

Tuesday, Dec 26,
2023

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Women participation in NREGS continues to rise, 59% this fiscal

As per the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), published by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, the female Labour Force Participation Rate has increased in the country in recent years.

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New Delhi | Updated: December 26, 2023 07:12 IST

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Data on NREGS portal shows of the total 238.62 crore person-days under the NREGS during 2023-24 till December 24, the figure of women person-days was 141.37 crore or 59.25%.

Women participation in the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) was the highest in 10 financial years, with the proportion of women person-days in the total touching 59.25% till December 24 during the current financial year 2023-24, shows official data.

The rates of participation of women in the **MGNREGS**, defined as women person-days out of the total in percentage, stood at 57.47% in 2022-23 and 54.82% in 2021-22. It was 53.19% during 2020-21 at the time of the **Covid-19** outbreak and 54.78% in 2019-20 during the pre-Covid period.

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The number of women person-days was 169.90 crore (57.47 %) of the total 295.66 crore in 2022-23. The lowest percentage of women participation in the NREGS over the last 10 financial years was recorded in 2020-21 at 53.19%. Women participation figures in NREGS for 2023-24 is based on data available up to December 24 and there might be a marginal change at the end of the financial year in March-end 2024. However, the broad trends indicate a steady rise in the women participation in the rural job guarantee scheme.



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While the southern states like Kerala (89%), Tamil Nadu (86%), Puducherry (87.16%) and Goa (72%) have recorded women participation rate of over 70%, it has been hovering around 40% or below in northern states like Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh over the years.



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In 2023-24, 5 states/UTs with the lowest women participation rate under NREGS are:

PARTICIPATION IN PAST 10 YEARS

Financial year	Days out of total (%)
2014-15	54.88
2015-16	55.26
2016-17	56.16
2017-18	53.53
2018-19	54.59
2019-20	54.78
2020-21	53.19
2021-22	54.82
2022-23	57.47
2023-24	59.25

Source: <https://nrega.nic.in/>

Lakshadweep (38.24%), Uttar Pradesh (42.39%), Madhya Pradesh (42.50%) and Maharashtra (43.76%). However, an uptick has been reported in 3 of them during the current financial year: Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Lakshadweep.

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For instance, it was 37.87% in 2022-23 which increased to 42.39% in 2023-24. Similarly, Lakshadweep saw an increase to 38.24% from 26.67% and from 41.80% to 42.50% in Madhya Pradesh. In the financial year 2023-24, a total of 5.38 crore

As per the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), published by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, the female Labour Force Participation Rate has increased in the country in recent years.

The rise was sharp in rural areas. In rural areas, the female Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR), defined as the percentage of persons in the labour force among the persons in the population, increased to 30.5% in 2022-23 (July-June) from 18.2% in 2017-18. The female unemployment rate has declined to 1.8% in 2022-23 from 3.8% in 2017-18.

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Harikishan Sharma

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First published on: 26-12-2023 at 01:26 IST

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