# CHAPTER 3

# DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Research is a systematic and objective process of inquiry aimed at discovering, interpreting, and revising facts to address specific problems or questions (Creswell and Creswell, 2023). According to Saunders et al. 2019, "a research design is the overall plan that combines the various study components logically and cohesively, guaranteeing that the research problem is successfully addressed. It also includes the guidelines for data collection, measurement, and analysis."

With these facts in view, the research design for the present study, **"Exploring Entrepreneurship as a Coping Strategy for Mothers of Visually Challenged Children,"** is discussed under the following headings:

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

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

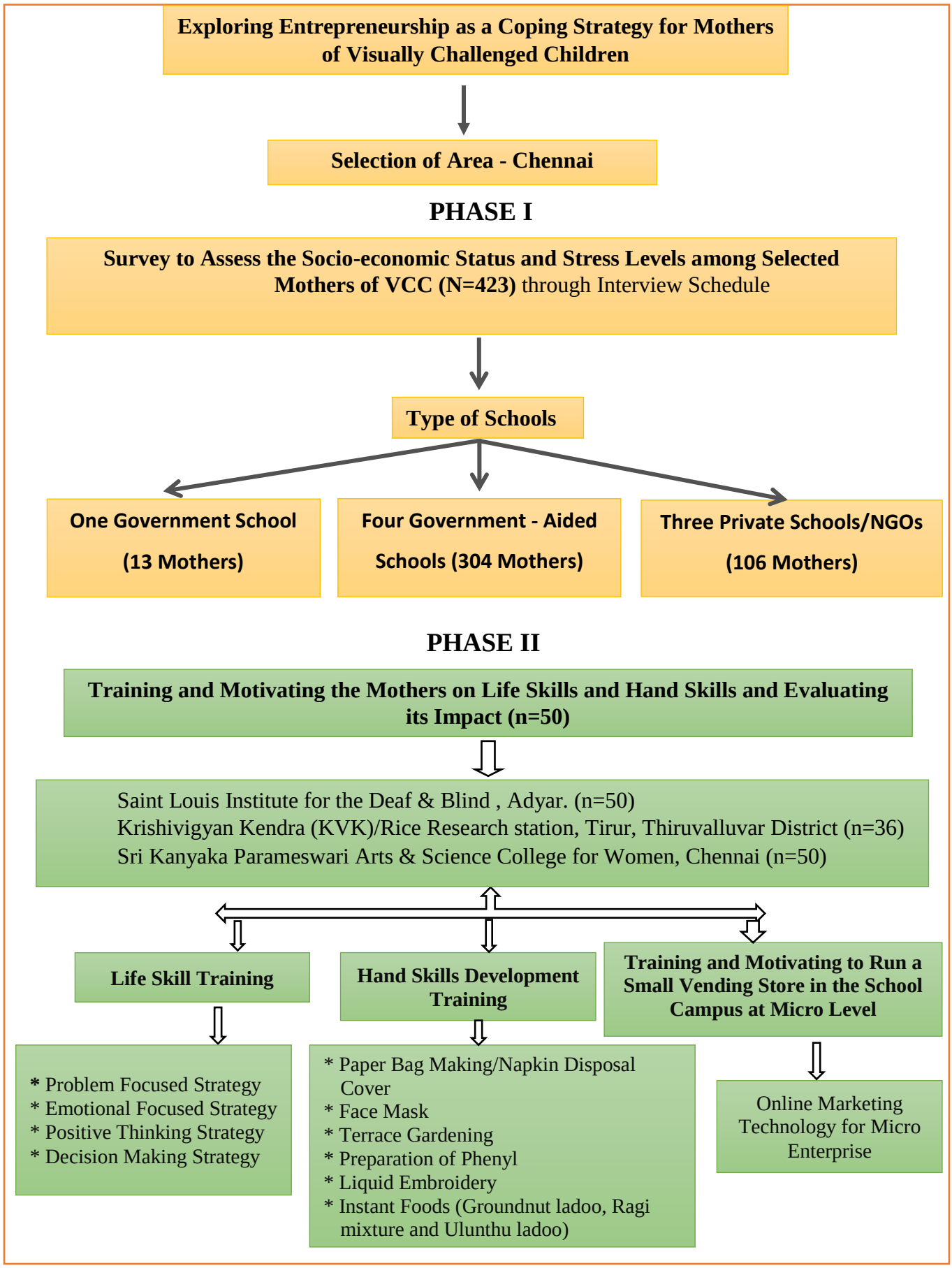
**3.3. Phase 3:** Creating and Launching a Small Vending Store in the School Campus, by Trained Mothers (St. Louis Thai Store)

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

a) Post-assessment

b) Case Study

The schematic representation of the study's phases is shown in Figure 2.


Exploring Entrepreneurship as a Coping Strategy for Mothers of Visually Challenged Children
Selection of Area - Chennai
PHASE I
Survey to Assess the Socio-economic Status and Stress Levels among Selected Mothers of VCC (N=423) through Interview Schedule
Type of Schools
One Government School (13 Mothers)
Four Government - Aided Schools (304 Mothers)
Three Private Schools/NGOs (106 Mothers)
PHASE II
Training and Motivating the Mothers on Life Skills and Hand Skills and Evaluating its Impact (n=50)
Saint Louis Institute for the Deaf & Blind , Adyar. (n=50)
Krishivigyan Kendra (KVK)/Rice Research station, Tirur, Thiruvalluvar District (n=36)
Sri Kanyaka Parameswari Arts & Science College for Women, Chennai (n=50)
Life Skill Training
Hand Skills Development Training
Training and Motivating to Run a Small Vending Store in the School Campus at Micro Level
* Problem Focused Strategy
* Emotional Focused Strategy
* Positive Thinking Strategy
* Decision Making Strategy
* Paper Bag Making/Napkin Disposal Cover
* Face Mask
* Terrace Gardening
* Preparation of Phenyl
* Liquid Embroidery
* Instant Foods (Groundnut ladoo, Ragi mixture and Ulunthu ladoo)
Online Marketing Technology for Micro Enterprise

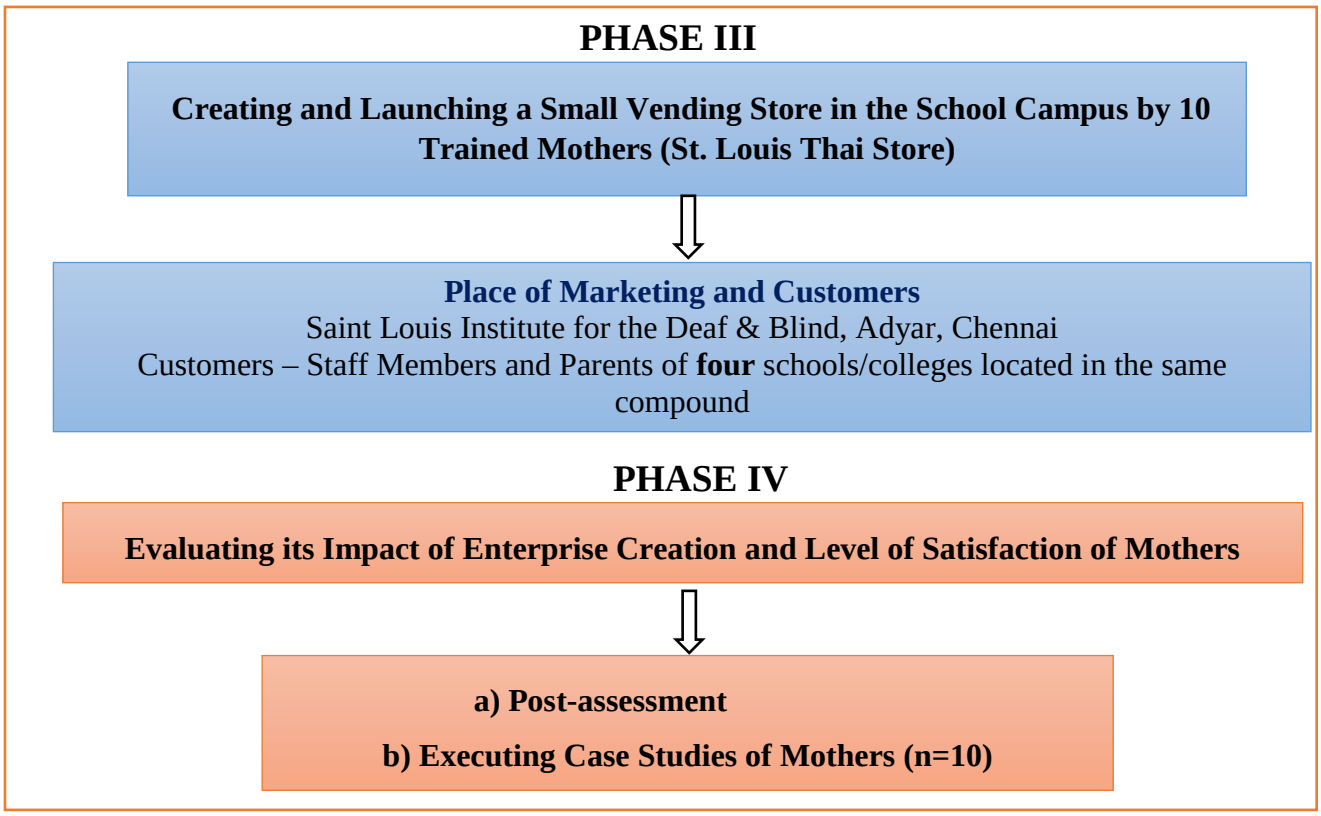



**Figure 2: Research Design**

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

The mothers of visually challenged children being the target population, schools for VCC in Chennai city were visited to understand the number of mothers who bring their children, stay there and return home after the school. As the first step in research, for conducting the survey, permission letter was obtained from one government School, four government-aided schools, and three private/NGOs (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 (T. Nagar), Nethrodaya (Mogappair), Little Flower Sheltered Workshop for the Blind (Greams Road, Mylapore), St. Louis Institute for the Deaf and Blind (Adyar), and Government Blind School (Virugambakkam)), Chennai (Annexure II).

