

K. STRATEGY FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION

K.1 Social Inclusion

1. The project has made detailed assessment and the project design includes strategies and action plans for the following safeguards:

- Gender Strategy
- Youth Strategy
- Tribal Development
- Support to Disabled and most Vulnerable

K.2 Gender Strategy

2. The goal of the gender strategy is to reduce absolute and relative poverty of women and girls from marginalized sections in the project area and thereby contribute to the achievement of gender- specific outcomes in the project area. The major objectives of this strategy are:

- Increase the participation of women, especially those from the very poor and poor families, in the village level institutions like Gram Sabha, SHGs, VPRC, and EAGs.
- Strengthen women in decision making process, especially those from poor and vulnerable families and entrusting them with decision making positions of various village level institutions e.g. Secretary, treasure and office bearers of VPRCs, EAGs and VPRC subcommittee members.
- Increase voice and representation of women in the local self governance institutions
- Strengthen poor women's asset base, livelihood security and economic opportunities
- Reduce gender specific risks and vulnerabilities of poor women from SC/ST and poorest households.

3. **Implementation of Gender Strategy in the Project:** The areas of project design- institutional and implementation arrangements that have specifically integrated gender are:

- Gender awareness, capacity building and mainstreaming
- Women representation in all project supported village institutions
- Women's equitable participation and benefit sharing and
- Support to vulnerable and disabled women.

4. The objectives and strategy for gender mainstreaming are summarized in Table 11.1.

Table 11.1 Elements of Gender Strategy

Elements	Strategy
Building capacity of key stakeholders in promoting gender equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both gender specific and engendered training programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Staff at all levels – state, district and cluster on gender awareness and sensitization ➤ VP President and Ward members, local politicians, and all VPRC members about gender concerns ➤ Leadership and management skills for women to function effectively in various positions, particularly participation in Gram Sabhas, project related issues • 40% of all recruitment on the project to be women involving non- traditional roles (like finance, livelihood and monitoring) are occupied by women. • Staff at cluster, district and state level to anchor the responsibility for gender related outcomes
Mainstreaming and increasing role of women in decision making in village institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gram Sabha quorum requires 50% participation of women • All representatives from hamlets to be women • VPRCs and its subcommittees (finance and procurement) should have at least 50% women as office bearers and the secretary and treasurer of VPRC should be woman • Social Audit Committee to have at least 2/3rd of women members • Check signatories in SHGs, EAGs and VPRC to be women • Preference shall be given to women with additional weightage to the disabled women as Book keepers of VPRC • Preference to women, especially youth to be trained as Para-professionals •
Promoting equity in Village Panchayats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligibility criteria for VPs to access incentive funds include attendance of women (at least 50%) in Gram Sabha meetings, decision making positions held by women in VPRC and other subcommittees, women as SAC members •
Providing opportunities for women in economic activities and asset creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75% of the project Fund will for the benefit of women. • Seed money can be used to promote the credit worthiness of SHGs of poor women • Creating better availability of financial services to women SHGs, Federations and promoting bank linkages • Promoting pro-women livelihood subprojects • Asset creation for women by promotion of joint ownership of newly acquired asset base. •
Strengthening poor women’s asset base and livelihood security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying poor women, especially the vulnerable – widows, destitute, deserted, aged and orphan girls, during the participatory identification of the poor • Mobilizing poor women into SHGs, EAGs and Federations • Providing awareness on legal and political rights to women work on social issues like dowry, domestic violence and lack of mobility • Building the knowledge and skill base of women to enable them to interact effectively with market forces training for effective use of technology; • Training women in non-traditional occupations, creating entrepreneurial

Elements	Strategy
Building capacity of key stakeholders in promoting gender equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both gender specific and engendered training programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Staff at all levels – state, district and cluster on gender awareness and sensitization ➤ VP President and Ward members, local politicians, and all VPRC members about gender concerns ➤ Leadership and management skills for women to function effectively in various positions, particularly participation in Gram Sabhas, project related issues • 40% of all recruitment on the project to be women involving non- traditional roles (like finance, livelihood and monitoring) are occupied by women. • Staff at cluster, district and state level to anchor the responsibility for gender related outcomes
Mainstreaming and increasing role of women in decision making in village institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gram Sabha quorum requires 50% participation of women • All representatives from hamlets to be women • VPRCs and its subcommittees (finance and procurement) should have at least 50% women as office bearers and the secretary and treasurer of VPRC should be woman • Social Audit Committee to have at least 2/3rd of women members • Check signatories in SHGs, EAGs and VPRC to be women • Preference shall be given to women with additional weightage to the disabled women as Book keepers of VPRC • Preference to women, especially youth to be trained as Para-professionals •
Promoting equity in Village Panchayats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligibility criteria for VPs to access incentive funds include attendance of women (at least 50%) in Gram Sabha meetings, decision making positions held by women in VPRC and other subcommittees, women as SAC members •
	<p>capacities among women for creating employment opportunities for other women</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing the level of awareness of women on government programs and legal literacy
Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender sensitive indicators for inputs and outputs • Tracking changes in allocation of resources, responsibilities and decision-making at the village level • Assess impact of rural poverty on women and reduction of gender disparities

K.3 Youth Empowerment Strategy and Action Plan

5. Youth is generally defined for the purpose of implementation of Vazhndhu Kaatuvom Project as any person between the age group of 18-35 years. They can be both male and female. The youth strategy to harness their potential and vibrancy is summarized in Table 11.2.

