

NREGA NATIONAL TRACKER

AT MID-YEAR

1 APRIL - 30 SEPTEMBER 2021

PEOPLE'S ACTION FOR
EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE (PAEG)

HIGHLIGHTS

- The **total budget allocation for NREGA is 34% less** than the revised budget for the previous year.
- **Remaining Funds Can Cover At Most 13 Days of Employment per Household till March 31, 2022.**
- **Pending liabilities** from previous years amount to 17,180 crores, **23.53% of the total budget** allocated.
- Almost **90% of total allocated funds have been utilized.**
- **9.71 crore job cards were active** as on September 30, 2021. Out of these active job cards, **6.68 crore demanded work this year.**
- **198.33 crore persondays of work have been generated** in the first half of this fiscal year. This is a **decrease of 25.63%** when compared to the same period of last year.
- **Out of the total persondays of employment that were projected to be generated till September 30th this year, only 91% has been generated.**
- **13.25%** of the total households that demanded employment did not get employment under NREGA.
- The government shares **no data on unemployment benefits** claimed or given to workers in the MIS and the data has to be aggregated from panchayat level offices individually.
- Out of the total households employed under NREGA, **only 6.03% of households were employed for 81-99 days** whereas **only 1.80% were employed for 100 or more days.**
- For the first six months of the year, **14.64% of total payments are pending** to be paid by the Government of India.
- Since the pandemic, **concurrent social audits** have been conducted in many states. But their standards are not satisfactory, according to NREGA Sangarsh Morcha. Also, **no social audits done in this year are available in the public domain.**

WHY A NREGA TRACKER?

The NREGA is a lifeline for millions of rural poor. It guarantees 100 days of employment for each rural household at minimum wages. There are two important legislative provisions. Work should be provided within 15 days of demanding work failing which the workers are entitled to an unemployment allowance. Workers should be paid within 15 days of completion of work, failing which they are entitled to compensation for the delays. While NREGA has always been vital, it has assumed renewed significance in light of the unemployment crisis induced by the lockdowns in 2020 and 2021 and the steep economic downturn. This tracker is an attempt to closely monitor the performance of NREGA by making some key metrics available in an accessible manner.



WHAT IS IN THIS TRACKER?

The tracker provides some broad statistics from the NREGA Management Information System (MIS) such as the number of households that have completed 100 days of work, the number of households nearing completion of 100 days of work, amount of funds left with states, a comparison between work demanded and employment provided for select states. The tracker also provides two graphs monitoring the NREGA performance annually. It shows the changes in the budget over the years and the pending liabilities as a proportion of the annual budget. This is a continuation of the trackers we started in 2020 and we would appreciate inputs to constantly improve this. We would like to work with collectives and campaigns in different states to create state-specific trackers focusing on themes that are most relevant for your work. Finally, we hope that this data will be used to ask questions, prompt further reporting and organize workers to demand and access their entitlements.

90% of Funding Already Utilized

- In the fiscal year 2021-22, Rs. 73,000 crore was allocated as the budget for NREGA. This budget is Rs. 38,500 crore or **34% less than the revised budget for 2020-21**.
- Pending liabilities from previous years amount to 17,180 crores, **23.53% of the total budget allocated**.
- **Almost 90% of total allocated funds have been utilized till now**, including the liabilities from the previous year. This calls for an urgent allocation of additional funding from the Government of India.
- Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal have a negative net balance of funds remaining, bringing into question the possibility of effective implementation of NREGA in these states for the rest of the year.

