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# Azim Premji University COVID-19 Livelihoods Survey



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## West Bengal (Rural)

Azim Premji University along with Paschim Banga Khet Majoor Samity conducted a detailed phone survey of 189 respondents to gauge the impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on employment, livelihoods, and access to government relief schemes.

The respondents were selected through a purposive sampling method to ensure diversity in location and type of work done. The sample is not representative of the state.

The data presented here was collected between 29th April, 2020 and 9th May, 2020. This is part of a series of state-level briefs based on the survey results. A dashboard with detailed information is available at [cse.azimpremjiuniversity.edu.in](http://cse.azimpremjiuniversity.edu.in)



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### Key Findings

**73%**

reported that they had lost their employment during the lockdown.

**48%**

households did not have enough money to buy even a week's worth of essentials.

**93%**

households reported consuming less food than before.

**94%**

vulnerable households received ration.

**51%**

of vulnerable households received no cash transfer.

## **Relief measures announced**

Relief measure information was sent out to survey respondents via SMS.

### **Central Level**

- \* Between April to June 2020, each PHH and AAY family to get free of cost 5 kg food grains per person per month and 1 kg of dal per family per month. This is in addition to regular ration which they will continue to get.
- \* Women Jan Dhan account holders to get Rs 500 per month between April to June, 2020.
- \* First instalment of PM-KISAN (Rs2000) to be paid during 1st week of April.

### **State Level**

- \* Rice and wheat to be provided free of cost till September for BPL, AAY and other PHH card holders.
- \* Rs 1000 cash transfer for daily wage workers registered with the state government.
- \* Door-delivery of mid-day meals for children enrolled at the Anganwadi.
- \* Insurance policy for all persons involved in COVID-19 related duties. Compensation of Rs.10 Lakh for loss of life due to covid for these workers. Free treatment for these persons and their family members.
- \* Counselling services for all quarantined persons.
- \* Under the Sneher Paras scheme Rs. 1000 will be given to migrant workers from West Bengal stranded in other states. Scheme is applicable from 20th April to 3rd May.

Source : [covid19socialsecurity.wordpress.com/relief-measures](https://covid19socialsecurity.wordpress.com/relief-measures)



## **Recommendations**

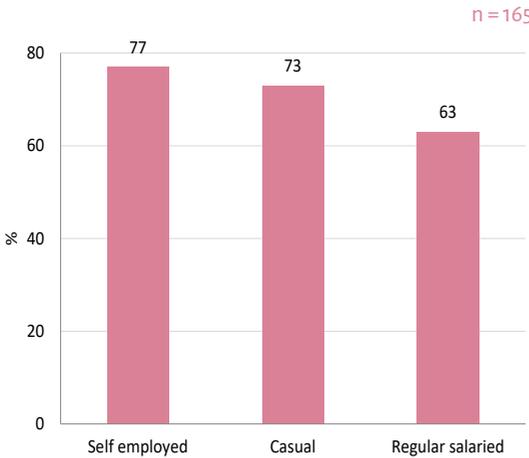
- \* Universalise PDS to expand its reach and provide the promised expanded rations for at least the next six months.
- \* Give cash transfers equal to at least Rs 7000 per month for two months.
- \* Use information from MGNREGA, PM Ujjwala, PDS and local registrations to expand the reach of cash transfers.
- \* Urgent need to focus on programmes for the urban poor.
- \* Over the medium term, proactive steps like expansion of MGNREGA, introduction of urban employment guarantee, and investment in universal basic services are needed.



## Impact on livelihoods

This section deals with the impact that the lockdown has had on work and earnings. We measured levels of employment and income since the lockdown was imposed, and compared them to the situation prevailing in February.

Figure 1: Workers who lost their employment by activity status in February (%)



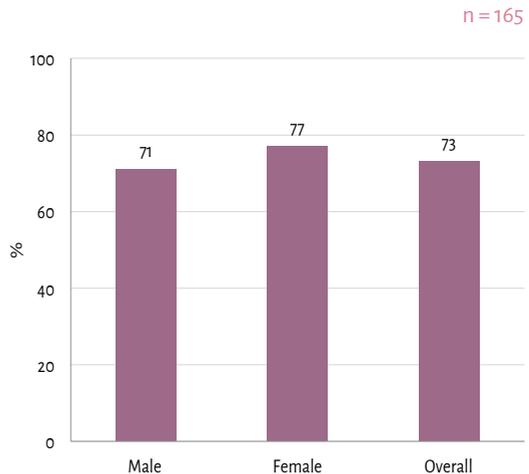
77% self-employed reported that they had lost their employment during the lockdown.

Those working in the rural areas were worst hit with 73% losing their employment.

SC/ST households were severely hit with 72% losing their employment compared to General (77%) and OBC (63%).

Compared to men (71%), more women lost employment (77%).

Figure 2: Workers who lost their employment by sex (%)

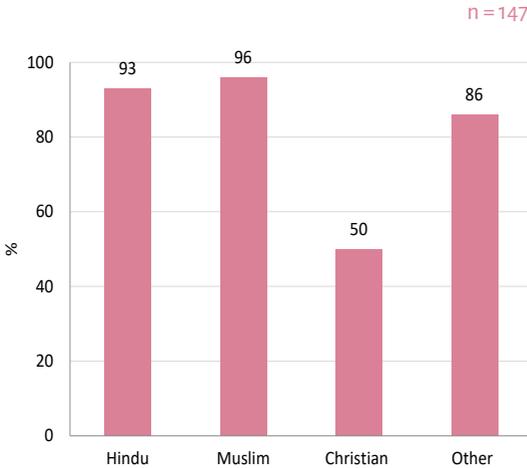




## Impact on households

This section looks at how households were faring under the lockdown particularly with respect to food intake and access to savings and credit.

