



Rise in NREGS Demand

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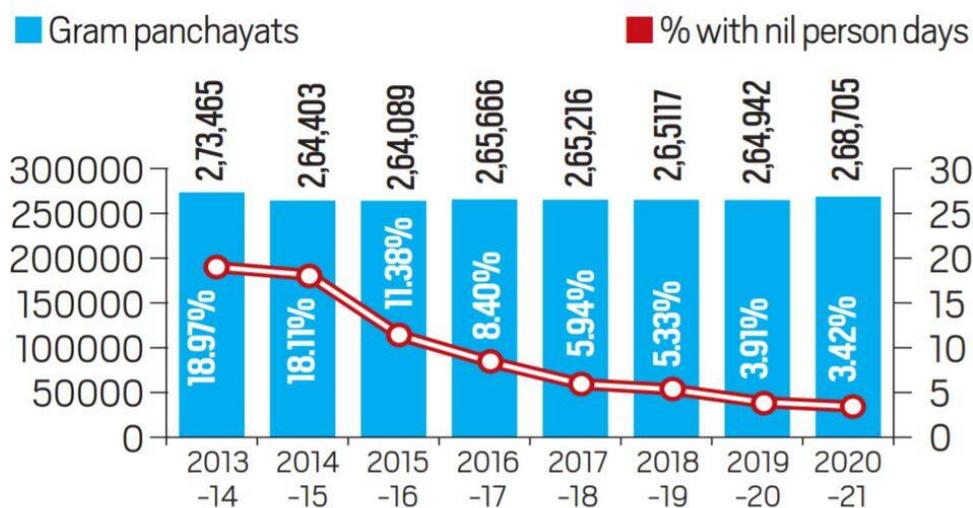
Why in News

A recent analysis of data available up to November on the **National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme** (NREGS) portal shows that demand for work has been at all time high.

Key Points

- The **NREGS** is a **demand-based scheme** and has emerged as a **safety net during the pandemic for jobless migrant workers** returning to their villages
- Despite a progressive relaxation in **Covid-19** curbs to revive the economy, **96% gram panchayats** have logged work under the scheme in the financial year (2020-21) as compared to previous seven years.

PANCHAYATS WITH ZERO PERSON DAYS WORK



- The number of gram panchayats generating **nil person days of work** (panchayats with zero person days work) during the current financial year **are at an eight-year low** of only **3.42% of the 2.68 lakh gram panchayats across the country**.
In 2019, the number of gram panchayats generating nil person days during the entire period **was 3.91% of the total 2.64 lakh gram panchayats**.
- Over **96% of gram panchayats** across the country have **registered demand for work** under NREGS from April till November-end.
- **Over 6.5 crore households**, covering 9.42 crore individuals, have availed NREGS till November 2020, which is an **all-time high**.
 - Over 265.81 crore person days have been generated, which is **higher than** 265.44 crore generated in **2019**.
 - 1.98 crore households availed the scheme in October 2020, which is **82% higher than 2019**.
 - **Highest number of demand** for work came from **Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh**.
- The **wage expenditure** has also reached an **all-time high of Rs. 53,522 crore** during this period.
- **Tamil Nadu** has **reported the highest figure of households** that availed the NREGS across the country, since July and has been **followed by West Bengal**.
These two states were not covered under the **Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan**.

National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme

- The **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005** was notified by the Government of India on September, 2005 and was made **effective in February 2006**. Under it, the **NREGS was introduced**.
- 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'.
- **Ministry of Rural Development** in association with state governments, monitors the implementation of the scheme.

Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan

- It was launched in **June 2020** to **empower and provide livelihood opportunities to the returnee migrant workers and rural citizens** who had **returned to their home states** due to the **lockdowns**.
- It worked in mission mode for **125 days** with an outlay of **Rs. 50,000 crore**.

- A total of 116 districts across six states, namely **Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jharkhand and Odisha** were chosen for the campaign.
 - These districts covered the **maximum number** (about 2/3) of such **migrant workers who had returned**.
 - The chosen districts include 27 **Aspirational Districts**, districts which are affected by poor socio-economic indicators. These are aspirational in the context, that improvement in these districts can lead to the overall improvement in human development in India. It is a NITI Aayog's Programme.

Source:IE