

Sustainable livelihood for women through Palm leaves handicraft

1. Introduction

This project proposed for women to improve their livelihood through skill-based employment. The project gives opportunities for women to work from their home by creating social enterprise and generate sustainable income. The women are trained to produce the palm tree products such as handicraft, jaggery, candy, and ornaments and initially the project bring into being with handicraft. The palm tree is largely available in south India and largely in Tamilnadu state. People are using the palm tree as they see fit and however, it is used for more than 800 varieties of needs. Locally, the income generation through the palm tree is jaggery, fruit, leaves for thatched, oil, and for the stove. The usage of palm leaves is not a new concept and it's an age-old practice. Many Indian epics and *Puranas* are written in palm leaves before many centuries and it still exists. The existing crafts are off-track but could be reaffirmed through skill-based employment. The women from rurban who have fewer job opportunities are targeted for this project. This project prospects to engage the women for employment for sustainable livelihood.

2. Objectives

The main objective of this project is to provide sustainable livelihood for rurban women through Palmyra tree. The other specific objectives are:

1. To improve the economic condition of the rurban women through Palmyra handicraft production.
2. To engage the rurban women through the skill-based employment
3. To establish the social enterprise among the rurban women and
4. To study and record the social transformation of rurban women.

3. Project proposed area and targeted population

The proposed districts are Villupuram and Thoothukudi which are north and south respectively. Both the districts have substantial palm trees and are identified as vulnerable districts based on the various parameters. In these districts, there is an increase in the unemployment rate, especially women. The project identifies 200 vulnerable women in the first phase, 100 in each district. The project covers both rural and urban and all the section of the women. Either single individual or a self-help group (SHG) can make production and in case of SHG, the division of work happens among the members.

4. Method of implementation

a. Preparation of the SHG group and Training

Identification of the vulnerable section of population through NGOs and create a self-help group or collaborate with the existing SHG and choose them as beneficiaries. It splits the group into three namely and gives them fifteen days of intensive training in the following heads; *a) raw material production unit* that collects the palm leaves from the tree, gives colouring, and shapes as per the requirements of the production unit, *b) palm leaves production unit* study the market demand and list the prerequisite set of productions in terms of colour, shapes and variety, and *c) marketing unit* tie-up with different selling agencies including e-markets. Culturally, the people of Tamilnadu offer palm leaves mala to god, head of the political party, village, state etc., therefore, the marketing team associate with many of these institutions. They collect their desired variety and pass it to the production unit.

b. Rollout of the handicraft unit

The handicraft unit is created in the chosen area and raw materials will be provided. To create the Those units will be producing handmade crafts such as invitation, mala, wreath, flower bouquet, the star for Christmas, children toys, food packets, boxes, decors, wallpapers, and ornaments, etc., Once they produce the products they sell the furnished products to the buyer company who had buy-back agreement or through e-marketing. One single person can earn more than Rs. 300 per day. It gives sustainable income to the women that improve them economically. It is proposed after six months of the start-up, the outlet by the SHGs is created at the district level.

5. Expected outcome

There are few outcomes that are expected, decrease in unemployment, gradual incremental development, economic impact in the lives of women, and creating the social enterprises. The various social changes that took place among the women are meticulously recorded and especially the level of women empowerment is analysed. The report of this study would be published after three years of time. These are analysed by the students by conducting a regular study and record it for the policy and other academic research. Based on the interim research findings, the methodology of the project implementation may be changed for the betterment of the women and the final outcomes paves the way for future social projects.