

INTRODUCTION

If by strength is meant moral power, then woman is immeasurably man's superior

- Mahatma Gandhi (1869–1948)

Being named a collectivistic Country, Indian society is popular for its values of social cohesion and interdependence. Chadda and Deb (2017) refer to the Indian joint family in itself as an excellent resource. In this institution of coexistence, the woman of the family provides the functional and operational link. Pages in the annals of Indian history have placed women in various social statuses. Though contemporary India boasts of a changed stature, women still endure subjugation to men. Parihar (2011) calls it as ‘socio – economic slavery’. Family structures with a predominance of patriarchal society, taboos and stereotyping especially in women’s roles have hindered with, states Lakshmi (2005) women assuming equal status with men in the socio economic milieu. The environment need not have been conducive for their development on par with men, but the bare truth as Singh (1999) had commented that they have a profound and pervasive effect on the well-being of their families, communities and local ecosystems should not be underestimated. Yet what is mostly seen is the reverse.

The potentials of women in major areas - development, finance and management, decision making, gainful employment and self-employment – have been considered one step below men and such instances of gender prejudices had pervaded beyond limits to include in its wake factors like job options, wage fixing and other such socio economic attributes where women’s potential was undermined ending up in glaring gender discrimination. Such discrimination will lead to formation of genre after genre of incapacitated women population. According to Singer (2011) poverty, discrimination and exploitation are terms related to low wage earning capacity of women.

In essence, what is expected when people talk of equality is less understood. Provision of equal options for access to resources, opportunities and options to participate in economic decision making is what is expected of. Gender equality will reign where mutual respect prevails in all aspects. As far as India is concerned even sex ratio shows a decreasing trend in favour of women. Despite such glaring truths, it is well known that the Indian Constitution considers gender on the basis of the triple – fold principles of equality, dignity

and freedom from discrimination. Then, where has the system gone wrong? It is explicit that the women themselves are to be blamed for their plight. Major vital statistic related to women's empowerment highlights deficiency in all essential parameters of expected status like literacy and earning level, but high in ignorance, lack of knowledge on day to day happenings/ technological improvements, proactive behaviour and interest to excel which are but impediments to their path to progress.

Anticipations on their active participation in domestic as well as societal aspects as harbingers of transformation is given priority by virtue of their felt presence in all arena. Despite considerable growth in daily walks of life studies point to several women who are still in need of care for their **resource enhancement and empowerment**. One among such vulnerable group is **the tribal women** who gain attention because their role in their small family and social structure as substantial and crucial has to be acknowledged.

Cohorts dwelling in unapproachable forest regions are referred to as tribes (Nathan and Kekar, 2004). Regional variations in all systems and practices help classifying them under several tribes. The distinguishing key concepts, which signify particular tribe, are their size, isolation, religion and means of livelihoods accorded, Beteille way back in 1974. Common observation on tribal characteristics is viewing them as the most isolated and disadvantaged cohorts.

Nevertheless, controversy still exists regarding the **status of tribal women** – to be enjoying higher social status than other women and the counter viewpoint that they have a low social status. Regional differences, isolation, nature of tribe and their willingness for connectedness, all count in deciding their social status. Despite tribal women shouldering the brunt of managing both household and livelihood, the restrictive nature of tribal norms and rules restrain their progress, opines, Asif (2009). Inborn traits of them sustaining subsistence livelihoods and their dependence on minor forest produces, as Maitreyi (2011) observes also retains them in the lowest rung of the development ladder.

From World Bank Brief titled 'India's Adivasis' Report, Yadavar (2018) quotes Scheduled tribes to comprise eight per cent of India's population, but to rank high in poverty level influenced due to their low productivity potentials. Therefore it is clear that the tribe women are waiting for some stimulation from those who have stakes in their development.

Glaring reports focus on their dwindling population, illiteracy and primitive livelihood technologies as reasons for their poor economic status. From among numerous cohorts, 75 such tribal scattered in 18 States and one Union Territory of India were identified and categorized as **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)**. Earlier called as **Primitive Tribes**, they are now recognized for their extreme vulnerability citing their isolation in small and scattered habitats in hilly terrains. Moreover on comparison with other local tribes they project low development indices. Being “exclusive” in their cultural and governance traits has led to obvious inequality index.

