

**External Evaluation**

**of**

**Social Need Education and Human  
Awareness (SNEHA)**

**for the project**

**Advocacy and Capacity Building for poor women  
groups in fishing villages in Tamil Nadu, India**

**Jan 2018-Dec 2021**

**Collaborating Institution**

**Seniors without Borders (SwB), Denmark**

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## 1. Executive Summary

The project titled “Advocacy and capacity building for poor women groups in fishing villages in Tamil Nadu, India” has been implemented by SNEHA based in Nagapattinam region of Tamilnadu with the support of Seniors without Borders (SwB) from Denmark for the period of 2018-2021. With the larger objective of reducing the Poverty and promote Gender Equality with increased income and better livelihood of poor families, the current project designed with the support of SwB to execute Capacity building for Women Co-ops to run their own business (Micro and Small Enterprises (MSMEs), Focus on Marketing and Empowerment of Women with Rights orientation.

The external evaluation of the project has been carried out in the month of December 2021 with an objective of assessing the tangible changes and outputs which the intervention is expected to contribute and to provide a picture of the outcome of the project from the fisherwomen’s perspective. The methodology involved field visit to Village Women Co-ops (MSMEs), interviews, focus group discussion using observational research methods. Further, the data presented by Samuthra India Producer Company Ltd, (a company initiative of SNEHA) was analysed for understanding the economic outcome of the project.

Findings from the individual units and interaction with fisherwomen groups in the operational area reveals that the project has achieved all of its planned targets. *11 New Micro Enterprises (co-ops) with 54 members have been started in 10 villages (2 groups in Thirumullaivasal village).* One third of trained members are engaged in starting the business in Local Units. 130 women benefitted from Human Rights and Literacy Trainings. They are empowered with more knowledge on Human Rights and Women’s Rights and able to realise the same in their real-life situation.

Nearly 650 members were provided various skill training including marketing. To focus on Marketing, SNEHA has promoted the concept Home Shop Members in every village where individual women sell the products produced by Producer Cooperatives (MSMEs) with the guidance of Samuthra. Further, the products of Local Units were placed on sales in stalls of Government Programmes and Expos conducted by private companies. On an average 35% of Sales done by Home Shop Members of the Village Units. The COVID Lockdown situation and the restrictions have created major set back for the project to achieve its results qualitatively at the desired level. However, the local units and the team are able to maintain their consistency in managing their business and rejuvenate with new energy. Hence, the recommendations of the external evaluation have been evolved based on the shared knowledge of Fisherwomen and their Groups. Further, the evaluation also recommending measures for SNEHA and supporting partners to redefine the perspective, practice and profit indicators with more depth understanding of poverty, women’s rights and connected issues related to the Livelihood System of Coastal Community in this region.

## 2. Introduction

### 2.1. Background

Social Need Education and Human Awareness (SNEHA), a woman headed organization working for the empowerment of marginalized communities since 1984. SNEHA's vision is to work towards "A just society that is free of caste, class, religion, gender, language and age-based discrimination through social transformation with peoples' participation and participatory, consultative, transparent and inclusive system of governance, which ensures the protection and promotion of the environment". The project supported by Seniors without Borders (SwB) is to build an alternative livelihood system among the poor fisherwomen in Nagapattinam and Karaikal Region of Tamilnadu and Puducherry through a federation model for alleviating their poverty condition and promote sustainable development and empowerment. This project has been supported by Landsforeningen Lavende Haf in Denmark in the first phase between 2016-2017 and SwB in second phase during the years 2019-2021(due to Covid Lockdown situation project which was supposed to end in 2020 made to extend till 2021).

The long term objective	The short term objectives
*Reduced poverty (UN Goal no 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>*Improve capacity of women married to fishermen and better livelihood of their families</li><li>*The support provided by the umbrella organisation Samuthra being funded by the co-ops members' fee</li><li>*Higher female consciousness and knowledge about human and women's right achieved through Marketing education and training in Human Rights</li></ul>

## Samuthra India Producer Company Ltd

Samuthra is a Producer company Ltd initiated by SNEHA in the year 2015 for providing technical support (including logistic management) to the fisherwomen to build their livelihood business options with quality standards and promote value added products from the primary sources available in this region. Samuthra operates on Share Holder Concept and the profit earned is also distributed as incentives for the production units at the village level.

While promoting production by women, Samuthra also engage in building marketing skills among the fisherwomen as individual and groups. Community facilitators were appointed exclusively for managing the project at the field level, while the other SNEHA staff members provide support and enhancing the business and increase the income of poor fisherwomen.

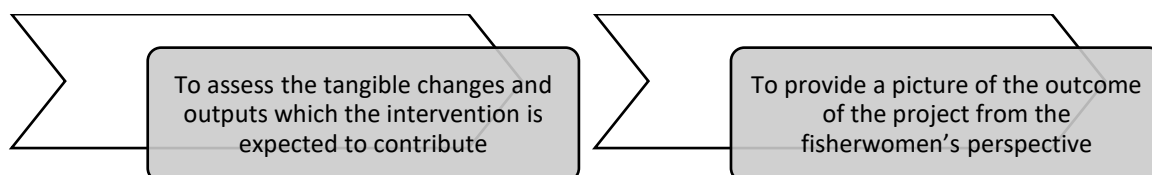
### Marketing System

Marketing of products developed by fisherwomen has been done both at the centralised unit (Samuthra) level as well as through Home Shop Members (individual women based in Villages). The quantity of the production is based on orders they obtain in beforehand similarly the packaging process (small or large sizes) is based on the demand from the market. During the Lockdown period, the centralised marketing and production support played the backbone role for the village units.

## 2.2. Purpose of the Evaluation

The main purpose of the evaluation is to understand the outcome of the current phase of the SwB supported programme undertaken by SNEHA through allied initiatives (Samuthra Pvt Ltd) including community based organisations and to draw lessons and experiences out of it for the future.

