



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

Y.S. JAGAN'S WELFARE ADMINISTRATION IN ANDHRA PRADESH: A PERCEPTIONAL STUDY ON "NAVARATNALU"

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Abstract

In Indian politics second generation leaders or inheritors of a political legacy always come up against a tall mountain to climb, in terms of popular perception. The Congress party rode to power in 2004 on the strength of YSR's leadership. YSR's first decision after assuming power in 2004, was to give free electricity to the agriculture sector and waive farmers' loans. His path breaking healthcare initiative, Arogyasri, brought corporate medical treatment to the doorstep of the poorest of the poor and his celebrated fee reimbursement scheme empowered millions of youths with education which would otherwise have been well beyond their grasp. comprised of welfare schemes which are based on the Navaratnaluu of the Like his father YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, the Chief of the YSR Congress party (YSRCP) has come up with an elaborate model of governance party. It was this model of welfare governance which fired the imagination of YS Jagan Mohan Reddy to come up with a slew of welfare schemes which would percolate to the grassroots across the state. In sample selection 44 percent of the respondents belong to students, 2 percent of the respondents belong to domestic workers, 24 percent of the respondents belong to employees, 18 percent of the respondents belong to mothers and 14 percent of the respondents belong to others. As per the above table, 86% of the respondents are aware of Navaratnaluu schemes, through which the state government is providing financial assistance. 75% of the total respondents are getting benefitted by the various schemes under Navaratnaluu. In the overall respondents 74% are satisfied with the Navaratnaluu schemes. 67% of the respondents were satisfied and felt happy with the implementation of

Navaratnalu in Andhra Pradesh. 61% of the respondents opined that these Navaratnalu schemes are very useful for the needy people. From the total respondents 82% of the respondents had expressed their happiness towards present government welfare administration and their functioning.

Key Words: Welfare Schemes, Navaratnalu, Respondents, Government, People, Development, Y.S. Jagan, Andhra Pradesh.

Introduction:

In Indian politics second generation leaders or inheritors of a political legacy always come up against a tall mountain to climb, in terms of popular perception. Be it Stalin in Tamil Nadu, Akhilesh Yadav in UP, Surjit Singh Badal in Punjab, HD Kumaraswamy in Karnataka or Udhhav Thackeray in Maharashtra, to cite a few instances, each such leader is inevitably measured against the work and contribution of his larger-than-life father. In other words, they find themselves in the unenviable situation of having to fill oversized shoes. Dr. YS Rajasekhara Reddy's political mantle, despite all the claims the Congress makes, fell on his son, the current Chief Minister of AP, YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. Again, comparisons are unavoidable. Not for nothing is Dr YSR idolized across the Telugu states as few leaders before him had been or have since been.

The Congress party rode to power in 2004 on the strength of YSR's leadership. He stood tall as he walked through the length and breadth of undivided Andhra Pradesh from Vikarabad in Ranga Reddy district of the time to Ichchapuram in Srikakulam to familiarize himself with the problems of the needy and impoverished under the TDP government of the day. It was this walkathon which gave YSR an insight into the welfare governance model which he wanted to develop for the State back then and also powered the Congress into office unseating Chandrababu Naidu.

YSR's first decision after assuming power in 2004, was to give free electricity to the agriculture sector and waive farmers' loans. His path breaking healthcare initiative, Arogyasri, brought corporate medical treatment to the doorstep of the poorest of the poor and his celebrated fee reimbursement scheme empowered millions of youths with education which would otherwise have been well beyond their grasp. YSR envisioned pensions for widows and the elderly, and a higher allowance for the differently abled. The Indiramma housing scheme for the poor, which was one of his pet projects, was considered unprecedented in terms of its scale. Jalayagnam led to Polavaram and Veligonda projects in Andhra and Pranahita-Chevella lift irrigation projects in Telangana and other such.

comprised of welfare schemes which are based on the Navaratnalu of the Like his father YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, the Chief of the YSR Congress party (YSRCP) has come up with an elaborate model of governance party. Relevantly the name is marked through nine large-scale welfare programs, the party plans to offer benefits which are worth a minimum of Rs 1 lakh to Rs 5 lakh per year.

