



## Demand for MGNREGA Work Increased

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### Why in News

The demand for work by households under the **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act** (MGNREGA) programme surged to a nine-year high in 2019-20.

### Key Points

- According to the MGNREGA official portal, 5.47 crore households sought MGNREGA works, **the highest since 2010-11**, when the number was 5.5 crore.
- **More individuals too worked under MGNREGA in 2019-20**, with 7.86 crore employed at various sites across the country. This is the highest since 2012-13, when 7.97 crore individuals worked under this programme.
  - The **disruption caused by the coronavirus lockdown**, however, may impact the final figure of the person days generated in March 2020.
- The **gram panchayats not recording any MGNREGA expenditure has also declined**. This shows that more and more panchayats are using MGNREGA to provide unskilled work to the unemployed.
- These new **MGNREGA figures coincide with the sharp fall in GDP growth rate** to 5% in 2019-20, the lowest in a decade.
- The **demand for works under MGNREGA is surging despite the fact that wages have been flattening** in recent years.
  - In 2019-20, average MGNREGA wage per day per person was Rs 182.09, barely Rs 3 higher than Rs 179.13 in 2018-19.
- The data also showed that **263.73 crore person days** were generated during 2019-20, slightly lower than 267.96 crore in 2018-19 but significantly higher than the total person days generated during each financial year from 2012-13 to 2017-18.
- During 2019-20, the Centre released Rs 72,162.13 crore for the MGNREGA, the **highest ever amount**, and substantially higher than the Rs 62,125.07 crore released in 2018-19.

### Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005

- The Act **aims at enhancing the livelihood security** of people **in rural areas by guaranteeing hundred days of wage employment in a financial year to a rural household** whose **adult members** (at least 18 years of age) volunteer to do unskilled work.
- The **central government bears the full cost of unskilled labour**, and 75% of the cost of material (the rest is borne by the states).
- It is a demand-driven, social security and labour law that aims to enforce the **‘right to work’**.
- The **Ministry of Rural Development (MRD)**, Government of India in association with state governments, **monitors the implementation of the scheme**.
- Agriculture and allied activities constitute more than 65% of the works taken up under the programme.
- Social inclusion, gender parity, social security and equitable growth are the founding pillars of MGNREGA.

**Source: IE**