

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The research study, titled “**Exploring Entrepreneurship as a Coping Strategy for Mothers of Visually Challenged Children,**” was undertaken to address the multifaceted challenges faced by mothers in caring for their visually impaired children. These mothers often juggle multiple responsibilities, including caregiving and household management, as well as satisfying social relationship, often without adequate support systems. Recognizing this, the study focused on identifying their stress factors, understanding their socio-economic realities, and devising actionable strategies to empower them. Mothers of children with visual impairment experience a heightened level of stress due to the dual demands of caregiving and navigating societal barriers. Through a phased approach, the study bridges the gap between understanding the experiences of these mothers and implementing actionable strategies that lead to meaningful change. The outcome highlights the importance of skill development, resource optimization, and entrepreneurial initiatives in promoting resilience and enhancing personal and social well-being. This chapter gives the summary and conclusion of the study.

Entrepreneurship was identified as a potential pathway to achieve these goals, offering not only a means of income generation but also an opportunity for personal growth and self-empowerment. In light of this, the research project was initiated with the following objectives:

- Understand the stress levels of selected mothers about socio-economic status.
- Analyze the impact of Life Skills Training (LST) and Handskills training programme developed on the well-being of mothers.
- Develop and establish a minor vending store on the school campus for enhanced well-being and income generation and evaluating its impact.

#### **The study’s hypotheses**

The following research hypotheses were tested in this research. They were inferred based on a review of the literature and actual evidence.

- **Ho1.** There would be no significant difference in factors leading to stress (related to society, spouse, children, and housing conditions) among the mothers based on

the selected socio-demographic variables.

- **Ha2.** A significant difference would exist in parental stress levels and personal and social well-being based on the selected socio-demographic variables.
- **Ha2.1** Significant difference would exist on parental stress levels based on selected socio-demographic variables.
- **Ha2.2** Significant difference would exist on personal and social well-being based on selected socio-demographic variables.
- **Ha3.** There would be a significant relationship between ‘factors leading to stresses,’ ‘parenting stress levels,’ and ‘personal and social well-being’ among the selected mothers.
- **Ha4.** There would be a significant difference in life skills and hand skills training among the selected mothers before and after the training programme.
- **Ha5** There would be a significant difference in ‘parental stress levels’ and ‘personal and social well-being’ between the selected subjects before and after the training programme.

### **Design of the study**

The design of the study consisted of four major phases as follows:

**Phase 1:** Survey to Assess the Socio-economic Status and Stress Levels among Selected Mothers of Visually Challenged Children (VCC) (N=423)

**Phase 2:** Training and Motivating the Mothers on Life Skills and Hand Skills and Evaluating its Impact (n=50)

**Phase 3:** Creating and Launching a Small Vending Store on the School Campus, by Trained Mothers (St. Louis Thai Store) (n=20)

**Phase 4:** Evaluating the Impact of the Enterprise Creation (Vending Store) and Level of Satisfaction (n=10)

**Phase 1: Survey to Assess the Socio-economic Status and Stress Levels among Selected Mothers of Visually Challenged Children (N=423)**

The survey composed of 423 mothers of children with visual impairment from eight schools and organisations, such as St. Louis Institute for the Deaf and Blind (Adyar), Little Flower Convent for Blind & Deaf (T, Nagar), Om Muruga Special School

and Vocational Training Center (Tondiarpet), Tamil Nadu Association of the Blind School (Tondiarpet), Mission to the Blind (Madhavaram), Little Flower Convent Higher Secondary School for the Visually Impaired (Nungambakkam), Little Flower Sheltered Workshop for Blind (Greems Road, Mylapore) and Government Blind School (Virugambakkam), Chennai to assess their socio-economic status, family profile, housing details, details of children with visual impairment, factors leading to stress, levels of parental stress and personal and social well-being (QOL).

