POVERTY ERADICATION THROUGH P4 POLICY – A STRATEGIC APPROACH IN ANDHRA PRADESH

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Abstract:

Poverty eradication remains a critical global challenge, reflected in the Sustainable Development Goal 1 (SDG-1) which aims to end poverty in all its forms everywhere. Achieving zero poverty is essential for inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development, particularly in regions with significant vulnerable populations. The Government of Andhra Pradesh has launched the innovative Public-Private-People Partnership (P4) programme under the Swarna Andhra@2047 vision, aiming to empower economically disadvantaged families through targeted mentorship, financial support, and community engagement. This study highlights the need to strengthen the P4 initiative by enhancing data-driven targeting, improving community participation, expanding livelihood support, and fostering financial inclusion. Emphasizing social equity, sustainable infrastructure, and robust monitoring systems are also crucial for the programme's success. Strengthening private sector collaboration and international partnerships will further accelerate progress towards zero poverty in the state

Keywords: Poverty eradication, Sustainable Development Goal 1, zero poverty, Public-Private-People Partnership.

1. Introduction

Eradicating poverty is a global priority, highlighted by the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which aim to eliminate it by 2030. Despite ongoing efforts, poverty remains a multifaceted issue that affects millions worldwide, posing obstacles to economic development, social cohesion, and overall well-being. While notable strides have been made in reducing extreme poverty, significant barriers persist, especially in areas burdened by conflict, inequality, and limited access to essential resources and opportunities. In India, tackling poverty is a major development concern, as a large segment of the population still lives below the poverty line. Although the country has experienced rapid economic growth, deep-rooted inequalities in income distribution, education, healthcare, and job availability continue to fuel poverty and social disparities.

The Indian government has introduced several measures to combat poverty, such as rural employment schemes, social security initiatives, and efforts to promote financial inclusion. Nevertheless, further action is needed to achieve sustainable and inclusive development that reaches all segments of the population. In Andhra Pradesh, poverty continues to be a pressing issue, with many families susceptible to economic disruptions and lacking access to essential services. The state has implemented a range of poverty alleviation programs, including welfare initiatives, skill development efforts, and social protection policies. This study examines the approach of the P4 policy framework—which emphasizes people, planet, prosperity, and peace—as a guiding approach for enhancing poverty reduction strategies in Andhra Pradesh.

2. Poverty alleviation in India

While countries like South Korea in the 1960s and more recently China have primarily relied on economic growth to reduce poverty, India has adopted a dual approach. Alongside efforts to boost the incomes of the poor through economic expansion, India has also allocated a significant share of its increased revenues from growth to directly support the poor. This second approach includes a variety of targeted programs aimed at tackling specific dimensions of poverty, such as food security, nutrition, employment, housing, infrastructure, electricity, clean water, sanitation, literacy, and healthcare (Anuradha Tyagi, 2017).

Given the scale and complexity of poverty, India's Tenth Five Year Plan adopted a multi-faceted strategy. It emphasized high economic growth alongside direct interventions like employment schemes, food and social security, and access to basic services such as education, health, and housing. It also recognized the importance of governance, promoting Panchayati Raj Institutions as key agents in service delivery. Poverty in India is officially measured based on minimum calorie intake—2,400 calories per day in rural areas and 2,100 in urban areas—by the Planning Commission. Poverty is seen not just as income deprivation but also as a lack of basic human needs and opportunities. Historically, Indian planners believed that fostering economic growth would automatically reduce poverty.

Post-independence, India launched several anti-poverty programs such as the IRDP, NREP, and RLEGP, later restructured into initiatives like SGSY and the National Rural Livelihoods Mission. Since 2000, India has seen substantial progress, with rural poverty reducing faster than urban areas—thanks in part to schemes like MGNREGS. The number of poor fell from 635 million to 364 million in a decade, with an annual poverty reduction rate of 1.3% from 1993–94 to 2011–12. India's development faces dual challenges: poverty and rapid population growth, both of which strain environmental resources. Still, economic growth has helped lower poverty levels, and India met the first Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target on poverty. With the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, India committed to eradicating poverty, protecting the environment, and ensuring inclusive prosperity by 2030. NITI Aayog oversees SDG implementation, and India has made notable progress—lifting 271 million people out of poverty between 2006 and 2016, according to the Global Multidimensional Poverty Index. The proportion of people in multidimensional poverty dropped from 55.1% in 2005–06 to 27.9% in 2015–16 (Avinash Kumar, 2019).

