

Behind the Numbers: MGNREGA in Telangana, 2024-25

LibTech India

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About LibTech

We are a team of engineers, social workers, and social scientists who are interested in improving public service delivery in India. We have been working as a team in multiple states of the country, including Telangana, for more than 10 years—though individually, some of us have been involved for even longer.

Over the years, we have been consistently releasing reports on the implementation of MGNREGA in Telangana, along with a few reports at the national level and for other states as well. Some of our reports have been quoted, and our policy recommendations have been engaged with and, in some cases, acted upon by state governments and the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), reflecting the impact of our work on shaping conversations around welfare governance.

Basic Entitlements under MGNREGA

- 100 days of guaranteed wage employment to registered rural households
- Unemployment allowance in case employment is not provided
- Wage payment within 15 days of work completion
- Delay compensation if wages are not paid within 15 days

“This report primarily focuses on the employment aspect of MGNREGA”

About This Report

This report analyses the implementation of MGNREGA in Telangana during FY 2024-25, with reference to data from the previous financial year, 2023-24. The data, sourced from <https://nrega.nic.in/> as of 7 April 2025, provides valuable insights into the current status of the program in the state. We also draw on national-level trends to contextualize Telangana’s performance. The objective is to inform citizens and stakeholders about key trends and developments in the program’s execution.

1. Key Findings

- 5.3% increase in unique households that worked despite household registrations remaining stagnant. Telangana's improvement in participation stands in contrast to the national declines of 3.5% (households). – **Section 2.1.1**
- 1.1% increase in total persondays generated, outpacing the national drop of 7%. But average persondays per household fell by 4% (from 47.71 to 45.80), indicating increased participation did not translate into proportionate employment – **Section 2.2**
- Steep 31.1% drop in households completing 100 days of work, bringing the proportion down from 5.3% to just 3.5%. This is over three times the national decline of 9.5%, reflecting major constraints in fulfilling the employment guarantee – **Section 2.2**
- 17 out of 32 districts recorded an increase in persondays, with Mulugu (36.5%), Kamareddy (24.6%), and Warangal (23.7%) showing significant growth. In contrast, Medchal and Sangareddy and Mahabubabad saw sharp declines of 25.3%, 19.2% and 18.1% respectively. – **Section-3**
- April and May saw a sharp rise in persondays—up by 88% and 35% respectively compared to the previous year. However, this was followed by a sustained decline for the rest of the year. The downturn coincided with a Ministry of Rural Development's (MoRD) advisory issued in late May, highlighting non-compliance with the 60% rule for agriculture-related expenditure. – **Section 3.1**
- While the overall number of registered job cards in the state has remained largely stagnant, there has been a net reduction of 0.91 lakh workers—unlike the national trend, which saw a net addition of 119 lakh workers. Despite significant deletions over the past three years, the state has not undertaken reinstatement drives. Field insights suggest that this inaction may be linked to attempts to limit coverage under the MGNREGA-linked Indiramma Atmiya Bharosa scheme.— **Section 4**
- Despite an increase in the notified wage rate from ₹272 to ₹300, the rise in MGNREGA wage income at the household level has been modest—only ₹1,133, increasing from ₹8,637 in 2023–24 to ₹9,770. This remains far below the potential income of ₹13,740 that households could have earned if full wages had been paid for all days worked.— **Section 5**
- Estimated wage shortfall of ₹1,059.32 crore (40.6%), due to the gap between notified and actual wages, even though persondays remained stable. This continues a trend of large underpayment in Telangana's MGNREGA implementation – **Section 5.1**

2. Employment at State Level

2.1 Trends in MGNREGA Employment Telangana in National Context

As a demand-driven employment program, MGNREGA is intended to respond to the needs of workers seeking wage employment. However, in recent years, the Union government’s tight control over budget allocations—combined with uneven political will and administrative capacity across states—has significantly influenced the program’s implementation. These constraints directly affect how effectively MGNREGA operates on the ground.