Table 11.2 Elements of Youth Strategy

Elements	Strategy
Building capacity of youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of its information dissemination and awareness generation, the aspirations and frustrations of the youth, and the opportunities and constraints that they envisage, will be provided to all stakeholders including community members and leaders and project implementing Teams at all levels Atleast 20% of the PFT Teams members will be from the youth category
Mainstreaming and increasing role of youth in village institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VPRCs and its subcommittees should have at least 25% youth as its office bearers Atleast one member of Procurement Sub-Committee and Social Audit Committee should be a youth. Therefore, youth could emerge as a critical link in the implementation and consolidation of project activities and outcomes Preference will be given to youth as Para-professionals, especially those that will serve the interest of more than one village panchayat.
Providing opportunities for youth in economic activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project will finance the exploration of opportunities for youth in various sectors under the Skill Development Fund, build linkages and tie-up with private sector to identify key niche areas, and then provide youth with the required training to be able to seek employment in the identified areas, though they may have to pay equity contribution depending on the category they belong to. The project will work with groups of youth in villages through the SHGs to understand their concerns and also provide them information about various options and avenues of engagement Seed money may be used to promote the credit worthiness of youth SHGs (including mens group) of very poor Creating financial services to youth SHGs and promoting bank linkages Youth will be motivated for promoting livelihood subprojects
Strengthening of poor youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training youth on utilising their potentials and creating entrepreneurial capacities among youth for creating employment opportunities Increasing the level of awareness of youth on government programs
Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth sensitive indicators for inputs and outputs Tracking changes in allocation of resources made for building the capacity of youth Assess employment opportunities created for the youth

K.4 Tribal (indigenous people) Development Plan (TDP)

6. In Tamilnadu, the tribal population constitutes the poorest and the most vulnerable of the social groups. Hence in the Project, a Tribal Development Plan is proposed as an integral part. The population of Scheduled tribes constitutes 1.03 % of the State's general population.

7. **Objective of TDP:** The objective of the Tribal Development Plan under the project will be to empower the poor Tribal Communities and improve their livelihoods through:

- Developing and strengthening pro-poor local institutions/groups of the tribals;
- Building skills and capacities of the Tribals; and
- Financing productive demand-driven subproject investments taking care to fosters full respect for dignity, human rights and cultural uniqueness of the Tribal Communities; and that all interventions are culturally and socially compatible.

8. Vazhndhu Kaatuvom Project recognizes that Tribals are one of the Most Vulnerable sections in TamilNadu. Hence the project adopts the same norms for the tribals as applicable to special groups like disabled and Most Vulnerable.

9. **Scope:** The project adopts the classification of Schedule Tribes in the Constitution for coverage under Tribal Development Plan. Before project implementation the DPMU will identify specific marginalized Tribes in their respective project districts who need to be specially focused on.

10. **Key Elements of Tribal Strategy:** The key elements of the tribals strategy are described below:

- Preference in selection of Blocks: The Project blocks have been selected by giving due weightage to SC/ST population.
- Higher allocation of project funds to Tribal families: The Village Funds are allocated to the Village Panchayats on the basis of total population and number of tribal families. VPs where tribal families are there, will be provided 50% higher allocation for the number of tribal families as compared to other target poor. While deciding the fund envelope to a VP (VPRC fund and Livelihood Fund) the District Vazhndhu Kaatuvom Units will take into account the number of Tribal families in the PIP list.
- Special Institutional Arrangements: In Village Panchayats where the number of tribal families are above 50 a separate tribal VPRC will be constituted and funds directly released to the tribal VPRC. In VPs wherever there are more than 10 and less than 50 families a separate tribal sub committee will be constituted and a separate tribal representative will be included in the general VPRC.
- It is envisaged that in VPs where tribal population is 60 % and above will be treated as Single VPRC. However, all office bearers and 70 % all habitation representatives should belong to tribal population. Where ever necessary, the VP shall ensure the representation of other marginalized communities like scheduled caste in the VPRC.
- Tribal VPRC: In VP where the Tribal population is more than 50 households, a separate VPRC will be formed for the Tribal community. The VPRC will consist of 5-10 members. The Tribal VPRC will have Tribal SHG women as representatives from each Tribal hamlet. One or two male members who will be of assistance in the functioning of the VPRC like the traditional tribal head man (Moopan) may be included. One of the hamlet representatives can be elected as the president of the VPRC. The tribal VPRC will discharge all the functions of the VPRC exclusively for the tribal areas. It will have a separate bank account and MoU with the District Vazhndhu Kaatuvom Unit. It will receive funds separately and implement the VPRC fund for the tribal areas in an autonomous manner.
- Tribal Sub-committee: In VPs where the number of tribal households is between 10 and 50, a tribal subcommittee of the VPRC will be formed. The Tribal Sub-Committee will comprise of 2-3 tribal members, mostly women SHG members. This sub-committee will ensure that all identified tribal families receive full benefit from the project. They will be responsible for preparing the tribal sub-plan

as part of the over-all livelihood plan. While applying for the instalments of VPRC fund, the VPRC has to certify that the Tribal families have received their due share.

