

LIVELIHOOD SECURITY AMONG URBAN POOR -EVALUATING IMPACT OF AUEGS IN KERALA

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ABSTRACT

In the current scenario, the importance of livelihood security for the rural and urban poor has increased. To achieve this purpose, India's central and state governments have implemented many anti-poverty programmes. Livelihood security refers to households' obtaining and maintaining access to resources to meet their basic needs. The present paper discusses the importance of the Ayyankali Urban Employment Guarantee scheme in providing livelihood security to the urban poor. The present study is based on primary and secondary data collection. primary data was collected from beneficiaries of the scheme using a structured questionnaire. secondary data collected from official records, economic reviews, and journal articles. The prime objective of the study is to understand the socio-economic behavior of the scheme's beneficiaries and to assess the scheme's impact on urban development. The study's major findings indicate that AUEGS has created unexpected outcomes in poverty reduction, women empowerment, and a positive impact on the livelihood security of the urban areas in Kerala.

KEYWORDS: AUEGS, Women Empowerment, Livelihood Security, Poverty Reduction, And Employment Generation.

INTRODUCTION

Household livelihood security is defined as adequate and sustainable access to income and resources to meet basic needs, including sufficient access to food, potable water, health facilities, and educational opportunities. The risk to livelihood security determines the level of vulnerability of a household to income, food, health, and nutritional insecurity. Livelihood insecurity continues to be a significant issue for low-income nations. To mitigate poverty, the Indian government has initiated several wage employment and self-employment schemes, including the National Urban Livelihoods Mission (NULM) and the Self-employment Programme for urban poor (SEPUP). Despite these initiatives, poverty persists in India. To ensure stable livelihood for the urban poor, the Kerala government has launched an urban wage employment programme known as the AYYANKALI URBAN WAGE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME. In 2010 Kerala became the pioneering state in India to implement an urban wage employment akin to the MGNREGA. It aims to enhance the livelihood security of the urban poor by providing 100 days of wage employment within a financial year to an urban household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. The present study elucidates the characteristics and operational mechanisms of the AUEGS while evaluating its impact on enhancing livelihood security for individuals living in urban poverty.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the socio-economic characteristics of beneficiaries of the AUEGS.
- To examine the impact of AUEGS on providing livelihood security for the urban poor.

LITERATURE REVIEW

G.D Niveditha (2022) This paper aims to elucidate the potential of the AUEGS as a mechanism for delivering social security to urban impoverished populations, with a particular focus on women and migrant laborers. The study conducts a critical analysis of the operational aspects of AUEGS, addressing its design and the challenges encountered during implementation, drawing insights from the experiences of workers and their interactions with municipal and state officials, as well as experts in the field. The conclusion emphasizes the necessity of establishing a similar scheme at the national level to enhance the state's capacity to bolster social security for the urban poor.

Sahana Subramanian (2023) The research evaluates the influence of the AUEGS on urban commons and the well-being of beneficiaries, conceptualized as human freedoms. It demonstrates that the AUEGS plays a crucial role in enhancing the functioning and capabilities of beneficiaries; however, structural and implementation challenges impede their effective realization. Additionally, the study offers specific recommendations aimed at addressing these persistent issues within the scheme.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The present study is based on primary and secondary data collection. primary data have been collected from the beneficiaries and officials of AUEGS programmes from selected municipalities in Kerala with the help of interview schedules. The secondary data was collected from various sources like Economic Review, AUEGS websites, research journals, books, and journals.

AYYANKALI URBAN EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE SCHEME

As a result of the spectacular improvement of the rural economy through the MGNREGA ACT, many policy experts recommend designing and implementing an urban wage employment guarantee programme to alleviate poverty and unemployment in urban areas. our policymakers are realizing the need for urban wage employment programs to support the urban poor, and various state governments have stepped in with their urban employment guarantee schemes such as the Odisha Urban Wage Employment Initiative, Mukhya Mantri Shahri Ajeevika Guarantee Yojana (Himachal Pradesh), Mukhyamantri SHRMIK Yojana (Jharkhand) Ayyankali Urban Employment Guarantee Scheme (Kerala) Among these states, Kerala was the first state in India implementing urban wage employment programme known as the AYYANKALI URBAN WAGE EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE SCHEME. This scheme ensures livelihood security for the urban poor by providing 100 days of wage employment to the urban poor within a financial year. The initiative seeks to establish a robust rights-based social safety net for residents of urban areas in Kerala by providing a reliable employment option when other job opportunities are limited or insufficient. The program guarantees 100 days of work for adult household members in urban regions, offering wages equivalent to those under the MGNREGA scheme. The daily wage is anticipated to rise from Rs 311 to Rs 333, with this increase taking effect retroactively from April 2023. In the fiscal year 2015-16, only three lakh workdays were recorded, with an expenditure of Rs 7.48 crore from a budget allocation of Rs 15 crore. However, by 2022-23, workdays significantly increased to 41.11 lakh. For the fiscal year 2023-24, the budget allocated for the AUEGS has been raised to Rs 150 crore.

