

India: Hunger Index Among Poor in 11 States Continues to Be Dire Post-Lockdown: Survey

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As per the report's findings, 64% of people said that their consumption of lentils had gone down and 73% said their consumption of green vegetables had reduced in the last two months.

New Delhi: More than five months after the nationwide COVID-19-induced lockdown came to an end, the hunger index among the poor and the marginalised section of society continues to be grave in as many as eleven states, according to a 'Hunger Watch' report published this week.

The report, collated by the Right to Food Campaign along with a number of similar non-governmental networks, was based on a survey carried out on 3,994 persons between September and October 2020. A majority of those included in the survey earned less than Rs 7,000 per month.

The states included in the survey were Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Delhi, Telangana, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. While 2,186 persons were interviewed in rural areas, the rest were surveyed in urban areas. Those interviewed mainly belonged to the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and religious minority communities including Muslims.

"About 77 per cent of the PVTG (particularly vulnerable tribal groups) families, 76 per cent of Dalits, and 54 per cent of the adivasis reported that their quantity of food consumption decreased in September-October as compared to pre-lockdown period," the [New Indian Express said](#), quoting from the report.

"When it came to consumption of cereals, pulses and vegetables, 53 per cent reported that their consumption of rice/wheat had decreased in September-October and for about one in four, it has "decreased a lot.",," the report said.

As per the findings, while 64% people said that their consumption of lentils had gone down, 73% said their consumption of green vegetables had reduced in the last two months.

"About 56 per cent of the respondents never had to skip meals before lockdown. In September and October, 27 per cent respondents went to bed without eating. About one in 20 households often went to bed without eating," the news report said.

In Gujarat, the survey conducted by Anna Suraksha Adhikar Abhiyan stated that while 20.6% households sometimes skipped meals due to lack of food at home, 28% said that they went to bed without a meal.

According to a [report in the Indian Express](#), the survey, conducted in nine districts of the state - Ahmedabad, Anand, Bharuch, Bhavnagar, Dahod, Morbi, Narmada, Panchmahals and Vadodara - also found that that in Gujarat, many ration cards have been made "silent".

“The government has not given accurate information to the families, many of whom are from very deprived communities, as to why their ration cards cannot be used anymore to claim their basic entitlements. This process of making ration cards ‘silent’ has happened at the local taluka and/or district level. Additionally, in many areas, taluka level committee meetings are not being held due to Covid-19 effectively depriving families their right to food security.” the report said, quoting from the findings.

A [news report in *The Hindu*](#) based on the findings said, “About 71% of those who were non-vegetarians could not afford eggs or meat. When quizzed about their perception of drop in quantity of food as compared to pre-COVID 19, nearly 66% or 2/3rd of people said they were having less than the quantity they used to eat.” The report also highlighted discrimination reported by Dalit and Muslim families while accessing food.

Based on its survey, the Right to Food Campaign has demanded a universal public distribution system that supplies every household with at least 10 kg grain, 1.5 kg pulses and 800 gram cooking oil till June 2021.

The news report stated the survey results called “into question the government’s decision to withdraw free grains under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY) after November.”

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