

The Role of Women Empowerment through Pudhumai Pen Scheme in Tirunelveli City

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Abstract: *The Pudhumai Pen Scheme, launched by the Government of Tamil Nadu, is a major initiative aimed at promoting higher education and empowering young women. By providing monthly financial assistance of ₹1,000 to girl students from government schools, the scheme helps to reduce financial burdens and encourages them to continue their studies. It has successfully improved enrolment, reduced dropout rates, and increased confidence and independence among female students. Moreover, it has motivated families to value education over early marriage, thereby fostering social change. The present study focuses on assessing the impact of the Pudhumai Pen Scheme in Tirunelveli city. The main objectives are to examine the scheme's role in promoting higher education, to assess its contribution to women empowerment through education, economic independence, and self-confidence, and to analyse the importance of financial assistance in reducing dropout rates among girl students. For the study, a structured questionnaire was prepared, and data were collected from 132 respondents using the five-point Likert scale technique to measure the level of satisfaction. The collected data were analysed using percentage analysis, simple ranking technique, and Likert scale analysis for better interpretation. The findings show that the majority of respondents belong to the age group of 20 years, and about 39% identified lack of awareness as a major challenge in accessing the scheme. Most respondents also reported facing delays in document verification while applying. Based on the results, the study suggests that regular review meetings should be conducted to ensure that the scheme's benefits reach the students effectively. Furthermore, skill development workshops and awareness programs should be organized in colleges to help students fully utilize the scheme and become more confident and job-ready. Overall, the Pudhumai Pen Scheme stands as a progressive effort towards women's education, empowerment, and social development in Tamil Nadu.*

Keywords: Women Empowerment, Higher Education, Gender Equality, Educational Empowerment, Dropout Reduction

