

# FOOD SECURITY IN INDIA DURING COVID19 EPIDEMIC IN 2020



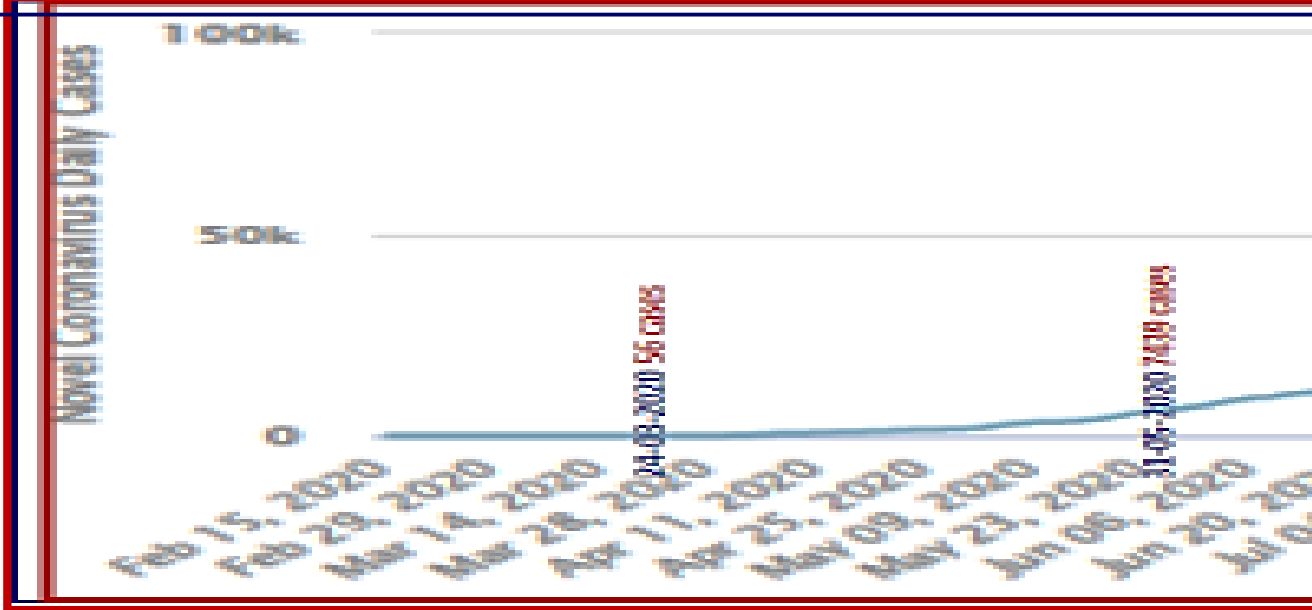
**PREMA RAMACHANDRAN**  
**DIRECTOR, NUTRITION FOUNDATION OF INDIA**



**Webinar on 1.2.2021**

**LOCK DOWN AND ITS IMPACT: SAVING LIVES IS HIGH PRIORITY**

# COVID 19 NEW CASES IN INDIA (MOVING 7 DAY AVERAGES)



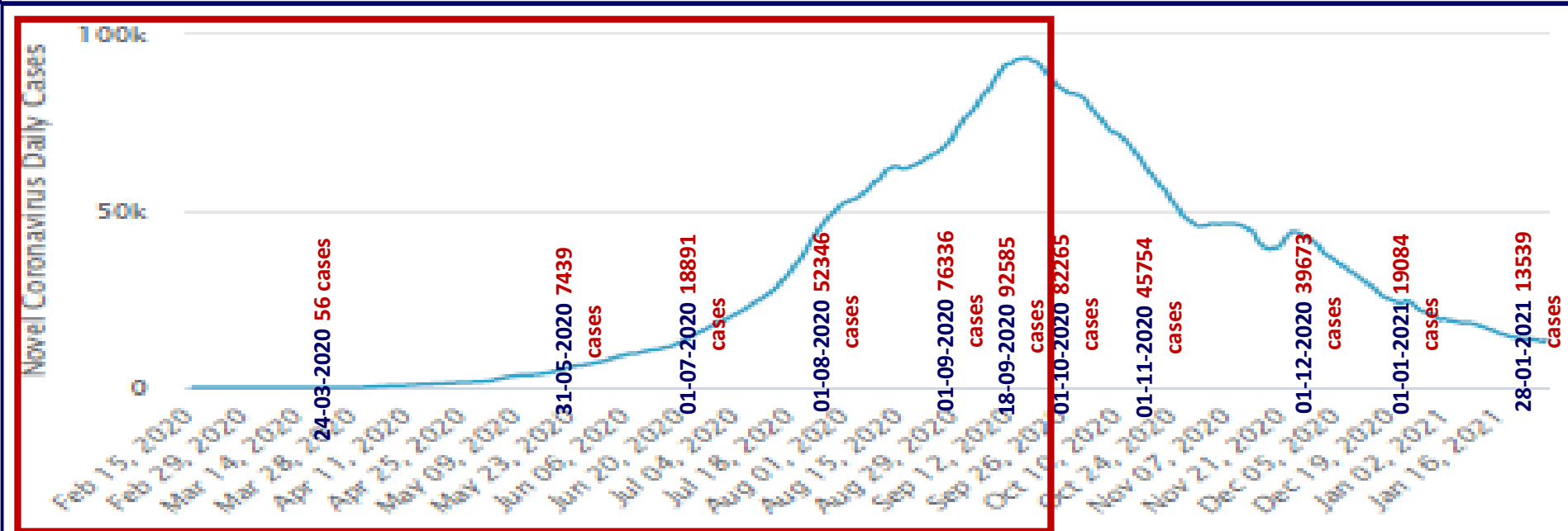
In January 2020 China reported that what began as a respiratory illness in Wuhan city had within three months spread to the entire Hubei province, across China and across continents

China, Italy and Spain reported that their hospitals were getting overwhelmed with person requiring admission for severe respiratory illness and that case fatality rates in admitted cases ranged between 16 to 20 %

India imposed strict Lock down to delay spread of the SARSCoV2 infection in the country on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2020 when daily new cases were 56 and total reported cases were <600.

This gave time for health services to reorganize, screen, admit and treat cases and minimize deaths.

# COVID 19 NEW CASES IN INDIA (MOVING 7 DAY AVERAGES)



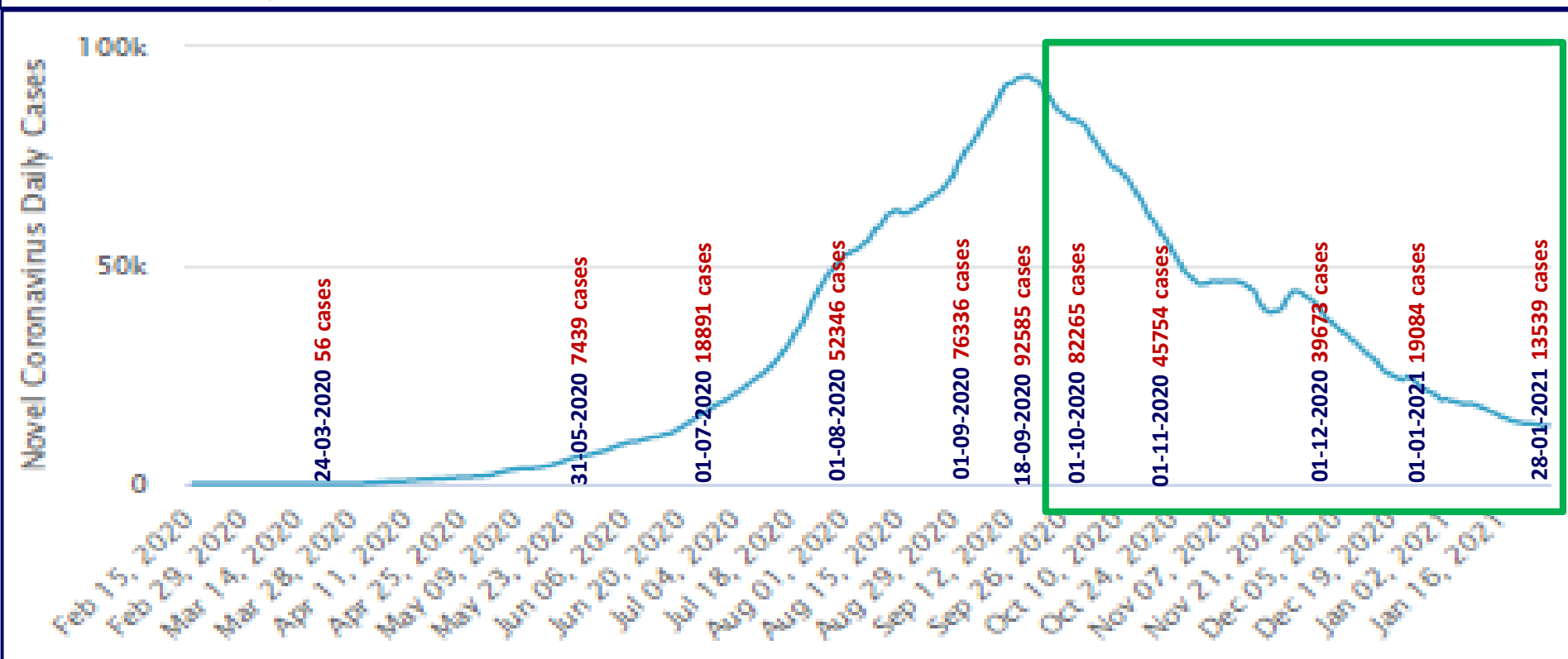
But lock down brought economic activities to a standstill and endangered food security of millions. So phased unlocking with precautions was initiated in June 2020 to restore economic activities.

Cardinal principles during unlocking were:

- Prevent further job loss in urban areas and increase support to rural employment through MNREGA.
- Try to work from home. Enable children to learn from home
- Leave home only for necessary activities. Avoid overcrowding, congregations
- Use masks, ensure physical distancing and hand washing to prevent infection

Despite these precautions, there was steady rise in cases but India had relatively low case load and deaths/million population. Case fatality rates were low.

# COVID 19 NEW CASES IN INDIA (MOVING 7 DAY AVERAGES)

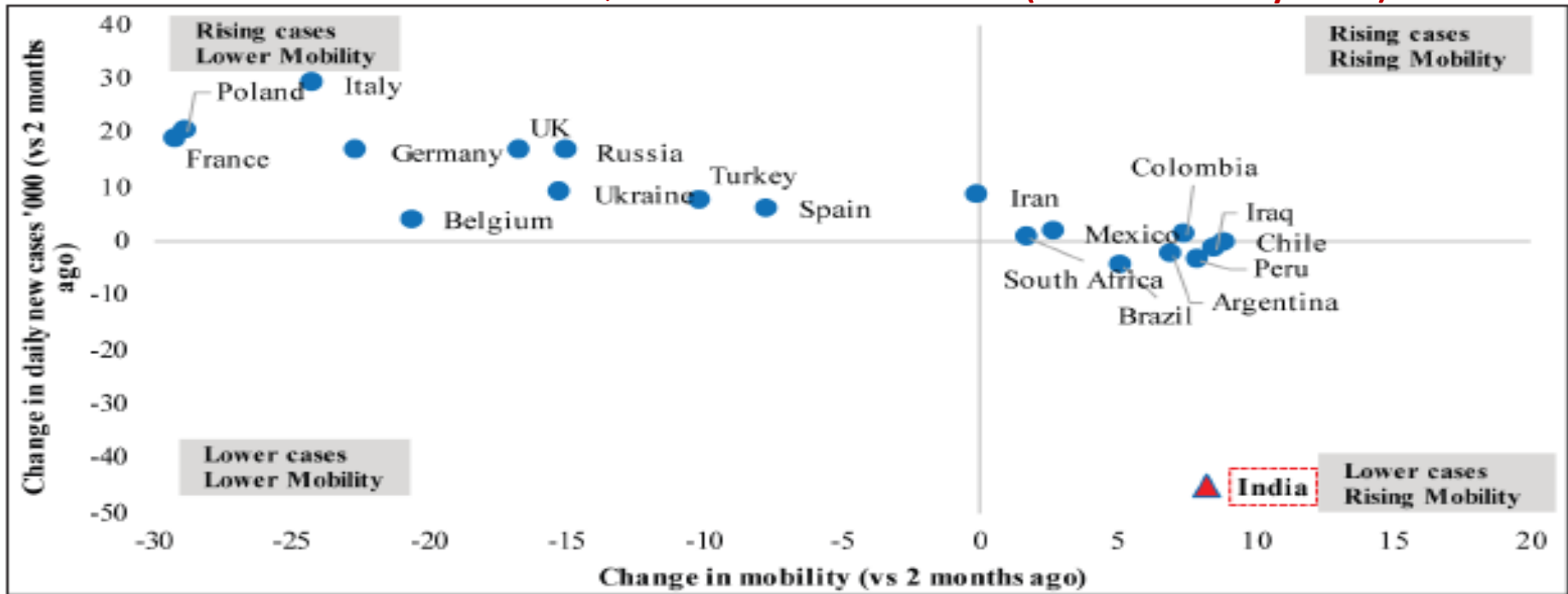


There had been a progressive fall in new cases since October 2020, despite the festival season related over crowding and non-compliance with precautions. Contrary to the trend in USA and Europe, fall in number of new cases continued even after the onset of winter - quite severe in the northern parts of the country.

