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# Developmental and Welfare Schemes in Rural Telangana: An Analytical Study

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## Abstract

This paper examines the expenditure and implementation progress of selected developmental and welfare programmes in rural Telangana. It focuses on the extent to which the figures reported in official government records provide a consistent and meaningful account of programme performance. The study follows a descriptive, document-based approach and organises the reported indicators under six broad areas: resource base, livelihoods and water, social protection, human development, habitat and sanitation, and governance. Percentage changes, achievement ratios, beneficiary shares and indicative unit costs are calculated from the reported aggregates. The analysis suggests that the state expanded its administrative network and made substantial investments in income support, irrigation, drinking water, housing and social protection. Aasara pension coverage is concentrated among widows and older persons, while reported progress under Mission Kakatiya and Telangana Ku Haritha Haaram remains below the stated targets. The arithmetic review also identifies an unreconciled difference between the reported Aasara expenditure and the amount implied by the stated beneficiary numbers and pension rates. More broadly, the available government records provide greater detail on expenditure and physical outputs than on outcomes such as actual irrigated area, survival of planted trees, functioning household water connections and timely receipt of benefits. The paper therefore interprets the figures as reported administrative claims rather than independently verified outcomes. It concludes by setting out a practical framework for checking programme delivery at the village level and by identifying areas requiring more systematic evidence.

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**Keywords:** Rural Development; Telangana; welfare programmes; social protection; Aasara pensions; irrigation; self-help groups; document analysis

## 1. Introduction

Rural development is meaningful when improvements in the wider economy are reflected in the living conditions and opportunities of rural households. Since its formation on 2 June 2014, Telangana has pursued a broad set of programmes intended to support agriculture, strengthen rural infrastructure, improve access to essential services and provide income security to vulnerable groups. These initiatives include farm-sector interventions such as Rythu Bandhu, Rythu Bheema, Mission Kakatiya and the Kaleshwaram project; household-oriented programmes such as Aasara pensions, Kalyana Lakshmi, two-bedroom housing and Mission Bhagiratha; and village-level initiatives such as Palle Pragati and Telangana Ku Haritha Haaram. Central programmes, including MGNREGA and the National Food Security Act, also form part of the rural development landscape.

The scale and diversity of this programme portfolio make careful assessment important. Official government records commonly report budget allocations, beneficiary numbers, infrastructure created and targets achieved. These indicators are useful for understanding the reach of public programmes, but they do not always establish whether the intended benefits have reached households or produced the expected changes. For example, the number of tanks restored does not by itself show how much additional land is being irrigated; the number of seedlings planted does not indicate how many have survived; and the availability of bulk drinking-water supply does not confirm that every household has a functioning tap. Differences in reference periods, definitions and reporting units can also make comparisons difficult. Against this background, the present paper examines secondary data on developmental and welfare programmes in rural Telangana, drawing on official government records and programme-level information. The analysis is guided by three central questions: what do the available records indicate about the resource base and implementation of rural programmes; to what extent are the reported figures internally consistent when examined through basic calculations; and which aspects of programme delivery require verification at the village level? The paper does not attempt to estimate the causal impact of individual schemes. Instead, it assesses the

information contained in the official government records and identifies the evidence needed for a more complete evaluation.

The paper makes a practical contribution in four respects. First, it organises the reported information within a common analytical framework. Second, it derives comparable indicators, including percentage change, achievement against target, beneficiary composition and indicative unit costs. Third, it identifies numerical discrepancies and important gaps in outcome reporting. Finally, it translates the state-level indicators into a village-visit verification framework. The analysis is based exclusively on secondary information; no household survey or field investigation was undertaken for this paper, and the calculations presented are derived from the secondary data reported in the official government records consulted for the study.

The paper is organised as follows. Section 2 reviews relevant literature and explains the research gap. Section 3 presents the objectives and analytical propositions, while Sections 4 and 5 describe the conceptual framework and methodology. Section 6 analyses the reported indicators. Section 7 outlines subsequent changes in programme design as reported in the cited public sources. Section 8 presents a village-level verification framework, and Sections 9 and 10 discuss the findings, suggestions, limitations and conclusion.

