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CONTENTS

Sr. No.	TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)	Page No.
1.	RECOGNISING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND CUSTOMER LOYALTY: AN ILLUSTRATION FROM ORGANISED RETAIL SECTOR <i>DR. R. R. CHAVAN & ANIL DONGRE</i>	1
2.	PRODUCER GAS AS A VIABLE ENERGY SOURCE <i>RAHUL BASU</i>	4
3.	ENSET VALUE CHAIN ANALYSIS: THE CASE OF DIRE ENCHINI WOREDA, OROMIA REGIONAL STATE, ETHIOPIA <i>ABEBE UMA & DR. J. PAUL MANSINGH</i>	7
4.	ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW OF NEURAL NETWORK <i>KULBIR KAUR & GAGANDEEP KAUR</i>	15
5.	EXPERIENTIAL BRANDING IN WONDERLA (VEEGALAND) AMUSEMENT PARK, KOCHI: THE ENHANCING ROLE OF GROUP ORIENTATION OF VISITORS <i>K.J. JAIS & BELAGAVI BAKKAPPA</i>	22
6.	CAREER GOAL AND CAREER PREPARATION AMONG THE UNDER GRADUATE STUDENTS: A STUDY ON SELECTED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AFFILIATED TO BHARATHIAR UNIVERSITY, COIMBATORE, TAMIL NADU <i>DR. VIJAYALAKSHMI</i>	30
7.	CORPORATE RESTRUCTURING: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK <i>SHAILAJA D.KELSHIKAR & DR. MANOJ SHAH</i>	36
8.	FACTORS INFLUENCING CORE QUALITY MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (THE CASE OF SOME SELECTED COLLEGES OF ETHIOPIAN MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE) <i>DR. BREHANU BORJI AYALEW & ABEL DULA WEDAJO</i>	40
9.	EXPLORING BUYING BEHAVIOUR OF URBAN CONSUMERS TOWARDS SHAMPOOS: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCES FROM INDIA <i>S M FATAHUDDIN, MOHAMMED NAVED KHAN & AYESHA ANUM</i>	58
10.	PRODUCT PLACEMENT IN MOVIES AND TV SERIES: CONCEPT, EXAMPLES AND BEST PRACTICES <i>PRAMA VISHNOI & NAMITA PADHY</i>	62
11.	A REVIEW PAPER ON MULTICULTURALISM IN WORKPLACE <i>DR. POOJA DASGUPTA & KHUSHBU DUBEY</i>	66
12.	A STUDY ON IMPACT OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS WITH S.R.F TO BANGALORE CITY <i>JONITA PREETHI SEQUEIRA</i>	69
13.	EXPORT GROWTH AND PROSPECT OF FLORICULTURE IN INDIA: GLOBAL SCENARIO <i>R.SENTHILKUMAR</i>	74
14.	RECOGNITION: AN EMPLOYEE RETENTION TOOL <i>RASHMI BADJATYA</i>	78
15.	IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNET OF THINGS IN RURAL SENSITIVE AREA OF CHHATTISGARH <i>DR. ASHIM RANJAN SARKAR</i>	81
16.	WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN MADURAI CITY <i>DR. S.C.B. SAMUEL ANBU SELVAN & V.SUGANYA</i>	85
17.	INDIAN CIVIL AVIATION INDUSTRY: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES <i>JAYA G. PRABHU PARRIKAR</i>	88
18.	ROLE OF PUNE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SLUMS <i>SHEETAL RANDHIR</i>	90
19.	SALES PROMOTION STRATEGY: A STIMULATING FACTOR FOR THE CONSUMERS TOWARDS THE ORGANIZED RETAIL SECTOR IN BILASPUR <i>PRATIBHA RAI & DR. (MRS.) B.B. PANDEY</i>	94
20.	EFFECT OF STEREOTYPE ON EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH DISABILITIES IN SELECTED UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA <i>JOHN WEKESA WANJALA, DR. SUSAN WERE & DR. WILLY MUTURI</i>	99
	REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK & DISCLAIMER	104

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WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN MADURAI CITY

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ABSTRACT

Women in India had status quo with men in ancient times. With traditions and ordinances catching place in the society women were subjugated to oppression which were borne silently by her. Social revolution began with reformers from different aegis of the society made a loud call to Indian women to come out of her shell. Many laws were enacted in favour of women to take her in the path of empowerment. Yet in the male chauvinistic society empowerment has not reached its fullness as was desired. To analyse and find the real position of women in Madurai city, India an attempt has been made by the authors and a sample of 50 women respondents were taken and their socio economic status were questioned. The results of the study are obtained by applying statistical tests.

KEYWORDS

women empowerment, social revolution.

INTRODUCTION

The most wonderful creation of God is humankind, made in His own image and likeness. 'Women' as she is, is known in India, for her selfless service. The Holy Scriptures talk about her as one who is full of love and compassion and holds, her love for children as eternal and edifying. During the historic times, she was subjected to inequality and suppression and was reduced to a machine, which is thrown away or discarded after use. Many pioneers emerged to refit her status in the society. Of late, she has come out of her shell, though not completely. This paper attempts to throw light on her real status in the pluralistic society Madurai India.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Various books, journals and websites were assessed to identify the research gap in relation to empowerment of women. Social issues in relation to women were examined by social activists who pronounce the evils existing in their society which includes child marriage, sati and polygamy. Various regional poets have brought out their quest for empowering women and have raised their hands against the atrocity committed to women. Of late commerce studies also talk about empowering women by way of providing empowerment through financial inclusion and entrepreneurial development.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Women in India in this technological savvy period play multiple roles at home and at work place. This is common in cities and metros where a good number of women experience economic and social independence. Not many cases have this liberty in down south of Tamil Nadu. Madurai known for its inheritance of traditions of Dravidians and Aryans has within and between different sections of the society a big poisonous vein of illiteracy among women folks. There is an urgent need to focus into the status of women in Madurai city and so the following issues have become relevant to the study.

