**Transformation of livelihoods of rural and urban poor women through Promotion of Jute Hub and Entrepreneurship Training**

**Introduction:**

Women’s economic empowerment has been one of the core agenda of India’s national policies and five year plans for several decades. Poverty, gender discrimination and exploitation are three major critical factors which undermines women’s well being and progress in many developing nations. Statistics shows that Feminisation of poverty or the growing number of women in poverty In India shows an alarming figure for the past four decades .

It has been widely recognised that investing in economic empowerment will majorly result in Gender equality, poverty eradication for women. There is quite a lot of research in India which shows an authentic relationship between women’s improved economic condition and its impact on women’s life with self respect, increased social dignity and well being.

India’s ratification with CEDAW (The Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women ) the core international treaties of United Nations shows the nations commitment towards mainstreaming gender equality perspectives in National , economic and social planning.

Despite several schemes, welfare programs and micro credit, the economic position of women in Tamilnadu always remains a challenge. They either lack potential skills or a complete technical knowledge towards positioning themselves with a selective venture which would help them earning a sustained income.

The oppressed cultural and restricted social norms really restrict the mobility of rural and urban poor women .Hence there is a pressing need that women need to be definitely enabled with ongoing acquisition of knowledge and skills. More so the support towards self-employment /employment promotions for poor women must go beyond ‘Training and capacity building “of the women. Women economic empowerment could be translated in to reality only when the women attain a holistic sense of direction to position themselves in an employment or self employment venture.

Voluntary Association for Peoples Service (VAPS), a’ skill development and entrepreneurship institute for the underprivileged ‘widely recognise the above concerns of women on positioning women towards a sustained livelihood and income . By recognising the practical lived realities and challenges in women‘s livelihood VAPS proposes a “Knowledge capacity building and a Mentor model for poor women’s Income Enhancement “in Madurai District.

This model would impart a viable skill promotion on jute for the under privileged women from Madurai district. Most importantly a Madurai Jute Cluster will be strengthened which would encourage trained women on jute products making , raw materials sales , trading of jute products , cutting , becoming resource experts on Jute etc. In this context VAPS would like to merge and address the issue of women’s economic concern in to the pressing environmental concern

**Rationale for the proposed project:**

Like many other districts and states Madurai has also attracted quite a lot of developmental schemes for poor being implemented by both Govt and civil society organisations .The SwarnaJeyanthi Sahari Rozkar Yojana ( SJSRY) , and the schemes implemented by Women development corporation are the major govt mission which attempts to make women employed /self employed through skill training. However the convergence rate of women in to employment after training is quite low.

First of all women has the restriction towards time and mobility due to their house hold responsibilities , hence it is highly necessary that choosing of a livelihood activity need to be women friendly with specific reference to time and values attached to a family. In today’s situation , women at Madurai neither posses strong skills nor possess a secured job with a standard income.

Secondly the handholding support extended through the organisations in today’s situation is very minimal. Some organisations /schemes only provide micro credit and linkage or the remaining organisations are promoting skill development on a particular venture. But promoting women in to employment/self employment requires mentoring support such as confidence building, communication, Time Management and other soft skills, marketing skills, etc. Hence a skill development curriculum appropriately designed with inclusive approach of capacitating women’s potential in to employment/self employment venture is proposed.

Thirdly and more importantly the training trade (entrepreneurial activity) and the societal value attached to it. In order to make the skill development venture in to economic reality for women, the trade in which we train the women must carry a social value. In this context Jute and jute value added products have been found much enterprising for the past few years.

Basically jute enterprise activity has been found resulting on triple layer effect on poor women, community and the environment. Climate change is the major threat to our environment and usage of plastics become inevitable. There have been increasing awareness that jute utility items such as bags, files, pouches could serve as an alternative to usage of plastic utilities in everyday lives. Jute being natural and easily degradable, corporate companies, education institutions and the common public are increasingly showing interest towards utilising the same More so, making jute products requires only a basic knowledge on tailoring and doesn’t involve deeper technical performance. Hence imparting jute enterprise skills would be a viable option for women to have a sustained income.

The proposed social enterprise project on Jute not only consider economic empowerment alone, but also empowering women more generally—improving their ability to access the fundamental elements of development: happiness, health, education, rights, and social and political participation. It is aimed that the proposed social enterprise project would ensure a overall paradigm shift in the process of overall development of under privileged women in Madurai District Tamilnadu.

Most importantly the proposed project aims to secure our environment. The project is a mainstreaming approach to create an eco friendly world through women. As part of promoting sustainable income, marginalised rural and urban women will be trained on Jute entrepreneurial trade and they are exclusively involved in production of jute utility products. The project aims to create network among Jute women entrepreneurs who will present versatile, quality jute handbags, Thamboola Bags, school college utility items , conference bags and folders etc. They will also be trained in to manufacturing cloth bags and supplies across states. This project has a vision to enable people to enter in to the world of safe environment through effective usage of bio degradable materials such as jute and cloth utilities in our everyday lives.

**Objectives of the proposed Project:**

* To train and impart jute skills for women belonging to rural, urban, slum pockets of Madurai district in Tamilnadu
* To promote better gender relations and gender equality through women economic empowerment
* To create a unique platform for employment /self employment in the arena of Jute making
* To identify and tap the women from underprivileged categories such as women with lower income, women headed households, physically challenged etc
* To create a widespread awareness on utilisation of jute/cloth as an eco friendly utility product with the view to combat climate change
* To enhance income of women by providing employment /self employment in the Madurai Jute cluster unit
* To increase social and psychological well being for women by providing expanded scope of choosing different jute activities such as sales , marketing, jute products stitching , raw materials sales etc .