## 2. Review of Literature and Research Gap

The literature on development and social protection provides a useful basis for examining rural welfare programmes. Sen (1999) views development as the expansion of substantive freedoms and capabilities. From this perspective, income transfers, access to health services and educational opportunities are important not merely as forms of expenditure, but because they can widen the choices available to individuals and households. Drèze and Khera (2017), in their discussion of social-security initiatives in India, emphasise that the effectiveness of welfare programmes depends substantially on the quality of implementation and the regular delivery of entitlements.

Studies of employment guarantees and community-based institutions further demonstrate why coverage figures should be interpreted carefully. Imbert and Papp (2015) examine the labour-market effects of India's employment guarantee and report changes in rural wages and employment patterns. Khera (2011) documents

implementation concerns, including delays in wage payments and restrictions in access to work. These findings suggest that the number of registered job cards is not an adequate measure of employment performance; actual days of work and timely wage payments are also relevant. Deininger and Liu (2013), examining a self-help group model in India, report improvements in household welfare and asset-related outcomes, indicating the importance of the quality and economic value of group participation in addition to membership numbers. In irrigation assessment, a distinction must similarly be maintained between the potential created by an infrastructure project and the area that is actually irrigated.

## 3. Objectives of the Study

- To examine the land-use pattern, administrative structure and macroeconomic context relevant to rural development in Telangana.
- To analyse the expenditure and implementation progress of selected agricultural, social-protection, human-development, housing, drinking-water and sanitation programmes.

## 4. Conceptual Framework

For analytical clarity, the programmes and indicators reported in the official government records are grouped into six interrelated pillars. The framework follows an input–output–outcome sequence. Inputs refer to financial and other resources committed; outputs refer to the immediate services or assets delivered; and outcomes refer to the changes experienced by households or communities. Governance and administrative arrangements are treated as enabling conditions that influence programme delivery. The classification is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1:Analytical classification of the reported rural development programmes**

| Pillar | Schemes and items reported | Indicator type |
|---|---|---|
| Resource base | Land use; GSDP and per capita income | Context |
| Livelihoods and water | Rythu Bandhu, Rythu Bheema, farm power, Mission Kakatiya, Kaleshwaram, Dharani land records | Input and output |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Social protection | Aasara pensions, Kalyana Lakshmi, PDS, SHGs, MGNREGA, SC/ST/BC/minority outlays | Input and coverage |
| Human development | KCR Kit, Arogya Lakshmi, free education, residential schools | Output and outcome |
| Habitat and sanitation | Two-bedroom housing, Mission Bhagiratha, sanitation, Palle Pragati | Output and outcome |
| Governance | New districts, mandals, Gram Panchayats; Gram Sabhas | Enabling condition |

5. Research Methodology

The study adopts a descriptive and document-based research design. The unit of analysis is the individual indicator reported in the secondary data on rural developmental and welfare programmes.

**6. Results and Discussion**

6.1 Resource Base, Governance and Economic Context

The official government records report a geographical area of 112.07 lakh hectares. of this, net area sown accounts for 46.60 lakh hectares (41.58 per cent), while forest land accounts for 26.98 lakh hectares (24.07 per cent). These two components, together with the other land-use categories in the official government records, reconcile with the stated total. Current and other fallow land together account for 18.18 lakh hectares, or 16.22 per cent of the total geographical area. This is a substantial share in relation to the net sown area and indicates that the benefits of irrigation investment will depend partly on whether cultivable fallow land can be brought into productive use. The reported forest share is also below the 33 per cent target associated with Telangana Ku Haritha Haaram. The comparison points to the scale of the stated ambition, although the available records do not provide a time series of forest cover or survival-adjusted plantation data.

