
Women in rural labour force: Factors influencing non-agricultural engagement of women workers

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ISLE CONFERENCE, PATIALA



Sectoral Composition of Female Employment

Well known that women are concentrated in some sectors and there is a gender segregation in occupations

Is there any change in this?

What are the characteristics of the sectors which have a relatively higher share of women?

What explains higher presence of women in these sectors?

Broad Trends in Sectoral Composition

Huge decline in share of agriculture – especially for women, after 2004-05

Manufacturing employment stagnant as a share of total employment for both men and women

Construction showed an increase between 2004-05 to 2011-12, but not in the next period

Services, show an increase in share for both male and female – significantly for women in the period 2011-12 to 2017-18

Women's Share in Employment

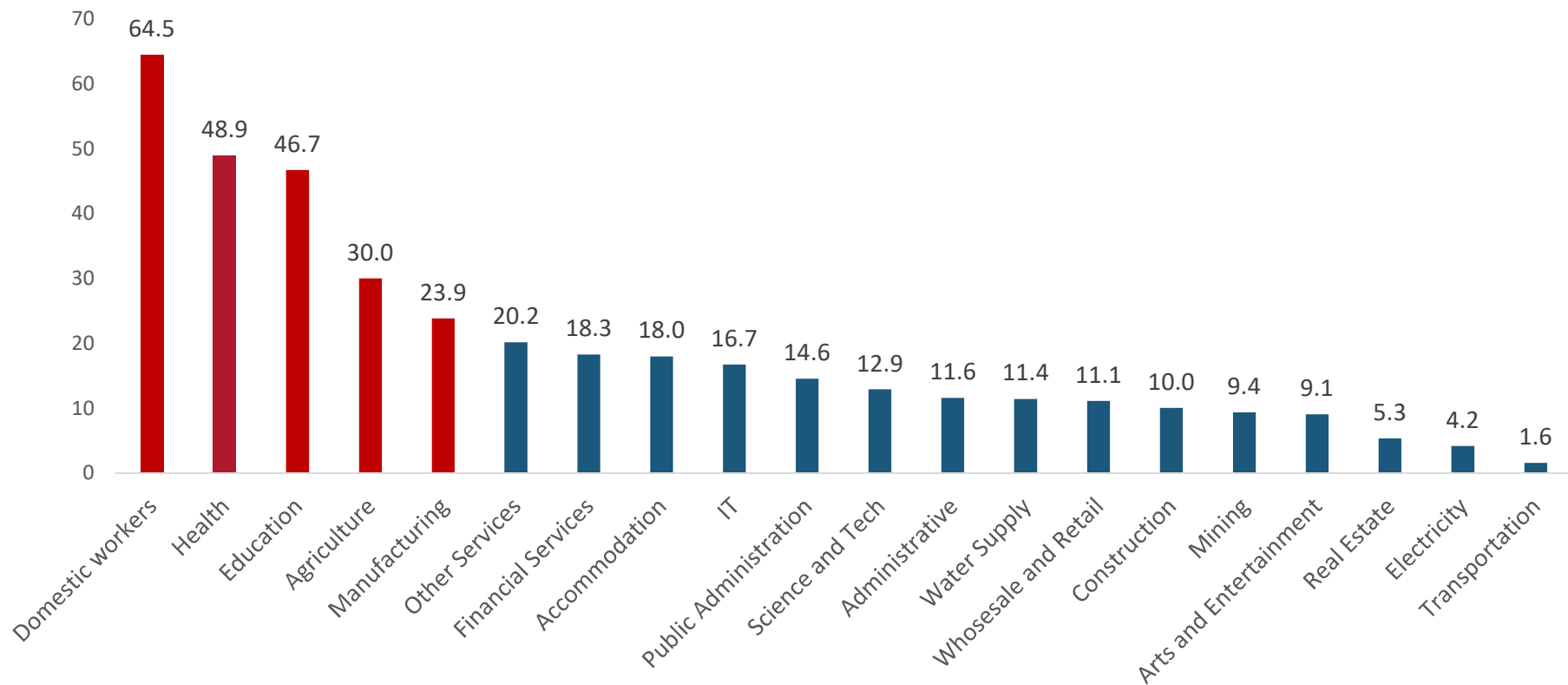
Year	Share of Women in Total Employment
1993-94	32.9
2004-05	33.4
2011-12	27.6 (30.4 R and 19.8 U)
2017-18	23.3 (24.4 R and 20.5 U)

Sectors with a higher than average share of women defined as 'women-concentrated sectors'.

