

# *Weekly Livelihoods Update*

10 July 2018

✚ **Agricultural Revival and Reaping the Youth Dividend:** In recent years, “youth” has emerged as a distinct category of population to be governed in India. Policy efforts to realise the “demographic dividend” amidst an agrarian crisis have however not met with success as suggested by reports of jobless growth on the one hand and poor quality of employment generated outside agriculture on the other. What are the prospects of improving youth livelihoods within agriculture? Can the youth revive the prospects of agriculture? Improving incomes within agriculture while also paying sufficient attention to caste and gender relations that shape labour hierarchies, access to land, youth preferences and mobility aspirations is critical to imagining a future that sustains agriculture and youth livelihoods.

[Visit <https://www.epw.in/journal/2018/26-27/review-rural-affairs/agricultural-revival-and-reaping-youth.html> for further reading].

✚ **The Value of Rural Women’s Labour in Production and Wood Fuel Use:** How do gender-related factors influence cooking fuel use? Why does an LPG capital subsidy lead to fuel stacking rather than fuel switching? A framework for analysis is used in the article to assess the limitations of capital subsidies for LPG in remote rural areas where women’s labour has a low opportunity cost.

[Visit <https://www.epw.in/journal/2018/26-27/special-articles/value-rural-womens-labour-production-and-wood-fuel-use.html> for further analysis and reading].

✚ **Decline in sowing of Kharif Crops:** There has been a more than 20 per cent decline in total sowing area of Kharif crops this June as compared to the same period last year. The total sown area as on June 29, 2018 stood at 16.52 lakh hectares as compared to 210.75 lakh hectare at this time in 2017. According to the press release issued by the Ministry of Agriculture and farmers’ welfare, the impact of delayed arrival of the southwest monsoon, especially in eastern, central and northern India, is now evident. More than a week-long break in monsoon has affected sowing of several crops. Cotton, oilseeds, pulses and coarse cereals are among the worst-hit crops. Both spatial and temporal distribution of rain is important for kharif crops, which accounts for about 50 per cent of agricultural production in the count.

[Visit <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/agriculture/impact-of-stalled-monsoon-30-45-decline-in-sowing-of-kharif-crops-in-june-61051> for further reading]

✚ **Songs from the Farmland:** Singing comes naturally to most of the 5,000 people of Phek, a village in Nagaland close to the India-Myanmar border. They love to sing as they toil in their terraced rice paddies.

[Visit <https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/leisure/story/20180716-songs-from-the-farmland-1278979-2018-07-08> for further reading]

✚ **Can Hydropower Projects in Sikkim reactivated?** The indigenous tribal community in Sikkim regard their land and the Rivers Teesta and Rangeet as sacred and integral

to their civilisations heritage. However, the industrialisation efforts have not only displaced and marginalised this community from the development plans within their ecologically and culturally protected area. The need for grassroots protest and organisation against the construction of hydro-electrical dams along the river and in protected forest areas has recently been reinvigorated.

[Visit <https://www.epw.in/engage/article/can-act-movement-sikkim-be-reactivated> for further reading]

✚ **Stone Crushing Factories Take a Toll on Workers:** Opportunities for working class families are severely limited in Rajasthan due to the state's dry climate and infertile land. In the city of Beawar, about 50 km from Ajmer, the government had sold land to stone crushing factories two decades ago, in a bid to provide employment to the people. People were initially overjoyed, as the factories provided some succour. However, in the subsequent years, working in hazardous conditions without any safety gear or equipment, the workers have faced several health issues. Many people were severely injured, while the health of others deteriorated after contracting tuberculosis. Silicosis, a disease which does not have any cure yet, has taken the lives of many workers. Women whose husbands were killed by Silicosis have been forced to take up the same job as they try to make ends meet. A daily wage worker in Beawar makes about Rs 200-300 for an eight-hour shift.

[Visit <https://thewire.in/labour/photo-essay-stone-crushing-factories-take-a-toll-on-workers> for further reading]

✚ **Lynching Cases and WhatsApp:** IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad had last week asked for greater accountability from WhatsApp, saying that the government will not tolerate any misuse of the platform to spread fake messages designed to "provoke" and "instigate" people. Rumours on WhatsApp have triggered a spate of incidents involving mob fury, a recent one being lynching of five men on the suspicion of being child-lifters in Maharashtra's Rainpada village of Dhule district. In response, WhatsApp had informed the government that fake news, misinformation and hoaxes can be checked by the government, civil society and technology companies "working together". The platform began an awareness campaign to help users identify and prevent the spread of false information, hoax messages and fake news. It has also brought out full-page advertisement in leading newspapers, first in the series of its user awareness drive, giving "easy tips" to decide if information received is, indeed, true. Without specifying whether it will stop services of any person found to be spreading fake news, the company had said it has made changes on group chats to prevent the spread of unwanted information.

[Visit <https://www.theweek.in/news/india/2018/07/10/Lynching-cases-WhatsApp-shares-easy-tips-to-spot-fake-news-hoax.html> for further reading].