



Workers in the Time of Covid-19

Originally published: ActionAid Association, India (2020)

Introduction

Carried out from 23rd August 2020 to 8th September 2020, during Unlock 3.0, the third phase of the government's phase-wise reopening of the post coronavirus lockdown, the survey, carried across 23 states and five Union Territories, assesses the impact of COVID-19 and the lockdown workers of the informal sector. Interviewing over 16,900 workers in 402 districts, the assessment covered a broad range of issues pertaining to livelihood, wages, savings, expenditure and access to social security schemes, with the objective of putting the lives of the workers of the informal sector in the context of the enraging pandemic and the ensuing economic turmoil.



Key Highlights

1. As lockdown restrictions were gradually relaxed, people have begun returning to their livelihoods, however despite this fact, a huge number of them remain unemployed. **48% of the workers reported being unemployed, compared to 78% workers** in Round I of the survey.
2. Sufficiency of food items has increased from 18.47% during the lockdown period to 32.06% in the unlock phase. Water sufficiency, however, has decreased from 61.38% to 59.23% in the same frame of time. **Savings sufficiency noticed an upturn as 12.22% reported sufficient savings during Unlock compared to 5.29% in the lockdown.**
3. A mere 10% of workers were reported to be employed full-time, whereas 42% were either employed on a part-time basis or worked sporadically since the unlock process began. The unemployment rate of informal sector **workers in rural areas (53%) was 1.5 times more in comparison to that of urban areas (36%).**
4. Around 67% respondents in urban areas and 68% in rural areas reported that their consumption of food was not sufficient. Additionally, 38% workers residing in urban areas and 42% in rural areas said their water consumption is not sufficient.
5. Low wages coupled with exhaustion of savings due to lockdown resulted in the workers resorting to taking loans to stay afloat. **Around 39% workers (47% in urban areas and 36% in rural areas) revealed they had to borrow money to support themselves.**

Read more: https://www.actionaidindia.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Workers-in-the-time-of-Covid-19_Survey-Round-II-V8-29-Oct-20.pdf

Author: Saumya Anand, PILOT at Pratham