Table 1

Select States	Total Funds Available	Funds Sanctioned	% of Available Funds Sanctioned	Total Expenditure	Pending Liabilities (from previous year)	Net Balance
West Bengal	5,956	2,383	40	7,543	2,860	-2,393
Andhra Pradesh	6,272	4,571	73	6,281	1,061	-2,090
Tamil Nadu	5,079	3,525	69	6,001	1,200	-1,234
Madhya Pradesh	5,161	3,426	66	5,380	901	-930
Rajasthan	6,000	3,333	56	6,227	2,115	-819
Assam	1,016	1,147	113	992	38	-82
Gujarat	1,285	776	60	1,277	192	-69
Karnataka	4,452	3,019	68	3,912	854	7
Bihar	5,540	2,092	38	4,963	2,675	65
Chhattisgarh	2,487	1,665	67	2,200	702	90
Maharashtra	1,225	801	65	1,039	131	100
Uttar Pradesh	4,649	2,731	59	4,184	618	180
Jharkhand	2,095	1,613	77	1,659	87	219
Odisha	4,170	2,720	65	3,233	449	321
Telangana	3,623	2,220	61	2,844	622	512
All India	66,231	40,015	60	64,462	17,180	-6,646

Source: MGNREGA MIS Report R 7.1 accessed on September 30 2021

All figures in Rs. Crore

- Total funds available refers to the amount of funds states were allocated based on the 'Approved Labour Budget' of each state by the Centre minus the outstanding liabilities from the previous year.
- Funds sanctioned refers to the amount of budgeted NREGA funding that has been transferred by the Government of India to state government treasuries.
- Total expenditure refers to the amount of funds spent on NREGA from the budget that has been allocated this year. It includes the total funds spent on wages, materials, administrative costs and other expenditures. **It does not include payments pending for expenditures done in this year.**
- Net Balance = Total Funds Available - (Total Expenditure + Payments Due for Expenses Incurred in the Current Year)
- "Actual Balance" refers to the difference between total funds available and total expenditure in the year, excluding payments due for expenditure incurred in the year.
- The difference between "Net Balance" and "Actual Balance" is important as payment due for expenditures incurred in this year can be carried forward to the next year as liabilities that are yet to be paid.

Remaining Funds Can Cover At Most 13 Days of Employment per Household

Table 2

Number of Persondays that can be Generated by a State Based on Remaining Funds			
Select States	Number of Job Cards that Demanded Work this Year (in Lakhs)	Remaining Funds (in Rs. Lakhs)	Days of Work that can be Generated Per Household
Odisha	33.16	93,744	13
Jharkhand	21.31	43,645	10
Telangana	33.97	77,899	9
Bihar	39.54	57,696	7
Chhattisgarh	26.07	28,673	5
Karnataka	31.86	54,065	5
Maharashtra	14.3	18,613	5
Uttar Pradesh	72.87	46,495	3
Assam	20.13	2,315	0
Gujarat	12.36	733	0

- Maximum Days of Work that can be Generated per Household = Funds Remaining with States / (Number of Job Cards that Demanded Work this Year x Notified Wage Rate)
- The maximum number of days of work that can be generated per household that has demanded work this year, based on funds remaining for payment of wages, is 13 (in Odisha).
- Many states have already exhausted their budgets and cannot generate any more workdays theoretically, as their actual balances are negative.

40% of All Job Card Holding Households Have Demanded Work This Year

- 17 crore job cards have been registered in total till date. The number of 'active job cards' is 9.71 crore. A job card is said to be active if it has demanded work at least once in the past three years. 6.68 crore active job card holders have demanded work this year.
- 1.47 crore households have applied for work but have not been issued job cards.



Table 3

Select States	Active Job Cards	Job Cards Issued This Year	Job Cards Demanded Work this Year/ Total Registered Job Cards (%)	JCs Issued This Year / JCs Demanded Work This Year (%)
Andhra Pradesh	56.82	1.79	53.04	3.5
Assam	36.34	1.68	33.44	8.35
Bihar	75.64	20.61	17.32	52.12
Chhattisgarh	35.22	0.44	61.14	1.69
Gujarat	17.28	0.91	27.19	7.36
Jharkhand	33.51	1.55	31.63	7.27
Karnataka	43.2	3.71	42.54	11.64
Madhya Pradesh	65.05	4.4	58.72	8.54
Maharashtra	31.88	14.98	12.07	104.76
Odisha	50.1	0.04	40.55	0.12
Rajasthan	87.57	4.92	53.16	7.79
Tamil Nadu	74.67	2.35	70.61	3.62
Telangana	36.07	1.88	60.31	5.53
Uttar Pradesh	130.17	0.61	31.19	0.84
West Bengal	103.81	12.68	44.99	18.61
All India	971.7	82.13	39.32	12.29
Source: MGNREGA MIS Report R 1.1 and R 5.1 accessed on September 30 2021				
All figures in Lakhs				



Persondays Employment Generation Lower Than Pandemic Year, But Higher Than Other Previous Years

- 198.33 crore persondays of work have been generated till September 30th. This is a decrease of 25.63% when compared to the same period of last year. However the number of persondays generated is higher than those of non-pandemic years.

