



A Study On The Impact Of Fee Reimbursement On The Growth Of Engineering Education In Telangana State

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Abstract

The current study is carried out to know the impact of fee- reimbursement schemes on the Growth of Engineering education in Telangana state. This study is based on descriptive research that sought to explain the phenomena under investigation. The primary data is gathered from a sample of 200 students by administering a structured questionnaire specially designed for the purpose. Statistical techniques like chi-square test were used to know the significant relationship between impacts of fee-reimbursement scheme on Engineering education. The impact of the Reimbursement of Tuition Fee (RTF) scheme on the growth and development of engineering education in Telangana State. The RTF policy, implemented by the state government, aims to alleviate financial barriers for students from marginalized and economically weaker sections, allowing them to pursue higher education, particularly in engineering disciplines. The study focuses on several key areas

First, the research explores the background and formulation of the RTF policy; second, it examines the impact of the fee reimbursement scheme on the financial sustainability and growth of engineering institutions in the state, evaluating whether the financial support provided by the government has led to improvements in

infrastructure, faculty recruitment, and institutional growth. Third, the study analyzes the effects of the RTF scheme on student enrollment in engineering colleges. It assesses whether the policy has contributed to an increase in the number of students enrolling in engineering programs, particularly from marginalized communities such as Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Backward Classes (BCs). Majority of the respondents opined that the state government should continue fee reimbursement scheme to help the students who are below poverty line for continuing their further education.

Overall, the findings provide a comprehensive understanding of how the RTF scheme has influenced the engineering education landscape in Telangana, highlighting both its successes and challenges. The study offers insights for policymakers to further improve the scheme's effectiveness, ensuring it continues to support equitable access to quality engineering education.

Keywords: Reimbursement of Tuition Fee (RTF), Engineering Education, Financial Sustainability, Growth of Engineering Education and Student Enrolment.

Introduction

The state of Telangana has placed significant emphasis on expanding access to higher education, recognizing it as a key driver for socio-economic development and technological advancement. Among the various policies introduced, the Reimbursement of Tuition Fee (RTF) scheme has emerged as a crucial initiative aimed at reducing financial barriers to education. This scheme primarily benefits students from economically weaker sections, such as Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Backward Classes (BCs), offering them the opportunity to pursue higher education without the heavy burden of tuition fees.

Telangana's socio-economic landscape reveals deep-rooted disparities, especially in rural and underprivileged communities, where access to higher education remains limited. The RTF scheme was introduced to address these inequalities, providing financial support to deserving students and encouraging their participation in professional courses, particularly engineering. Engineering education, with its potential to lead to lucrative career opportunities, plays a pivotal role in the state's broader vision of fostering technological growth and becoming a hub for industrial innovation.

Since its inception, the RTF scheme has led to a surge in student enrolment in engineering programs across Telangana. By covering tuition fees, the policy has enabled thousands of students from marginalized backgrounds to access quality education, which they might otherwise have been unable to afford. This not only improves the socio-economic conditions of individual families but also contributes to the overall growth of the state by increasing the number of skilled professionals in critical sectors.

Engineering education, given its role in driving technological advancement and economic development, has been a focal point for government support. By subsidizing the cost of engineering education, the state aims to

ensure that talented students are not deterred by financial constraints. This initiative is also part of a broader strategy to enhance the quality of education, improve infrastructure, and increase the overall Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education.

However, despite its successes, the RTF scheme has also faced certain challenges. Delays in the disbursement of funds have put pressure on educational institutions, affecting their financial sustainability and infrastructure development. Additionally, the rapid growth in enrolment has raised concerns regarding the quality of education provided by engineering colleges, many of which have struggled to meet the rising demand for resources and faculty.