Currently the reported number of new cases are similar to those reported in June 2020.

But some data from sero-surveillance suggest that the proportion of persons with antibodies due to prior infection may be as high as 60%.

# PHASED UNLOCKING AND IMPROVEMENT IN MOBILITY BUT FALL IN NUMBER OF NEW CASES (Economic survey 2021)



Source: Data accessed from <https://www.Covid19india.org/> and MOHFW - Data as on 31<sup>st</sup> December

Higher mobility after unlocking resulted in relatively higher number of cases in most countries

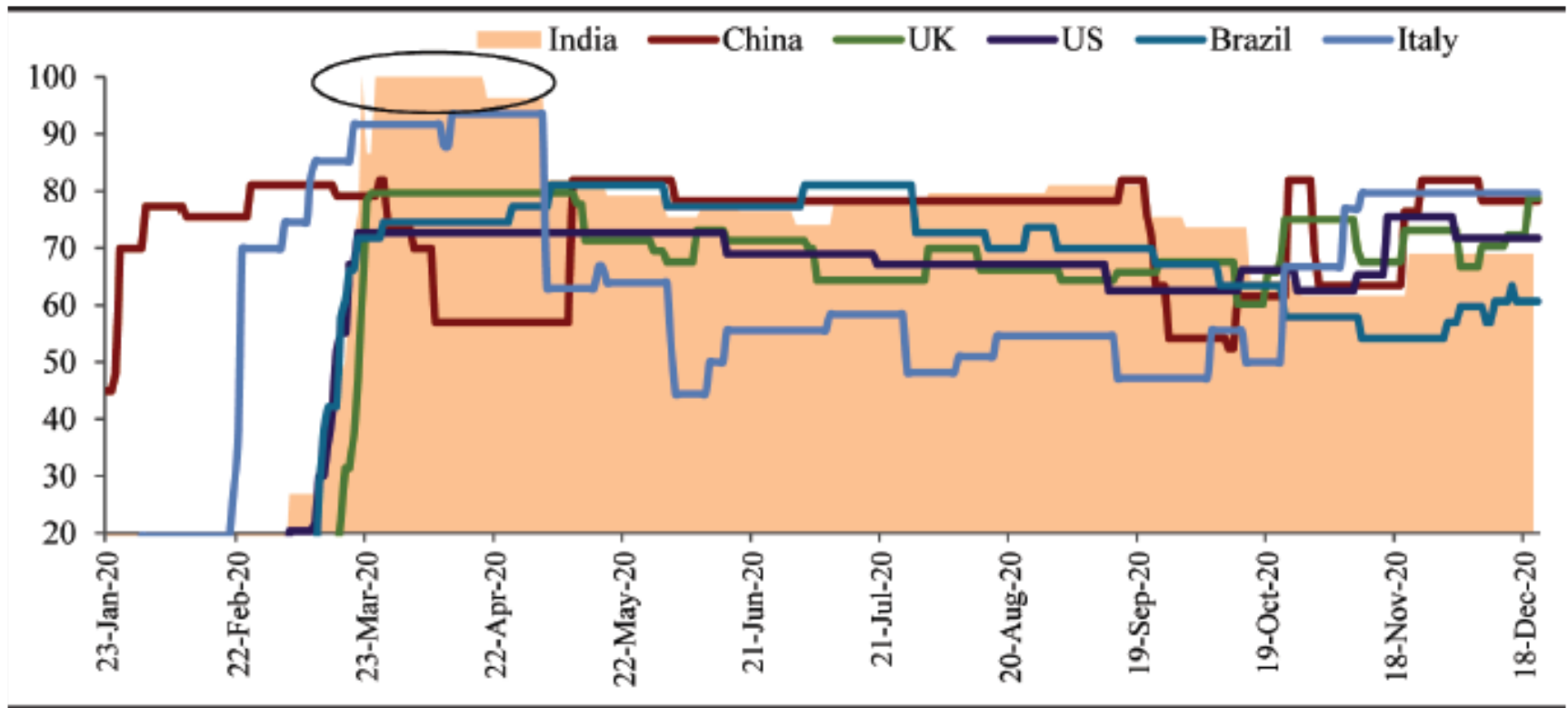
In India unlocking was not followed by high number of cases.

This might be partly because:

- lock down continues for education, entertainment, activities related to meetings
- compliance with mask wearing and physical distancing is high especially in congested urban localities

# **LOCK DOWN AND ITS IMPACT ON FOOD SECURITY**

# STRINGENCY OF LOCK DOWN (Economic Survey India 2021)



Source: Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker – data as on 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2020

**India imposed the most stringent (100%) lock down between March and May 2020 even when the moving average of new cases was 56 and the total case load was less than 600.**

**USA imposed a 70% lock down when there were over 1 lakh cases**

**Lock down in India has been sustained at over 75% till October and over 70% till end of December.**





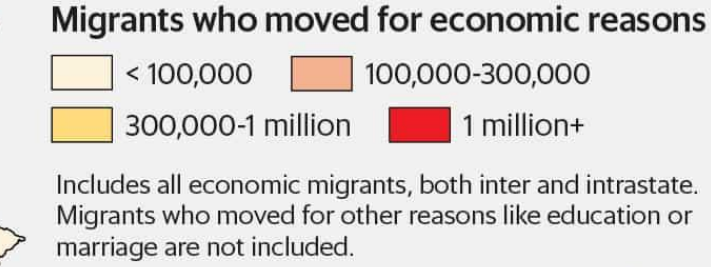
# THE MIGRANT HOTSPOTS

Some districts, like Thane or Mumbai suburban, house over a million economic migrants. Just 22 districts in the country account for a third of all migrant workers.

Apart from **Jaipur** and **Delhi, Ludhiana** is the most important centre in North-West India

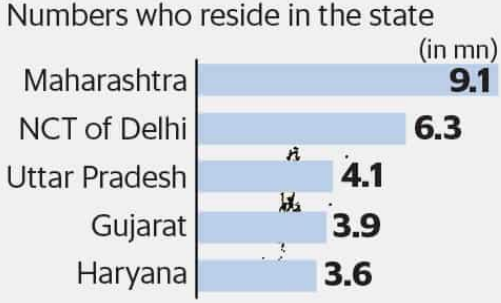
The **Mumbai-Thane-Pune** belt is one of the country's biggest hubs for work-related migrants

**Southern Tamil Nadu** has a lot of intrastate migrants (those from within the state)



**Coastal Andhra** sees a regular influx from **Telangana** and **Odisha**

### Hubs of interstate migrants



Source: Census 2011; Geetika Varshney, India, Migration Now

Inter-state migration for economic reasons is common in India

There are well known districts from which outward migration occurs

Hubs of inter-state inward migration are also well recognised

# COVID-19 Makes Indian Unemployment Rate Jump Up

Average unemployment rate in India (2016-2020)



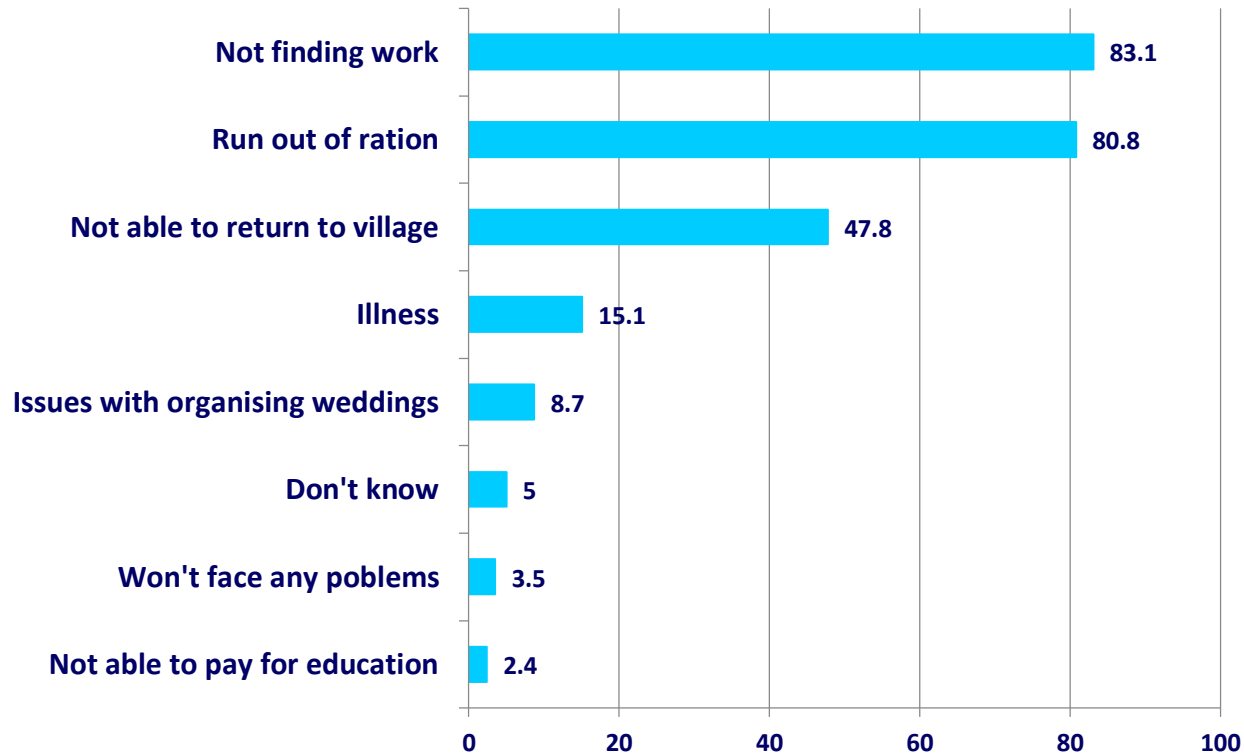
Source: Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy



statista

About 1/5<sup>th</sup> of the work force in informal sector were reported to have lost their jobs immediately after lock down.

## Impact of lockdown on migrant population



**Loss of employment had serious adverse effect on migrant labour population**

**Over 80% lost job and earnings and became food insecure.**

**Lock down came in the way when they wanted to return to village**











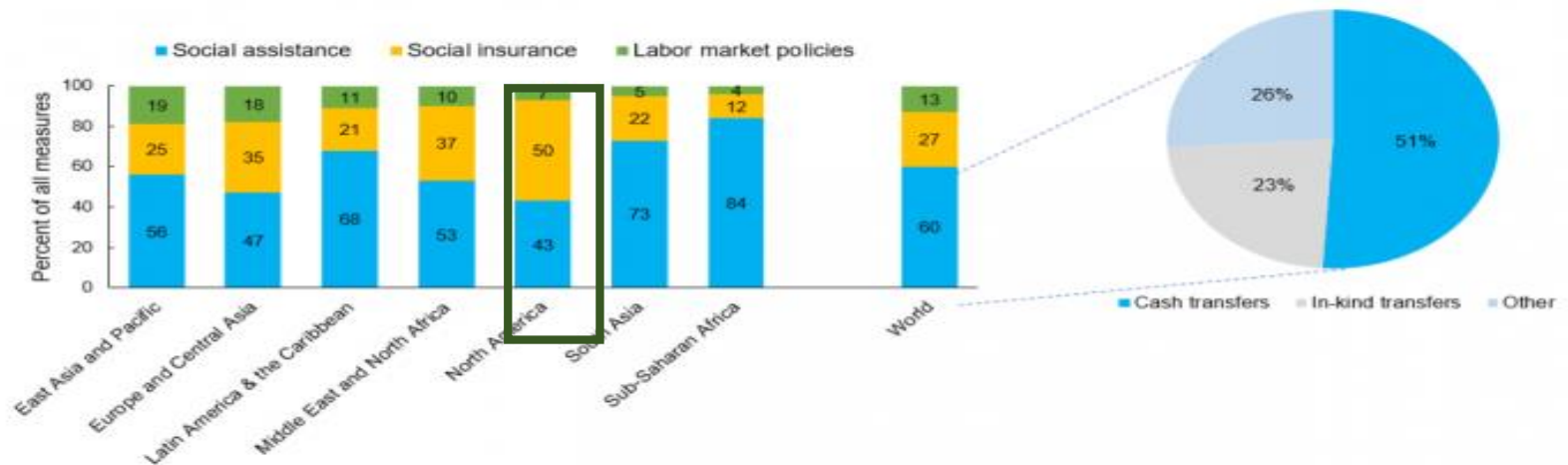


# **LOCK DOWN RELIEF MEASURES**

# Countries' responses to COVID-19

Cash transfers are at the core of government measures supporting households during the pandemic.

