



EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE DURING COVID-19

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MGNREGA is one of the largest social safety nets anywhere in the world. In addition to taking a rights-based approach to employment provisioning, it includes several other innovative features such as equal pay for men and women, on-site child-care facilities, an attempt at grassroots democracy and participatory governance. This report presents survey findings from Bihar, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Demand for work under scheme in 2020 witnessed an increase of 43%
- Decline in village sources of employment and incomes as well as remittances constituted a huge negative shock to vulnerable households.
- The increase in income of some households was both directly attributed to earnings through MGNREGA and indirectly due to increases in productivity resulting from roads, irrigation work etc. Thus, MGNREGA contributed to the overall development of village.
- Not having to migrate, assured wages despite delays, and equal wages for men and women are the top 3 overall reasons for liking the program.
- For the majority of households surveyed, working in farms and migrating is the main alternative to MGNREGA
- There are intra state variations in conversion rate from registration to working.
- Only 14% of households always got receipts while 60% of the households never got receipts. Number increased during COVID and thus got no unemployment allowance even after 15 days of no work.
- Problem of rationing exist in two ways: households needing work do not get it(roughly 39% of all the job card holding households) and those who get some work do not get for desired no. of days. Reasons of huge unmet demands are:
 - ✓ Inadequate work: more predominant in the low performing blocks compared to the high performing ones. Poor Strengthening of Gram Sabhas led to not enough shelves of work being created.
 - ✓ Since the adoption of the electronic funds management system Gram Panchayats don't get any funds in advance to execute works hence work does not start even for sanctioned projects.
 - ✓ Practitioners have also alluded to the centralization of programme implementation using the MIS as a reason as even ongoing work is marked as closed after target time
 - ✓ Contractor Did Not Inform: high prevalence of contractors is a sign of massive corruption and elite capture of the programme
 - ✓ Panchayat Rozgar Sahayak not available and technical anomalies (name not in the computer)
- In Bihar we see manifestation of the discouraged worker effect.
- Inadequate funds allocation delays wage payments which are more in the second half of a financial year compared to the first half. Overall, only 36% of the households got their payments within 15 days. Since stage 1 time has uniformly improved, there is reason to believe that the delays experienced by households in getting wages are due to delays in transfer of wages by the Union government.

- On average, density of bank branches, financial inclusion and financial autonomy among women is better off in the southern states of India
- The majority of households reported that they used the NREGA earnings primarily on food and other household provisions followed by medicines and health related expenditures. Analogously, reduction in expenditure on food, medicines and education comes across as the main consequence of lack of access to MGNREGA

Read more: https://cse.azimpremjiversity.edu.in/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/MGNREGA_Covid_Survey_Report_Final.pdf

Author: Jahanavi, PILOT at Pratham