

**EMPOWERING RURAL WOMEN THROUGH FREEBIE SCHEMES OF
TAMIL NADU STATE GOVERNMENT**

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Abstract

This article has mainly focused on the innovative scheme of free bus travel and how it benefited the people and sparked to empower the women in the male centric society. Tamil Nadu is a welfare State which implemented innovative schemes for enhancement of people status gradually. On the consequence, the Government of Tamil Nadu has announced the scheme for women welfare and empowerment named “Free Bus Travel Scheme” which has given the free travel to all women in Tamil Nadu. The intention of the scheme was announced by the Government of Tamil Nadu to increase the mobility of women. This scheme has increased the women’s mobility and their savings. Tamil Nadu, being a role model for implementing the innovative free schemes for entire India. All the state has attributed the concept for their convenience and applied the different phenomenon. Earlier, Tamil Nadu Government has given the doles and freebies to the people, especially those have in the poverty line. Some of the electronic goods also provided to enhance the economic and educational enhancement. Now the tern has changed beyond the stereo type of schemes and programs. Conceptually, the Government has announced the free travel for all women might be stupendous character which directly or indirectly enhance the women status and empower the women in this society.

Keywords:, Innovative freebie schemes and Socio-Economic Empowerment of Rural Women

Introduction

Rural women in India are concentrated in agriculture to a much larger extent than men. Around 60 percent of India’s population engaged in farming, women contribute to almost 70-80 percent of farming activities but they are neither legally nor socially recognized as farmers. The term “freebies” has become a point of contention in the political culture of India. In order to woo voters to their side, political parties try to outdo each other

by promising free goods, such as mobile phones, laptops, etc. There are economic, if not moral aspects to it. The moral aspect to it is that when it comes to choosing political parties, it all boils down to how much a party has given incentives packaged as freebies, in other words it can almost be said that political parties are bribing people into voting for them. The economic aspect is how sustainable it is for the state to keep providing freebies at state expenses.

Distribution of freebies in election or pre-election existence is a deeply ingrained tradition which is accustomed to democratic India. Freebies often takes the form of cash, bribes, free rice, saris, or loan waivers and its mandatory practice by parties has predominantly overtaken the centre stage in all election campaigns. Simply put 'Freebies' are public welfare measures – goods or services – offered free of cost by the government. As far as the Indian context is concerned, freebies are not precisely defined in the legal framework. As of now it is used as a political term by the Central Government to express its disapproval of certain schemes at the state-level. It is highly likely that the meaning will change as time evolves. Now it must be noted that certain expenditures done under populist pressures are questionable to say the least, but given the astronomical rise of income inequality among the Indian populace, some of these freebies may be justified in order to put the economy on its right track.

Empowering Rural Women

The Tamil Nadu government's primary objective for this program was to enable women, particularly in the rural areas, to acquire knowledge for social and economic development. From these research findings, it can very well be argued that this unique non-traditional strategy of the Tamil Nadu government was one of the most effective, targeted interventions of the Dravidian administration to uplift and empower women. Historically, the Justice Party, precursor to the DMK, played a big role in women's empowerment. Subsequently, three areas in which Tamil Nadu achieved tremendous success- helping shrink traditional cleavages of caste, religion and gender- are attainment of educational outcomes, healthcare and inclusive industrial growth. Success in these three areas are intertwined. Commendable results were achieved in the field of education in Tamil Nadu by Dravidian parties through a slew of financial interventions (freebies)- such

as free mid-day meal scheme, free bus pass, free cycles and free laptops- and affirmative actions- including both horizontal and vertical reservations. Along with free colour TV, schemes to remunerate women graduates among others have paid huge dividends in the attainment of the educational goals of women.

Review of Literature

Ramesh Pandita¹ (2022) in his article entitles “Politics of Freebies” had stated that Strange it may sound but the fact it remains that people riding the costliest cars, living lavish & dignified lifestyles, owning millions and billions of rupees have actually been reduced to be labelled as beggars by their own Chief Minister for supporting his freebie politics and are shamelessly happy to receive a meager Rs 300/- or so a month as waiver on their electricity and water bills. **Nipun² (2020)** in his report “Freebies Culture In Indian Politics”, had concluded that freebie schemes must be used for individuals who are in desperate need of basic necessities. It must not be used by political parties in a way that lowers election competition between them. Elections must be held in a free and fair manner in order to benefit society and to assist the needy. **Saksham Vashishtha³ (2023)**, in his article entitled “The Role of Freebies in Indian Politics”, had pointed out that freebie schemes are the social welfare regimes whereby material goods are distributed to the poor and vulnerable populations of the country and helping their uplift their socio-economic condition. According to the conclusion of **Kuunal Bakshi & Shreya⁴ (2023)**, “A Critical Analysis of Distribution of Election Freebies” Freebies in general is bribery Not just the cash- from laptops to cows to mixers grinders to all sort other goodies, political parties of all ilk, belief and ethics have infused a draconian culture in the Indian democracy, a culture where freebies has been not used as a tool to cure the social apathy, but conducted to create financial gains, private assets and to achieve major vote pluralities.

