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Rural Poverty Alleviation Prgrammes in Andhra Pradesh- A Region-Wise Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The present research paper intended to know about the ongoing rural poverty alleviation programmes in Andhra Pradesh. Discussed about the poverty measurements taken by the State Government through Indira Kranthi Patham programme on selected respondents, which has been major rural poverty reduction programme in the state. The study is based on primary data and focuses on the social and economic dimensions of rural poverty especially education and health which are main contributors for Human Development. The findings show that IKP has brought much change in the poverty status of the rural people, the proportion of Coastal Andhra respondents comparatively higher than that of other two regions under study.

KEYWORDS: Rural Poverty Alleviation Programmes, Andhra Pradesh, Indira Kranthi Patham, Region-wise analysis.

Introduction

Poverty is a state where a person finds it unable to maintain a minimum socially accepted level of standard of living. It is pointed as the root cause for low levels of health and educational outcomes, poor access to clean drinking water and sanitation, inadequate physical security, lack of voice, and insufficient capacity and opportunity for mobility. Poverty alleviation remained the central to all the state and central level policy making. The Five Year Plans in India had their focus directly or indirectly on reducing the poverty levels throughout. In India the Planning Commission has been deciding on the methodology and making estimates of the number and percentage of poor at national and state level. These poverty estimates are treated as official. On a comparable basis these official estimates are available for the years 1973-74, 1977-78, 1983, 1987-88, 1993-94 and 2004-05.

As per the latest estimates of Planning Commission available for the year 2004-05, the poverty ratio for rural and urban areas of Andhra Pradesh were 11.20 per cent and 28.00 per cent respectively and that for the State as combined was 15.80 per cent. Table-1 depicts the percentage of people below the poverty line in Andhra Pradesh and at All India level for different time periods.

Table 1: Poverty in Andhra Pradesh and All India

Year	Andhra Pradesh			All India		
	Rural	Urban	Combined	Rural	Urban	Combined
1973-74	48.41	50.61	48.86	56.64	49.01	54.88
1977-78	38.11	42.55	39.31	53.07	45.24	51.32
1983	26.53	36.30	28.91	45.65	40.79	44.48
1987-88	20.92	40.11	25.86	39.09	38.20	38.86
1993-94	15.92	38.33	22.19	37.27	32.36	35.97
2004-05	11.20	28.00	15.80	28.30	25.70	27.50
1993-94*	48.10	35.20	44.60	50.10	31.80	45.30
2004-05*	32.30	23.90	29.90	41.80	25.70	37.20

*As per Tendulkar Group
Source: Planning Commission, Government of India.

In 2005, the Planning Commission has appointed an Expert Group to review alternate concepts of poverty and recommend necessary changes in the existing procedures of official estimation of poverty. As per the official committee methodology, estimates of poverty ratio for rural and urban areas of Andhra Pradesh for 2004-05 were 32.30 per cent and 23.40 per cent respectively and that for the State as combined was 29.90 per cent. The corresponding figures for All India during the same period were 41.80 per cent, 25.70 per cent for rural and urban areas and 37.20 per cent for combined.

The government's strategy on rural poverty eradication recognizes that long-term investment in core sectors such as agriculture, health and education will accelerate the pace of poverty reduction. The rural poverty reduction strategies thus will be multi-pronged and multi-sectoral. They can be broadly classified under three categories: (i) Intensive Poverty reduction initiatives through a strategy of social mobilization, (ii) Aggressively promoting agricultural growth and (iii) Provision of basic minimum services.

After experimenting, several poverty alleviation programmes, Government of Andhra Pradesh has settled for two important programmes. One is self-help group programme and the other is watershed based approach. The Governments basic strategy for removal of poverty in Andhra Pradesh would revolve around social mobilization and empowerment of the poor. The ongoing Indira Kranthi Patham (IKP) programme in all over rural areas of Andhra Pradesh based on the strategy of social mobilization and the empowerment of the rural poor.

Importance of the Study

Efforts at poverty alleviation have borne fruit in that for the first time since independence, the percentage of absolute poor in some states is now well below the national average. Despite various strategies to alleviate poverty, hunger, malnourishment, illiteracy and lack of basic amenities continue to be a common feature in many parts of Andhra Pradesh. Though the policy towards poverty alleviation has evolved in a progressive manner, over the last five and a half decades, it has not undergone any radical transformation. However, none resulted in any radical change in the ownership of assets, process of production and improvement of basic amenities to the needy. Due to unequal distribution of land and other assets, the benefits from direct poverty alleviation programmes have been appropriated by the non-poor. Compared to the magnitude of poverty, the amount of resources allocated for these programmes is not sufficient.