Given this context, it becomes essential to analyse employment-related data to assess how the program is functioning in Telangana. In the following section, we examine key employment metrics for the financial year FY 2024–25, comparing them with data from FY 2023–24. We also refer to national-level trends to situate Telangana’s performance in a broader context. Metrics related to employment generation, participation of vulnerable communities, and budget utilization serve as key indicators to evaluate the program’s performance

2.1.1 Household and Worker Trends Under MGNREGA

- *Telangana's household registrations remained stagnant, reflecting limited progress compared to national trends.*

	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25	% Drop in the State** $((1-2)/1)*100$	% Drop in the Country**
	(1)	(2)		
Households Registered (in Lakhs)	53.02	53.08	-0.1	-7.8
Unique Households worked (in Lakhs)	25.33	26.68	-5.3	3.5
Workers employed (in Lakhs)	40.62	42.44	-4.5	5.5

Table 1: Households and worker trends for FY 2023-24 and FY 2024-25.

** A negative value represents an improved trend while the positive value represents the drop in the performance.

In FY 2024-25, Telangana showed contrasting trends compared to the national pattern. Household registrations in the state remained stable with a marginal increase of 0.1%, while nationally there was a sharp rise of 7.8%. The state witnessed notable improvement in work participation, with a 5.3% increase in unique households that worked and a 4.5% rise in workers employed—against national declines of 3.5% and 5.5%, respectively. Field reports indicate that officials informally halted new jobcard¹ issuance and splits. This may have had the effect of limiting the number of beneficiaries under the Indiramma Atmiya Bharosa cash transfer scheme, which is targeted at landless MGNREGA households. Refer to Table 1

2.2 Persondays Generated: FY 2023-24 Vs FY 2024-25

- *Persondays generated increased marginally, but fewer households reached 100 days of work.*

Despite a 5.3% increase in the number of unique households that worked under MGNREGS in Telangana during FY 2024–25, the overall employment outcomes show signs of strain. While total persondays generated in the state rose marginally by 1.1%, this growth did not keep pace with the rise in participating households. However, Telangana still fared better than the national trend, which saw a 7% decline in persondays(Refer to Annexure 1 for national level statistics).

	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25	% Drop in the State	% Drop in the Country
Unique Households worked (in Lakhs)	25.33	26.68	-5.3	3.5
Persondays² Generated (in Lakhs)	1208.58	1222.11	-1.1	7.0
Average persondays³	47.71	45.80	4	3.6
Households completed 100 days of employment (in Lakhs)	1.35	0.93	31.1	9.5
Percentage of households completed 100 days of employment⁴	5.33	3.49	-	-

Table 2: Employment for FY 2023-24 and FY 2024-25 in Telangana.

The average persondays per household in the state fell by 4%, mirroring a similar decline of 3.6% nationally. The most striking concern was the steep 31.1% drop in the number of households completing 100 days of employment in Telangana—more than three times the national decline of 9.5%. Consequently, the share of

¹ Jobcards and households are used interchangeably in this report

² Number of work days completed under MGNREGS by the Job card holders

³ (Persondays Generated / Unique Households worked)

⁴ (Households completed 100 days of employment / Unique Households worked)*100

fully employed households in the state dropped from 5.3% to just 3.5%. These figures highlight that while more households in Telangana participated in MGNREGA, they received fewer days of work on average, and the chances of completing the full 100 days entitlement fell sharply compared to national trends.

3. Employment at District Level

- *Mulugu district saw the highest rise in MGNREGA persondays with a 36.5% increase, while Medchal recorded the steepest drop at 25.3%, highlighting stark contrasts in implementation across Telangana.*

In FY 2024–25, **17 out of 32 districts** in Telangana recorded an increase in MGNREGA persondays compared to the previous year. Among the top gainers, **Mulugu** registered a remarkable **36.5% rise**, while **Kamareddy** and **Warangal** reported increases of **24.6%** and **23.7%** respectively. On the flip side, districts like **Medchal**, **Sangareddy** and **Mahabubabad** registered sharp declines of **25.3%**, **19.2%** and **18.1%** respectively. This contrast among districts underscores the need for localized strategies to address both underperformance and sustain gains. For more details on district wise data on persondays, refer to Annexure 2.