The survey was conducted to find out the general socio-economic background of families, stress levels, personal and social well-being, and skills needed to overcome stress. A survey is the process of gathering data from existing population units with no specific control over factors that may impact the population characteristics of interest in

the research (Kothari & Gaurav, 2019). The survey was conducted to acquire the data needed for this part of the study. Aspects included in this phase are detailed as follows:

**3.1.1 Selection of Study Area**

**3.1.2 Selection of the Sample**

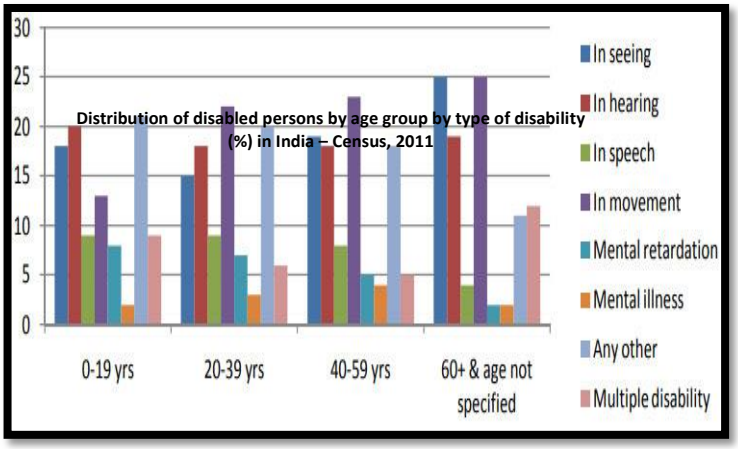
**3.1.3 Selection of Tools**

**3.1.4 Collection of Data**

**3.1.5 Analysis and Interpretation of Data**

### 3.1.1 Selection of Study Area

The study area was Chennai city, the capital of the state of Tamil Nadu, located in the northeast of the state, is one of the busy hubs. Apart from being a central district, this capital also serves as the entryway to South India. In sequence, Chennai has developed into one of the cosmopolitan cities in India and plays a significant role in the historical, cultural, and intellectual growth of India. The investigator selected Chennai city as it was an ideal choice for the study as it has many institutes catering to the needs of the differently abled which helped in collecting information from the mothers of visually challenged children.


**Sources:** http://www.census2011.co.in/census/district/21-chennai.html,
http://www.indiaonlinepages.com/population/india-population-2011.html

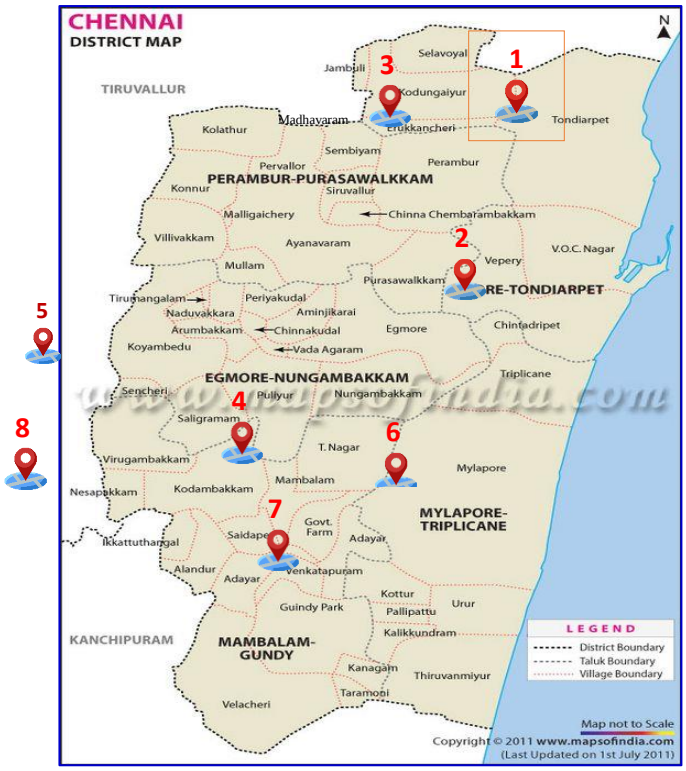
## Plate 1: Selection of Area

### 3.1.2 Selection of the Sample

Sampling refers to the process of selecting a small subset from a larger population for research purposes, typically when it is impractical to study the entire population (Julious, 2023). Lohr (2021) describes sampling as the method of identifying a group from which data will be collected, especially when the population is too large to include

all members. Purposive sampling is a non-probability technique where the researcher intentionally selects individuals based on specific characteristics relevant to the study (Acharyya & Bhattacharya, 2019). This method is cost-effective and saves time, as the researcher relies on expertise to choose the most suitable participants, ensuring more relevant and insightful data. In Chennai, 11 blind schools cater to the educational needs of visually impaired children, with eight located in the central, north, and south parts of the city. These schools offer specialized education, Braille training, and support services (Chennai.nic.in, 2023).

The location of the selected institutes for the study area is shown in Plate 2.




1. Om Muruga special school and vocational training center (Tondiarpet)
2. Tamil Nadu Association of the Blind School (Tondiarpet)
3. Mission to the blind (Madhavaram)
4. Little flower convent higher secondary school for the visually impaired (Nungambakkam)
5. Nethrodaya (Mogappair)
6. Little Flower Sheltered Workshop for the blind (Greams Road, Mylapore)
7. Saint Louis Institute for the Deaf & Blind (Adyar)
8. Government Blind School (Virugambakkam)

## Plate 2: Map Showing the Location of the Study – Chennai

The researcher used purposive sampling method to select mothers of visually challenged children from schools and sought support from various NGOs and organizations in Chennai. After finalizing the sample population and research tools, the

researcher obtained permission from the principals of the selected schools to conduct the survey among the mothers.

A visit was made to these schools to determine the number of mothers who wait for their children at school, as it is not practical to drop them off and pick them up daily. A total of 423 mothers were found for the study. The mothers, responsible for both child-rearing and caring for other family members, often left their jobs to focus on raising their children. Some faced difficulties and placed their children in reputable blind school hostels. During the survey, the investigator observed that some mothers expressed their keen interest in skill-based training programs as a means to enhance their income and achieve self-empowerment.

### 3.1.3 Selection of Tool

This part of Phase I includes the following:

**3.1.3.1 Formulating the interview schedule and Pilot study**

**3.1.1.2 Conducting the interview using the pretested schedule**

#### 3.1.3.1 Formulating the Interview Schedule and Pilot study

An interview schedule is a prepared set of questions or topics designed to guide an interviewer during a research interview. It ensures consistency and systematic data collection, particularly in structured and semi-structured interviews. According to Kumar (2019), an interview schedule helps reduce interviewer bias and improve the reliability of qualitative data by providing a standardized approach to each interview. To facilitate the investigator's ability to pose coherent questions about the study, an interview schedule was developed to collect primary data. A structured schedule was used as a tool for data collection. It was designed to collect details from the selected mothers of visually challenged children regarding their socio-economic background, factors leading to stress, family and societal support, stress-coping strategies and techniques adopted, attitude, and the motivating factors that led them to consider entrepreneurship in the future.

Pilot study was conducted among forty mothers of visually challenged children from blind schools in Chennai city in order to ensure the clarity of the questions and also to validate and check the reliability of the interview schedule. Smith et al. (2020) suggested that, before conducting a full-scale field experiment, a pilot study should be conducted among one-tenth of the subjects to assess the important aspects of the survey, thereby reducing ambiguity in the interview schedule and the modified schedule used for the study to collect data is presented in Annexure II.