Importance of the Study

¹ **Ramesh Pandita**, “Politics of Freebies, March 2022,

² **Nipun**, “Freebies Culture in Indian Politics”, Brillpedia, July 11, 2022

³ **Saksham Vashishtha**, “Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research (An International Scholarly Open Access Journal, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal)”, Vol.10, No.7, July 2023, EISSN: 2349-5162

⁴ **Kuunal Bakshi & Shreya**, “A Critical Analysis of Distribution of Election Freebies”, A Journal on Contemporary Issues of Law”, June, 2023

Tamil Nadu State Government is offered a number of Freebies schemes to the people for socially and economically empowering of rural women. There have been studies which showed the poverty-reducing effect of the Public distribution System. The free or subsidized rations under PDS allows food grains to be available for cheap for consumers while assuring remunerative prices to farmers. Subsidized food grains distributed under the PDS contribute to ensuring basic food security. The Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) kept many away from the brink of starvation during the novel corona virus pandemic. Mid-day meals in schools have been proven to contribute to increased enrolment and retention in schools and addresses classroom hunger. It also resulted in keeping the evil of child labour under control. Tamil Nadu government's free bus pass for women has encouraged more women to join the workforce, in turn leading to economically stable families and women's empowerment. The introduction of free colour television in villages has resulted in decrease in domestic violence and also enabled women's empowerment as women have been able to connect with the outside world through visual media. It has ensured self-respect, as women and children are able to watch TV in their houses rather than visit the homes of those who are rich and own TV sets. Subsidies such as free laptops have now become necessities for increasing productivity, knowledge and skills. The small amounts given to the poor are called 'freebies', while freebies that the rich get through low tax rates and exemptions are referred as 'incentives'. Fiscal incentives are given to encourage corporate/entrepreneurs to boost industrial growth.

Statement of the Problem

Because the country's education system is deteriorating, the majority of people are in favor of improving and concentrating on education. Therefore, the state government has taken steps to improve education, and one of the steps in helping the education system is launching the Pudhumai Penn Scheme. This initiative also prioritizes the education of female residents. Mr. Stalin established the Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammayar memorial 'Puthumai Penn' (Modern Woman) Scheme, which stipulated that female students who attended government schools from grades 6 to 12 and were interested in pursuing higher education were eligible to receive a monthly stipend of 1,000 rupees. Further, lack of education, insufficient of water resources, transport cost, Unemployment, lack of income, poverty and lack of financial supports are the major constraints to the people especially in

rural India. Hence, urgently need to undertake this study in order to know various schemes like offered by Tamil Nadu State Government for the welfare of the rural people in the study area.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin inaugurated '**Pudhumai Penn**' on September 5 in Chennai. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal was there. In Chennai, Bharathi Women's College had an event. During the ceremony, Mr. Kejriwal presented 26 schools of excellence and 15 model schools established by the Tamil Nadu government in imitation of his AAP administration in Delhi.

Naan Mudhalvan program,

Under the 'Naan Mudhalvan program, the Tamil Nadu Skill Development Corporation (TNSDC) will offer courses to government college students in Tamil Nadu on drones, 5G, and ChatGPT. Approximately 4,767 students have already signed up for Chat GPT for the upcoming semester, while 3,600 have chosen to participate in drone testing and design sessions, according to J. Innocent Divya, the managing director of Tamil Nadu Skill Development Corporation (TNSDC). The Chat GPT course will be administered by GUVI, an IIT-M and IIM-A-incubated Ed-tech company, while Vaayusastra Aerospace, an IIT-M Incubation Cell and IIT-M Rural Technology Business Incubator-incubated company, will instruct students on drone fundamentals, aerodynamics, design, calibration, simulation, assembly, and flying.

The main objective of the Tamil Nadu Naan Mudhalvan Scheme is to identify, train and offer career and academic guidance to talented students in government-run and state educational institutions. Through this scheme, students of Tamil Nadu will be able to get training that will help them in achieving their career goals. This scheme will make students of Tamil Nadu self-dependent. Other than that through this scheme, the standard of living of students will also improve. Talented students will get proper guidance with the implementation of this scheme which will help them in choosing the correct career path.

