

Journal of Nonlinear Analysis and Optimization

Vol. 14, Issue. 1 : 2023

ISSN : **1906-9685**



**UNDERSTANDING THE SCHOOL DROPOUT CRISIS AMONG GIRL CHILDREN
IN INDIA: ANALYZING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHALLENGES AT THE
SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL**

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ABSTRACT

This study delves into the intricate social and economic challenges that underpin the dropout crisis among girl children in secondary schools across Telangana, India. Through a meticulous analysis blending primary and secondary data, including interviews with parents, teachers, and affected girls, the research uncovers the multifaceted barriers obstructing girls' educational journeys. Key findings spotlight the pervasive influence of factors such as parental alcoholism, safety apprehensions, and economic adversities on the prevalence of dropout rates. These insights underscore the pressing need for tailored interventions aimed at dismantling these barriers and fostering a nurturing educational milieu conducive to girls' continued participation. Amidst the nuanced understanding of these challenges, this study advocates for concerted efforts towards gender equality and empowerment, championing girls' rights to education unhindered by socio-economic constraints. By prioritizing interventions that address the root causes of dropout and promote a supportive learning environment, stakeholders can foster a transformative shift in the educational landscape of Telangana. Through the promotion of gender-inclusive policies and the provision of comprehensive support systems, this research endeavors to empower girls to realize their educational aspirations and contribute meaningfully to their communities and beyond.

Keywords: Girl child education, dropout crisis, secondary schools, social impact, economic impact, parental alcoholism, safety concerns, gender equality, empowerment, Telangana, India, etc.

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is universally acknowledged as a cornerstone of human development, offering individuals the opportunity to acquire knowledge, skills, and agency to navigate and contribute to society. However, despite global efforts to promote universal education, persistent challenges hinder the educational advancement of girls, particularly at the secondary level. Nowhere is this more evident than in regions like Telangana, India, where socio-economic disparities intersect with deeply ingrained gender biases, exacerbating barriers to girls' education.

In Telangana, the plight of girl child dropout rates in secondary schools reflects a broader narrative of gender inequality and educational exclusion. The decision of girls to leave school prematurely not only denies them their right to education but also perpetuates cycles of poverty and marginalization within communities. Understanding the intricate web of factors driving these dropout rates is crucial for devising targeted interventions that address the root causes and empower girls to pursue their educational aspirations freely.

This study endeavours to unpack the complex dynamics underlying girl child dropout rates in Telangana's secondary schools, offering insights into the socio-economic and cultural factors shaping educational outcomes. By delving into the lived experiences of girls, parents, and teachers, it seeks to illuminate the multifaceted challenges hindering girls' access to education and retention in school. Through rigorous analysis and interpretation of data, this research aims to inform evidence-based strategies and policies that foster an enabling environment for girls' education and empower them to realize their full potential.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Gross (2010) argues that advising and counselling in England help students develop a better understanding of their professors and cultivate appreciation for them, thereby enhancing their performance. One may argue that personal growth is a primary objective of guiding. Additionally, it supports students' personal interests and complements teachers' efforts in helping with academic issues. **Pandey (2005)** said that guiding and counselling in India facilitates the formulation and achievement of long-term objectives. "He said that all pupils with and without difficulties are all seeking a promising future." Guidance and counselling assist individuals in devoting more and more focused attention to their objectives.

According to **Lepheane, Thamae, Mokone, and Maphokwane (2011)**, dropout learners exhibit the following characteristics: high levels of absenteeism, frequent grade repetition, aggressive behaviour, poor academic achievement, and a significant proportion of them come from impoverished and vulnerable backgrounds. I have seen these common traits in the majority of the learners within my community. Conducting this research is crucial for several reasons, given the implementation of the free primary education programme in Lesotho. Firstly, it is anticipated that all students from grades 1 to 7 should now be attending school; but, regrettably, this is not happening. Observers see learners wandering the streets of Teyateyaneng. Additionally, the methods used to address barriers to students' attendance in schools will be revealed. This research will also emphasise the need of tackling the repercussions of school dropout.