Graph 1

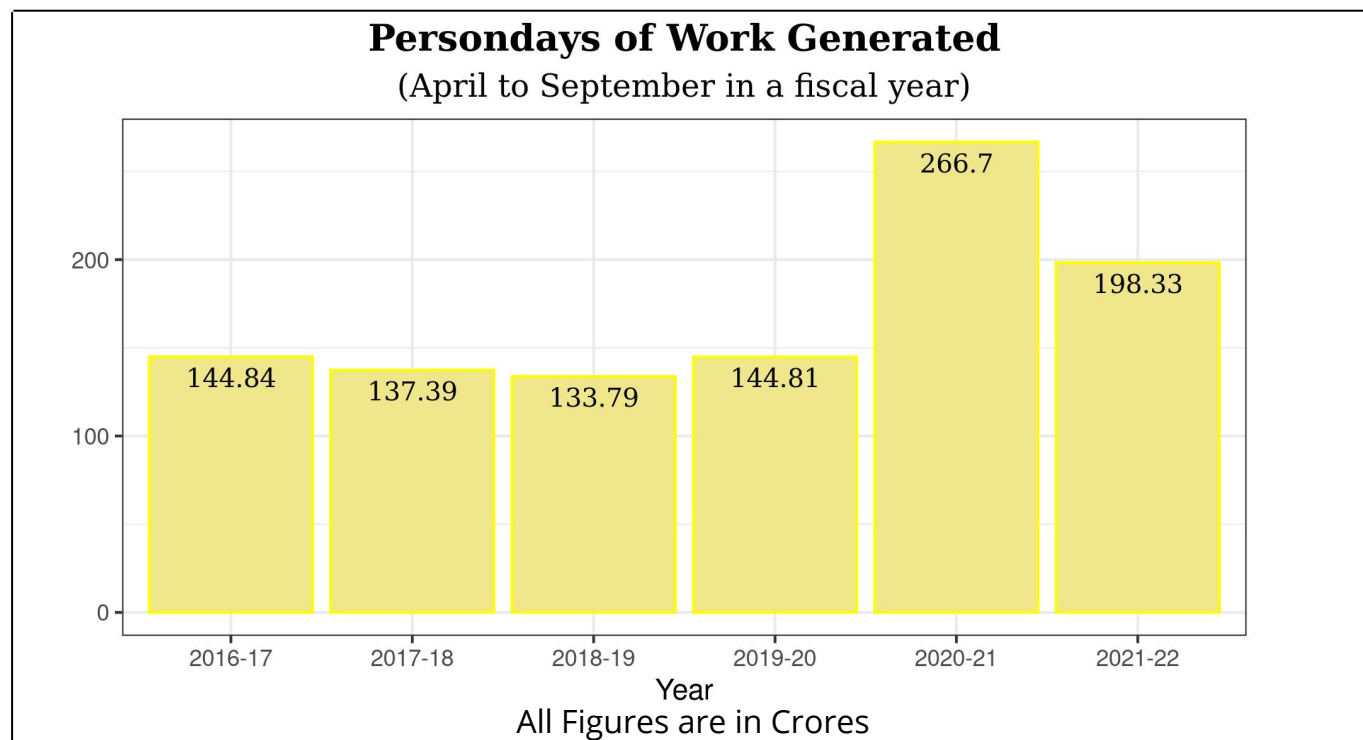


Table 4

Select States	Projected Persondays (in crores)	Persondays Generated (in crores)	Persondays of Work Generated per Day (in lakhs)	Difference Between Persondays Generated and Projected (in crores)	Difference as % of Persondays Projected*
Maharashtra	5.78	3.2	11.7	2.58	-44.6
Bihar	14.78	9.79	2.25	4.99	-33.8
Jharkhand	7.94	6.05	5.38	1.89	-23.8
Assam	4.93	4.1	4.05	0.83	-16.8
Tamil Nadu	21.97	18.62	2.07	3.35	-15.2
Odisha	13.46	12.34	3.32	1.12	-8.3
Rajasthan	22.89	21	5.69	1.89	-8.3
Chhattisgarh	7.97	7.37	9.19	0.6	-7.5
Madhya Pradesh	18.06	16.72	1.76	1.34	-7.4
Karnataka	10.97	10.36	6.78	0.61	-5.6
Gujarat	3.85	3.76	11.54	0.09	-2.3
Telangana	11.3	11.33	10.23	-0.03	0.3
Andhra Pradesh	20.93	21.3	6.23	-0.37	1.8
West Bengal	18.62	20.26	8.67	-1.64	8.8
Uttar Pradesh	14.3	15.78	11.13	-1.48	10.3
All India	218.03	198.33	108.97	19.7	-9.0

* The values are calculated in the following manner: Difference as % of persondays projected = $-(\text{Difference})/\text{Projected persondays} \times 100$. The negative sign indicates that the persondays generated were lesser than the persondays projected.

NREGA MIS Report R 2.2.2 accessed on September 30 2021

- In the states of Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu the difference between persondays of work projected and generated was more than 15%. Overall, about 9% of the persondays projected have not been generated.



13% of Demand for Work Unmet, Even Though the Data is Conservative

