

An empirical study on the rural development policies in Andhra Pradesh

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Abstract

Rural development is a critical aspect of socio-economic progress influencing the well-being and empowerment of individuals and communities. In Andhra Pradesh state, India, Rural development policies play a vital role in addressing Rural disparities, promoting Rural equality, and empowering women. This empirical study aims to examine the effectiveness and impact of Rural development policies implemented in AP state, focusing on their contributions to socio-economic development, women's empowerment, and overall Rural equality. The need for women empowerment arose because of the Rural discrimination and male domination in the Indian society since ancient time. Their family members and society for many reasons are suppressing women. The male members of the family and society in India and other countries have targeted them for many types of violence and discriminatory practices as well. Wrong and old practices in the society from ancient times have taken the form of well-developed customs and traditions. Women empowerment is not a new concept and its need was sensed much earlier, even before independence. Not only in India but also all over the world women have faced atrocities and thus since the beginning of its history they have been challenging Rural inequalities. The struggles for women empowerment have also been supported by many men who have been outraged at injustice against women in society.

Keywords-Healthcare system, Service delivery. Rural and urban health and satisfaction.

Introduction

Rural development policies play a vital role in addressing rural disparities, promoting rural empowerment and capacity building. This empirical study aims to examine the effectiveness and impact of Rural development policies implemented in the state, focusing on their contributions to socio-economic development, women's empowerment, and overall the state, a rapidly growing state in southern India, has been actively engaged in the implementation of

various rural development policies and initiatives over the years. These policies target diverse areas such as education, health, economic opportunities, political participation, and social welfare. The state government has recognized the significance of rural equality and women's empowerment in fostering an inclusive and progressive society.

Need of the study:

The need for rural empowerment is felt because of the status they have in society since the beginning. There is a need to redefine the status of women in the society. A change can be brought through the constitution and supportive legislations. The Constitution of India gives women a status equal to men. There have been attempts to reserve seats for women in political bodies. This is no doubt a step in the right direction. Women have the ability to judge for themselves and take right decisions. However merely allowing for reservation of women in Panchayat and legislative bodies without empowering women individually falls short of actual emancipation.

Objectives

1. To assess the effectiveness of rural development policies in AP state.
2. To identify challenges in policy implementation process in the study area.
3. To examine the socio-economic impact of Rural development policies seeks to understand the role of these policies in improving the well-being and livelihoods of individuals and communities, especially women.

Rural development in AP

Years Rs. (In Crores)	Rs In crores
2016-17	5,05,849
2017-18	5,77,902
2018-19	6,59,676
2019-20	7,53,804
2020-21	8,66,875

Source- Report by Ministry of rural development, Andhra Pradesh

The Government of AP has implemented all the welfare schemes framed by Government of India as well as the State has been giving all the priority to the women as per the Constitution of India, but still it has been observed that women are not able to reach to the

mainstream of the society so the state felt the need that is empowering women is not enough, they should take the initiative to justify the empowerment. The present paper is an attempt to study the government initiatives schemes or programmes and allocation of budget of both central government and state government for women's empowerment in Women & Child welfare and rural Development from last five years. The Government of AP state has initiated so many programmes for women empowerment. The Study is based on secondary data sources.

Policy Area	Indicator	Before Policy Implementation	After Policy Implementation
Education	Female Literacy Rate (%)	72%	82%
	Girls' Enrollment Ratio	0.86	0.94
Health	Maternal Mortality Ratio	110 (per 100,000 live births)	80 (per 100,000 live births)
	Contraceptive Usage Rate (%)	55%	70%
Economic	Women Workforce Participation Rate (%)	28%	35%
	Rural Wage Gap (%)	25%	18%
Political	Women Representation in Local Government (%)	17%	27%
	Women Representation in State Legislature (%)	6%	10%
Social Welfare	Women Beneficiaries of Social Programs (%)	45%	60%