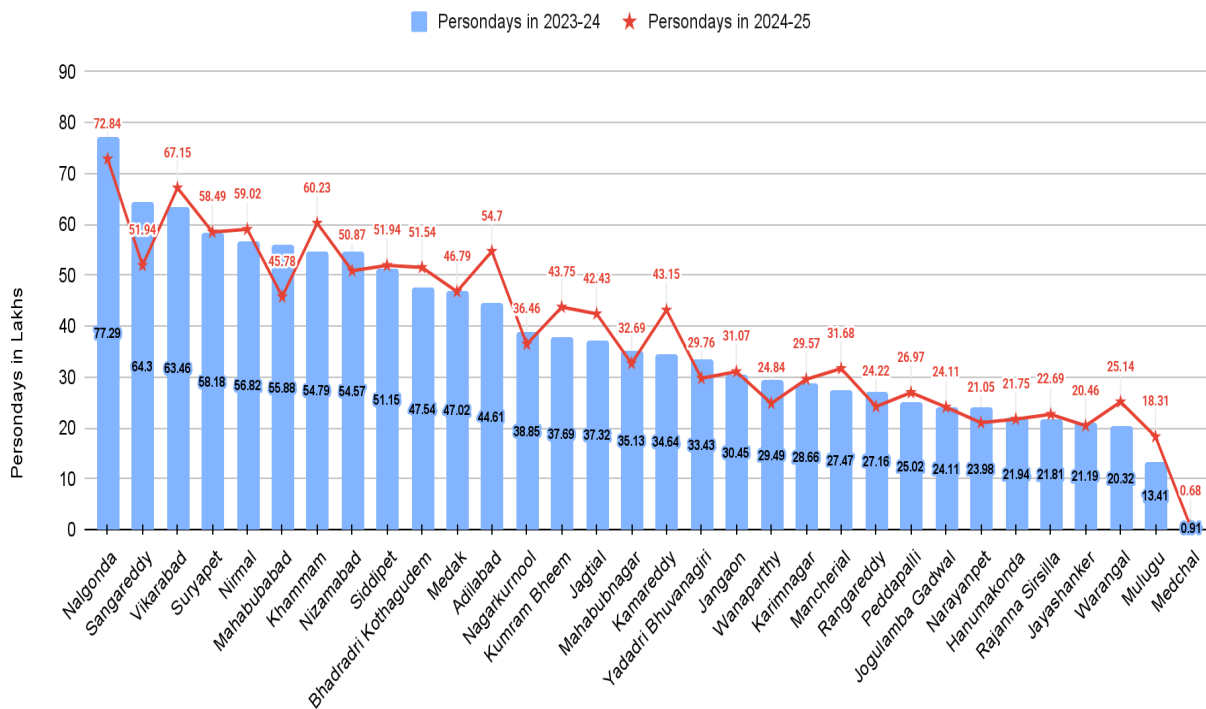


Figure 1: District-wise persondays comparison for FY 2023-24 and 2024-25

3.1 Monthly trends in NREGA persondays

- Despite a sharp drop during the core working months, a massive surge in April and May alone accounted for most of the year’s persondays, masking the slowdown that followed.

In FY 2024–25, MGNREGA persondays began on a strong note, with sharp year-on-year increases of 88% in April and 35% in May. However, this early momentum quickly faded, as persondays consistently declined from June 2024 through March 2025 compared to the previous year. The steepest drop occurred in November, with an 82% year-on-year decline. The smallest drops were observed in September and March, both at 26% below the previous year’s peak.