Figure 3: Share of households consuming less food than before (%)



96% of the Muslim households reported consuming less food than before.

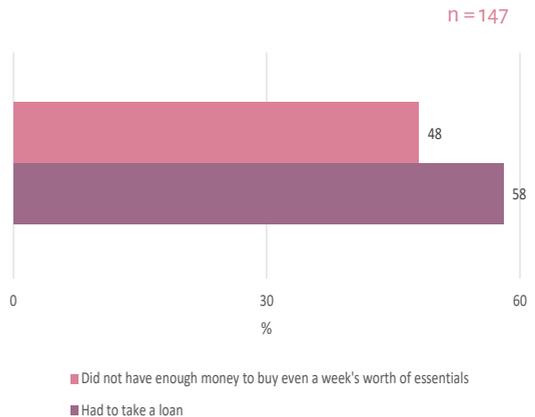
Migrant workers were severely affected with 80% reporting that they had to reduce their food intake.

58% reported that they had to take a loan to cover the daily expenses during the lockdown.

48% reported that they did not have enough money to buy even a week's worth of essentials.

36% reported that they only got reduced salary or no salary at all during the lockdown.

Figure 4: Financial status of households during the lockdown (%)

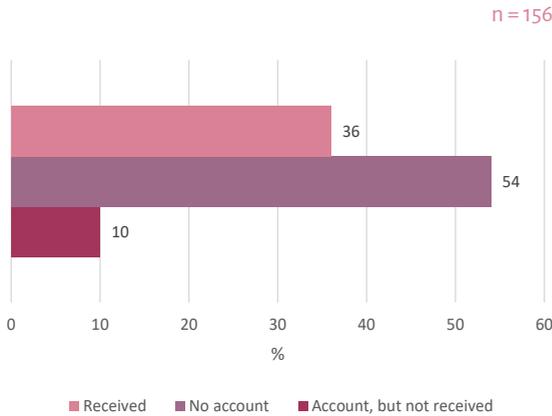




## Access to relief measures

This section studies the reach and impact of relief measures announced by the Government. We focus on availability of food rations, cash transfers to beneficiaries and benefits accruing to vulnerable households.

Figure 5: Vulnerable households who received a Jan Dhan transfer (%)



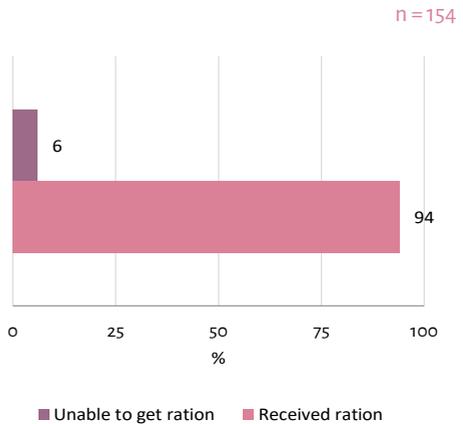
When 36% reported that they received a Jan Dhan account transfer, 10% of account holders did not receive a transfer.

51% reported that they did not any even a single cash transfer.

94% reported that they received ration.

Of those who received the ration, the average quantity received was 4 kg.

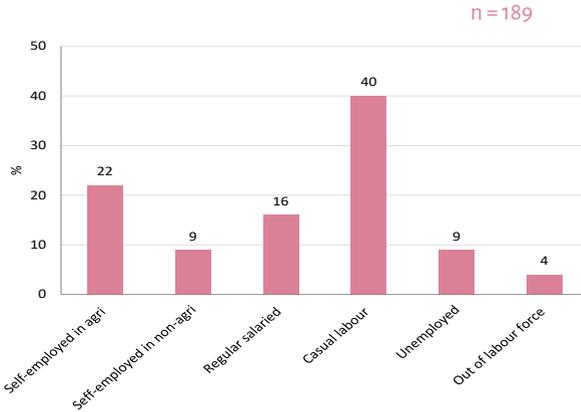
Figure 6: Share of vulnerable households who received ration (%)





## Survey Coverage

Figure 7: Share of respondents by activity status in February (%)



63% of respondents were males and 37% were females.

Hindus comprised 83% of respondents, and Muslims 13%.

47% of respondents hailed from the SC/ST community.

95% of the households were vulnerable i.e. they earned less than Rs 10,000 in February.



## Results from other surveys happening in the state

- \* According to a UChicago analysis of CMIE Consumer Pyramid Household Survey (CPHS); anywhere between 80-90% of households reported an income loss in the state. The study also finds that around 40 to 60% of households have resources that will last them two weeks. At least 80% said their resources will run out within a month.
- \* COVID-19 impact studies conducted by Dalberg, Foundation of Agrarian Studies and IMPRI, also feature West Bengal in their sample drawn from a number of states.

For a compilation of the various Covid-19 surveys and studies conducted across the country please visit : [cse.azimpremjiuniversity.edu.in/covid19-analysis-of-impact-and-relief-measures/#other\\_surveys](https://cse.azimpremjiuniversity.edu.in/covid19-analysis-of-impact-and-relief-measures/#other_surveys)