

31 March 2018

Shri Narendra Singh Tomar
Minister of Rural Development
Government of India

Dear Mr Tomar

Demand for immediate notification of revised MGNREGA wage rates for 2018-19

NREGA Sangharsh Morcha, a network of organisations and individuals agitating for the rights for MGNREGA workers, is writing to you to demand the immediate notification of revised MGNREGA wage rates for 2018-19. As the Ministry of Rural Development is yet to notify the revised wage rates, Muster Rolls for the next financial year are being issued at the 2017-18 wage rates.

Currently, MGNREGA wage rates of 29 states and Union Territories are less than the corresponding minimum wage rates for agricultural work. The difference is greatest in Tripura, where the MGNREGA wage rate is only 58 per cent of the state minimum wage for agriculture. This ratio is 59 per cent for Sikkim, 64 per cent for Gujarat and 65 per cent for Andhra Pradesh (see table).

The Supreme Court has repeatedly upheld minimum wages as a fundamental right and equated payment of anything less as “forced labour”. Unremunerative MGNREGA wages, coupled with long delays in wage payments – even non-payment of wages in many cases – has turned many rural workers away from the employment guarantee programme.

NREGA Sangharsh Morcha demands the following:

- Immediate notification of revised MGNREGA wage rates for 2018-19.
- Payment of compensation and difference in the 2018-19 and 2017-18 wage rate to all workers made to work at the current wage rate in the new financial year.
- MGNREGA wage rate to be at least Rs 600 a day, as the Seventh Pay Commission recommends a minimum monthly salary of Rs 18,000.
- Allocation of adequate budget to meet the work demand of all rural households and ensure payment on time.

We hope you will act upon the Morcha’s demands.

Sincerely,

Abhay Kumar (9845371493), Ankita Aggarwal (9818603009), Anuradha Talwar (9433002064), Arundhati Dhuru (9919664444), Gangaram Paikra (9977462084), Kamayani Swami (9771950248), Mukesh Nirvasat (9468862200), Neeta Hardikar (9825412387), Nirmala Tammineni (9848930031) and Richa Singh (9452232663)

(On behalf of NREGA Sangharsh Morcha)

State / Union Territory	Minimum Agricultural Wage (Rs) ^a	NREGA Wage Rate 2017-18 (Rs) ^b	Absolute difference (Rs)	What proportion of the minimum wage is the NREGA wage (%)
Andaman	297	236	61	79
Andhra Pradesh	302	197	105	65
Arunachal Pradesh	200	177	23	89
Assam	250	183	67	73
Bihar	237	168	69	71
Chandigarh	350	265	85	76
Chhattisgarh	234	172	62	74
Dadra and Nagar Haveli	304	218	86	72
Daman and Diu	268	195	73	73
Goa	324	240	84	74
Gujarat	298	192	106	64
Haryana	318	277	41	87
Himachal Pradesh	210	179	31	85
Jammu and Kashmir	225	179	46	80
Jharkhand	230	168	62	73
Karnataka	269	236	33	88
Kerala	287	258	29	90
Lakshadweep	401	237	164	59
Madhya Pradesh	230	172	58	75
Maharashtra	194	201	-7	104
Manipur	112	204	-92	182
Meghalaya	189	175	14	93
Mizoram	115	194	-79	169
Nagaland	115	177	-62	154
Nicobar	308	249	59	81
Odisha	213	176	37	83
Puducherry	223	205	18	92
Punjab	294	233	61	79
Rajasthan	213	192	21	90
Sikkim	300	177	123	59
Tamil Nadu	195 ^c	205	-10	105
Telangana	200	197	3	99
Tripura	307	177	130	58
Uttarakhand	158	175	-17	111
Uttar Pradesh	228	175	53	77
West Bengal	234	180	54	77

^aSource: paycheck.in/main/salary/minimumwages (The lowest minimum wage is taken for states that do not have the category of 'agriculture'.)

^bSource: nrega.nic.in (NREGA wage rate in Scheduled Areas of Himachal Pradesh is Rs 224.)

^cSource: http://cms.tn.gov.in/sites/default/files/go/labemp_e_3_2015_2D.pdf



