



MGNREGA in Paderu ITDA, FY 20-21

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Introduction

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (2005) is a legal entitlement for every rural household in the country.

About this Report

This report examines NREGA's implementation in Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA), Paderu of Visakhapatnam District in FY 20-21. There are 11 Mandals: Ananthagiri, Araku Valley, Chintapalle, Dumbriguda, Gangaraju Madugula, Gudem Kothaveedhi, Hukumpeta, Koyyuru, Munchingiputtu, Paderu, and Pedabayalu. Data available in the public domain and insights from the field were used for this report. We used the data available as on 31st March, for three Financial Years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21. In this report we present the Paderu ITDA and Mandal/GP level details of expenditure, jobcards, and employment generated.

We hope that the insights from this report will add value towards improving the implementation of MGNREGA in ITDAs, through implementation agencies, members of Civil Society Groups, the Media, and Concerned Citizens.

1. Key Statistics

Much higher dependence of ITDA on MGNREGA.

Tribal population from ITDA, Paderu has been participating in great numbers in MGNREGA work, compared to the population from plain areas! This year numbers also reflect the same. On an average each job card holding household was employed under NREGA for more than 78 days, which is 10 and 24 days more than the district and state's average respectively. Even the percentage of households that completed at least 100 days of work in the ITDA (44.2%) is significantly greater than that of the district (30.5%) and the state (18.2%). Table 1, shows few other important statistics related to MGNREGA, along with the above mentioned details.

Table 1: Key MGNREGA Statistics for Paderu ITDA, Visakhapatnam district, and Andhra Pradesh.

		Paderu ITDA	Visakhapatnam	Andhra Pradesh
1	Total number of mandals/blocks	11	39	661
2	Total number of panchayats	245	925	13,584
3	Job Cards issued since inception (lakhs)	1.45	4.60	67.84
4	Number of households employed in FY21 (lakhs)	1.33 (34.5%)*	3.86	47.81
5	Number of workers employed in FY21 (lakhs)	2.57 (39.4%)*	6.52	80.02
6	Persondays generated in FY20-21 (lakhs)	104 (39.5%)*	263	2,604

7	Average persondays per household	78.6	68.1	54.4
8	Average wage rate per day per person	237.6	233.3	228.8
9	Percent of households completed at least 100 days	44.2	30.5	18.2

*as a percentage of totals for Visakhapatnam

In the following sections, we delve a little deeper into the different aspects of MGNREGA, in ITDA Paderu, to get insights into its implementation and make policy recommendations accordingly.

2. Expenditure

Total expenditure increased by 38.6% compared to the previous year's expenditure. Increase in wage expenditure was even higher- more than 48%.

MGNREGA is a predominantly centre-funded program, and only 10% of the expenditure is from the state. Expenditure in FY 21 was much higher compared to the previous two FYs, at more than Rs. 380 crores.

The act mandates that material & skilled wages components should not be more than 40% of the wages and material expenditure put together. In Paderu, the material component was successfully kept under 40% in the last three years. Notably, the share of expenditure on wages has been

	18-19	19-20	20-21
Wages (Rs.crores)	187.38 (60%)	174.50 (63%)	247.53 (65%)
Material and skilled wages (Rs. Crore)	123.95 (39%)	100.76 (37%)	134.50 (35%)
Contingent expenditure (Rs. Crore)	3.12 (1%)	0.47 (0.001%)	0.13 (0.0003%)
Total expenditure (Rs. Crore)	314.45	275.73	382.16

consistently increasing. Amount spent in the last three years under MGNREGA in the ITDA along with the split of wages, material, and contingent components can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2: MGNREGA Expenditure in Paderu ITDA over Last 3 FYs.

Total expenditure increased by 38.6% compared to the previous year's expenditure. Increase in wage expenditure was even higher- more than 48%. Examining the wage expenditure, it can be seen that in FY 21, active households earned Rs. 247.53 crores. This is much more than the previous 2 FYs. Taking 1.33 lakh active households in FY21, this means that each household was able to earn Rs. 18,600 on average in the previous year, which is a significant earning from MGNREGA.

3. Job Cards

Nearly 7,300 new Job Cards Issued in FY21.