- The figures on demand provided by the government are most definitely underestimates, as only demand that is registered in the MIS is included. Many workers are simply turned away by officials when they demand work, without this demand being registered. Refer to [previous PAEG NREGA tracker](#) for a detailed explanation.

Table 5

State	Number of Households that demanded employment	Number of Households that were provided employment	Unmet Demand [b-c]	Unmet Demand as a % of Employment Demanded [100*(d/b)]
a	b	c	d	e
Tamil Nadu	65.37	62.7	2.67	4.09%
West Bengal	69.53	63.97	5.56	8.00%
Assam	20.31	18.35	1.95	9.61%
Karnataka	32.37	29.01	3.35	10.35%
Rajasthan	63.90	56.83	7.06	11.05%
Andhra Pradesh	51.21	45.21	5.99	11.71%
Maharashtra	14.59	12.63	1.95	13.39%
Chhattisgarh	26.19	22.55	3.64	13.92%
Jharkhand	21.92	18.79	3.13	14.29%
Odisha	33.90	28.75	5.14	15.17%
Uttar Pradesh	74.00	60.82	13.18	17.81%
Madhya Pradesh	52.35	42.34	10.01	19.13%
Bihar	39.79	31.75	8.04	20.21%
Telangana	34.03	26.33	7.7	22.63%
Gujarat	12.50	8.83	3.66	29.33%
All India	677.58	587.82	89.76	13.25%

Source: MGNREGA MIS Report R 5.1.1 accessed on September 30 2021

All figures in Lakhs

- About 6.77 crore households demanded employment, out of which about 5.88 crore households were employed. This resulted in an unmet demand of about 13.25%.
- The unmet demand percentage was the highest in the state of Gujarat (over 29%) followed by Telangana (over 22%) whereas it was as low as about 4% in the state of Tamil Nadu.