After assuming charge as chief minister of Andhra Pradesh on May 30, 2019, Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy's top priority was 'Navaratnalu' —literally nine gems, but in this case, a reference to the nine welfare schemes he had promised to implement if voted to power. The schemes were in keeping with the poll promises outlined in the YSRCP (Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party) manifesto for the 2019 assembly election. "By increasing per capita income through these initiatives, we can grow into a model not only for the country but also the world," Reddy had claimed.

It was this model of welfare governance which fired the imagination of YS Jagan Mohan Reddy to come up with a slew of welfare schemes which would percolate to the grassroots across the state. During the course of his 14-month long walkathon, Praja Sankalpa yatra, through Andhra Pradesh, YS Jagan announced in meeting after meeting that he drew up his own governance model based on nine precious gems or Navaratnalu which included flagship initiatives like YSR Rythu Bharosa giving Rs. 50,000 to farmers, Arogyasri, fee reimbursement, Jalayagnam among others. Apart from the widespread resentment against Chandrababu Naidu's Telugu Desam party across the state in residuary Andhra Pradesh YS Jagan's vision, which seemed to reflect a throwback to YS Rajasekhara reddy governance model, struck a chord with the masses. While predicating his system of governance on YSR's people friendly government, YS Jagan bore in mind the fact that his father's legacy would be the touchstone against which he would be judged. He added certain other schemes as a part of his vision, such as YSR Asara, under which loans of cooperative societies would be waived and interest free loans sanctioned. Jagan also came up with Amma Vodi under which Rs. 15,000 would be given to mothers of school going children.

Background:

Of the 175 seats in A.P assembly, the YSR Congress Party founded by him, bagged 67 in the 2014 elections. Starting in November 2017 as leader of opposition, as he cross-crossed through the state in his close to 3,600 km long padayatra, speaking of Navaratnalu, Jagan, in addition to spelling out his vision for the state, highlighted corruption in the TDP establishment. Amaravati, Polavaram and sand mining controlled by mafias everywhere, were among a host of burning issues which had ubiquitous relevance in all parts of the state.

YS Jagan's Padayatra bore fruit and drove him to power in the May 2019 elections. The YSRCP bagged as many as 22 Lok Sabha seats and a staggering 151 assembly seats, sending Chandrababu's TDP packing. Immediately after Jagan was sworn in as chief minister at the end of May this year, he hit the ground running fast tracking governance in AP.

Navaratnalu remained at the top of his list and at the end of his first 100 days in office, YS Jagan made sure that he kept his word. He announced an increase in pensions for senior citizens, physically challenged and other categories, assistance of RS.15, 000 to mothers of school going children under scheme, scrapping of contributory pension which the TDP regime had introduced.

YS Jagan's promise of bringing the government to the doorstep of the poorest villager was launched with the Gram Secretariat scheme under which 1.2 lakh jobs at various levels were created. YS Jagan in just over a year has ensured that the YSRCP model of governance covers all segments of society. The setting up of several corporations for the welfare of various social groups, such as the BC Corporation, mirrors his vision. YS Jagan, as he had promised in his interaction with the masses in meetings, is determined to ensure welfare governance in Andhra Pradesh treading on the path laid out by his father and going beyond.

The very purpose of Navaratnalu is to achieve social justice by ensuring the fruits of development reach those who were bereft of them till date. While implementing the programme, never consider, caste, creed, religion, region, political affiliations and ensure every eligible gets benefited," Jagan maintained. He said saturation should not be limited to namesake, but should become a reality. In that direction, the State government has come up with village volunteers and village secretariat system. Each village volunteer will be entrusted with the responsibility of 50 people and in coordination with the village secretariat; they will be responsible for door delivery of the government schemes to those 50 households.