(Number of measures announced, planned and/or implemented, by region)



Source: Ugo Gentilini et al. (2020).

INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND

In India and South Asian countries, cash transfers were not high. over 3/4<sup>th</sup> received assistance mainly as food grains or cooked food to ward off food insecurity and hunger.

# **CASH TRANSFERS AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMMES** (Economic survey)

*Direct cash transfers were done to:*

- 42 crore individuals,
- more than 20 crore Women Jan Dhan accounts,
- cash support to building and construction workers,
- additional emergency working capital funding of Rs 30,000 crore were provided to farmers through NABARD,

Because of IT enabled services, the pace of cash transfer was swift

## *Employment programmes*

- Additional allocation were made under MGNREGA.
- Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan (GKRA) was launched on 20th June, 2020 for a period of 125 days in 116 districts of 6 States to boost employment and livelihood opportunities for migrant workers who had returned to their villages and similarly affected citizens in rural areas due to COVID-19 pandemic.

# PROVIDING FOOD DURING LOCK DOWN

# **FREE FOOD GRAIN AND FOOD DISTRIBUTION DURING COVID EPIDEMIC**

**Food production in India had been increasing as projected. There were adequate stock of food grains also.**

**India had enacted the National Food Security Act in 2013. This legislation provided highly subsidised food grains to 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of Indian population as a legal entitlement**

**The availability of adequate food grains and the Food Security Act enabled the country to provide 35 kg cereals and 5 kg of the pulses free of cost to all ration card holder between 1.4.2020 and 30.11.2020.**

**Some states are continuing the provision of free food grains**

**In addition to this almost all cities in the country had organised the MDM kitchens to cook and provide two meals for all those who came to the food distribution centres**

**These measures ensured that despite massive unemployment and reduction in wages, the poorer segments of the population were able to ward off hunger**



**The availability of adequate food grains and the national food security act enabled the country to provide 35 kg cereals and 5 kg of pulses free of cost to all ration card holder between 1.4.2020 and 30.11.2020.**

**Some states are continuing the provision of free food grains**

**Hot cooked food was served twice a day in selected centres in major metros and cities.**

**Govt agencies used the MDM kitchens transport systems in these cities to cook food and transport it to the centres**

**NGOs and citizen's groups cooked and served meals twice a day in many cities and towns.**







**When migrants reached their villages, they were initially kept in temporary shelters away from the village because of the fear that they might have been infected in the city.**

**After two weeks they were accepted into the village but were food insecure because they could not find any remunerative employment. The community cooked and provided them with two meals.**



**In villages both cooked food and rations were provided to the returned migrants**

**These measures prevented hunger in an estimated 60-70 million migrant families.**

**However remunerative employment was not available in villages.**

**When there was a revival of the urban employment, most of the migrants returned to the cities, but often got only temporary jobs at lower wages.**

**Provision of free food grains till end of November 2020 helped them to ward off hunger.**

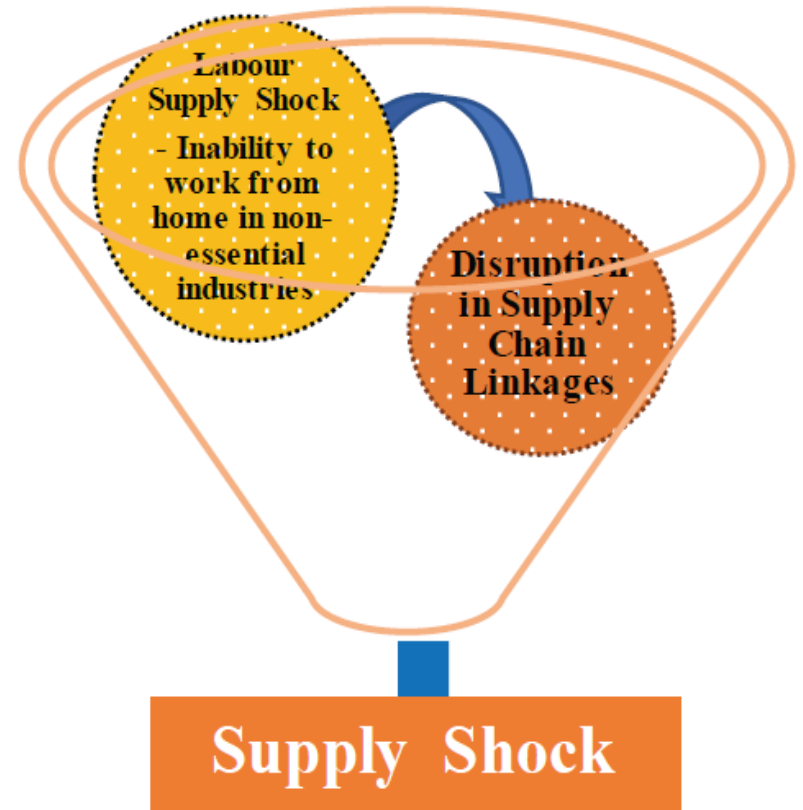
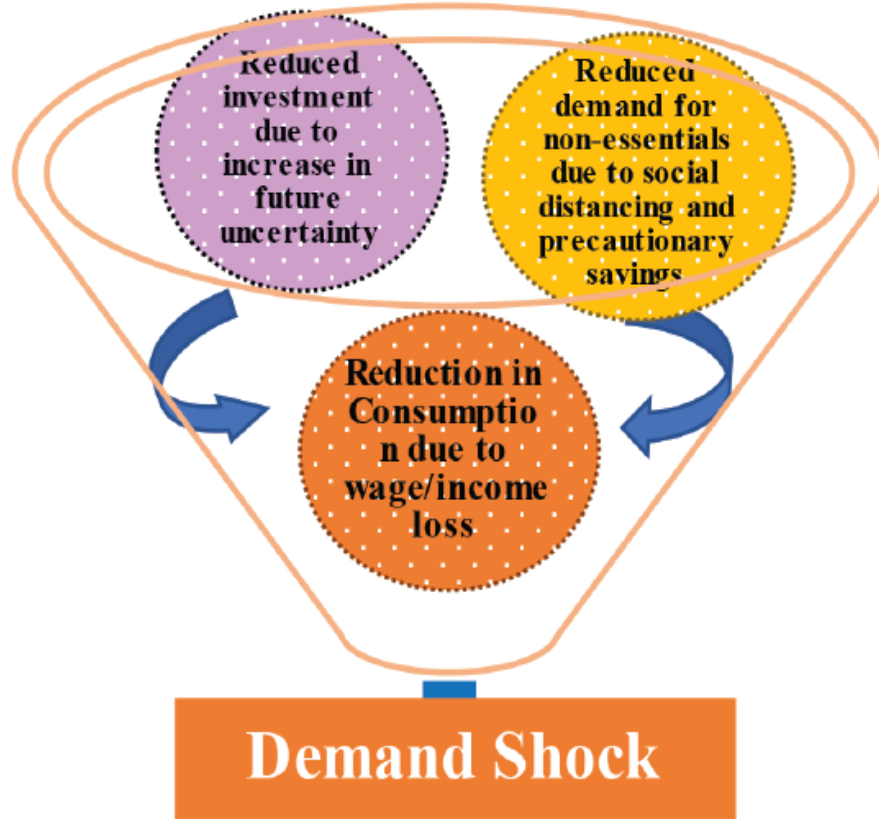


**When train services were resumed the state and central govt provided assistance to migrants to buy train tickets and get home using special trains .  
Returning migrants were provided with food grains and food for the journey**

# LEARNING TO LIVE WITH SARS COV2 INFECTION ROAD TO ECONOMIC RECOVERY



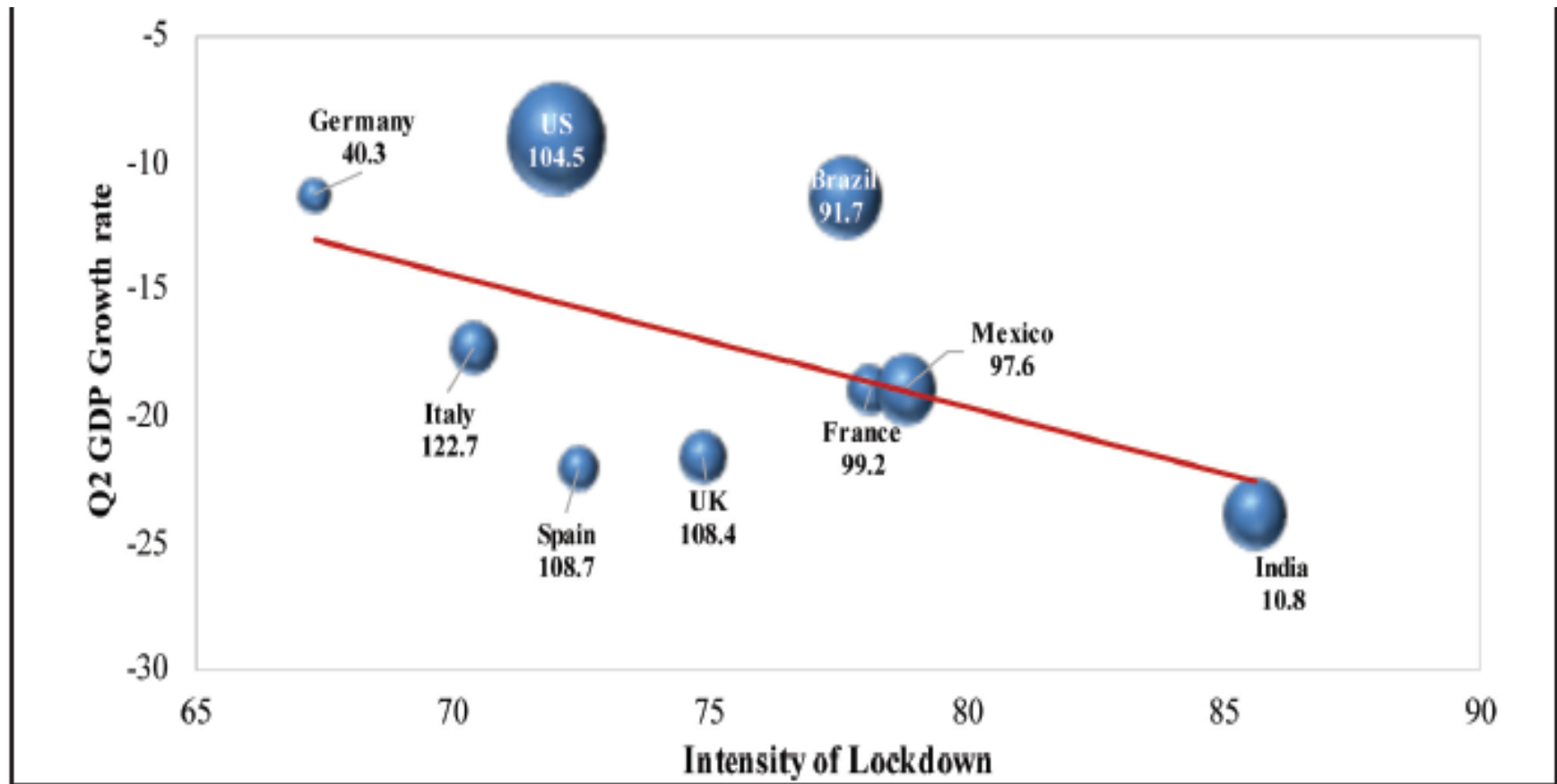
# TWIN ECONOMIC SHOCKS CAUSED BY COVID 19 PANDEMIC (Economic survey 2021)