Poverty remains a major issue in developing countries, including India. While poverty levels were very high in the 1950s and 1960s, they declined to 21.9% nationally by 2011–12, though rates still vary significantly across states—from 9% to over 30%. There are two main strategies to reduce poverty: promoting economic growth and providing direct welfare support. Earlier studies show that both capital and revenue expenditures positively impact per capita income, which in turn significantly reduces poverty. Capital expenditure, however, has a stronger effect on growth than revenue spending. Thus, both types of spending contribute to poverty reduction, primarily through their influence on growth. Public expenditure can also be categorized into infrastructure and social development spending, both of which play key roles in this process (Ritwik Sasmal, Pinaki Das & Joydeb Sasmal, 2024).

The Indian government has implemented various policies and programs focused on poverty reduction, employment generation, and improving rural infrastructure and basic services. The Ministry of Rural Development plays a central role in shaping policies for rural advancement. Key rural economic activities include agriculture, handicrafts, fisheries, poultry, and dairy. Initiatives like Bharat Nirman, developed in collaboration with state governments and

Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), aim to strengthen rural infrastructure. Another major step was the enactment of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (2005), which provides wage employment and supports rural livelihoods.

The Ministry also promotes voluntary initiatives and the use of emerging technologies to boost rural development, environmental conservation, and sustainable resource management. Several other central ministries—such as Agriculture, Health, Women and Child Development, and Tribal Affairs—also contribute to rural development efforts. To enhance grassroots democracy, the government continues to empower Panchayati Raj Institutions with greater authority, funding, and responsibilities. Institutions like Grama Sabhas, NGOs, Self-Help Groups (SHGs), and PRIs are being actively involved to foster inclusive and participatory governance in rural areas (Chintamani Panda et al., 2018).

According to the Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) 2019 by UNDP, India lifted 271 million people out of poverty between 2006 and 2016. The MPI value dropped from 0.283 in 2005–06 to 0.123 in 2015–16. During this period, the proportion of people living in multidimensional poverty fell from 55.1% (about 640 million) to 27.9% (around 369 million). India recorded significant progress across all 10 MPI indicators, reflecting broad improvements in living standards (Verma Apporva and Saurabh Mani, 2020).

The Government of India has launched several poverty alleviation programs to meet Sustainable Development Goal 1 (No Poverty). Key initiatives include MGNREGA, which guarantees 100 days of wage employment to rural families, and the Deendayal Antayodaya Yojana, comprising the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) and National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM) to reduce rural and urban poverty. Additionally, affordable housing schemes like Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana support rural and urban populations. Social security is strengthened through programs such as the National Social Assistance Programme and Atal Pension Yojana. Insurance coverage is provided via Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana and Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana. Other notable efforts include Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana for financial inclusion, Antyodaya Anna Yojana for subsidized food, and the National Food Security Mission to boost food production. Together, these initiatives reflect the government's comprehensive approach to alleviating poverty and uplifting marginalized communities (Verma Apporva and Saurabh Mani, 2020).

3. Poverty alleviation programmes in Andhra Pradesh

After trying multiple poverty reduction programs, the Andhra Pradesh government focused on two main approaches: self-help groups (SHGs), such as DWCRA and other thrift and credit societies, and watershed development targeting backward areas. These programs aim to assist the poor, but implementation issues persist. Beneficiary selection, intended to be from Below Poverty Line (BPL) families, is often manipulated by local officials, undermining fairness. To improve this, beneficiary lists should be ranked by income or landholding, with clear instructions to village leaders for transparent selection. Many beneficiaries remain unaware of scheme details and are pressured to accept decisions made by middlemen or local leaders. Therefore, guidelines should be publicly displayed in Gram Panchayat offices and village meetings, and villagers must be informed that no payments to intermediaries are required for selection. Earlier programs like IRDP created assets and provided income but failed to lift the poorest above the poverty line. The benefits often excluded the very poor, although assets in animal husbandry and irrigation helped strengthen physical and natural capital. Programs such

as JRY and IAY focused on asset creation, with some potential to reduce labor supply and raise wages for others.