### 3.1.3.2 Conducting the Interview Using the Pretested Schedule

After selecting and formulating the research tools, discussions were held with the Social Service Department of Loyola College, Chennai, and the Yoga Mandiram Organization, Chennai, to refine and adapt the tools to suit the study. (Plate 3). The modified tool (Annexure II) was administered to the mothers of visually challenged children using the interview method. According to Neeraja et al. (2015), the interview method is defined as a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information, focusing on the content specified by the research objectives of systematic description, prediction, or explanation. The interview method involves a direct or indirect meeting between the researcher and the respondents. The researcher determines the questions in advance, aiming to elicit responses that align with the research goals. The survey was conducted offline among the mothers of visually challenged children, from LKG to 12th standard (aged between 4 and 18 years), to gather information relevant to the study. The socio-demographic details of both the mothers and their children were collected personally to analyze the relationship between the independent and dependent variables (Plate 4) using an interview schedule. Along with the questionnaire, some mothers also took part in semi-structured interviews. These interviews helped the researcher understand their caregiving experiences and the stress they faced. The main purpose of the interviews was exploratory, they guided the design of the questionnaire, refined the stress-related items, and ensured the tool was relevant to their context. The interview data were not analyzed separately using qualitative methods like coding or narrative study. Instead, the interviews acted as supportive input, making the questionnaire stronger and helping interpret the findings more clearly.

**Plate 3: Discussion with the Subject Expert and Social Servicer**

**Plate 4: Conduct of the Interview**

**Variables of the Study:** The variables of the present study are as follows:

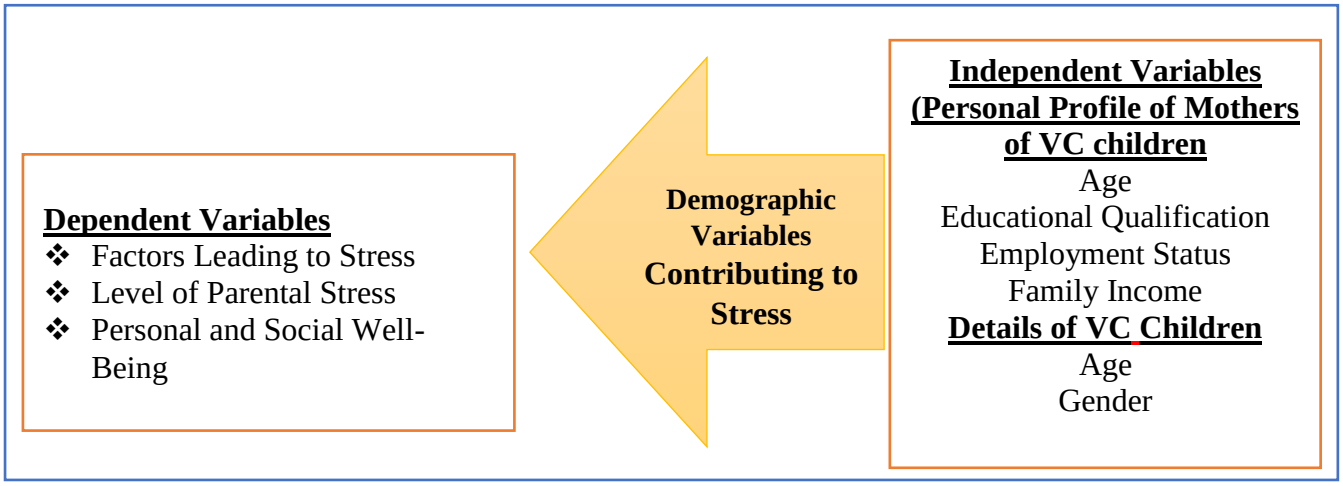



**Figure 3: Demographic Variables Contributing to Stress**

### 3.1.3.3 Description of the Tool

The interview schedule includes the following factors:

a. Socio-economic status of the family of the selected respondents.

b. Factors leading to stress by selected respondents

c. Paid help and family support in caring for children with visual impairment

d. Awareness of stress and involvement of children in family activities (Child Centeredness scale, Cox A and Bentovim A, 2000).

e. Level of parental stress (Parental Stress Scale 1995, Berry & Jones, 5-point Likert Scale by *Berry, JD, & Jones, W.H., 1995 initial psychometric evidence. Journal of Social and Personal* Relationships, 12, 463-472.)

f. Personal and Social Well-Being (Quality of Life and Health Scale, 2014, WHOQOL-BREF) and

g. Willingness to participate in hand skill training and life skill training programmes

**a. Socio-Economic Status of the Families of the Selected Respondents**

This section collects information on mothers' variables, including age, educational qualifications, marital status, and employment status. The **family variables** include family type, family size, family income, the employment status of the husband, the location of the family, and the number of children (excluding visually challenged children). **Housing variables** include ownership, type of house, and size of house. Additionally, the **details of visually challenged children,** including age, gender, number of children with VI, ordinal position, child's stay in home/hostel, severity of VI and the causes of blindness were included for the study.

**b. Factors Leading to Stre`ss by Selected Respondents**

Information about sociological stressors—stress related to society, husband, children, and housing conditions—was analyzed to assess the stress level among the selected respondents using a five-point rating scale.

Rating scales are structured tools commonly employed in survey research to quantify subjective attitudes, perceptions, or experiences. They enable respondents to express the intensity or frequency of their opinions or behaviors across an ordered scale. Modern research emphasizes the importance of scale reliability, validity, and respondent comprehension to ensure accurate data collection" (Joshi et al., 2015; Revilla & Ochoa, 2017). It is a self-structured questionnaire; the statements were derived from approximately 35 books and journals. In addition, qualitative insights gathered from the responses and lived experiences shared by the mothers during preliminary interactions were also incorporated to ensure contextual relevance and cultural sensitivity. This dual approach enhanced the face validity of the tool, as it ensured that the statements were both theoretically grounded and practically resonant with the target population. "To ensure the accuracy and consistency of the questionnaire on factors contributing to stress, both validity and reliability tests were conducted. The content validity was established with the help of subject experts, who reviewed each item for relevance and clarity. Necessary modifications were made based on their feedback. For reliability, Cronbach's alpha was used to assess internal consistency. The overall reliability score was found to be 0.9, which indicates good reliability. Therefore, the tool used in the study is both valid and reliable for measuring the factors leading to stress among mothers of visually challenged children." This section consists of 40 statements with five-point scale provided to show how much the selected respondents agree or disagree with each

statement, from "strongly agree (SA), agree (A), neutral (N), disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD)" with scores 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1, respectively. The total score was calculated using the formula for the scores obtained (Nx5 + Nx4 + Nx3 + Nx2 + Nx1 = 3495 x No. of Statements), where N = No. of male children (233) and (Nx5 + Nx4 + Nx3 + Nx2 + Nx1 = 2850 x No. of Statements) where N = No of female children (190). Hence, the higher the score, the higher the stress.

**c. Paid Help and Family Support**

Information about household activities supported by family members, paid help, or the mothers themselves in cooking, washing, mopping floors, spending time with children, buying vegetables, making children get ready for school, helping children in homework, playing with children, bathing, feeding, and dressing was graded as self, spouse, parent, in-laws, paid help, and not applicable (single mothers) by considering scores of 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, and 0, respectively.

**d. Awareness of Stress and Involvement of Children in Family Activities**

**Awareness of Stress**

Information about (1) awareness, (2) kinds of stress-relieving techniques the mothers adopt, and (3) time spent for relaxation and knowledge-gaining on basic stress-relieving techniques by the respondents was included in this aspect.

**Involvement of Children in Family Activities**

Child-centeredness is reflected in providing the child with opportunities to engage in autonomous activities of their own choice or family activities that parent's judge to be potentially enjoyable or fulfilling for the child. It is derived from the Child-Centeredness Scale by Marjorie Smith (1985), which provides practitioners and investigators with an opportunity to explore the caring environment for their children. There are two versions—one for children aged between 2 and 6 years and one for children aged between 7 and 12 years. This scale has been modified to understand the involvement of children in family and social activities. This scale contains 15 statements. Each statement is scored as 1 if it has occurred or zero if it has not, and the item scores are summed to give a total score from 0 to 15 for the list of specific activities. The questionnaire is scored on a continuum, where the higher the score, the more involvement of child family activities are (Cox A and Bentovim A, 2000).

**e. Level of Parental Stress**

The Parental Stress Scale, developed by Berry & Jones (1995) to measure stress associated directly with the demands of parenting, was used to understand the mothers' stress. Berry and Jones (1995) established support for the reliability of the Parental Stress Scale, which aims to measure the levels of stress experienced by parents and considers both positive and negative aspects.

Higher levels of parental stress related to

- Low levels of parental sensitivity to the child.
- Poor child behaviour
- Low quality of parent-child relationship.

  Mothers responded to each of the 18 statements using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A total of 18 statements are then summed to obtain an overall score.

Provides a measure that considers positive aspects (e.g., emotional benefits, personal development) of parenting as well as the negative (demands on resources, restrictions) aspects of parenthood, which consists of 18 statements. Respondents agree or disagree in terms of their typical relationship with their child or children with a five-point scale (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=undecided, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree).

Doubts were clarified during the administration of the survey. The scale is relatively short and easy to administer, making it suitable for use as a ‘before and after measure.’