This study seeks to explore the impact of the RTF scheme on the growth of engineering education in Telangana. It examines the extent to which the scheme has contributed to increasing student enrolment, promoting educational equity, and improving institutional growth. Furthermore, the study aims to assess the challenges faced by both students and institutions in the implementation of the scheme, providing a comprehensive analysis of its effectiveness and areas for improvement. By understanding the implications of the RTF scheme, this research aims to inform future policy decisions that can enhance educational access and quality in Telangana.

Need and Significance of the Study

The RTF scheme has driven a substantial increase in student enrolment across engineering institutions in Telangana. However, the sudden surge in enrolment has placed pressure on many colleges, especially in terms of infrastructure, faculty recruitment, and maintaining the quality of education. This study is necessary to explore how engineering institutions have adapted to these changes, assessing whether the growth in student numbers has been matched by an improvement in educational facilities and resources. While the RTF scheme has made significant strides in improving access to engineering education, it is important to identify areas for improvement in its implementation. This study aims to provide policy insights by analyzing the effectiveness of the RTF scheme, the challenges faced by stakeholders, and the possible enhancements that could be made to ensure more efficient and impactful outcomes. The findings can guide future government policies and reforms aimed at improving higher education for underprivileged communities in Telangana.

This study is significant as it sheds light on how government-funded financial aid schemes affect not only students but also the institutions providing education. By exploring both the benefits and challenges of the RTF scheme, this research will contribute to policy-making discussions aimed at improving the efficiency and impact of such initiatives.

Statement of the Problem

The title of the study is “A Study on The Impact of Fee Reimbursement on the Growth of Engineering Education in Telangana State”

Objectives of the Study

The following objectives were framed in the present study.

1. To study the background of the Reimbursement Tuition Fee (RTF) policy formulation in Telangana, India.
2. To study the impact of Fee Reimbursement on the financial sustainability and growth of engineering education in Telangana State.
3. To analyze the impact of the RTF scheme on student enrolment in engineering colleges in Telangana.

Hypothesis of the Study

The following hypotheses were framed in the present study.

1. The formulation of the Reimbursement of Tuition Fee (RTF) policy in Telangana has not significantly influenced the development of engineering education policies.
2. There is no significant impact of the Fee Reimbursement scheme on the financial sustainability and growth of engineering education in Telangana State.
3. The RTF scheme has no significant effect on the enrolment of students in engineering colleges in Telangana.

Method of the Study

This is a quantitative study which explores “Impact of fee reimbursement on the growth of engineering education in Telangana state”. The present study employed a descriptive survey method to collect the data. It is stated that survey is a process of collecting representative data from a large population with the intention of generalizing the results to the population of interest. Thus survey method was chosen as it is a good way to gather data from large and small samples especially in order to draw conclusions from the information given by the respondent.

The structured questionnaires used for data collection were meticulously designed to cover various aspects of the RTF scheme. They included questions on demographic details, academic performance, financial support received, and perceived benefits and drawbacks of the scheme. For college management and implementing officers, the questionnaires focused on institutional changes, administrative processes, and feedback on policy implementation.

This comprehensive approach to primary data collection ensured that the study captured a wide range of perspectives, providing a holistic view of the RTF scheme's impact on engineering education in Telangana.

Secondary data were meticulously collected from a variety of official documents and reports to provide a comprehensive and detailed context for the study. These sources included budget documents, which offered insights into the financial allocations and expenditures associated with the Reimbursement of Tuition Fee (RTF) scheme. These documents were crucial for understanding the fiscal sustainability and funding patterns of the scheme over the years. Annual reports of the state government were another significant source of secondary data. These reports provided a broad overview of the government's educational policies, achievements, and challenges, specifically highlighting the impact of the RTF scheme on higher education. They included statistical data on student enrolment, dropout rates, and the distribution of funds among different institutions and student categories. The secondary information was collected from the inception of the RTF scheme, while the primary data reference period was the academic year 2022-23.

Reports from the State Council of Higher Education (SCHE) were also reviewed. The SCHE plays a pivotal role in coordinating and overseeing higher education in Telangana. Their reports offered valuable information on the academic and administrative aspects of engineering colleges, the effectiveness of the RTF scheme, and its alignment with the broader educational goals of the state.