Only 6% of Households Got More Than 80 Days of Work

Table 6

State	Total attendance between (81-99 days)	Total attendance (100 days or more)	Total attendance	Households employed for 81-99 days as % of Total Households employed	Households employed for 100 days or more as % of Total Households employed
Assam	0.26	0.04	18.00	1.48%	0.27%
Maharashtra	0.30	0.39	12.35	2.50%	3.21%
Jharkhand	0.92	0.14	18.26	5.08%	0.79%
Bihar	0.98	0.03	31.32	3.15%	0.12%
Uttar Pradesh	1.15	0.34	59.50	1.94%	0.59%
Gujarat	1.19	0.15	8.73	13.70%	1.82%
Chhattisgarh	1.23	0.28	22.46	5.50%	1.25%
Tamil Nadu	2.00	0.09	62.00	3.24%	0.15%
Telangana	2.23	1.85	26.19	8.54%	7.08%
Karnataka	2.48	0.13	28.46	8.74%	0.46%
West Bengal	2.53	0.68	62.09	4.08%	1.10%
Odisha	3.36	1.47	28.01	12.00%	5.27%
Rajasthan	3.71	0.61	55.97	6.64%	1.09%
Andhra Pradesh	4.77	3.28	45.12	10.58%	7.27%
Madhya Pradesh	6.41	0.59	41.61	15.41%	1.44%
All India	34.78	10.37	576.71	6.03%	1.80%

Source: NREGA MIS Report R 5.1.3 accessed on September 30 2021

All figures in Lakhs of Households

- In Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh, the number of those employed for 81-99 days was above 10% of the total households employed. In Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Odisha, the number of those employed for 100 days or more was above 5% of the total households employed.
- In Bihar, Tamil Nadu, Assam, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand, less than 1% of the total households who were employed under NREGA were employed for 100 days or more. Similarly, out of the total households covered under NREGA, less than 2% were employed for 81-99 days in the states of Assam and Uttar Pradesh.



Almost 15% of Total Payments Are Delayed

The payment of wages to NREGA workers happens in two stages. In Stage 1, respective states have to generate Funds Transfer Orders (FTO) for the worker's wages and electronically send them to the Government of India. In Stage 2, the Government of India processes the FTOs and transfers the wages directly to the bank accounts of workers. The Supreme Court (SC) judgement dated May 18, 2018 in Swaraj Abhiyan vs Union of India, Writ Petition (CIVIL) 857 of 2015 clearly holds the central government accountable for the full extent of delay (Stage 1 + Stage 2). The Supreme Court has instructed the central government to calculate the delay compensation for stage 2 and pay the same to the workers. However, even after 2 years, only Stage 1 delays continue to be calculated and compensated for. The workers still do not get any compensation for Stage 2 delays. Also, the report on Stage 2 delays (R 14.6) shows only the total transactions and amount pending, but does not indicate for how long each particular transaction or wage transfer has been delayed.



Table 7

Stage 1 Delays					
States	Delays Between 31-60 Days (No. of Transactions)	Delays Between 61-90 Days (No. of Transactions)	Delays of More Than 90 Days (No. of Transactions)	Total Value of Delayed Payments (Rs. Lakhs)	Delayed Payments / Total Wages (%)
Uttar Pradesh	62120	7610	1099	8478.44	2.68
Maharashtra	24380	3098	117	1537.95	2.03
Madhya Pradesh	38738	3367	2098	5815.72	1.71
Telangana	75194	23551	9761	2170.35	1.16
Assam	14057	2212	29	977.94	1.09
Bihar	15784	5391	2116	1743.82	0.91
Andhra Pradesh	154373	4484	933	2706	0.57
Chhattisgarh	884	351	68	57.22	0.43
Karnataka	12693	2332	1015	1033.56	0.35
Gujarat	713	7	17	211.88	0.28
Odisha	7695	292	82	616.26	0.24
Rajasthan	8713	812	246	706.33	0.18
West Bengal	4055	144	16	673.78	0.16
Jharkhand	20	0	0	1.19	0
Tamil Nadu	3	0	0	3.95	0
All India	486709	67321	51795	33079.96	0.81

MGNREGA MIS Report R 14.5 accessed on September 30 2021

- The majority of payment delays are between 31-60 days. Gujarat, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal have the lowest Stage 1 delays.
- Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh have significant delays of more than 60 days.
- In Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, more than 1.5% of total wages are delayed. Telangana has the highest number of Stage 1 delays, at 23,551 delays.

