

PRESS RELEASE

Azim Premji University COVID19 Livelihoods Survey: Results from Telangana

Azim Premji University, in collaboration with Samalochana, conducted a detailed phone survey of 329 respondents in Telangana between 15th April and 9th May, to gauge the impact of the COVID19 lockdown on employment, livelihoods, and access to government relief schemes. This is part of a larger study carried out in 12 different states in collaboration with ten civil society organisations. 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. 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.

Key Findings from the Survey

37% reported that they had lost their employment during the lockdown.

There was a 53% fall in average earnings of casual workers and self-employed non-agricultural workers.

16% households did not have enough money to buy a week's worth of essentials.

58% households reported consuming less food than before.

98% vulnerable households received ration.

27% of vulnerable households received no cash transfer.

49% of households reported taking a loan to finance their personal expenses during the lockdown

25% reported that they got no or reduced salary during the lockdown

In summary, the disruption in the state's economy and labour markets 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:

- 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.