AP gets $ 75 million from World Bank

To benefit the Government of Andhra Pradesh in terms of its Rural Inclusive Growth Project while aiming to enhance the agricultural incomes of small and marginal farmers and ensure increased access to services related to health, nutrition, sanitation and social entitlements, an agreement $ 75 million credit was signed between the Indian government and the World Bank recently, informed an official.

“Over the years women-led community institutions in Andhra Pradesh have made significant impacts in helping communities gain higher access to credit, education and assets, and in greater empowerment of women. However, despite these achievements, inclusion remains a challenge,” said Onno Ruhl, World Bank Country Director in India. “This new generation rural transformation program will strive to fulfill the aspirations of small and marginal farmers, especially among the SC and ST communities, to ensure shared prosperity and increase in the pace of poverty reduction.”

The credit agreement for the project was signed by Raj Kumar, Joint Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, on behalf of the Government of India; Sunitha Kolaventy, Finance Secretary, on behalf of the Government of Andhra Pradesh; and Onno Ruhl, World Bank Country Director in India, on behalf of the World Bank. Solomon Arokiaraj, the Chief Executive Officer of Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty, the implementing agency was also present.

The project will focus on increasing economic opportunities for small and marginal farmers, especially from Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) households in the 150 most backward mandals (cluster of villages across gram panchayats).

It will invest in developing a network of social enterprises for food, nutrition, sanitation and other social enterprises which operate at community and district level. Several Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) with leading private sector organizations are being planned to enable farmers to better access markets. It will also support the Government of Andhra Pradesh in its efforts at creating an enabling policy framework, with real time analytics across sectors through the various missions established by them.

To boost human development, investments will be made in improving access to services in the areas of health, nutrition, and water and sanitation and increasing coverage and effectiveness of India’s social safety net programs.

It will also work towards improving the coverage and service delivery of social protection entitlements fr 500,000 poorest households.

“Most of the small and marginal farmers are not able to access opportunities from the growth in these sectors because they have limited access to extension services, good quality inputs like improved seeds, market services, and institutional credit. The Government of Andhra Pradesh has now adopted a mission-based approach with a focus on inclusive growth and poverty alleviation. These missions would provide the policy framework and enabling eco system for the initiatives proposed in the project,” said Parmesh Shah, Lead Rural Development Specialist and the Task Team Leader for the project.