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**Public Awareness and Engagement with Government Schemes for
Sustainable development in Tiruchirappalli District of Tamilnadu**

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***Abstract:** Sustainable development is an important goal for keeping the environment and the economy healthy in the long term, and government programs are a big part of reaching these goals. There have been a number of government programs in Tamil Nadu to promote sustainability and reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The success of these plans, on the other hand, depends a lot on how aware and involved the general public is. Even though these programs are important, there isn't much information about how well the people of Tamil Nadu know about them. This study seeks to evaluate the present level of awareness regarding government initiatives pertaining to sustainable development in Tiruchirappalli District of Tamil Nadu. This study seeks to improve the reach and effectiveness of these Government initiatives by evaluating public awareness and identifying communication gaps, thereby promoting more efficient sustainable development in the selected study area..*

***Keywords:** Awareness, Government Schemes, Sustainable Development, Tamilnadu..*

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INTRODUCTION

Tamil Nadu has experienced a profound shift towards sustainable development, propelled by an integration of governmental policies, community-based initiatives, and heightened public awareness. Acknowledging the imperative to harmonize economic expansion with environmental conservation and social justice, the state has established renewable energy as a foundational pillar. Leadership in wind and solar power has materialized through pioneering policies and incentives that have secured substantial investments in renewable infrastructure, thereby curtailing dependence on fossil fuels and mitigating carbon emissions. To promote sustainable agriculture, the government has introduced measures such as organic farming and water conservation techniques, ensuring food security while conserving natural resources. Alongside environmental goals, social inclusivity and economic development have also been prioritised through initiatives like the Tamil Nadu Sustainable Urban Development Project, which aims to improve infrastructure, expand affordable housing, and enhance access to essential services in urban areas. Investments in education and healthcare further empower citizens to participate meaningfully in the sustainable development process. Community-driven initiatives, supported by NGOs and civil society organisations, have played a crucial role in building environmental awareness and promoting sustainable livelihoods, especially among marginalised communities. Over all, Tamil Nadu's journey toward sustainable development embodies a holistic approach that weaves together very progressive measures to ensure sustainable development across the state. They have rolled out a mass of programs that address key areas like farming, energy, infrastructure, and education. For farmers, there is the Sustainable Agriculture Mission, which promotes sustainable practices such as organic farming and water conservation, keeping the environment clean while ensuring everyone has enough to eat. Specifically, there are policies such as the Solar Policy that encourage the use of renewable resources (solar and wind power), not only lowering pollution emissions but also giving a chance to become less dependent on others for energy. Regarding the infrastructure upliftment, efforts like the Green Corridor Initiative focus on improving the transportation network while minimising environmental degradation through greenery and environmentally friendly architecture. Education also plays a pivotal role in this objective, with initiatives to help young pupils understand the significance of caring for our planet and leading sustainable lives from an early age. These and all the other initiatives are part of Tamil Nadu's ambitions, stretching across a broader horizon to grow and develop in ways that do not hurt the earth, building a future that is fairer, more balanced, more inclusive and more resilient for generations to come.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

V. Rajendran (2023) in his study entitled "Climate Change Mitigation Efforts by the Tamil Nadu Government" reviews that Tamil Nadu's climate change mitigation strategies, including the State Action Plan on Climate Change. The paper highlights progress in reducing carbon emissions and promoting green practices but calls for more ambitious targets.

V. Raghavan (2023) in his study entitled "Social Equity and Sustainable Development Schemes in Tamil Nadu" explores that how sustainable development schemes address social equity. The paper discusses efforts to include marginalized communities but highlights ongoing challenges in achieving true equity and inclusiveness

H. Dinesh (2022) in his study entitled "Sustainable Transport Solutions in Tamil Nadu: An Evaluation" assesses that sustainable transport initiatives such as the Chennai Metro and bus rapid transit systems. The study finds improvements in urban mobility but identifies challenges in achieving integration and ensuring accessibility for all residents.