There was a huge jump in new Job cards issued in FY 21, compared to the previous 2 FYs. In FY 19 there were 1,587 new JCs, and in FY20 there were 2,468 new JCs issued. Comparatively, **there were 7,279 new JCs issued in FY 21, an increase of almost 3 times from the previous year.** A crucial factor in the jump seems to be the shift of jobcard applications processing from the mandal to the village secretariats during the pandemic. Particularly for ITDAs, where villages are often geographically far from the mandal and difficult to reach because of lack of connectivity, the relocation of the centres to the village would certainly have played an important role. The village secretariats also helped to accelerate the process of new jobcard issuing.

The figure below provides Mandal-wise information on total JCs, new JCs issued, and the number of households employed in FY21¹. Gudem Kothaveedhi added the most new JCs (1,495), and Dumbriguda added the least (246).

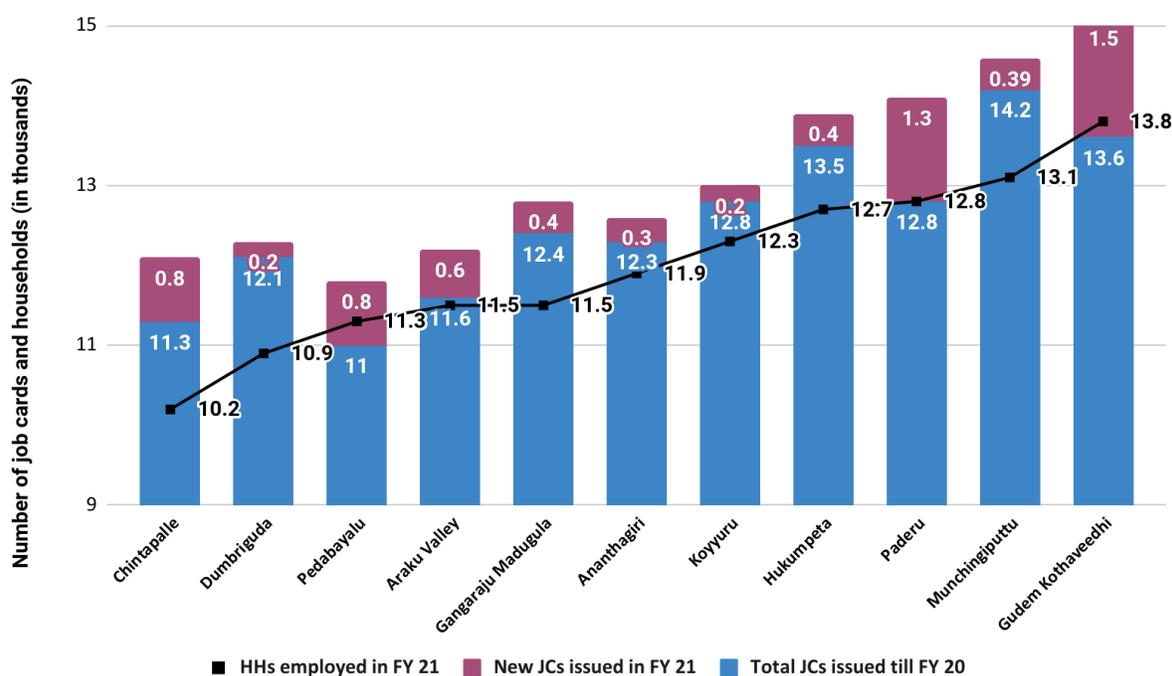


Figure 1: Jobcards in Paderu ITDA in FY21.

Nearly a fourth of Paderu households still don't have a jobcard

While it's welcoming to see the rise in the number of new jobcards issued over the years, nearly a fourth of Paderu households still do not have a jobcard. Total Households in Paderu are 1.9 lakhs according to the Gram Sachivalayam data. The total jobcards issued in Paderu since the inception of

¹ In this report, active households/active jobcards refers to those that demanded at least 1 day of work in FY21.

the scheme are 1.45 lakhs; this means that 76.3% of households have a jobcard. Nearly a fourth of Paderu households don't have a jobcard.