- Tribal Resource Team: A team with adequate experience in promoting the livelihoods among the Tribals will be identified in regions to assist the project in implementing the TDP. This team will identify tribal specific livelihoods, provide skill training and marketing linkages for the tribal products.
- Positive Presumption in PIP: In order to ensure that tribals who are very marginalized are not left out, the project presumes that all tribals are part of the target poor. Hence all VPs while identifying the target poor will include all tribal families. In case any tribal family is not being included then the VP has to justify the exclusion. The PIP guidelines will incorporate this safeguard.
- Lesser Equity Contribution for Tribal Families: The beneficiary contribution for livelihood projects for Tribal EAGs will be minimum 30% and the grant from the project will be up to 70%. In the 30% equity, 5 % of individual contribution is applicable for tribal EAGs as disabled and vulnerable groups.
- Promotion of Tribal Specific Livelihoods: The project will take special efforts to promote tribal specific livelihoods, which are in tune with the culture of the tribals. Efforts will be taken to promote NFTP based and Eco-friendly livelihoods.
- Tribal communities are primarily forest or natural resources-based. A majority of these communities depend on collection of forest produce seasonally as their only source of livelihood. During other times, they are wage-gatherers - a significant population is marginal or landless. One of the critical roles of the project in the tribal area will be to ensure an environment to help grow a symbiotic relationship between tribal people and the natural resources. Therefore, one of the important tasks of the resource team involved in the project should be to closely work with the tribal communities in the protection, conservation, regeneration and sustainable development of the natural resources. This will mutually benefit developing natural resources-based livelihood enterprises and options. This requires the project to design innovative approaches for the gainful involvement of the communities not merely as unskilled labour but finding gainful expression of their indigenous skills in areas of employment.
- Tribal Para-professionals: While selecting Para-professionals from the community, skills relevant to tribals will be given priority.
- VP incentive fund: The VP Incentive guidelines have been liberalized for VP with separate Tribal VPRC by providing additional 10 marks. Similarly weightage has been given for good performance under tribal development while selecting VPs for incentive.
- Convergence: The project will work closely with the Forest Department, Tribal Welfare Department and Health Department to implement the TDP. To ensure better co-ordination, it is proposed to set up a steering committee at State level with the members from government departments and NGOs.
- Communication strategy: Information dissemination of project aspects like project components, basic principles, non-negotiables, roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders, are crucial. The IEC strategy of the project has taken into account the specificities of the Tribal areas and is putting together a special

strategy to reach out to the Tribals. Some of the methods being looked at are folk art, street theatre, films and simple pamphlets. The emphasis will be on creating resource persons from within the Tribal community to provide information and local insight.

11. **Key Elements of the Tribal Plan:** The key elements of Tribal Plan are summarized in Table 11.3.

Table 11.3 Key Elements of the Tribal Plan

Key Elements	Key considerations and arrangements
A. Rules	
Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All tribal families to be included under the project, recognizing that they are poorest and marginalized; VPRC to justify non-inclusion of any ST family.
B. Benefits	
1. VP Fund allocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ST Population an important basis; 50% higher allocation per family for ST families in comparison to other poor.
2. Productive investment sub project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum 10 % contribution for taking up skill training; Equity contribution of 30% with 70% grant from the project; Promotion of Non timber Forest Products (NTFP) based and eco-friendly livelihoods; Livelihoods promoting protection, conservation, regeneration and sustainable development of natural resources; Explore potential of indigenous skills in livelihood options; Tribal resource agency to assist with tribal livelihood and skill development.
3. VP Incentive Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VPs with a tribal VPRC will get additional 10 points; Performance of the VP on implementation of TDP, important criteria for Incentive Fund.
C. Implementation Arrangements	
1. Project Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preference for blocks with ST population.
2. IEC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific focus on tribals and their cultural traditions for IEC campaign; Use of methods like folk art, songs, street theatre, simple pamphlets, etc. Emphasis on identifying and nurturing local artists.
3. Institutional Arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Representative from Village Forest Committee in the VPRC to enhance coordination with tribal livelihoods; Separate VPRC in VPs with more than 50 households, representation to the traditional headman (Moopan); Will have separate bank account and allocation; Tribal sub-committee in VPRCs with 50 or less tribal families; Tribal plan to be prepared as part of the Village Plan; VPRCs to certify tribal families have received their due share to become eligible for next installment of VPRC fund
4. Para-professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preference to those community members who are familiar and sensitive to the needs of the tribals.
5. Convergence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close working relationship with Forest Department, Tribal Welfare Department and Health Department for meeting critical needs of tribals.