**Phase 2: Training and Motivating the Mothers on Life Skills and Hand Skills and Evaluating its Impact (n=50)**

Fifty mothers of children with visual impairment from the St. Louis Institute for the Deaf & Blind in Chennai were selected for their interest shown, supportive environment, accessibility, and familiarity with the researcher in phase two of the study. Based on their willingness to join, lack of entrepreneurial background, the necessity to earn while staying at school, and the need to meet economic and childcare requirements, it was understood that there was a need for training and motivation among the selected mothers to take up entrepreneurship as a career in the future. Experts in Psychology, Home Science, Business Management, and Nutrition were contacted and with a structured intervention schedule, offered training on life skills (problem focused strategy, emotional focused strategy, positive thinking and decision making) and practical sessions on income generating hand skill training (paper bag making, face mask, healthy ladoos, napkin disposal covers, phenyl preparation and liquid embroidery) were given to 50 mothers who were willing and interested at Sri Kanyaka Parameswari Arts & Science College for Women, St. Louis Institute for the Deaf and Blind and ICAR, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Tiruvallur for a period of thirty three days for 63 hours. The school authorities provided essential infrastructure, including rooms, water, and electricity. Meanwhile, mothers were grouped based on their interests to create and sell products such as paper bags, healthy ladoos, napkin disposal covers, phenyl preparation, and liquid embroidery within the school campus. A schedule was administered to the participants to understand the effect of the training before and after the training program. A post-assessment was conducted using a schedule among the mothers of visually challenged children to understand the impact of the training.

**Phase 3: Creating and Launching a Small Vending Store on the School Campus, by Trained Mothers (St. Louis Thai Store) (n=20)**

Phase III focused on establishing a small-scale enterprise, St. Louis Thai Venture, for 20 mothers of visually impaired children in St. Louis Institute for the Deaf & Blind in Chennai. This initiative, supported by the school, provided resources like space, materials, and utilities. Mothers grouped based on skills and interest developed during the intervention produced and sold items such as paper bags, healthy ladoos, napkin disposal covers, phenyl preparation, and liquid embroidery within the campus. Participation in trade fairs and school bazaars expanded their entrepreneurial opportunities. Proximity to other educational institutions created a ready market, enhancing sustainability. Motivational support from the school Principal, teachers, and the researcher boosted their confidence and creativity. The evaluation was done evaluated entrepreneurial preferences, motivational factors, and business promotion strategies, empowering mothers for financial independence and sustainable livelihoods. This initiative strengthened community ties and ensured the venture's viability.

**Phase 4: Evaluating the Impact of the Enterprise Creation (Vending Store) and Level of Satisfaction (n=10)**

A post-assessment was conducted among twenty mothers who were involved in the St. Louis Thai Store, and case studies of ten entrepreneurs were presented in Phase IV: Results and Discussion.

The findings of the research study are summarized below:

**Phase 1: Survey to Assess the Socio-economic Status and Stress Levels among Selected Mothers of visually challenged children (N=423)**

The personal profile of 423 surveyed mothers of visually challenged children reveals significant demographic, social, and economic status. Among the children, 55 per cent were male participants and 45 percent were female participants, aged between 4 and 18 years.

**a. Demographic profile of selected respondents**

**(i) Socio-Economic Profile of the Selected Respondents**

- The socio-economic profile revealed that most of the mothers were in the age group of 26-35 years (44.7 per cent), followed by 36-45 years (38.5 per cent). It

was noted that the majority (85.8 per cent) of the mothers with female children were aged between 26 and 35 years, while most mothers with male visually impaired children (63.9 per cent) were aged between 36 and 45 years.

- The educational status showed that 58.9 per cent of mothers of female visually impaired children had completed higher secondary education. In comparison, 38.2 per cent of mothers of male visually impaired children had completed secondary education. In both groups, 7.3 per cent of mothers with boys and 4.7 per cent of mothers with girls had professional education.
- Regarding marital status, the majority (84.9%) of the mothers were living with their spouses, while 15.1% were single mothers. 88.4 per cent and 82 per cent of mothers having female and male visually challenged children were living with their spouses, and 18 and 11.6 per cent of mothers having male and female children were single mothers, respectively.
- Most heads of families with female visually impaired children were employed as professionals (68.9%), while a significant 42.1% of heads of families with male children were self-employed.
- 71.6 per cent of mothers of visually impaired girls were employed as professionals, whereas 65.2 per cent of mothers of male visually impaired children were homemakers. In both cases, around 4 per cent of mothers were employed in clerical positions.
- In terms of family income, 71.6 per cent of mothers of female children belonged to the high-income group (earning more than Rs. 70,501 per month), while 67.8 per cent of mothers of male children fell under the low-income group, earning only upto Rs. 6000 /- per month.