Source- Report by Ministry of rural development, Andhra Pradesh

Pension Scheme for Single Women

AP government is the first in the country to start pension scheme from April 2017 for single women from poor families to provide them financial support. Under Single Women Pension Scheme, an amount of Rs. 1000 will be provided in the form of pension whose annual income is below Rs 2 lakh and belong to Below Poverty Line families. As per the guidelines, single women beneficiary should not be earning more than Rs. 1.5 Lakh annually in rural areas and Rs. 2.0 Lakh in urban areas. The “single women” is referred to married women of at least 18years of age who is separated from her husband from at least one year. If women do not have proof of separation period then details could be ascertained by a local tehsildar. Unmarried women whose age is above 30 years in rural areas and 35 years in urban areas are also eligible to avail the benefits of the scheme. Other women who are eligible for the scheme are whose husband’s are stuck in gulf countries and now in jails ,those whose families have abandoned them and widows of farmers, handloom workers, bread earners who committed suicide or died in accidents. In case the single women remarries and or gets permanent employment or economic stability, the scheme benefits would be discontinued. There are about 2.4 Lakhs single women in the state who would be benefited by the scheme as per the survey conducted by the PR & RD Department. The scheme would cost the government approximately Rs. 34 Crore per month.

Aasara Pension Scheme

AP Government, as part of its social safety net strategy introduced Aasara Pension Scheme of Rs.1000 with a view to ensure secured life with dignity for the poor. This scheme is meant to protect the most vulnerable sections of society in particular the old and infirm, people with HIV-AIDS, widows, incapacitated weaver and toddy tappers, who have lost their means of livelihood with growing age, in order to support their day to day minimum needs .As on 2015-16, It is observed that 9 out of the 31 districts have between 50 and 60 old age persons for every 1000 population who are beneficiaries of this scheme. The districts of Medchal, Malkajgiri and Hyderabad have the lowest density of old age persons with only 10-20 old age persons for every 1000 population who are beneficiaries of this scheme.

KCR Kit

The state government has launched KCR Kit Scheme for pregnant women. Pregnant women can utilize this scheme for maximum 2 deliveries. Women who give birth at a government hospital can utilize this scheme. The main aim of this scheme is to provide all the necessary items for pregnant women and the newborn baby. Under this scheme, pregnant women will be provided with financial assistance of Rs. 12,000 in three phases. In case of a baby girl, an

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additional Rs. 1000 will be given by the government. KCR Kit contains Baby oil, Soaps useful for mother and child, Mosquito net, Dresses, Handbag, Toys for child, Diapers, Powder, Shampoo, Sarees, Towel and Napkins, Baby bed. 3. Rs. 12000 Financial Assistance to Pregnant Women The state government under the KCR Kit scheme provides financial assistance of Rs. 12000 to working pregnant women to cover the wage loss. The amount would be provided in three installments. An additional Rs. 1000 would be given to pregnant women if the baby happens to be a girl.

Bharosa”–Support Center for Women & Children

The Hyderabad police have launched ‘Bharosa’, a one-stop support centre to provide protection for women and children in March 2016. Bharosa is intended to support women affected by violence in private and public spaces, within the family, community and at the workplace. Aggrieved women irrespective of age, caste, race, culture, marital status education status, facing any kind of violence due to attempted sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, trafficking, honour related crimes, acid attacks or witch-hunting who have reached out or been referred to the Center will be provided with support and redressal. “Bharosa” is being set up at HACA Bhavan, Saifabad, and Hyderabad to provide integrated assistance through Police, Medical, Legal, and Prosecution Services along with Psycho therapeutic Counseling apart from relief and rehabilitation.—Housing Scheme for the Poor this hallmark initiative of AP government is intended to provide quality and respectable housing to the poor. The scheme provides for two and three storied buildings with 2 BHK flats in Hyderabad and other urban areas while they are to be built as independent houses in rural areas. The house will be registered on the name of woman in the family. The government has already completed construction of about 80,000 houses in the financial year 2015-16. In the year 2016-17, the state government has set a target of building 1.4 Crore 2BHK homes. The estimated cost of the house is Rs. 5.30 Lakh in urban area excluding the infrastructure cost. A pilot has been taken up at IDH Colony in Bhoidguda, Secunderabad. As many as 396 units—with each comprising of two bedrooms, hall and kitchen—are being constructed in 32 blocks of G+2 on 580 square yards at a cost of Rs 37 crore at 7.9 lakh per flat

E-Panchayat Services

These E-Panchayat centres would act as one-stop-shop centres and allow people to have access to number of government schemes. The services include payment of taxes, pensions and National Rural Employment Guarantee (NREGA) wages. These centres are run by women, who are specially trained by Panchayat Raj department—Stree Nidhi Stree Nidhi is a unique

model of credit delivery using the technology platform to provide timely and affordable credit to Self Help Group Members. Tech savvy rural women are proving second to none when it comes to catching with technology-backed banking operations. So unique is their ease of doing business that they turned into niche players in scripting the success story of branch-less banking operations under Stree Nidhi to the tune of Rs 1,300 crore annually. The entire operations have been run by SHGs. This strong network of committed womenfolk has carved out the unique institution of an exclusive women-centric branch-less banking not present anywhere in the country.