The group-based DWCRA model mobilized the poor, empowering weaker sections through self-employment opportunities and social capital formation, which is crucial for helping the poorest participate in development. Watershed development also built social capital, benefiting both participants and non-participants, making the "watershed plus" approach promising for poverty alleviation. However, most schemes address income poverty without tackling the vulnerability of the poor to risks like droughts, floods, accidents, or loss of earning members. To address these risks, program convergence through social mobilization is necessary, such as federating SHGs at village and higher levels. Self-employment programs tend to keep participants at subsistence income levels, often relying on low-income activities like making papads or pickles. To raise incomes, improvements in technology, skills, infrastructure, and market access are needed. Public-private partnerships can help, as seen in DWCRA groups linking with companies like Philips and Hindustan Lever to market products. Expanding such partnerships is crucial.

The Andhra Pradesh government has adopted a multidimensional strategy with social mobilization at its core. Key interventions include DWCRA, DPIP, APRLP (watershed-based), APRPRP, Adarana (BC Welfare), Girl Child Program, and Janmabhoomi. The state is home to over 40% of India's DWCRA groups, highlighting its commitment to women's empowerment as a key to reducing rural poverty. Women's self-help groups have grown into a mass movement, with over 2 million women saving regularly. Together with government funds, these groups have mobilized around Rs. 1200 crore, primarily used to provide consumption and production loans for non-farm activities, improving rural livelihoods and capital formation.

Watershed development, initiated on a large scale since 1995-96, covers over 5,400 watersheds, benefiting both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries through social and ecological improvements. Female-oriented watershed agencies have been especially effective for women's empowerment. The World Bank-supported DPIP program began in 2000 in six backward districts and later expanded to 16 districts as AP RPRP, focusing on rural poverty reduction.Despite these efforts, Andhra Pradesh struggles with high child labor rates, but recent government initiatives aim to eliminate child labor (S. Mahendra Dev and P. Padmanabha Rao, 2002).

Andhra Pradesh has implemented various initiatives to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 1 (No Poverty), aiming to improve livelihoods and well-being. These include social safety net programs like the Rice Card and Pension Kanuka, which support vulnerable groups, and strong women's Self-Help Groups that provide credit access and livelihood training. The state actively promotes rural employment through schemes such as MGNREGS and encourages livelihood diversification via skill development. Agricultural support, affordable housing, improved healthcare access, and financial inclusion efforts also play key roles. Additionally, Andhra Pradesh leverages digital technologies to enhance transparency and efficiency in welfare delivery. While these measures demonstrate a strong commitment to poverty reduction, challenges remain in reaching the most marginalized populations and sustaining impact, requiring ongoing evaluation and adaptive policymaking to ensure long-term success (Rajesh Kumar and Anil Kumar, 2019).

Since the early 2000s, poverty reduction in India accelerated, but it is important to assess whether this decline has been inclusive across socio-religious and economic groups, especially

in the undivided Andhra Pradesh and its two successor states, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. Between the two, Telangana has experienced a faster annual decline in poverty rates (HCR) in both rural (10.59%) and urban areas (11.80%) compared to Andhra Pradesh's rural (8.61%) and urban (9.40%) declines. Telangana also has lower poverty levels overall. In terms of social groups, Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) show higher poverty rates than the rural and urban averages in both regions, with Telangana having higher poverty among SCs and STs compared to Andhra Pradesh. Conversely, Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and general groups fare better in Telangana, while in Andhra Pradesh, OBCs face higher poverty than other groups. Notably, poverty among STs has declined faster than among SCs, possibly due to targeted tribal development programs in the 2000s.

Urban poverty shows similar trends, with SCs and STs suffering more than average, but poverty is declining across all groups. However, STs remain the most disadvantaged in urban areas. The share of poor people from OBCs is rising in Andhra Pradesh but falling in Telangana, partly due to population changes and differing poverty trends. This indicates that OBCs remain a vulnerable group in Andhra Pradesh, while SCs face similar challenges in Telangana.