M. Kumar (2022) in his study entitled "Government Schemes for Sustainable Development in Tamil Nadu: A Review" the study reveals that,an extensive overview of government initiatives aimed at sustainable development in Tamil Nadu, including the Tamil Nadu Green Climate Fund and the Integrated Watershed Management Programme. The paper evaluates the effectiveness of these schemes, noting improvements in environmental quality but highlighting challenges such as limited community involvement and insufficient monitoring mechanisms.

S. S. Kumar(2022) in his study entitled "Public Participation in Sustainable Development Schemes in Tamil Nadu"explores that public participation in implementing sustainable development schemes. The study highlights successful participatory approaches but identifies barriers such as lack of awareness and engagement.

Ramesh (2022) in his study entitled "Financial Mechanisms for Sustainable Development in Tamil Nadu"explores that financial mechanisms like green bonds and subsidies that support sustainable development. The study finds that while these mechanisms facilitate green investments, there is a need for greater transparency and confidence among investors.

S.K. Sharma (2022) in his study entitled "Urban Development and Sustainability: Tamil Nadu's Approach"explores urban sustainability initiatives under schemes like the Smart Cities Mission. The paper notes advancements in urban infrastructure and smart city features but highlights challenges in integrating sustainable transport and waste management solutions.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The statement of the problem regarding awareness of government schemes aimed at transforming Tamil Nadu towards sustainable development underscores a critical issue in the state's socio-economic landscape. Despite the concerted efforts of the government to implement various schemes and initiatives fostering sustainable development, there exists a significant gap in awareness among the populace. This gap hampers the effective implementation and utilization of these schemes, thereby hindering the state's progress towards sustainability goals. Factors contributing to this lack of awareness may include inadequate dissemination of information, limited outreach to marginalized communities, linguistic barriers, and a lack of engagement with local stakeholders. Addressing this problem is essential to ensure inclusive and equitable

access to the benefits of government schemes, empower communities to actively participate in sustainable development initiatives, and ultimately, propel Tamil Nadu towards a more prosperous and environmentally conscious future. This raises the research question to what extent the respondents are aware about the schemes?

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To analyze the Sustainable Development schemes for socio-economic development of the respondents.
2. To examine the impact of Sustainable Development schemes under the various factors in society
3. To suggest appropriate policy measures for solving them.

HYPOTHESIS

1. There is no association between the socio-Economic variables and level of awareness among sample respondents.

METHODOLOGY

The study is mainly based on primary data. The researcher used an interview schedule to collect data on their awareness, utilisation, and satisfaction with the Government Schemes. Secondary data have been used to explain the theoretical aspects of the study. Journals, books and websites form secondary data. A total of 318 respondents were chosen from the Tiruchirappalli district to participate in the survey. This sample size is sufficient for drawing inferences about the population, which should reassure the audience of the study's reliability, provided that the convenience sampling technique is appropriate and the respondents are representative of the target population. The collected data from the respondents were thoroughly analysed using various statistical methods. Simple percentage calculations were employed to determine the frequency and distribution of responses. Finally, the Chi-Square Test was used to examine if there were significant associations between different variables, such as awareness levels and socio-demographic factors.

DATA ANALYSIS

TABLE-1 - SOCIO ECONOMIC PROFILE OF THE SAMPLE RESPONDENTS

Variables	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Area of Residence		
Rural	255	80.2
Urban	63	19.8
Age Group		
>20	37	11.6
21-40	176	55.3
41-60	105	33.1
Gender		
Male	105	33.02
Female	213	66.98

Educational Qualification		
12 th	36	11.32
Diploma	13	4.09
UG	252	79.25
PG	6	1.89
Others	11	3.46
Occupation		
Private Employee	110	34.59
Government Employee	56	17.61
Business	63	19.81
Agriculturist	42	13.21
Others	47	14.78
Marital Status		
Married	192	60.37
Unmarried	126	39.62
Type of Family		
Nuclear	187	58.80
Joint	131	41.19
Family Income		
Below Rs 75000	169	53.14
Rs 75001-Rs 85000	68	21.38
Rs 85001-Rs 95000	42	13.21
Above Rs 95000	39	12.26