The administrative structure expanded considerably after the formation of the state. The number of districts increased from 10 to 33, revenue divisions from 43 to 71, mandals from 464 to 589, Gram Panchayats from 8,368 to 12,751, municipalities from 68 to 142 and municipal corporations from 6 to 13. The largest proportional increase was in the number of districts. The reported increase in local administrative units has implications for programme coordination, monitoring and the capacity of

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field-level institutions. On the figures presented, the average number of Gram Panchayats per mandal rose from approximately 18.0 to 21.6. The official data also refer to 438 erstwhile mandals in its MGNREGA discussion, whereas 589 mandals are reported elsewhere. This difference is not explained and should be clarified before the figures are used for inter-period comparisons. The official records report GSDP growth of 9.25 per cent for the period considered, compared with 6.99 per cent nationally. It also reports per capita income of Rs 2,28,216 for Telangana against the national figure of Rs 1,34,432. These state-level averages provide broad economic context, but they should not be interpreted as direct measures of rural household income because they may conceal substantial differences between districts, rural and urban areas, and economic sectors.

### 6.2 Agriculture, Irrigation, Livelihoods and Environment

The official records report that 24.16 lakh farmers receive 24-hour free agricultural power. It also records contracted power capacity of 16,261 MW, with a further 11,612 MW described as being in the pipeline. Although these figures indicate the scale of the power infrastructure and support reported for agriculture, the document does not quantify the fiscal cost of free farm power or provide information on the reliability and quality of supply at the farm level. Such information would be necessary to assess the operational and financial sustainability of the intervention.

Irrigation-related figures include 38 new projects, 70 lakh acres of irrigation potential and 10 lakh acres of stabilised ayacut. For the Kaleshwaram project, the official government records report an intended irrigation coverage of 18.25 lakh acres and an expenditure figure of Rs 80,190.46 crore. Dividing the reported project cost by the stated potential gives an indicative amount of approximately Rs 4.39 lakh per acre of potential. This is not an estimate of the actual cost per acre irrigated, because the available records do not state the area receiving irrigation in the relevant period. Mission Kakatiya is reported to have restored 27,584 of 46,531 tanks, representing 59.3 per cent of the stated target, and to have stabilised 6.09 lakh of 10.12 lakh acres, or 60.2 per cent. Against the reported expenditure of Rs 4,352.80 crore, the implied averages are approximately Rs 15.8 lakh per tank restored and Rs 71,500 per acre stabilised. These averages are indicative only and should not be treated as comparable project costs, since the nature, scale and components of the two irrigation interventions differ.

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Under Telangana Ku Haritha Haaram, the available government records records 157 crore seedlings planted against a target of 230 crore, equivalent to 68.3 per cent. The reported components include 120 crore seedlings in forest areas, 10 crore under GHMC/HMDA and 100 crore outside forest areas; these component descriptions require clarification because the stated components do not appear to reconcile with the reported total. More importantly, the available records do not provide survival rates, plantation condition or changes in canopy cover. Therefore, the number of seedlings planted should be interpreted as an implementation output rather than evidence of an equivalent increase in forest cover.

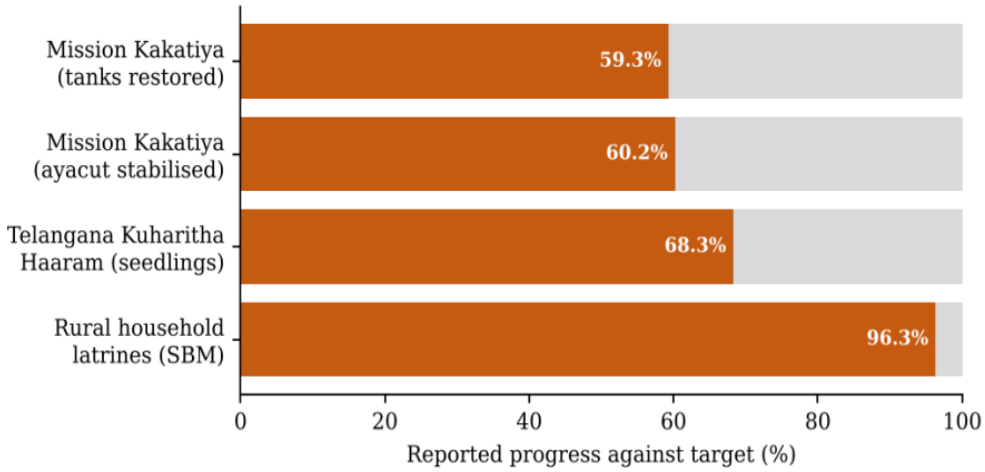



**Figure 1: Reported progress against selected programme targets (%)**
*Source: Author's calculations based on official government records.*