12. **Plan Implementation Arrangements:** The implementation arrangement for implementing the tribal plan are presented in Table 11.4

Table 11.4 Implementation Arrangements and Management

Level	Arrangement/Members	Functions
Project Level	State level Steering Committee with project Director, Tribal Welfare Department and/or MD, THADCO, a reputed NGO as Members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing necessary guidance and support to the Project in tribal areas and convergence support.
State level	Specialist for Tribal Development in SPMU.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordination with District units and other line department's activities; • Support DUs and PFTs in social mobilization and capacity building of tribals and their institutions; • Support DUs and PFTs in generating and grounding community Business plans.
District Level	District level Steering Committee constituted with District Collector as the chairperson, District Forest Officer, District Adi Dravidar Welfare Officer, DM, TAHDCO, Two Tribal VPRC Presidents (by rotation), Two Tribal Sub-Committee members (by rotation) as members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convergence support and guidance
	Asst. Project Manager, Social Safeguards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordination with PFTs and VPRCs and other line depts. Staff. • Support PFTs in social mobilization and capacity building of tribals and their institutions; • Support PFTs in generating and grounding community subprojects.
Cluster Level	Facilitator, Social Mobilisation in Project Facilitation Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist in the preparation of micro-plans and demand driven subprojects for tribals; • Facilitate implementation of the plans.
Village Level	Tribal VPRC / Tribal Sub Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formation of Tribal VPRC (More than 50 tribal households)/ Tribal Subcommittee (less than 50 tribal households) - will have the overall responsibility to ensure that the ST population in the VP are involved in the project and benefit from it.
	Tribal Para-professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobilization and Facilitation. • Providing Technical Support and services.

13. **Convergence:** The convergence arrangement for implementing Tribal Plan are summarized in Table 11.5.

Table 11.5 Convergence Arrangements for Implementing Tribal Plan

Forest Department	Tribal Welfare
Principles	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Right of NTFP collection to the VFC/SHGs and processing / semi-processing and value addition by SHGs for commercial NTFPs; 2. Identity Cards issued to the NTFP collectors – giving area of collection, items to be collected, season and necessary authorization; 3. Right to collect NTFP for livelihood needs – food, shelter, crafts, tools; 4. (More than 50 tribal households) Right to sell finished and raw products and value add at their settlements; 5. Taking the Government Order on NTFP collection further – more opportunities to SHGs. 	<p>Convergence with TAHDCO, Adidravidar welfare officer, special taushildar to implement the special livelihood and social safeguard measures;</p> <p>Convergence with Government Tribal Residential Schools (GTRS) to encourage better and regular teaching;</p>

Mechanisms:
<p>District level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The District Vazhndhu Kaatuvom Unit will work closely with the District Forest Officer and Range Officer for identification of project needs (for example – sheds for NTFP processing, a pump or collection and trade issues). • Each Range Officer from the concerned range will also interact closely with the PFTs & VPRC. • Tribal Welfare Department officials at the district head quarters will be directly working with the District Vazhndhu Kaatuvom Unit. • Health officials working in the TN Health Systems program (prior experience of working with tribal groups) will be interacting with the District Vazhndhu Kaatuvom Unit. • The annual working and finance plan by the District Vazhndhu Kaatuvom Unit is in full consultation by the Forest, Health & Tribal Welfare Department to enhance the synergy of activities and implementation on ground and reduce duplication of efforts.
<p>Village level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each month – the Range Officer will have to hold a meeting with the VPRC along with VFCs of that area and discuss progress of activities, the NTFP collection and processing systems, economic activities that require technical, management or financial aid. Record and minutes of these meetings will be displayed in tribal hamlets; • VPRC will co-opt the VFC in this programme – as a close co-operation between Forest Department and State Society is envisaged. VPRC will actively link-up project interventions in tribal areas through/ with the VFC. Funding opportunities for VFC activities that directly link up to Livelihoods will be possible.

14. **Monitoring & Learning (M&L) for Implementing Tribal Plan:** For the purpose of monitoring and evaluation of Tribal Development Plan, basic data relating to village wise information on tribal population, infrastructure facilities, land utilization, cropping pattern, livelihoods etc. will be collected and recorded as part of baseline information. The project interventions planned in the village, as part of the Annual Plan and the project interventions actually implemented will also be captured in the MIS. The Tribal VPRC / Tribal Sub committee will compile the data on progress which will be incorporated in the monthly progress report of the Village Panchayat

15. The community will be involved in process monitoring through Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques, wherever required in order to know the quality of project implementation and inputs provided under the project. The villagers will monitor the performance of all project functionaries, starting with the Community activists, Community Para professionals and the PFT.

K.5 Strategy For Disabled People And Vulnerable Poor

16. **Introduction:** In rural areas majority of the disabled people are represented in the poor and poorest families. They are largely discriminated and excluded by the society even by their own families and are caught in a vicious cycle of poverty and disability, each being both a cause and a consequence of the other. Vazhdhu Kaatuvom Project recognises their rights and gives special attention to their development through appropriate development measures.