More or less the same sectors in each year

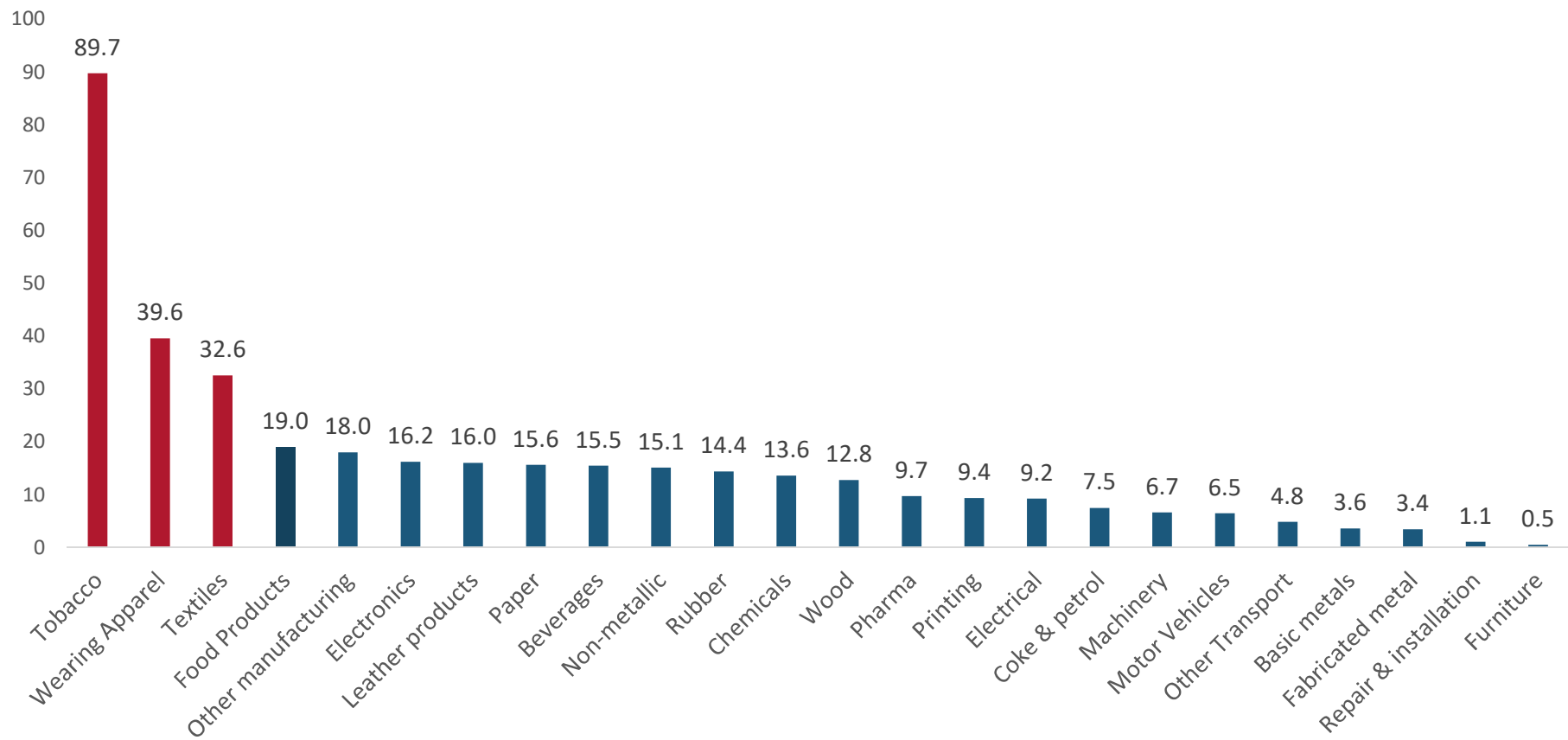
Sector-wise shares, 2017-18

Share of women in total employment by sector



Share in Sectors within Manufacturing, 2017-18

Share of Women in Manufacturing Employment



Women Concentrated Sectors

AGRICULTURE

DOMESTIC WORK

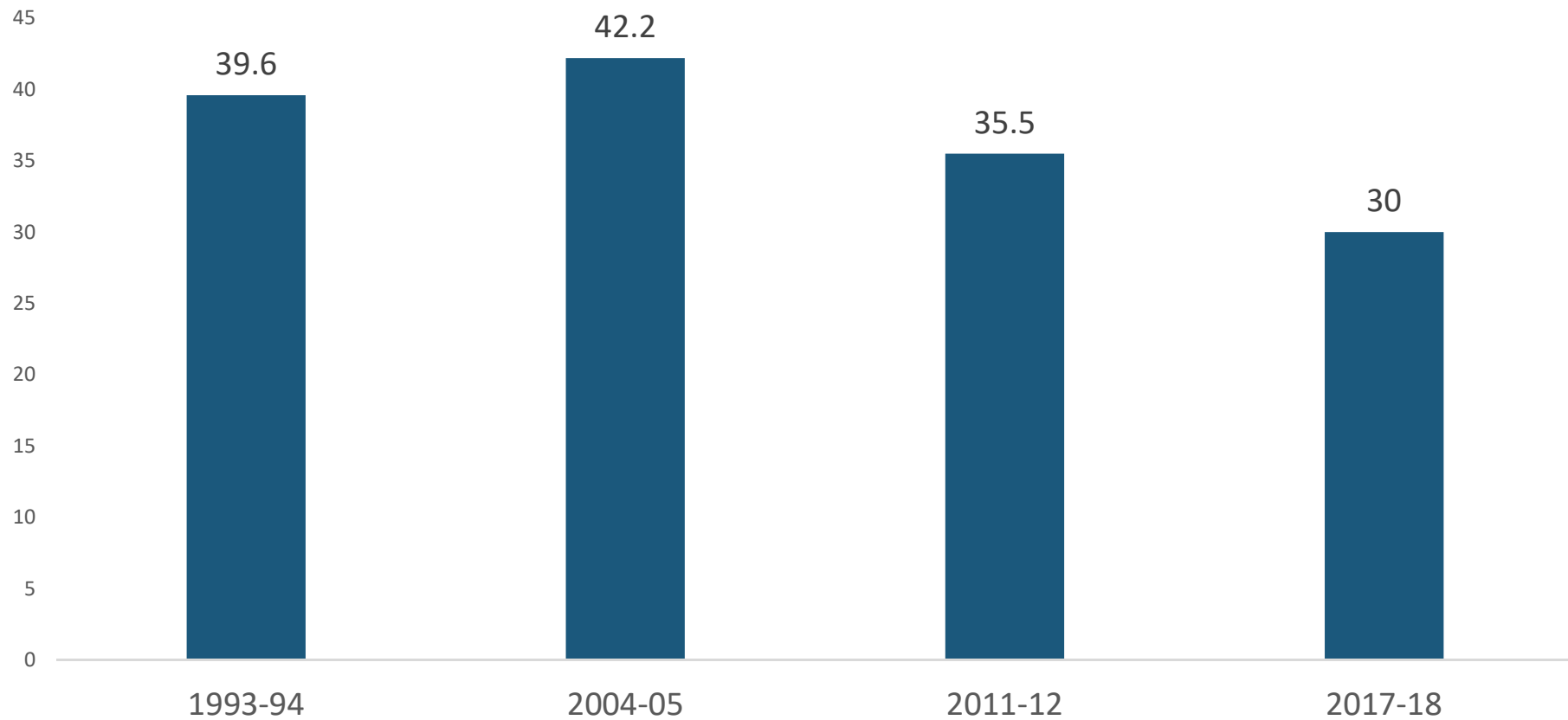
MANUFACTURING (TOBACCO, TEXTILES AND WEARING APPAREL)

EDUCATION

HEALTH

Agriculture – Defeminisation

Women's Share in Agriculture Employment



Share of employment in the women-concentrated sectors (excluding agriculture)

% of employment in the women concentrated Sectors (excl Agri)	1993-94	2004-05	2011-12	2017-18
Female	9.2	12.9	17.1	21.9
Male	5.4	6.9	6.9	7.2