**The specific Objectives of the Evaluation<sup>1</sup> is defined as below:**



<sup>1</sup> Term of Reference of the Evaluation

## **2.3. Process and Methodology of Evaluation**

In line with the ToR for this Evaluation, the evaluator along with SNEHA core team analysed the data presented by Samuthra team. The evaluator conducted a three days intensive field visit to 10 village SMEs, Samuthra and SNEHA involved individual interview and focus group discussions with fisherwomen who were engaged in this project. The individual interviews (Annexure I) Fisherwoman Entrepreneurs in the village, directors of SNEHA and Samuthra and focus group discussions held with the women's group in the village SME units, core group of SNEHA, staff members and some of the customers of Samuthra Products.

### **Criteria evolved for the purpose of evaluation**

- Comprehending the history and background of the project and the project team, strategizing and planning of field visit.
- Use of Process Review with the Core Team analysing the quantitative and qualitative data presented by Samuthra on both field level and centralised unit level achievements.
- Field based observation and inferences of realities observed through descriptive dialogue design
- Use of Observational Research Method -Observing the performance of women's group and their productive engagement in presenting their success, failure, learnings and way forward.
- Content evaluation of the books of accounts, training materials, training modules developed by SNEHA.
- Using Participant Observation Method-Interface with the village unit and Women Federation Meetings, Customer Relations in improving the marketing linkage at Samuthra.
- Involving Interview and administering oral questionnaire with the leaders of Women Groups
- Exclusive Collective Review with the Core Group and Project team through presentation of field observation (de-briefing).
- Use of Cross-sectional Design through intervention across the operational areas all along the field visits.

Primary data was collected at the level of the Women Groups through interviews in the Village Units, SNEHA office, Samuthra Office and leaders of village level institutions and project team. The evaluator met and visited selected villages, groups, persons and organisations in consultation with SNEHA. The villages were selected based on certain criteria related to well

functioning, moderate, new units (in operation for more than 6 months) as suggested by SNEHA (Annexure II). At each of the village unit SME, the visit was initiated with a briefing meeting with the women group members followed by visit to production process. The visit was ended with a de-briefing and sharing of observation by the evaluator.

Secondary data were obtained from the documents available shared by the secretariat of SNEHA such as the proposal, training manuals etc. Where needed, specific formats were prepared for collection of additional data (output numbers, sales and procurement data etc.). The SNEHA-Samuthra team has updated these formats and submitted to the evaluator. All these data were complemented by and compared with data from other sources, such as documents and interviews (triangulation).

### SMEs visited

Sl. No.	Place	Unit
1	Akkaraipettai	Narmadha Unit (disinfectant making/catering)
2	New Kallar	7 Star Catering
3	TR Pattinam	Muthukkal Healthy Snacks Unit (Snacks making)
4	Karaikalmedu	Sales Unit by Federation members
5	Karaikalmedu	Nalam Unit (Nutrition Powder/catering)
6	Chandrapadi	Shell Unit (disinfectant making)
7	Pudupettai	Creative Paper Bag
8	Chinnakudi	Aaha Masala Unit
9	Poombuhar	Dolphin Unit (Catering and Pickle)
10	Serudhur	Home Shop Members & Speedy Relief Production Unit

## 3. Outcome Analysis

### 3.1. Objective wise assessment of results

This section will present the findings from the evaluation on the achievements towards the project programmes and related objectives targeting the community women. The assessment of achievements is analyzed through a ranking of outcomes according to the extent to which they were achieved and if there were shortcomings. The rankings are provided in the table below.

Ranking	Definition
To a large extent (80%-100%)	Outcome fully achieved without major shortcomings. It exceeded expectations. All expected outputs under the outcome were fully achieved. Any gaps are considered insignificant.
To a significant extent (60%-79%)	Outcome achieved, with only minor shortcomings. Overall, it met expectations. Most outputs under the outcome were fully achieved and very few were partially achieved.
To a moderate extent (40% to 59%)	Outcome partially achieved, with minor shortcomings. It met most expectations. About half of the outputs under the outcome were fully achieved, while a similar proportion were partially achieved or not at all.
To a limited extent 10% to 39%)	Outcome partially achieved but with significant/major shortcoming. It substantially failed to meet expectations. Very few outputs under the outcome were achieved and the majority of outputs were partially achieved or not all.
Not at all (0%)	Outcome not achieved at all and failed to meet expectations. The vast majority of outputs under the outcome were not achieved.

### **Objective 1**

**Improve the capacity of women married to fishermen and better livelihood for their families in Nagapattinam and Karaikal Districts**

#### **Activities**

- Training women in marketing and business skills

#### **Expected Outcome**

10 new co-ops being established and training in marketing leading to an increase in sales (turn-over) of co-ops have increased substantially and over 50%.