17. The strategy for the disabled and vulnerable poor is to empower and mainstream the disabled poor and other most vulnerable poor by securing their entitlements, services and by improving livelihood opportunities and quality of life.

18. **Overall objectives:** The overall project objectives for Disabled persons and other Vulnerable Poor is to empower and mainstream the disabled poor and other most vulnerable by proactively including them during social mobilization and institution building of the project thereby improving livelihood opportunities, quality of life and securing their dignity.

19. **Project definition of Disabled and Vulnerable persons:** The following persons who are defined as disabled and poor vulnerable persons are considered for inclusion in the project activities and benefits

20. **Who are Disabled Persons:** The project adapt the definition of Persons with disability Act 1995 and National Trust Act of 1999 that those who are affected by any of the following disabilities, to the extent of 40% or more, as certified by a Recognized medical authority:

- Visual impairment including low- vision;
- Speech and Hearing Impaired
- Loco-motor disability includes Leprosy-cured and any form of cerebral palsy
- Mental retardation
- Mental illness
- Autism
- Multiple disabilities

21. Efforts will also be taken to ensure that all the eligible disabled poor, who will not have been certified as disabled, get the certificates within a time frame.

22. The project will also take appropriate efforts to certify all eligible disabled persons to obtain disability certificate within a time frame by medical board (or) competent rehabilitation professional assigned by BDFa.

23. **Who are Vulnerable people:** Vazhdhu Kaatuvom project defines “vulnerability” as an individual or group of people or specific community who are socially marginalized due to lack of sexual identity, physical ability to earn, family and social support to lead normal socialization process and those who are defined vulnerable by the community due to lack of social security, livelihood resources and basic survival means.

24. The project acknowledge the following as vulnerable:

- Widowed women with meagre subsistence income and without social supports;
- Deserted wives and destitute with meagre subsistence income and without social supports;
- Orphaned children and those who are engaged in child labour;
- Senior citizens above 65, without any subsistence income or social supports;
- The poor nomadic communities such as gypsy, traditional palmist etc;
- Persons with HIV positive and AIDS of all ages who are economically poor, living without social support;
- Transsexual
- Persons from very poor and poor families affected with chronic illness such as epilepsy, haemophilia, elephantiasis, TB and heart diseases, which disabled them from taking up physical labour.
- Any other marginalized families who are defined by the community.

25. The most vulnerable listed above are the poorest of the poor suffering from severe socio-economic disabilities in the village and are in need of special assistance. Normally persons satisfying the guidelines for national social assistance programme of the Government like OAP, Widow pension etc, will be eligible for inclusion in project activities and benefits.

26. Key strategy for vulnerability reduction need not be welfare means and charity in nature. Where ever possible, the vulnerable people should be given opportunity to empower themselves through community mobilization and development process. Therefore, VPRC and BDFa shall guide them through mainstreaming initiative such as skills development and livelihood supports. However, this will not prevent people accessing individual benefits enabling them to reduce their vulnerability

27. Finalization of the list of beneficiaries at the Panchayat level: The identification of persons with disabilities and other vulnerabilities at the panchayat level will essentially be through the Participatory Identification of the Poor (PIP) process and list will be

approved in the Gram Sabha. However, considering that the identification of this category of the poor itself can be difficult and long-drawn, the project views that the process of identification of the disabled and the most vulnerable will not be finalized and looked at as an ongoing process.

28. **Project Approach:** During the last decade there have been key experiences within Tamilnadu and around the country on the workable approaches for intervention with the disabled and vulnerable. Importantly, the community based rehabilitation approach against the institutional service delivery model; the social mobilisation and special groups institutional building process as against the conventional, passive-individual, charitable, recipient model, have gained momentum

29. **Vazhdhu Kaatuvom Principles of Community Based Rehabilitation initiatives:**

- The proposed rehabilitation activities should address the comprehensive needs and issues of disabled and vulnerable persons and community where they live in;
- Enable the services at home and community settings with operational flexibility respecting the views of poor and local situations.
- Encourage the participation and involvement of disabled and vulnerable in program planning, monitoring and evaluation aspects.
- “Transfer of knowledge, skills and delegation of power is the process of empowering people and it should not left with the professionals alone”
- Rights of disabled and vulnerable persons are protected in all development initiative;
- Ensure that the community who benefits from such services gradually takes over the responsibility of managing rehabilitation programs;
- Disabled and vulnerable themselves become the champions for others and are able to take up different roles in the empowerment and institution building process based on their abilities.
- The programme will be owned by the special groups and community and not the facilitating organisations.

30. **Prioritization within the disabled:** The project recognizes that all the disabled poor requiring special assistance. However, for extending the support and assistance, it will initially cover the disabled persons with ‘multiple’ impacts - severity or degree of disability, disabled women, children and those who are living under difficult circumstances namely no shelter or living single in the same order of priority.