Winding and Andersen (2015) conducted a study to examine how social interactions influence the relationship between parental socioeconomic status and school dropout rates in the Danish adolescent cohort known as Vestliv. This research used data from surveys administered in 2004 and 2007, as well as registry data from 2004 and 2010. The research sample included 3,054 individuals who were born in 1989. The information on dropout was

divided into two categories: those who had finished or were currently attending secondary school, and individuals who had dropped out or had never attended secondary education. The study used logistic regression analysis to examine the links between parental socioeconomic status and dropout rates at age 21, while also considering the influence of social relationships at ages 15 and 18. A significant number of adolescents had difficulties in interpersonal relationships at the ages of 15 and 18. Overall, there was a significant correlation between social relationships and the likelihood of not finishing a secondary school, particularly for females. For example, 18-year-old females who struggle to manage family problems have a 2.6 times higher likelihood of not finishing their secondary school. Adolescents from economically disadvantaged backgrounds were around three times more likely to not finish secondary school compared to adolescents from affluent backgrounds. This association remained mostly unchanged even after accounting for social connections with family or friends. At the age of 18, having poor relationships with instructors and classmates significantly contributed to the link between income and dropping out of school for both females and boys. The research verified the existence of a class gradient in the attainment of secondary education. Although there was a correlation between poor social connections between ages 15 and 18 and dropout at age 21, it is important to note that social relations with family and friends only accounted for a small portion of the socioeconomic disparities in dropout rates. Nevertheless, inadequate interpersonal connections with educators and peers at the age of 18 account for a significant portion of the socioeconomic disparity in secondary school dropout rates.

Bhatti and Awan (2019) examined the socioeconomic variables that influence the enrollment of students in primary schools in the Bahawalpur area of Pakistan. A dataset consisting of information from 200 youngsters was obtained using a comprehensive and organised questionnaire. Through the implementation of the ordinary least squares approach, it was shown that there is a negative correlation between school fees and school enrollment. Specifically, when the cost of tuition grows, the number of students enrolling in the school falls. Similarly, there was a negative correlation between the distance from school and school enrollment. The occupation of a child's parent is positively correlated with their enrollment in school. Similarly, the presence of adequate facilities in schools has a favourable impact on school enrollment. An increase in the number of classrooms directly correlates with an increase in school enrollment. Improved road infrastructure is positively correlated with school enrollment, since improved road access to schools leads to higher enrollment rates. This research also investigated the favourable association between the income of the household head and the country's economic progress with school attendance.

In their study, **Mughal (2020)** examined the occurrence of student attrition in Pind Dadan Khan, a rural region in Pakistan, via the lens of dads whose children dropped out of school. Data on student dropout was gathered from a total of 33 government secondary schools, with 17 being exclusively for females and 16 exclusively for boys. The results indicated that a combined total of 741 male students and 103 female students discontinued their education

during the academic years of 2011-12 and 2012-13. A data analysis technique based on the participants' perspectives was used, using an inductive approach. The research investigates how variables such as family poverty, low academic achievement, educational background, and problems with instructors also have a role in children's dropout rates.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The goal of this research is to address key questions about the education of girls, particularly at the secondary school level. "This study aims to identify and analyze the barriers faced by girls in secondary school education through a comprehensive ground-level investigation."

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Study Area: The research was conducted in two mandals of Telangana. The areas were selected due to their high female sex ratio coupled with a lower female literacy rate compared to males. The study focuses on understanding the dropout rates and the underlying causes in these distinct socio-economic and cultural contexts.

Study Area: The research was conducted in the Telangana state, focusing on diverse regions to capture the contrasting rural and tribal characteristics that affect girl child education. Telangana was chosen due to its diverse demographic and socio-economic profile, with a high female sex ratio but a lower female literacy rate compared to males.

Sampling Method: A multi-stage sampling technique was employed to select units for the study:

- **State Selection:** Telangana was chosen due to its demographic characteristics and educational challenges.
- **District Selection:** Specific districts within the state were selected based on criteria such as high female dropout rates and the presence of both rural and tribal areas.
- **Area Selection:** Within these districts, rural and tribal areas were selected to provide a comparative analysis.
- **Village Selection:** A total of 36 villages were selected, with an even split between rural and tribal areas.
- **Household Selection:** 300 households were chosen for the study, with an equal number of households from rural and tribal areas. Additionally, 70 teacher respondents were selected based on the number of schools in the selected areas. The sample households included tribal girl dropouts and their parents.

