India has adopted unique measures to promote equality and development of women and has number of legislations to protect the interests of women and encouraging their participation in national development. It is clear from the analysis that the percentage of women literates are very low compared to men and female literacy in rural areas is only 30.6 per cent which is half of the literacy rate in urban areas. Even though the women constitute a major workforce in India, their work is unacknowledged or under developed.

In view of the low status of women, the Government of India have launched several programmes for the development of women especially the programme of development of women and children in rural areas with the objective of improving the status and quality of life of poor women and children in rural areas and enabling women to improve their earning capacity with the following objectives.
1. Improving the status and quality of life of poor women and children in the rural areas.

2. Enabling women to improve their earning capacity.

3. Improving the impact of ongoing development programmes by stimulating, supplementing, strengthening and integrating them.

4. Involving the community in planning and implementing the programme so that need based development activity will be carried on by the communities even after outside assistance is withdrawn.

The above programme is being implemented in Cuddapah district since 1983-94. Cuddapah district is one of the drought prone district of Andhra Pradesh. It lies between the Northern Latitudes of 13°43 and the eastern longitudes of 77°53 and 79° 29. The total geographical areas of the district is 1,74,329 sq. kms. with a cultivable area of 8.50 lakhs acres. The district has 3.60 per cent of the state population. The percentage of males is 50.36 and the percentage of female is 49.64.

In order to improve the living conditions of the poor, the Government of India and Andhra Pradesh have implemented programmes like IRDP, TRYSEM, Jawahar Rozgar Yojana and DWCRA in the district. In Cuddapah district under TRYSEM
programme 4,824 Rural Youth were provided training to take-up the self-employment programmes during 1993-98.

Integrated Rural Development Programme is another important programme implemented in the district. It is evident from the analysis that 53,493 beneficiaries were provided assistance under IRDP in Cuddapah district.

The Government of India has launched Jawahar Rozgar Yojana programme in the district in the year 1989 and the same was implemented in the district. It is evident from the analysis that majority of the funds earmarked for JRY were utilized for the development of the poor in the district.

The scheme of development of women and children in rural area is being implemented in the district since 1983-84. The main objective of this programme is to raise the income level of women poor households and involve them in social development. The analysis reveals that the rate of achievement in the coverage of beneficiaries is very high in all the years except in 1994-95 and with regard to the coverage of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribe beneficiaries during the period 1983-84 and 1998-99, 44.18 per cent belongs to Scheduled Castes, 8.20 per cent belongs to Scheduled Tribes.

It is evident from the analysis that out of the 3941 groups covered under DWCRA in Cuddapah district, only 1.63 per cent of the
groups were selected for assistance and provided assets in the selected mandal. Even though the Pulivendla Mandal is backward, no special provisions were made to encourage the rural women belonging to Scheduled Castes, and Scheduled Tribes to improve their income and employment.

The mandal Pulivendla is a backward mandal with a population of 38,610, the percentage of literate women in the mandal accounted to 48.12 per cent only. The net area irrigated in two seasons is 40.243 acres. It is evident from the data that among the age group between 22 years and 60 years the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Backward Castes, and Other Castes beneficiaries are more in number. It is also significant to note that among the illiterates the Scheduled Tribe beneficiaries stood first followed by Scheduled Castes, Backward Castes. The data also reveals that none of the selected beneficiaries possess unirrigated land of 1 to 2 acres and only 40 per cent of the beneficiaries possess agriculture equipment. It is also evident that 70 per cent of the beneficiaries are under debts which clearly shows that the poor rural women suffer from heavy indebtedness.

Strategies to improve the living conditions of the rural poor in all their aspects and dimensions have been an integral part of the planning process in India. It is evident from the previous chapters that the Scheduled Caste women and Scheduled Tribe women are suffering from various evils like low literacy level, meagre land-holdings, rural
indebtedness. Even though the Government of India have been launching various schemes and providing subsidies due to poor socio-economic background, these rural women are not able to seize the benefits provided by the Government and could not generate sufficient income from the various programmes.