31. **Disabled women:** Women with disabilities are amongst the poorest of all people, the most marginalized and the most abused. They have been subjected to deliberate neglect, verbal abuse, physical assaults and sexual harassment. In every sphere of live, women with disabilities in the villages experience a triple bind: they are discriminated because they are women, because they are disabled and because they are from the very poor families.

32. Moreover, they are regarded as inferior beings by society at large. They are deprived of nutrition and health services; education services during childhood, love and affection throughout their lives. They are prevented from learning skills necessary for enhanced productivity and income.

33. Hence, the project shall prioritise the special needs and issues of disabled women among the disabled and ensures adequate safeguard measures.

34. **Children with disabilities:** Among the all, the children with disabilities are mostly deprived and exposed to vulnerability due to lack of basic needs such as nutrition, health care, rehabilitation services and better education. This deprives the children to experience childhood, access to quality education due to physical, attitudinal and other barriers that exist in the current education system.

35. The project would explore opportunities to meet their special needs such as early stimulation, pre-schooling, education, medical, communication, physiotherapy, appropriate aids and appliances and other suitable rehabilitation measures.

36. **Sensitisation:** People with disabilities have a right to be included in all aspects of life. In order to fight for the right to inclusion, people with disabilities need to live in an environment in which they are empowered. Social exclusion is often the hardest barrier to overcome, and is usually associated with feelings of shame, fear and rejection. Negative stereotypes are commonly attached to disability devalue them. Much of the discrimination experienced by them is based on an implicit notion that they are not the same as others and so cannot be expected to share the same rights and aspirations. The culture plays a big role in disabled people's place in social, parental and economic life.

37. Hence, it is vital to create conducive environment and desirable attitudinal changes among the community and project stakeholders aiming the inclusion possible. Along with the community, the disabled persons and their family members will also be sensitised for desirable attitudinal changes by the project team.

38. **Social Mobilization:** The recently proclaimed national and international engagements like Asian Pacific Declaration as well as the UN Millennium Development Goals have all recognized the social mobilizations approach as key to empowerment and dignity. Considering experiences around the world, it has been imperative for the project to proactively incorporate social mobilization and community institution building approach to respond to the concerns of the disabled poor and other vulnerable. It means that:

- Exclusive self-help groups of the disabled persons at the habitation level will be first layer of institutions.
- In case of vulnerable, the aged between 18 and 65 will be encouraged to be a member of groups either inclusive or exclusive in nature. The children, aged and persons affected by chronic illness shall be supported through individual assistance.

- Exclusive federation of the Disabled Persons Groups (DPGs) at block level will be second crucial layer;
- And the next layer will be either at District or State level will be left to the experience, aspiration and wisdom of the disabled person's institutions. Accordingly, the project strategy for the disabled and vulnerable is developed.
- While exclusive institutions of the disabled is a good strategy to build the confidence and empower them, it is important that for livelihood and economic activities, close alliance and linkage is forged with other CBOs and also occupy key niche in different processes in the processing/value chain which may best be handled by the disabled.
- Accessing financial and technical support for especially economic activities may be better when the disabled team up with other CBOs till there is greater sensitivity among service providers including financial institutions.
- Synergy between various governmental and non-governmental approaches and programs is also critical to enable similar mobilization and institutional building processes.

39. **Criteria for eligibility – institutional membership:** The project views all persons with disabilities and the vulnerable as defined earlier, living in a particular village panchayat as the target. The benefits to them will be facilitated mostly through the groups and not directly individuals. Therefore, all the disabled and other vulnerable have to become members of the SHGs. However, the aged persons and other most vulnerable who are less in size to form a self-help group will be exempted from group formation. Membership can either be in an exclusive disabled persons group (DPG) or in an exclusive vulnerable group or in existing women self help group or other existing group.

40. The vulnerable who are incapable of any physical work or livelihoods earning activities will have to be supported through social protection interventions - safety nets including pensions etc.

41. **39. Composition and size of the group:** Prevalence of disability has no boundaries and cuts across caste, age and gender. Disabled Persons Groups, therefore, can be mixed groups of men, women, and children with disabilities. With regard to Persons with mental disabilities and those with severe physical disabilities, the guardians/care givers, i.e. parents, spouses, and in extraordinary cases other members of the families, to represent the disabled member in their family. However, in such cases the primary member will still be the person with disability. The global prevalence figures for disability are diverse and in a few habitations disabled persons may be small in number, and hence, for the formation of the DPG, the minimum number required is 5. However, for the vulnerable group, the minimum size would remain 12.

42. **Multiple memberships for multiple vulnerabilities:** A family with an additional member with disability will have additional burden in many ways. For each member with disability, the way family loses out in the battle to survive is different and difficult. Hence, members with disabilities will be recognized as unit for support, rather

than the household. Hence, the disabled shall receive special fund assistance, seed funds and livelihood fund as well through EAGs.

43. **Institutional formation and first level of federation:** The DPGs will be promoted exclusively for the disabled poor. In every hamlet, habitation and village panchayat, social mobilization process and group formation for exclusively the disabled members will be initiated within 3 months of PIP. All the DPGs will be affiliated to appropriate federations to voice their needs, aspirations and issues of disabled persons.