The official government records report an annual Rythu Bandhu payment of Rs 10,000 per acre and an aggregate outlay of Rs 14,000 crore. Taken together, these figures imply coverage equivalent to approximately 1.4 crore acres, subject to the assumptions underlying the reported annual outlay. Rythu Bheema is described as providing a death benefit of Rs 5 lakh to farmers. The land-records exercise is reported to have covered 1.78 crore survey numbers and 75.54 lakh acres. The resulting average of about 0.42 acre per survey number indicates a high degree of fragmentation in the recorded holdings. In a payment system linked to acreage, the amount received by a small landholder will consequently be lower than that received by a larger landholder. The available government records do not provide sufficient

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information to assess the position of tenant cultivators or farmers whose land records may be incomplete.

6.3 Social Protection and Community-Based Institutions

The Aasara pension programme is reported to cover 38,63,775 beneficiaries across six broad categories. As shown in Table 2 and Figure 2, widows account for 37.13 per cent of beneficiaries and older persons for 32.33 per cent. Together, these two categories constitute 69.46 per cent of the total. Single women account for a further 3.46 per cent. The beneficiary composition therefore indicates that the programme provides a substantial income-support mechanism for older persons and women in vulnerable circumstances. This interpretation relates to the distribution of beneficiaries; the available records do not provide household income data or information on the adequacy of the pension in meeting living costs.

**Table 2: Distribution of Aasara pension beneficiaries by category**

| Category | Beneficiaries | Share (%) | Monthly pension (Rs) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Widow | 14,34,556 | 37.13 | 2,016 |
| Old age | 12,49,135 | 32.33 | 2,016 |
| Disabled | 4,91,006 | 12.71 | 4,016 |
| Beedi workers | 4,08,161 | 10.56 | 2,016 |
| Single women | 1,33,695 | 3.46 | 2,016 |
| Toddy tappers, weavers, HIV and filaria patients | 1,47,222 | 3.81 | 2,016 |
| Total | 38,63,775 | 100.00 | – |

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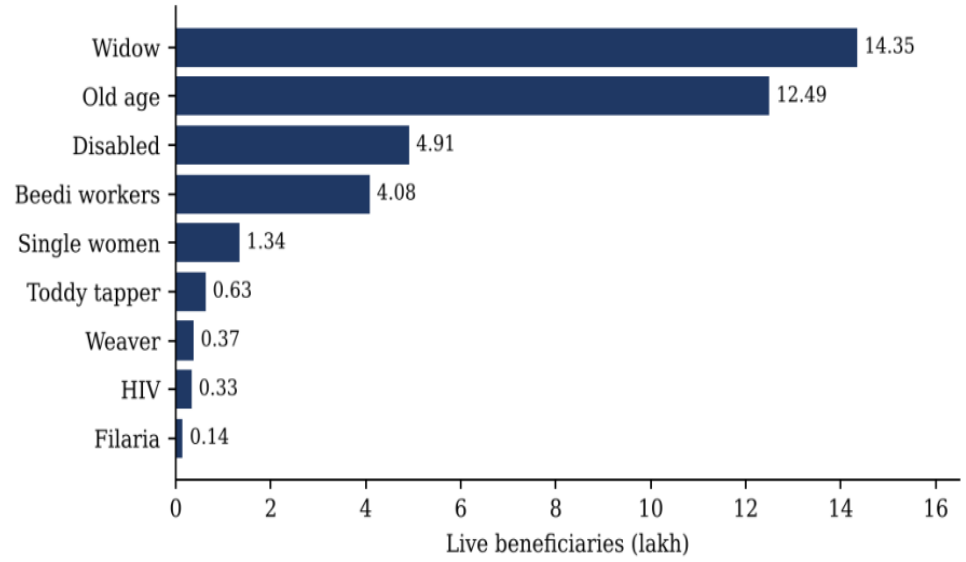



