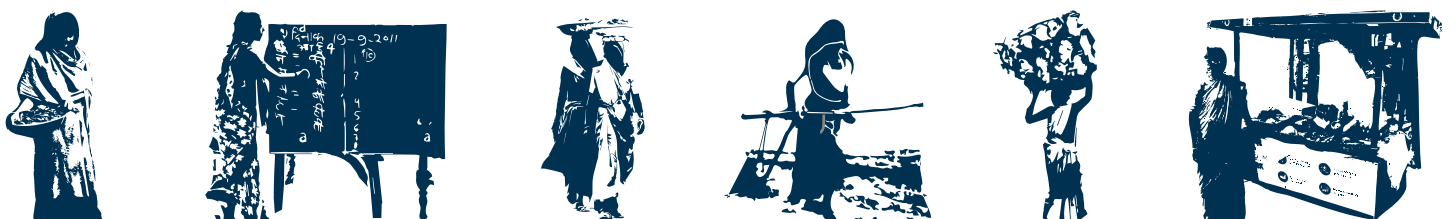


WOMEN'S WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION IN INDIA: **STATEWISE TRENDS**

BIHAR



This series of state factsheets highlights the important aspects of women's employment across the states in India. The factsheets use secondary data provided by the National Sample Surveys' Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), 2017-18. The factsheets also draw on data from the employment – unemployment surveys (EUS) conducted by the same agency in previous years as well as data from other sources to support state specific analysis.

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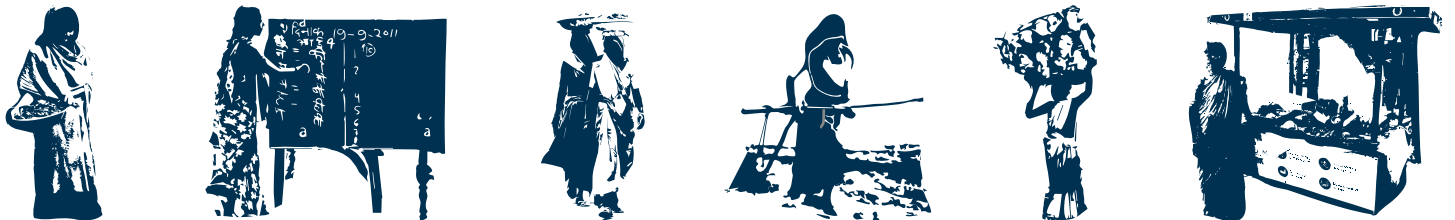


Bihar

Located in the eastern region of the country, Bihar bears the ignominy of being among the poorest states of India with very low development outcomes and indicators in the domains of education, health, food security, hunger and nutrition. It also lags behind in gender development indices. In the domain of economic empowerment, Bihar fares the worst with the lowest workforce participation rates (WPRs) for women at 2.8 percent. This rate is much lower than the average female workforce participation rate (FWPR) for India, among all states – which is currently an important policy concern. The factsheet explicitly points towards certain stark aspects of the status of women's employment in Bihar – which require urgent policy attention – and highlights the overt disparities through a comparison with the national averages.

2.8%

lowest female
workforce
participation
rate



Trends in FWPRs: India and Bihar

- Both Bihar and India show similar trends in loss of employment opportunities, this trend is especially stark for women in rural areas (Charts 1 & 2).
- Bihar's rural FWPR (at 2.5 percent in 2017-18) is substantially below the national average of rural FWPR at 17.5 percent.
- The decline in rural FWPR in Bihar has been much sharper than the decline observed at the national level.

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Chart 1: Workforce Participation Rate - India