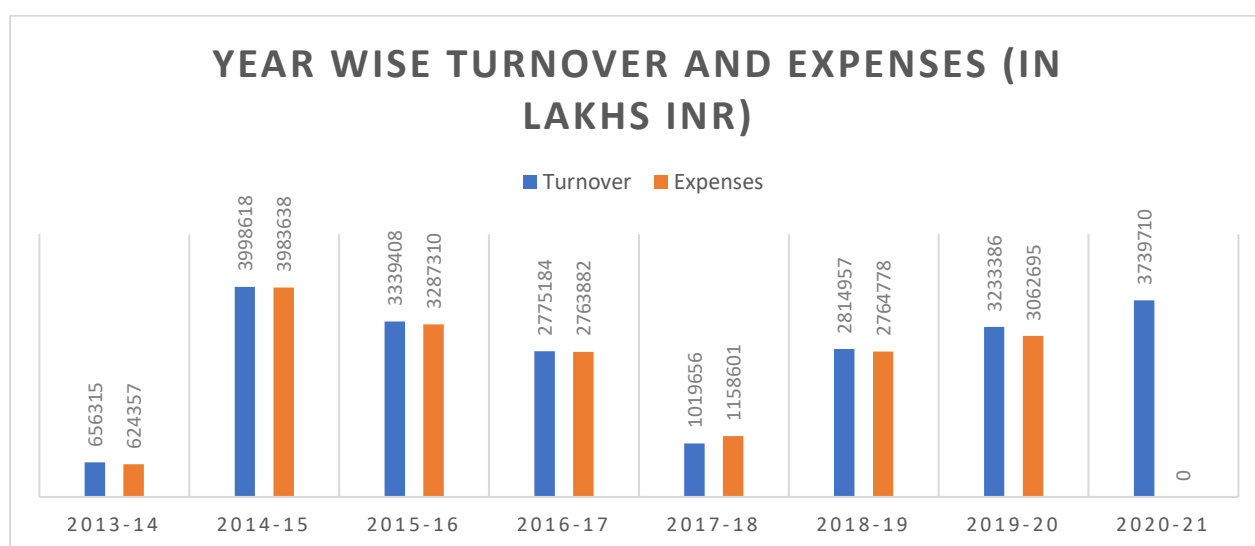


## Observation

There were six kinds of trainings provided to women entrepreneurs to improve their livelihood situation. The trainings were ranging from Orientation to start a business, Entrepreneurship development, Skill training on product development, Marketing, documentation, reading and writing. The table below explains the improvement in the Turn over from the micro enterprises of Women through Samuthra. Though there is substantial increase in the turn over (Table 1) from the beginning year of 2013-14(5 times more in current year 2020-21), comparing the data from 2018-19 to 2021 (Current Project period), 31% increase in Sales observed, despite of COVID Lockdown conditions. **11 New Micro Enterprises (co-ops) with 54 members have been started in 10 villages (2 groups in Thirumullaivasal village).** One third of trained members are engaged in starting the business in Local Units.

Table 1

Year Wise Turnover and Expenses (in lakhs INR)								
Particulars	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Turnover	656315	3998618	3339408	2775184	1019656	2814957	3233386	3739710
Expenses	624357	3983638	3287310	2763882	1158601	2764778	3062695	3637510



The assessment of above activities, revealed that the objective has been achieved to a **Significant Extent** considering the scale of operational units at the village level. The trainings provided in Product Development has been more effective than the Marketing Skills (20 skill training and 2 marketing skill trainings provided to 650 members). However, the Home Shop Member concept of promoting individual members to earn profit margin through local marketing has not been achieved the desired results. Each member's monthly income ranging between Rs.1000 to Rs. 4000, which has potential to improve in future.

The incentives provided to the local production units and the expenses including the transportation costs are made by Samuthra. The training on product development, maintenance of registers, Records as per the organisation standards, meeting the government norms of registration, banking process, collective decision making through co-operative model, conflict resolution has taken more energy and time than expected. Hence, marketing for increasing the profit share could not be concentrated as desired.

## **Objective 2**

The support provided by Samuthra being funded by the co-ops members' fee.

### **Activities**

- Launch new marketing initiatives where bids for supply to local institution, and or private schools.
- Open more strategic selling points

### **Expected Outcome**

Women trained in marketing thus increasing the turnover to a level where co-ops service fee of 12% can fund the cost of Samuthra.

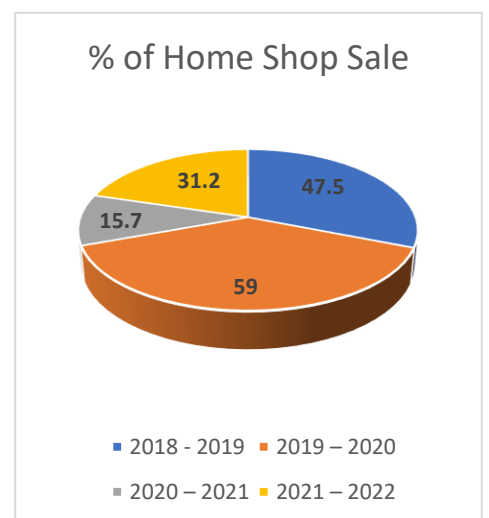
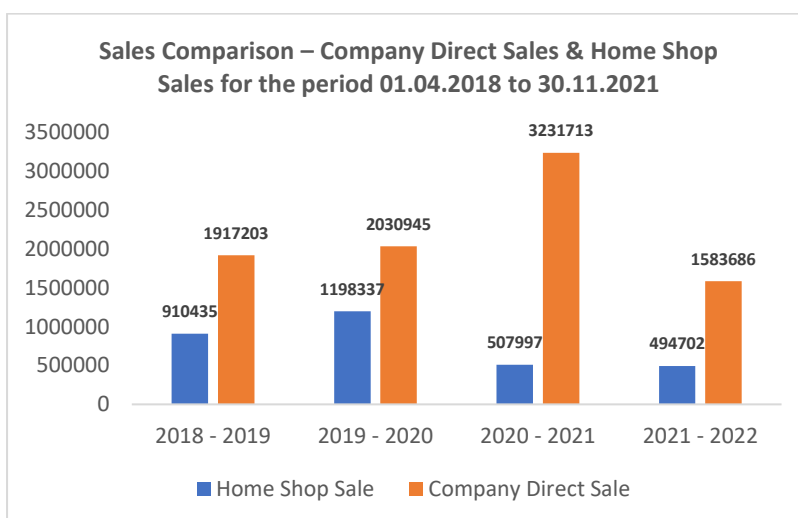
### **Observation**

Currently, Samuthra provides the Marketing support as backbone of Local MEs. The below Table 2 shows the % of Home Shop Sale fluctuating over the years. It started as 47% in 2018-19, 59% in 2019-20 and reduced to 15.7% in 2020-21 during lockdown period. And further picking up in 2021 to 31%. This shows Samuthra is constantly working to improve the Home Sale and retain as much possible despite of restrictions during Lockdown.