44. **Institutional Structure for Self Advocacy- Block level federation:** The village level DPGs primarily committed to meet the primary issues related to livelihood, skills development, special rehabilitation needs and work towards community integration. However, the capacity of the hamlet level DPG is mostly confined to villages and do not have collective power to voice over the rights of the disabled at regional levels. Hence, the DPGs shall exercise more power together as a Block level. This Block Disability Federation (BDF) will bring together all the DPGs belonging to all the habitations and Panchayats. After the preliminary phase, a higher- level federation at the district level, will be left to the experience, aspirations and wisdom of the disabled persons institutions.

45. **Seed Capital as an instrument to Institutional Strengthening:** As a special incentive for triggering appropriate institution development processes, for social mobilization and strengthening DPGs, a grant upto Rs.10,000 per functional group towards seed capital will be provided. This seed capital will provide the DPGs with a lot of confidence and be utilized essentially for creating a basis for transactions amongst the members, bringing in financial discipline and habit – a discipline necessary for lasting programs for better quality of life and livelihood promotion. Further, this seed capital amount may be leveraged with banks for additional funds. The experience will enrich DPGs and enhance their ability to start moving into opportunities in the larger world. Therefore, it is important to release this seed capital to the functional DPGs i.e. 2-3 months old groups and functioning well with group norms, group meetings, regular savings. The early release will catalyse the groups to be ready for livelihoods scanning and evolving their concrete plans within the next 6-months. Credit rating is not imperative for releasing the seed capital for the special groups.

46. Seed capital, as an instrument, not only facilitates DPGs to begin the transactions, but also prepares them to build credit history, thereby building credibility with appropriate federations, VPRC and other financial institutions. This will be from the general Seed Capital Fund of Village Fund.

47. **Village Poverty Reduction Committee:** At least one person with disabilities and vulnerable (one each) will be a member of the VPRC, so as to voice the concerns of the disabled and other vulnerable and protect their interests in the cutting-edge village level institution of the project.

48. **Village level Community Disability Facilitator:** Disability is both a cause and consequence of poverty. Eliminating poverty is unlikely to be achieved unless the rights and special needs of the people with disabilities are taken into account. The special needs shall be addressed through one to one support at family level. The VPRC shall identify an active disabled person (preferably a woman) as the Community Disability Facilitator (CDF), who will work under the guidance of BDFA.

49. The CDF shall be selected based on the number of disabled and vulnerable people requiring specialized home-based support services. If such need arise for 10 and above persons in a Panchayat, the VPRC shall engage one CDF. Alternatively, the BDFA would assist the VPRC to evolve alternate strategies like, building the capacity of parents/ caregivers or referral services.

50. The responsibility of the CDF will be identifying the disabled persons, assisting special group facilitators to mobilize all the disabled poor in the respective village into groups and be on the rolls of the DPGs as the Bookkeeper. Over a period of the first 6-months, her/his services will be broad-based to include servicing the disabled persons in providing home based therapy and other rehabilitation support services and in exploring appropriate livelihoods.

51. The remuneration for the CDF will be decided by the VPRC and will be paid for 3 years. The overall support to the CDF will be by the Block Disability Facilitation Agency (BDFA), which will be identified and contracted by the District Vazhndhu Kaatuvom Society. In addition, the BDFA will depute one special facilitator to each PFT who will exclusively look after disability and vulnerability component.

52. **Community-based Rehabilitation, Life Skills and Tools:** Disabled and other vulnerable will be facilitated towards a better living with dignity, before the livelihoods skills and ventures. The disabled and other vulnerable persons who are in groups will be encouraged to seek support for acquiring life skills, tools, implements, medical support etc., that help them to a better living, and community-based rehabilitation for those who require this. The VPRC can take up rehabilitation schemes for disabled and most vulnerable from this component.

53. Funds will be made available from Special Assistance to Vulnerable of Village Fund. A minimum amount of beneficiary contribution will be decided by the community for all rehabilitation interventions utilizing special assistance fund.

54. **Skill Building:** Skill Building, within the realm of existing livelihoods as well as new potential opportunities in the changing market and society, is important in building livelihoods for the disabled and other vulnerable. Creating specialized learning contexts suitable to the disabled poor and positively influencing the larger job market through their institutions will open up avenues for the disabled. Investments into skill building for taking up appropriate future livelihood options and occupations, particularly for the disabled youth, have to be made. At least 20% of the Special Assistance to Vulnerable of Village Fund will be made available for skill building.

55. **Livelihood Business Support:** It is assumed that the above two processes precede this phase. Disabled persons, fully equipped with right attitude, skills and strong skill training in a particular option(s), will be facilitated to develop livelihoods/business investment proposal. This will be appraised and the feasible and viable proposals will be assisted and there will be no compromise with respect to the feasibility assessment – this is a departure from previously existing initiatives wherein this is overlooked heavily burdening the disabled with products that do not have a market. Investment required will come from the Special Assistance to Vulnerable of the Village Fund and the bank finance. Up to 70% of the Livelihood Fund amount will come from the project which will be used to finance any gaps in the overall investment and / or value addition and the balance will be from other sources including the beneficiary contribution. The project support is available only to the beneficiaries who are in the DPGs or in existing SHGs.