Chaudhuri and Chaudhuri (2005) justify the Government’s move on such a classification called PVTG as its primary objective is to create an enabling environment for the tribes to grow and prosper, prioritizing the four major social indicators of literacy, employment, health and nutrition. Down the lane several schemes and programmes have been floated in their favour and they too had benefitted leading to improved living environments. But, beneficiaries being occupants of forest area the schemes should have focused more on forest resources. Ironically many **neglected the eco – based element** in them and hence could not achieve the primary objective of reaching the target group. The areas of assistance made available essentially covered a broad spectrum, but which dispensed in its entirety the ecological concept. Backwardness of the tribal people due to inaccessibility of their remote living area with less technical aids was reported by Gnanamoorthy (2015) for the plight of even Government welfare and development services not really reaching them during utmost needs. Unfortunately, none of the efforts could evoke significant raise in the levels of the tribal’s education, economic, health and resource access indices. This warrants eco – based endeavours from all quarters.

Attempts by social and environmental scientists with other stakeholders had attempted to assess the impacts of changing environmental situations and management related activities to well – being of individuals. Situations where individuals stay in the company of others in an environment created when their needs are met, act purposefully to meet their goals and by which they enjoy a satisfactory quality of life is described as **well – being**.

Resource management efforts must recognize the absolute relationship between resources and their eco - based connections, failing which providers have to face unexpected outcomes. Russell *et.al*’s., (2013) studies have shown evidences of harmonious blending of

Ecosystems and human well – being. Tribes' connections with their eco – based connections cannot be written off. Asif's (2009) studies have highlighted the significant role **Minor Forest Produce (MFP) / Non- Timber Food Products (NTFP)** play in the tribal economy, the collection and marketing of which is a major source of livelihood for most tribal families and are the mirror image of their eco – based connections. Women and their activities are essentially dependent on such gifts of nature (MFP) and hence are intrinsic to their existence. Dependence on MFP/ NTFP and their tribal sustenance go hand in hand. NTFPs are drawing attention as a **supplementary livelihood** and means of **income generation for communities, especially tribal women** living in and around forests opine, Rakshit (2007). A livelihood is where a household's capabilities with personal and environmental resources are put to productive use. Here, the women of the household hold the lion's share. These factors point out the multiple actors who/which should play in active livelihood; it can be both human and non-human, tangible and non-tangible. Hence any strategy devised to integrate livelihood element should be an approach comprising all factors. Such approaches should analyze both inputs and outcomes.

The **livelihoods approach** (Momtaz and Shameem, 2016) analyzes the intrinsic relationship between motivation and individual's preference for livelihood and the major hurdles in meeting the desired outcomes. The outcome expected would be something with real potential which can be anything like augmentation in income and well – being prospects, poverty reduction or a host of more as Serrat (2008) had reported. The concept on people's affinity to eco - systems, and the sense of belongingness to a place as crucial components in determining their well-being and also as being influential in the formation of people's "ecological identity" has been reported by Russell et al (2013).

Women's participation in all human societal pursuits though is appreciable along with their recent entry into political field, **access to resources** mainly to enhance their potential is found to be low. Over and above access to resources and considering their vertical mobility, women should gain greater **share** in the **control over** and **management** of resources and decision making in the home and society to claim that they have '**power**'. For this they need to be **empowered**.

Widening alternative prospects for choice and action to mould one's life is real empowerment. Especially, gender based empowerment and its expansion will certainly augment the financial capability of the women report Ghosh and Mukhopadhyay (2018).

For Mishra (2006) women's empowerment is a process that enables them to gain access to decision making process and acquirement of power which in turn requires sufficient levels of self-confidence and assertiveness. Ensuring livelihood security and economic independence can show prospects for mobility, which in a sense allows women to project personal values, strength and capacity as of prime importance in handling life's problems – the wherewithal for empowerment.

According to Kirve and Knitkar (1993), only means for women achieving economic status is by gaining visibility and voice in all situations which may get transformed as improvement in literacy both for selves and children and further family well – being. Considered in this context empowerment of women has a rich payoff in economic development and egalitarian goals of the society. Looking at it from the **self-empowerment** point of view is suggested for ensured success (Mazumdar and Ahmed, 2015).