Tamil Nadu Education Assurance Scheme

In order to help girls to pursue higher education, the Government of Tamil Nadu implements various kinds of schemes. Through these schemes, financial assistance is provided to the girls. Recently the Government of Tamil Nadu has launched the Tamil Nadu higher education assurance Scheme. Through this time the Government of Tamil Nadu is

going to provide financial assistance to the girls in order to pursue higher education. This article covers all the important aspects of the yojana. You will get to know how you can take advantage of the **Tamil Nadu Higher Education Assurance Scheme 2023**. Other than that you will also get details regarding this scheme's objective, benefits, features, eligibility, required documents, application procedure, etc.

Tamil Nadu Free Laptop Scheme 2023

Tamil Nadu Free Laptop Scheme has been launched by Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami for students who recently passed the 10th or 12th standard examination. The online application form-filling procedure will commence very soon. Applicants have to fill out the application form before the last date. Eligibility criteria, documents required for application submission, specifications of the laptop, and other information that is mandatory are available here in this article.

Today's world is the world of digitization. To survive in this digital world it is necessary for students to learn the latest technology. Free Laptop Scheme 2023 is an initiative of the state government of Tamil Nadu. Under this scheme, the government is going to distribute laptops to the beneficiaries. The aim of the government behind launching this scheme is to help those students who are financially weak and unable to buy a laptop or computer or to encourage the students in their further studies and modern technology

Tamil Nadu Naan Mudhalvan Scheme

In order to develop the skills of youths both Central and state governments implement various kinds of skill development schemes. Through these schemes, various kinds of skill development programs are implemented. By participating in these programs youth can develop their skills. Recently the Government of Tamil Nadu launched the **TN Naan Mudhalvan Scheme**. Through this scheme, the government is going to develop the skills of 10 lakh youths annually. This article covers all the important information regarding the scheme. You will get to know how you can take advantage of this scheme by reading this article. The chief minister of Tamil Nadu MK Stalin launched an ambitious skill Development Scheme called Tamil Nadu Naan Mudhalvan Scheme on 1st March 2022. Through this scheme, the government is going to equip 10 lakh youth across the state annually with skills that will help them to realize their talents for the benefit of the country. Through this scheme, academic guidance will be provided to talented students in

government-run and State educational institutions. This scheme will identify the talents and train the students which will ultimately help them in getting a better career. Through this scheme, spoken English lessons will be provided to the students so that they can face the interview panel successfully

Illam Thedi Kalvi Scheme

In order to improve the standard of education both state and Central governments launch various kinds of schemes. Through these schemes, various facilities are provided by the government. Recently the Government of Tamil Nadu launched Illam Thedi Kalvi Scheme. Through this scheme, education will be provided to the student in physical mode. This article will cover all the important information regarding **Illam Thedi Kalvi Scheme 2023**. The Government of Tamil Nadu has launched Illam Thedi Kalvi Scheme. Through this scheme, education will be provided to the students in a physical manner. Volunteers will be assigned for every class and for every subject. These volunteers will impart education to the students through door-to-door campaigns. All those students who cannot afford transport will be able to take benefit from this scheme. The salary of volunteers under this scheme will be Rs 25000 per month. Around 1 lakh students will be able to take benefit from this scheme. Those students who have suffered learning loss with psychological problems due to pandemic situations will be targeted under this scheme. Around 86550 people are registered to work as volunteers under this scheme. Out of these 86550 citizens, 67691 are women, 32 are transgender and 18557 are men.

Pudhumai Penn Scheme

Chief Minister M.K. Stalin will inaugurate the **Pudhumai Penn Scheme** in Chennai in the presence of Delhi's CM Arvind Kejriwal. Under "Pudhumai Penn," all female students from Classes 6 to 12 in government schools will be paid 1,000 a month till they finish their undergraduate degree, diploma, or ITI. Their bank account will be credited. Students may get various scholarships. This plan aims to encourage higher education among economically disadvantaged females. Additionally, 6 million females will benefit annually from this plan. The initiative was budgeted for 698 crores in 2022-23. M.K Stalin and Arvind Kejriwal inaugurated a social welfare initiative and model school scheme in Tamil Nadu. The program would provide monetary assistance to students who are enrolled in educational institutions who fulfill the norm requirements. In addition, this program is

geared toward improving the general well-being of female students and encouraging them to continue their education. The article discusses the Puthumai Penn Scheme, including its aims, relevance, and advantages. We will also discuss the key features of this plan.

