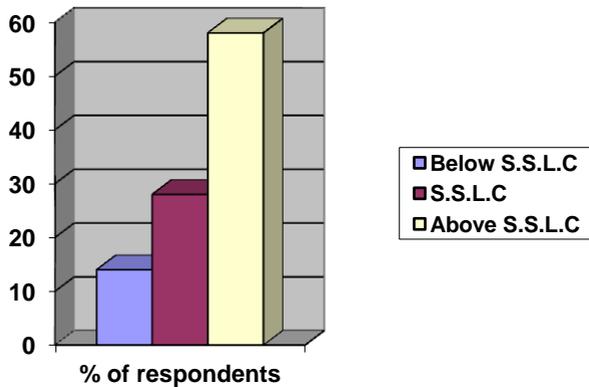
The respondents are classified with respect to their qualification. Details are given in Table 2.3.

Table.2.3
Educational Qualification

Category	No. of respondents	Respondents (%)
Below S.S.L.C	5	14
S.S.L.C	10	28
Above S.S.L.C	20	58
Total	35	100

Source: Sample survey

Figure.2.3 Educational Qualification



Source: Sample survey

2.4. Kudumbashree Mission and Training

The sample survey conducted among a population of 35 respondents reveals that 25 respondents which constitutes 71 per cent of the total sample reveals that they got training from Kudumbashree Mission after they got employment in the apparel

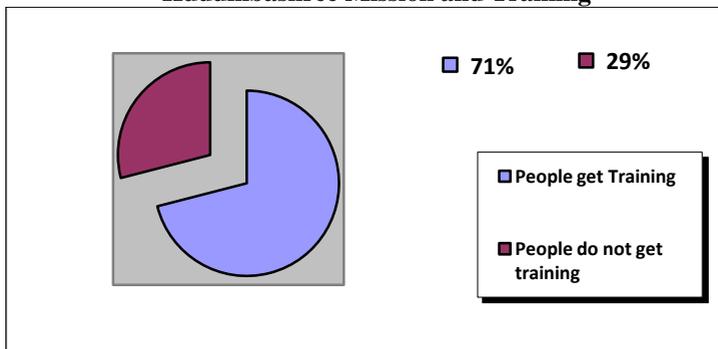
park and only 10 respondents which constitute 29 per cent of the total sample reveals that they will not get any training from the Kudumbashree Mission. Figure 2.4 is a diagrammatic representation of Kudumbashree Mission providing training to the members of the Apparel Park.

Table.2.4
Kudumbashree Mission and Training

No. of people received training	25	71%
No. of people not received training	10	29%
Total	35	100

Source: Sample survey

Figure.2.4
Kudumbashree Mission and Training



Source: Sample survey

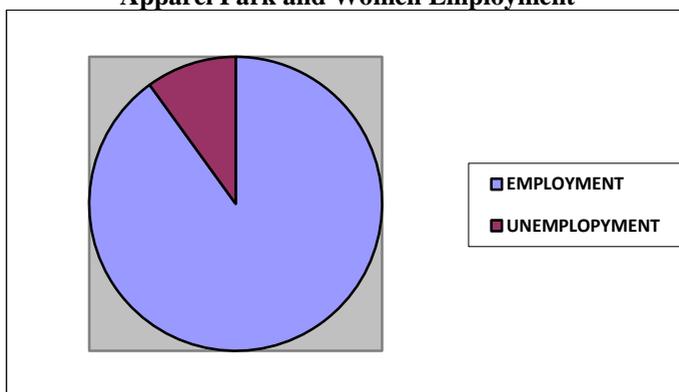
2.5. Apparel Park and Women Friendly Environment

Out of the 35 respondents, 30 respondents which constitute 85 per cent of the total sample reveals that there is women friendly atmosphere in the park and only 5 respondents, that is, 15 per cent has different opinion.

2.6. Apparel Park and Women Employment

With regard to the working of apparel park and employment level among the rural women in Nedumpna panchayat, out of the 35 respondents 32 respondents (90%) expressed that apparel park paved the way for creating employment opportunities among rural women and only 10 per cent, that is, 3 respondents are of the opinion the unemployment among women still present among rural people. The figure given below reveals this.

Figure.2.5
Apparel Park and Women Employment



Source: Sample survey

2.7. Apparel Park and Income Generation

One of the objectives of the study was to examine the economic impact of the project among the beneficiaries of the scheme. It is come to know that all the 35 respondents, that is, 100 per cent agree that the operation of the apparel park resulted in the increase in the income of the beneficiaries.

2.8. Apparel Park and Increase in Income

100 per cent of the respondents revealed that the objective of the apparel park resulted in income generation and out of the 35 respondents, 15 respondents which constitute 43per cent revealed their income had increased by ₹ 1000 per month, 34 per cent, that is,

12 respondents revealed that their income had increased by ₹1500 per month and 8 respondents, that is, 23 per cent opined that their income had increased by more than ₹ 2000 per month.