**Project Methodology and Implementation Plan:**

The projects would consist of four critical milestones during the entire project period

*Identification and selection of Rural urban and slum women for Jute/ cloth utility Products Training*

* Women from underprivileged communities such as SC/STs , single headed women , widows , young girls who dropped out from schools will be identified and preferred for training
* Mobilisation through media , meetings at slums, towns and villages distribution of pamphlets about the significance of women entrepreneurship /employment and safeguarding the environment
* A selection committee comprising of any government representatives, funding organisation will be formed for selection
* Application form with relevant documents such as Aadhar card, educational qualification etc will be collected

*Training of women beneficiaries on Jute and cloth Utilities*

The training module will consist of following

* Technical Training on Jute and cloth Utilities such as conference Bags, Files, Handbags, Executive bags, Thamboola Bags College bags etc
* Management sessions on Time Management, Problem Solving skills, Business strategies, Motivation, Financial Management
* Sessions on Women Entrepreneurship and success traits
* How to access small loans from Govt Financial Institutions

The training will be classroom teaching as well as demo stitching sessions by technical experts on Jute, resource persons and successful women entrepreneurs will be handling classes. The women trainees will also be taken for exposure visits

*Employment /Self Employment for the trained women:*

* 50%Women beneficiaries will be assisted to set up their own small unit
* 25 % of the beneficiaries will be given employment at Madurai Jute cluster – A small jute unit run by VAPS ) The employment avenue will include jute stitching , sales , raw materials sales , Awareness meetings at Madurai and other places on replacement of plastics etc)

*Strengthening of Madurai Jute cluster as an employment hub for women (a socio economic and environmental development hub*)

* The unit will be strengthened to provide employment opportunities to at least 25% of the women beneficiaries

**Project Period:**

The project period will be for one year comprising of 10 batches of training women on Jute and cloth utilities

**Expertise of the implementing Agency (VAPS) on women’s skill Building on Entrepreneurship:**

VAPS have acquired eminent expertise on training youth and women on various skill building and enterprise activities. It has partnered with Government on various skill building initiatives and also implemented Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) projects of corporate organisations. So far VAPS have trained more than 5000 women on various enterprise trades and many of them have emerged as micro entrepreneurs in various districts of Tamilnadu.

**Major Partner organisations for VAPS**

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| --- | --- |
| Name of the Organization | Partnership Mode |
| HDFC | CSR- Promotion of women livelihoods |
| NI –MSME(Entrepreneurship Development Program-EDP and Entrepreneurship Skill Development Training ESDP ) | Small and medium enterprise Promotion for the poor |
| PDIL | CSR – Establishing Library and Coaching Centre ‘s for competitive Exams for youth at Virudhunagar District |
| GAIL INDIA | CSR – Farmers Advisory Centres and Imparting integrated Farming training |
| Ministry of Agriculture /MANAGE | Agriclinic and Agri Business Scheme ( ACABC) promotion of Agri Entrepreneurs in Tamilnadu and Pudhucherry |
| Ministry of women and Child Development | Research Studies |
| Ministry of Panchayat Raj | Research Studies |
| NABARD | Agri Technology Transfer |
| EDII( Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India ) Accenture supported MEDP | Micro Enterprise Development Promotion for the poor in Madurai and Ramnad, Salem and Trichirappalli Districts ) |

**Outcome of the Project:**

The proposed livelihoods project envisions women economic empowerment and safeguarding environment equally on board. This project aims to train 400 women in a year and promote them as micro and medium entrepreneurs or create them employment opportunities in Jute /cloth manufacturing and sales units. The project aims to covert 40 % of the training beneficiaries as successful entrepreneurs. By empowering women on economic grounds , the project aims to ensure the world with gender equality , equity and gender justice.

**Budget for 1( one ) Batch**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **S.No** | **Activity** | **Amount \*(INR)** |
| 1 | Promotional Activities(Publicity)Media , advertisements , interaction with women , youth groups and Mobilization | 3500 |
| 2 | Screening & Selection of candidates ,Inauguration and Valedictory | 8000 |
| 3 | Rent for the Training venue | 10000 |
| 4 | Course materials for the Trainees | 5000 |
| 5 | Training Kit( Jute materials , cloth , scissors , Thread ) | 13000 |
| 6 | Tailoring Machines ( For Rent) | 15000 |
| 7 | Guest Faculty Honorarium and Jute /cloth Trainers | 35,000 |
| 8 | Exposure visits | 15,000 |
| 9 | Working lunch & Refreshments | 60,000 |
| 10 | Program Coordinators and Admin staff / Honorarium | 40000 |
| 11 | Photos & Video | 5,000 |
| 12 | Postage & Communication | 5,000 |
| 13 | Miscellaneous | 7000 |
| 15 | Handholding and post programme support | 40000 |
|  | **TOTAL** | **321,500** |

For conducting one Programme Rs 3, 21,500 (Three Lakh Twenty One Thousand Five Hundred)

10 programs (10 Batches) x 3, 21,500 =Rs 3,215,000

**GRAND TOTAL= Rs 3,215,000 (Thirty Two Lakh Fifteen Thousand Only)**