#### **(ii) Family Profile of Selected Respondents**

- The study found a clear distinction between families of mothers of male and female children with visual impairment. Among mothers of boys, 86.3 per cent belonged to nuclear families, while only 13.7 per cent were from joint families. In contrast, 53.7 per cent of mothers of girls were from joint families, and 46 per cent were from nuclear families. This suggests that managing children with visual impairments may be easier in joint families, as they receive additional support from other family members.

- Medium-sized families (4-5 members) were the most prevalent (57.9 per cent), followed by small families (2-3 members) with 38.1 per cent, while only 4 per cent were large families (more than six members).
- Regarding the number of children in families, 58.4 per cent were having one child, followed by two children (33.8 per cent) and three or more children (7.8 per cent). This preference for a small family norm is likely influenced by economic factors and the challenges of managing both family and caregiving responsibilities.

**(iii) Housing Details of the Selected Respondents**

- Among mothers with male children, the majority (67.8 per cent) were residing in rental houses, whereas most mothers with female children (76.3 per cent) owned their homes.
- In terms of type of house, a significant proportion of the total sample (46.8 per cent) live in one-room houses, where 65.7 per cent of mothers of male children and 23.7 per cent of mothers having female children dwell in one-room dwellings. In contrast, 44.2 percent of mothers having female children reside in flats or apartments and multi-storeyed dwellings (27.4 per cent).
- Regarding the size of the house, the majority of mothers of male children (50.6 per cent) live in small-sized houses (500-750 sq ft), while mothers of female children live in large houses (above 1201 sq ft), comprising 71.6 per cent of the selected group.

**(iv) Details of Visually Challenged Children of the Selected Respondents**

- Around 60.5 per cent of children fall within the 7 to 10 year age group (81.1 per cent of girls and 43.8 per cent of boys), and 7.6 per cent of children were between 4 and 6 years (9.9 per cent of boys and 4.7 per cent of girls).
- The majority (95.3 per cent) of families were having only one visually impaired child, and in most cases, the child is the first-born (64.5 per cent).
- In terms of the place of stay of visually impaired children, 100 percent of the girls and 85.8 percent of the boys stay at home, whereas 14.2 percent of male children were staying in school hostels.

- Regarding the severity and causes of blindness, 83 per cent were partially blind due to genetic mutation (51.8 per cent), followed by retinal diseases (28.6 per cent), consanguineous marriage (6.9 per cent), jaundice during pregnancy, nutritional deficiencies (4.7 per cent), and premature birth (3.3 per cent).
- A maximum of 76.4 per cent of mothers of low-income families were unemployed. Cent percent of mothers in high-income families were employed as professionals, and middle-income households showed a mix, with 27 percent of mothers as homemakers and 24.3 percent working as daily wage earners.

**(v) Time Spent with Children for Various Activities**

- Concerning time expenditure patterns of mothers of children with visual impairments, most mothers, regardless of the child's gender, spent less than an hour with children for studies (72.8 per cent), followed by transportation (79.2 per cent), extra-curricular activities (67.8 per cent), and recreation (74.5 per cent). It was noted that mothers of boys with visually impairment (55 per cent) were more likely to spend over five hours at school, accompanying their children, than mothers of girls with visually impairment (45 per cent)
- The Chi-square analysis revealed statistically significant gender-based differences in time spent by mothers on academic, travel, extra-curricular, and recreational activities ( $p < 0.05$ ). Mothers of female children spent comparatively more time on extra-curricular and recreational activities, while extended academic time was reported only for male children. In contrast, time spent on school-related activities did not show a significant association with the gender of the child, indicating standardized caregiving demands.