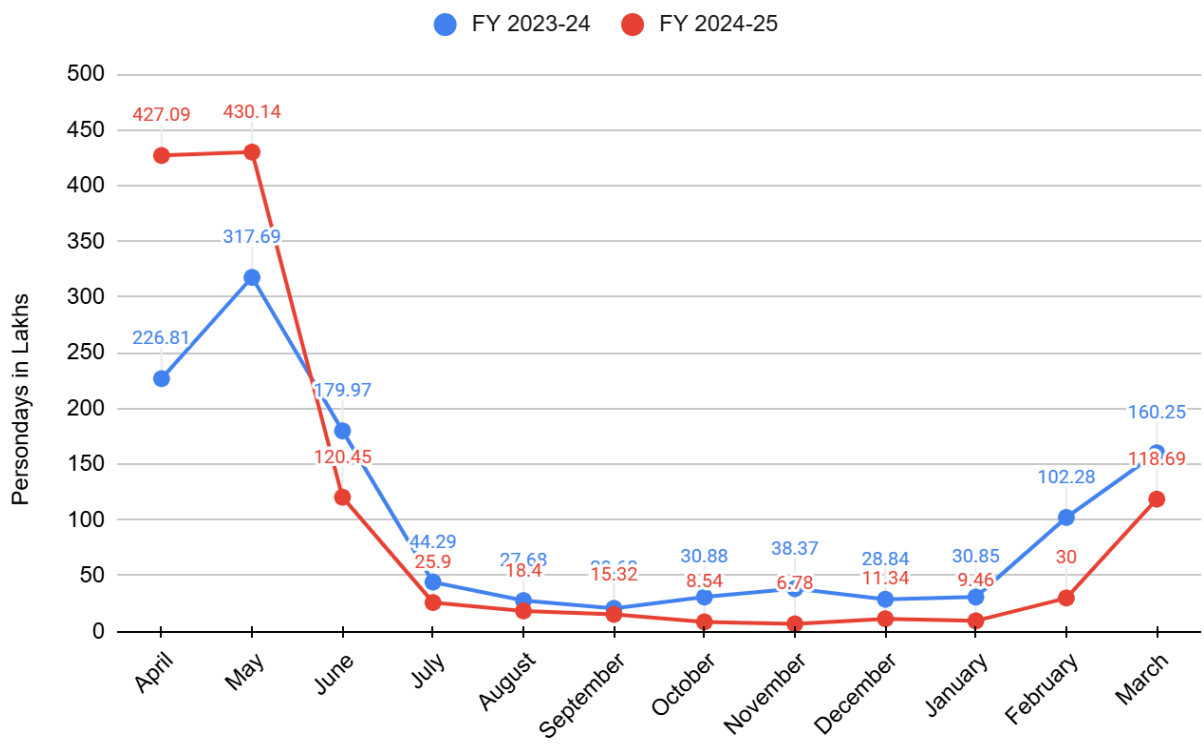


Figure 2: Month-wise comparison of persondays generated in FY 2023-24 and 2024-25

This slump closely followed administrative intervention. On 24th May 2024, the Ministry of Rural Development, Govt of India issued an [advisory](#) to the Telangana government, citing violations in MGNREGA implementation—particularly the failure to meet the mandatory 60% expenditure on agriculture and allied activities. The unusually early timing of this advisory, just seven weeks into the financial year, likely curtailed employment for the rest of the year.

4. Jobcard and Worker Deletion

Trends for FY 2024-25

- *In 2024–25, Telangana saw a stagnation in Jobcard registrations but a net reduction in workers—running counter to the national trend of substantial net additions.*

In FY 2024–25, Telangana presents a unique pattern in the dynamics of Jobcard and worker updates under MGNREGA. While the state recorded a negligible net increase in Jobcards—suggesting that more households were added than removed—this apparent expansion masks a deeper issue. At the worker level, the state witnessed a net reduction, with more workers deleted than added, signalling a shrinking active workforce under the scheme.

This diverges sharply from the national trend, where both Jobcards and workers saw substantial net additions. Compounding this concern, Telangana has failed to conduct large-scale drives to reinstate households and workers who were wrongly deleted due to the imposition of Mandatory ABPS (Aadhaar-Based Payment System). Over the last three years, the state has recorded substantial deletions—about 6.1 lakh households and 21 lakh workers have been removed—severely affecting people’s ability to access work and undermining their rights under the Act.

While most states are actively reinstating workers, Telangana’s lack of action could suggest a pattern of inaction. One possible reason, as field insights indicate, might be an attempt to limit new MGNREGA registrations—potentially affecting eligibility under the Indiramma Atmiya Bharosa cash transfer scheme, which requires MGNREGA enrollment for beneficiaries.

	Jobcards Deleted (Lakhs)	Jobcards Added (Lakhs)	Net Jobcard Deletions (Lakhs)⁵	Workers Deleted (Lakhs)	Workers Added (Lakhs)	Net Worker Deletions (Lakhs)⁶
Telangana	0.8	0.85	-0.05	3.31	2.4	0.91
India	39.32	153.71	-114.39	113.16	232.19	-119.03

Table 3: Net Jobcard and worker deletions for FY 2024-25 : Telangana vs India

⁵ Deleted Jobcards - Added Jobcards

⁶ Deleted Workers - Added Workers

5. Telangana's MGNREGA Wage Expenditure Trends:

- *Despite higher notified wages, Telangana's MGNREGA workers earned far less than their potential due to wage gaps and fewer workdays.*

While MGNREGA notified wages in Telangana increased from ₹272 to ₹300 in FY 2024–25, workers continued to face substantial wage suppression due to the persistent gap between notified and actual received wages. On average, workers received only ₹213 per day—just 71% of the notified amount. Although this marked a 17.8% increase in received wages from the previous year, the benefit was partially offset by a decline in average persondays from 47.7 to 45.8. As a result, household income rose modestly by ₹1,133—from ₹8,637 to ₹9,770—a 13% increase. However, this remains far below the potential income of ₹13,740 had workers received the full notified wage for all workdays.