Source: Primary data

The table 1 shows that out of 318 samples the majority of respondents (80.2%) live in rural areas, while only 19.8% reside in urban areas. The largest proportions of respondents (55.3%) are in the 21-40 years age group, followed by 41-60 years (33.1%). The >20 years group represents a smaller portion (11.6%). The sample consists predominantly of females (66.98%), with males accounting for only 33.02%. The majority of respondents (79.25%) have completed undergraduate (UG) education. 12th grade education represents 11.32%, while PG holders are minimal at 1.89%. Private employees make up the largest group (34.59%), followed by those in business (19.81%). A smaller proportion works as government employees (17.61%) and agriculturists (13.21%), with others (14.78%) constituting various job categories not mentioned in the primary occupations. A majority of respondents (60.37%) are married, with unmarried individuals accounting for 39.63%. nuclear families are more prevalent (41.19%) compared to Joint families (58.80%) in the study area. In a sample of 318 individuals, More than half (53.14%) of the respondents reported that their family incomes below Rs 75,000, with progressively smaller shares in higher brackets followed by 21.38% (Rs 75,001–85,000), 13.21% (Rs 85,001–95,000), and 12.26% (above Rs 95,000), reflecting a lower-income skew.

TABLE 2 - LEVEL OF AWARENESS ON GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

Variable	Low (29)	Medium (213)	High (76)	Total (N=318)	D.f	Table Value	Chi-square value
Area of Residence							
Rural	18	183	54	255	2	4.891	5.991* (Rejected)
Urban	11	30	22	63			
Age Group							
>20	3	18	16	37	6	33.950	12.59 (Accepted)
21-40	7	135	34	176			
41-60	19	60	26	105			
Gender							
Male	5	69	31	105	2	17.937	5.99 (Accepted)
Female	18	160	35	213			
Literacy							
12 th	-	17	19	36	8	70.765	15.51 (Accepted)
Diploma	-	10	3	13			
UG	20	175	57	252			
PG	-	-	6	6			
Others	-	5	6	11			
Occupation							
Private Employee	12	83	15	110	10	55.342	15.52 (Accepted)
Government Employee	-	44	12	56			
Business	-	40	23	63			
Agriculturist	6	36	-	42			
Others	3	26	18	47			
Marital Status							
Married	21	123	48	192	2	15.505	5.99 (Accepted)
	Unmarried	08	90	28			
Nature of Family							

Nuclear	12	129	46	187	2	4.000	5.991*
Joint	17	84	30	131			(Rejected)
Annual Family Income							
Below Rs 75000	22	127	-	169	6	23.474	12.59
Rs 75001-Rs 85000	-	18	50	68			(Accepted)
Rs 85001-Rs 95000	4	23	15	42			
Above Rs 95000	3	45	11	39			

Source: Primary data

Note:* Indicates (H0 – Rejected).

Summary of Findings:

- ∇ Out of 318 respondents Most of them (80.2%) belong to rural areas.
- ∇ Regarding the age the largest group is (55.3%) 21-40 years.
- ∇ The sample is predominantly (66.98%) female respondents in the study area.
- ∇ The majority (79.25%) have an undergraduate education in the study area.
- ∇ Regarding occupation the largest group (34.59%) reported working as private employees.
- ∇ Most of the respondents (60.37%) are married.
- ∇ The majority of the samples (58.80%) are lives in Nuclear families.
- ∇ Most respondents (63.21%) earned below Rs 75000 as their annual income.
- ∇ The Significant differences are observed for the age groups with p-values below 0.05. This suggests that age might be a factor influencing the distribution.
- ∇ The p-values for both Male and Female are greater than 0.05. This indicates that gender does not significantly influence the variable under study.
- ∇ Significant differences are found only for 12th grade and PG degree, with p-values below 0.05. For Diploma, and UG, no significant differences were observed.
- ∇ Occupation seems to significantly affect the distribution of individuals across low, medium, and high categories, especially in private employment, business, and agriculture labour.
- ∇ The p-values for both Married and Unmarried are greater than 0.05. Hence, No significant difference between marital statuses, meaning that being married or unmarried does not influence the distribution significantly.
- ∇ There is no significant difference between family types (nuclear vs. joint), indicating that family structure does not significantly impact the variable being studied.