Table 8

Stage 2 Delays				
Month	No. of Transactions Pending for Response (in Lakhs)	% of Transactions Pending Out of Total	Amount Pending (in Rs. Lakhs)	% Amount Pending Out of Total
September	184.63	49.73	3.04	53.24
August	81.78	20.63	1.54	24.41
July	25.12	5.02	0.33	4.18
June	24.52	4.75	0.26	3.52
May	17.67	4.12	0.18	3.06
April	16.07	4.95	0.14	3.25
Upto September	349.79	13.78	5.49	14.64

Source: NREGA MIS Report R 14.6 accessed on October 10 2021

- For the first six months of the year, 14.64% of total payments are pending and nearly 3.5 crore transactions are pending for response.
- The month of September accounts for the majority of the pending transactions and amount, with 1.84 crore transactions pending for response and 53.24% of the total amount also pending.



Only 3.76% of Entitled Delay Compensation has been Paid

- NREGA workers are entitled to a delay compensation of 0.05% of wages per day, in case of a delay in wages.
- While most states have only a minimal amount of compensation pending to be paid for delayed wages (less than Rs. 1 lakh), Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh have the highest compensation pending at 4.46 and 2.19 lakhs respectively.

- Assam, Odisha, Rajasthan, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh have paid no compensation to workers. Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand and Tamil Nadu have almost no compensation payable. Only Maharashtra has paid a significant amount of their compensation, at 62.37%.
- In a majority of the states, less than 10% of compensation payable to workers for wage delays has been approved by the government for compensation.

Table 9

Select States	Compensation Payable	Compensation Paid	Compensation Paid / Compensation Payable (%)
Maharashtra	8.69	5.42	62.37
West Bengal	4.51	1.22	27.05
Madhya Pradesh	23.83	1.96	8.22
Andhra Pradesh	29.40	2.24	7.62
Bihar	15.75	0.62	3.94
Gujarat	0.69	0.02	2.90
Karnataka	8.29	0.12	1.45
Assam	9.16	0.00	0.00
Chhattisgarh	0.35	0.00	0.00
Jharkhand	0.01	0.00	0.00
Odisha	4.06	0.00	0.00
Rajasthan	3.68	0.00	0.00
Tamil Nadu	0.01	0.00	0.00
Telangana	28.43	0.00	0.00
Uttar Pradesh	46.04	0.00	0.00
All India	314.24	11.76	3.74
Source: MGNREGA MIS Report R 14.1 accessed on October 10 2021			
All figures in Rs. Lakhs			

- In Table 9, compensation payable for wage delays is the amount of compensation the government has to pay workers for delays in payment of wages that have exceeded 15 days.
- These claims for compensation are then either approved or rejected by the government. The claims that have been approved and paid constitute compensation paid, while those which have been approved but not paid constitute compensation due.
- It is important to note that the process of making claims for compensation for delayed wages is a complicated and technical process which is difficult to complete for workers. Therefore, the number of actual claims made by workers on the ground could be significantly undercounted.
- The figures on compensation due must be considered with skepticism, as they are based on data provided by the government itself, especially when the government has been attempting to use the MIS to paint a rosy picture of NREGA data.

Studies and Media Reports

Given the significant role that NREGA has played in providing some income support to the rural poor, reeling from long-term economic distress exacerbated by the lockdown, several studies have sought to document its coverage and impact. In-depth media reports have also highlighted important workers' issues. A few are presented here:

Can a Machine Learn Democracy? Chakradhar Buddha, Sakina Dhorajiwala and Rajendran Narayanan. AMCIS 2021 Proceedings, 2021.

- The [paper](#) illustrates how technologies like the MIS have been used to undermine the legal rights of workers and deflect accountability. It also examines whether these technologies incorporate democratic values.
- The MIS plays three important roles in NREGA- administrative efficiency, transparency and monitoring.
- It often becomes a tool at the hand of bureaucrats and administrators to undermine the rights of workers under the Act, because of the complicated involvement of multiple agencies with varied roles, administrative and financial powers. The technology is used to enforce and mediate asymmetrical power structures between the workers and the government.
- It undermines the political capacities and democratic participation of workers and also enables officials to evade accountability.
- The MIS becomes the sole repository of many pieces of vital information for workers. Questions that are crucial to workers, such as 1) What are my wages? 2) Have the wages been paid? 3) Which account would they be credited to? 4) Can I access wages whenever I need them after they are credited?" must be answered through the MIS.
- The first three questions can be answered through the MIS, even though the details are concealed in several complex reports. The nature of the design of MIS and its commitment to transparency and participatory democracy enshrined in the Act must be seriously examined.
- The highly technical and centralised architecture has made the registration and redressal of grievances extremely difficult for workers. The centrally controlled nature of the MIS only allows the input of information and no flexibility for states to customize the system.