On top of this the following issues affects jobcard entitlements in the region

- Jobcards were not updated in the past 4 years, because of which family members, who attained age of 18+ are not included in the jobcards.
- Newly married couples didn't get a jobcard of their own, as their names from their parents jobcards were not removed.
- Some families are not interested in working under MGNREGA, owing to the past experiences of not receiving their wages on time. And these families could be in large numbers without jobcards.
- Jobcards were made inactive/deleted, without the consent of the worker for unknown reasons. Around 16,000² jobcards were deleted from 2017 till date.

LibTech's field study in Paderu indicates that some of them are likely to be incorrect deletions. In many cases, the jobcard holders are not even aware that their jobcard has been deleted - they are simply told their name did not come in the Muster Roll.

As jobcard and employment data indicates, MGNREGA plays a crucial role in sustaining the livelihoods of families in the region, we recommend the concerned officials to take the following actions immediately:

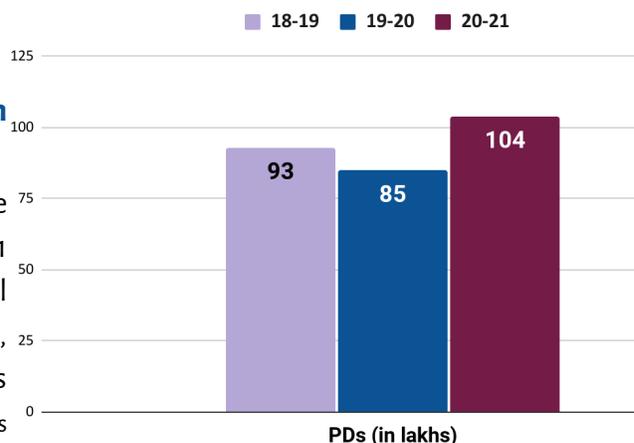
1. Village Secretariat to process Jobcard application & issue at the village level
 - i. Efforts must be made to ensure that those who want MGNREGA work are not excluded because their jobcard was not made
2. Update the Jobcards in a campaign mode;
 - i. All the family members, who attained the age of 18 should be included.
 - ii. Split the jobcards by issuing new ones to those who are newly married.
3. Intimate the worker/ family before deactivating a jobcard/ deleting a worker.

4. Employment Provided

104 Lakh Persondays Were Generated in 2020-21, Highest in the Last Three Years

There has been a significant increase in the wage employment provided under MGNREGA in 2020-21 compared to the last two financial years. The total number of persondays has increased to 104 lakhs, which is 22% more than 85 lakhs persondays generated in 2019-20.

Figure 2: Total Persondays generated in Paderu ITDA over Last 3 FYs.



² 15,840 jobcards are completely deleted as per the data available on <https://nrega.nic.in>

A point to note is the share of women in the total persondays generated in Paderu ITDA. For the Visakhapatnam district, and for AP and the country as well, women's share in persondays and workers saw a decline in FY21. In Paderu, on the contrary, women's participation, both in terms of workers and persondays, remained constant at approximately 50%.

4.2 Monthly trend

80% of persondays were generated in the first four months

Historically, more persondays have been generated during the summer months i.e. the first three months of the financial year, as there are minimal agriculture and allied activities related livelihood opportunities during these months. This year too, despite the lockdown due to the pandemic, approximately 80% of the persondays generated in the FY2020-21, were generated in the first four months of the financial year.

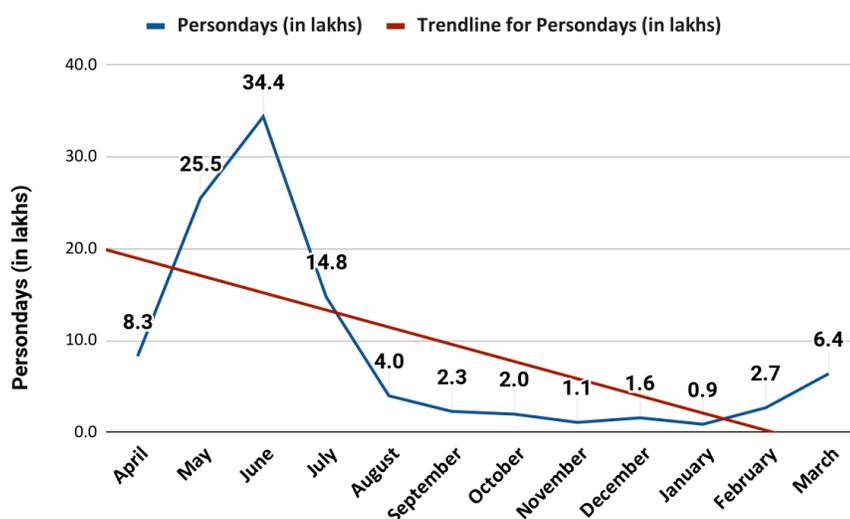


Figure 3: Monthly trend in Persondays generated in FY21.

