

A Voluntary commitment towards hand-holding the deprived community with the support of our member organization, to ensure equal opportunity to those who are in need for support for Sustainable Livelihoods, enhancing people's well-being through knowledge, innovation and transformative actions

# Irula Livelihood Development Project

Stepping Towards Inclusivity

Department of Development Initiatives

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Confederation of Indian Industry

CII has been at the helm of building and projecting the brand of Indian Industry, CII in principle is proactive in compassing and supporting industries by facilitating various initiatives to strengthen the critical growth factors of the industry and the national economy. In order to create a conducive and sustainable business environment by improving the quality of the society, which is very important to CII, we chose to act by recommending conscious business practices to the industries.

CII took the mandate of catalyzing industry's involvement in India's social development agenda and we have been taking the lead in Corporate Social Responsibility, advocating and facilitating with the members to take up innovative and impactful projects. It has envisaged a National Movement for Mainstreaming CSR for Sustained Inclusiveness as part of its Social Development Agenda.

We have taken up various impactful projects for various industry members like Saint Gobain, TITAN, Blue Star, GMMCO, Forbes Marshall, etc. We ensure visibility and credibility for the work that gets done. All our projects have components that will enhance the brand value of the organization.

Considering that the Affirmative Action for the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities is a voluntary commitment and understanding the value for the same, Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) initiates a step forward towards hand-holding the deprived community in coordination with the Government, civil society and our member organization, in this National endeavor to ensure equal opportunity to those who are in need for support for Sustainable Livelihoods, enhancing people's well-being through knowledge, innovation and transformative actions as part of your CSR or Affirmative Action..

# Irula Livelihood Development Project

## Introduction:

Irula tribals, once displaced from their forest homes and traditional occupations, have now lost their pathetic settlements and precarious livelihoods in coastal villages. Dependent on the forest, they gathered and sold honey, beeswax and firewood to villagers in exchange for village products, and relied on the forest for food, comprising largely of vegetation and wild animals.

Irular live in two south Indian states at its maximum distribution – Tamil Nadu and Kerala. In Tamil Nadu they live in the Nilgiris, Coimbatore and Erode districts. In Kerala they live in the Palakkad district and Attapady and Walayar panchayats.



They live in four taluks in Coimbatore district, namely Coimbatore South, Coimbatore North, Avinashi and Madathukulam. The Coimbatore district houses 4254 Irulas in 40 settlements comprising 139 villages. Nearly 100 Vettakada Irula settlements are found in the forest areas or in the deep mountainous jungles. There are 4 tribal settlements in the Siruvani Hills comprising 14 villages. The Census of Kerala identified 756 Irulan individuals from 189 families, who lived in 9 settlements covering 23 km<sup>2</sup> in the state.

They ranked at the very bottom of the heap. Driven out of their forest homes they had no land, no steady means of livelihood. Virtually cut off from the mainstream of society, mostly living far away from the other communities. When they were forced out of their forest homes, they found they had little or no skills and could only labour in rice mills or as inland fishermen.

This scenario leaves them with scarcely any earnings, absolutely no savings, and the ability to



just about scrape together the day's meal.

### **Issues Faced by the identified community:**

Some of them have settled on the fringes of the village the mouths of rivers and backwaters where they eke out a living using cast nets for inland fishing or combing the riverbeds to for earthworms that are sold to fisheries.

Out of the yield they receive, the need to pay a huge cut as rent for the boats to the boat owners, and even if the catch is good, they have difficulties in going to fish market/city to sell them as they don't have means of transport.

### **Recommendations for livelihood support:**

1. Fishing Nets Distribution
2. Motor Boats Distribution area wise
3. Bicycle distribution to individual families
4. Skill Development Training – Tailoring and allied activities\*\*
5. Setting up Self Help Group for Women\*\*
6. Sector Based Skill Training for Youths\*\*



Thank you for your consideration.

Best Regards

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