

# **Chapter No. VI**

## **Summary of the Findings, Policy Implications and Conclusions**

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The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles. The Constitution not only grants equality to women, but also empowers the State to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favor of women. Within the framework of a democratic polity, our laws, development policies, Plans and programmes have aimed at women's advancement in different spheres. From the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-78) onwards has been a marked shift in the approach to women's issues from welfare to development. In recent years, the empowerment of women has been recognized as the central issue in determining the status of women. The National Commission for Women was set up by an Act of Parliament in 1990 to safeguard the rights and legal entitlements of women. The 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Amendments (1993) to the Constitution of India have provided for reservation of seats in the local bodies of Panchayats and Municipalities for women, laying a strong foundation for their participation in decision making at the local levels.

India has also ratified various international conventions and human rights instruments committing to secure equal rights of women. Key among them is the ratification of the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1993.

The Mexico Plan of Action (1975), the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies (1985), the Beijing Declaration as well as the Platform for Action (1995) and the Outcome Document adopted by the UNGA Session on Gender Equality and Development & Peace for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, titled "Further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action" have been unreservedly endorsed by India for appropriate follow up.

The women's movement and a wide-spread network of Non-Government Organizations which have strong grass-roots presence and deep

insight into women's concerns have contributed in inspiring initiatives for the empowerment of women.

However, there still exists a wide gap between the goals enunciated in the Constitution, legislation, policies, plans, programmes, and related mechanisms on the one hand and the situational reality of the status of women in India, on the other. This has been analyzed extensively in the Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India, "Towards Equality", 1974 and highlighted in the National Perspective Plan for Women, 1988-2000, the Shramshakti Report, 1988 and the Platform for Action, Five Years After- An assessment"

Gender disparity manifests itself in various forms, the most obvious being the trend of continuously declining female ratio in the population in the last few decades. Social stereotyping and violence at the domestic and societal levels are some of the other manifestations. Discrimination against girl children, adolescent girls and women persists in parts of the country.

The underlying causes of gender inequality are related to social and economic structure, which is based on informal and formal norms, and practices.

Consequently, the access of women particularly those belonging to weaker sections including Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes/ Other backward Classes and minorities, majority of whom are in the rural areas and in the informal, unorganized sector – to education, health and productive resources, among others, is inadequate. Therefore, they remain largely marginalized, poor and socially excluded.

In view of the critical role of women in the agriculture and allied sectors, as producers, concentrated efforts will be made to ensure that benefits of training, extension and various programmes will reach them in proportion to

their numbers. The programmes for training women in soil conservation, social forestry, dairy development and other occupations allied to agriculture like horticulture, livestock including small animal husbandry, poultry, fisheries etc. will be expanded to benefit women workers in the agriculture sector.

With this background the present study was undertaken to assess the socio-economic conditions of women in Anantapur district. The study is mainly confined to women of Kambadur Mandal of Anantapur District in Andhra Pradesh. The study deals with the facets of rural women and their socio-economic status in the villages, namely, Jikireddy Palli, C.V.Thanda, Chennepalli and Karthanaparthi Mandals of Kambadur Mandal in Anantapur district. The study examines whether the women have made any real progress in this backward Mandal even after 60 years of independence.

The study is particularly confined to four villages of Kambadur Mandal of Anantapur district, where the ratio of women is less than district, State and National levels. The women in this mandal speaks both Telugu and Kannada languages.. The researcher collected data at random. Fifty questionnaires were administered in each sample village.

The researcher has adopted the questionnaire method and keenly observed while interviewing the respondents and obtained the required data and information. In addition, the researcher has also collected the secondary data from the Government records at the State and District levels. During the survey the researcher has personally engaged in several of the activities and functions to record the genuine information.

The study has been presented in six chapters with the following objectives.

1. To explain the status of women in general and Rural Women in particular under globalization;
2. To study the trends in the growth rural women during the plan period;
3. To review the programmes/policy for the development of rural women in the country;
4. To examine the aspects of primary education, primary health and infrastructural facilities for the growth and development rural women in the study area;
5. To analyze the socio-economic condition of rural women in the study area; and
6. To suggest measures for the development of rural women in the study area.

### **Summary of the Findings**

1. The study reveals that large number of sample women respondent hails from the productive age group of 26-35 years and 36-50 years.
2. Among the sample women 30 percent belongs to Backward Classes and followed by Scheduled Tribe with 29 percent, others with 21 percent and Scheduled Castes with 20 percent respectively.
3. The literacy rate of sample rural women is lower than district, state and national level, which indicates the educational backwardness of the sample villages.
4. More than six-tenth of the women in the sample area are living in nuclear families.
5. The normal family size of large number of women is 4 to 6 members in the sample villages.
6. More than eight-tenth of the sample women families are headed by the male members.

7. Agriculture and allied activities is the main occupation of majority of women respondent families.
8. One of the main reasons for poor economic status of rural women is lack of employment throughout the year. Large number of women getting employment less than 180 days in a year.
9. More than eight-tenths of women families possessing landholdings of 1 to acres. Only 8 percent among them have some amount of irrigated land.
10. As the sample women have not opened account in any bank, indicates that they have no surplus amount to deposit amount in banks.
11. The frequent failure of crops in the district due to prevailing drought conditions it became inevitable for 70 percent of rural families to sink in debt trap and to migrate to nearby urban centers to eke out livelihood.
12. Nearly 47.50 percent in sample village doesn't possess sanitary latrines.
13. The personal hygienic care also appears to be very poor, as 60 percent women are not taking bath regularly.
14. Fire wood is the major source of cooking for large number of families in sample villages. In good number of cases, it is the women who are going around the villages for collection of firewood.
15. The prevailing economic backwardness of the people in sample villages forcing the people to consult unqualified medical practitioner in case of sickness.
16. Large number of women cloths for daily use is confined to two pairs. Moreover, the clothes to wear during occasions is confined to one pair in large number of women.
17. The possession of gold ornaments by the sample rural women ranges 1 to 10 grams both in case of silver and gold.