**Scoring the tool:** A low score indicates a low level of stress, while a high score indicates a high level of stress.

- Overall possible scores on the scale range from 18 to 90.
- The higher the score, the higher the measured level of parental stress.

Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) is a measure of general stress, and obtained significant correlations for parents of ($r(233) = .50$; $p < .01$) and parents of children with disabilities ($r(51) = .41$, $p < .01$) (Berry and Jones , 1995).

**f. Personal and Social Well-Being (Quality of Life and Health Scale, WHOQOL-BREF, 2014)**

To assess the personal and social well-being of mothers of VCC, the quality of life, the WHOQOL-BREF scale, developed by the World Health Organization (June 1997, updated January 10, 2014), was utilized. In WHOQOL-BREF, the term "BREF" is derived from the word "brief," indicating that this version is a shortened form of the original WHOQOL-100 questions. This validated tool comprises 26 statements across four domains of quality of life: physical, psychological, social, and environmental.

**Physical domain** (statements 4, 10, 15, 16, 17, 18): Assesses physical well-being, e.g., "To what extent do you feel that physical pain prevents you from doing what you need to do?"

**Psychological domain** (statements 5, 6, 7, 11, 19, 26): Addresses mental well-being, e.g., "How much do you enjoy life?"

**Social domain** (statements 20, 21, 22): Evaluates social relationships, e.g., "How satisfied are you with your relationships?"

**Environmental domain** (statements 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 23, 24, 25): Considers environmental factors, e.g., "How safe do you feel in your daily life?"

A five-point Likert scale (1-5) was used, where 5 indicates the highest quality of life. Reverse scoring was applied to selected items in the physical and psychological domains. Quality of life levels were categorized based on mean scores: 1-2.33 (low), 2.34-3.66 (moderate), and 3.67-5 (high). The category length was determined to be 1.33.

**g. Willingness to Participate in Life Skill and Hand Skill Training Programme**

The final segment of the survey aimed to assess the willingness of mothers of visually challenged children to participate in skill training and life skill programs designed to establish new businesses. The objective is to help these mothers alleviate their stress and empower them through entrepreneurial activities.

**Pretesting and Finalizing the Data Collection Tool**

The interview schedule used to obtain data from the samples, in compliance with the study's objectives, was carefully scrutinized to ensure that the questions were unambiguous, clear, complete, and comprehensive, thereby identifying the important

factors that influence the stress levels of the selected mothers. All precautions were taken, and the interview schedule was followed as closely as possible. The standardized tools used included the Parental Stress Scale, developed by Berry & Jones (1995), the WHO Quality of Life BREF, and the Child-Centeredness Scale, initially developed by Marjorie Smith in 1985 and revised by Cox and Bentovim (2000). Recent studies emphasize the importance of pre-testing interview schedules to ensure the clarity, reliability, and validity of the questions before the actual survey. Pre-testing methods, such as expert reviews and cognitive interviews, are commonly used. These methods help identify potential issues with the questions and ensure that the instrument is effective in gathering the intended data (Sunil et al., 2023).

The study was submitted for review by the ethics committee. It was approved and granted research permission with the number AUW/IHEC/RM-20-21/XPD/17 by the Institutional Human Ethics Committee of Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore (Annexure I: Ethical Clearance Certificate). To ensure that no ethical violations occurred, signed permission was obtained from the individuals who participated in the research.

The researcher briefed the survey participants on the investigation's goal and then provided the necessary information. Since Tamil is a regional language, the interview schedule was explained in Tamil.

### 3.1.4 Collection of Data

The data were collected from the selected samples using the well-structured, pre-tested interview schedule formulated by the researcher. "Survey research is a widely adopted method in social sciences for systematically gathering information from a defined population. It serves both exploratory and confirmatory purposes, helping researchers to develop hypotheses as well as test them depending on the existing knowledge base and the intended application of the findings" (Vehovar et al., 2016).

Efforts were made to collect the filled-out schedules from the researcher's contacts, including schools, NGOs, relatives, and neighbors. The respondents were provided with a comfortable atmosphere that ensured privacy, allowing them to respond without hesitation. Hence, the researcher built a good rapport with the selected samples; the researcher felt that they were very emotional while answering the questions. Wherever explanations were required, the researcher explained the terms and made it

easy for the respondents to answer. A significant constraint faced during the data collection process was the time constraint and the COVID-19 situation. The returned schedule was checked to assess the completion of the question with the required information. However, their response rate was very satisfactory since most of them were personally contacted. The response rate was 423 out of 456, with a few respondents being reluctant to participate.

As a part of the field observations, it was noted that many mothers of visually challenged children accompanied their children to school and stayed within the school campus throughout the day. This daily routine resulted in considerable free time for these mothers. Several of them expressed a genuine interest in using this time to engage in meaningful and income-generating activities within the school environment. In response to this need, the researchers designed a skill development training programme aimed at enhancing their life skills and promoting self-reliance. However, the sudden onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 posed unexpected challenges to conducting group training sessions, as public health restrictions made it unsafe to gather all participants together in a single location.

### 3.1.5 Analysis and Interpretation of Data

According to Creswell and Creswell (2017), "Once data is collected, it must undergo systematic procedures such as organization, coding, categorization, and interpretation to ensure that meaningful patterns and themes can be identified. Data analysis is essential for transforming raw data into insights that align with the study's objectives." The data collected from the respondents were checked, classified, coded, tabulated, analyzed, interpreted and presented. The data were statistically analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) (Version 27.0). Descriptive statistics such as number, percentage, mean, standard deviation, t-test, and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were computed. Graphs and figures were used to present the data in Chapter IV, Results and Discussion.

## 3.2. Phase 2: Training and Motivating the Mothers on Life Skills and Hand Skills and Evaluating its Impact (N=50)

Following the analysis of survey data, it became evident that mothers of visually challenged children faced significant financial challenges and expressed a strong desire to generate income, particularly through engaging them in skill development activities

during their children's school breaks. Moreover, it was noted that a considerable number of these mothers had left their previous employment to devote themselves entirely to caring for their children. Notably, the survey revealed a pressing need among these mothers to alleviate stress through targeted stress management strategies.

These findings catalyzed for the researcher to design and implement a training program aimed at enhance the life skills of these mothers and equipping them with the necessary hand skills to establish their businesses through comprehensive skill development initiatives. Anilkumar et al. (2015) indicate that training helps to enhance a person's capabilities and enables them to make the right decision at the right time. Therefore, such a training programme should be developed which can increase self-confidence, especially among women. These programmes are crafted with the active participation of beneficiaries, fostering skills that lead to income generation, self-sufficiency, and overall well-being." In this, mothers were not only receptive to the intervention but also proactive, suggesting their need for getting trained in producing homemade products. They were confident that such a programme would provide them with the tools to initiate small businesses, addressing both financial constraints and emotional resilience.

This led to the following steps:

**3.2.1 Selection of the Location**

**3.2.2 Selection of Sample**

**3.2.3 Structuring of Programmes – Life Skills and Basic Hand Skills**

**3.2.4 Formulation of the Training Schedule**

**3.2.5 Conduct of Training Programme**

### 3.2.1 Selection of the Location -

For the implementation of Phase II, the St. Louis Institute for the Deaf & Blind in Chennai city was selected. The choice of this institution was based on multiple factors: the school authorities, already familiar with the research scholar, granted permission to conduct the programmes; the Institute is well-established, popular, and easily accessible; and importantly, a significant number of mothers stay on the school premises with their children, ensuring better participation and support for the intervention.

### 3.2.2 Selection of Sample

Sampling is the process of selecting a subset of individuals from a population to represent the whole group. It enables researchers to conclude a larger population without examining every individual (Etikan & Bala, 2023). A well-chosen sample should closely reflect the characteristics of the population from which it is drawn.

Purposive sampling, also known as judgmental or selective sampling, involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups that are exceptionally knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest. It is widely used in qualitative research where researchers aim to gain deeper insights (Palinkas et al., 2021).

A comprehensive list of potential participants was compiled based on the mothers' willingness to participate in the program. These mothers had these characteristics in common like lower socio-economic status, lack of entrepreneurial background, necessity to earn while staying for an extended period in school along with children, meet economic needs and satisfy the child's desire and possibility to have the selected mothers under the direct supervision of the investigator.

**Plate 5: Interacting with the School Administrators**

Fifty mothers of visually challenged children from the St. Louis Institute for the Deaf and Blind in Chennai City were identified or willingness to undergo training based on the age range of the children (10-17 years), their grade level (6th to 11th standard), and maternal consent to participate in the training program. Accessibility to the investigator was facilitated by the familiarity and interest shown by the mothers of

visually challenged children could exercise, which made the researcher's task easier in conducting the programme.

### 3.2.3 Structuring of Programmes on Life Skills and Basic Hand Skills

The programme was designed with the primary aim of equipping mothers of visually challenged children (VCC) with essential life and vocational skills, offering both emotional support and avenues for economic empowerment. Through a series of structured training sessions, the initiatives aimed to reduce stress levels and promote a sense of self-reliance among the mothers, thereby contributing to an overall improvement in their well-being and that of their families.