Although poverty rates are higher among STs and SCs, the proportion of urban poor is larger among OBCs because of their higher population share. Despite progress in reducing poverty overall, historically disadvantaged groups continue to experience significant deprivation. Analysis of the factors driving poverty changes shows that increases in per capita consumption expenditure (MPCE) contributed to poverty reduction, but rising inequality sometimes offset these gains. Telangana experienced a decline in inequality alongside MPCE growth, leading to faster poverty reduction, whereas Andhra Pradesh saw slower progress due to rising inequality. Among social groups, inequality is highest among forward castes, followed by STs and OBCs, with SCs experiencing the least inequality.

In urban areas, inequality declined more in Telangana than in Andhra Pradesh, even though Andhra Pradesh had faster MPCE growth. The greater reduction in inequality in Telangana helped achieve faster poverty reduction. However, inequality increased among SCs in Andhra Pradesh and among STs in Telangana. Overall, STs and SCs face higher inequality in Andhra Pradesh than in Telangana, likely related to the relatively higher consumption levels in Telangana (Priyabrata Sahoo et al., 2021).

4. P4 Policy in Andhra Pradesh

The 'P4' Policy, which stands for 'Public, Private, People Partnership,' is a distinctive model designed to foster collaboration among the government, private sector, and individuals with the goal of eradicating poverty and uplifting marginalized families. This initiative strives to build a sustainable and inclusive framework for socio-economic development, ensuring that progress reaches those most in need. The core focus of the 'Zero Poverty – P4 Policy' is to empower families by providing essential amenities and opportunities. Key benefits include access to housing (land and home construction), sanitation facilities, 100% tap water connections, LPG gas connections, reliable electricity with incentives for rooftop solar power, and high-speed internet access for every household. Additionally, the policy promotes entrepreneurship to help families achieve financial independence.

Beneficiaries of this initiative are termed 'Bangaru Kutumbam' or 'Golden Families.' These underprivileged households will receive financial support, guidance, and resources needed to lift themselves out of poverty. On the other hand, 'Margadarsis' — well-off families, high-net-worth individuals, and members of the Telugu diaspora — are encouraged to adopt and support

these Bangaru Kutumbams. Margadarsis can contribute through funding education and healthcare, offering career mentorship, connecting families to professional networks, providing tuition or business capital, and supporting community infrastructure projects.

The Chief Minister, N. Chandrababu Naidu called on the wealthiest 10% of the population to help uplift the poorest 20% through this partnership model. In terms of implementation, the government will identify Bangaru Kutumbams using data analytics and surveys, ensuring these families continue to benefit from existing welfare schemes. However, the government's role will mainly focus on policy formulation and oversight, without direct involvement in financial transactions. Instead, Margadarsis will use the P4 platform to select families they wish to support, engage with them, and provide various types of assistance. Government officials will help facilitate these connections to ensure mutual understanding and trust. Financial transparency is a priority; families or villages will report their needs on the P4 platform, with public entities verifying requests before funds are allocated. All transactions will be conducted through this digital platform to maintain accountability and monitor impact effectively.

Priority for adoption will be given to 20 lakh of the most deprived families, identified through government data analysis, with support coming from the wealthiest 10% of families. Additional families will be included in later phases of the program. To manage and drive this initiative, a 'P4 Society' is being established at the state level, with chapters at district, legislative assembly, and village levels. The society will bring together key stakeholders such as public representatives, government officials, industry leaders, philanthropists, corporate social responsibility (CSR) heads, and civil society organizations dedicated to social impact.

Aligned with the vision of "Viksit Bharat@2047," under the leadership of Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Chandrababu Naidu, the Government of Andhra Pradesh is dedicated to creating a prosperous and inclusive "Swarna Andhra." The goal is to ensure that by 2047, every family—regardless of background—has the opportunity to rise, thrive, and contribute to a sustainable and shared future. This vision aims to build a wealthy, healthy, and happy Andhra Pradesh where no one is left behind.

To realize this vision, the government has introduced "Padi Sutralu," ten guiding principles designed to promote holistic and sustainable development throughout the state. At the heart of Swarna Andhra is the belief that true prosperity comes when every family can succeed. Through the Zero Poverty-P4 initiative—a Public, Private, People partnership—prosperous citizens, known as Margadarsi, are encouraged to mentor and support economically vulnerable families, called Bangaru Kutumbam. This initiative focuses on creating personalized support pathways to help all families grow and contribute to shared progress.