2.9. Apparel Park and Standard of Living

As the beneficiaries of the project are rural women especially among the BPL category the study reveals the fact that the operation of the apparel park resulted in increasing the living standard of the beneficiaries. All respondents agreed the same.

2.10. Role of Kudumbashree and Apparel Park

One of the objectives of the study was to identify the role of Kudumbashree in the successful working of the apparel park. All the respondents, that is, 100 per cent opined that Kudumbashree played a major role in the operation and development of the apparel park in Nedumpana panchayat.

2.11. Apparel Park and Women Empowerment

Most of the beneficiaries opined that apparel park had succeeded in empowering rural women especially the marginalised groups. The analysis provides a mixed response. Out of the 35 respondents, 28 respondents revealed that it had succeeded in empowering rural women and the 7 respondents provide a negative opinion.

Findings

1. Women empowerment through apparel park enhance employment, especially in rural women
2. It improves the standard of living of the people in Nedumpana panchayat (directly and indirectly).
3. It helps in the creation of entrepreneurial qualities among rural women.
4. It paved the way for the production of diversified products.
5. Women become self-sufficient - It increase the income of the rural women
6. Marketing facilities increased.

7. It helps in the upgradation of handloom industry in Nedumpana panchayat
8. Empowerment of women through Apparel Park helps to reduce gender inequality.
9. It helps to reduce the poverty among rural poor in Nedumpana panchayat.
10. The interference of Kudumbashree units helps in the production of high quality products.

Suggestions

1. The management has to find out alternative source of raw materials in order to ensure uninterrupted supply.
2. The Kudumbashree units have to provide training facilities to each and every worker in the unit for making better quality products.
3. The panchayat authorities has to provide women friendly environment in the unit.
4. The government should provide financial support for the widening of the unit.
5. The management has to find out alternative marketing sources to sell their products.

ചോദ്യാവലി

1. പേര് :
2. വയസ്സ് :
3. സാമ്പത്തിക വിഭാഗം : APL / BPL
4. ജാതി : ജനറൽ, ബെസി, എസ്. സി / എസ്.ടി
5. വിദ്യാഭ്യാസ നിലവാരം : പത്താംതരത്തിന് താഴെ / പത്താംതരം/ പത്താംതരത്തിനു മുകളിൽ

6. താങ്കൾക്ക് ഏതെങ്കിലും തരത്തിലുള്ള കലാപരമായ കഴിവുകൾ ഉണ്ടോ

ഉണ്ട് ഇല്ല

7. കുടുംബശ്രീ മിഷനിൽ നിന്നും അപാൽ പാർക്കിന്റെ പ്രവർത്തനവുമായി ബന്ധപ്പെട്ട ഏതെങ്കിലും തരത്തിലുള്ള വിദഗ്ധ പരിശീലനം കിട്ടിയിട്ടുണ്ടോ?

ഉണ്ട് ഇല്ല

8. സ്ത്രീ സൗഹാർദ്ദപരമായ അന്തരീക്ഷമാണോ അപാൽ പാർക്കിൽ നില നിൽക്കുന്നത്

ഉണ്ട് ഇല്ല

9. അപാൽ പാർക്കിന്റെ പ്രവർത്തനം നെടുമ്പന പഞ്ചായത്തിലെ തൊഴിലില്ലായ്മ ഒരു പരിധിവരെ പരിഹരിക്കുന്നതിന് സഹായകമായിട്ടുണ്ടോ ?

ഉണ്ട് ഇല്ല

10. അപാൽ പാർക്കിന്റെ പ്രവർത്തനം താങ്കളുടെ വരുമാന വർദ്ധനവിന് സഹായിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ടോ?

ഉണ്ട് ഇല്ല

11. അപാൽ പാർക്കിന്റെ പ്രവർത്തനം താങ്കളുടെ ജീവിത നിലവാരം മെച്ചപ്പെടുത്തുന്നതിന് സഹായകമായിട്ടുണ്ടോ?

ഉണ്ട് ഇല്ല

12. കുടുംബശ്രീയുടെ ഇടപെടൽ അപാൽ പാർക്കിന്റെ പ്രവർത്തനം മെച്ചപ്പെടുത്തുന്നതിന് സഹായിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ടോ ?

ഉണ്ട് ഇല്ല

13. അപാൽ പാർക്കിന്റെ പ്രവർത്തനം നെടുമ്പന പഞ്ചായത്തിൽ സ്ത്രീ ശാക്തീകരണത്തിന് വഴിയൊരുക്കിയോ ?

ഉണ്ട് ഇല്ല

14. പാർക്കിന്റെ പ്രവർത്തനം മെച്ചപ്പെടുത്തുന്നതിനുള്ള നിർദ്ദേശങ്ങൾ