

PRESS RELEASE

Azim Premji University COVID19 Livelihoods Survey: Release of Early Findings

Tuesday, May 12th, 2020

Azim Premji University, in collaboration with ten Civil Society Organisations, has conducted a detailed phone survey of 4000 workers across 12 states of India, to gauge the impact of the COVID19 lockdown on employment, livelihoods, and access to government relief schemes.

We will present early results of this survey in a webinar on **Tuesday, May 12th, at 5 PM.**

Please join us on [You Tube Live](#)

Survey data as well as details, including organisations involved, are available on [our website](#).

COVID19 and its associated safety measures, such as the lockdown since March 24th have taken a heavy toll on the economy, and particularly on vulnerable informal and migrant workers and their families. **Immediate as well as medium to long term, comprehensive policy measures are needed to counter these effects and chart the path to economic recovery.** We hope that the survey findings will help in determining the extent and nature of policy interventions that are needed.

The survey was carried out in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Delhi, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra (Pune), Odisha, Rajasthan, Telangana, and West Bengal. We measured levels of employment and earnings since the lockdown was imposed, and compared them to the situation prevailing in February. We covered self-employed, casual, and regular wage/salaried workers. A detailed report will be released in a few weeks time.

Key Findings of the survey

- **Two-Thirds (67%) of workers reported having lost their employment. Urban India is more severely affected. 8 in 10 workers in urban areas (80%) and almost 6 in 10 workers in rural areas (57%) lost their employment .**
- For non-agricultural self-employed workers who were still employed, average weekly earnings fell from Rs. 2240 to Rs. 218 (a fall of **90%**).
- For casual workers who were still employed, average weekly earnings fell almost in **half** from Rs. 940 in February to Rs. 495 during the lockdown.
- Half of all salaried workers (51%) saw either a reduction in their salary or received no salary.
- **Half (49%) of households reported that they did not have enough money to buy even a week's worth of essential items.**

In summary, the disruption in the economy and labor markets is enormous. Livelihoods have been devastated at unprecedented levels during the lockdown. The recovery from this could be slow and very painful. **The immediate relief measures do not appear to be in proportion to the severity of the situation on the ground.**

As a response to the findings of this survey, the team which has conducted the study, suggests the following measures to ameliorate the conditions of those most affected by the crisis:

- A universalisation of the PDS to expand its reach and implementation of expanded rations for at least the next six months.
- Cash transfers equal to at least Rs. [7000 per month for two months](#). From a macroeconomic perspective as well, larger transfers are needed to bring back demand in the economy.
- Opening up of MGNREGA sites in keeping with physical distancing norms is urgently needed.
- Proactive steps like [expansion of MGNREGA](#), introduction of [urban employment guarantee](#), and investment in [universal basic services](#) are needed.