For social and economic growth of a Nation, Skills and knowledge development as driving forces are identified parameters and India, in particular has the advantage of a “demographic dividend” by virtue of the growing population in the active economic age group (15 to 59 years) who can make significant contribution to National growth provided they are equipped to be productive. Agenda of great concern therefore, is to create more low- and medium-skilled jobs with special emphasis on enhanced quality of work to show women inroads to come out of subsistence work and stay self-empowered. (https://wcd.nic.in/sites/default/files/REVISEDSTEPGUIDELINES2014_1.pdf)

The parameters of women empowerment in tribal belts according to Sharma and Varma (2008) are multipronged, the achievement of which may assist women to choose the livelihood of their choice, learn/ promote and practice indigenous skill, make use of available resources and enjoy appreciable **well – being** and **quality living**. These factors warrant behavioural change in women for a good cause.

Behavioural changes can be influenced through **livelihood or economic actions** state, Salafsky et al., (2008). In this context the symbiotic relationship between resource availability and end use for it from an eco –based standpoint has to be considered. To encourage positive behaviors on conservation of resources, especially the environment and eco – based resources, action oriented research is recommended (Ban and Jacob, 2017). Thought processes should include optimal utilization for maximum benefits without

damaging the sustainability of the environment. This is the nature of behavioral change expected. Mobilizing women into representative and self – managed institutions like a Self Help Group (SHG) would be welcome as it would promote women oriented organizations, and act as game changers in terms of improving their status on all aspects. Educational level, role models to follow, gendering, and competing demands on human / non-human resources are but a few reasons for women resisting to become entrepreneurs. Awareness generation is a must states Arumugam (2014), where Governments and private parties could evince ample interest.

Capacity building will federate SHG women to access institutional platforms for service and finance with a strong will power and self-confidence, voice their requirements and demand them with self-esteem. Institutional capacity building through various training programmes organized in consultation with mutually benefitting stakeholders can not only escalate the women’s status but also enrich networking experiences. Skill orientation should not consider women of common interests alone, but should include multiple avenues from which they could benefit because the specific reason for which a women attends may differ from fresh hand to one who needs an advanced course Kuratko and Hodgetts (1997). To ensure economic security, availability of credit from financial sector would be an added impetus, as SHGs can act as unique approaches to financial intermediation. Economic intervention coupled with access to credit was the popular empowerment approach envisaged, state Panda (2000) when initiation and establishment of SHG to emerge successful has been pointed out by Kirankere and Subrahmanya (2013) as it promises provision of finance for taking it up and benefiting from the positive impacts of the prospect on their social and economic life.

Hence, it is essential to provide training on self-employment, skill development and livelihood improvement through selected institutions to tribal people to curb down their below poverty status and make them self-reliant for their livelihood. Margaret and Kala’s (2013) study had focus on these aspects.

Such motivational endeavours can sharpen their knowledge levels, create changes in their behaviour and attitude, reflection and reflectivity over which can help improve their quality of living. Taking control and ownership over one’s life through widening of their choices and becoming proficient to take dominant life choices in areas where their abilities

were not honoured earlier implies empowerment (United Nations, 2001). Empowerment of women involves economic opportunity, social equality and personal rights (Sen and Kumar, 2001). Even then, there is no denying that there are huge gaps between guarantees and the daily realities of women's lives. As Baha (1982) had rightly said, women should be given rights to access knowledge and information and power to utilize them on multiple empowerment dimensions. They need to be provided with an enabling platform where their sentiments to the environment are respected, their skills are up graded and their economic situation improved.

These facts prompted undertaking a study on the **Irular tribe** and the women therein, inhabiting the **Tholamplayam** Panchayat and **Senguttaiyur (Senguttai)** settlement on a different dimension. They belong to the PVTG category. Their settlement is within the Reserve forest area. Hence they have rights to benefit from the biotic aspects in the region. Earlier studies reported dealt with their general living status or nutritional status. Studies on overall well – being of the settlement and optimal utilization of forest resources for enhancement of their living pattern or as livelihood options is a felt lacuna. What exactly they do for their livelihood, role of women in particular and their concepts on empowerment are quite ambiguous. All these stimulated choosing the locale and topic of the study.

1.1. Rationale for the Study

Bhasin (2007) asserts that tribal women in India contribute positively to the local economy and participate along with men in subsistence activities. In reality, women do more work than men and share equal responsibilities in non-economic and economic activities. Awais et al. (2009) point out getting a sustainable livelihood and a decent life due to environmental degradation and middlemen interference are issues and challenges tribal women face. Lack of awareness and confidence to be on their own after being subjected to submissive behaviour for generations are attributed as basic reasons.