**Figure 2: Aasara pension beneficiaries by category (lakh)**

*Source: Author's calculations based on official government records.*

A comparison of the stated pension rates and beneficiary numbers with the reported annual outlay identifies a material difference. Applying a monthly pension of Rs 2,016 to the listed categories and Rs 3,016 to persons with disabilities produces an estimated annual amount of approximately Rs 9,936 crore. The available government records, however, reports an outlay of Rs 11,758 crore, leaving a difference of about Rs 1,822 crore, or approximately 18 per cent of the calculated amount. The available records do not explain whether this difference relates to arrears, changes in beneficiary numbers during the year, administrative provisions or a different accounting period. The discrepancy should therefore be treated as an item requiring reconciliation, rather than as evidence of misstatement. Kalyana Lakshmi is reported to provide Rs 1,00,016 per eligible marriage, against an outlay of Rs 1,350 crore. This allocation would correspond to a theoretical maximum of about 1.35 lakh payments if the entire amount were used for benefits at the stated rate; the actual number of beneficiaries is not reported. Under the National Food Security Act, the reported 280.67 lakh beneficiaries, at an entitlement of 6 kg per person, would require approximately 1.684 lakh tonnes of food grains. This is broadly close to the reported release of 1.79 lakh tonnes. However, the available government information gives

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two different descriptions of the Antyodaya entitlement—35 kg at Re 1 and 10 kg free—which should be clarified before a definitive reconciliation is attempted.

Self-help groups (SHGs) are another important element of the reported social-protection and livelihood framework. The available government records records 4,19,287 rural SHGs with 45.54 lakh members, giving an average membership of approximately 10.9 persons per group. It reports 1,81,365 urban groups with 21 lakh members, or about 11.6 members per group. Rural bank-linkage loans increased from Rs 6,550 crore to Rs 9,073 crore, a rise of 38.5 per cent, while the number of groups financed increased from 1,86,563 to 2,56,422, a rise of 37.4 per cent. Consequently, the average loan per financed group changed only marginally, from approximately Rs 3.51 lakh to Rs 3.54 lakh. The increase in total credit was therefore associated mainly with a larger number of groups receiving loans rather than a substantial increase in the average loan amount. The 1,86,563 groups financed in 2019–20 represent about 44.5 per cent of the total rural SHGs reported. For MGNREGA, the available government records record 51.3 lakh job cards covering 1.12 crore persons. These figures describe registration and potential coverage, but they do not establish the extent of employment actually generated. The number of households provided work, average days of employment, wage-payment delays and the proportion of demand for work met would provide a more meaningful assessment of implementation.

### 6.4 Human Development, Housing, Drinking Water and Sanitation

The health indicators presented in the official government records show a rise in institutional deliveries from 31 per cent in 2013 to 60 per cent in 2017. Over the same period, the reported maternal mortality indicator declined from 92 to 76, infant mortality from 34 to 29 and under-five mortality from 40 to 32. The number of residential schools increased from 296 to 959. These changes are encouraging as descriptive trends. However, the available government records does not specify the definitions, data sources or measurement periods for all indicators, nor does it provide a comparison group. Improvements may also reflect broader changes in public health provision, household awareness and socio-economic conditions. It would therefore be inappropriate to attribute the entire change to any one state programme on the basis of the information available.