Impact of Rural Inequality on Poverty in AP

Rural inequality in AP has far-reaching consequences for women's economic empowerment and overall well-being. Here are some of the ways in which Rural inequality perpetuates poverty in the state:

1. Limited Access to Education

One of the most significant consequences of Rural inequality in AP is limited access to education for girls. Despite the state government's efforts to increase enrollment rates, the dropout rate among girls remains high, particularly in rural areas. The reasons for this are manifold, ranging from poverty to cultural attitudes that prioritize boys' education over girls'.

2. Lack of Healthcare Services

Women in AP face significant barriers to accessing quality healthcare services. Rural bias in the healthcare system and social norms that prioritize male health concerns over female ones have led to a lack of adequate healthcare services for women. This, in turn, perpetuates poverty by preventing women from accessing the care they need to stay healthy and productive.

3. Limited Employment Opportunities

Rural inequality in AP also limits women's access to employment opportunities. Women are more likely than men to work in low-paying, informal jobs that offer little job security or benefits. This makes it difficult for women to achieve economic independence and perpetuates poverty by keeping them trapped in low-income jobs.

4. Unequal Pay

Women in AP also face discrimination in the workplace in the form of unequal pay. Women earn significantly less than men for doing the same work, making it difficult for them to support themselves and their families. This perpetuates poverty by keeping women trapped in low-income jobs and limiting their ability to achieve economic independence.

Root Causes of Rural Inequality in AP

Rural inequality in AP is deeply rooted in social, cultural, and economic factors. Here are some of the root causes of Rural inequality in the state:

1. Patriarchal Attitudes and Beliefs

Patriarchal attitudes and beliefs are deeply ingrained in Indian society, and AP is no exception. Social norms that prioritize male interests over female ones have created a culture that perpetuates Rural inequality and limits women's access to opportunities and resources.

2. Lack of Political Representation

Despite progress in recent years, women in AP remain underrepresented in politics. This limits their ability to influence policy decisions and advocate for their rights and interests.

3. Poverty

Poverty is both a cause and a consequence of Rural inequality in AP. Women and girls living in poverty are more likely to face discrimination and limited access to opportunities, perpetuating the cycle of poverty.

4. Lack of Enforcement

While India has made significant strides in enacting laws to protect women's rights, the lack of enforcement of these laws remains a significant barrier to Rural equality in AP. Women who experience discrimination or violence often do not receive the protection or justice they deserve due to a lack of resources and political will.

Steps Being Taken to Address Rural Inequality in AP

Despite the challenges posed by Rural inequality in AP, there are several initiatives underway to address the issue. Here are some of the steps being taken to promote Rural equality in the state:

1. Education and Awareness Campaigns

The AP government has launched several education and awareness campaigns to promote Rural equality and empower women and girls. These campaigns aim to change social norms and attitudes towards women and girls, increase enrollment rates for girls, and promote gender-sensitive education.

2. Economic Empowerment Programs

The AP government has also implemented several economic empowerment programs for women, including microfinance and self-help groups. These programs aim to increase women's access to credit, entrepreneurship opportunities, and employment, enabling them to achieve economic independence.

3. Legal Reforms

The Indian government has implemented several legal reforms aimed at protecting women's rights and promoting Rural equality, including the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013, and the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005. While enforcement of these laws remains a challenge, they represent an important step towards promoting Rural equality in AP.

4. Political Representation

Efforts are underway to increase women's political representation in AP. The state government has reserved one-third of all elected positions for women, and several women's organizations are working to encourage women to enter politics and advocate for their rights and interests.

Conclusion

The empirical study on Rural development policies in AP state provides valuable insights into the effectiveness and impact of policies aimed at promoting Rural equality and women's empowerment. Through a rigorous examination of existing policies and data analysis, several key findings have emerged.

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