MGNREGA: The Rescue Act in Need of Assistance. Ankur Bharadwaj and Ashwini Deshpande. Centre for Economic and Data Analysis, Sep 20, 2021.

- According to the authors of this [paper](#), MIS data shows that women always have a higher share of all persondays generated, when compared to men. The share of women in all persondays generated has consistently been more than 53% since 2015-16.
- The share of women fell lower than the average of previous years in 2020-21 and 2021-22, post-COVID, indicating the male dominance in the rural labour market, through public employment schemes.

MGNREGA: The Guaranteed Refuge for Returning Migrants During COVID-19 Lockdown in India. Nitin Lokhande and Haripriya Gundimeda. The Indian Economic Journal, 69(3) 584 – 590, 2021.

- This [study](#) indicates that almost 7.5 million seasonal migrant workers made use of NREGA during the lockdown. However, they were able to find work only for around 23 days and only secured around 28% of their pre-COVID level wages.
- However, NREGA could be a safety net only for around one-third of returning migrant workers and it could not counteract the income and job loss experienced by the remaining workers.
- A district-wise analysis of seasonal migration data shows that adequate rural non-farm employment cannot be generated during the agricultural off-season, especially in the states of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. The overdependence on a weakened NREGA in such regions is a symptom of the severe employment and economic crisis being faced by these states.

Strengthening wage policies to protect incomes of the informal and migrant workers in India. Anoop Satpathy, Xavier Estupiñan and Bikash Kumar Malick. Labour and Development. V.V.Giri National Labour Institute, Feb 11, 2021.

- This [paper](#) contends that NREGA wages and minimum wages in India are both inadequate, and bureaucratic and implementation impediments prevent such measures from attaining their objectives.
- The authors argue that the existing process for establishing NREGA wages in India is removed from the realities of consumption patterns of workers, leading to inadequate minimum wages.
- The wage rates under NREGA are extremely low and are lesser than the minimum wage rates for agricultural workers in 20 out of 21 major states.
- Some of the causes of this low level of NREGA wages include the delinking of the wages from the state agricultural minimum rate of wages in 2009; the determination of wages without any proper methodological grounding or transparency and the adjustment of NREGA wages in relation to an outdated Consumer Price Index for Agriculture Labour (CPI-AL).
- These improper wage policies, along with implementation issues, lead to the prevalence of the low level of NREGA wages, which, as a result, hinder the effectiveness of these policies in the incomes, employment and standard of living of rural workers.

MGNREGA Payment Delays in Andhra Pradesh. LibTech India, Sep 2021.

- In order to study delays in the payment of wages for NREGA workers in Andhra Pradesh, the [study](#) used a random sample of 1% of panchayats in the state were taken and their payment delays were compared to previous years, for up to July 2021.
- The government was found to be taking thrice the time it took in 2020-21 to process fund transfers in 2021-22, i.e. 26 days on average.

- Less than 20% of payments have been successfully completed within the legally mandated 15 days. Almost 3% of transactions take more than 60 days to get processed, while nearly half of all pending transactions are delayed by more than 30 days.
- If all Stage 1 and Stage 2 delays were calculated, then the state would have to pay compensation for pending wages to the tune of Rs. 26 crores to the workers.

NREGA implementation: 'Unsatisfactory' social audit across States, Govt of India told. Counterview, Oct 4, 2021.

- According to NREGA Sangharsh Morcha, the standards of social audits for NREGA, which should be conducted under the oversight of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG), *"are largely unsatisfactory"*.
- The [article](#) also contends that the units and officials that conduct the social audits are not independent in most states, and they also rarely have adequate staff or resources.
- Very few social audits have also taken place since regular audits were stopped in April 2021. Also, not all social audit reports are made available in the public domain.