This objective is completely derived based upon the performance of Samuthra and its retaining skills of Local Market. There were many new initiatives observed like putting stalls in Expo and Government Department Exhibitions, Supply to Local Schools like Vanavil and Producer Company Thaiman were serving well. Due to these experiences from city-based initiatives, now Samuthra is getting orders from family marriages, local festival seasons and initiating catering units of Women for family functions and public functions. However, no co-ops service fee collected to fund samuthra, instead, the company's direct sales of products produced by local units have been increased to more than 50%. The profit gained from this centralised market sales has been shared with local units as Incentives. This year 3 lakh rupees incentives shared from total nearly 40Lakh turnover.

**Table 2**

<b>Percentage wise Sales Comparison – Company Direct Sales &amp; Home Shop Sales for the period 01.04.2018 to 30.11.2021</b>					
<b>S. No</b>	<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>Home Shop Sale</b>	<b>Company Direct Sale</b>	<b>% of Home Shop Sale</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
1	2018 - 2019	910435	1917203	47.5	Normal situation
2	2019 - 2020	1198337	2030945	59	Normal situation
3	2020 - 2021	507997	3231713	15.7	Lockdown Period
4	2021 - 2022	494702	1583686	31.2	Partial Lockdown Period
		<b>3111471</b>	<b>8763547</b>	<b>35.5</b>	



The above planned objectives have achieved **to a moderate extent** considering the lockdown situation and local marketing challenges competing with branded products which has major investment in advertisements and communications to the rural public.

The women in the community who are producing the products expects Samuthra to procure materials in large quantity and provide fast moving products for sale in the villages. For example, more than pickles and snacks, demand for phenyl is high in villages. The food products are more saleable in City public. Also, the catering service (cooked food) from women group for family functions and local festivals is more popular than consumption of organic products like Millet Snacks, Organic Turmeric and Spice Powders. But the local village women groups are the producers of these organic value-added product and the chemical-based products. During emergency situation Samuthra unit in the City also manufacture products with the staff capacity in the office.

SNEHA as a social organisation has a challenge to balance between profit making to improve economic conditions of local fisher women and follow ethical trading practices like quality organic food production, decent standard of profit share to the local units, transparency and accountability maintenance to the Government and Pubic. To achieve, this, consumer awareness programmes, study tour to EKSAT in Kerala conducted and social media platforms, Federation Meetings of Fisher Women were used for sensitisation on above standards.

Considering the poor economic situation of fisher women in local co-ops and there is need for investment in advertisement and sensitisation among rural mass for procurement of organic products negating branded products by big companies, this objective would need long term intervention in the region.

### **Objective 3**

#### **Higher female consciousness and knowledge about human and women's rights**

##### **Activities**

- Training co-ops women in Human Right with a focus on women's rights in India.

## **Expected Outcome**

The women have acquired a better knowledge of their rights and will participate more in activities in the civil society

## **Observation**

The assessment of above activity in training women in human rights, literacy has shown that the organisation has achieved its objective **to the Large Extent** as the women participated in the evaluation in the fields expressed more value to these trainings than the income generation from the products they produce and sale. They expressed their gratitude to the organisation in developing their public speaking skills, leadership, communication, sensitive to their rights within their family and community which is highly patriarchal in nature. The documentation training and literacy used to maintain credibility to their initiatives among the locals and helps to improve their communication skills both in oral and writing. 130 women benefitted from 11 Human Rights and Literacy Trainings. They are empowered with more knowledge on Human Rights and Women's Rights and able to realise the same in their real-life situation.

## **3.2. Assessment of Outputs – Case Studies of Individual MSME (Co-ops)**

Out of 10 Local Units visited, 6 Case studies have been identified below to understand the overall picture of the performance. Though Lockdown played a major obstacle, the consistency of the project in ensuring the activities are assessed from the review of their consistent engagement.

### **1. Narmatha Cleaning Products**

This Narmatha Unit initiated by SNEHA through SAMUTHRA has identified the products which are fast moving to the needs of Local Fishing Community. The disinfectants they produce is largely used by fishermen and their families to get rid of unwanted smell during fish and dry fish handling, sales and cleaning. This unit has largest number of women engaged as group of around 9 members namely S.Backiya, P.Jothi, . P.Arumaikannu, R.Shakila, K.Punitha R.Chitra, K.Kowsalya, C.Shamili, M.Saraswathi. All of them belong to Akkaraipettai Fishing Hamlet, which was adversely affected during Tsunami and still the fishermen are facing tough

weather and threat from Srilankan Navy during Fishing. The economic situation of fisherwomen families are highly instable and there is a dire need for women to support families through other livelihood options. The catering unit started by Narmadha Members has also yielded good results as the village situated near the Nagapattinam Town area. During the year 6 major food orders were handled by the Catering Unit now increased upto 10 orders including supply of cooked food for government and non-governmental programmes. Simultaneously, the group involved in production of Soaps and Disinfectants to the number of 910 and 4300 respectively in the year 2020. This production and sales number has increased in the year 2021, as 1070 and 5996.

Registered under MSME, Government of India in the year 2015, Narmadha Unit got support from Puthakka thittam of Government of Tamil Nadu with grant of rupees 1.5 lakh for their businees development. They also submitted proposal to the district administration to start a Food Court inside the campus of Fishing Harbour located on the shore. They also lobbied with the local fishing community heads(men) for allocation of site for their project as community plays a major role in using the common property resources. Following which the basement construction ceremony(they call Poomi Pooja) was conducted The major reason for successful functioning of the group is geographical location near the town where SNEHA and Samuthra offices located and the training of women given by the project in liasoning with the government departments to get the support. Despite of this, the women group members still facing hardships in the hands of their own community men in getting decent space within the harbour limit due to local politics and male domination.

