

# The Chhattisgarh print

Despite the economic upheaval triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic, the state of Chhattisgarh is holding steady. PrintWeek finds out why there's a cause for optimism for print in the state as 2021 progresses

**P**icking up the pace of growth swiftly is a good description for the performance of Chhattisgarh's economy in 2020, and a significant achievement in the context of the economic upheaval confronting the wider Indian economy.

Located in central India, the state of Chhattisgarh was a part of Madhya Pradesh till 2000. It shares its border with seven states, which provides market access to around 520 million people across these states — approximately 40% of the Indian population.

Chhattisgarh is one of the major rice producing states of India and is also known as the rice bowl of India. One of the greenest states in the country, 44% of Chhattisgarh's geographical area is under forest cover.

## Good show in 2020: challenges and support

Looking back, the state of Chhattisgarh appears to have held up well despite the pandemic in 2020. According to a report published in *Businessworld* dated 4 July 2020, there's a significant growth in GST, automobile, agriculture and other sectors in the state. GST collection increased by 22% compared to 2019. Vehicle registration increased by 3.5 times while the state secured top position in providing employment to people under MNREGA and in bringing relief to forest dwellers engaged in collection of forest produce.

Despite the difficult circumstances due to Covid-19, unemployment rate in Chhattisgarh has significantly decreased. As per the survey report of CMIE, the



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rate of unemployment in the state in April was 3.4%, which is the lowest of 12 months. The Reserve Bank of India has praised the growth in agriculture and agriculture-related works in Chhattisgarh during the lockdown. The RBI report points out that even during the nation-wide lockdown, Chhattisgarh has experienced accelerated economic growth.

The state has increased the number of forest products procured at support price in the state from seven to 31.

Chhattisgarh holds the top rank in the country in terms of minor forest produce collection during the lockdown period. Chhattisgarh has achieved its target for the year within six months. Till July 2020, nearly 1.5 quintals of minor forest produce worth Rs 104-crore had been collected in the state.

## Projections for 2021

Even as the Economic Survey 2020-21 tabled in the Assembly in February project a decline in per capita income by