2.5 Lakh Households Exhaust 100-day MGNREGA Work Limit In Three Months. Shreeja Singh. Money Control, July 6, 2021.

- By the 6th of July, 2021, around 2.5 lakh households had used up all the 100 days of work they are eligible to get under NREGA.
- On top of this, much of the demand for work is not registered in the MIS, as governments are required to provide work to workers who demand them within 15 days. If the government is not able to provide work within the stipulated period, then the worker has to be given an unemployment allowance.
- While demand for NREGA work (till July 6) is lesser than 2020-21 in 2021-22, it is almost 38% higher than the demand in June 2019-20, which was during the pre-COVID period.
- Also, persondays of work generated are 7% and 56% lower in 2021-22, than in 2019-20 and 2020-21 respectively. This implies that significantly lesser work has been generated this year. The article can be found [here](#).

A shift in focus in NREGA. Debmalya Nandy. Telegraph, Sep 28, 2021.

- The [article](#) argues that the main objective of NREGA, to create rural employment through public investment, has been shifted by the government to focus on asset generation. Through this shift in focus, the government aims to make NREGA a scheme-based, supply driven policy, while disregarding the core ideas and principles of the Act.
- Centralized and bureaucratic control over the programme and the government's attempts to converge NREGA with other welfare schemes is also an important cause for the decline in the proper functioning of NREGA.
- Despite this asset-centric focus, there has been no improvement in the quality of rural assets. The author contends that this focus on assets is a wilful strategy employed by the bureaucracy to ignore worker's rights and to escape accountability for violations of the Act.
- Key issues such as inadequate allocations, centralized payments, payment delays and non-payment of wages, that have for long been ignored by the government have to be rectified immediately.

Poor Remuneration and Late Payments: The NREGA Payments Trap. Debmalya Nandy. The Wire, Sep 4, 2021.

- Commenting on the MIS system for NREGA, the [article](#) states that unnecessarily complicated and convoluted payment and tracking systems used by the government for NREGA must be replaced by simple, decentralised systems to ensure greater accountability and to empower better implementation of the scheme by local governing bodies.
- While according to the Act, the payment to workers must be completed within 15 days, the government uses the MIS system to make it seem like the process is completed within time, whereas, the data is only for Stage 1 payments. Using this technique, even when there are significant delays for wages to reach workers, the government ensures that there is a mirage of timely payments. The MIS report R 14.6 does not allow for proper tracking of delays and pending wages, by not dis-aggregating pending transactions.
- For example, the author states that “Currently as on 7th September, 43% of Payments for the month of August are pending from the Central government as per the Report No R.8.8.1 in the official website, which involves about Rs.2846cr of wages but the same website shows that 99% payments have been “generated” on time.”
- Despite a Supreme Court order in 2018, the MIS reports still do not show the number of transactions delayed beyond 15 days or the total volume of money involved in such delays. This complicated payment system has increased workers’ predicaments and reduced transparency and local accountability.
- The government has recently moved to separate Fund Transfer Orders and their processing into three different categories based on caste (SC, ST and Other). This unnecessary measure will only lead to an increase in delays and complexities, apart from the possibility of a reduction in funding.

Who We Are

People's Action for Employment Guarantee (PAEG) is a group of activists, academics and members of people's organizations that came together to advocate for the NREGA in 2004. PAEG hopes to play the role of a catalyst in provoking discussion, people's monitoring and convening coalitions to strengthen NREGA implementation through research and advocacy. PAEG is also facilitating a series of consultations on an urban employment guarantee in collaboration with various campaigns, institutions and organizations.

Links to Previous PAEG NREGA Trackers

- National Trackers: [First tracker](#) (data till 7th-10th July 2020); [Second tracker](#) (data till 31 July - 10 August 2020); [Third tracker](#) (data till 30th November 2020).
- State Specific Trackers for Bihar: [First tracker](#) (data till 31st August 2020)
- The trackers are available in Hindi also: National trackers: [First tracker](#); [Second tracker](#); [Third tracker](#). Bihar state tracker.

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