**b. Factors Leading to Stress of the Selected Mothers**

This includes the stress related to society, husband, children, and the housing conditions of the families.

**(i) Stress related to the society of selected subjects**

- Regarding stress related to society for mothers of girls, ‘interference by neighbors and relatives is the most prominent stressor (97.6 per cent), along with discomfort in social settings and fear of anti-social behaviors (68.9 per cent each), whereas 31.1 percent scored least to ‘accept the situation’. Eighty per cent of the mothers

of boys, the major stressor was ‘unexpected guests’, followed by ‘inability to participate in social activities’ (79.9 per cent), and ‘fear of anti-social elements of society’ (79.5 per cent). Mothers of boys (61.7 percent) felt that they missed or avoided the job opportunities due to their child’s misfortune.

- The descriptive analysis revealed that ‘Inability to participate in social activities’ had the highest mean scoring (4.33), while ‘interference from neighbors and relatives’ scored the lowest (2.43).
- Age of the mothers ( $F=45.081^{**}$ ), educational qualification ( $F= 178.261^{**}$ ), employment status of mothers ( $F= 291.128^{**}$ ), family income ( $F= 419.041^{**}$ ), age of the child ( $F= 22.705^{**}$ ) and gender of child ( $t= 10.096^{**}$ ) were considered for statistical analysis. The output of the F-test and t-test analysis showed that stress related to society is statistically significant at 1% level. Hence,  $H_0$  the null hypothesis was rejected.

#### **(ii) Stress Related to Husband among the Selected Respondents**

- In terms of stress related to husband, lack of care and affection (72.5%), followed by differences in opinions about child-rearing (70.8%), and husband-induced stress (70.5%) were the major stressors among mothers of boys. For mothers of girls, family issues with in-laws (71.7%) are the most prominent stressor, followed by unhealthy habits of the husband and hindrances to personal goals (58.3% each).
- The descriptive analysis revealed that among 359 mothers, excluding single parents, the highest mean rating is 4.05 for “I face family issues with my in-laws,” indicating strong agreement. The lowest mean rating is 3.66 for “My husband has undesirable, unhealthy habits that irritate me and my child,” falling between neutral and agree.
- The ANOVA and t-test results illustrated that there exists a significant difference in stress related to husbands on selected demographic variables among mothers of visually challenged children at 1% level. Stress levels are highest among mothers aged 31-40 years, those with primary/secondary education, working in clerical/administrative roles, from low-income families, and with children aged 4-6 years. Additionally, mothers of male children reported higher stress compared to those with female children. Hence,  $H_0$  the null hypothesis was rejected.

**(iii) Stress related to Children**

- The analysis highlights significant stressors among mothers of visually challenged children, varying slightly by the child's gender. Mothers of boys primarily worry about the child's future (97.2%) and face stigma, lack of family support, and financial constraints. Similarly, mothers of girls express concerns about the child's future and stigma (99.1%), followed by 'difficulty in training the child in self-care' and 'Frustration from not achieving personal goals'. Everyday stressors include lack of emotional support, shared responsibilities, and financial strain, which are increased by societal pressures and the demands of caregiving.
- The descriptive analysis revealed that mothers of visually challenged children worried most about their children's future (mean: 4.90), which highlights the emotional and practical burdens of caregiving, with minimal stress related to low expectations from their wards (mean: 2.11).
- The analysis explained the significant differences at 1% level in stress related to children among the respondents on selected demographic variables. Stress is the highest among mothers aged between 41 and 50 years, who hold undergraduate or postgraduate degrees, work in clerical/administration roles, and come from middle-income families. Mothers of children aged between 4 and 6 years reported the most stress, and mothers of female children exhibited slightly higher stress than those of male children. Hence,  $H_0$  the null hypothesis was rejected.