### ***Lessons Learnt***

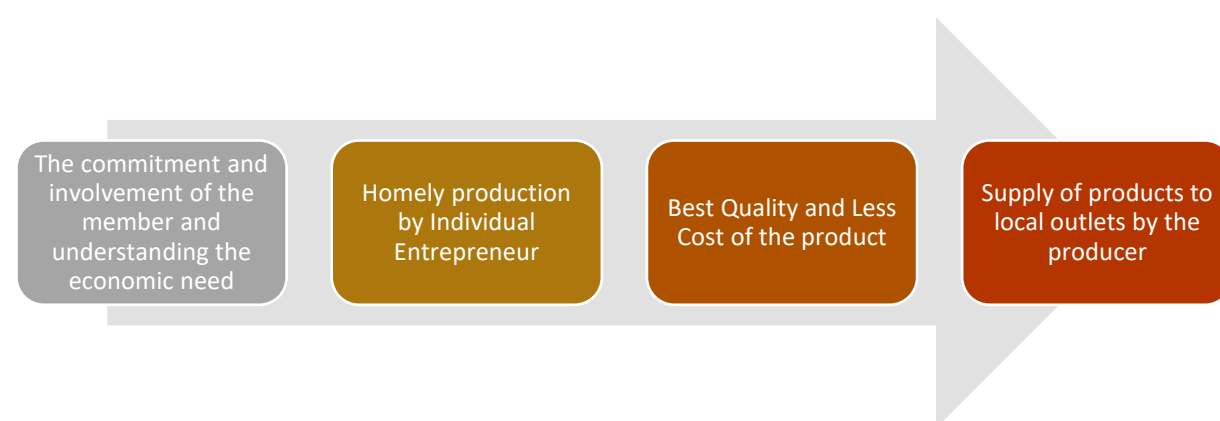


## 2. Jessy pickles – Individual Entrepreneur

Sumathi is the Founder of Jessy Pickles in Kilingalmedu Village. She started the pickle making with the support of women group members in the year 2019. As Karakalmedu is nearby Village and the Federation in Karaikalmedu, which includes women of neighboring villages is a well function sales unit, Sumathi got both moral and physical support in selling her product. Further, the sales support extended by Samuthra is an added advantage. Sumathi is survived by her sick husband and 2 children who still studying in School. This business helps her meeting the children's education and husband's treatment for the past one year. Further, Jessy pickles becomes popular in karaikal region due to its quality, taste and extended Shelf life. She sold around 366.400 kg (632 bottles/200gms) in the year 2020 and 501kg in the year 2021 despite of the lockdown obstacles. Within the start of 3 years Sumathi gained credibility to her products. Her pickle variety includes lemon, ginger, herbs like perandai, mudakathan, etc and fish, prawn. She has a small petty shop in front of her house and sells pickles in small packets for local community. Samuthra procure large quantities for sales in the nearby urban area consumers. Sumathi feels, the Sales support of Samuthra is of great help in sustaining her pickle business and seek such support consistently in future.

Sumathi has been part of SNEHA women's federation and actively engaged in all trainings and capacity building programmes. She is model for other Women Entrepreneurs not to lose confidence in spite of struggles in the family.

### ***Lessons Learnt***



### 3. Aaha Masala Unit

Aaha Masala Unit in Chinnakudi Village in Thanrangampadi Region has been led by women in the middle age group (35-45) since the year 2015. They are K. Ponni V. Sabeena, B. Thayanithi, B. Roja and M. Lakshmi. During the year 2020, they produced around 1425 kg of masala powders(including 1108kg for Covid Relief supply). This unit functioned very successfully as the infrastructure and machineries for drying and powdering, packaging of the Masala Powders was available. The trainings provided by SNEHA also helped them to make quality products and sales was quite impressive pre-pandemic period. However, due to family issues of the participating women hindered the smooth functioning during Lockdown. The women lost their motivation, despite of SNEHA extended its support for conflict resolution. During the year, the unit produced 525 kg of Masala powder for sales, which is very low compared to the capacity of the Unit. Women are unable to operate the grinding machine manually and needed support from their male members and also transportation of products during lockdown across state border (as the unit located within Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry) is the major issue.

The buildings and machineries were provided by SNEHA during post tsunami period. Now the women maintained it to the functional level. There needs to further handholding to the women from SNEHA to make the unit fully functional.

Also the unit has to depend on male operators to handle the machineries due to belt changing for different products. Now they have planned to purchase a new latest machinery, which is designed for easy handling.

#### ***Lessons Learnt***





#### 4. T.R. Pattinam- Muthukkal Healthy Snacks

Muthukkal Healthy Snacks Unit based in T.R.Pattinam is a brand new Unit started by E.Vijayarni, G.Pushpa, N.Elachi, A.Nagarani, all aged between 35-50. The production started with 61.800 kg millet balls (412 boxes / 150 gms) and later increased to 250 kg millet balls (1668/150 gms). This is due to the opportunity to present their products in the sales counter in Nagapattinam District Collectorate (Exporters Conclave).

Samuthra provided training for the women's group on preparation of the Snacks using the Millets like Ragi, Thinai, Varagu, Samai and pulses like Ground Nut and using Ghee. The unit women also provided support for packaging and labelling of the product in a hygienic condition. They follow all hygienic measures in processing the millets and preparation of Snacks with masks, gloves and head cover.

The unit is getting more orders from the local family functions and also supply to other village units through Samuthra for larger sale. All women participating in this unit are deserving women, who need financial support to survive their family as fishing is seasonal and most of the days their men become jobless. The women also maintain the records of production, sales and stock properly based on the training input from SNEHA.