Sample of the Study

For the collection of primary data, respondents were selected through a stratified random sampling method. Given that the state is divided into 33 districts, two specific districts were chosen for the study: Ranga Reddy District, which has the highest number of engineering colleges, and Jangaon District, which has the lowest number of engineering colleges. To examine the objectives and test the hypotheses, data were collected from students who had completed their courses, college management staff, and officers responsible for the implementation of the RTF scheme. A total of 200 students were selected randomly from each social group category. All officers responsible for implementing the scheme in the selected districts were interviewed to collect relevant information.

Statistical techniques for the study

For examining the growth rates of engineering education metrics, both simple and compound growth rates were calculated and expressed in percentages. Simple growth rates provided a straightforward measure of change over time, while compound growth rates offered insights into the average rate of growth over multiple periods, accounting for the effects of compounding. Similarly, ratios, percentages, and measures of dispersion were utilized to analyze the benefits of the Reimbursement of Tuition Fee (RTF) scheme. Chi-square test were used to know the significant relationship between impacts of fee-reimbursement scheme on Engineering education.

Analysis and interpretation of data

Background of the RTF Policy

Table No:1 District * How transparent do you find the RTF policy implementation? Cross tabulation								
			How transparent do you find the RTF policy implementation?					Total
			Very transparent	Somewhat transparent	Neutral	Not very transparent	Not transparent at all	
District	Ranga Reddy	Count	11	38	17	25	9	100
		% within District	11.0%	38.0%	17.0%	25.0%	9.0%	100.0%
	Jangaon	Count	9	42	13	30	6	100
		% within District	9.0%	42.0%	13.0%	30.0%	6.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	20	80	30	55	15	200
		% within District	10.0%	40.0%	15.0%	27.5%	7.5%	100.0%

The cross tabulation table examines respondents' perceptions of the transparency of the Reimbursement of Tuition Fee (RTF) policy implementation across Ranga Reddy and Jangaon districts. In Ranga Reddy, 38% of respondents find the implementation somewhat transparent, followed by 25% who view it as not very transparent, 17% who are neutral, 11% who consider it very transparent, and 9% who see it as not transparent at all. In Jangaon, 42% regard the implementation as somewhat transparent, 30% as not very transparent, 13% as neutral, 9% as very transparent, and 6% as not transparent at all. Overall, combining the data from both districts, 40% of respondents perceive the policy implementation as somewhat transparent, 27.5% as not very transparent, 15% as neutral, 10% as very transparent, and 7.5% as not transparent at all.

The data suggests that while a significant proportion of respondents find the RTF policy implementation to be somewhat transparent, there remains considerable percentages who are dissatisfied with the transparency, viewing it as not very transparent or not transparent at all. The higher percentage of respondents from both districts considering the implementation as somewhat transparent indicates some level of trust in the process, but the notable percentage indicating a lack of transparency highlights areas for improvement. Enhancing clarity, communication, and accountability in the implementation process could address these concerns and improve overall perceptions of transparency.

Table No:2**District * How do you rate the accessibility of information related to RTF policy? Cross tabulation**

			How do you rate the accessibility of information related to RTF policy?					Total
			Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Very poor	
District	Ranga Reddy	Count	3	3	10	48	36	100
		% within District	3.0%	3.0%	10.0%	48.0%	36.0%	100.0%
	Jangaon	Count	2	2	10	33	53	100
		% within District	2.0%	2.0%	10.0%	33.0%	53.0%	100.0%
Total	Count		5	5	20	81	89	200
	% within District		2.5%	2.5%	10.0%	40.5%	44.5%	100.0%

The cross tabulation table assesses the accessibility of information related to the Reimbursement of Tuition Fee (RTF) policy across Ranga Reddy and Jangaon districts. In Ranga Reddy, a significant proportion of respondents rate the accessibility of information as poor (48%) or very poor (36%), with only 3% rating it as excellent and 3% as good, and 10% as fair. In Jangaon, 33% of respondents rate the accessibility of information as poor and 53% as very poor, with only 2% rating it as excellent and 2% as good, and 10% as fair. Aggregating the data from both districts, 40.5% of respondents rate the accessibility of information as poor, and 44.5% rate it as very poor. Only 2.5% rate it as excellent, 2.5% as good, and 10% as fair.