56. The most vulnerable can avail of the support from Special Assistance, if they are in the existing SHGs or special SHGs of their own. It may be noted here that the Disabled and most vulnerable are eligible for livelihood assistance under the general livelihood fund in addition to the Special Assistance to Vulnerable sub-component. When disabled and most vulnerable EAGs access livelihood fund for economic activities, the grant from the project will be up to 70% of the project cost. The equity contribution can be 30% including bank credit (5% upfront individual contribution and 25% from other financial sources).

57. **Convergence to Disabled and vulnerable people:** While implementing, the project will try to converge various support programs targeted at disabled and vulnerable people from other organizations. The convergence of these programs is summarized in Table 11.6.

Table 11.6 Convergence of programs for the Disabled and Vulnerable

SL	Organisation	Nature of Service extended
A. Convergence of programs for the Disabled		
1	Block level NGOs implementing SSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical and handholding support to integrate disabled children into schools. • Educational tools and other assisting aids required for school children.
2	District Disabled Rehabilitation Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The special programmes implemented by the State and Central Government pertaining to disabled persons such as, issuing ID cards, education assistance, travel concessions, marriage and maintenance allowance, aids and appliances, NHFDC etc
3	District Rural Development Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 % reservation in all poverty alleviation programmes implemented by the department such as giving seed fund to credit rated SHGs and financial assistance to initiate livelihood activities.
4	TAHDCO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 % fund allocation to SC/ST disabled persons availing livelihood assistance and seed fund for the groups.
5	Service providing organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills training, rehabilitation supports, medical, special education and care services.

B. Convergence of programs for the Vulnerable		
1	Taluk office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availing pension, ration card, free rice, housing patta and other welfare measures.
2	District Social Welfare Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All state government schemes for vulnerable women such as short stay homes, skill training centres. • Dr.Dharmambal Ammaiyar Ninaivu widow remarriage assistance scheme; • E.V.R Maniyammaiyar Ninaivu widow daughter marriage assistance scheme • Annai Therasa Ninaivu Orphan Girl Marriage assistance scheme • Sathiyavani Muthu Ammaiyar Ninaivu Free supply of sewing machines • Free supply of Text book and note book to widow's children • Education support and government homes for the orphan and destitute children. • Government old age homes.
3	Service providing organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government and Charity hospitals for medical treatment to persons affected with chronic illness and other vulnerable people.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services of NGOs extending care and welfare measures aimed at vulnerability reduction and protection.

58. **Institutional Arrangement** for implementing the disabled and most vulnerable strategy is summarized in Table 11.7.

Table 11.7 Institutional Arrangement for implementing Programs for the Disabled and Most Vulnerable

Institutional Level	Organization / Individual	Roles and responsibilities
State Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist, Disability, Vulnerability and Tribal Development in SPMU 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing, co-ordinating and monitoring implementation of strategy for the disabled and most vulnerable.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State and District Level Resource Organizations and resource persons: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing capacity building modules on implementing action plan for disabled and most vulnerable. • Build capacity of Asst. Project Manger, Social Safeguard, Facilitator –Special groups and handhold them in implementing special programs for the disabled and most vulnerable. • Training master trainers for sensitizing project staff and leaders of SHGs and Federations.
District Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asst. Project Manager, Social Safeguard in DPMU 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordinate with BDFa in nominating Facilitator – Special Groups in PFT; • Build capacity and extend handholding support to special group facilitator; • Build network with government departments, resource organizations and service providers to support the disability and vulnerability plans;

Institutional Level	Organization / Individual	Roles and responsibilities
Cluster Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Block Disability Facilitation Agency (BDFA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Depute one special facilitator to each PFT; Backstop the functioning of Facilitator – Special Groups and CDFs; Extend human resources and other capacity building measures to the special groups in designing and implementing CBR components, guidance for livelihood and strategic support to strengthen DPGs and federation.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitator – Special Groups in PFT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be responsible for implementation of special programs for disabled and most vulnerable at the village level such as identifying disabled and vulnerable persons, organizing them into self-help groups and federations, meeting their livelihood and other special rehabilitation needs, organizing training for the parents and SHG leaders. Build capacity and handhold village level community disability Facilitator to carryout community based rehabilitation initiatives of disabled persons and vulnerable.
Village Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Disability Facilitator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist VPRC in including programs for disabled and most vulnerable in VPRC Plan; Assist special facilitator to organize the persons with disabilities and vulnerability into self-help groups; Assist the special groups in book keeping and record maintenance; Provide regular home based rehabilitation support services to the needy disabled, HIV/AIDS and aged; Assist EAGs to mobilize disabled and most vulnerable in livelihood activities.