

**SPECIMEN FORMAT FOR THESES OF MONTH**

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<b>Title of the thesis</b>	:	Exploring Entrepreneurship as a Coping Strategy for Mothers of Visually Challenged Children
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**Abstract within 300 words:**

Mothers of visually challenged children face persistent emotional, social, and economic challenges arising from intensive caregiving responsibilities, societal stigma, financial insecurity, and limited institutional support. These stressors often lead to elevated parenting stress, reduced self-esteem, and diminished personal and social well-being. The present study investigates the effectiveness of entrepreneurship as a coping strategy to alleviate stress and enhance the overall quality of life of mothers of visually challenged children. Anchored in Resource Management Theory, the study conceptualises time, energy, and financial resources as critical constraints and examines how these can be effectively reorganised through life skills development and entrepreneurial engagement. A mixed-methods research design was adopted, and the study was conducted in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, across four systematic phases.

Phase I, a cross-sectional survey, comprised a total sample of 423 mothers of visually challenged children drawn from eight special schools and organisations to assess socio-economic characteristics, factors leading to stress, parenting stress levels, and personal and social well-being.

Phase II employed a pre-test and post-test intervention design with a sub-sample of 50 mothers, who participated in a structured Life Skills Training (LST) and handskills training programme focusing on stress management, decision-making, positive thinking, and income-generating skills.

Phase III involved 20 trained mothers who established and operated a small-scale vending enterprise on the school campus (St. Louis Thai Store), while Phase IV evaluated the impact of entrepreneurship and satisfaction levels through detailed case studies of 10 mothers. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, independent and paired tests, one-way ANOVA, and correlation analysis to examine differences and relationships between socio-demographic variables, stress factors, parenting stress, and personal and social well-being. The findings revealed statistically significant differences at the 1 per cent level, indicating that socio-demographic variables significantly influenced stress and well-being outcomes. Post-intervention results demonstrated a significant reduction in parenting stress and substantial improvement in life skills, emotional resilience, self-confidence, decision-making ability, financial independence, and personal and social well-being among the mothers. The study further establishes that entrepreneurship, when supported through

structured training, institutional backing, and community-based frameworks, functions not only as a viable economic intervention but also as a powerful psychosocial coping mechanism. The integration of livelihood creation with emotional and social support contributed to enhanced resilience, improved caregiving capacity, and sustainable empowerment of mothers of visually challenged children. The study recommends the incorporation of inclusive livelihood initiatives, school-based entrepreneurial models, and supportive policy frameworks to promote the long-term well-being and socioeconomic security of caregivers of children with disabilities.

**i) Major objectives :**

- Understand the stress levels of selected mothers about socio-economic status.
- Analyze the impact of Life Skills Training (LST) and hands-on training programmes 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.

**ii) Hypothesis:**

The hypotheses of the study are as follows:

- Ho1. There would be no significant difference in factors contributing 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 contributing 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 skill development 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.

### **iii) Methodology :**

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 in the School Campus, by Trained Mothers (St. Louis Thai Store)

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

a) Post-assessment

b) Case Study

### **iv) Findings:**

- Survey to Assess the Socio-economic Status and Stress Levels among Selected Mothers of VCC: Findings (Assessment of Socio-economic Profile, Stress, and Well-being) Phase I findings revealed that most mothers of visually challenged children were young to middle-aged, married, and belonged to low-income nuclear families with limited employment opportunities. A large proportion spent prolonged hours within school premises due to caregiving demands, restricting their ability to engage in paid work. Parenting stress was significantly high, mainly due to constant caregiving, child-related responsibilities, and concern for the child’s future. Stress levels varied significantly across age, income, education, and child characteristics. Personal and social well-being was adversely affected, particularly due to physical exhaustion, health issues, and lack of sufficient energy. Statistical analysis confirmed significant differences in stress and well-being across socio-demographic variables, leading to acceptance of hypotheses Ha1.1 and Ha1.2.
- Training and Motivating the Mothers on Life Skills and Basic Skills and Evaluating its Impact: Phase II – Findings (Life Skills and Entrepreneurship Training Programme) Phase II findings showed that the structured life skills and entrepreneurship training significantly enhanced mothers’ coping abilities, decision-making, and positive thinking. Post-training results indicated a marked improvement

in all life skill dimensions, with mean scores increasing substantially compared to the pre-training phase. The intervention effectively utilized mothers' unavoidable waiting time at school for productive skill development. Training programmes were found to be feasible, participant-friendly, and suitable for mothers with limited education. The t-test results confirmed statistically significant improvement at the 1% level, leading to acceptance of hypothesis Ha2. Overall, the programme strengthened confidence, motivation, and readiness for income generation.

- **Creating and Launching a Small Vending Store on the School Campus, by Trained Mothers (St. Louis Thai Store): Phase III – Findings (Impact on Stress and Personal & Social Well-being)** Phase III results demonstrated a significant reduction in parenting stress and a notable improvement in personal and social well-being after the training intervention. The computed t-values for both parenting stress and well-being were statistically significant at the 1% level, confirming the effectiveness of the intervention. Mothers reported better emotional balance, improved coping with caregiving demands, and enhanced self-esteem. Engagement in productive activities reduced feelings of helplessness and emotional fatigue. These results validated the hypothesis Ha4, confirming that entrepreneurship-based intervention positively influenced psychological and social outcomes. **Phase IV – Findings (Entrepreneurship Outcomes and Income Generation)**
- **Evaluating the Impact of the Enterprise Creation (Vending Store) and Level of Satisfaction:** Phase IV findings indicated that the trained mothers successfully established small-scale income-generating activities with minimal investment and high profitability. Activities such as phenol production, face mask making, liquid embroidery, paper products, and nutritious laddoo preparation yielded consistent weekly profits, with a total net profit of ₹ 4,389. Institutional support from the school ensured steady demand, reduced marketing constraints, and enhanced sustainability. Mothers were able to balance income generation with caregiving responsibilities effectively. The intervention improved financial independence, confidence, and self-reliance. Overall, entrepreneurship emerged as a viable and empowering strategy for economic and psychosocial upliftment of mothers of visually challenged children.

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