Methodology

A field study has been conducted at 54 villages of 54 mandals in 9 districts representing from the rural areas of Chittoor, Anantapur and Kurnool districts of Rayalaseema region, Mahabubnagar, Nalgonda and Karimnagar districts of Telangana region and Guntur, East and West Godavari districts of Costal Andhra region of Andhra Pradesh state. The data for the preset study was generated through the schedule, which is survey. The sample chosen for the main study consisted of 1620 respondents, consists 540 respondents (33.34 per cent) from each region. The sample has been selected on the basis of rural population size, literacy rate, percentage of Agricultural Labourers, Marginal and Small farmers.

In the present study, an attempt made to highlight the eradication of rural poverty programmes and measures taken by State Government of Andhra Pradesh and to analyse its progress and achievements which facilitates better understanding of the impact of these on the development of Agricultural Labourers, Small and Marginal farmers in three regions.

Results and Discussion

This section presents poverty measurements taken by the State Government through ongoing Indira Kranthi Patham programme on selected respondents, which has been major rural poverty reduction programme in the state.

The Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty (S.E.R.P.) is implementing Indira Kranthi Patham (IKP) programme. This is a State-wide, commu-

nity demand driven rural poverty alleviation programme aiming to cover all rural poor households in the state. The activities of DWCRA and Velugu were integrated under a programme called Indira Kranthi Patham. The new scheme Indira Kranthi Patham had been designed by clubbing Women Empowerment with Poverty Alleviation. It is the single largest poverty reduction programme in South Asia.

It works with 10,59,056 Self Help Groups federated into 38,821 Village Organizations (VO) and 1098 Mandal Samakhyas (MS). The programme mandate is to build strong institutions of the poor and enhance their livelihood opportunities so that the vulnerabilities of the poor are reduced. Community Investment Fund (CIF) is the major component of the programme, which is provided to the SHGs/ VOs/ MSs to support wide range of activities for socio-economic empowerment of the Poor. To reduce the financial burden on the self help groups, "Pavala Vaddi" scheme was introduced in the year 2004. Incentive is provided by the Government in the form of reimbursement of interest above 3 per cent per annum on the loans taken by the self help groups under this scheme.

Table-2: Indira Kanthi Patham (IKP)- Rural Poverty Alleviation Programme

Indira Kanthi Patham (IKP)	Particulars	Rayala-seema Region	Coastal Andhra Region	Telangana Region	Total
Awareness	Yes	491 (90.9)	485 (89.8)	457 (84.6)	1433 (88.5)
	No	49 (9.1)	55 (10.2)	83 (15.4)	187 (11.5)
Beneficiaries	Yes	491 (90.9)	485 (89.8)	457 (84.6)	1433 (88.5)
	No	49 (9.1)	55 (10.2)	83 (15.4)	187 (11.5)
Assistance	Sufficient	476 (97.0)	462 (95.3)	427 (93.4)	1365 (95.3)
	Not Sufficient	15 (3.0)	23 (4.7)	30 (6.6)	68 (4.7)
Assistance in time	Yes	462 (94.1)	437 (90.1)	423 (92.6)	1322 (92.3)
	No	29 (5.9)	48 (9.9)	34 (7.4)	111 (7.7)
Preference of Assistance	Kind	308 (62.7)	310 (64.0)	317 (69.4)	935 (65.2)
	Cash	183 (37.3)	175 (36.0)	140 (30.6)	498 (34.8)
Difficulty in payment of loan	Yes	28 (5.7)	54 (11.1)	33 (7.2)	115 (8.0)
	No	463 (94.3)	431 (88.9)	424 (92.8)	1318 (92.0)
Impact on Economic condition	Yes	453 (92.3)	461 (95.1)	417 (91.2)	1331 (92.9)
	No	38 (7.7)	24 (4.9)	40 (8.8)	102 (7.1)
Impact on Poverty Reduction	Yes	453 (92.3)	461 (95.1)	417 (91.2)	1331 (92.9)
	No	38 (7.7)	24 (4.9)	40 (8.8)	102 (7.1)

Table -2 presents about the poverty measurements taken by the State Government through Indira Kranthi Patham (IKP) programme, it shows 88.5 per cent of respondents are aware of poverty reduction programmes by State / Central Governments and know about Indira Kranthi Patham as rural poverty reduction programme while 11.5 per cent of them say that they are not aware. . A region-wise distribution reveals that, full awareness about the programme is comparatively more pronounced among the respondents in the Rayalaseema region (90.9 per cent) than that of other two regions. There are 15.4 per cent respondents in Telangana, 10.2 per cent in Coastal Andhra and 9.1 per cent respondents in the Rayalaseema region are not aware about the IKP programme.

