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Tamil Nadu Afforestation Programme (TAP) and Socio- Economic Impact on Livestock and Livelihood Analysis in Kongurarkuttai Village, Tamil Nadu, India

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Key Words: TAP programme, socio-economic, livestock, livelihood change, village forest council

Abstract: We cannot speak about the natural resources, without looking at the society related to these resources. Kongurarkutti is an agricultural village located at the foothills of Anamallai hills of Indira Gandhi Wildlife sanctuary and National Park, Udumalpet forest range, Coimbatore district. Agriculture in the village is mostly based on annual rainfall and some of the farms have their own well. Most of the village people are agriculturists and keeping cattle and sheep for their livelihood. Reserve forest area was prominent grazing ground for their livestock once. The reserve forest area became degraded due to over grazing.

Tamil Nadu Forest department has selected this village to implement social uplift programmes through TAP 2005-06. The Tamil Nadu Afforestation Programme scheme administrative area is 532.98 hectares and project implemented in 250 hectares. During this plan several social welfare programmes were implemented to improve the quality of the life of the village community. In the mean time, planting tree saplings and sowing seeds through the Afforestation programmes were done in the degraded reserve forest area to improve health of the forest. Direct dependency of the village people on the reserve forest area was also reduced through this programme. A village forest council (gender specific) was created to monitor the implementation of the programmes. Both local community and forest department staff are jointly managing the village forest council and its funds. Despite the vast expansion of the formal credit in the country, the dependence of the rural poor on money lenders continues in many areas especially for meeting credit requirements. Such dependence is pronounced in the case of marginal farmers, landless laborers, petty traders and rural artisans belonging to socially and economically backward classless people and tribes whose propensity to save up is limited or too small to be mopped up by the banks. For various reasons, credit to these sections of the population has not been institutionalized. Based on the conditions prevailing in the country in regard to the credit availability to the poor, it is apparent that the

TAP programme has to play a crucial role in the process of economic uplift and make a way from the vicious circle of poverty. The present study highlights the impact of socio economic status improvement, cost of credit and recovery performance of loans received by TAP programme.

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