This signifies the importance of NREGA work for the rural population in the ITDA region, especially during the time of the pandemic, in times when other livelihood opportunities are minimal. Monthly trends in persondays across Paderu ITDA can be seen in Figure 3, along with the maroon trendline indicating the trend in persondays.

4.3 Mandal-wise Persondays Trend

All Mandals generated higher persondays than the previous FY.

The number of persondays generated in all the mandals is higher for the year 2020-21 compared to the last year i.e. 2019-20. All mandals except for Paderu and Pedabayalu show an increase compared to the last two years. Paderu and Pedabayalu have fewer persondays generated in 2020-21 compared to 2018-19 with a drop of 6% and 15% from 2018-19 to 2020-21. The substantial increase in persondays across the mandals highlights the importance of MGNREGA in ITDA during the pandemic.

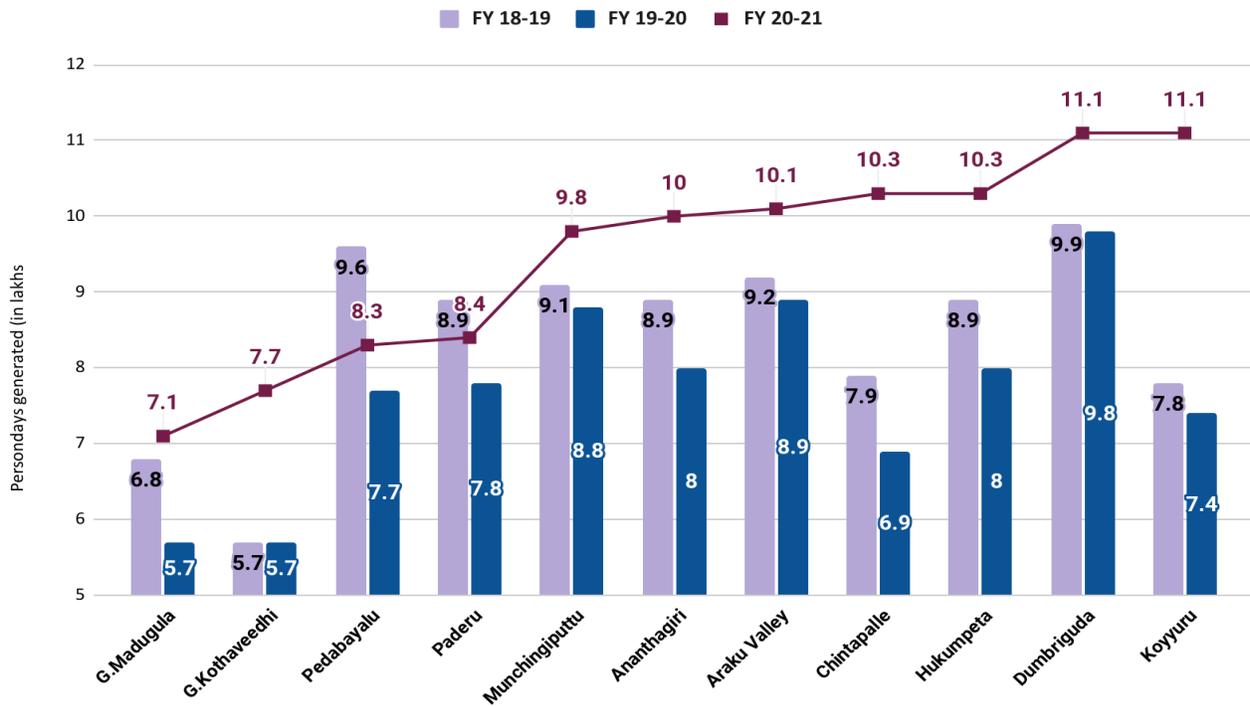


Figure 4: Mandal-wise Persondays generated over last 3 FYs (in lakhs)