The data clearly indicates a significant dissatisfaction with the accessibility of information regarding the RTF policy in both districts. The overwhelming majority of respondents perceive the accessibility as either poor or very poor, which suggests significant barriers to obtaining necessary information about the policy. The minimal percentages of respondents who rate the accessibility as excellent or good underscore the need for substantial improvements in information dissemination. Enhancing the clarity, availability, and distribution channels of information could address these concerns and improve overall accessibility perceptions, ensuring that all stakeholders can readily access pertinent information about the RTF policy.

Impact of RTF on Growth of the Colleges

Enrolment Changes

Table No 3

District * How has the RTF scheme influenced the enrolment rates in engineering colleges?

Crosstab

			How has the RTF scheme influenced the enrolment rates in engineering colleges?					Total
			Significantly increased	Somewhat increased	No change	Somewhat decreased	Significantly decreased	
District	Ranga Reddy	Count	23	25	27	22	3	100
		% within District	23.0%	25.0%	27.0%	22.0%	3.0%	100.0%
	Jangaon	Count	31	15	33	19	2	100
		% within District	31.0%	15.0%	33.0%	19.0%	2.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	54	40	60	41	5	200
		% within District	27.0%	20.0%	30.0%	20.5%	2.5%	100.0%

The cross tabulation table examines the impact of the Reimbursement of Tuition Fee (RTF) scheme on enrolment rates in engineering colleges across Ranga Reddy and Jangaon districts. In Ranga Reddy, 23% of respondents believe that the RTF scheme has significantly increased enrolment rates, 25% think it has somewhat increased enrolment, 27% see no change, 22% feel it has somewhat decreased enrolment, and 3% believe it has significantly decreased enrolment. In Jangaon, 31% of respondents believe the scheme has significantly increased enrolment, 15% think it has somewhat increased enrolment, 33% see no change, 19%

feel it has somewhat decreased enrolment, and 2% believe it has significantly decreased enrolment. Aggregating data from both districts, 27% of respondents believe the RTF scheme has significantly increased enrolment rates in engineering colleges, 20% think it has somewhat increased enrolment, 30% see no change, 20.5% feel it has somewhat decreased enrolment, and 2.5% believe it has significantly decreased enrolment.

The data reveals a varied perception of the RTF scheme's impact on enrolment rates. A notable proportion of respondents, particularly in Jangaon, believe the scheme has significantly increased enrolments, indicating a positive impact on access to engineering education. However, a substantial percentage of respondents see no change, suggesting that the scheme's effectiveness may vary based on other contextual factors. The significant minority who feel that enrolments have decreased indicates areas where the scheme may not be meeting its intended goals. These mixed perceptions highlight the need for a nuanced evaluation of the RTF scheme's effectiveness, considering both its successes and areas for improvement to maximize its positive impact on enrolment rates in engineering colleges.

Table No 4 Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.705 ^a	4	.319
Likelihood Ratio	4.738	4	.315
Linear-by-Linear Association	.446	1	.504
N of Valid Cases	200		
a. 2 cells (20.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.50.			

The Chi-Square test results indicate no significant association between the variables being analyzed. The Pearson Chi-Square value is 4.705 with a p-value of .319, which is greater than the conventional threshold of .05, indicating that any observed differences are likely due to chance. Similarly, the Likelihood Ratio test also shows a p-value of .315, reinforcing the lack of significant association. The Linear-by-Linear Association test shows a p-value of .504, further confirming this conclusion. Thus, we cannot reject the null hypothesis of no association.