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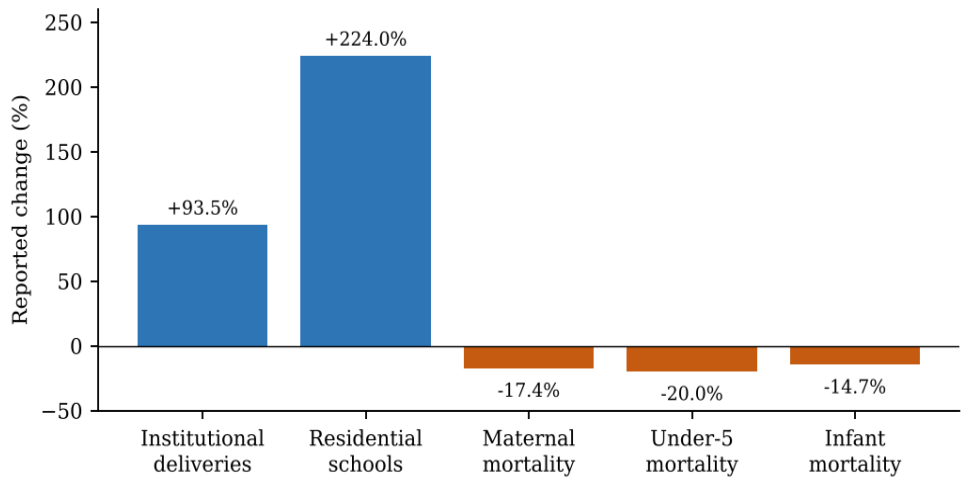



**Figure 3: Reported changes in selected health and education indicators (%)**

*Source: Author's calculations based on official government records.*

The rural unit cost of a two-bedroom house is reported as Rs 6.29 lakh, comprising Rs 5.04 lakh for the house and Rs 1.25 lakh for infrastructure. The number of completed houses increased from 12,043 in 2018–19 to 16,688 in 2019–20, representing a rise of 38.6 per cent. In the absence of an overall target and information on houses occupied by eligible families, the completion figures alone do not indicate the extent to which housing need has been met. Mission Bhagiratha is reported to provide bulk water supply to 23,968 rural habitations and 118 urban local bodies, with a reported project outlay of Rs 45,027 crore and supply norms of 100, 135 and 150 litres per capita per day. Bulk supply to a habitation, however, is not equivalent to a functioning household connection. Household-level coverage, continuity of supply, water quality and repair arrangements are therefore important measures of service delivery. Similarly, the reported coverage of latrines in 96.32 per cent of rural households and the state's open-defecation-free status indicate infrastructure and programme achievements, but do not establish regular use or sustained sanitation practices. Palle Pragati is particularly suitable for village-level assessment because its activities—such as nurseries, dump yards, Vaikunta Dhamam, street lighting, water supply, sanitation, tax collection and Gram Sabhas—can be directly observed and cross-checked against local records.

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The official records report community-wise allocations amounting to Rs 32,179.61 crore across four categories. Scheduled Caste development accounts for Rs 16,534.47 crore (51.4 per cent), Scheduled Tribe development for Rs 9,771 crore (30.4 per cent), Backward Class development for Rs 4,356.08 crore (13.5 per cent) and minority welfare for Rs 1,518.06 crore (4.7 per cent). These shares describe the distribution of the reported allocations. In the absence of corresponding population figures, beneficiary counts and expenditure outcomes, they cannot be interpreted as per capita allocations or as evidence of relative adequacy. The official information identifies Rythu Bandhu and Aasara as major household-oriented expenditure programmes, while Kaleshwaram and Mission Bhagiratha represent large infrastructure investments extending over multiple years. Annual programme expenditure and multi-year project costs should be distinguished when comparing the scale of public spending.