A shift in thought processes on **women** across subsequent Five Year Plans from the First one (1951-56) down the lane to the fifth plan (1974-1978) the **focus cascaded from welfare, education and status**. The sixth plan draft showed a **shift in focus from welfare to development**. **The Seventh Plan** envisaged operational concern for equality and development articulated by the International decade for women. Focus was on raising economic and social status through beneficiary oriented programmes. The three five year

plans which continued (VIII, IX & X) shifted their focus from **development to empowerment**, bestowing more impetus on women.

The **Irular Tribe** are found only in India and their total population is 2,48,000. Their population in Tamil Nadu is 2,06,000 and a huge cluster has occupied the Nilgiri biosphere, especially the Coimbatore district. Tamil Nadu constitutes one per cent of India's total tribal population. It is an irony that majority of the tribal households, report Vatta et al., (2017) to fall in medium to high vulnerability categories as they live on the edge of livelihood. They are found to sustain in bare minimum requirements, warranting taking up enhancement of their income and livelihood status on a war footing through viable interventions. Here, women of the households catch attention and emerge as prime targets as they are the routes to entry for any transformation endeavours. The division of work is heavily loaded on the tribal woman because in addition to an equal share in the economic production process she has to take the sole responsibility of household chores states, Rajyalakshmi (1996). The plight of women in the study settlement was reported in earlier studies as conditioned/ controlled by their cultural norms and taboos which is still worse and thus leaves them with restricted mobility, autonomy, voice and thus remain totally disempowered with less opportunities for income generation, decision making and entrepreneurship. A woman to voice herself needs empowerment in terms of social and economic parameters.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Empowerment and Sustainable Development of Senguttaiyur Village Irular Tribe Women on Eco - based Well - being Strategies

1.3. Operational definitions

- **Empowerment:** The gender empowerment measures, which estimated the extent of women participation in the country's economic and political activities, had ranked India as 135th of the 166 Nations in 2014 (Human Development Report, 2014).

To achieve the goal of empowerment of tribal women, it is necessary to build and develop human capabilities among the tribal women as equal to and comparable with men and women of modern urban society and urban economic system. Thus the **human capabilities approach** becomes an important tool for achieving the goal of tribal women empowerment. To achieve this, feasible strategies had to be evolved which will be in tandem

with the tribe's ecological conditions, eco – based livelihoods and the existing knowledge status of women in terms of indigenous skills. Above all willingness to self - empower had to be determined. The status visibly exposed can be dubious because the tribe would not know what empowerment means and the different types they are entitled to. Hence through interactions at different levels, observation and secondary data from concerned offices, the status of empowerment of the tribe in relation to de-facto, de-jure and subjective empowerment needed to be analyzed. Ensuring benefits through intervention mechanisms adopting human capabilities approach was banked upon.

- **Sustainable Development:** “Sustainable development (SD) implies achieving to meet current requirements without compromising those of future generations” (UNESCO, 2010). Though the UN definition of sustainability may have controversial interpretations it still covers the two fundamental issues; the inevitable issues of environmental degradation that is the resultant of economic growth, and the need for such growth to tackle poverty in the society. The tribal are in need of forest-based sustainable livelihoods for which ownership of forest resources and management of the ecology are crucial. Women's (especially tribal women) active role is key concept in deliverance and adoption of strategies for reproductive health, family planning, educational and job opportunities - all indicators strongly impacting sustainability of a healthy ecosystem. Tribal women's interactions with their natural surroundings, the eco system, *inter alia* cannot be underestimated as they justify the umbilical link between the two. For generations they have been the **custodians of the environmental resources, both as consumers** (maintenance of eco- friendly livelihoods) and **as conservationists, preserving the sanctity of them.** In recent years the access of tribal to forests for their livelihoods have shrunk both because forests themselves have shrunk and the regulatory regime continue to restrict tribal from collecting and processing NTFP for their livelihoods. To empower the women to tackle the issue roping in all concerned as stakeholders was found imperative and attempts to rope them in effectively was attempted. **The premise laid was not to insist women to dislocate, but capitalize from the locally available resources.** The notion that the capacity of women to effect a profound and pervasive impact on well – being of individuals and the environment alike has to be fully utilized (Singh, 1999).