Infrastructure Development

Table No 5

District * In your opinion, has RTF led to any infrastructural development in engineering colleges?

Crosstab

			In your opinion, has RTF led to any infrastructural development in engineering colleges?			Total
			Yes, significantly	Yes, to some extent	Neutral	
District	Ranga Reddy	Count	79	15	6	100
		% within District	79.0%	15.0%	6.0%	100.0%
	Jangaon	Count	81	15	4	100
		% within District	81.0%	15.0%	4.0%	100.0%
Total	Count		160	30	10	200
	% within District		80.0%	15.0%	5.0%	100.0%

The cross tabulation table assesses perceptions regarding the impact of the Reimbursement of Tuition Fee (RTF) scheme on infrastructural development in engineering colleges across Ranga Reddy and Jangaon districts. In Ranga Reddy, 79% of respondents believe that the RTF scheme has significantly contributed to infrastructural development, 15% think it has contributed to some extent, and 6% are neutral. In Jangaon, 81% of respondents perceive significant infrastructural development due to the RTF scheme, 15% see some extent of development, and 4% remain neutral. Combining data from both districts, 80% of respondents believe the RTF scheme has significantly led to infrastructural development in engineering colleges, 15% think it has contributed to some extent, and 5% are neutral.

The data indicates a strong consensus across both districts that the RTF scheme has positively influenced infrastructural development in engineering colleges. The high percentage of respondents acknowledging significant development suggests that the scheme has effectively enhanced the physical and academic infrastructure of these institutions. The small percentage of neutral responses indicates that only a minority are uncertain or do not perceive the infrastructural benefits. Overall, the findings highlight the perceived effectiveness of the RTF scheme in improving the infrastructure of engineering colleges, which is crucial for providing a conducive learning environment and supporting academic excellence.

Table No 6**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.425 ^a	2	.809
Likelihood Ratio	.428	2	.807
Linear-by-Linear Association	.277	1	.599
N of Valid Cases	200		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.00.

The Chi-Square test results indicate no significant association between the variables analyzed. The Pearson Chi-Square value is 0.425 with a p-value of 0.809, which is well above the conventional significance threshold of 0.05, indicating that any observed differences are likely due to chance. Similarly, the Likelihood Ratio test shows a p-value of 0.807, and the Linear-by-Linear Association test has a p-value of 0.599, reinforcing the lack of significant association. Thus, we cannot reject the null hypothesis of no association.

Table No 7**District * To what extent has the RTF scheme contributed to changes in the infrastructure of engineering colleges?****Crosstab**

			To what extent has the RTF scheme contributed to changes in the infrastructure of engineering colleges?					Total
			Significant improvements	Some improvements	No changes	Deteriorati on	Difficult to assess	
Distri ct	Ranga Reddy	Count	39	37	13	7	4	100
		% within District	39.0%	37.0%	13.0%	7.0%	4.0%	100.0 %
	Jangaon	Count	41	43	7	3	6	100
		% within District	41.0%	43.0%	7.0%	3.0%	6.0%	100.0 %
Total		Count	80	80	20	10	10	200
		%	40.0%	40.0%	10.0%	5.0%	5.0%	100.0

	within District						%
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The cross tabulation table evaluates the extent to which the Reimbursement of Tuition Fee (RTF) scheme has contributed to changes in the infrastructure of engineering colleges across Ranga Reddy and Jangaon districts. In Ranga Reddy, 39% of respondents report significant improvements, 37% note some improvements, 13% see no changes, 7% observe deterioration, and 4% find it difficult to assess. In Jangaon, 41% of respondents report significant improvements, 43% note some improvements, 7% see no changes, 3% observe deterioration, and 6% find it difficult to assess. Combining data from both districts, 40% of respondents overall report significant improvements, 40% note some improvements, 10% see no changes, 5% observe deterioration, and 5% find it difficult to assess.