4.4 Average persondays

4.4.1. Mandal level data

Average persondays ranges from 61.4 in Gangaraju Madugula to 89.2 in Dumbriguda

The average persondays in the financial year 2020-21 was above 60 for all mandals. While it was below 75 for Gangaraju Madgula, Pedabayalu and Gudem Kothaveedhi, it was above 85 for Koyyuru, Ananthagiri and Dumbriguda. Thus, there is some variation across the mandals in terms of the number of days of employment that households get from MGNREGA.

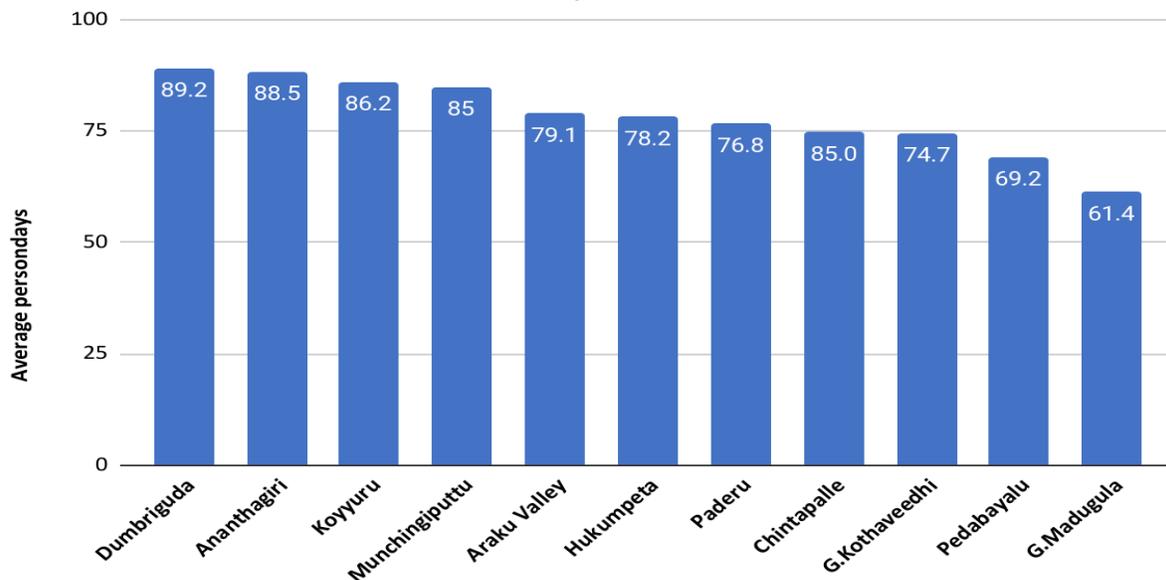


Figure 5: Average persondays across mandals

4.4.2. Village level data

48 villages have Zero Persondays and 175 villages have low-employment³ in Paderu, ITDA.

While the employment generated and the average persondays shows a positive trend over the years, a look at the village level data suggests there is a huge scope for improvement. As the data suggests, no employment was generated in the last FY in 48 villages (2%) and about 175 (7.2%) villages have low-employment of the total 2,438 villages of ITDA, Paderu. This shows the high level of disparity in allocation of work at the village level.

Our field visits to some of these villages with zero persondays indicates the following to be the reasons for this:

- **Insufficient Staff:** For instance one Technical Assistant and one Bare Foot Technician(B.F.T) are assigned to look after the implementation in 28 villages, and half of these villages have no connectivity. It seems almost impossible for B.F.T to visit all these villages in a week/month to record demand for work and monitor works under MGNREGA.
- **Lack of Awareness:** Workers are unaware of the fact that their job cards are in inactive mode and were told by the F.As that their names might show up in the subsequent musters. However these job cards can not get activated unless the workers visit M.C.C.
- **Lack of Monitoring and Evaluation at the village level:** Almost in all review meetings on MGNREGA works, the data is sought for Mandal Level and the story at the village level gets lost in the averages! Making it invisible for the authorities at a higher level.

