

SPECIMEN FORMAT FOR THESES OF MONTH

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

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Abstract within 300 words:

Major objectives :

Broad objective

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

Specific Objectives

- Locate a homogenous Irular Settlement with marginal development indices
- Find out the socio- economic profile of the settlement
- Identify unique characteristics of Irular women on human societal pursuits
- Enable samples to realize the limitations and constraints for empowerment
- Initiate eco – based livelihood options through multi-pronged interventions
- Execute prospects for community development and tribal well being
- Analyze Empowerment status of sample post intervention

Hypothesis:

H1. Irular tribe women are not dependent on activities which contribute to feminization of labour

H2. Visible improvement in awareness level of Irular women on select social and economic indicators could be enhanced with techno – based Intervention

H3. Introducing micro enterprises may not act as an instrument to ensure alternate livelihood options for Irular women

H4. Focus on wholesome community development (village cohesion) will help redefine women’s norms and rules by which they emerge as participants in crucial decision making

H5. Action programmes chalked out for the benefit of the Irular women will enable them to achieve an eco-based status of well-being.

Methodology :

The Plan and Procedure drafted involved **a mixed research methodology incorporating qualitative and quantitative methods.** The framework was posited to cut across three phases

The **first and second phases** concentrated on understanding the settlement, their characteristics, resources available and accessible and latter sections were streamlined to make the **women**, in particular, **the target group** to undergo **introspective exercises** by which they themselves were forced to come out with the felt lacunae, the hurdles in their path to empowerment and pool ideas to trouble shoot existing problems.

The researcher had adopted a **quasi experimental research design** in the **third phase** including **education, training intervention and experiential learning for 54 tribal women (women of 54 families out of 67 families who were willing to participate)** focusing on the social, economic, entrepreneurial and psychological **measures for empowerment** of the target group.

Being in a Reserve forest area (a contiguous territory) the major challenge was to make the women realize their rights to access minor forest produce (**MFP**), **incorporate technology and enhance their skills, livelihood options and thereby personal well being. Holistic development of the settlement** and change in their mindset and attitude was the ultimate aim which was visualized to ensure their **sustainable development**.

Findings:

Ethnographic study

Tholampalayam Panchayat in **Karamadai Block of Coimbatore District** in Tamil Nadu and specifically **Senguttaiyur village settlement** was chosen as it satisfied the requirements for the study, namely, sample size, homogeneity, contiguous territory, pathetic women's status and visible state of marginal development.

Despite their status as a declared PVTG, illiteracy, poverty, poor housing conditions, indebtedness, non cooperation, helplessness to exert their rights over MFP and benefit from it were the major lacunae that surfaced.

Findings of the Feasibility study

People, especially women were found to be basically lethargic and never attempted to improve their plight. Tribal's access to traditional natural resources, which they were entitled to make use of could not be accessed as they were found to inflict harm in the forest premises. All women were good in the indigenous skill they possessed in processing the leaves of *Alibizia amara* tree, into an organic shampoo powder. The technology being rural based was cumbersome and a drudgery; hence was not taken up seriously as an opportunity for entrepreneurship. Another product was tamarind where the women pathetically failed in front of the middlemen who easily deceived them in terms of returns for products.

Status of the Tribal Women

Pointers like health, taboos practiced (post puberty and delivery and during menstruation), non consumption of nutritious foods, lack of mobility, and freedom to express their viewpoints in major decision making (both at home and village affairs), projected the abysmal status of the women. Limited or less exposure to training in entrepreneurship, Government welfare programmes, middle men exploitation in marketing of products had hindered in their socio- economic- demographic growth.

Outcomes on Livelihood Approach

Basically the per capita income and expenditure and per capita nutritional diet were below standard levels. The status of the sample was very low and all of them were unaware of many of the livelihood indicators proving that they need a lot of acceleration to bring them at the least to a certain survival level. Hence this aspect was studied in terms of their **reflection** to certain indicators and the level of **reflectivity and reflexivity**, proper intervention to realize their individual oriented lacuna , appraisal of domains of empowerment dimensions and assessing their Quality of Living status

De- Jure and De- facto empowerment status

Attempt was made to find out their status in rhetoric and reality. The position of the sample in terms of resource availability, their connectedness to tangible resources, indirect benefits accrued through intangible resources, attributes of human well being like resource access and self determination were analyzed. Conditions contributing to good health, safety, economy and environment were considered. The capabilities of the sample relating to livelihood activities, which are **primarily eco – based, knowledge and technology use (tribal/rural)**, freedom to voice opinions and role play in Governance and management were also found out. It was proved that none of their activities leading to the present status had hitherto contributed to sustainability in their livelihood options, economy or the environment.

Sensitizing Women to Empower Selves

The samples were exposed to motivational efforts like lectures, demonstrations, field visits, skill development sessions for entrepreneurial endeavors, arranging for social networking with stakeholders of common interest (marketing of Arappu, tamarind, processed Amla etc), NGOs who provide training and infrastructure etc. Women themselves aired out their limitations and constraints and also realized that they need to be empowered on all aspects of social, economic, psychological, physical and political grounds.

Problem tree analysis

The limitations and constraints faced in various levels involving the people, process, policy and institutional levels were thrashed out and what was expected to improve their plight was brought out from their (sample women's) mouth, based on which action programme was scheduled on real time initiatives

Action programme

Real time initiatives such as training in technology based *Alibizia Amara* powder making for skill development , mobilizing women to move out of the cocoon for group cohesion, leadership building by forming a Self Help Group (SHG), arranging for substantial funds flow (by mobilizing funds for purchase of machinery, construction of shed and an Account in a Nationalized Bank in the name of the beneficiaries), starting a CLG

through healthy networking (Government & private organizations), registering it and enhancing their market potential through technical training and collaborative endeavours, thus enabling them to reach remunerative markets– all had set the stage for sustainable livelihood security and assured well being for the concerned sample from the tribal settlement.

The following sub domains of the major, set objectives are projected as proof for having successfully injected potentials for empowerment in the selected tribal women.

Pointers	Nature of Empowerment	Tangible / Intangible Evidences
Redefining gender rules and norms	Cultural	Acceptance by men, mobility and voicing their opinions
Leadership in Community	Social	Improved Social status Networking
Ownership of productive Assets	Economic	Entrepreneurial skills Communicative / Marketing Skills
Record and Account Maintenance	Psychological Economic	Self Confidence, Express views in decision making
Awareness about socio-economic development programmes	Sociological	Benefit from them (Green home, 100 days job, etc.)
Well-being	Resoucefulness/ know and exert their rights	Connectedness Connectivity Access to Resources

Summary and Conclusion

The Livelihood approach (diversification) adopted for the study vouched for the settlement’s (and the women’s in particular) habitat development , retention of culture and indigenous skill, comprehensive socio-economic development, improvement in quality of life, need based training on indigenous skill, optimal utilization of resources (Physical, natural and human), empowerment of women on viable inroads and networking for mutual benefits.

The study had paved way for the samples to realize all the three types of empowerment benefits namely normative, substantive and instrumental in both scales of empowerment such as individual and collective.

Formation of SHG enabled bringing in **economic and psychological benefits to the Irular tribe women** and also enabled **social empowerment** at large. The evidences of transformed stature of women as outputs by and large focus on the success of the endeavours as inputs.

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