To encourage greater participation and enhance their overall quality of life across physical, psychological, social, and environmental dimensions, these mothers were introduced to a well-curated training program. This programme was divided into various modules encompassing life skills development, vocational training, and entrepreneurship. The content was tailored to meet their specific needs and challenges and included a mix of theoretical knowledge and practical sessions to ensure hands-on learning and effective skill acquisition.

One group pre-test and post-test design was adopted to assess the impact of selected skill training programmes. The skill training modules included paper bag production, napkin disposal cover making, terrace gardening, preparing nutritious food, liquid embroidery, and phenyl making. Simultaneously, stress management techniques were also introduced, focusing on positive parenting, decision-making, problem-solving, and interpersonal relationship skills.

### 3.2.4 Formulation of the Training Schedule

The investigator compiled a list of day-scholar students at the St. Louis Institute for the Deaf & Blind and identified their mothers who were willing to participate in the training programme. After explaining the purpose of the study, discussions were held with the school Principal and the selected mothers to gain their cooperation. Mother of visually challenged children who willing to attend the programme were aged 24 years and above, with low income, and children aged between 4 and 18 years.

A total of fifty mothers were selected and engaged through structured interview schedule (Annexure III) administered both before and after the training programme, which included hand skill development and life skill training (stress-relief techniques).

Alongside the interviews, systematic observation was carried out to record behavioural changes and responses. The interview schedule and observations aimed to gather information on their willingness, reasons for participation, opinions, stress management awareness, and the post training method benefits derived post-training, including problem-solving, emotional coping, positive thinking, decision-making strategies, and income-generating skills.

The investigator also held one-on-one discussions with the mothers to understand their areas of interest, and based on their consent, experts in the respective fields were identified. The intervention module was developed based on the expert's opinion (details provided in Tables 1, 2, and 3).

### 3.2.5 Conduct of Training Programme

The programme was carefully planned with a focus on improving income-generating skills, life skills, stress management strategies, and basic business management abilities. It aims to reduce stress levels, enhance decision-making skills, and improve the overall well-being of the participants. When the government announced relaxation periods, the training was carefully scheduled and conducted in small batches to ensure safety. A total of fifty mothers were divided into ten groups, with of five mothers in each group, and training was provided simultaneously on the assigned dates. Attendance was marked regularly as per the training schedule. This adaptive approach allowed the programme to continue effectively despite external constraints, enabling mothers to benefit from the training. According to the scheduled training dates, attendance was marked regularly, and the school principal approved the attendance register. Plate 6, Figure 4, and Tables 3 to 5 present the schedule of events for the training program.

Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore
&
Sri Kanyaka Parameswari Arts and Science College For Women, Chennai
Students Societies CLUBS (NSS, YRC, Eco Club & Karuna Club)

Jointly Organizes
PH.D RESEARCH INTERVENTION PROGRAMME
on
"STRESS MANAGEMENT - LIFE SKILL & SKILL DEVELOPMENT TRAINING PROGRAM"
for Mother's of Visually Challenged Children

CHIEF GUEST
FATHIMA NASIRA A H
Past president and Present Editor of Inner Wheel, International all Women's Service, NGO, Chennai.

by
Ms.A.Nirmala Fousta
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Under the Guidance of
Dr.Rymala Mathen
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VENUE
Sri Kanyaka Parameswari Arts and Science College For Women, No.1,Audiappa Street,Broadway-Parry's Chennai-01
Date and Time: 12th & 13th February 2021 @ 10.00am

அவினாசிலிங்கம் மனையியல் மற்றும் மகளிர் உயர்கல்வி நிறுவனம் , கோயம்புத்தூர்
மற்றும்
ஸ்ரீ கன்னியகா பரமேஸ்வரி மகளிர் கலை மற்றும் அறிவியல் கல்லூரி, சென்னை

மாணவர்கள் சங்கம் (NSS, YRC, ECO மற்றும் Karuna club)

இணைந்து நடத்துகிறது
Ph.D. ஆராய்ச்சி தலையீட்டு திட்டம்
"மன அழுத்த மேலாண்மை - வாழ்க்கைத் திறன் மற்றும் திறன் மேம்பாட்டு பயிற்சி திட்டம்"
பார்வை குறைபாடு கொண்ட குழந்தைகளின் தாய்மார்களுக்காக

சிறப்பு விருந்தினர்
பாத்திமா நஸீரா A H
முன்னாள் தலைவர் மற்றும் தற்போதைய பதிப்பாசிரியை, இன்னர்வீல், சர்வதேச மகளிர் சேவை அமைப்பு, NGO, சென்னை
மூலம்
அ. நிர்மலா பவுஸ்டா
பி.எச்.டி ஆராய்ச்சி மாணவி (பகுதி நேரம்),
உதவி பேராசிரியர், உள்துறை வடிவமைப்பு மற்றும் அலங்காரப் பிரிவு,
ஸ்ரீ கண்ணியகா பரமேஸ்வரி கலை மற்றும் அறிவியல் மகளிர் கல்லூரி, சென்னை
முனைவர் ரிமலா மேதன்
உதவி பேராசிரியர் மற்றும் தலைமை ஆராய்ச்சி வழிகாட்டி,
தொழில்முனைவர் மேம்பாட்டு செல்,
அவினாசிலிங்கம் மனையியல் மற்றும் மகளிர் உயர்கல்வி நிறுவனம் , கோயம்புத்தூர்
நிகழ்விடம்
ஸ்ரீ கன்னியாகா பரமேஸ்வரி மகளிர் கலை மற்றும் அறிவியல் கல்லூரி,
எண்.1, ஆடிப்பட்டா வீதி, பிராட்வே-பாரீஸ், சென்னை-01
நாள் மற்றும் நேரம்:
12 மற்றும் 13 பிப்ரவரி 2021 காலை 10.00 மணி

**Plate 6: Invitation for the Training Programme (English & Tamil)**

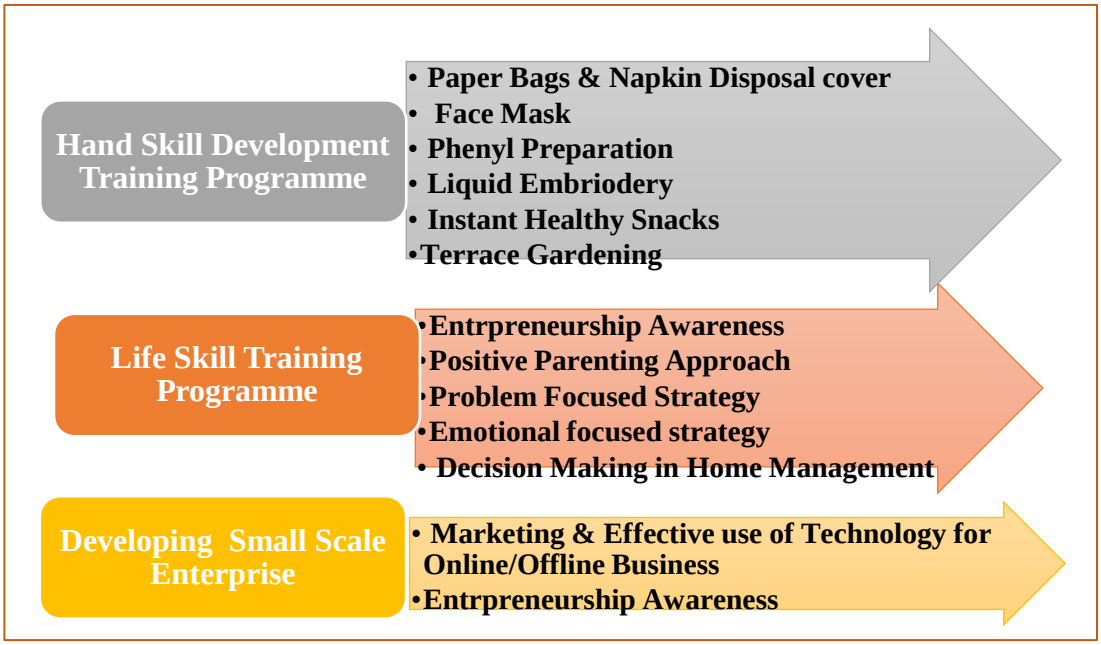


**Figure 4: Schematic Representation of Training Programme**

## SHEDULE OF THE TRAINING PROGRAMME

**Table 3: Life Skill Training Module (Theoretical Session)**

| Date | Topic | The various aspects covered | Resource Persons |
|---|---|---|---|
| 12th<br>10 am–1 pm | Positive Thinking Strategy | • Parental Behaviour that respects children<br>• Nurture and recognition<br>• Empowerment<br>• Structure and Guidance<br>• A non-violent upbringing | Dr.Nirmala Narayanan, Head, Dept. of Psychology, SKPC, Chennai (Freelancer & Psychologist) |
| | Problem-Focused Strategy | • Boosting a child's Self-Esteem<br>• Communication Priority<br>• Flexible and Willingness to adjust parenting style<br>• Flexible time | |
| | Emotional Focused Strategy | • Balancing caregiving responsibilities and personal well-being<br>• Active listening<br>• Encouraging emotional expression and creating a supportive environment | |
| 15th<br>1.30pm–4.30 pm | Decision Making in Home Management | • Define the problem<br>• Establish the criteria<br>• Consider and identify the alternatives<br>• Develop and implement a plan of action<br>• Evaluate and monitor | Dr.V.Meena, Head, Dept. of Home Science - Interior Design & Decor, SKPC, Chennai. |
| 18th<br>10.30 am–<br>1 pm | Guidance for Budding Entrepreneurs | • Entrepreneurial Qualities<br>• Willingness<br>• Management<br>• Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges (SWOC) | Mrs.Fathima Nasira A H, Former President and Present Editor of Inner Wheel, an international all-women's service NGO, Chennai. (YRC, SKPC, Chennai) |

### Practical Sessions on Hand Skills Training Programme

Following the theoretical sessions on life skills training, practical sessions on income-generating skills training were conducted for the selected mothers at Sri Kanyaka Parameswari Arts & Science College for Women, St. Louis Institute for the Deaf and Blind, and 36 mothers at ICAR, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Tiruvallur. Invited experts led these sessions in the respective fields.