**(iv) Stress Related to Housing Conditions**

- The analysis highlights significant stress related to housing conditions among mothers of visually challenged children, intensified by insufficient support from their husbands. Mothers of female visually challenged children reported higher stress levels related to the need for assistive technology compared to those with male children, whereas 66.6 per cent of mothers having boys reported 'noisy environment which disturbs the child'.
- The descriptive analysis of housing-related stress revealed that the highest stressors for mothers of visually challenged children had the opinion that the house is too small for the child to be active (mean 3.62). The lowest stressor was 'noisy environment which disturbs the child' (mean 2.89).

- The analysis of variance (ANOVA and 't' test) on stress related to housing conditions revealed significant differences at 1 per cent level on age of the mother ( $F=133.490^{**}$ ), educational qualification ( $F=142.834^{**}$ ), employment status of mother ( $F=214.530^{**}$ ), family income ( $F=478.962^{**}$ ), age of the child ( $F=9.559^{**}$ ) and gender of child ( $t=17.754^{**}$ ). Hence, the null hypothesis  $H_0$  is rejected

**(vi) Paid Help and Family Support**

- Regarding family and paid help support, mothers largely managed household activities on their own, receiving minimal support from their spouses, grandparents, and in-laws. Mothers with female children, in particular, relied on paid help for managing a few household activities.

**(vii) Involvement of children in Family Activities.**

- Cent percent of the mothers involved their children in making their birthday and other festivals memorable, followed by 'joining in social network', 'watching movies/listening to music'. Membership/interaction with the library/sports/arts club for the differently abled scored the least rank.

**c. Levels of Parental Stress among the Selected Respondents**

- The Parenting Stress Scale (PSS) revealed that the statement "the major source of stress in my life is my child(ren)" ranked highest, indicating significant caregiving demands. Mothers of male children reported higher stress on most items, reflecting societal expectations and caregiving challenges. The statement "I find my child(ren) enjoyable" scored least among mothers of both genders.
- Mothers aged between 36 and 45 years among illiterate mothers and those with professional degrees reported the highest stress levels, while mothers with higher secondary education reported the lowest stress scores. Employment and income were significantly associated with stress, with regular wage earners and mothers from low-income families showed higher stress scores. Additionally, mothers of male children and those aged between 4 and 6 years experienced elevated stress levels.
- The ANOVA revealed significant associations between selected socio-demographic variables and parental stress scores among mothers of visually

challenged children. Variables such as the mother's age ( $F=64.421^{**}$ ), educational qualification ( $F=119.085^{**}$ ), employment status of mother ( $F=102.081^{**}$ ), family income ( $F=258.248^{**}$ ), age of the child ( $F=11.155^{**}$ ) and gender of child ( $t=12.843^{**}$ ) show statistically significant differences ( $p < 0.01$ ) at 1 per cent level. Hence, Ha2.1 hypothesis is accepted.

#### **d. 5.1.4 Personal and Social Well-Being of Selected Respondents**

- The aspects of the personal and social well-being among the mothers highlight key domains of physical, psychological, and social well-being based on their gender. For mothers with boys and girls visually challenged children the statement, 'To what extent do you feel that physical pain prevents you from doing what you need to do?' ranked highest. The lowest ranked aspects were 'Do you have enough energy for everyday life?', 'To what extent do you feel your life to be meaningful?', and 'To what extent do you have the opportunity for leisure activities?' for the mothers having male children. 'How often do you have negative feelings such as blue mood, despair, anxiety, depression?' and 'Do you have enough energy for everyday life?' were the aspects scored least for the mothers having girl children.
- Mothers' age ( $F=32.889^{**}$ ), educational qualification ( $F=41.881^{**}$ ), employment status of mother ( $F=28.948^{**}$ ), family income ( $F=53.116^{**}$ ), age of the child ( $F=4.827^{**}$ ) and gender of child ( $t=3.868^{**}$ ) were considered for statistical analysis. The output of the F-test and t-test analysis showed that all aspects of personal and social well-being are statistically significant at 1% level. Hence, Ha2.2 hypothesis is accepted.
- The correlation analysis between factors contributing to stress, parental stress scale, and personal and social well-being revealed significant relationships. Strong positive correlations were found between parental stress and stress related to society ( $r = 0.701$ ) and the husband ( $r = 0.757$ ). A negative correlation was observed between stress and housing conditions ( $r = -0.627$ ). Additionally, personal and social well-being showed a significant negative relationship with societal stress ( $r = -0.388$ ) and husband-related stress ( $r = -0.426$ ). In contrast, a moderate positive relationship was found with housing stress ( $r = 0.406$ ). The hypothesis confirming the significant relationship between these variables was supported; hence, Ha3 was accepted.