India faced severe demand and supply side economic shocks in the first and second quarter of 2020 -21

Each aggravated the other

# STRINGENCY OF LOCK DOWN AND GDP GROWTH (Economic survey India 2021)

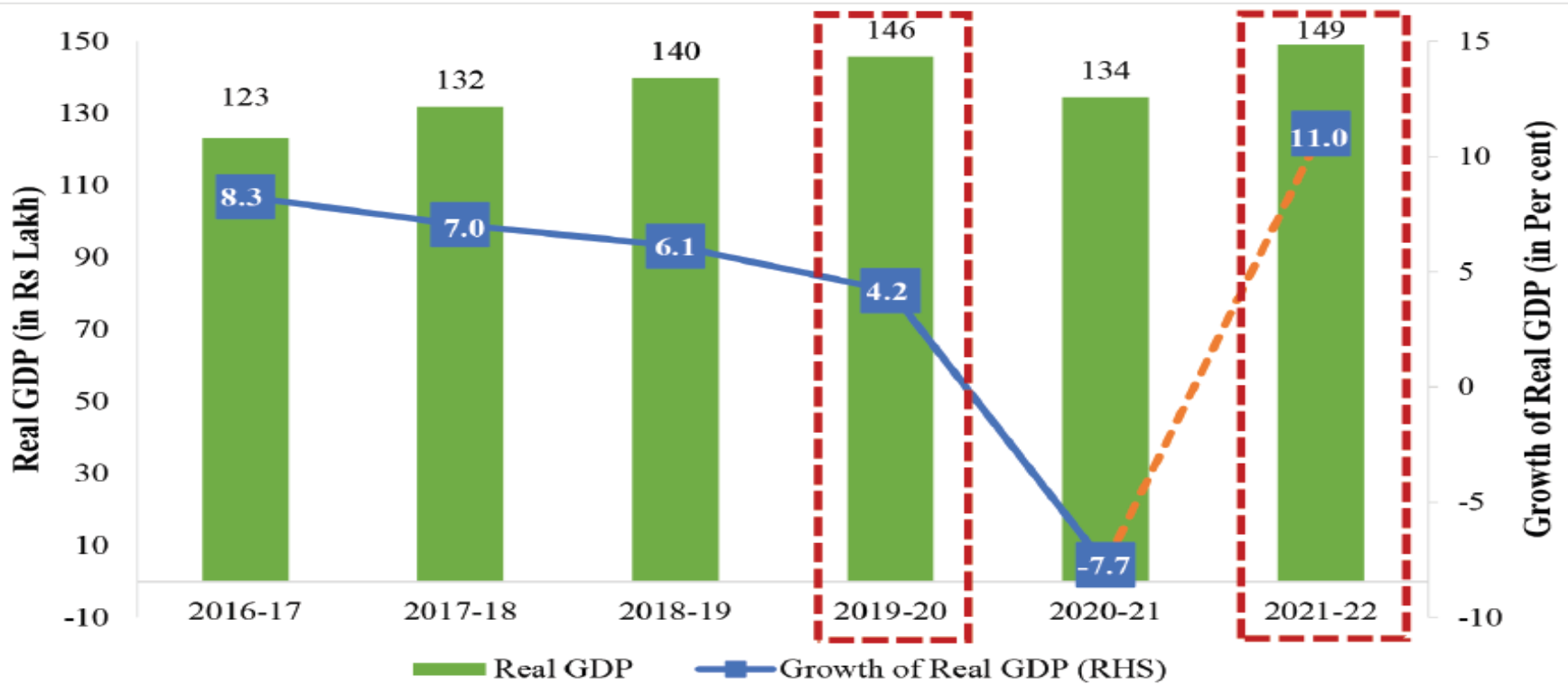


Source: Compiled from various sources

Note: Bubble size corresponds to number of deaths as on 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2020; number of deaths per lakh indicated with the bubble

**Lock down took a major toll in terms of economy and employment loss. Unlocking in a phased manner reduced the unemployment to some extent but wages were low.**

# ECONOMY ON THE PATH TO RECOVERY (Economic survey 2021)



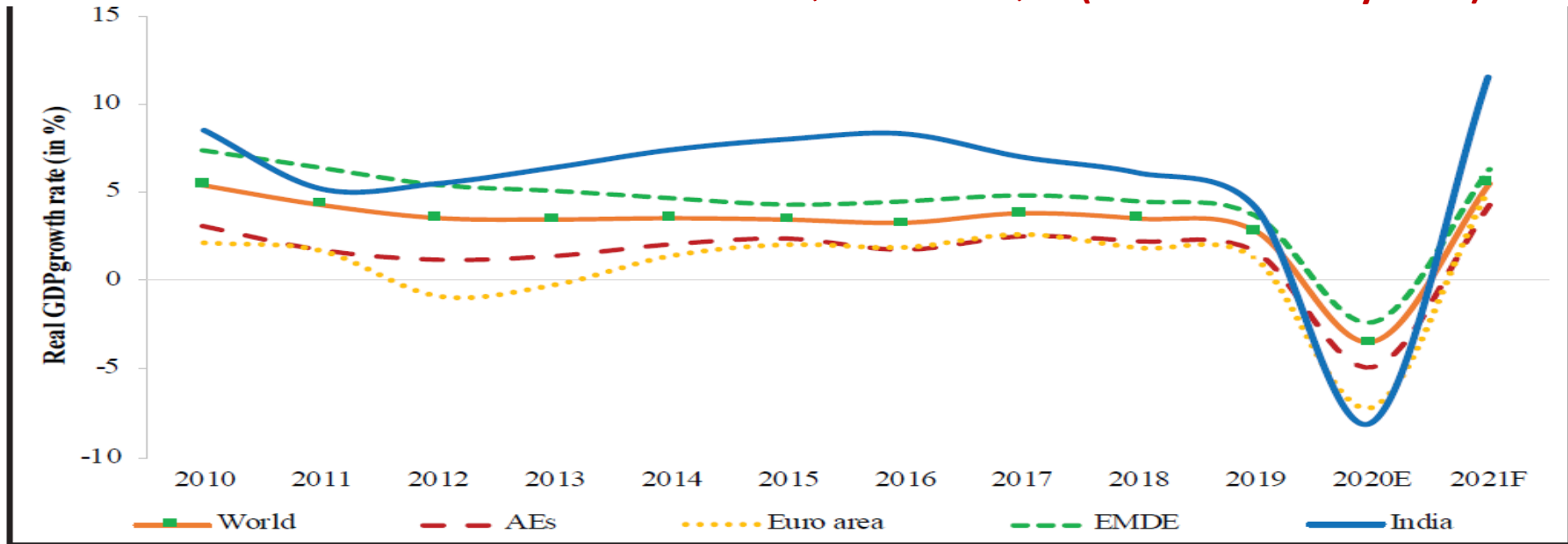
Source: NSO and Survey Calculations

## Economic survey 2021:

- assures us that the worst period is behind us.
- there are green shoots in all sectors of economic activity
- the country will have a V shaped economic recovery

**Worry: will recovery be equitable or be K shaped and widen inequities?**

# **ECONOMY ON THE PATH TO RECOVERY** (Economic survey 2021)



Source: IMF

Note: E is Estimate, F is Forecast

**As compared to other regions of the world, India implemented strictest lock down and experienced the deepest dip in GDP**

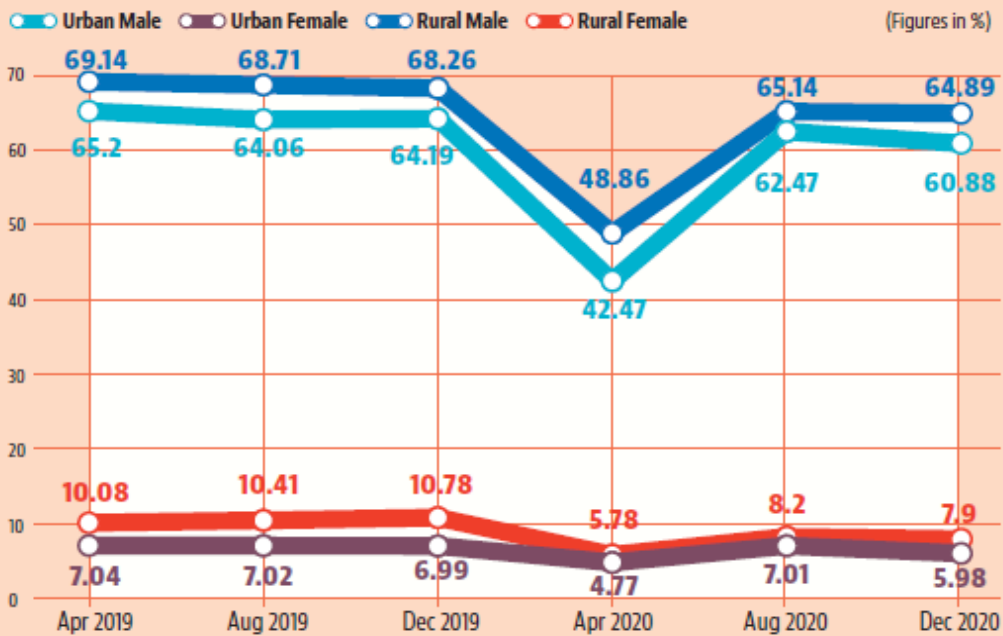
**Economic survey forecasts that with COVID 19 cases continuing to decrease, vaccine being made available, economic activities in India will bounce back**

**The country may experience a steeper increase in GDP as compared to other regions**



**ECONOMIC ACCESS TO FOOD :  
EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES**

## WORK PARTICIPATION RATE

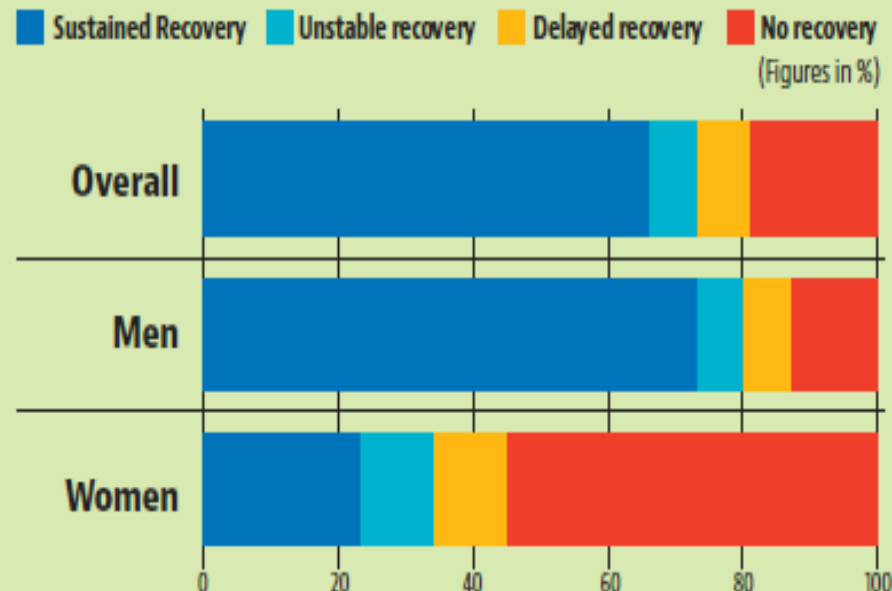


There was a steep reduction in employment as soon as lock down was imposed. With unlocking which began in June 2020, there was gradual improvement in employment rates over the next six months but even in Dec 2020, it was a 5% lower as compared to Dec 2019

