

## 'MGNREGS MADE UP FOR UP TO 80% INCOME LOSS DURING PANDEMIC'

Relevant for: Indian Economy | Topic: Issues Related to Poverty, Inclusion, Employment & Sustainable Development

In a first providing empirical evidence, a study conducted on the impact of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) during the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed that the wages earned under the Act helped people compensate between 20% and 80% of the income loss incurred because of the lockdown. The report also said that around 39% all job card-holding households interested in working under the MGNREGA did not get a single day of work in the year 2020-21.

The study titled, "Employment guarantee during COVID-19- The Role of MGNREGA in the year after the 2020 lockdown" conducted by Centre for Sustainable Employment, Azim Premji University, collaborative Research and Dissemination (CORD), Samaj Pragati Sahyog and NREGA consortium was released on Thursday. The study was aimed at determining the extent to which working in the programme provided income support to vulnerable households during the pandemic.

The team surveyed a total of eight blocks in four States -- Bihar, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. The final report of the survey that was conducted in December 2021 said, "For households who had not worked in the pre-COVID year but did find work during the COVID year, we find that MGNREGA earnings compensated for anywhere between 20% and 100% of income lost from other sources".

The study, however, also pointed out that MGNREGA was unable to meet with the actual demand from the ground. Across the eight blocks on an average 39% of households did not get a single day's work. "This means two out of five households that needed work in the COVID year did not get even a single day of MGNREGA work. And, those households that did not get a single day of work, actually wanted 77 days of work in the year on average," the study pointed out.

Study analyses data from eight blocks in Bihar, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh

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