The welfare drive gathered momentum during his second year, and in the gushy words of Perni Venkataramaiah, state minister for information and public relations: "In two years of governance, ending May 30, 2021, the CM has fulfilled 107 of the 129 pre-poll promises, spending a staggering Rs 1.31 lakh crore in the process." Apart from direct cash transfer of Rs 95,528.5 crore to beneficiary accounts, the state has also indirectly spent over Rs 36,197 crore on various schemes, including free power to farmers.

The schemes cut across caste and community, are gender-sensitive and cover nearly all sections of the working class in the state. But to foot the welfare bill, the state has had to borrow huge sums. In 2020-21, its borrowings exceeded the budget by 142 per cent. This despite the corona virus pandemic and its crippling effect on India's economy. Some have criticized Jagan Mohan Reddy, saying his welfares comes at the cost of real development. His justification: it puts money in people's hands, leading to a better quality of life for them and, in turn, spurring economic growth.

The nine Navaratnalu welfare schemes are:

1. YSR Rythu Bharosa

A promise to offer financial assistance of Rs 50,000 to farmers has been made by the YSRCP. In the second year, each family of the farmers would be given Rs 12,500 per year, in addition to zero-interest loans and free bore-wells. A calamity relief fund of Rs 4,000 crore, 9 hours free electricity during the day, cold storage units and food processing centers have been assured. With 62 per cent of Andhra Pradesh population dependent on agriculture and allied sectors, the wellbeing of farmers, farmhands and of those related to these sectors is crucial for the ruling YSRCP. On May 25, Government released Rs 1,820.2 crore for 1.5 million lakh farmers

under the YSR Free Crop Insurance to compensate for crop losses in Kharif 2020. Now, the state is settling the claims of the previous Kharif season before the start of a new one. For transparency, the list of beneficiaries is displayed at Rythu Bharosa Kendras (RBKs) and social audits are done to ensure no eligible farmer is left out.

The state has also given Rs 83,085.4 crore as assistance to farmers under various schemes, including Rs 17,029.8 crore to over 5 million farmers under the YSR Rythu Bharosa, Rs 1,038.4 crore input subsidy to 1.35 million farmers and Rs 1,261 crore as YSR Zero Interest Crop Loans. Most importantly, the financial assistance to the farmers is credited directly to their bank accounts. Reforms in the agriculture sector have paved the way for villages to become self-sufficient. The 10,778 RBKs have helped farmers with services such as procuring seeds and selling the produce within the village itself. The state is spending Rs 7,430 crore on a free power scheme for farmers and is also investing Rs 14,000 crore to create infrastructure of cold storages, godowns, grading facilities, drying floor and agriculture labs.

2. Fee Reimbursement

The Government is providing a comprehensive fee reimbursement scheme, in line with the vision of the late Chief Minister Dr YS Rajasekhara Reddy. In addition to this, an allowance of Rs 20,000 would be given to every student. A total of Rs 1 to 1.5 lakh would be spend on the education of each student.

Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has launched initiatives to improve the quality of education in the state by providing English-medium education, improving enrolment numbers and minimizing drop-out rates through schemes like Vidya Deevena, Vasathi Deevena, Amma Vodi and Vidya Kanuka. The state has spent Rs 25,714 crore in two years on the education sector. As a part of the educational reforms, the state is to implement the CBSE syllabus from the 2021-22 academic year and convert anganwadi centers launched under the Integrated Child Development Scheme into YSR Pre-Primary Schools.

3. Aarogyasri

The scheme is applicable to all medical treatments above Rs 1,000. Hospitals of any location, all medical expenses would be borne by the government. Among health initiatives, Reddy has upgraded the cover of the Dr YSR Aarogyasri scheme to include all families with an annual income of Rs 5 lakh and increased the number of procedures covered to 2,434 at empanelled hospitals in the state as well as Chennai, Bengaluru and Hyderabad. He is planning health hubs in all 13 districts of the state and three other cities in public-private partnership.