The training sessions were scheduled on dates convenient for both the participants and the resource persons. To ensure the safety of all involved, the training

was modified and conducted in smaller groups, accommodating a maximum of five mothers per session. This approach ensured that all fifty mothers could successfully participate in the training while adhering to safety protocols. The detailed schedule of the training is given in Table 3. A glimpse of the training conducted is shown in Plates 7, 8, and 9.

**Plate 7: Life Skill Training Programme**

**Table 4: The Schedule for Training on Hand Skills Activities**

| **Date & Month** February 2021 to March 2022 Day 4-33 | **Type of Training** | **Resource Person** | **Venue / No of Days & Hrs/ Session** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | **SKPC** | **St. Louis Institute for the Deaf & Blind** | **ICAR, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Tiruvallur** |
| Feb 2021 (8,15 & 22)<br><br>March 2021 (8,15 & 22) | Paper Bag Making & Napkin Disposal Cover | Ms. L. Madhumitha & Team, Karuna Club, SKPC, Chennai | 2 (2 hrs) | 31 ( 2 hrs) Each | - |
| June 2021 (7,14 &21)<br><br>July 2021 (5,12&19) | Liquid Embroidery | Ms. Shayamala Devi, Fevicryl Specialist – Pidilite Industries | 2 (3 hrs) | 31 (4 hrs) | - |
| August 2021 (9,16&23)<br><br>September 2021 (6, 13 & 20)<br><br>October 2021 (4,11 & 18) | Vegetable Gardening in Small Space | Mr. Shaik Abdulla, Gardner, Chennai & Ms.V.Bhanu, Head, Dept. of Sociology, National Service Scheme Coordinator SKPC, Chennai | 2 (1 hr) | 31(2 hrs) | - |
| January 2022 (10,17 & 24) February 2022 (14,21 &22) | Preparation of Phenyl | Ms. Kanchana, Homepreneur, Trainer in Home Made Products | 2 (30 min) | 31 (30 min) | - |
| March 2022 (7,17&18) | Instant Healthy Snacks – Groundnut Ladoo, Ulunthu Ladoo and Ragi Mixture | Dr.P.Santhi, Professor and Programme Coordinator, ICAR, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, (KVK) Tiruvallur, Tirur, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University. | - | 32 (30min) | 1(3 hrs) |

**Table 5: The Schedule for Motivating the Mothers**

| Date | Motivational Topic | Resource Person | No of days & Hrs / Session |
|---|---|---|---|
| 12.02.2021 | Marketing and use of Digital Technology for online Business | Dr. B.N. Padmaja Priyadharshini Managing Director,<br><br>M/S Home Plan Guru Civil Consultants PVT. Ltd. | 6 (1 hrs) |
| 22.02.2022 | Low Investment and High Profit | Dr. P. Santhi, Professor and Programme Coordinator, ICAR, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Tiruvallur, Tirur – 25, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University | 6 (1 hrs) |