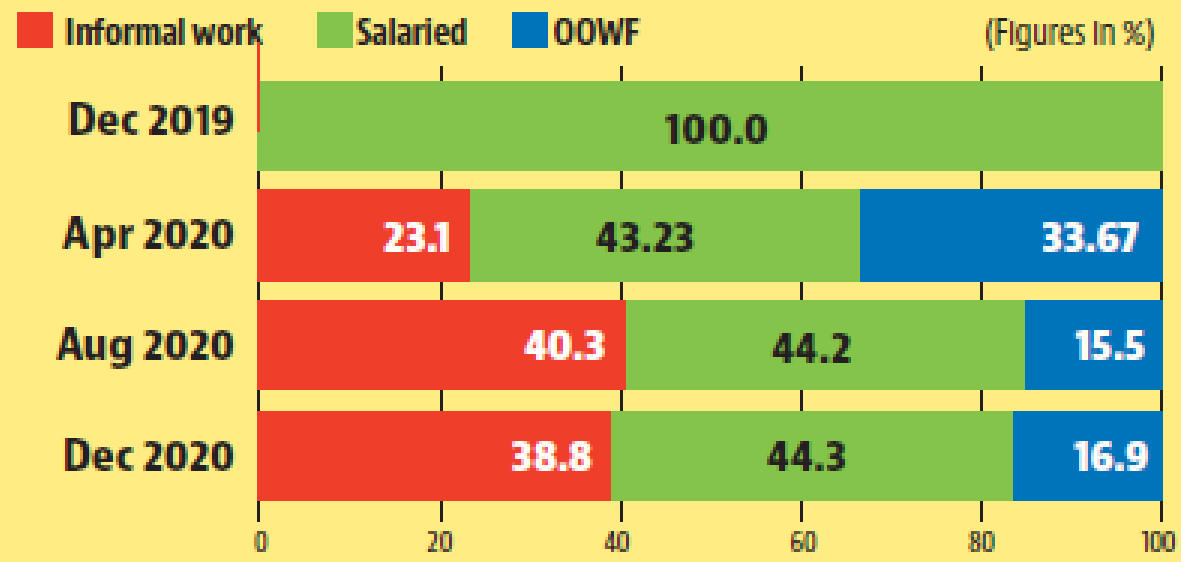
Post lock down recovery was sustained in about 70% of men; sustained recovery rates in women was less than 25%

In 1/5<sup>th</sup> of men and over half of women there was no post lock down recovery

## EMPLOYMENT RECOVERY POST-LOCKDOWN



# EMPLOYMENT TYPE OF WORKERS WHO HAD SALARIED JOBS IN DECEMBER 2019



Among those who had salaried employment in Dec 2019 only about 45 % continued as salaried employees.

Over 40% have now only informal work and about 1/6<sup>th</sup> out of work force.

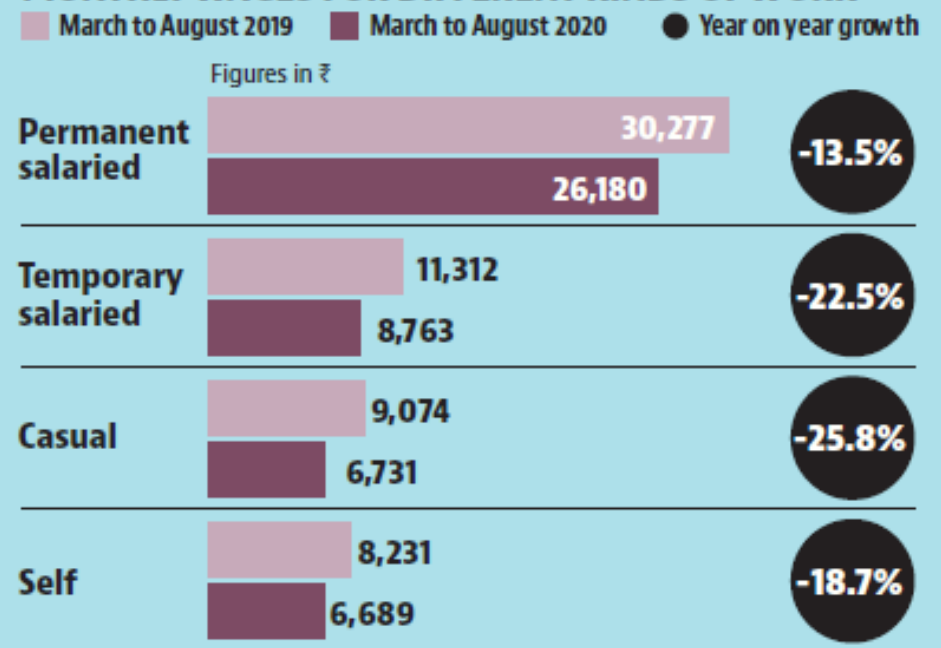
There was a substantial reduction in monthly wages in all categories of workers

Even wages of the permanent salaried persons showed a small decline.

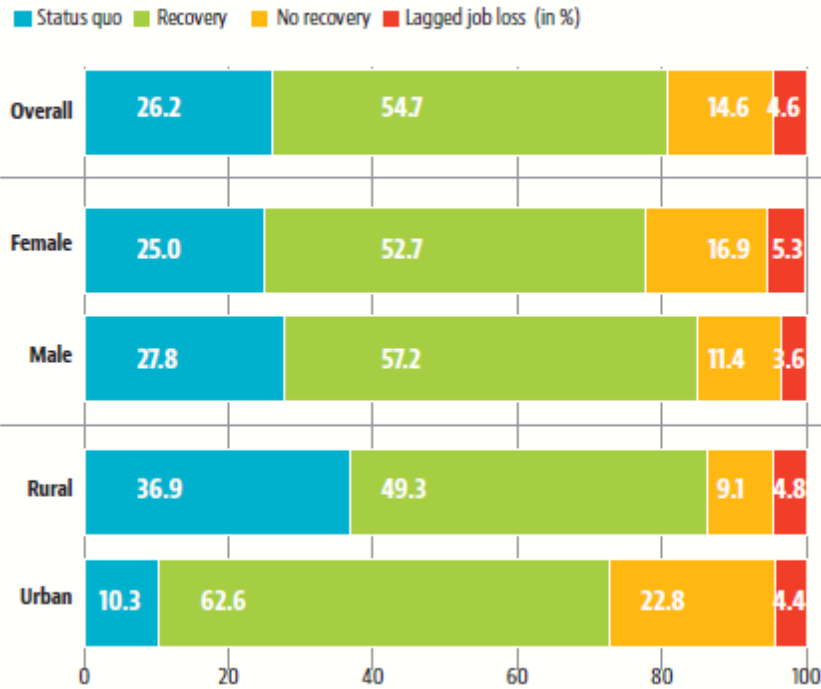
Temporary or casual workers salary dropped by a fourth

Self employed also suffered a drop in wages

## MONTHLY WAGES FOR DIFFERENT KINDS OF WORK



## EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCES DURING THE PANDEMIC

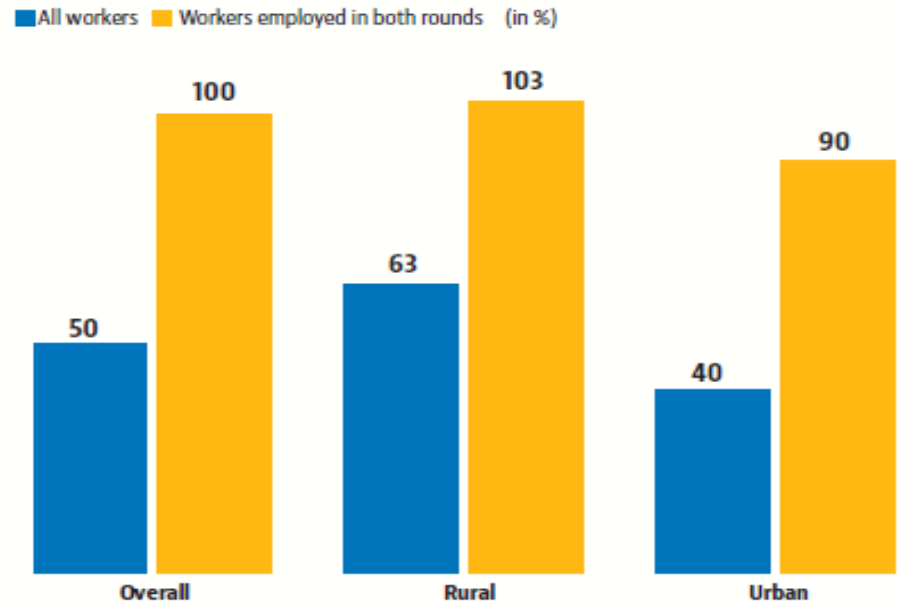


In over one-third of rural and one tenth of urban population employment experience remained unaltered. Both recovery in employment and no recovery in employment were higher in urban as compared to rural areas

There was decline in the post lock down earning as compared to pre-lock down earning both in urban and rural areas

The reduction was more marked in urban areas.

## POST-LOCKDOWN EARNINGS AS A PERCENTAGE OF PRE-LOCKDOWN EARNINGS



Month	Unemployment Rate (%)		
	India	Urban	Rural
Dec 2020	9.06	8.84	9.15
Nov 2020	6.50	7.07	6.24
Oct 2020	7.02	7.18	6.95
Sep 2020	6.68	8.45	5.88
Aug 2020	8.35	9.83	7.65
Jul 2020	7.40	9.37	6.51
Jun 2020	10.18	11.68	9.49
May 2020	21.73	23.14	21.11
Apr 2020	23.52	24.95	22.89
Mar 2020	8.75	9.41	8.44
Feb 2020	7.76	8.65	7.34
Jan 2020	7.22	9.70	6.06

### Statistical Profiles - Unemployment in India CMIE

April & May (lock down months) witnessed steep increase in unemployment rates  
 From June country initiated phased unlocking and this brought about reduction in unemployment rate

However even in Dec 2020 the unemployment rates were higher as compared to Jan 2020 both in urban and rural areas

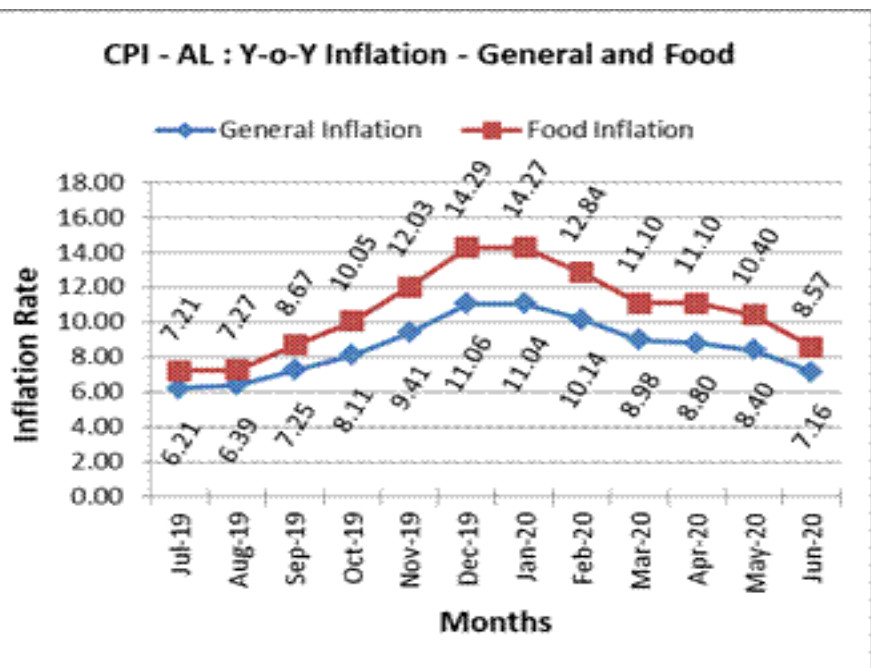
MNREGA enrolments even in January 2021 is high