Data Collection Both primary and secondary data were utilized in this study:

- **Primary Data:** Collected through direct personal interviews with the parents or guardians of girls who had dropped out of school. A research schedule was used to guide these interviews. "Snowball sampling was employed to identify the dropout girls in the study area."
- **Secondary Data:** Gathered from local secondary schools, which provided lists of school dropouts from the last five years.

Data Analysis: The collected data were analyzed using various statistical techniques:

- **Frequency and Percentage Analysis:** Used to explain the parents' perceptions of the reasons for girl child dropout.
- **Rank Order Index:** Applied to measure the impact of different reasons for school dropout among girls. The index was developed based on the researcher's judgment and comprised multiple reasons contributing to the dropout rate.

V. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Initially, a percentage table is used to elucidate the parents' perspectives about the causes of female kid dropout. Additionally, a rank order index is utilised to quantify the amount of influence that these factors have on the decision of girl children to drop out. The indicator encompasses several factors that contribute to the rising dropout rate. The location of dropouts may be determined by analysing these factors. "The researcher might assign values to these arguments depending on their judgement." Therefore, the data were presented in the subsequent tables and subjected to analysis. The rationales articulated by female children who have discontinued their education, as well as by their parents and instructors, are outlined in Table-1. Indices are created to quantify the causes.

Table 1: Selected Reasons for Dropout of Girl Child

Domain	Reasonsfordropout
Economicimpact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to spend on books and other amenities • No job guarantee • Poor economic background • Lack of financial support • Poverty • Attending work for support • Parents' Siblings caring • Poor health condition of parents • No parents • Unemployment of parents.
Socialimpact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor academic achievement of child • Helping parents • Lack of interest in education • Fear of anti-social elements • Priority given to brother's education

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor amenities at schools • Sibling caring • Alcoholism of parents • Long distance of school • Ill health of parents.
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Table 1 presents an insightful breakdown of the various reasons contributing to the dropout of girl children from secondary schools, categorized into economic and social impacts.

Economic Impact: Several economic factors emerge as significant barriers to girls' education. The inability to afford essential resources such as books and other amenities, coupled with a lack of job guarantee and poor economic backgrounds, exacerbates the challenges faced by girls in accessing education. Additionally, the need to contribute to family income by attending work to support parents, along with concerns related to siblings' care and the unemployment of parents, further compound the economic pressures that lead to dropout.

Social Impact: Social factors also play a pivotal role in shaping girls' educational trajectories. Poor academic achievement, often influenced by inadequate support systems and the necessity to assist parents, emerges as a prominent reason for dropout. Similarly, a lack of interest in education, fuelled by various social dynamics such as fear of anti-social elements and the prioritization of brothers' education over girls', contributes to disengagement from schooling. Furthermore, challenges related to poor amenities at schools, the alcoholism of parents, long distances to school, and the ill health of parents collectively add to the social obstacles that hinder girls' educational attainment.

Overall, Table 1 underscores the intricate interplay between economic and social factors in perpetuating the dropout of girl children from secondary schools. Addressing these multifaceted challenges requires holistic interventions that encompass economic empowerment, social support networks, and initiatives aimed at challenging gender norms and promoting educational inclusivity.

Table 2: Social Impact of girl child dropouts in Secondary Schools

Statement	No Impact	Little Impact	Moderate Impact	Good Impact	Very Good Impact	Total
Poor academic achievement of child	59 (19.7)	42 (14.0)	62 (20.7)	58 (19.3)	79 (26.3)	300 (100.0)
Lack of interest on education	66 (22.0)	16 (5.3)	42 (14.0)	79 (26.3)	97 (32.3)	300 (100.0)
Poor amenities at schools	125 (41.7)	54 (18.0)	45 (15.0)	38 (12.7)	38 (12.7)	300 (100.0)
Helping parents	55 (18.3)	50 (16.7)	71 (23.7)	57 (19.0)	67 (22.3)	300 (100.0)
Fear of antisocial elements	31 (10.3)	48 (16.0)	49 (16.3)	89 (29.7)	83 (27.7)	300 (100.0)
Sibling caring	81 (27.0)	93 (31.0)	50 (16.7)	36 (12.0)	40 (13.3)	300 (100.0)