#### ***Leasons Learnt***

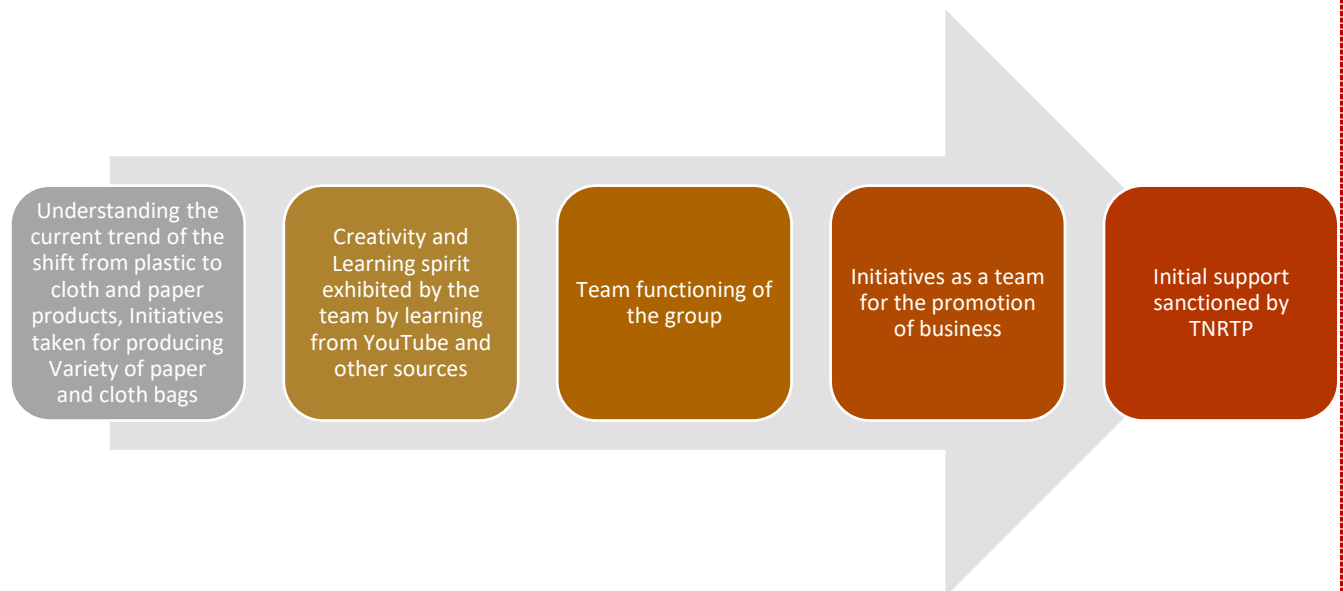


#### 5. Creative Paper Bag Unit, Pudhupettai

The bag making Unit in Pudhupettai has been started newly in the year 2020 with MSME registration. The unit is handled by a 5 member group of women namely Malarkodi, Malathi, Nirmala, Saranya and Sangeetha. Comparatively, this unit is run by young women below the

age group of 40. SNEHA supported building has been used by the women to place their tailoring and processing machineries, which they bought with the financial support from Tamil Nadu Rural Transformation Project worth of Rs. 75,000/-. These machines help them to produce paper bags in large volumes. In the beginning year they started producing 674 paper bags and later the government announced promotion of cloth bags to replace plastic bags. Hence, they produced 1896 cloth bags and 846 cloth bags in the year of 2021. The women expressed their satisfaction in producing the bags and made attempt to approach the local textile and bakery shops for orders. Currently, Samuthra is handholding the unit by procuring the bags in large numbers for their centralized orders. Women are able to see profit in making paper and cloth bags and need further support to access market linkages.

### ***Lessents Learnt***



### ***Suggestions for Improvement:***

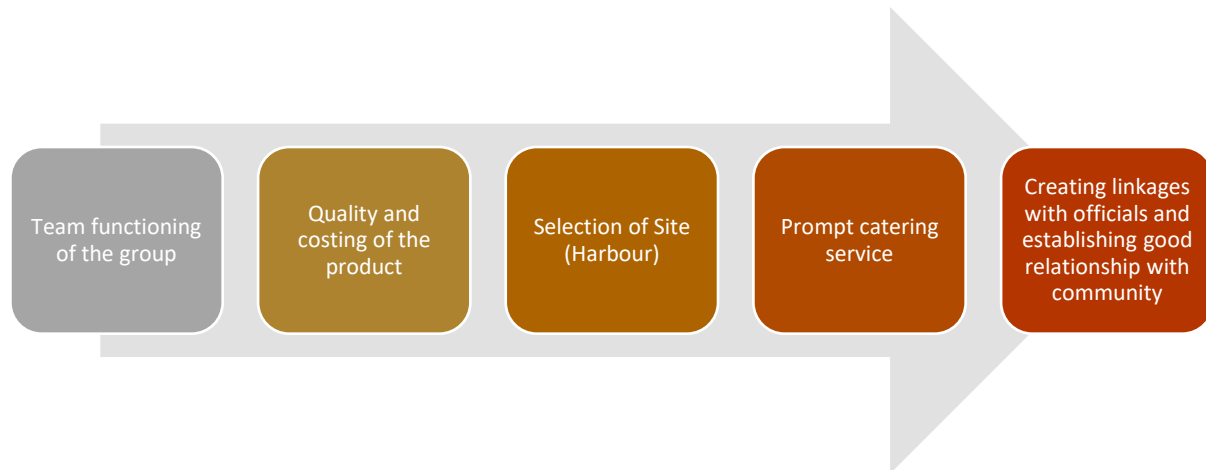
Initiatives to upgrade production and business through investment in machinery (Stiching and Cutting).

## **6. Dolphin Food Court, Poombugar**

Dolphin Food Court is one of the Popular Social Entrepreneurship model initiated by a large group of Women members in Poombugar with the registration under MSME in the year 2017. 10 women namely Stella, Rajkumari, Selvarani, Pushpavalli, Uma, Saroja, Sharmila, Vembu, Parvathi, Geetha are part of this initiative. The group involves women from the age group of 30 to 65. They worked hard to establish this Unit with the technical and training support from SNEHA and Samuthra and got a space to establishing their food court inside the fishing

harbour. Apart from the Food Court they also cook food for festivals and family ceremonies and celebrations. As the Lockdown was announced in the month of March 2020, the Food Court was shut down and now operating as catering unit. However, the inspiring story of the Unit is the team unity and active and energetic leadership in executing the business. Poombugar is a world renowned tourist spot on the East Coast is the added advantage for women to see good earnings from the Unit and help their families during offseason.