# **ECONOMIC ACCESS TO FOOD : FOOD INFLATION**

# FOOD INFLATION – WHOLESALE AND RETAIL

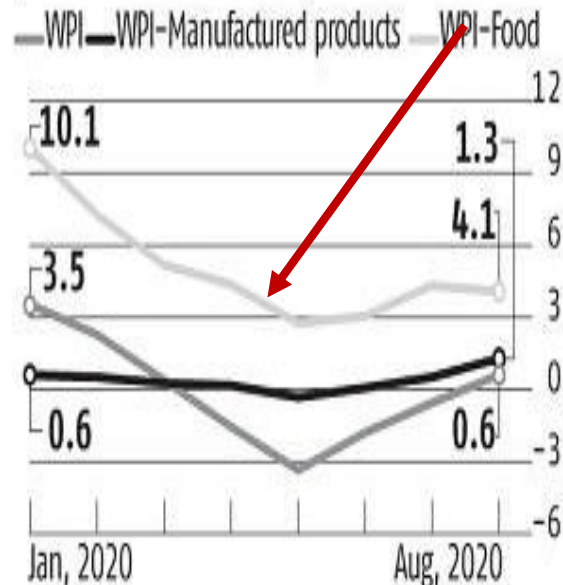
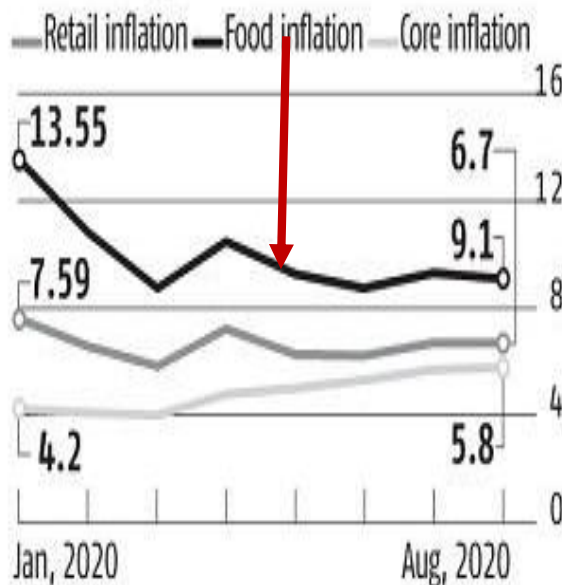
Food inflation had been higher than the general inflation since 2019-20

This trend continued even in the early part of the COVID epidemic and during the lock down period

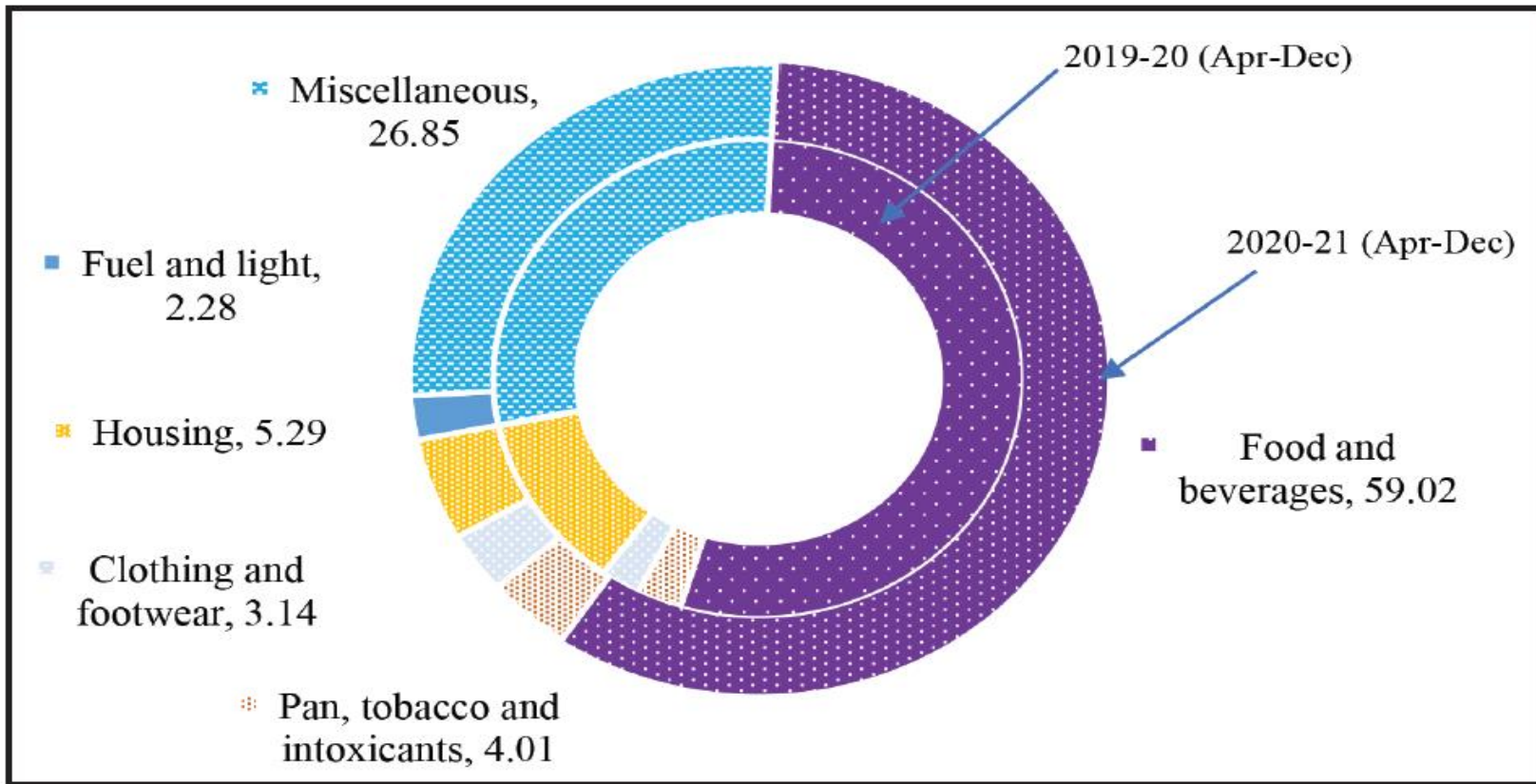


Both wholesale and retail food inflation continue to be high.

This render economic access to food more difficult among the persons working in informal sector at low wages



**Figure 10: Contribution of groups to overall CPI-C inflation in 2019-20 (Apr-Dec) and 2020-21 (Apr-Dec) in per cent**

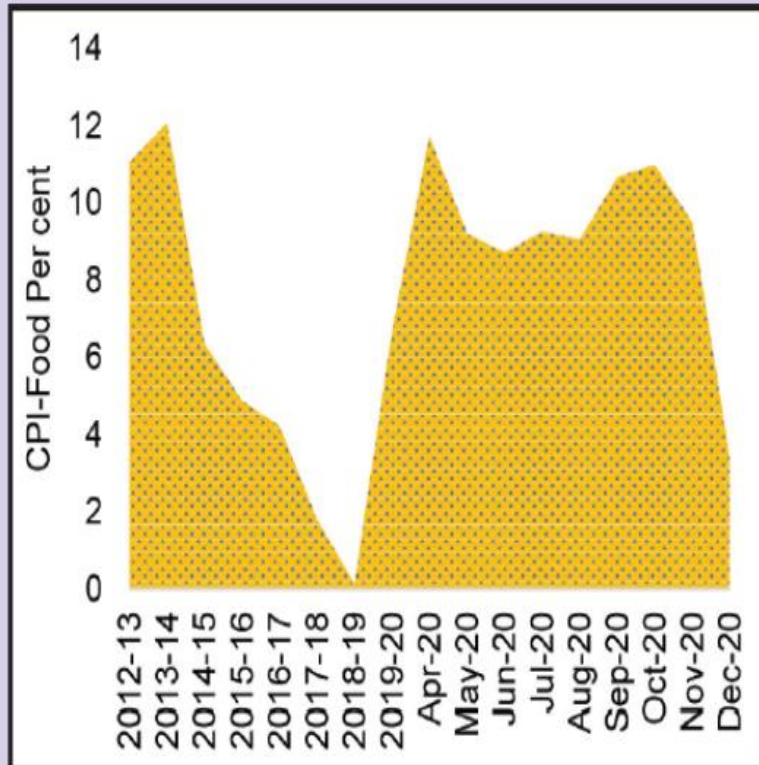


Source: NSO

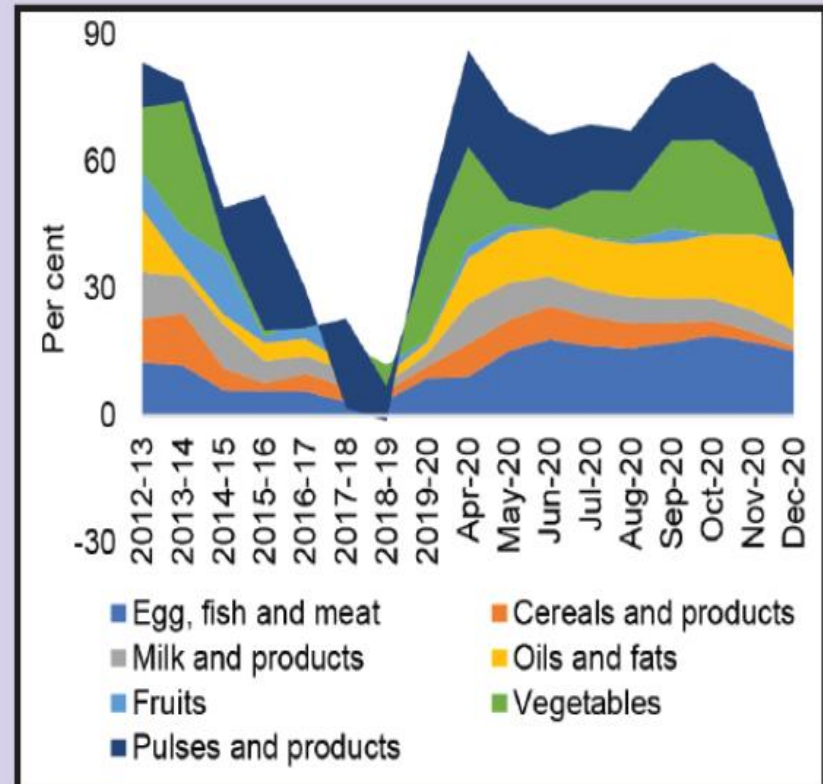
**Food and beverages contributed to over half of the consumer price index inflation**



*CPI- Food Inflation*



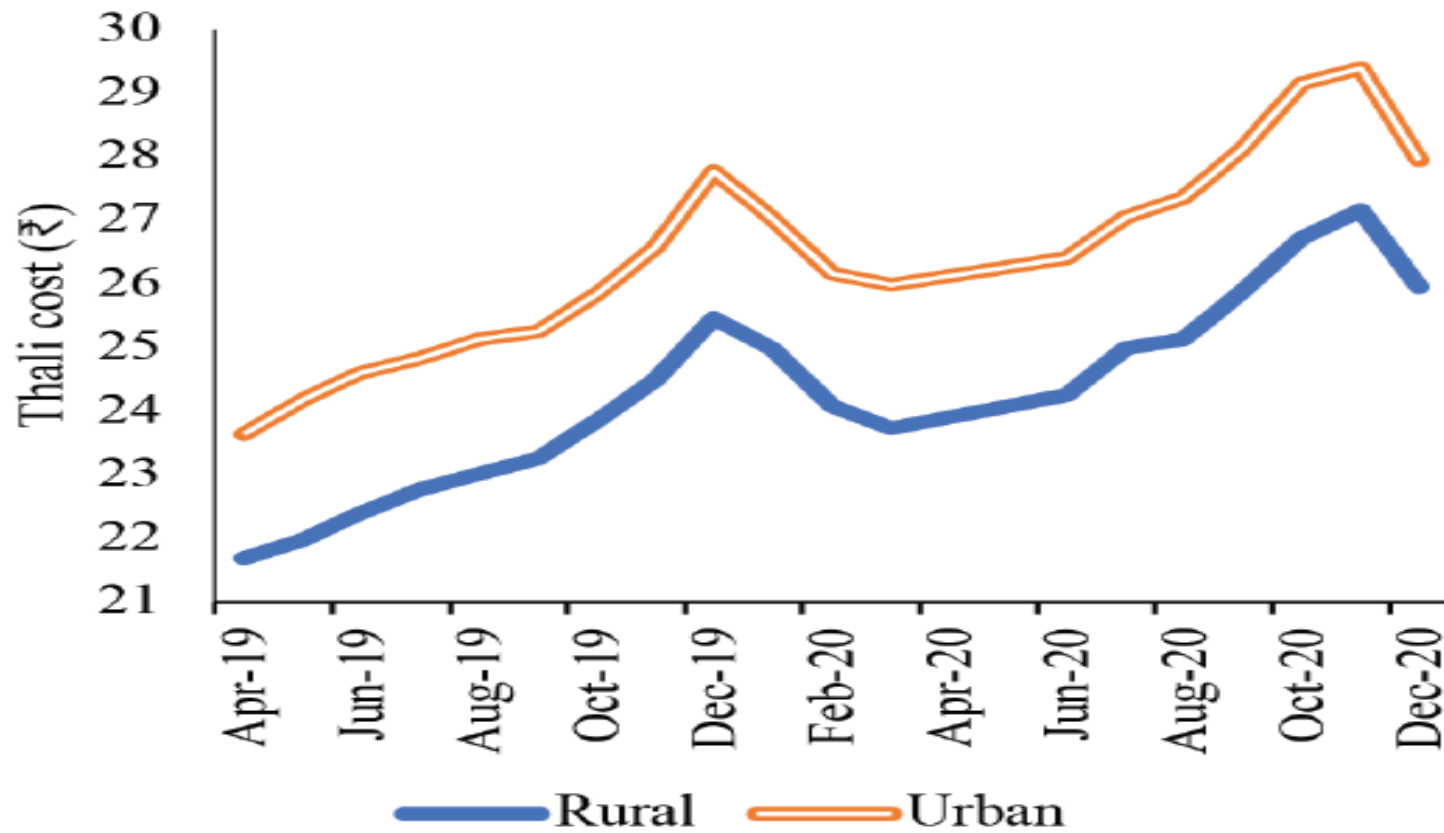
*Components of CPI- Food Inflation*



**Food inflation rates had been high through out the year**

**While inflation rates in cereals was low, food inflation rates were high for pulses, oil and fats, vegetables and animal food**