Considering these issues, initiating training in techno-based skill development involving indigenous resources and motivating tribe women to form **Self Help Group**

(SHG) and its exclusive CLG was thought of. This was also aimed to enhance their marketing and networking skills – all aimed at their sustainable development. The efforts placed impetus on dealing with the issues of poverty reduction and gender oriented development to impart empowerment benefits through real time endeavours was proposed. Transforming women from a **dependent mode to self – dependent mode** was the outcome intended to be achieved.

Box 1 : Irular Tribe

The forests of Coimbatore district in Tamil Nadu, India is spread over an area of 693.48 Km² and the tract falls between 10°37' and 11°31' North Latitudes and 76°39' and 77°5' East Longitudes. The North- western parts of the Coimbatore forest division form the lower ranges of the Nilgiris in the **Nilgiris Biosphere**. Karamadai block is a revenue block of Coimbatore district of the Indian State of Tamil Nadu. This revenue block consists of 17 panchayat villages. Tholampalayam Panchayat Village is situated at an altitude of 372 meters above sea level located 40 Km towards West from District Head Quarters Coimbatore. The **Tribal Settlement Senguttaiyur Village** is nested in the Nilgiri Biosphere. *The inhabitants of this Senguttaiyur Village belong to Irular Tribe.*

- **Well – being:** Creating environments or situations where human beings co-exist, where their basic needs are satisfied, where they can act in purposeful pursuance of their goals, enjoy an appreciable quality of life in the company of others is delineated as well – being. Simply stated it signifies “people’s ability to live a life they value” (Wongbusarakum *et al.*, 2014). Deploying ecosystem – based management strategies which address the dual – components, namely of **human** well – being and their cultural significance – have been tried and well documented, which was found successful by virtue of the paradigm shift envisioned towards ensuring ecological conservation and sustainability beyond human sustenance as Leong *et al.* (2019) had spoke of.

To initiate any action to empower them, they should first be motivated to come out and express their problems. Being a close-set cohort and with a PVTG tag, approaches should focus more on the social psychological aspect. Hence the sample women were subjected to undergo reflection exercises when they recalled past experiences, the impact of those introspects and spelt out their limitations and constraints. From the light of their expressions (reflexivity) contours where they needed motivation and where they had already benefited could be understood. Further intervention was planned based on these aspects.

Development has to be seen as an **organic process** where the most affected individuals are pitched in to determine their personal future. In Narayanan’s (2000) opinion,

it is a 'process of action, **reflection**, and adjustment that aims to bring about consistent patterns of change, one in which local communities gradually improve their ability to define, analyze, and meet their own needs'. To be reflective means being introspective, thoughtful or contemplative and, reflexive in the sociological sense defines reflecting on and contemplating on one's own position in the world (Kaufman, 2012). Sociology of knowledge exhorts **reflexivity** to refer to vicious circles between cause and effect. It commonly refers to the capacity of an individual to recognize forces of socialization and alter their place in the social structure. A low level of reflexivity would result in an individual shaped largely by their environment (or society). According to Sharma and Varma (2008) women become empowered through **collective reflection** and decision making.

Contemplation of these factors prompted scheduling a programme with inputs on recall exercises/ brainstorming sessions for reliving in their past (to make them realize their own limitations and constraints) and introspect to locate the lacunae with their selves which had impacted on their well – being status. The exercise brought out their inherent potential role in eco- based management aspects.

Eco – based: Attempts by social and environmental scientists with other stakeholders had attempted to assess the impacts of changing environmental situations and management related activities to well – being of individuals. In Vaid et al's (2011) perception, tribes are Mother Nature's children and therefore their living styles or patterns are influenced by specific eco – systems. The activities inclusive of livelihoods will eventually have an ecological tinge. The Irula tribe depended predominantly on subsistence living and eco-based livelihoods – collecting and processing of MFP and NTFP displaying zero awareness on value addition and lucrative marketing. All attempts on enhancement of situations or improvements in advanced technology should go in tandem with their eco- based livelihoods. Any deviation from that may require displacement, which they may resent due to the sentiments of belongingness they attach and had imbibed in the course of their life time. Irular tribe and their rural-based indigenous skills have already gained attention at the national level. Skill development is the success 'Mantra' in modern era which The Honourable Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi'ji has also recommended for implementation to improve livelihoods (Plate.1).Being a research scholar pursuing in "Women's Studies" as a discipline enthused a natural curiosity and interest in the investigator to launch on the study on "**Empowerment and Sustainable Development of**

Senguttaiyur Village Irular Tribe Women on Eco – based Well – being Strategies’. An attempt was also made to analyze their status on resource access and use **by using Breslow *et.al*’s., (2016) 4C’s model which was modified to suit the cohort** and the settlement and the Social Context selected for the study.