**Phase 2: Training and Motivating the Mothers on Life Skills and Basic Hand Skills and Evaluating it's Impact (N=50)**

- Regarding the willingness to attend the training program and awareness of stress, among the 50 mothers, 97 per cent showed a desire to participate in the program, and the majority (82 per cent) were aware of stress coping techniques.
- The reasons as opined by mothers to participate in the training program was to 'be independent', 'start own business', 'help husband in financial needs', 'build up confidence to bring up the child', and 'utilize time effectively in the school campus'.
- One-to-one teaching was found to be the most effective learning method, as per the mothers' opinions regarding the training program.
- Regarding the impact of the training programme on life skills and hand skill development before and after, revealed significant positive changes in post-intervention. All mothers showed improvement in various aspects, including goal setting and time utilization (above 90%). Satisfying family needs, possessing sufficient knowledge of business, opportunities for self-sufficiency, and increased creativity (above 80%), while improving living conditions, learning the technical aspects of starting a business, and being independent (above 70%). A dynamic and risk-taking attitude increased for more than 60 percent of mothers of children with VI.
- The implementation of problem-focused strategies showed substantial improvements on 'Being realistic about time frames' and 'Prioritising commitments'(98 %).
- Emotion-focused strategies resulted in significant improvements in focusing on 'stay more focussed on important matters' (from zero to 80 per cent).
- Positive thinking strategies showed a substantial increase in 'involvement in all activities' from 7 per cent to 79 per cent after the intervention program.
- The training enhanced decision-making skills in prioritizing activities (from zero to 73 per cent) and 'Everyday Talking and spending time with children' (from 45 per cent to 84 per cent).

- About skill training program ‘ability to work under stress’ (from 14 to 94%), increased creativity (from 28 to 90%), ‘confidence in my ability to provide the need of my child’ (from 10 to 90%), inspiration to achieve my goal (from 26 to 86%) able to handle challenging situation (from 24 to 86%), learned more about technical aspects and procedure to start own business (from 16 to 84%), provides opportunities for self-sufficiency (from 20 to 80%), became more independent (from 18 to 78%) and improvement in daily living condition (from 12 to 76%) were the improvements showed by the respondents highlighting the success of the skill training program.
- There existed a significant difference at 1% level on problem-focused strategies ( $t=-52.518^{**}$ ), emotion-focused strategies ( $t=47.066^{**}$ ), positive thinking strategies ( $t=157.249^{**}$ ), decision-making strategies ( $t=128.037^{**}$ ), and hand skill development ( $t=73.567^{**}$ ). Therefore, the results of the intervention programme revealed a significant difference in life skills and skill development before and after the programme. Hence, the hypothesis Ha4 is accepted.
- The computed ‘t’ value for parenting stress scale ( $t=19.625^{**}$ ) and personal and social well-being ( $t=132.096^{**}$ ) proved to be significant at 1 % level. Therefore, the test results revealed a substantial difference in parental stress scale and personal and social well-being before and after imparting the training. Hence, the hypothesis Ha5 is accepted.
- About the assessment of the training program, all mothers rated it excellent for practical application and benefits, followed by content/presentation and organization of the programme.

### **Phase 3: Creating and Launching a Small Vending Store on the School Campus, by Trained Mothers (St. Louis Thai Store) (N=20)**

- Regarding preference of respondents towards entrepreneurship program for business, the study found that 52 per cent of the mothers of children with visual impairment expressed a strong interest in taking up entrepreneurship as a career option, and 8 per cent showed no interest.
- Cent per cent of the respondents were motivated by the researcher, school principal, and their children, followed by their husbands (72 per cent) and by themselves (62 per cent) to pursue entrepreneurial ventures.

