

## **PLIGHT OF WORKERS: WHAT DOES THE OFFICIAL DATA TELL US**

### **PERIODIC LABOUR FORCE SURVEY (PLFS)**

The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) conducted by the National Statistical Office (NSO) (see Annual Report, PLFS, 2018-2019 <http://mospi.nic.in>) of the Central Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI), was primarily designed among others, for measurement of employment and unemployment. The First Annual Report (July 2017-June 2018) covering both rural and urban areas gave estimates of all important parameters of employment and unemployment and was released in May 2019.

### **PLFS SECOND ANNUAL REPORT**

The Second Annual Report, which we shall discuss here, was released earlier in June 2020 on the basis of PLFS conducted during July 2018 and June 2019. This survey was spread over 12,720 FSUs (6,983 villages and 5,737 urban blocks) covering 1,01,579 households (55,812 in rural areas and 45,767 in urban areas) and enumerating 4,20,757 persons (2,39,817 in rural areas and 1,80,940 in urban areas).

Estimates of labour force indicators are presented in this Report based on standard approaches. We present here only the usual status results which relates to the activity status of a person during the reference period of 365 days preceding the survey date. The activity status on which a person spent relatively longer time (major time criterion) during the 365 days preceding the date of survey was considered the usual principal activity status of the person. Such persons may also in addition to his/her usual principal status, have some economic activity for 30 days or more during the reference period of 365 days preceding the date of survey, which is called the subsidiary status. The usual status, therefore takes into consideration the person's principal status (ps) and subsidiary status (ss). Some of the important results at the all-India level for the period July 2018-June 2019 from PLFS show the following:

### **EMPLOYMENT STATUS**

- During 2018-19, about 51.7 per cent of rural households had income from self-employment. The share of rural households with major source of income from casual labour during 2018-19 was 25.1 per cent and that of regular wage / salary earning was 13.1 per cent.
- In urban areas, about 31.8 per cent of the households had major source of income from self-employment during 2018-19. The share of urban households with major source of income from regular wage / salary earning was 42.8 per cent and that of casual labour was nearly 11.0 per cent.
- Share of self-employed among workers in India was about 57.4 per cent among rural males, 59.6 per cent among rural females, 38.7 per cent among urban males and 34.5 per cent among urban females.
- Among workers, about 14.2 per cent among rural males, 11.0 per cent among rural females, 47.2 per cent among urban males and 54.7 per cent among urban females were regular wage / salaried employees.
- The proportion of casual labour among workers in India was about 28.3 per cent among rural males, 29.3 per cent among rural females, 14.2 per cent among urban males and 10.3 per cent among urban females.

### **SECTORAL PATTERN OF EMPLOYMENT**

- The sectoral pattern of employment shows that in rural areas, during 2018-19, about 53.2 per cent of the male workers and 71.1 per cent of the female workers were engaged in the agricultural sector.
- The proportions of male and female workers in rural areas engaged in 'construction' sector were 15.4 per cent and 6.0 per cent respectively. The proportions of male and female workers in rural areas engaged in 'manufacturing' sector were 7.3 per cent and 9.0 per cent respectively.
- In urban India, during 2018-19, among male workers, the industry sector, 'trade, hotel and restaurant' sector engaged about 25.2 per cent while 'manufacturing' and 'other services' sectors accounted for about

21.9 per cent and 22.3 per cent, respectively. Among female workers in the urban, 'other services' sector (other than 'trade, hotel & restaurant' and 'transport, storage & communications') had the highest proportion of workers (45.6 per cent), followed by 'manufacturing' (24.5 per cent) and 'trade, hotel and restaurant' (13.8 per cent). Activities under other services sector include membership organizations, repair of computers and personal and household goods and other personal service activities.

- In India, 68.4 per cent of the workers in non-agriculture sector were engaged in the informal sector. The share of informal sector among male workers was 71.5 per cent and among female workers was nearly 54.1 per cent in non-agriculture.
- In India, among regular wage / salaried employees in the non-agriculture sector, 69.5 per cent had no written job contract: 70.3 per cent among males and 66.5 per cent among females.
- In India, among regular wage / salaried employees in the non-agriculture sector, 53.8 per cent were not eligible for paid leave: 54.7 per cent among males and 50.6 per cent among females.
- In India, among regular wage / salaried employees in the non-agriculture sector, 51.9 per cent were not eligible for any social security benefit: 51.2 per cent among males and 54.4 per cent among females.

## **UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN INDIA**

Unemployment rate in India was 5.8 per cent. It was 5.6 per cent among males and 3.5 per cent among females in rural areas, while the rates were 7.1 per cent among males and 9.9 per cent among females in urban areas.

For educated (highest level of education which is secondary and above) unemployment rate in India was 11.0 per cent: 11.2 per cent in rural areas and 10.8 per cent in urban areas.

The unemployment rate among the rural male youth (persons of age 15-29 years) was 16.6 per cent while the unemployment rate among the rural female youth was 13.8 per cent during 2018-19. For the urban sector, the unemployment rate among male youth was 18.7 per cent and 25.7 per cent in 2018-19.

## **WHAT DO THE OFFICIAL DATA TELL US**

What do we learn about the workforce and employment / unemployment situation in India?

It shows that most workers still struggle for a decent employment in the country with majority being self-employed. They do not even have a formal job contract or get or even made eligible for any social security benefits due to the informal nature of their employment. They, therefore do not get recognized as workers. The thrust of any agenda for the social sector must, therefore, include the decent work agenda as a top priority in which conditions of employment beginning with a proper letter of appointment or engagement, social security which includes, old-age, health, maternity, among other benefits must be made an integral part.

The youth in our country needs special focus with their high unemployment rates. Skills and employability needs to be at the top of the agenda for youth, where not only the state but also industry will have to come forward to identify areas where they require skills to be made more contemporary through a proper skill-gap analysis and an employability programme. It is not enough that industry blames the youth about not being employable. The reasons for such lack of employability will have to be sincerely investigated and the responsibility will have to be taken by both the state and the industry for their employment.

Partha Pratim Mitra  
28 June 2020

9831172060  
[nagarikmancha@gmail.com](mailto:nagarikmancha@gmail.com)