With this backdrop, details on the livelihood options that the tribe women undertook was examined and strategies for techno- based improvements through training was included in the agenda with due note on their indigenous skill and the local resources they were habituated to. This actually was to set the stage for sustaining the tribal livelihood culture about which they were proud of, in the meanwhile promote the products among urban end users after value addition. Hence this was the major intervention program attempted.

The procedure was drafted to include a multi-pronged approach to study the settlement characteristics, the women and their latent skills, eco-based resources and their optimal utilization to empower the women on entrepreneurial lines. Moreover there also was a hidden agenda to bring the women into the limelight, help create an identity for them and envisage in the run betterment of well – being prospects through active stakeholder participation through the major and specific objectives set for the study.

1.4. Objectives of the Study

The plan and procedure of the study was streamlined to achieve the following set objectives:

Broad objective

- Envisage sustainable empowerment and quality well-being of Irular women through skill up gradation and micro enterprise using indigenous eco- based resources

Specific Objectives

- Locate a homogenous Irular Settlement with marginal development indices
- Find out the socio- economic profile of the settlement
- Identify unique characteristics of Irular women on human societal pursuits
- Enable samples to realize the limitations and constraints for empowerment
- Initiate eco – based livelihood options through multi-pronged interventions

- Execute prospects for community development and tribal well being
- Analyze Empowerment status of sample post intervention

1.5. Hypotheses

The following statements were set as hypothesis for the concerned study

- H₁. Irular tribe women are not dependent on activities which contribute to feminization of labour
- H₂. Visible improvement in awareness level of Irular women on select social and economic indicators could be enhanced with techno – based Intervention
- H₃. Introducing micro enterprises may not act as an instrument to ensure alternate livelihood options for Irular women
- H₄. Focus on wholesome community development (village cohesion) will help redefine women’s norms and rules by which they emerge as participants in crucial decision making
- H₅. Action programmes chalked out for the benefit of the Irular women will enable them to achieve an eco-based status of well-being.

1.6. Assumptions and Arguments Put forth

- There can be no sustainable development without a transformation of the character, attitude, culture, and competence of the target group (Irular women) at the grassroots, for which voluntary willingness to change from dependent to self- reliant mode is imperative
- Adopting a “Bottom-up” strategy which is location specific could help aim at ecologically and economically sustainable, need based holistic community development.
- Roping in Government Departments, NGO’s, Schools, Environmentalists, Forest Officials, and local Governance for related issues, networking with them for a wholesome outcome involving the entire settlement could help achieve concerns of high priority.

1.7. Delimitations

- Senguttaiyur in Tholampalayam Panchayat was the only settlement selected for the study
- Techno-based skill up-gradation for women on two major eco-based livelihood options alone were chosen as a nascent initiative

1.8. Scope of the study

The essence of the present study is to bring in transformation in the living style of the entire settlement, starting with the women of the households. Enabling all the inhabitants to participate in various activities drafted in their favour was aimed as the basic premise for the study, though a lion's share of the schedule has been set aside mainly to enhance women's livelihood options, introduce livelihood diversification and ensure income generation in the first instance and for their economic empowerment in the future. It is hoped that the outcomes of the study *per se* would benefit the settlement in Toto.

- The study focuses on the need and importance of giving support, guidance, entrepreneurial skill training and monitoring of financial and non-financial aids for the empowerment of the Irular women belonging to Senguttaiyur village on a sustainable basis.

It is hoped that the study on one side would project the status of an age old tribal settlement and their uniqueness, and on the other the resilience or otherwise of the tribal women to transform themselves to improve their plight and well – being through proactive participation in socio economic endeavours. **What is expected of them is:**

- Not to be servile, but self-confident
- Not to be bossy but bold
- Not to be docile but decisive



Plate.1: National impetus on

Irular well being