## Vegetarian Thali



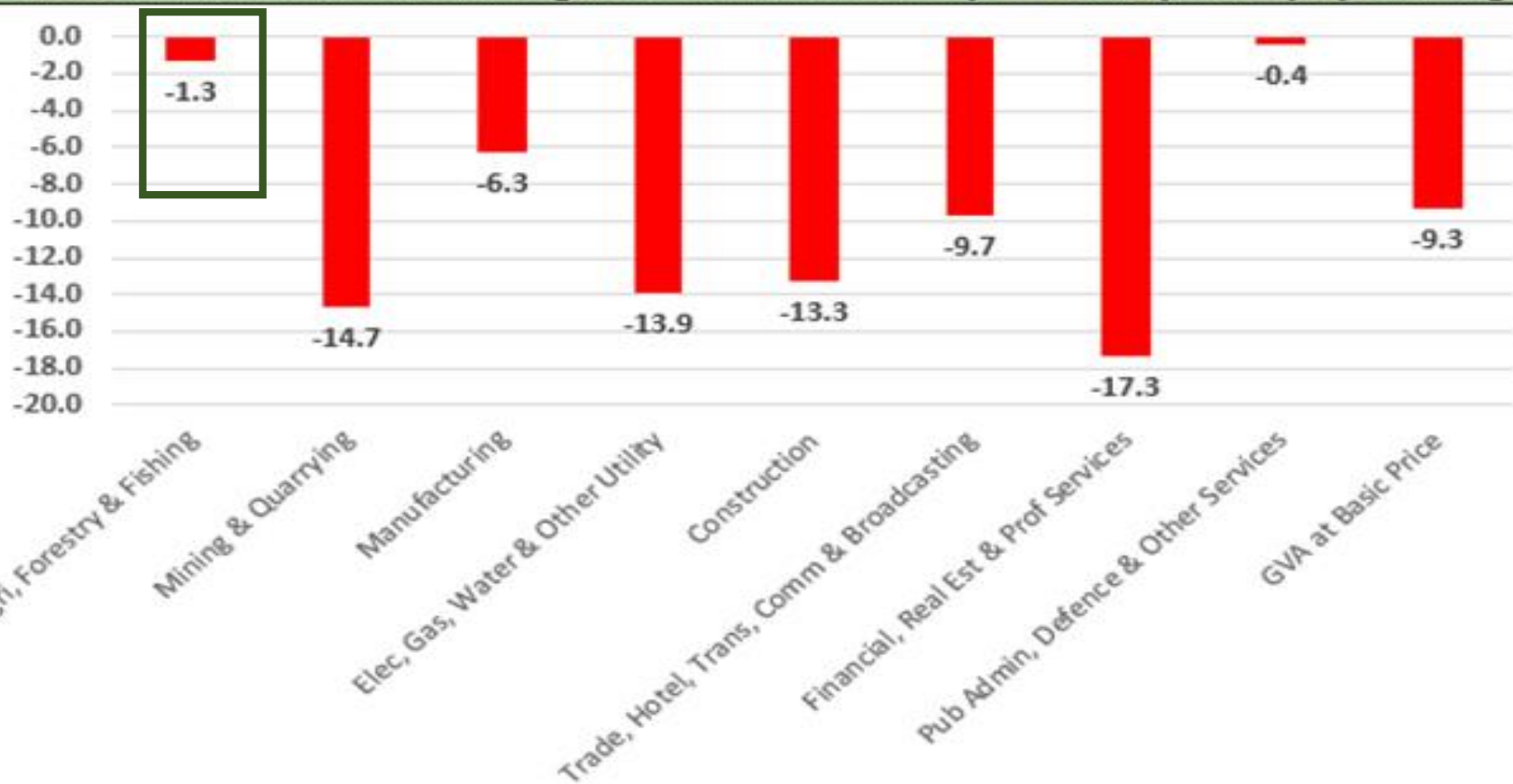
Source: NSO

Note: 1. Thali cost for the months of April, 2020 & Ma

**The high cost of food has a greater impact on food security because of the concomitant reduction in wages across many segments of the population**

**AVAILABILITY OF FOOD  
FOOD PRODUCTION**

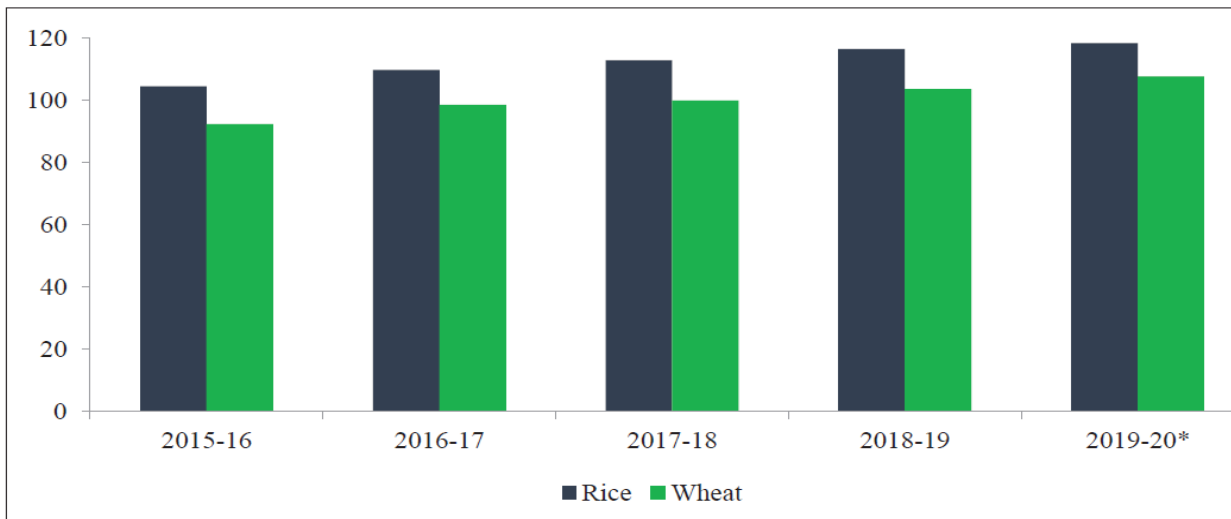
**FIGURE 1: Estimated falls in sectoral growth rates in GVA in April – June quarter (in percentage)**



*Data Source: National Statistical Office (NSO), Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation, Government of India*

**The fall in sectoral growth was lowest in Agriculture  
Adequate production and transport of the food stuffs was major factor  
that enabled government to initiate steps to prevent steep increase in  
household food insecurity between April and December 2020**

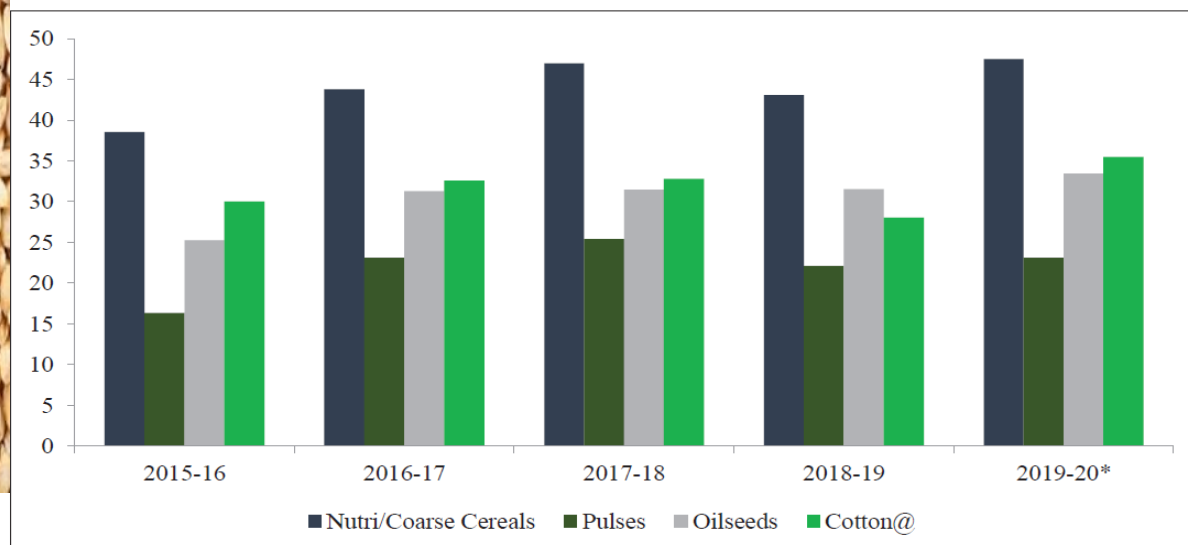
**Figure 4: Trend in Production of Rice and Wheat Crops (Quantity in Million Tonnes)**



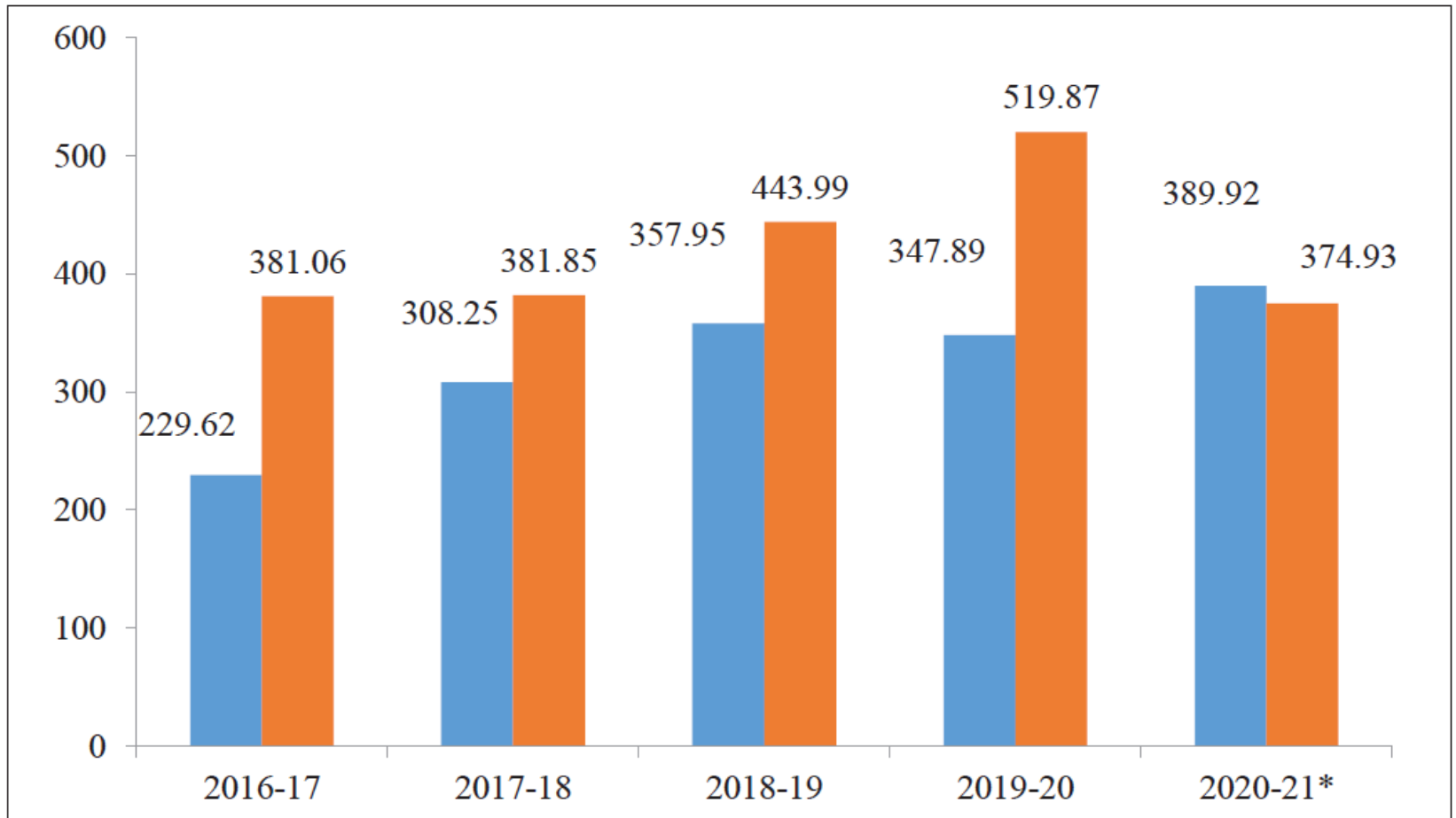
**Production of food grains continued without any disruption.  
Production of some cereals and some pulse had reached record height**