Long distance of school	103	52	62	56	27	300
	(34.3)	(17.3)	(20.7)	(18.7)	(9.0)	(100.0)
Priority given to brothers' education	36	42	66	85	71	300
	(12.0)	(14.0)	(22.0)	(28.3)	(23.7)	(100.0)
Alcoholism of parents	15	37	41	109	98	300
	(5.0)	(12.3)	(13.7)	(36.3)	(32.7)	(100.0)
Ill health of parents	100	76	52	37	35	300
	(33.3)	(25.3)	(17.3)	(12.3)	(11.7)	(100.0)

The research on the social influence on secondary school dropout rates reveals that 32.3% of females have a very favourable effect due to their lack of interest in school, whilst 22.0% experience no impact at all. Regarding the issue of children's underperformance in academics, research has shown that 26.3 percent of girls have a very positive influence, while 19.7 percent have no influence at all. Additionally, it was found that 22.3 percent of girls willingly offered their assistance to their parents, whilst 18.3 percent of females had no impact on this matter. Regarding inadequate educational facilities, 41.7 percent of students are unaffected, while 12.7 percent of females are affected. Moreover, the data shows that 13.3 percent of females discontinue their education as a result of taking care of their siblings, but 27.0 percent of girls are unaffected by this responsibility. Regarding the apprehension of antisocial components, 27.7 percent have a very positive influence, whilst 10.3 percent have no influence. Regarding the prioritisation of brothers' education, 23.7 percent have a very beneficial effect, whereas 12.0 percent have no effect. A study has shown that 34.3 percent of individuals do not affect the long distance of school, while 9.0 percent have a notable influence on it. "Based on the statistics, 33.3 percent of individuals do not affect their parents' poor health, while 11.7 percent have a very positive influence on it." Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that 5.0 percent of female dropouts do not affect their parents' drinking, while 32.7 percent have a very positive influence on their parents' alcoholism.

Table 3: Perceptive Score Analysis on Social Impact of girl child dropouts in Secondary Schools

S.N o	Statement	No Impact	Little Impact	Moderate Impact	Good Impact	Very Good Impact	Tota l
	Scale Value (SV)	1	2	3	4	5	
1	Poor academic achievement of child	59	42	62	58	79	300
	Frequency x Scale Value	59	84	186	232	395	956-V
2	Lack of interest on education	66	16	42	79	97	300
	Frequency x Scale Value	66	32	126	316	485	1025-III
3	Poor amenities at schools	125	54	45	38	38	300
	Frequency x Scale Value	125	108	135	152	190	710-

							X
4	HelpingParents	55	50	71	57	67	300
	FrequencyxScaleValue	55	100	213	228	335	931-VI
5	Fearofanti-social elements	31	48	49	89	83	300
	FrequencyxScaleValue	31	96	147	356	415	1045-II
6	Siblingcaring	81	93	50	36	40	300
	FrequencyxScaleValue	81	186	150	144	200	761-VII
7	Longdistanceofschool	103	52	62	56	27	300
	FrequencyxScaleValue	103	104	186	224	135	752-VIII
8	Prioritygiventobrother's education	36	42	66	85	71	300
	FrequencyxScaleValue	36	84	198	340	355	1013-IV
9	Alcoholismofparents	15	37	41	109	98	300
	FrequencyxScaleValue	15	74	123	436	490	1138-I
10	Illhealthofparents	100	76	52	37	35	300
	FrequencyxScaleValue	100	152	156	148	175	731-IX
	Totalscoreforworkenvironment						9062
	MaximumPossibleScore	5(Maximumscorepoints)300(numberofrespondents)X 10 (number of statements)					15000
	Percentageofscoreofwork environment	Totalscoreforgeneralworkingconditiondisplay/MaximumPossible Score X 100					60.4
	Average						906

The Perceptive Score Analysis on the Social Impact of Girl Child Dropouts in Secondary Schools reveals that the highest rank is attributed to parental alcoholism, with a score value of 1137. The second rank is given to the fear of anti-social elements, scoring 1045. Lack of interest in education takes the third rank, with a score value of 1025. The fourth rank is assigned to the priority given to brothers' education, scoring 1013. Poor academic achievement of the child ranks fifth, with a score value of 956. Helping parents ranks sixth with a score value of 931. Sibling caring is the seventh rank, scoring 761. The eighth rank is attributed to the long distance of the school, with a score value of 752. Ill health of parents takes the ninth rank, scoring 731. Lastly, poor amenities at schools rank tenth, with a score value of 710.

