

PRESS RELEASE

Azim Premji University COVID19 Livelihoods Survey: Stories behind the numbers Voices from Gujarat, Rajasthan, Delhi and Pune

Thursday, June 4th, 2020

Azim Premji University, in collaboration with civil society organisations, conducted phone surveys of 5000 workers across 12 states of India, to gauge the impact of the COVID19 lockdown on employment, livelihoods, and access to government relief schemes. Survey data as well as details, including organisations involved, are available on [our website](#). State-wise survey data is available [here](#).

In this webinar, we will present the findings of our survey for the states of **Gujarat and Rajasthan**, and the cities of **Delhi and Pune**. We will hear from our collaborators in these states and cities to understand what these findings mean in the context of the metros and villages that they work in.

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

COVID-19 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.

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. We will soon be releasing a detailed report of these findings.

The sample for the survey was selected using the networks of our civil society organisation collaborators. The findings pertain only to the sample and are not representative of the entire state. Findings should not be compared across states.

Key Findings of the survey

Gujarat (315 respondents)

- **Seven out of ten (71%) workers lost their employment.** Urban workers more severely affected with **nine out ten urban workers losing their employment** since the lockdown.
- **96% of regular salaried workers in urban areas lost their jobs.**
- Nearly **nine in ten farmers not able to sell their produce at full price.**
- Nearly **seven in ten households did not have enough money** for a week's worth of essentials, situation worse in urban areas (89%).
- **95% of urban households reported reducing their food intake** during the lockdown.
- **85% of vulnerable households received ration.**

- **66% of urban households did not receive any cash transfer** compared to 51% rural households.

Rajasthan (484 respondents)

- **Nearly nine in ten (88%) workers reported losing their employment.**
- **Casual wage workers in urban areas worst hit**, 95% lost their jobs.
- **68% of salaried workers were not paid salaries** or received **only partial payments.**
- More than **three in four households** reported **consuming less food** during the lockdown.
- 63% of vulnerable households did not have money to buy even a week's worth of essentials.
- Four in ten households had to take a loan as a result of the lockdown.
- **Three in ten migrants** working in urban areas **did not have a ration card.**
- Nearly **four in ten vulnerable households in urban areas received no cash transfers.** _

Delhi (240 respondents)

- **73% lost employment** during the lockdown. **Self-employed and regular salaried worst hit**, eight in ten lost employment.
- **Average earnings of non-agricultural self employed and casual wage workers fell by 63%.**
- **Women suffered more employment loss**, 77% women and 66% men lost employment.
- **Nine in ten migrant households** reported **consuming less food** than before.
- 3 out of 4 households did not have money to buy a week's worth of essentials.
- **More than half of vulnerable households did not receive ration**, nearly seven in ten migrants did not receive ration.
- **Seven out ten (73%) of vulnerable households did not get any cash transfer.**

Pune (307 respondents)

- Nearly **8 out of ten (78%) lost their employment** during the lockdown. **Men were worse affected**, 86% men and 72% women reported employment loss.
- **More than two-third (67%) of salaried workers did not receive salaries**, either partially or fully.
- **Eight in ten households were consuming less food** than before.
- **More than nine in ten households unable to pay next month's rent.**
- Nearly **four in ten (37%) households unable to get ration.**
- **96% of vulnerable households did not have a Jan Dhan** account.
- **Nine in ten (94%) vulnerable households did not receive any cash transfer.**

In summary, the disruption in the economy and labor markets of these cities and states is enormous. Livelihoods have been devastated at unprecedented levels during the lockdown. The recovery from this could be slow and very painful.

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.