

## **Job scheme yet to pick up pace in 6 Karnataka districts**

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BANGALORE: The National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) is yet to gain momentum in Karnataka districts where farmers are in distress. The State Government appears to have done little to implement the scheme for the benefit of rural poor.

According to official data, implementation of the scheme has been dismal in the past seven months in the six districts where second phase of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) is being implemented.

The scheme has not provided jobs to anyone in any district other than Chikmagalur. Only members of 13 households have been provided jobs (50 mandays) in Chikmagalur district as on October 31. The Union and State governments have released Rs. 147.55 crore to these six districts. But the actual expenditure incurred is just Rs. 5.98 crore. Of this, Rs. 1.47 crore has been spent on wage component, Rs. 1.65 crore on material and Rs. 2.84 crore on contingencies.

The first phase of NREGS was launched in February 2006 in Bidar, Gulbarga, Raichur, Davangere and Chitradurga. The second phase commenced in April 2007 in six districts under distress — Belgaum, Chikmagalur, Hassan, Kodagu, Shimoga and Bellary. Except Bellary, all other districts are under the Rs. 2,689-crore Prime Minister's relief package for farmers.

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