4. Jalayagnam

For benefitting lakhs of families by irrigation projects. Priority of this scheme is the completion of Polavaram project.

5. Ban on Alcohol

A ban on alcohol is promised to be placed by the YSRCP regarding its sale across the State in three stages.

6. Amma Vodi

With a view to encourage families with school-going children, the YSRCP government is providing Rs 15,000 towards assistance to all mothers who send their children to school.

7. YSR Cheyutha

Through YSR Cheyutha, the YSRCP intends to support all women from SC, ST, BC and minority communities, who are aged over 45. This would amount to Rs 75,000 per woman from these communities over a period of 4 years. The Jagan Mohan Reddy government has also prioritized women and disbursed Rs 88,040.2 crore through welfare schemes like YSR Asara, YSR Cheyutha, YSR Sunna Vaddi, YSR Kapu Nestham, YSR Sampurna Poshana, YSR Nethanna Nestham and YSR EBC Nestham. The YSR tag is meant to commemorate his father, the late Dr Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy, chief minister of erstwhile Andhra Pradesh.

Moreover, to ensure that every woman is able to provide for her children and give them a good education, the state has given out Rs 13,022.9 crore under the Jagananna Ammavodi scheme by depositing Rs 15,000 a year into the accounts of underprivileged mothers. Under the government's YSR Aasara flagship scheme, 7.8 million DWCRA (Women and Children in Rural Areas) women have benefited through Rs 6,310.7 crore paid in installments towards reimbursement of their outstanding bank loans. Under the YSR Zero Interest Scheme, where the government pays the interest on loans of the self-help group (SHG), 9.8 million women have benefitted from Rs 2,354.22 crore. Reddy is also repaying their debts to commercial and co-operative banks. The first installment of Rs 6,310.7 crore was given to 7.8 million women in September 2020. He has promised to clear their loans worth Rs 27,168 crore in four installments under YSR Aasara. On December 25, 2020, the government began the distribution of 3.1 million house sites to disadvantaged groups with the registration done in the name of the woman of the family to encourage empowerment.

8. HOUSING for all poor

The YSRCP promises to build 25 lakh homes for the poor in a five-year duration. Permanent houses to the homeless poor will be built over a period of 5 years and registered in name of the woman of the household. The distribution of 2,500,000 housing sites for economically weaker sections of the population on December 25, 2020, brought Reddy massive goodwill.

9. Pension Enhancement

The eligibility age criteria of 65 years for the pensions would be reduced to 60 years. Senior citizens aged above 60 would be given Rs 2,000 while the physically challenged would be given a pension of Rs 3,000. The establishment of village and ward secretariats to bring the administration to the villages and towns firmly entrenched the YSRCP at the grassroots level. Over 300,000 village and ward volunteers, who were appointed to deliver the benefits of various government schemes, be it pensions or ration, directly to the beneficiaries at their doorsteps, proved a masterstroke for him.

Objectives of the study:

- To examine the impact of implementation of navaratnalu on society in Andhra Pradesh
- To suggest policy implications for the implementation of Navaratnalu in AP.

Limitations of the study:

The following are the limitations of the study:

- The study is limited to two areas of Andhra Pradesh
- The sample of the study are students, Domestic workers, Employees and others

Methodology:

This empirical research study was adopted a quantitative method by asking questions based on the objectives and covered 104 respondents viz, students, domestic workers, employees, mothers, and others in 2 areas of Andhra University, Visakhapatnam city of Andhra Pradesh state. Simple random sampling technique was employed in selection of samples. The study was employed in both primary and secondary sources for the collection of relevant data. The relevant secondary sources are also taken for this research study from journals, books, magazines, and online sources. The data was collected from the respondents through the survey method. The tool consists of two parts; the first part deals with activities relating to the impact of implementation of navaratnalu in AP state, and the second part about suggestive/policy implications on the process of program implementation.