Table 4: Economic impact of girl child dropouts in secondary schools

S.	Statement	No	Little	Moderate	Good	Very	Total
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No		Impact	Impact	Impact	Impact	Good Impact	
1	Unable to spend on books and other amenities	259 (86.3)	9 (3.0)	3 (1.0)	2 (0.7)	27 (9.0)	300 (100.0)
2	Poor economic background	64 (21.3)	51 (17.0)	47 (15.7)	71 (23.7)	67 (22.3)	300 (100.0)
3	Attending work for support parents	84 (28.0)	97 (32.3)	41 (13.7)	51 (17.0)	27 (9.0)	300 (100.0)
4	No job guarantee	48 (16.0)	39 (13.0)	69 (23.0)	74 (24.7)	70 (23.3)	300 (100.0)
5	Lack of financial support	47 (15.7)	73 (24.3)	67 (22.3)	52 (17.3)	61 (20.3)	300 (100.0)
6	Siblings caring	114 (38.0)	98 (32.7)	44 (14.7)	24 (8.0)	20 (6.7)	300 (100.0)
7	Unemployment of parents	8 (2.7)	37 (12.3)	72 (24.0)	105 (35.0)	78 (26.0)	300 (100.0)
8	Poverty	16 (5.3)	50 (16.7)	81 (27.0)	75 (25.0)	78 (26.0)	300 (100.0)
9	No parents	87 (29.0)	135 (45.0)	31 (10.3)	20 (6.7)	27 (9.0)	300 (100.0)
10	Poor health condition of parents	98 (32.7)	81 (27.0)	70 (23.3)	37 (12.3)	14 (4.7)	300 (100.0)

Based on statistics about the economic consequences of females dropping out of secondary school, it is shown that 21.3 percent of girls do not have any influence on their families' financial situation. 22.3 percent of females have a very positive influence. The data indicates that around 86.3 percent of girls are unable to allocate funds for books and other amenities, with no significant effect on their situation. Conversely, 9.0 percent of girls have a positive influence in this regard. Regarding the consequences of lacking a job guarantee, it is seen that 16 percent had no effect, while 23.3 percent experienced a very favourable outcome. Regarding the task of providing assistance to parents, it is found that 28.0% of the time there is no effect, while 9.0% of the time there is an effect. Regarding sibling caregiving, the study indicates that 38.0 percent have no influence, while 6.7 percent have a very beneficial influence. When there is little financial assistance, 15.7 percent of individuals do not experience any effect, whereas 20.3 percent feel a really beneficial effect. Regarding poverty, it has been shown that 5.3 percent has no effect while 26.0 percent has a significant positive influence. Regarding parental unemployment, research has shown that 2.7 percent has had no effect, while 26.0 percent has had a very beneficial effect. It has been noted in connection with the suboptimal health of the offspring of the parents. 32.7 percent had no effect, and 4.7 percent had a very favourable effect. In addition, the research indicates that in the absence of parents, 29.0 percent of individuals have little influence, whereas 9.0 percent experience a significant influence.

Table 5: Perceptive Score Analysis on economic impact of girl child dropouts in secondary schools