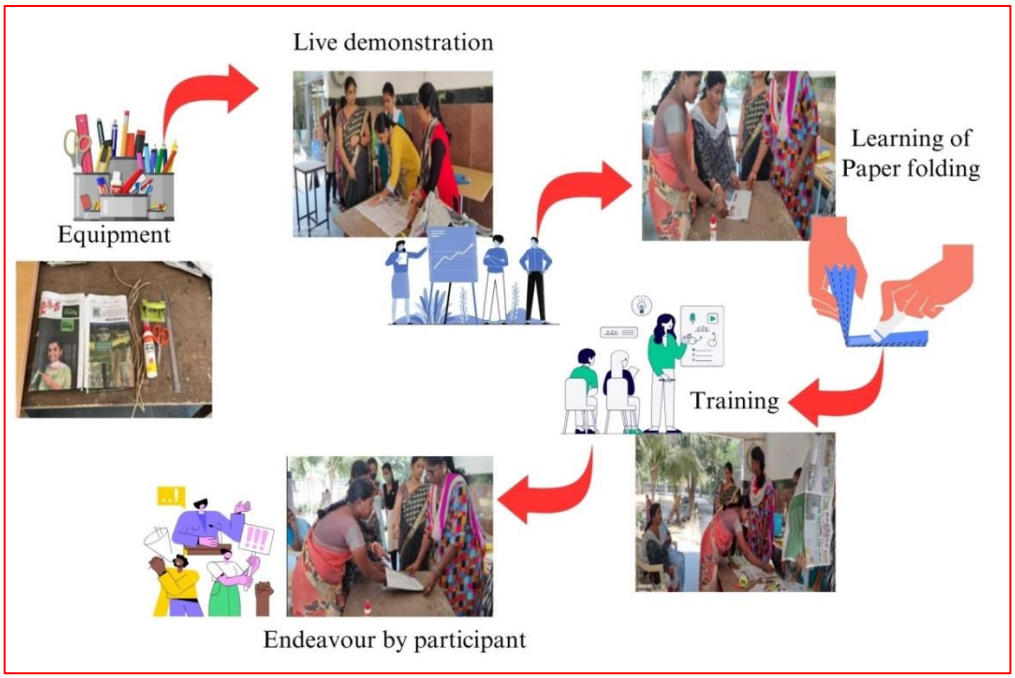


**Plate 8: Training on Paper Bag Making**

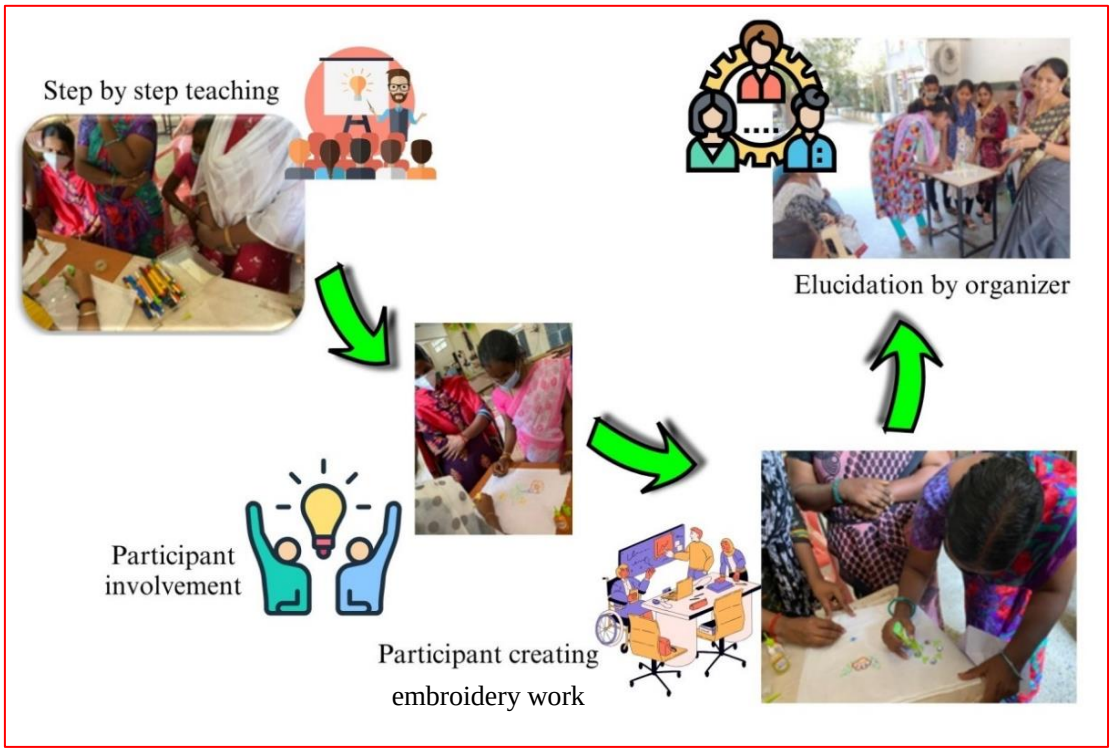


**Plate 9: Training on Liquid Embroidery**

**Plate 10: Training on Phenyl Preparation**

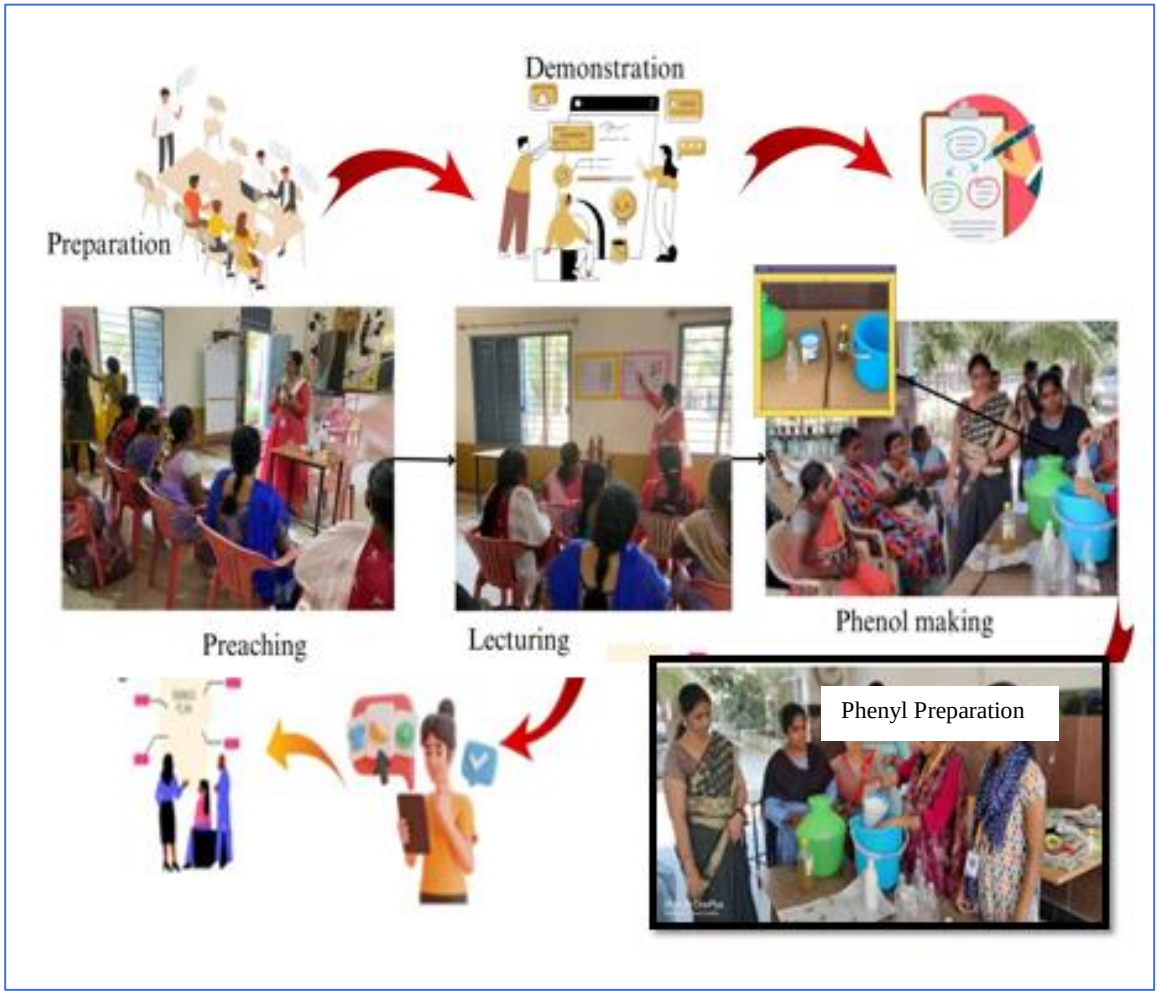


**Plate 11: Training on Vegetable Gardening in Small Spaces**

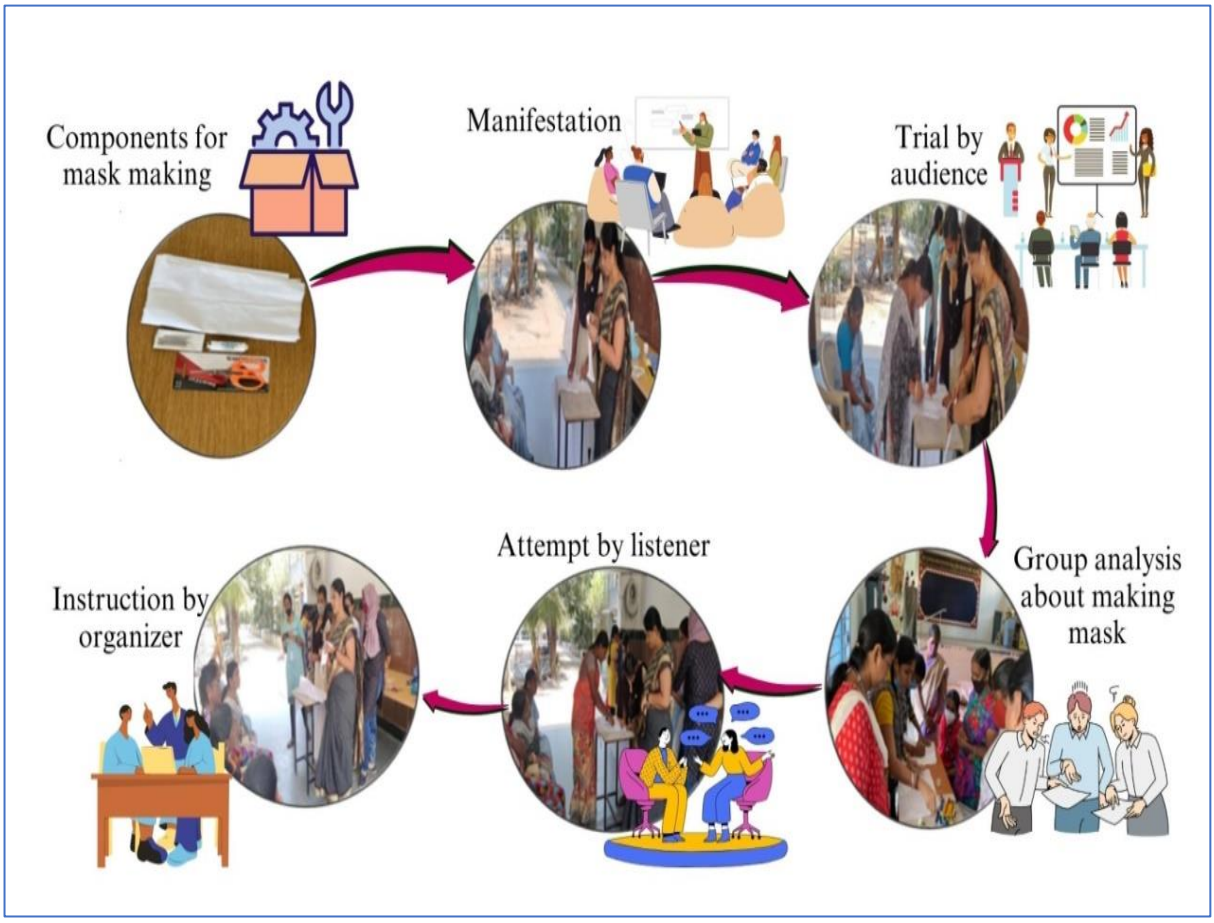


**Plate 12: Training on Face Mask**

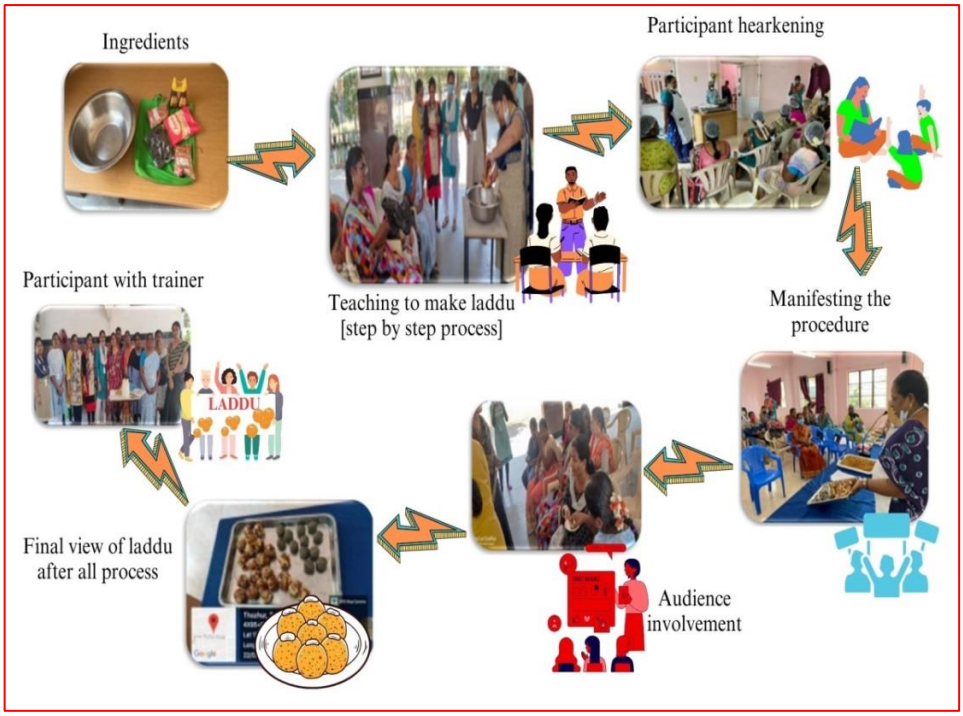



**Plate 13: Training on Healthy Ladoo**

**Plate 14: Motivating Mothers to Start Small-Scale Enterprise**


போர் முரசு
PORE PUTHIYAMURASU
பொய் பிரச்சாரம் செய்து அரசியல் ஆதாயம் தேட பார்க்கிறார் ஸ்டாலின் :
கொரோனா 2.0 மிளகாய்


**Plate 15: Output of the Training Programme**

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

Phase III of this study focuses on facilitating the establishment of businesses for 24 mothers who expressed interest in starting their enterprises after participating in the training program. However, due to personal problems, four mothers withdrew, leaving 20 to start their businesses with the support of the St. Louis Institute for the

Deaf and Blind. The objective of this phase is to evaluate the effectiveness of entrepreneurship training among 20 selected mothers to understand their preference towards entrepreneurship (scored as 3- strong liking to take up entrepreneurship, 2- may take up entrepreneurship and 1 – do not prefer), motivation factors and business promotion methods are recorded as multi-option responses, with the frequency of responses analysed to identify dominant influencing factors.

With the support and approval of the principal, a dedicated space within the St. Louis Institute for the Deaf and Blind was allocated for establishing the St. Louis Thai Store. Recognizing the importance and potential of this initiative to economically and emotionally empower mothers of VCC, the principal extended full cooperation by providing the school premises for this purpose during regular working hours on all school days.

Beyond providing space, the institution also offered essential infrastructure support, including access to water, electricity, raw materials, and other necessary amenities. This institutional backing created a supportive environment that allowed mothers to engage in productive entrepreneurial activities in a setting that was both familiar and accessible.

Mothers were organized into small groups based on their interests and the specific skills they had acquired during the training sessions. They were allowed to create and sell their products directly within the school premises, eliminating the need for intermediaries and allowing them to retain complete control over their earnings. This arrangement enabled them to utilize their time efficiently while remaining close to their children. Furthermore, the initiative inspired many participants to expand their entrepreneurial engagement by participating in trade fairs, public exhibitions, and school-based events. These experiences not only enhanced their business skills but also broadened their exposure to real-world market dynamics.

Throughout the initiatives, the principal and the researcher played a vital role, consistently encouraging the mothers, underlining the significance of time management and the effective use of available resources to build a sustainable livelihood. The provision of newspapers (for making paper bags) and other resources further boosted the mothers' confidence and commitment to their entrepreneurial endeavors.

The researcher introduced innovative ideas for product development, such as nutritious balls made from affordable and locally available ingredients, including roasted peanuts, roasted split gram, honey, dates, and jaggery (recipes provided in Annexure V). This made the products both cost-effective and nutritious, catering to the needs and preferences of the targeted market. Teachers at St. Louis Institute for the Deaf & Blind voluntarily supported the mothers by providing dresses for liquid embroidery designs, paper bags for packaging, and napkin disposal covers when needed. This collaborative effort strengthened the bond between the school and the mothers, fostering a supportive ecosystem for entrepreneurship.

The St. Louis Institute for the Deaf and Blind is strategically located near other Educational Institutions, such as St. Patrick's School, St. Patrick's Arts & Science College, St. Michael's Higher Secondary School, and a Church, providing a ready market for the products offered by the mothers. The demand generated within the school and the neighboring community enhances the viability and sustainability of the business, thereby providing sustainable income to the needy mothers. Plates 12 and 13 depict the inauguration at St. Louis Thai Store on 21 March 2022. Details of the sales made by the mothers of visually challenged children are discussed in Chapter 4, Results and Discussion.