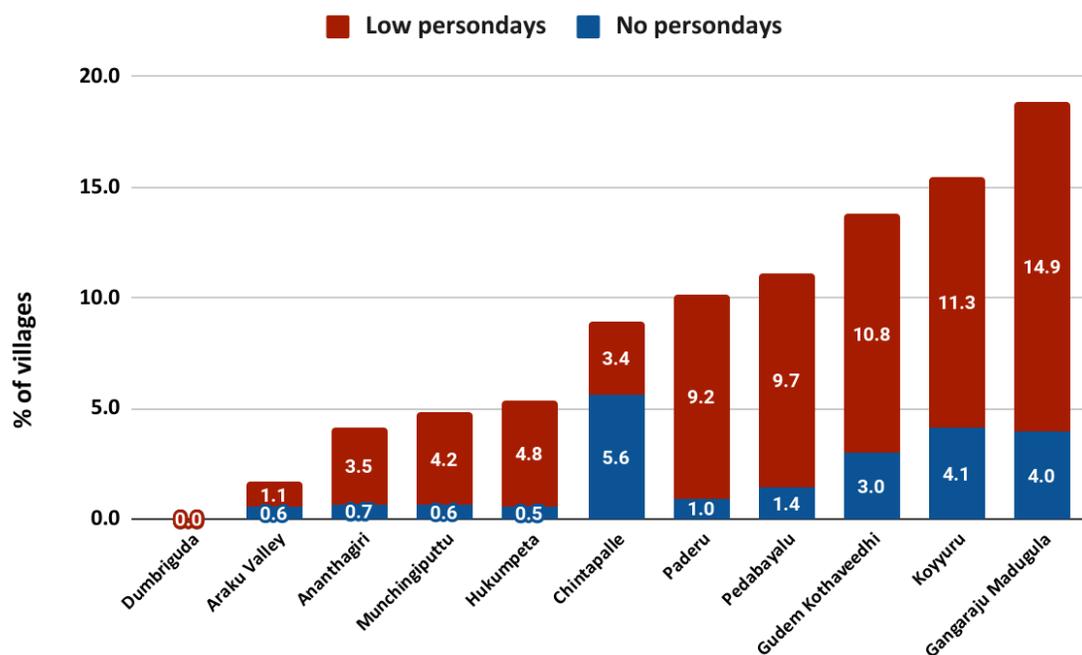


Figure 6 Percentage of villages with no and low persondays across the mandals

³ We use 40 persondays i.e. half of the ITDA average persondays as a benchmark for low-employment.

Figure 6 depicts the percentage of villages with no and low persondays across the 11 mandals. While Dumbriguda does not have any village with no or low persondays, 14.9% of villages in Gangaraju Madugula have low persondays and 4% have no persondays. Chintapalle has the highest percentage of no persondays villages (5.6%).

Since the officials review the MGNREGA work by looking at the panchayat level data, village level reality gets lost in averages. And almost 10% of the villages are getting affected because of this, so It's critical to look at the village level scenario to improve the implementation.

While the officials were saying that this phenomenon of zero persondays is due to the fact that the majority of these villages are either watershed villages or no longer inhabited, it's important to note that we personally visited a good number of these villages only to find otherwise. Efforts can be made to ensure low-employment villages and GPs with large disparities are sites of interventions for state and civil society alike to improve NREGA.

4.5 ROFR Patta Holders

63.6% of patta holders not registered on the MIS for receiving 150 days of work.

Record of Forest Rights (RoFR) Patta Holders are landless tribals who were awarded pattas by the state recognising their ownership over the land they have occupied for many years. All patta holders, with minor exceptions are eligible for 150 days of work under MGNREGA. A look at the data, however, shows that nearly half of them have not been registered for 150 days in the MIS (NREGA Software).

4.2.2 The mandate of the Act is to provide at least 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to every rural household whose adult member volunteers to do unskilled manual work. The Ministry mandates the provision of additional 50 days of wage employment (beyond the stipulated 100 days) to every Scheduled Tribe Household in a forest area, provided that these households have no other private property except for the land rights provided under the FRA Act, 2006.