## **Policy Implications**

1. The strategy is to be adopted to facilitate women to have access for poor women to employment, skill up gradation, training, credit and other support services so that the rural women as a group can take up income generating activities for supplementing their incomes.
2. Women's equality in power sharing and active participation in decision making, including decision making in political process at all levels will be ensured for the achievement of the goals of empowerment.
3. All measures will be taken to guarantee women equal access to and full participation in decision making bodies at every level, including the legislative, executive, judicial, corporate, statutory bodies, as also the advisory Commissions, Committees, Boards, Trusts etc.
4. Affirmative action such as reservations/quotas, including in higher legislative bodies, will be considered whenever necessary on a time bound basis. Women-friendly personnel policies will also be drawn up to encourage women to participate effectively in the developmental process.
5. Since women comprise a majority of the population below the poverty line and are very often in situations of extreme poverty, given the harsh realities of intra-household and social discrimination, macroeconomic policies and poverty eradication programmes will specifically address the needs and problems of such women. There will be improved implementation of programmes which are already women oriented with special targets for women. Steps will be taken for mobilization of poor women and convergence of services, by offering them a range of economic and social options, along with necessary support measures to enhance their capabilities.

6. Women's perspectives will be included in designing and implementing macro-economic and social policies by institutionalizing their participation in such processes. Their contribution to socio-economic development as producers and workers will be recognized in the formal and informal sectors (including home based workers) and appropriate policies relating to employment and to her working conditions will be drawn up. Such measures could include; Reinterpretation and redefinition of conventional concepts of work wherever necessary e.g. in the Census records, to reflect women's contribution as producers and workers.
7. Creating an environment through positive economic and social policies for full development of women to enable them to realize their full potential.
8. The *de-jure* and *de-facto* enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedom by women on equal basis with men in all spheres – political, economic, social, cultural and civil.
9. Equal access to participation and decision making of women in social, political and economic life of the nation.
10. Equal access to women to health care, quality education at all levels, career and vocational guidance, employment, equal remuneration, occupational health and safety, social security and public office etc.
11. Strengthening legal systems aimed at elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.
12. Changing societal attitudes and community practices by active participation and involvement of both men and women.
13. Mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development process.
14. Elimination of discrimination and all forms of violence against women and the girl child; and

15. Building and strengthening partnerships with civil society, particularly women's organizations.
16. The important role played by women in electronics, information technology and food processing and agro industry and textiles has been crucial to the development of these sectors. They would be given comprehensive support in terms of labour legislation, social security and other support services to participate in various industrial sectors.
17. The provision of support services for women, like child care facilities, including crèches at work places and educational institutions, homes for the aged and the disabled will be expanded and improved to create an enabling environment and to ensure their full cooperation in social, political and economic life. Women-friendly personnel policies will also be drawn up to encourage women to participate effectively in the developmental process.
18. A holistic approach to women's health which includes both nutrition and health services will be adopted and special attention will be given to the needs of women and the girl at all stages of the life cycle. The reduction of infant mortality and maternal mortality, which are sensitive indicators of human development, is a priority concern.
19. Women's traditional knowledge about health care and nutrition will be recognized through proper documentation and its use will be encouraged. The use of Indian and alternative systems of medicine will be enhanced within the framework of overall health infrastructure available for women.
20. Women's perspectives will be included in housing policies, planning of housing colonies and provision of shelter both in rural and urban areas. Special attention will be given for providing adequate and safe housing and accommodation for women including single women, heads of households, working women, students, apprentices and trainees.

Women will be involved and their perspectives reflected in the policies and programmes for environment, conservation and restoration. Considering the impact of environmental factors on their livelihoods, women's participation will be ensured in the conservation of the environment and control of environmental degradation. The vast majority of rural women still depends on the locally available non-commercial sources of energy such as animal dung, crop waste and fuel wood. In order to ensure the efficient use of these energy resources in environmental friendly manner women will be involved in spreading the use of solar energy, biogas, smokeless chulahs and other rural application so as to have a visible impact of these measures in influencing eco system and in changing the life styles of rural women.

21. In recognition of the diversity of women's situations and in acknowledgement of the needs of specially disadvantaged groups, measures and programmes will be undertaken to provide them with special assistance. These groups include women in extreme poverty, destitute women, women in conflict situations, women affected by natural calamities, women in less developed regions, the disabled widows, elderly women, single women in difficult circumstances, women headed households, those displaced from employment, migrants, women who are victims of marital violence, deserted women and prostitutes etc.

## **Conclusion**

The district of Anantapur, which has become a by-word for frequent droughts and famines, stands for the second lowest rainfall receiving district in the country, next only to Jaisalmar in Rajasthan. The plight of the people in the district is highly pitiable as droughts and famines occurring at a frequency of three out of every five years, causing a serious scarcity for food and fodder. Farmers in the rural areas lead a highly in-secured lives failing to provide basic needs on a sustainable basis to their families. This being so, Kambadur mandal is the most backward and highly draught prone and fast converting itself into a desert, where neither a river nor a canal passes through, needs to be immediately developed by a package of 'New Deal' by the government(s) by flooding the funds. A majority of the households have been gainfully employed for six months in a year, including the wage employment days provided under the MGNREGS. At least, to provide succor the MGNREGS has to double the wage-employment days from the present 100 to 200 days in the mandal. This apart, NGOs or Philanthropic organizations like Sri Satya Sai Trust, Puttaparthi may adopt the mandal to bring about all-round development, including Rural Women empowerment and their development.