**Figure 5: Trend in Production of Other Major Crops (Quantity in Million Tonnes)**



**Figure 14: Procurements of Rice and Wheat over the Last Five Years (Lakh Tons)**

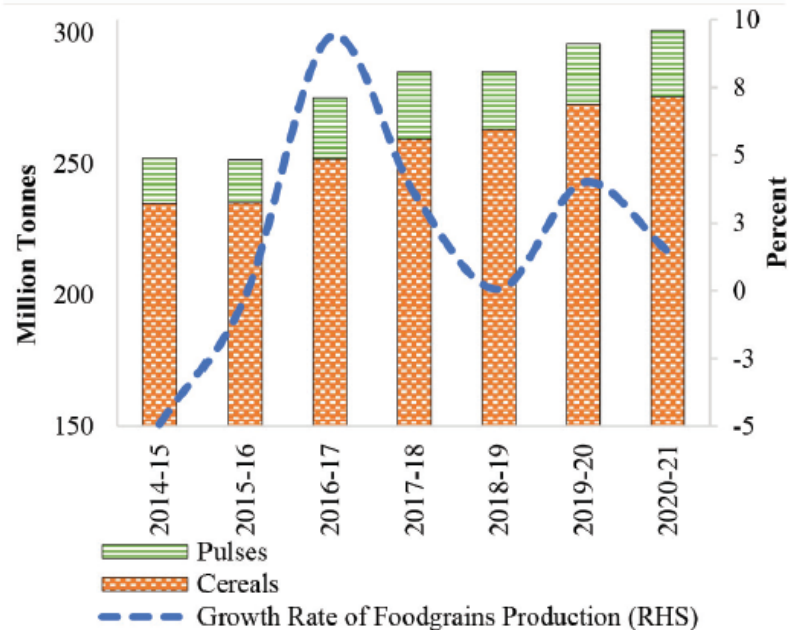


Source: Based on Data from the Website of Food Corporation of India & DFPD.

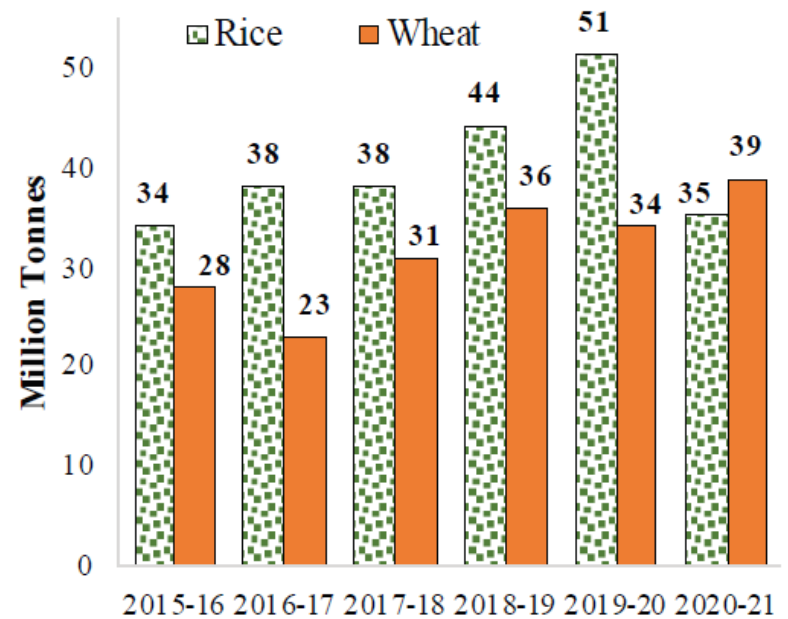
\* As on 15.01.2021 for rice.

**Procurement of food grains continued without any disruption.  
Country is able to export food grains to neighbors - Myanmar and China**

**Figure 22: Foodgrain Production in India**



**Figure 23: Procurement of Rice and Wheat**



Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Food and Public Distribution

Note: Production figures for 2020-21 are estimates. Procurement of Rice is as on 15 January 2021.

**Food grain production and procurement are continuing to grow.**

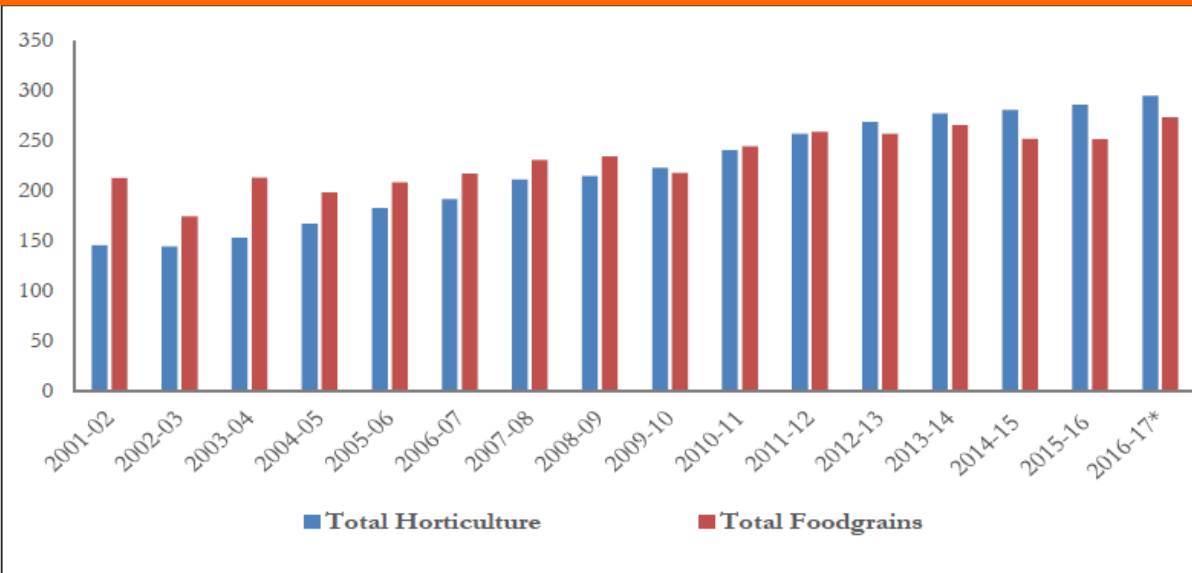
**However rural incomes have not shown a similar trend**

**It is imperative that agriculture and allied activities are made remunerative so that the productivity continues to increase.**

**This will ensure sustained food security at home.**

**Export to neighboring countries needing food grains will help them to provide food security to their citizens**

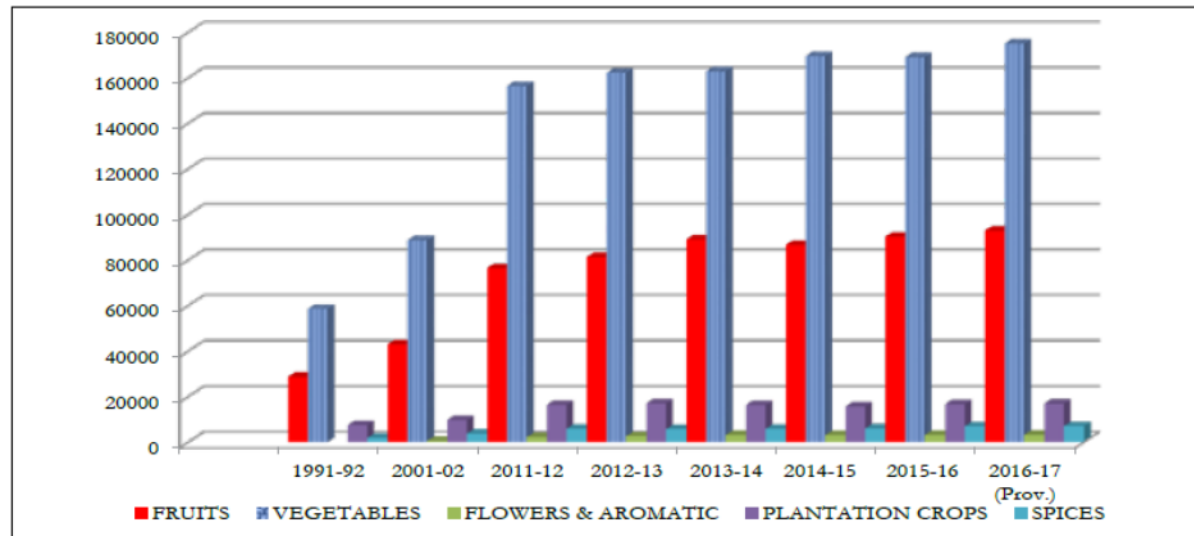
# VEGETABLE AND FRUIT PRODUCTION



Since 2001 there has been an increase in the production of horticultural products. As of 2019-20 total horticultural products exceed total food grain production.

Source: Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare

The increase in horticultural products is mainly due to increase in production of vegetables and some increase in the production of fruits.



Source: Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare.



# VEGETABLE CONSUMPTION



**Vegetable production was comparable to earlier years and relatively unaffected through out 2020.**

**But farmers faced problems in transporting and marketing them. So they were adversely affected economically**

**Majority of the consumers were unable to afford purchasing adequate amount of diverse vegetables; vegetable consumption suffered.**

# LEARNING TO LIVE AND COPE WITH SARS COV2 INFECTION

# **LEARNING TO LIVE AND COPE WITH SARS COV2 INFECTIONS**

**India is opening up the lockdown in a phased manner.**

**Health sector coped with providing care to persons with SARS CoV2 infections.**

**Cases and deaths have remained low**

**There has been a steady fall in confirmed cases and deaths.**

**But vigilance is needed and health services have be prepared to cope with increase in number of COVID 19 infections**

**In coming months health services will have to gear up to halt and later reverse the trend of reduction in access to preventive and promotive care, care under MCH and disease control programmes and elective procedures and restore them to the pre- COVID 19 era level**

**This will prevent increase in morbidity and mortality due to illnesses other than COVID 19.**

**There is an urgent need to reinforce the health education message that these efforts require the cooperation of all the citizens in terms of universal adherence to physical distancing and wearing masks to reduce the risk of transmission of all respiratory infections, including COVID 19, in health care settings.**

**With resumption of economic activity there has been some improvement in economic indices.**

**Focus should be on economic growth linked to employment and wage growth**

**Agriculture has been the sheet anchor which enabled the country to provide food for the needy for several months.**

**Remunerative prices for food stuffs, storage capacity to prevent gluts and distress sale, technology for processing vegetables to prevent wastage, and adequate marketing facilities would enable agriculture to continue being productive.**

**There are fears that the resumed economic growth may not be similar across sectors and may widen disparities .**

**These fears should be allayed**

Thank You

The image features the words "Thank You" in a bold, sans-serif font. Each letter is filled with a different color from a rainbow spectrum, creating a vibrant, multi-colored effect. The letters are arranged in a slightly staggered, 3D-like perspective, with soft, grey shadows cast beneath them onto the white background. The colors transition from purple on the left, through red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and finally to dark purple on the right.