- All mothers were satisfied with the skill training program on paper bag making/napkin disposal cover, mask making, preparation of phenyl, and low-cost nutritious food, where four percent of them were partially satisfied with liquid embroidery as it needed more intricate, task and talent.

**Phase 4: Evaluation of the Impact of the Enterprise Creation and Level of Satisfaction (N=10)**

- **Phenyl Production:** The mothers of children with visual impairment gained significant revenue through selling phenyl, which was in high demand during the pandemic in schools, hospitals, and churches. The investment for producing phenyl was minimal, at Rs. 580 per week, with weekly revenue of Rs. 620, yielding a profit of Rs. 120 per week. The sale of phenyl, especially its perfumed variety, became a successful entrepreneurial activity for these mothers, with 98 percent of their revenue derived from it. This business model proved beneficial for the mothers and could be encouraged as a sustainable entrepreneurial option in special schools.
- **Face Mask Production:** The mothers capitalized on the demand for face masks during the pandemic and also for allergies, sourcing materials from tailor shops and stitching masks to sell within the school. This venture was profitable, with 97% of the production sold on a weekly basis. This entrepreneurial venture proved to be both profitable and resourceful.
- **Paper Bag and Napkin Covers:** The mothers of visually challenged children utilized training in paper bag and napkin disposal cover production to create and sell these items within the school campus. They collected used newspapers and, with permission from the school principal, made medium and large-sized bags for staff and church members. The demand for these products was high, particularly for napkin disposal covers and paper bags, which helped to replace plastic bags on the school campus. The revenue earned from these sales highlighted the positive social impact of their efforts, especially in promoting hygiene and environmental sustainability.
- **Blouse Design and Liquid Embroidery:** The selected mothers, skilled in stitching and blouse design, were motivated to offer liquid embroidery designs. They not only sold their creations within the school campus but also took orders

from staff and conducted sales in open grounds. The new embroidery techniques, which replaced traditional Aari work, were well-received by the teachers. With minimal investment and effort, the mothers earned Rs 80 for simple designs and Rs 250 for more intricate ones, highlighting the profitability and popularity of their blouse-designing business.

- **Healthy ladoos:** The selected mothers, trained in preparing healthy ladoos, used ingredients such as roasted groundnuts, chickpeas, dates, and honey to create a cost-effective product. Initially met with hesitation, the ladoos gained popularity among staff and students after they sampled the product. The mothers sold around 300 ladoos weekly, generating an average revenue of Rs. 1000. The cost of making the ladoos was minimal, with each ladoo priced at Rs. 10. This initiative proved successful, both in terms of revenue generation and positive reception within the school community.

#### Case study (N=10)

- **Mrs. Mariyammal and Mrs. Lakshmi**, both mothers from financially struggling backgrounds, started a phenyl-making business after attending training sessions. They utilized their time during their children's school hours to produce and sell phenyl, gaining good profits. Their entrepreneurial efforts also included making and selling healthy ladoos in their neighborhood, helping them manage family finances during difficult times.
- **Mrs. Jayalakshmi and Mrs. Kavitha** ventured into mask-making during the COVID-19 pandemic. They began by producing high-quality masks at affordable prices and marketing them through word-of-mouth and social media. Their business grew quickly, and they supported local health initiatives while employing other women in their community.
- **Mrs. Yasmin and Mrs. Nithya** began creating eco-friendly paper bags and napkin covers using discarded newspapers. After attending training, they sold their products in the local community and school, offering sustainable alternatives to plastic. Their business not only provided financial support but also contributed to environmental sustainability.
- **Mrs. Santhana Lakshmi and Mrs. Thilagavathi** used their training to create healthy ladoos using health-boosting ingredients. They marketed their ladoos

within their community and the school campus, providing a steady income while promoting better nutrition for their families and children.