The P4 initiative connects well-off families (Margadarsi) with economically disadvantaged families (Bangaru Kutumbam), fostering mentorship and financial aid to promote lasting development. Moving beyond charity, this model aims to build a self-sustaining community where everyone supports one another for collective advancement. There are two main ways to participate in the P4 program: adopting a family for long-term mentorship and financial support, which includes guidance in education, employment, and financial stability; or making a one-time targeted financial contribution to meet specific needs at the individual, family, or village level, such as funding a child's education or supporting small businesses.

Contributors can select families based on preferences using demographic and geographic filters, such as district, family size, presence of senior citizens, children, or farming households. After choosing and pledging support, contributors are connected directly with the families they

support, ensuring meaningful and sustained impact. To get involved, interested individuals can sign up on the portal to explore families in need. All families listed belong to the bottom 20% economically in the state and require assistance. While adoption of any family is encouraged, the filtering options allow contributors to tailor their support to specific needs or regions, making the support targeted and effective.

The Government of Andhra Pradesh, through G.O. Rt. No. 107 from the Planning Department dated June 25, 2025, has revamped and restructured the Smart Andhra Pradesh Foundation (SAPF) into the Swarna Andhra P4 Foundation. This change is designed to align the foundation with the vision of Swarna Andhra@2047. The newly structured foundation will leverage Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds, contributions from international donors, and support from International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) to drive the Zero-Poverty (P4) initiative and other impactful, transformative development programs across the state. The restructuring expands the foundation's mandate to focus on sustainable development, social inclusion, and economic empowerment, in line with the state's goal to reach a Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) of $2.4 trillion and a per capita income of $42,000 by 2047.

The revamped Swarna Andhra P4 Foundation will support the government by adopting a structured approach to mobilizing CSR resources through the Public-Private-People Partnership (P4) model. This effort is closely aligned with the broader objectives of the Viksit Bharat@2047 and Swarna Andhra@2047 initiatives, which emphasize inclusive and sustainable growth. The foundation's primary aim is to promote sustainable development, social inclusion, and economic empowerment, with a particular focus on reducing inequality and helping families realize their aspirations to live poverty-free lives. To achieve this, the foundation has outlined several key objectives. These objectives include mobilizing contributions from CSR, philanthropic organizations, international donors, high-net-worth individuals (HNIs), and individuals to support impactful development initiatives under the P4 model. The foundation also aims to promote digital literacy, STEM education, and vocational training to equip the youth with future-ready skills. Strengthening primary healthcare systems and improving access to sanitation services are additional priorities. The foundation emphasizes poverty alleviation by supporting livelihood generation, micro-enterprises, and increasing access to financial services. Gender equity and social inclusion are also central goals, with efforts aimed at empowering women's collectives and enhancing the Self-Help Group (SHG) ecosystem. Finally, the foundation seeks to develop grassroots sports infrastructure and implement youth engagement programs to harness the demographic dividend, ensuring that the state's young population can contribute effectively to Andhra Pradesh's growth and development.

5. Conclusion

It is suggested that the Swarna Andhra P4 programme strengthen its efforts by enhancing data-driven targeting to accurately identify the most vulnerable families and ensure efficient resource allocation. Greater community engagement, including active involvement of local leaders and Self-Help Groups, can increase trust and programme relevance. Capacity building for Margadarsis is essential so they can provide effective mentorship and financial guidance. Additionally, integrating diversified livelihood support—such as skill development, microenterprise assistance, and market linkages—will help build sustainable economic foundations. Expanding financial inclusion through partnerships with banks and microfinance institutions can provide marginalized families with easier access to credit, insurance, and

savings. Leveraging technology for transparent fund management and progress tracking will increase accountability and reduce leakages.

It is also suggested that the programme emphasize social inclusion by targeting interventions for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and women, ensuring equitable opportunities for these groups. Investing in sustainable infrastructure like sanitation, healthcare, clean water, and renewable energy will improve overall living standards. Encouraging private sector participation by recognizing CSR contributions can secure a steady funding base. Focus on education, digital literacy, and vocational training is crucial to empower youth and break the poverty cycle long-term. Furthermore, establishing robust monitoring and impact evaluation systems will help adapt the programme based on feedback and results. Lastly, fostering lasting partnerships with international donors, NGOs, and diaspora networks will support continuous innovation and resource mobilization, driving the initiative toward the goal of zero poverty in Andhra Pradesh.

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