In order to raise their income level they were provided assistance under DWCRA. The total number of beneficiaries covered from 1992-93 to 1998-99 are 1134. The rate of increase in drawing the beneficiaries is uneven. Majority of the rural women were provided assistance for Rope Making, Coal Making, Stone Cutting and Leaf Plate Making, followed by Vegetable Vending, Business, Milk and Curd Vending, Basket Making, Flower Vending. Among the Scheduled Castes rural women, majority of them were provided assistance for Rope Making only. In case of Scheduled Tribe women, majority of the beneficiaries were provided assistance for Stone Cutting only. It is evident from the analysis that out of 40 Scheduled Caste beneficiaries, the higher number of the beneficiaries, i.e., 20 were in the category of Rs.7500 above income range, 11 beneficiaries were in the category of Rs.3001 to 3500 income range and 4 beneficiaries were in the income range of Rs.4600 to 7500, 3 beneficiaries were in the category of Rs.3000 and below. In respect of Scheduled Tribes 22 beneficiaries were in the category of Rs.7500, 11 beneficiaries were in the category of Rs.3001 to 3500 and 4 beneficiaries were in the category of Rs.3000
and below. In respect of Backward Castes, 10 beneficiaries were in the category of Rs.7500 above, 10 beneficiaries were in the category of Rs.4600 to Rs.7500, 10 beneficiaries were in the category of Rs.3001 to 3500, 4 beneficiaries were in the category of below 3000. In respect of Other Castes, 18 beneficiaries were in the category of more than Rs.7500, 12 beneficiaries were in the category of Rs.3001 to 3500, 5 beneficiaries were in the category of Rs.4600 to 7500 and only 2 beneficiaries were in the category of below Rs.3000.

The level of employment after the implementation of DWCRA programme reveals that out of the 160 beneficiaries 49.5 per cent of them had employment of 101 to 181 mandays and 27.5 per cent of them had employment of 0 to 100 mandays, 20 per cent of them, had employment of 181 to 240 mandays and 3.12 per cent of them had employment of above 241 mandays. Among the Scheduled Castes, 47.5 per cent of them had employment of 101 to 180 mandays, 30 per cent of them had employment of 0 to 100 mandays as well as 22.5 per cent of them had employment of 181 to 2401 mandays. None of them had above 241 mandays. In respect of Scheduled Tribes, 62.5 per cent of them had employment of 101 to 180 mandays, 22.5 per cent of them had employment of 0 to 181 mandays, and 15 per cent of them had employment of 181 to 240 mandays. None of them had above 241 mandays. In case of Backward Castes, 47.5 per cent of them had employment of 101 to 181 mandays, 35 per cent of them had
employment of 0 to 180 mandays, 17.5 per cent of them had employment of 181 to 240 mandays and none of the had above 241 mandays. In respect of Other Castes, 40 per cent of them had employment of 101 to 180 mandays, 22.5 per cent of them had employment of 0 to 180 mandays. 25 per cent of them had employment of 181 to 240 mandays and 12.5 per cent of them had above 241 mandays.

The basic reasons for meagre income and less employment generation through the implementation of DWCRA programme in the mandal, in case of Scheduled Castes as revealed by them clearly shows that 35.40 beneficiaries could not generate additional income and employment due to lack of storage facilities. In respect of Scheduled Tribes, activity of Stone Cutting was launched, the reason for Meager income and less employment as stated by them reveals that 45.45 per cent had low rate of sales, 41.66 per cent could not generate sufficient income and employment as they diverted the assistance to clear off old debts.

In respect of Backward Castes, the activity of Coal Making was launched the reasons for meagre income and less employment generation by them shows that 25.53 per cent have utilized the assistance to clear off the old debts. 33.43 per cent of beneficiaries could not improve their income because of low rate sales and 40 per cent have utilized the assistance for providing storage facilities. In
case of Other Castes, Leaf Plate Making activity was launched the reason for Meagre Income and less employment as revealed by them shows that 58.34 per cent of the beneficiaries could not generate more income and employment due to the high transport cost.

Suggestions

1. Since many women beneficiaries admitted to there being that they were forced to sell away their goods due to the lack of storage facilities. Hence the government should provide storage facilities to the rural women to store the goods,

2. Since many women beneficiaries admitted to their being that they under heavy debts, they were forced to sell away the assets to clear off the debts. Hence, at the time of sanctioning the assistance, the officials have to verify whether women beneficiaries have cleared off their debts.

3. It is evident from the analysis that more number of the other castes beneficiaries could not generate adequate income because of high transport cost. Hence the government should provide transport facilities at reasonable rates or transport subsidy.

4. Many women beneficiaries have expressed that the rate of sales are very low because of the distance between the residence of the villages and the business shops. The government should therefore, establish centralized markets for the sale of goods produced by these rural women in their own villages.
5. After sanctioning the assistance to the women groups, the officials have to monitor and guide the beneficiaries for effective implementation of the schemes.

6. Forward and backward linkages are to be considered while sanctioning the assistance.