This wage gap is not new. As per a 2021–22 reply by the Ministry of Rural Development in Parliament, Telangana had the dubious distinction of having the lowest received wages in the country—just 71% of the notified rate. Worryingly, this trend shows no signs of reversal. In FY 2024–25, while Andhra Pradesh—with the same notified wage of ₹300—recorded an average wage of ₹255, Telangana lagged significantly behind at ₹213.

This persistent shortfall in wage realization calls for immediate corrective action from the state government to ensure that workers receive their full entitlements and that the promise of MGNREGA as a reliable source of rural livelihood is meaningfully upheld.

	Notified wages (Rs)	Received wages⁷ (Rs)	Average Person days	MGNREGA Household Income⁸ (Rs)	Potential Household Earnings⁹ (Rs)
FY 2023-24	272	181.03	47.71	8637	12977
FY 2024-25	300	213.32	45.80	9770	13740

Table 4: Comparison of MGNREGA Wages and Household Income for FY 2023-24 to FY 2024-25

⁷ Average wage rate per day per person

⁸ MGNREGA Household Income = Received wages * Average Person days

⁹ Potential Household Earnings = Notified Wages * Average Person days

5.1 Evaluating the MGNREGA Wage Deficit in Telangana

- *The state witnessed a ₹1,059.32 crore (40.6%) shortfall in MGNREGA wages despite workers putting in the same number of days.*

In Telangana, MGNREGA households earned a total of ₹2,607.01 crore in FY 2024–25, with an average daily wage of ₹213.32. Had they received the full notified wage of ₹300 per day, their total income would have been ₹3,666.33 crore—an additional ₹1,059.32 crore, reflecting a 40.6% increase in earnings.

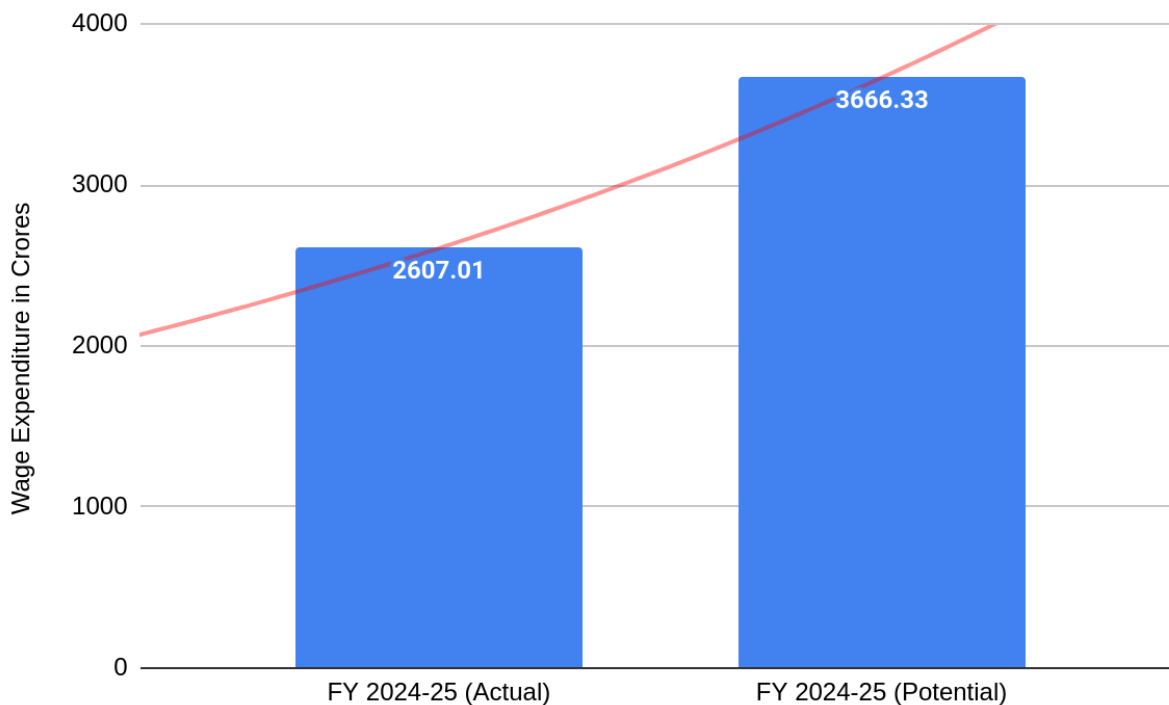


Figure 3 : Comparison of Actual wage expenditure and Potential wage expenditure for FY 2024-25