### ***Lessons Learnt***



### ***Suggestions for Improvement:***

An outlet could be established near the tourism spot, that is run parallely will be helpful.

## ***4. Findings and overall observation***

After completing the evaluation process the findings are derived from two fronts i.e. socio-economic situation of fisherwomen in the target area and analysis of the data presented by implementing organisation SNEHA. Based on the overall objective and specific objective of the Project, findings are grouped under three key areas of intervention. i. Training Inputs and Outputs, ii. Enhancement of Income and Sustainability, iii. Impact of the Project on Women's Rights and Participation in Civil Society.

### **4.1. Training Inputs and Outputs**

- ✚ The trainings on product development, quality check, packaging helped the women to explore the possibilities of supporting their families with additional income in non-fishing categories. Further, the training programmes also designed in such a way that

identification of leadership to the units is based on the social standards of collective decision making, accountability and transparency principles.

- ✚ All the village units have proper documentation, registration and new units have started their due process of registration. SNEHA has a policy of collective engagement, which helped in maintaining accountability and transparency in every transaction. The integration of Village level Community Women Federations and the Livelihood Project has been conceptualized from the beginning of the project. Trainings inputs on management/conflict resolution reached its full potential.
- ✚ The output of the training could be analyzed through the interface of women members with the government departments and obtaining the Government Subsidy and Loan for their Units. The communication and necessary documentation are maintained by Women Group in the MSMEs. The members who are non-literate able to obtain literacy through trainings and maintain the records.
- ✚ Women groups promoting products through home shop membership and introducing new products like Healthy Snack using Millets, food court have gained confidence to participate in the government sponsored exhibition stalls. Further, the exposure visits to Kerala and other Districts of Tamil Nadu where there is successful entrepreneurship models enabled women to initiate business model of their own.
- ✚ The inadequate performance of many units on Local Sales and their dependence on Samuthra is evident as the training on Marketing Skills are not adequate and consistent. There is no scientific study of Market and Customer base done in the project results in poor sales performance in village market base. This has impacted their motivation. While women are in dire need of support for their livelihood, the external condition of Market, Banking and Government restrictions and formalities makes them vulnerable to meet the challenge. Samuthra and SNEHA has to provide multiple support service to enable women to sustain their initiatives.

## **4.2. Enhancement of Income and Sustainability**

The identification of fisherwomen who need economic support from the livelihood project and the choice of product is determined by the local women federation facilitated by SNEHA for many years. Hence, the project aim of enhancing the income has been percolated down at

the village level and women who are engaged in the Local Units are able to provide their energy. The 42 products promoted by Samuthra with quality parameters and training inputs helped the women to identify the product suitable for them to produce. The disinfectants, turmeric and tea powder are largely consumed by locals, while the food products like millet powder, snacks, pickles are sent to outside market through Samuthra. The overall performance of increasing turn over is maintained despite of Covid Lockdown measures. While the closure looks at the MSMEs at the village level reveal the inadequacy and inconsistency in working hours, the overall performance of each unit is looking promising for the local units to flourish further provided they get adequate orders from the market. Hence, the production and income are based on market situation for selling the product while the availability of human resources is not an issue.

While the fisherwomen expressed the training inputs have made them more confident and enabled them to realise their ideas for engaging in their own business model, the income they are earning is minimal due to Covid Lockdown situation. Around 30% of the individual needs fulfilled from the unit. Further, the local marketing support for their products is the greatest challenge they face as the families are not consistent on purchase of products from local unit. Hence, they depend on Samuthra for selling their products outside of their village.

Out of the maximum 6 years engagement in the livelihood project, Samuthra and MSMEs has high potential of sustainability provided there is adequate back-end support system developed with well-equipped marketing, transportation and communication standards along with procurements of raw materials in more cost-effective manner. Further, there is a plan needed for earning more profit without compromising on quality and ethical business practices to meet the economic needs of fisherwomen. The success of this process depends on the support of the Government and Banking Institutions. Unlike Kerala, Tamil Nadu is delayed in promoting women's entrepreneurship and providing support for women to access land, infrastructure and market their produce. The General Sales Tax (GST is new centralised tax regime, which has replaced Sales Tax of the State governments) registration and procedures for procurement of loan is another tedious process that local women's group have to go through to achieve additional income.

### **4.3. Impact of the project on Women's Rights and Participation in Civil Society**

The project has made major impact on women's rights in terms of their social engagement on par with the fishermen in the villages. Women able to demonstrate their collective spirit

irrespective of their challenges in facing local family/community dynamics. Their participation has increased in civil society through their lobbying and advocacy skills. Women are able to resist government policies and laws containing the rights of coastal communities like Aqua Culture promotion, Dilution of Coastal Regulation Zone Notification, Draft Indian Marine Fisheries Bill, etc. The leaders participate in state and national level forums to raise their voices and protection of coastal livelihood in Fisheries.

While their representation in community recognised, their secondary role in families remains due to cultural ethos and norms. Women's rights is yet to permeate down at the family level in marriage, education, child birth and land rights. Coastal land is considered as commons and men in the village holds more power in determining the usage. Women's Rights over common property as their livelihood rights is one of the major areas SNEHA need to work on.

## *5. Recommendations*

### **For the Project**

Considering the long-term impact that this project is aimed in line with SDG 6, the evaluation proposes a framework on understanding socio-economic model of Livelihood. Perspective, Practice and Increasing Income (Profit) are three key components in bringing successful change in the lives of women in marginalised communities.

“Fundamentally, poverty is a denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. It means not having enough to feed and cloth[e] a family, not having a school or clinic to go to, not having the land on which to grow one's food or a job to earn one's living, not having access to credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities. It means susceptibility to violence, and it often implies living on marginal or fragile environments, without access to clean water or sanitation.” —United Nations, 1998

### **Perspective**

The project does not include access to Land for women as major area of focus. In the coastal communities, the land is considered as Commons and Men are holding the customary rights in management of land, while the State is simultaneously claiming its monopoly as Coastal Porambores (commons). In this conflict between customary rights and state property, the women are excluded in accessing their rights over land for their Livelihood. For production,

processing, packaging, exhibition, etc women need land and infrastructure. Many villages, SNEHA constructed post Tsunami buildings are used, but under constant threat from the community men for acquisition for other purposes. This area needs further exploration by the organization to make it women's sustainable solution.