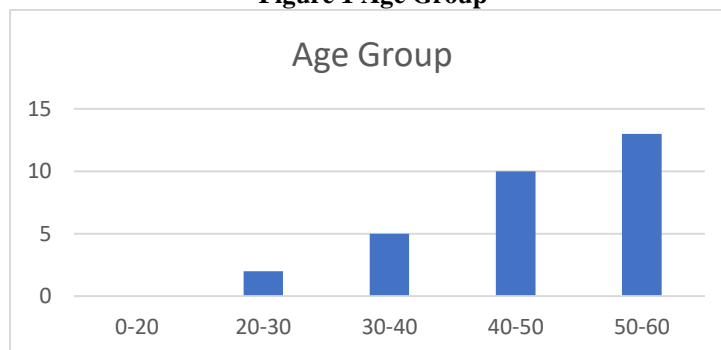
Apart from the stipulated wage rate, AUEGS has provided other rights and benefits to its beneficiaries such as free medical treatment and wage compensation, drinking and cleaning water, basic sanitation and resting shed, first aid kit, and creche facilities. The major works under the scheme included waste management, water conservation, pre-monsoon cleaning, afforestation, and house construction under PMAY and LIFE MISSION. In the financial year 2019-20, dairy farmers have also been included as beneficiaries of AUEGS, dairy farmers who have more than two cattle and supply no less than 10 liters of milk per day to a dairy cooperative society are eligible to get a day wage under the scheme.

DATA DISCUSSION

➤ **SOCIO-ECONOMIC BEHAVIOUR OF THE BENEFICIARIES OF AUEGS**

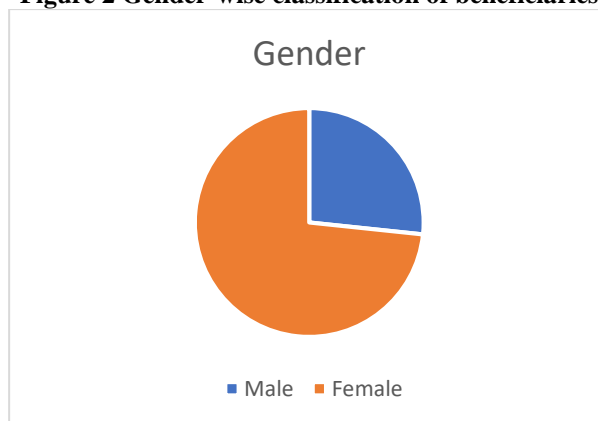
The evaluation of the socioeconomic behaviors of beneficiaries will be conducted by considering various factors, including age group, caste, educational attainment, family size, housing conditions, and the category of ration cards held.

Figure 1 Age Group



The above figure 1 shows that nearly 43% of the beneficiaries belong to the 50-60 age group. It reveals that most of the beneficiaries are age-old.

Figure 2 Gender-wise classification of beneficiaries



Source: primary data

The above pie chart shows that around 73% of the beneficiaries are females.

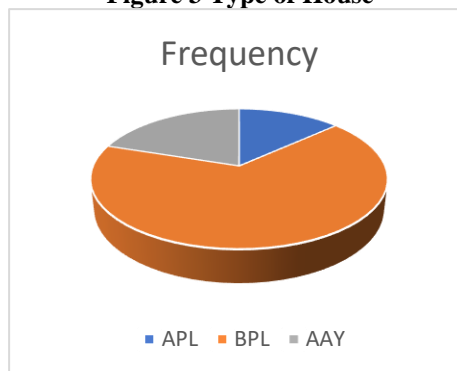
Table 1 caste of the beneficiaries

caste	Frequency
General	6
OBC	4
SC	18
ST	2

Source: primary data

The above table data reveals that more than half of the beneficiaries are belonging to SC.

Figure 3 Type of House



The above pie chart explains that around 67% of the beneficiaries are belonging to below the poverty line. only 13% of them including those above the poverty line.

Table 2 Educational Attainment of Beneficiaries

Educational status	frequency
lower primary	16
upper primary	8
SSLC	5
Degree	1

source: primary data

Table 2 indicates the educational attainment of beneficiaries of the AUEGS. It shows that more than half of the beneficiaries completed the lower primary education.

➤ **IMPACT OF THE SCHEME**

Table 3 classification based on beneficiaries' responses about the impact of the scheme

Impact of AUEGS	Responses	
	Yes	No
Employment creation	30	0
Asset generation	23	7
Women empowerment	30	0
improve livelihood security	28	2

source: primary data

Table 3 shows the beneficiaries' responses about the scheme's impact on improving urban development. This indicates that most people opine that AUEGS has had a very positive effect on employment generation. As per the guidelines of AUEGS, it is guaranteed 100 days of wage employment to the urban poor. AUEGS has been instrumental in providing much-needed employment to the urban poor. It provides employment opportunities to marginalized sections of society, the scheme has contributed to reducing caste and gender discrimination and has helped to create a more equitable and just urban society.

ASSET CREATION: Around 76% of the beneficiaries agree that AUEGS has created a positive impact on asset creation. Most of the work under the scheme relates to the construction of durable assets such as water bodies, roads, public wells, house construction, and urban beautification. Therefore, it helps to improve private and public asset creation in urban areas.

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: One of the fundamental goals of AUEGS is to empower women. The initiative guarantees that a minimum of one-third of its beneficiaries are women, thereby fostering gender equity and encouraging women's involvement in the workforce. AUEGS has implemented equal pay for both women and men, which contributes to enhancing financial independence and elevating the social status of women in urban settings.

IMPROVE LIVELIHOOD SECURITY: One significant goal of AUEGS is to enhance livelihood security for individuals living in urban poverty. Approximately 93% of the beneficiaries indicated that their living standards have improved since they participated in AUEGS. The initiative aims to bolster the livelihood security of urban residents by creating wage employment opportunities.

CONCLUSION

The research on livelihood security among the urban poor through the AUEGS highlights notable accomplishments and influences within urban India. Initiated in 2010, this scheme was designed to enhance employment opportunities and ensure livelihood security for the urban poor, thereby addressing issues of poverty and seasonal unemployment. The current study serves as a straightforward assessment of the AUEGS's impact on urban development. Findings indicate that the AUEGS has effectively contributed to the reduction of poverty and unemployment in urban settings. This demand-driven initiative empowers urban households to pursue employment according to their specific needs, thereby providing a reliable income source for informal workers and enhancing their overall livelihood security.

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