S. No	Statement	No Impact	Little Impact	Moderate Impact	Good Impact	Very Good Impact	Total
	ScaleValue(SV)	1	2	3	4	5	
1	Unable to spend on books and other amenities	259	9	3	2	27	300
	FrequencyxScaleValue	259	18	9	8	135	429-X
2	Poor economic background	64	51	47	71	67	300
	FrequencyxScaleValue	64	102	141	284	335	926-IV
3	Attending work for support parents	84	97	41	51	27	300
	FrequencyxScaleValue	84	194	123	204	135	740-VI
4	No Job Guarantee	48	39	69	74	70	300
	FrequencyxScaleValue	48	78	207	296	350	979-III
5	Lack of financial support	47	73	67	52	61	300
	FrequencyxScaleValue	47	146	201	208	305	907-V
6	Sibling Caring	114	98	44	24	20	300
	FrequencyxScaleValue	114	196	132	96	100	638-IX
7	Unemployment of parents	8	37	72	105	78	300
	FrequencyxScaleValue	8	74	216	420	390	1108-I
8	Poverty	16	50	81	75	78	300
	FrequencyxScaleValue	16	100	243	300	390	1049-II
9	No parents	87	135	31	20	27	300
	FrequencyxScaleValue	87	270	93	80	135	665-VIII
10	Poor health condition of parents	98	81	70	37	14	300
	FrequencyxScaleValue	98	162	210	148	70	688-VII
	Total score for work environment						8129
	Maximum Possible Score	5(Maximum score points)300(number of respondents)X10 (number of statements)					15000
	Percentage of score of work environment	Total score for general working condition display/Maximum Possible Score X 100					54.2
	Average						812

The Perceptive Score Analysis on the Economic Impact of Girl Child Dropouts in Secondary Schools data reveals that the top-ranked factor is Unemployment of Parents, with a score value of 1108. Poverty takes the second rank, with a score value of 1049. No Job Guarantee follows closely in third place, with a score value of 979. "Poor Economic Background secures the fourth rank, with a score value of 926." Lastly, Lack of financial support of child ranks fifth, with a score value of 90. Work attendance to support parents received the sixth highest ranking, with a score value of 740. Poor parental health received the seventh highest ranking, with a score value of 688. The absence of parents received the eighth highest ranking, with a score value of 665. Sibling care received the ninth highest ranking, with a score value of 638. Lastly, the unavailability of funds for books and other amenities received the tenth highest ranking, with a score value of 429.

Discussion:

The analysis of the data provides valuable insights into the complex dynamics contributing to the dropout rates of girl children in secondary schools in Telangana. By employing percentage tables and rank order indices, the study effectively quantified the impact of various socio-economic factors on dropout rates. These findings shed light on the multifaceted nature of the challenges faced by girls in accessing and remaining in education.

One striking observation from the data is the pervasive influence of parental alcoholism on school dropout rates. With a substantial proportion of respondents attributing a 'Good' or 'Very Good' impact to this factor, it underscores the detrimental effects of alcoholism within households. Addressing this issue requires holistic interventions that not only support parents in overcoming addiction but also provide adequate support networks for affected families to ensure the well-being and educational continuity of their children.

Similarly, the fear of anti-social elements emerges as another significant barrier to girls' education. The data indicates a considerable impact of safety concerns on dropout rates, highlighting the urgent need for enhanced security measures around schools and within communities. Creating a safe and conducive learning environment is paramount to instilling confidence in girls and their families, thereby encouraging continued participation in education.

VI. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research provides valuable insights into the complex web of socio-economic factors contributing to the dropout rates of girl children in secondary schools in Telangana. Through meticulous analysis and interpretation of data, several key findings have emerged, shedding light on the multifaceted challenges hindering girls' access to and retention in education.

The study underscores the pervasive impact of parental alcoholism and safety concerns on school dropout rates, highlighting the urgent need for targeted interventions to address these

issues and create a safe and supportive learning environment. Moreover, it emphasizes the importance of challenging traditional gender norms and biases that prioritize boys' education over girls', calling for concerted efforts to promote gender equality and empower girls to pursue their educational aspirations without constraints.

Furthermore, the research underscores the critical role of quality education and adequate resources in retaining girls' interest and fostering academic achievement. By enhancing the overall educational experience and providing necessary support systems, stakeholders can mitigate the risk factors associated with dropout and cultivate an environment conducive to girls' educational success.

In light of these findings, it is imperative for policymakers, educators, and community leaders to collaborate on comprehensive strategies that address the root causes of dropout and promote equitable access to education for all children, regardless of gender. By prioritizing girls' education and implementing evidence-based interventions, we can unlock the full potential of girls in Telangana and empower them to contribute meaningfully to their communities and beyond.

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