PEOPLE PERCEPTION ON IMPLEMENTATION OF NAVARATNALU

The collected data were analyzed based on the objectives of the study and interpreted as follows. The percentages were calculated for interpreting the data. According, the conclusions are drawn, and the recommendations are offered. Demographic variables such as educated and illiterate of the beneficiaries of navaratnalu are given below.

Table 1: Category wise respondents

Category wise	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Students	46	44%
Domestic workers	2	2%
Employees	24	23%
Mothers	18	17%
Others	14	14%
Total	104	100

Table above table shows that 44 percent of the respondents belong to students, 2 percent of the respondents belong to domestic workers, 24 percent of the respondents belong to employees, 18 percent of the respondents belong to mothers and 14 respondents belongs to others.

Table 2: Background-wise Respondents/Beneficiaries

Category	Respondents	Pro-Government	%	Anti-Government	%
Educated	72	50	69	22	31
Illiterate	32	24	85	8	15

The above table shows that 69 percent of the respondents who were educated are supportive towards government; 31 percent of the respondents who were educated are anti towards government; 85 percent of the respondents who were illiterate are supportive towards government; 15 percent of the respondents who were illiterate are anti towards government.

Table 3: Opinion of respondents on Navaratnalu

Opinions of the respondents	Yes	No
Are you aware of Navaratnalu of state government	90 (86.54%)	14 (13.46%)
Did you know that the government provides financial assistance to people under different schemes	90 (86.54%)	14 (13.46%)
Have you benefitted from the schemes of Navarathnalu	78 (75.00%)	26 (25.00%)
Are you satisfied with these Navarathnalu schemes	77 (74.04%)	27 (25.96%)
Are you happy with the implementation of navaratnalu by the government	70 (67.31%)	34 (32.69%)
Are these schemes useful for the people	64 (61.54%)	40 (41.60%)
Are you happy with the present government functioning	85 (81.73%)	19 (18.27%)

The above table shows that 100 percent opined relating to the Navarathnalu, a part of the respondents opined positively, and only minuscule part of the respondents pessimistic about implementation of Navarathnalu. We found that 86% of the respondents are aware of Navarathnalu schemes, through which the state government is providing financial assistance. 75% of the total respondents are getting benefitted by the various schemes under Navarathnalu. In the overall respondents 74% are satisfied with the Navarathnalu schemes. According to data 67% of the respondents were satisfied and felt happy with the implementation of Navarathnalu in Andhra Pradesh. The data also highlights 61% of the respondents opined that these Navarathnalu schemes are very useful for the needy people. From the total respondents 82% of the respondents had expressed their happiness towards present government welfare administration and their functioning.

FINDINGS:

Andhra Pradesh government is implementing the Navarathnalu for the welfare of people belonging to economically and socially weaker sections.

1. We found that 82% of the respondents had expressed their happiness towards present government welfare administration and their functioning.
2. Majority of the people are felt that, this Navarathnalu scheme will help to eradicate their poverty.
3. Students are expressing their satisfaction towards implementation of the fee reimbursement.
4. We found that when the respondents are moving from the literate to illiterate, they are more likely to support government for welfare administration.
5. Most of the domestic workers are anti towards the ban on alcohol as they are spending most of their income on alcohol.
6. Employees are least interested and ignorant as these Navarathnalu did not emphasize on infrastructural development.

Suggestions and recommendations:

1. All these schemes should reach to the people at the grass root levels even to the tribal people who are alienated.
2. Inspection before implementation- Government should focus on the schemes which really meet the people needs.
3. Government should make sure that only eligible and needy people are getting benefitted.
4. The state should equally spend on capital expenditure which eliminates structural bottlenecks and leads to the income generation.

Conclusion:

Overall, the results from this survey have showed that mostly people are satisfied with the implementation of navaratnalu. But they are also saying that the government should concentrate more on infrastructural development. Government should not only provide financial assistance but also enquire whether the students are getting quality education or not, because education is the base for development and today's youth are tomorrow's future.

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