Women concentrated sectors, excluding agriculture, are where women are mostly getting absorbed with their share in women's employment increasing from 9.2% to 21.9%

The same is not the case for men, where the share of these sectors in their employment has gone up only from 5.4% to 7.2%
Therefore, the sectors that are absorbing men are not providing comparable additional employment to women

Health and Education

% of employment in health and education	1993-94	2004-05	2011-12	2017-18
Education – Female	1.8	3.1	4.7	7.6
Education – Male	1.7	2.1	2.3	2.6
Health – Female	0.5	0.9	1.4	2.5
Health – Male	0.5	0.7	0.7	0.8

The role of education and health sectors in women’s employment has gone up significantly – although the overall share is still low, it has increased by 4.2 times for education and 5 times for health. In contrast, for men, these sectors have increased by around 1.5 times for both sectors.

Job Creation

Number of Women (in million)	2004-05	2011-12	2017-18
Total Women Workers	153.4	130.9	108.3
Women Dominated Sectors	133.0	104.5	85.5
Agriculture	113.5	82.5	61.9
WD minus agriculture	19.5	22.0	23.6
Health	1.4	1.8	2.7
Education	4.8	6.2	8.2
Domestic Work	3.2	2.6	3.3
Women Dominated Manufacturing	10.1	11.4	9.4
'Other' Sectors	20.4	26.4	22.9

Demand for Women's Labour

In absolute numbers: there is a drastic fall in women's employment agriculture after 2004-05.

The number of jobs have increased in health, education and domestic work. Everything else there is a fall.

The fall in the other sectors is even more than the fall in the women concentrated manufacturing. So jobs for women are not getting created in other sectors either.

And sectors where there is a supply (assuming there is no change in this with increasing education), there are no jobs and these are all 'dying' sectors? The women-concentrated manufacturing sectors already saturated? (Retail and construction may increase?)

Education and Health – have huge potential for expansion, here, government has a role to play.

Other sectors where the share of women is relatively high are finance and insurance, accommodation, information & communication and public administration

Characteristics of women-concentrated sectors

Self Employment

Location of work is at home

Skill requirements are lower

Higher public sector employment

So, we can argue that these are the kind of jobs that women would look for

Willingness to Work

NSS asks women engaged in domestic duties if they would like to work if work available at home – 30% say Yes

IHDS asks women who are not currently working would like to work if they could find 'suitable' (65% say Yes) (Desai and Joshi, 2019)

Recent Deshpande and Kabeer (2019) study finds women demand for work that is compatible with household chores

Public Employment is important

In rural areas 29% of women and 10% men workers outside of agriculture, are employed in the public sector. In urban areas – 17% women and 12% men

Correlation between female employment in the public sector and female participation in the labour force

Public employment has the potential to narrow the gender wage gap

Women demand jobs in the government (status, mobility, predictable, wages, aspirations)

Multiplier

Women in Government in India

Examples:

5.7% in Railways are women (applications increasing, 17%)

Female employment in the police force is 8.7% of the total police force, while the overall vacancy rate is 22.2%; 71.8% of the women on the force are constables and 17.6% are at head constable positions.

On an all-India basis, women constituted 48.3% of the total elementary education teaching workforce. Majority at assistant prof level (8% of VCs)

ASHAs, AWWs, AWHs, mid-day meals cooks and helpers together constitute over 6 million workers (60 lakhs)

Categories of workers: Regular/ 'government servants', Contractual, Honorarium based, Voluntary

Policies:

Reservations in government jobs (AP, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan Bihar, Gujarat, MP, TN)

MHA - 33% quota for women in the National and State police forces (constables).

Potential for Employment

Huge vacancies and shortfalls – 7.5 lakh positions in central government alone (7th CPC – JG and CPC, 2019)

Massive human development deficits

Public employees per 1000 population – 111 in Brazil, 57 in China and 16 in India (Ghosh and Chandrasekhar, 2019)

Potential/need for service providers is high (human development outcomes)-filling vacancies and investing in infrastructure building in the areas of health and education—can create more than 2 million jobs (Abraham, et al., 2019)

These jobs can create opportunities (especially for women) – with impact on human development outcomes as well as addressing the demand deficit in rural economy

THANK YOU!