Figure 7 An excerpt from MGNREGA Annual Master Circular 2020-21

HHs recognised as RoFR Patta Holders	HHs registered as Patta holders on the MIS	Patta Holders not recognised by the MIS
81,785	29,767 (36.4)	52018 (63.6%)

Table 4: Patta Holders in Paderu ITDA

Government of Andhra Pradesh issued ROFR title pattas to more than 81,785⁴ families. However, more than 50,000 deserving 'pattadaars' are not recognised in MGNREGA MIS as the ROFR title holders, thereby deprived of their right to work for 150 days under the scheme. Officials responsible for this must ensure that pattadaars get their rights.

However, beyond the matter of registering all the patta holders, it is also important to analyse how many of them are availing of the 150 days. If we consider all the deserving families that are registered in MIS as ROFR title holders (29,767), they should have generated about 15 lakh additional persondays⁵, but only 5 lakh persondays were generated by them. **There is a shortcoming of nearly 10 lakh persondays, with a potential to earn an amount of Rs 23.76⁶ crores in wages for the tribal population.** And if we consider the pattadaars not identified in the NREGA MIS, the figure would be staggering.

In our interviews with workers, it is observed that these vulnerable groups entitled to 150 days are very often unaware of this right, even if they are registered on the MIS for availing the extra days. The concerned officials and the state need to take steps to spread awareness about this special provision, and ensure that all those who are eligible, are enrolled. And the burden of proof falls on the worker family to prove his eligibility for this provision and visit M.C.C to register. It helps if the state can automate the process as both the NREGA MIS and ROFR database⁷ is managed by the state.

5. Rejected Payments:

Rejected payments are those that are initiated from the Centre, but are rejected due to technical errors, like a bounced check. Suspended payments occur when there are no Aadhaar or bank account details mapped to the worker's Job Card.

Around 2000 households are affected by the rejected payments, ₹ 44,71,300⁸ from about 4570 transactions are held up as rejected payments as per the data available on MGNREGA, Andhra Pradesh's Website. Almost 70% of this amount is from 5 mandals only, the amount rejected in each Mandal, along with the number of transactions and the number of families affected can be seen in table 5.

S.No	Mandal	Amount	No.of Jobcards	Transactions
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⁴ Around 48,000 physical copies of pattas are yet to reach the farmers, all the 81785 were recognised and approved as ROFR title holders as on October, 2020.

⁵ As they get to work additional 50 days over the 100 days

⁶ FY 2020-21 average wage is Rs 237.6

⁷ Giribhumi / GiriPragathi database

⁸ as on 23, April, 2021

1	Pedabayalu	₹ 8,38,179	307	802
2	Araku Valley	₹ 6,51,894	302	717
3	Dumbriguda	₹ 5,97,560	262	650
4	Munchingiputtu	₹ 5,94,319	167	581
5	Ananthagiri	₹ 4,19,623	160	439
6	Koyyuru	₹ 4,05,542	155	379
7	Gudem Kothaveedhi	₹ 3,56,839	167	345
8	Chintapalle	₹ 2,67,467	119	262
9	Gangaraju Madugula	₹ 1,53,121	65	180
10	Paderu	₹ 99,072	71	109
11	Hukumpeta	₹ 87,684	65	106
	Total	₹ 44,71,300	1840	4570

Table 5: Rejected Payments and amount of Worker families affected in ITDA, Paderu

However the govt data shows that it is only about ₹ 3,30,783, this discrepancy arises due to the inactive jobcards. There are about deleted/ inactive jobcards with payments due and all of these payments are not considered in government data.

In our field observations and interviews with M.C.C staff at various mandals, we were told that these jobcard holders have more than one job card, hence the earlier one is in inactive mode. And the workers don't try to resolve issues with the older card and receive pending wages on that card as the officials say that it is illegal to have two job cards. But it is important to note that it is not the workers' fault.

Conclusion

While Paderu ITDA has clearly performed well in FY21, the strength of the numbers must be understood not as something to celebrate, but as a testament to the importance of MGNREGA in the area, especially in light of the pandemic. The employment figures clearly expose the dependence of thousands on the scheme. As the village-level discrepancies, field insights, and situation of the pattadaars show, there remain many crucial problems in the implementation of the program that must be investigated and corrected.