- ∇ The **annual family income** plays a significant role in determining the distribution of individuals across the low, medium, and high categories, especially for lower and mid-range income groups.
- ∇ The Significant differences are found for Annual income below Rs 75000 and Rs 75001- Rs 85000, with very small p-values.

PROBLEMS FACED BY THE RESPONDENTS AVAILING THE GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

- ∇ The implementation and efficacy of government schemes are frequently undermined by several critical impediments. Primarily, lack of awareness among the target population regarding the availability and precise details of these schemes often creates significant informational asymmetry. This challenge is further exacerbated by complicated application procedures and an excessive burden of paperwork, which can deter potential beneficiaries from initiating or completing the application process.
- ∇ Moreover, limited accessibility to essential information and support services, particularly prevalent in remote areas, establishes considerable geographical barriers, disproportionately affecting vulnerable communities. Even for those who successfully navigate these initial hurdles, delays in the processing and subsequent disbursement of benefits can wipe out the timely impact intended by the programs, leading to frustration and erosion of trust. Compounding these issues is an inadequate provision of support and guidance throughout the application process, leaving many applicants without the necessary assistance to successfully access the schemes.
- ∇ Collectively, these systemic challenges diminish the overall reach and effectiveness of public initiatives, thereby necessitating streamlined processes, enhanced outreach, and robust support mechanisms to ensure equitable access and optimal societal benefit.

SUGGESTIONS

- ∇ It is utterly unacceptable that government schemes continue to flop spectacularly year after year wasting billions in taxpayer money and leaving millions trapped in poverty due to their profound disconnect from ground realities. For instance, programs intended for rural upliftment often ignore local soil types, crop cycles, and cultural practices, resulting in near-zero adoption rates. Therefore, policymakers must immediately realign scheme objectives with hyper-local needs through regular, robust, and participatory consultations with community stakeholders, including farmers, women's self-help groups, and village councils.
- ∇ Invest in comprehensive training for frontline personnel, including extension workers, local officers, and community outreach staff, who engage directly with beneficiaries on a daily basis. At present, many such personnel are inadequately prepared, facing difficulties in

communicating government schemes effectively to local populations or adapting them to specific contextual needs, which further widens the disparity between policy design and practical implementation. Allocating substantial resources to practical, hands-on training programs encompassing local dialects, cultural practices, and problem-solving competencies will enhance service delivery, foster authentic trust, and transform support mechanisms into effective tools for alleviating family poverty, rather than mere administrative formalities.

- ∇ Improve communication channels to ensure clear and effective information flow between agencies and beneficiaries and also address technical issues with online systems by upgrading technology and providing user support. It will ensure fairness and transparency in the distribution of benefits to prevent discrimination.

CONCLUSION

Awareness of government schemes is pivotal in driving the transformation towards sustainable development. By understanding and utilizing these initiatives, individuals and communities can actively participate in creating a more equitable, prosperous, and environmentally responsible society. Government schemes in Tamil Nadu, such as those focused on health, education, employment, environmental conservation, and entrepreneurship; provide the foundation for sustainable progress. Effective dissemination of information and engagement with these programs can empower citizens to make informed decisions, enhance their quality of life, and contribute to the state's overall development goals. In conclusion, heightened awareness and proactive participation in these schemes are crucial for achieving sustainable development, ensuring that the benefits reach every segment of society and lead to a more resilient and inclusive future.

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