Pudhumai Penn Scheme Benefits

The Pudhumai Penn Scheme is different from other schemes since it focuses on providing financial assistance, encouraging female students to continue their education, and discouraging parents and guardians from allowing their daughters to be married at a young age. Because of the foresight to focus on contemporary circumstances, the Puthumai Penn Scheme is going to usher in a new era of innovation within the next several years. A monetary award of Rs 1,000 per month will be provided to female students who are pursuing an education till they have either graduated or earned a certificate or diploma, irrespective of the field. Because it is common knowledge that female students in our country are discouraged from pursuing an education, this program offers a boost to the confidence of young women. The scheme aims to help 6 lakh females per year and has been budgeted at Rs 698 crore. Under Pudhumai Penn, money would be immediately paid to student bank accounts to assure their education. This means there will be no mediator in receiving money, just the children and the bank. The plan discourages child marriages and empowers women. They shouldn't accept anything that hurts their pride. Debit cards were given out to a total of 613 students during the initial phase of the plan. Talking about the initial stage of the scheme, this will be beneficial to around 6,500 students in the Tiruchi district who are now enrolled in institutions of the arts, sciences, and engineering.

Kalaingar Magalir Urimai Thogai Scheme

The Tamil Nadu government has identified 1.06 crore women, as eligible to benefit from the Kalaingar Magalir Urimai Thogai (women's basic income) scheme, which Chief Minister M.K. Stalin is set to launch in Kancheepuram on September 15, the birth anniversary of former CM. C.N. Annadurai. The Chief Minister M.K. Stalin is set to launch in Kancheepuram on September 15, the birth anniversary of former CM. C.N. Annadurai. During his speech at a meeting he chaired at the Secretariat in Chennai to review the arrangements being made towards the launch, Mr. Stalin said a total of 1.63 crore applications were received, of which 1,06,50,000 have been short-listed to benefit from the scheme. ATM cards would be issued in certain numbers initially, and will have to be issued

to all. Though the Tamil Nadu government in its budget for 2023-24 stated that a sum of ₹7,000 crore has been allocated for this scheme, it is believed that the scheme will cost more. The CM on Monday said that a total sum of ₹12,000 crore would be allocated for this scheme annually. A senior official told *The Hindu* that the allocation of ₹12,000 crore would not be for the ongoing year, as a few months have already passed before the formal launching of the scheme on September 15. The CM advised officials to ensure that there were no faults anywhere while implementing the scheme.

Zero Ticket Bus Travel Scheme for Women

In May 2021, the Government of Tamil Nadu announced a scheme whereby women travelers can travel without paying any fare in government run normal-fare buses (for short distances up to 30 kilometers) in cities and towns in the state. Women are issued zero-tickets (a fare less ticket) when they travel in these buses. Free travel facilities have been provided for all women including working women, Transgender and girls who are pursuing higher education in ordinary fare city buses operated under the control of the Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation since 2021.

Tamil Nadu Government announces and implements lots of scheme for the welfare of people of Tamil Nadu. One of the social welfare schemes for Tamil Nadu Women is Zero Ticket Bus Travel Scheme. It was announced and launched in the year 2021. The main objective behind launching Zero Ticket Bus Travel Scheme is to encourage women of Tamil Nadu for higher work participation and reduce the dependency on private mobility. Most of the Working Women, Girls Students and Women Labourers doesn't have their own convenience to commute one place to another. They regularly pay for travelling fare which overburden them financially. So to unburden the Women of Tamil Nadu financially, Government came up with a idea to provide free of cost travel in government run buses. Under Tamil Nadu Zero Ticket Bus Travel Scheme, No women have to any fare if they are travelling in Government of Tamil Nadu run buses. Zero Fare Ticket will be issued to women beneficiary at the time of travelling. Free of cost travel in government run buses will only valid up to 30 kilometers. Women Beneficiary has to carry one photographed identity card for verification purpose. Transgenders are also eligible for free of cost travel under Zero Ticket Bus Travel Scheme of Tamil Nadu. Free of Cost Bus Service will only provided in Tamil Nadu Government run Ordinary/ City Buses or Buses operated under the

control of Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation. There is no need to apply anywhere to avail the benefit of free of cost travel in buses. Women Beneficiary can directly travel free of cost under Zero Ticket Bus Travel Scheme for Women of Government of Tamil Nadu.

Conclusion

The socio-economic conditions of the people can be improved through the efforts as well as supports of the government. Tamil Nadu State Government through offering different types freebie schemes provides employment opportunities to the people, reduces unemployment problems, generates income, alleviates poverty, contributes to industrial production, country's GDP, market share, export earnings, develops entrepreneurship, utilizes the available natural and human resources, provides food security, removes the disequilibrium among the people, reduces social evils empowers rural women and thereby strengthen rural economy. Therefore, it concluded that the freebie schemes of Tamil Nadu State Government are the uplifts for empowering the rural women in terms of both socially and economically.

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