

Stunting and undernutrition among adolescent girls of indigenous communities in Telangana, India: A cross-sectional study

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Introduction

Despite economic progress, indigenous communities in India remain vulnerable to malnutrition due to traditional practices, poverty, and limited education. This study explores chronic malnutrition indicators among indigenous adolescent girls in Telangana, India, focusing on stunting, thinness, and undernutrition.

Materials and Methods

Methods:

Sample- Data collected in 2017 from 695 adolescent girls (11-18 years) from 2542 households.

Approach- Mixed methods approach combining demographic and nutritional indicators.

Indicators- Stunting, thinness, undernutrition.

Age Groups- Early Adolescents (11-14 years), Late Adolescents (15-18 years).

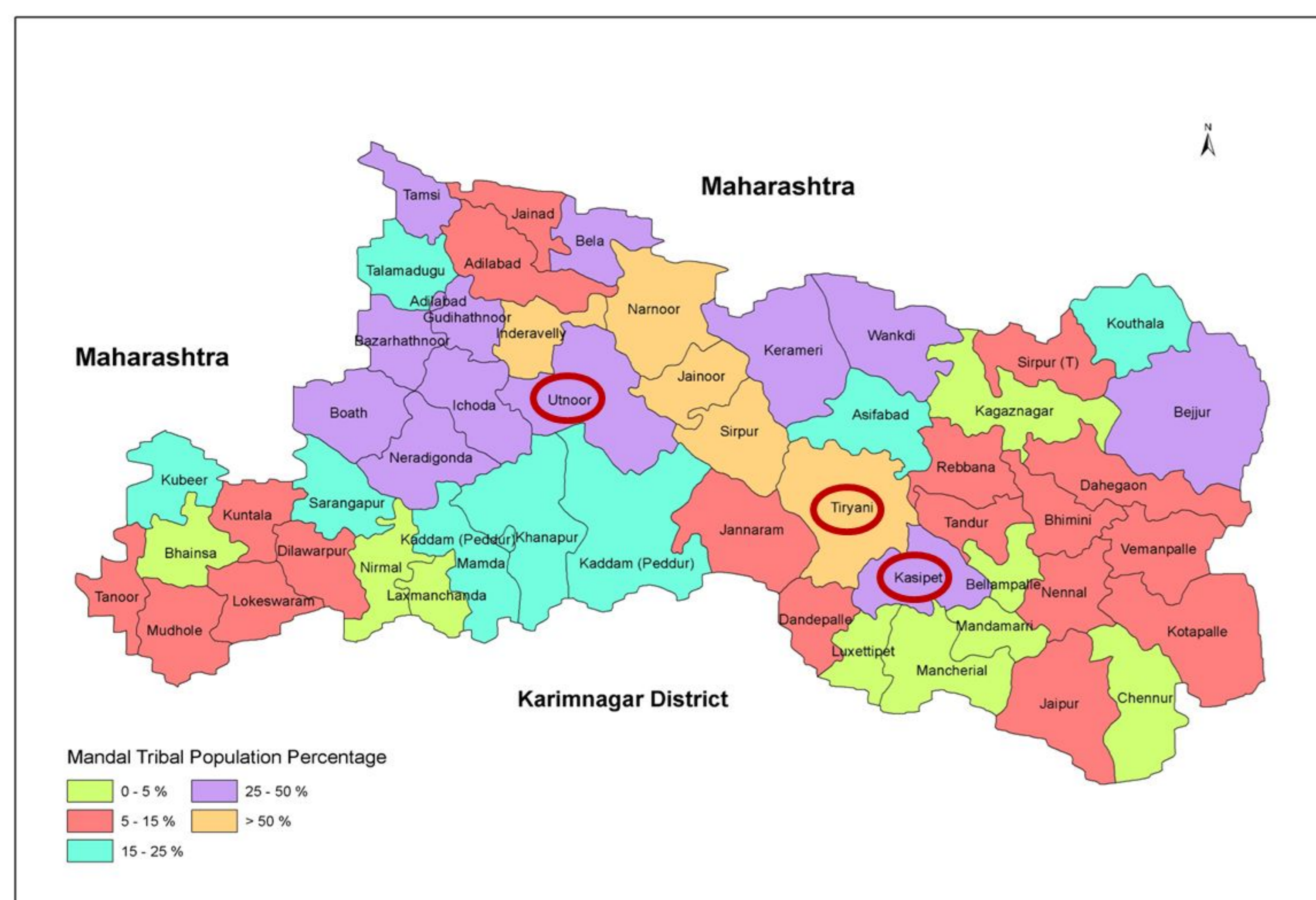


Fig 1. Study locations

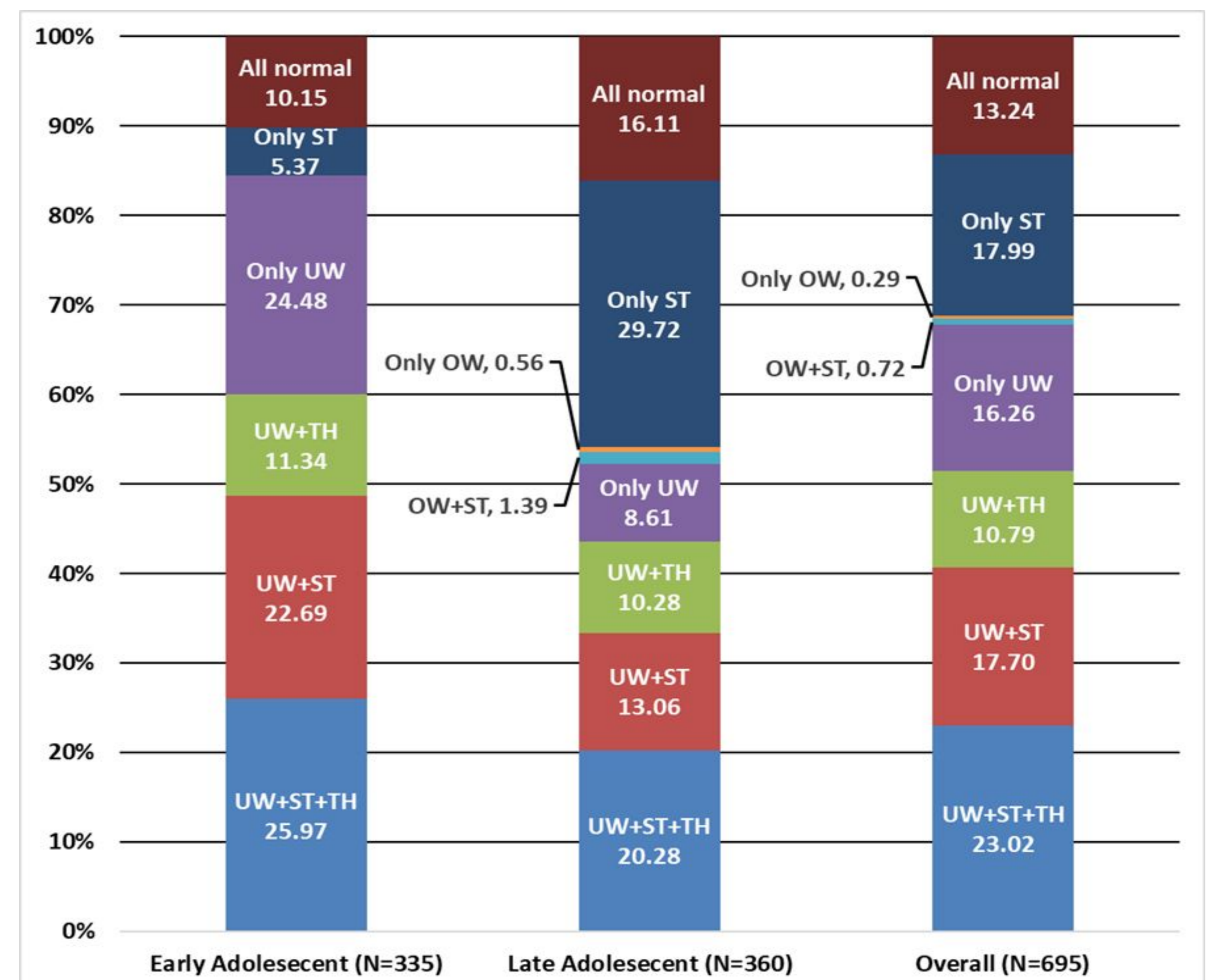
Results and Discussion

Results:

Nutritional Status: 87% of girls were stunted, underweight, or thin, while only 13% had normal nutritional status.

Age Differences: Early adolescents had higher underweight prevalence (24.4%), late adolescents had higher stunting prevalence (30%).

Factors Identified: Education of head of household and adolescent girl, toilet availability, socio-cultural norms around food, and early marriage.



Note: UW = underweight, OW=overweight, ST=stunting and TH=thinness

Fig 2. Prevalence of nutritional status indicators among early and late adolescents (in %)

Implications:

Policy Interventions: Need for targeted policies and programs to address malnutrition among indigenous communities.

Nutrition Education: Conduct nutrition education sessions to raise awareness about balanced diets and dietary diversity.

Behavior Change Campaigns: Promote behavioral changes, including delaying early marriages to improve nutritional outcomes.



Conclusions

The study underscores the urgency of coordinated efforts, including policy interventions, education, and behavior change campaigns, to combat chronic malnutrition among indigenous adolescent girls in Telangana. By addressing socio-economic, cultural, and nutritional determinants, we can work towards improving their overall well-being and future prospects.