88.5 per cent respondents are beneficiary of IKP programme. However, significantly 11.5 per cent respondents are not beneficiaries of the programme, as they are not aware of the programme A region-wise distribution of data reveals that the beneficiaries of IKP programme is comparatively higher in the Rayalaseema region (90.9 per cent) than that of other regions i.e. Coastal Andhra (89.8 per cent) and Telangana (84.6 per cent).

Most of the respondents received sufficient loan and negligible 4.7 per cent respondents have not received sufficient loan from IKP programme. A region-wise distribution of data reveals that, though most of the respondents in all three regions have received sufficient loan from IKP programme. Yet it is in the Rayalaseema region, that this proportion is the highest (97 per cent). There are 6.6 per cent respondents in Telangana, 4.7 per cent in Coastal Andhra and 3 per cent respondents in Rayalaseema region not received sufficient loan.

There are 92.3 per cent respondents, who had got the loans in time. Only 7.7 per cent do not get the assistance in time from the programme. Besides, 9.9 per cent respondents in the Coastal Andhra, 7.4 per cent in Telangana and 5.9 per cent respondents in Rayalaseema region did not get the assistance in time from the IKP programme.

34.8 per cent respondents have received their loans in cash, while 65.2 per cent have received it in kind. A break-up of data shows that loan as kind is comparatively more pronounced in Telangana (69.4 per cent) than in the Coastal Andhra (64.0 per cent) and Rayalaseema region (62.7 per cent). Cash loans have been advanced in greater proportion to beneficiaries in Rayalaseema (37.3 per cent), than in Coastal Andhra (36.0 per cent) or Telangana region (34.6 per cent).

The majority 92.0 per cent of the respondents stated that they have no difficulty in repayment of loan, because the government has reduced the interest up to twenty five paise, it is called Pavala Vaddi. Very few 8.0 per cent of them stated they have difficulty in repayment of loan. A region-wide distribution of data reveals that 94.3 per cent of Rayalaseema respondents have expressed no more difficulty in repayment of loan than that of other two regions i.e. 88.9 per cent of Coastal Andhra and 92.8 per cent of Telangana.

The majority respondents have stated that IKP loans considerably changed their economic condition, by providing them with new sources of income, better production and higher returns. The majority of the respondents in the sample have stated that IKP loans have significantly improved their economic condition. However, there are 7.1 per cent respondents have stated that it has failed to improve their economic condition. A region-wide distribution of the data reveals that a substantial improvement in the economic condition has been reported by Coastal Andhra region than that of two regions.

The majority of the respondents have opinion that IKP programme have contributed much towards the poverty reduction of the rural poor. The majority of the respondents' are of the views that these programme have brought about significant change in the socio-economic status of the rural people. There are 7.1 per cent respondents, who are very critical of the programme; and have suggested that they have brought no substantial change in their poverty status of the rural people. In the sample, 11.5 per cent respondents, who are not members of IKP programme have not opined on this matter. IKP has brought much change in the poverty status of the rural people, the proportion of Coastal Andhra respondents comparatively higher than that of other two regions under study.

Conclusion

Andhra Pradesh is known for introducing innovative poverty alleviation programmes like Indira Kranthi Patham (IKP) for women's empowerment, INDIRAMMA programme for providing housing and other infrastructure, pensions, land distribution and health insurance (Arogyasri) are the other important programmes helping the poor in various dimensions. The IKP programme, as discussed earlier, has been dedicated for the uplift of the rural poor. The scheme is comparatively recent in origin; as such the consequences following from them are yet to be properly assessed, in terms of the poverty reduction of the rural people. It has brought much change in the poverty status of the rural people, the proportion of Coastal Andhra respondents comparatively higher than that of other two regions.

Recommendations

We have travelled about six decades since independence. The objective of all our policies had been stated as promoting rapid and balanced economic development with equality and social justice. Poverty alleviation has always been accepted as one of India's main challenges by the policy makers, regardless of which government was in power. Providing productive employment in agriculture and rural non-farm sector is important for reduction in poverty. Access to land (as owners or tenants) and credit are important for the poor in agriculture. In order to develop the rural non-form sector, there is a need to look at issues such as rural-urban linkages, infrastructure, markets, technology and training in skills. The key strategy for reducing poverty lies in creating productive employment for the poor through labour-intensive pattern of growth and better implementation of poverty alleviation programmes.

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