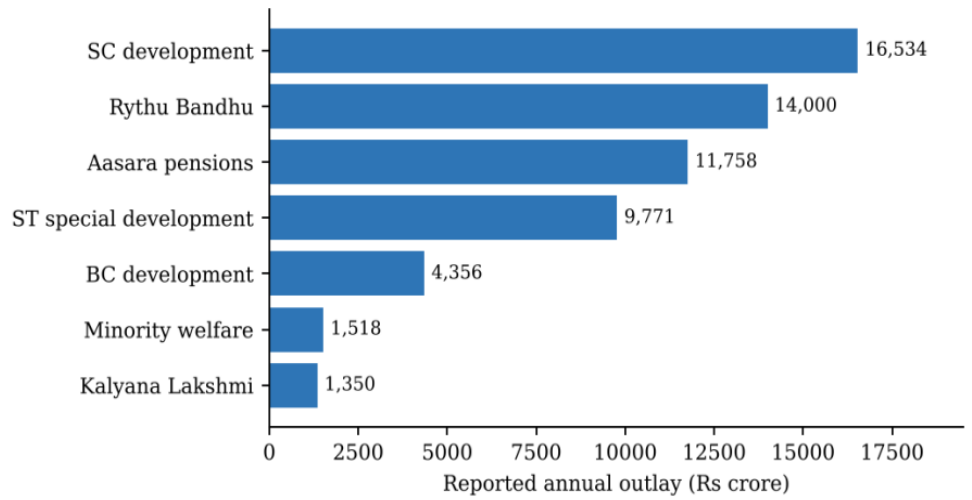



**Figure 4: Reported expenditure on selected programmes (Rs crore)**
*Source: Author's calculations based on official government records.*

## 7. Major Findings, Suggestions and Limitations

The analysis leads to several findings. First, the available government records record a substantial expansion in Telangana's administrative network, although the difference between the reported mandal totals requires clarification. Second, the state's rural development portfolio covers a wide range of needs, including farm support, irrigation, social security, health, housing, drinking water and sanitation.

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Third, Aasara pension beneficiaries are concentrated among widows and older persons, who together account for approximately 69.5 per cent of the reported total. Fourth, the reported achievement levels for tank restoration, stabilisation of ayacut and plantation activity range from about 59 to 68 per cent of their stated targets. Fifth, the Aasara expenditure figure does not reconcile with the annual amount implied by the listed beneficiary numbers and pension rates. Sixth, the available government records provide considerably more information on administrative coverage and physical outputs than on the quality, continuity and outcomes of services. Finally, the programme changes reported after 2020–21 mean that scheme names, benefit rates and administrative arrangements must be considered carefully when comparing data across years.

The following measures would strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of rural development programmes. Programme reports should present outcome indicators alongside expenditure and physical outputs—for example, actual irrigated area alongside irrigation potential, and seedling survival alongside plantation numbers. Each indicator should be accompanied by a clear definition, unit of measurement, reference period and data source. Pension, food-grain and wage-payment records should be periodically reconciled with beneficiary lists and payment rates, and unexplained differences should be disclosed. SHG monitoring should consider the adequacy and productive use of credit, repayment performance and the continuity of bank linkage, rather than relying only on the number of groups and total loan disbursement. For drinking water and sanitation, monitoring should extend to household-level functionality, service regularity, water quality and actual use. Changes in scheme names, eligibility conditions and benefit rates should be documented so that time-series comparisons remain meaningful. Finally, Gram Panchayats and Gram Sabhas can play a stronger role in local verification by reviewing programme registers and discussing beneficiary experiences in a transparent manner.

The study has certain limitations. It relies on a secondary data drawn from an undated government compilation of programme information that does not identify the originating department or cite the underlying administrative datasets. The figures relate to different reference periods and have not been independently verified. The calculated unit costs are indicative ratios based on reported aggregates and should not be interpreted as audited costs or causal estimates. State-level totals also conceal

variations across districts, mandals and villages. The discussion of subsequent programme changes relies on the public sources listed in the references and requires confirmation against official notifications. In addition, the proposed village-level verification framework has not been field-tested. These limitations do not invalidate the descriptive exercise, but they define the boundaries within which its findings should be interpreted.

## 8. Conclusion

The analysis presents a structured assessment of the information available in a official government information on rural development and welfare programmes in Telangana. The reported figures indicate an expansion in administrative reach and substantial public investment across agriculture, social protection, infrastructure and human development. They also show that Aasara support is concentrated among widows and older persons, while the reported progress figures for selected irrigation and afforestation activities remain below their stated targets. The arithmetic review identifies specific inconsistencies and highlights the need for clearer definitions and reconciled expenditure data. More importantly, the official government records demonstrate the limits of relying on beneficiary totals, budget allocations and physical outputs as stand-alone measures of programme performance. A sound assessment must also establish whether benefits are delivered on time, infrastructure is functional and intended outcomes are sustained. The proposed village-level verification framework offers a practical starting point for such an assessment. Future research combining official records, household-level evidence and direct observation across a representative set of villages would provide a stronger basis for evaluating the reach, quality and effectiveness of rural welfare programmes in Telangana.

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