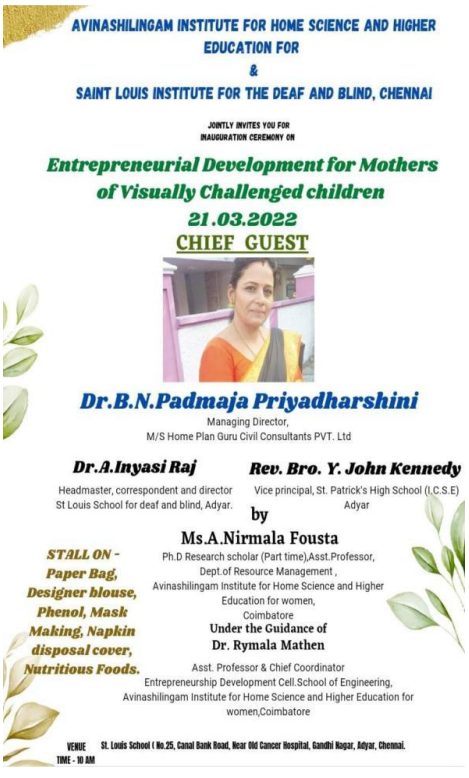


**Plate16:Inauguration of St. Louis Thai Store, Adyar**


**Plate 17: Sales at St. Louis Thai Store, Adyar**

### 3.4 Phase 4: Evaluation of the Impact of Enterprise Creation and Level of Satisfaction

The impact of training given to mothers of visually challenged children on stress management and entrepreneurial skills was evaluated using a structured evaluation schedule. An evaluation is a systematic inquiry into how, why, and to what extent the objectives or goals are achieved. It involves reflecting on tasks, assessing their success, and identifying areas for improvement (Khooshab et al., 2016). It aims to create a supportive environment for enterprise creation among mothers of visually challenged children, thereby fostering economic empowerment and social inclusion within the school community.

#### 3.4.1 Post-Assessment of Training Effectiveness

The training programme evaluation form is a quantitative tool designed to assess the effectiveness and impact of two training programs: (i) the life skills training program and (ii) the skill development training. The evaluation covers dimensions such as content/presentation, organization, practical application, benefits, and impacts, allowing

respondents to rate each aspect on a scale of "Excellent," "Good," or "Fair." It systematically collects data that can be numerically analyzed. The use of a rating scale for various categories and criteria enables the researcher to perform statistical analysis and draw conclusions based on measurable data (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The evaluation form is given in Annexure IV.

Phase IV includes:

A. Revenue generated by selling different products
B. Satisfaction achieved
C. Case studies of 10 entrepreneurs of St. Louis Thai Store.

**Support and Follow-up**

By empowering mothers to establish their businesses, this phase of the study aims to promote economic independence and enhance the well-being of families with children who have visual impairments.

- The sustainability of their enterprise was evaluated to assess the long-term impact on the mothers' livelihoods and overall personal and social well-being. Regular follow-up sessions were conducted to assess progress, address any challenges participants faced, and provide additional assistance as needed.
- Participants created a network comprising fellow participants, mentors, and program facilitators through a WhatsApp group.
- The mothers took turns in managing the vending store and maintained a systematic record of the income and expenditure. The profit gained from every sale was divided among them, and part of it is reinvested under the supervision of the school's principal. From the information disseminated by them, the necessary information, after a detailed analysis, is presented in Chapter IV, Results and Discussion.

**Case Studies**

Creswell and Poth, (2023) states that "Case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., interviews, observations, documents, and reports), and reports a case description and case themes". It is commonly used to

understand complex phenomena within their contexts, aiming to uncover patterns, relationships, and meaning unique to a specific group, organization, or situation (Yin, 2022)

Hence, a case study was conducted among mothers of visually challenged children who had successfully engaged in income-generating activities through St. Louis Thai Store, as they had shown interest in running the enterprise during their leisure time at school.

**Identifying the Entrepreneur of St. Louis Thai Store for Case Studies**

The investigator recognizes the importance of the impact evaluation because it provides information about whether the programme is achieving its intended goals and whether it is making a positive difference in the lives of the selected mothers of visually challenged children. To probe deeply into individual cases, the investigator selected 10 successful women entrepreneurs who were practicing income-generating activities after three months.

The benefits of entrepreneurship, including the effective utilization of resources and their enhancement (in terms of time, energy, and money), as well as the level of satisfaction with the improvement in personal well-being, were recorded. The information received is presented under Chapter 4, Results and Discussion.