



CONCLAVE 2021
CSE's Annual Green Educator's Network Meet

The New World (Dis)order

Building a better and greener world in the post-pandemic era



How MGNREGA rescued rural population during the pandemic

MGNREGA proved to be the safety net and cushioned the blow for returning migrants when exodus from cities happened during the first phase of the nationwide lockdown

Record breaking demand for work. Between May and July 2020, the scheme generated the highest number of employment recorded since its launch in 2006.

Demand for MGNREGA works showed an unprecedented spike—some **35-37 million households asked for employment** for three consecutive months-- May, June, and July. Against this, around 32 million households got work under the scheme.

This figure was a record. **On an average, 21.5 mln households** seek work under MGNREGA in a month in the country



How MGNREGA rescued rural population during the pandemic

- 57 percent of total demand was generated from the five states that reported the return of a large number of informal sector workers—Uttar Pradesh (that has received 6.2 million workers), Rajasthan (5.3 million), Andhra Pradesh (4.4 million), Tamil Nadu (4.1 million) and West Bengal (3.5 million)
- With sudden and drastic job losses, even skilled people lined up for work under MGNREGA as it was the only employment provider at that time
- Demand for work ebbed as the country opened up and so did other employment opportunities
- In the second wave, in 2021, there was a 30 per cent increase in demand for work compared to the usual times. But that demand contracted in some states because this time the pandemic hit hard in the rural areas too



Sharp increase in employment of 18-30-yr-olds

- MGNREGA was the fallback option for the youth during the pandemic as they either could not enter the labour market or suffered job losses
- According to data analysed by CEDA, highest increase in MGNREGA employment percentage was in the 18-30-year-old age group in 2021-21
- It increased from 20.4 per cent in 2019-20 to 37.3 per cent



Not only about employment

- State governments took this opportunity and harnessed the surplus labour to **create assets** in the villages crucial for ensuring livelihood for the rural communities -- from deepening of ponds, reviving traditional water bodies for saving groundwater to widening roads
- MGNREGA mandates that at least 60 per cent of the works undertaken must be related to land and water conservation.
- Districts with high job demands used this opportunity to create **thousands of water conservation works**
- Between April and June, 2020, over **600,000 water-related structures** were built or repaired



MGNREGA implementation completed 15 years in 2021

This year in February, DTE reporters travelled across the country to gauge the impact of the scheme on assets creation and sustainability in the last 15 years

Overall, since 2006, more than **30 million water conservation related assets** have been created in the country's rural areas.

These assets have brought a turnaround for the communities

Some shining examples:



A check dam built in 2006 in Himmatpura village in Jalaun, is the reason the three dug wells in the village have enough water to meet the drinking needs of 80 per cent of the families. It also helps irrigate all the farms spread over 30 hectares. Photograph: Bhagirath



In MP's Barmani village, migrant labourers have returned to resume farming after the implementation of massive water conservation programmes





Andhra Pradesh's Bandlapalli village which was once drought prone is now drought proof and distress migration has stopped. The village residents have planned and installed 900 odd water harvesting structures over the past 15 years. Photograph: G Ram Mohan





Thank you