

# Growing Unemployment

One of the major promises made during every election campaign was massive job creation. Even after the elections are over claims of creating lakhs of jobs galore. But the reality is that the number of new job creation is being out paced by the number of job seekers by a large margin. The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) data, made public on May 31, 2019, clearly showed that the employment situation is worsening with every passing year.

The PLFS data shows that there is contraction of aggregate employment by 1.2 million between 2011–12 and 2017–18. Aggregate employment, which stood at 472.5 million in 2011–12, came down to 471.3 million in 2017–18. This is mainly due to the rural women losing 24.7 million jobs. The decline in the rural female workforce is accelerating since the turn of this century. The PLFS data shows a fourfold slowdown in employment creation for rural males. Thus, the jobs crisis prominently visible in the previous period in rural female segment seems to have spread to the rural male segment now.

With the majority of rural persons still engaged in agriculture, a crisis in the rural economy most prominently manifests itself in agricultural employment. People in large numbers (27.1 million) deserted agriculture between 2011–12 and 2017–18, once again led by rural female workers (19.8 million). The PLFS data confirmed that People are leaving agriculture not because there are more job opportunities available in nonagricultural sectors but because agriculture is not providing a sustainable income. primarily due to push factors, for there was inadequate absorption in non-agricultural sectors of the economy (25.9 million). Precisely, due to this reason more people abandoning agriculture than the available non-agricultural jobs (25.9).

A larger number of people moved out of agriculture (34.4 million) between 2004–05 and 2011–12, compared to the recent period (27.1 million)—2011–12 and 2017–18. However, aggregate employment still expanded by 14.6 million in the previous period, while in the present period employment shrunk by 1.2 million. This is simply because labour absorption in non-agriculture almost halved in the current period; while employment in non-agriculture expanded by 48.9 million in the previous period, presently it could only absorb 25.9 million fresh workers.

Thus, the PLFS data shows that there is an urgent necessity to revive non-agricultural employment alongside supporting agriculture. Empty slogan like direct cash transfers, Jan dhan Yojana, make in India bickering, skill development schemes, debt reliefs etc. had not moved in this direction. What is needed is the energizing the manufacturing sector and public investment in agriculture. The BJP government continued the same policy implemented by UPA government that withdrew from investing in agriculture in theme of attracting private investment in agriculture and succumbing the manufacturing sector to the imperialist sharks.

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