Further, with training inputs and necessary technical support from the organizations, the women in MSMEs are equipped to be an entrepreneur rather than wage earning members. Hence, more than calculating their day wages and working hours, their participation, consistency in engagement, effective use of resources, reduction of wastage, improvement in communication, empowerment and recognition in the village, quality service delivery, negotiation within community and government etc need to be considered. These are the qualities, which helps them to enhance their earnings assessed in small groups as well as individually.

Village religious festivals practicing patriarchy, marriage ceremonies, are the major options for women to sell or provide service to improve their business. Alternative thinking needs to be explored to tap the local market. While small group entrepreneurship is functioning successfully, wherever needed individual entrepreneurship (similar of Jessy Pickles) could be promoted to bring innovation, increase profit and reduce unproductive nature due to conflicts within groups.

Samuthra to redesign its function to improve its marketing capacity, quality management and procurement of products from local unit. Promotion of Local Brands, exploring more quality raw materials, identify alternate nature friendly packaging materials, improving advertisements, communication, brand building are essentials.

### **Practice**

The project needs to include community advocacy methods for quality food and life style practices promoting the products made by women. Community men/fisherfolk need to be largely involved in livelihood promotion and sensitisation of men as co-home makers through village federations. Involvement of Youth/Children in changing life style (ex. Using locally made quality products).

Appreciating best performing families, institutions supporting the livelihood project and customer feedback system to be standardised. Replacing membership of local unit based on changing needs of fisherwomen and similarly exploring new products suitable to the environment and local needs with quality parameters in place. The days and time of engagement need to be corelated with productivity and satisfy the needs of women in various

fronts starting from adequate income, status and recognition within family and community and outside market and society.

Identify marketing skill among women and promoting talents with communication skills for the benefit of local unit. Similar to Production Group, forming a Marketing Group at village and federation level (apart from individual home shop membership) and at Samuthra would help to improve the business.

Promoting new products through individual entrepreneurship among fisherwomen particularly single women and women headed families.

### **Increasing Income (Profit)**

**To assess increase income in the collective business models (MSMEs) the review process of local units as well as centralized unit (Samuthra) need following indicators monitored periodically.**

Consistency in the growth of Production and Sales	
Reducing wastage/loss in production and transportation	
Quality Products (hygiene/nil adulteration) produced without complaint	
Best standard practices (helping the poorest of the poor/sharing/model building, etc.)	
Brand building	
Profit from Margin shared to strengthen the Livelihood Project/Organisation	
Profit from increasing participation and exchange of products within local market and inter-village/ inter district/state/all India levels	
Profit from champions of Samudra Products	

Most importantly, recognition and support from the government machinery is necessary, particularly on taxing, registration and banking process.



## For Organisation

SNEHA with nearly 4 decades of experience in community-based action in this region has well established principles and practice adhering the constitutional norms and values of the country. Further, the organisation needs to assess its capacity for initiating self-sustainable initiatives without solely depending on external funding. Samuthra India Producer Company Ltd could be further strengthened to fund SNEHA through its income and profit share. While using the experience of seniors, new talents have to be promoted to bring innovation and creativity. The Socio-Economic Model that SNEHA is promoting has the Local Units as base in which standard operating procedures and quality parameters to be systematised with better communication. While the Local Units needs to function in a Self-Help mode, the centralised contribution from Samuthra need to be continued through more technical expertise and knowledge.

## 6. Conclusion

The livelihood project has achieved minimum consistent earning, but has maximum reach out through its members despite of COVID Lockdown restrictions. To assess the economic impact of the overall project there needs to be minimum 10 years period of intervention necessary. The following phase of this project is very crucial for SNEHA and Samuthra to make required course corrections towards sustainability and building standard model for poverty alleviation in this region.

## 7. Annexures

### Annexure I

#### Questionnaire for Individual/Group Interview

1. Name of the Enterprise:
2. Nature of business entity:  
Production / marketing / service delivery
3. How long they are engaged into the business?
4. Individual enterprise or group enterprise? Give details of members.
5. What motivated you to become an entrepreneur?
6. What are the enabling factors to promote?
7. Did you get any training programme to do this business? What are they?
8. Was the training sufficient to run the business? Where is the gap?
9. How the training helped you to enhance your ability/capacity?
10. What is the future training requirement?
11. How did you finance the business? Was the financial support sufficient?
12. What is the current stage of your business?  
Pilot stage / established the product or service / scale up stage
13. What is your immediate requirement to scale up the business?
14. Do you feel, you can sustain in your business and continue to exist with the current resources?
15. How working in small group help? What are the conflict management measures you learnt?
16. How the business activity has enhanced your leadership and empowerment?
17. How the business enhanced your position in the family and society?

## **Annexure II**

### **Criteria for Assessment of MSME's**

#### **Well-Functioning Groups**

1. Proper Record Maintenance
2. Time Management
3. Production Capacity
4. Quality of the Product
5. Self-Investment
6. Team Spirit
7. Marketing Capacity
8. Re investment their earnings
9. Age of the group
10. Register under MSME
11. Tie-up with Govt. Projects
12. Participation in Local Programmes

#### **Medium Functioning Groups**

1. Proper Record Maintenance
2. Lacking in Time Management
3. Production Capacity
4. Lacking in product quality
5. Self Investment
6. Conflict within the group
7. Poor Marketing Capacity
8. Age of the group
9. Process in MSME registration
10. Awaiting for Tie up with Govt projects

#### **Newly Formed Group**

1. Age of the Group
2. Process in MSME Registration
3. Awaiting for tie up with Govt projects

## Annexure III

### Photo Gallery