- **Mrs. Monica and Mrs. Geetha**, both mothers of children with visual impairments, turned their passion for fashion into an entrepreneurial venture by designing blouses with liquid embroidery and Aari work. Starting with minimal investment, they started small business serving teachers and steadily gained recognition for their creative and affordable designs.

### **Conclusion**

This research highlights the significant challenges faced by mothers of children with visual impairments in Chennai, particularly in terms of stress, financial instability, and limited support systems. In many cultural contexts, parents often feel a greater burden when raising sons, as they are traditionally expected to assume family responsibilities and financial stability in adulthood. This added pressure may contribute to a lower perceived personal and social well-being among these mothers. The study demonstrated that intervention programs focusing on life skills and stress management played a pivotal role in reducing stress and enhancing the personal and social well-being of these mothers. Moreover, entrepreneurship emerged as a powerful tool to address both the financial challenges and emotional strain experienced by these mothers. By engaging in small-scale businesses, such as phenyl production, mask-making, eco-friendly paper bag creation, healthy laddoo preparation, and blouse designing, these mothers not only achieved financial independence but also experienced a sense of empowerment, which positively impacted their mental well-being.

The success of these micro-enterprise initiatives highlights the importance of a holistic support system for mothers of children with visual impairments. This system should include financial support, emotional guidance, and skill-building opportunities. The findings align with broader literature on women's empowerment, emphasizing the transformative potential of entrepreneurship for women from marginalized backgrounds. Studies by Awasthi (2023), Kapoor & Sharma (2022), and the World Bank (2023) further reinforce that entrepreneurship and skill-based training significantly enhance women's confidence, economic stability, and social empowerment, even when they are in distress.

The research shows that providing educational programs, entrepreneurial support, and mental health interventions can significantly improve the lives of mothers of children with visual impairments. The successful establishment of small businesses by these mothers is a testament to the power of skill development, community support, and innovation in overcoming financial and personal challenges. The findings provide a clear pathway for future interventions aimed at enhancing the well-being and independence of mothers facing similar challenges, thereby contributing to their economic stability and overall personal and social well-being.

### **Limitations of the Study**

- The study was limited to a specific group of mothers within a particular geographic area, which may not be representative of all mothers of children with visual impairments across different regions or cultural contexts.
- Modern technological assistive devices used by the visually challenged children and its impact are not studied.
- The study relies on self-reported measures of stress levels and empowerment.
- Various external factors, such as family support, financial constraints, or access to resources, could influence the effectiveness of entrepreneurship.
- The WHOQOL-BREF is a general tool and may not specifically reflect the unique experiences and stress faced by mothers of visually challenged children.
- The findings may not apply to all mothers of visually challenged children.

### **Recommendations:**

- Introduce more flexible skill-based training programs within special school campuses to suit mothers' time and mobility constraints which can be replicated in other institution catering to special children.
- Provide seed funding or microloans to help interested mothers to start small businesses.
- Engage families, especially husbands, through awareness sessions to promote support for mothers' participation.
- Create peer support groups among mothers for emotional encouragement and business collaboration.

- Collaborate with NGOs, government schemes, and CSR initiatives to provide financial aid and mentorship.
- Ensure that school authorities and staff are involved to provide permissions and space for entrepreneurial activities.
- Monitor long-term outcomes of such interventions to track changes in stress levels and personal and social well-being.
- Government agencies can promote skill training to women through entrepreneurship development institute so that more uniform and standard programme can be conducted.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

- Compare the effectiveness in ensuring sustainability and social impact for mothers of visually challenged children.
- Identify challenges in securing low-interest loans and strategies to enhance entrepreneurial success.
- Analyze the impact of mentors, business advisors, and support networks on business sustainability.
- Assess their role in fostering business growth and community engagement.
- Explore the role of digital tools and online platforms in facilitating entrepreneurship for mothers.
- Study the influence of cultural factors on entrepreneurial success and identify globally effective strategies.

This study though a minor step in improving the self-esteem and confidence in a small section of our women population, the researcher have the satisfaction of throwing a small light in their lives which can create a long standing motivation to the mothers of differently abled children irrespective of their age, culture or religion.