6. Conclusion

The performance of MGNREGA in Telangana during FY 2024–25 reflects a mixed trajectory. On the positive side, the state witnessed an increase in participation, with more households and workers engaging in the program compared to the previous year, even as national trends showed a decline. This indicates the continued relevance and demand for MGNREGA in rural Telangana.

However, deeper analysis reveals significant concerns. While participation rose, key employment indicators weakened. Average persondays fell, and the proportion of households completing 100 days of work dropped steeply. These figures suggest that although more people are seeking employment, the program is not meeting their full entitlements under the Act. Employment was highly uneven through the year, with a strong start followed by a mid-year slump that coincided with an advisory from the Union Ministry—raising questions about the influence of administrative decisions on work availability.

District-level disparities were also notable, with several districts experiencing sharp declines in employment, including some that had previously performed well. The reduction in the active workforce—despite a marginal rise in jobcards—indicates persistent issues with deletions and limited efforts at reinstating affected workers. This trend is especially concerning given the link between MGNREGA registration and eligibility for other social protection programs.

Additionally, while notified wages have increased, workers continued to receive significantly lower amounts in practice. This gap, coupled with fewer workdays, has limited the income support MGNREGA is meant to provide. The estimated wage shortfall of ₹1,059 crore highlights the scale of this issue.

To ensure that MGNREGA continues to function as an effective rural employment guarantee, the Telangana government must focus on expanding work availability across the year, addressing exclusions in worker records, ensuring timely and full wage payments, and improving responsiveness to local distress and demand.

Team Behind This Report:

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Annexure 1

	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25
Unique Households worked (in Lakhs)	599.46	578.42
Persondays Generated (in Lakhs)	31217.56	29042
Average persondays	52.08	50.21
Households completed 100 days of employment (in Lakhs)	44.94	40.67
Percentage of households completed 100 days of employment	7.5	7

Annexure 2

Sl no	Districts	Persondays in 2023-24 (Lakhs)	Persondays in 2024-25 (Lakhs)	Change (%)**
1	Mulugu	13.41	18.31	36.5
2	Kamareddy	34.64	43.15	24.6
3	Warangal	20.32	25.14	23.7
4	Adilabad	44.61	54.7	22.6
5	Kumram Bheem (Asifabad)	37.69	43.75	16.1
6	Mancherial	27.47	31.68	15.3
7	Jagtial	37.32	42.43	13.7
8	Khammam	54.79	60.23	9.9

9	Bhadradri Kothagudem	47.54	51.54	8.4
10	Peddapalli	25.02	26.97	7.8
11	Vikarabad	63.46	67.15	5.8
12	Rajanna Sirsilla	21.81	22.69	4
13	Nirmal	56.82	59.02	3.9
14	Karimnagar	28.66	29.57	3.2
15	Jangaon	30.45	31.07	2
16	Siddipet	51.15	51.94	1.5
17	Suryapet	58.18	58.49	0.5
18	Jogulamba Gadwal	24.11	24.11	0
19	Medak	47.02	46.79	-0.5
20	Hanumakonda	21.94	21.75	-0.9
21	Jayashanker Bhopalapally	21.19	20.46	-3.4
22	Nalgonda	77.29	72.84	-5.8
23	Nagarkurnool	38.85	36.46	-6.2
24	Nizamabad	54.57	50.87	-6.8
25	Mahabubnagar	35.13	32.69	-6.9
26	Rangareddy	27.16	24.22	-10.8
27	Yadadri Bhuvanagiri	33.43	29.76	-11
28	Narayanpet	23.98	21.05	-12.2
29	Wanaparthy	29.49	24.84	-15.8
30	Mahabubabad	55.88	45.78	-18.1
31	Sangareddy	64.3	51.94	-19.2
32	Medchal	0.91	0.68	-25.3

** Green indicates a rise in persondays, Blue indicates no change, Red indicates drop in persondays