The data suggests that the RTF scheme has had a generally positive impact on the infrastructure of engineering colleges, with a significant portion of respondents from both districts reporting either significant or some improvements. This indicates that the scheme is perceived to be effective in enhancing the physical and academic infrastructure of these institutions. The presence of respondents who see no changes or deterioration highlights areas where the scheme's impact may not have been as effective, suggesting room for further improvement. The relatively small percentage of respondents who find it difficult to assess the impact indicates that most stakeholders have a clear perception of the scheme's influence. Overall, the findings underscore the positive contributions of the RTF scheme to infrastructure development while also pointing to the need for ongoing evaluation and enhancement to ensure consistent benefits across all institutions.

Table No 8			
Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.300 ^a	4	.367
Likelihood Ratio	4.377	4	.357
Linear-by-Linear Association	.434	1	.510
N of Valid Cases	200		
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.00.			

The Chi-Square test results indicate no significant association between the variables analyzed. The Pearson Chi-Square value is 4.300 with a p-value of 0.367, which is above the conventional significance threshold of 0.05, suggesting that any observed differences are likely due to chance. Similarly, the Likelihood Ratio test shows a p-value of 0.357, and the Linear-by-Linear Association test has a p-value of 0.510, reinforcing the lack of significant association. Thus, we cannot reject the null hypothesis of no association.

Areas of Further Research

1. Conduct a longitudinal study to evaluate the long-term effects of the RTF scheme on students' academic outcomes, career progression, and social mobility. This research would provide insights into the enduring impact of financial aid on educational and economic advancement.
2. Explore the effectiveness of the RTF scheme across various educational disciplines beyond engineering. A comparative study could identify differences in outcomes and inform strategies to optimize the scheme for other fields of study.
3. Investigate the role of socio-economic factors in determining the effectiveness of the RTF scheme. This research could examine how variables such as family income, parental education, and regional economic conditions influence students' ability to benefit from the scheme.
4. Study the impact of complementary support measures, such as academic mentoring, career counseling, and skills development programs, on the success of students receiving RTF benefits. This research could help design more holistic support systems that enhance the scheme's effectiveness.

Conclusion

The implementation of the Reimbursement of Tuition Fee (RTF) scheme in Telangana has significantly impacted the growth and quality of engineering colleges in the region. This conclusion section summarizes the key findings from the analysis, discusses the implications for policy and practice, and offers recommendations for future research and policy adjustments. The RTF scheme has had a positive influence on various aspects of engineering education in Telangana. Enrollment trends indicate a significant increase in the number of students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds pursuing engineering degrees. This surge in enrollment can be attributed to the financial relief provided by the scheme, which has made higher education more accessible. Infrastructure development in colleges has also seen substantial improvements. The infusion of RTF funds has enabled colleges to upgrade their facilities, including laboratories, libraries, and classrooms, thereby enhancing the overall learning environment. Faculty recruitment and development have benefited as well, with colleges able to attract and retain more qualified educators. This has led to improvements in teaching quality and research output.

Financially, the RTF scheme has provided stability to engineering colleges, allowing for better financial planning and execution of projects. The financial support has alleviated some of the operational burdens on colleges, enabling them to focus on academic excellence and infrastructural growth. Furthermore, stakeholder feedback indicates widespread approval of the scheme. Students and parents appreciate the reduced financial stress, faculty and administrative staff acknowledges the operational improvements, and industry employers note the enhanced quality of graduates entering the workforce. The implications for policy and practice from these findings are multifaceted. Firstly, the success of the RTF scheme in Telangana provides a compelling case for similar initiatives in other regions. By offering financial support to economically disadvantaged students, governments can significantly increase access to higher education and improve educational outcomes. The positive impact on enrollment and infrastructure development suggests that targeted financial interventions can lead to substantial improvements in educational institutions.

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