- Identifying the socio economic status of women in Madurai city
- Assessing the impact of education on the status of the family and thereby its role in empowering women
- Offering suitable solutions to the policy makers.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study are

- To Identify the socio economic status of women in Madurai city
- To assess the impact of education on the status of the family and thereby its role in empowering women
- To Offer suitable solutions to the policy makers.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study entails women empowerment in Madurai city. The results of the study will be applicable to tier II cities in Southern India that inherit similar traditions.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Women empowerment enables improvement in the standard of living of the community as it makes women sharp emotionally and rationally. In this backdrop the study gains importance.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study is restricted to the Corporation governed part of Madurai. Data collected is purely based on the response provided by women workers who were questioned casually during work time. Data were recorded in sheets after obtaining oral answers from the respondents.

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

A sample size of 50 women was taken at random in Madurai city covering posh and slum areas. Simple percentage is used to analyse the data collected. The socio economic status of women is analysed here.

SOCIO ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN**OCCUPATION**

Women in Madurai are doing all types of job from being that of a cleaner to a CEO. Occupation of women plays a vital role in empowerment because it portrays her financial independence in the society.

TABLE 1: OCCUPATION

Occupation	Total	Percentage
Salaried Employees in private sector	25	50
Public sector employees	5	10
Professional	10	20
Business	10	20
Total	50	100

Source: Primary data.

Table 1 reveals that 50 percent of the total respondents are salaried employees in private sectors doing odd jobs to make their living.

MARITAL STATUS

Married women assume greater responsibility in their homes in being that of a home maker. This is either a part time or a full time job (that is) she works only as a homemaker or takes up multiple roles, both within and outside family. This plays a key role in determining women empowerment and hence the classification.

TABLE 2: MARITAL STATUS

Status	Total	Percentage
Married	37	77.5
Unmarried	13	12.5
	50	100

Source: Primary data

Among 50 respondents 37 of them are married and support family through their status.

EDUCATION

The backbone of a society is educated women. Educated women enlighten her children and take decision wisely and seriously. This also paves a way for empowerment by enabling her to have her eyes of the mind open to reality.

TABLE 3: EDUCATION

Education	Total	Percentage
Upto HSC	20	40
Graduate	10	20
Post Graduate	5	10
Professional	5	10
Others	10	20
Total	50	100

Source : Primary data

Table 3 reveals that 40 percent of respondents are qualified only up to HSC and take up blue collared jobs, thus revealing suppression.

MONTHLY INCOME

The income earned enables one to support a decent living. Greater the income greater is the increase in standard of living and contribution made by women towards this helps in empowering them. Table 4 throws light on this phenomenon.

TABLE 4: MONTHLY INCOME

Income per month	Family income	Contribution by women	Contribution by men
Less than Rs. 10,000	Yes	75%	25%
10,000-20,000	Yes	63%	37%
20,000-30,000	Yes	45%	55%
Above 30,000	Yes	39%	61%

Source: Primary data

Table 4 highlights that in case of low income group contribution by women is the highest and among high income group contribution by male is the highest. It can therefore be understood that women folks suffer with poor income and are breadwinners in downtrodden families.

FAMILY TYPE AND SIZE

Madurai known for its inheritance of traditions houses both joint and nuclear families. The waves of modernization have influenced the city with number of families growing smaller in size and nature. Joint families are linked with women doing perennial occupation of house maker alone whereas nuclear families reduce the burden of work in terms of number of members to be served. Table 5 reveals this classification.

TABLE 5: FAMILY TYPE AND SIZE

Family type	Number of respondents	Per centage
Joint	10	20
Nuclear	40	80
Family size		
Less than or equal to 4	35	70
Greater than 4	15	30

Source: Primary data

Table 5 portrays that nuclear families are more in Madurai city and the number of members in 70 per cent of the total families is less than or equal to four.

Applying correlation tests on the variables namely education and income, education and occupation undertaken there is a high degree of positive correlation between the variables and the regression coefficient shows dependence of income and occupation on the educational attribute. This has led to the following findings.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The study has revealed that 50 percent of women are salaried employees and 77.5 percent women are married and 80 percent are educated only upto HSC. 75 per cent earn less than Rs.10,000 per month. 80 per cent live in nuclear families and 70 per cent have less than or equal to 4 members in their families. Conclusions arrived at are married women in Madurai city, are educated up to HSC and are employed in doing blue collared jobs. They contribute to the best

part of the family income and live in nuclear small sized families. The poor state of women in the city is due to lack of collegiate education which prevent them from taking up refined employments. Since education is limited among women, it is concluded that women are not really empowered in Madurai city. It is suggested that free and compulsory education can be, given to women at graduate level and job oriented studies can be taught as free adult education programme, which will enable them to be empowered.

SCOPE OF FURTHER STUDY

- a) Women empowerment through financial inclusion.
- b) Women empowerment among corporate women employees.
- c) Role of Women in family decision making.

CONCLUSION

When a women is educated the nation is built is a consensus existing among the pioneers and social reformers. Women when educated empower themselves and the society.

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