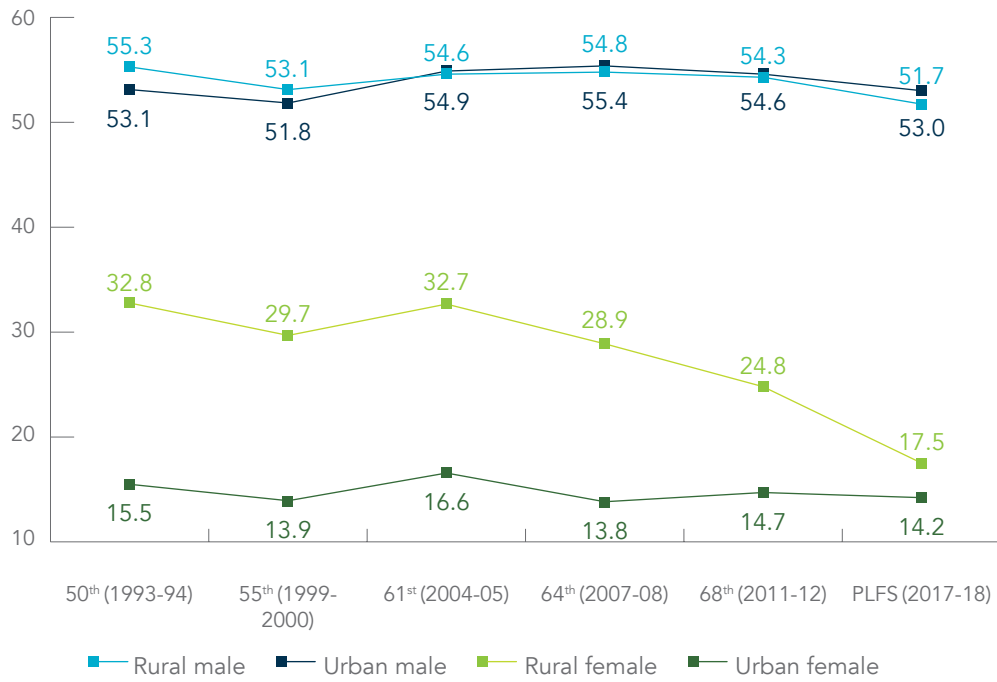
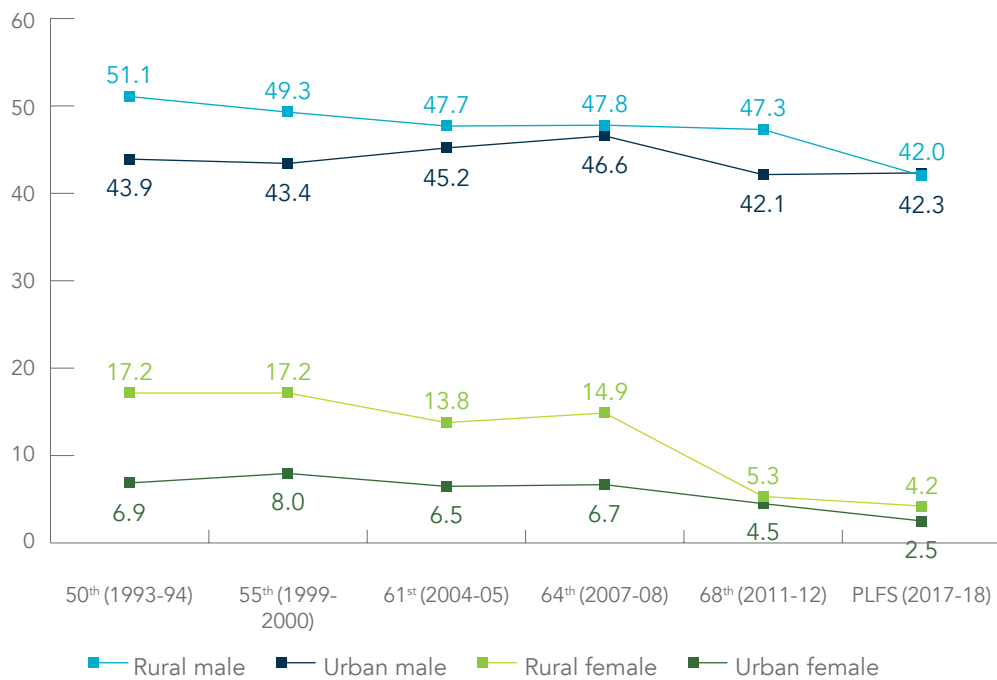


Chart 2: Workforce Participation Rate - Bihar



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Distribution of women by status of employment

- While the number of women in the workforce declined, the share of those working in regular employment increased substantially in Bihar after 2004-05, but more so between 2011-12 and 2017-18. This trend is in line with the observed increases in regular employment for women at the all India level (Charts 3 & 4).
- In contrast, there was a significant decline in the share of women in self-employment in both rural and urban areas in Bihar – more than the observed declines in women’s self-employment at the all India level.

Chart 3: Women’s status of employment - India

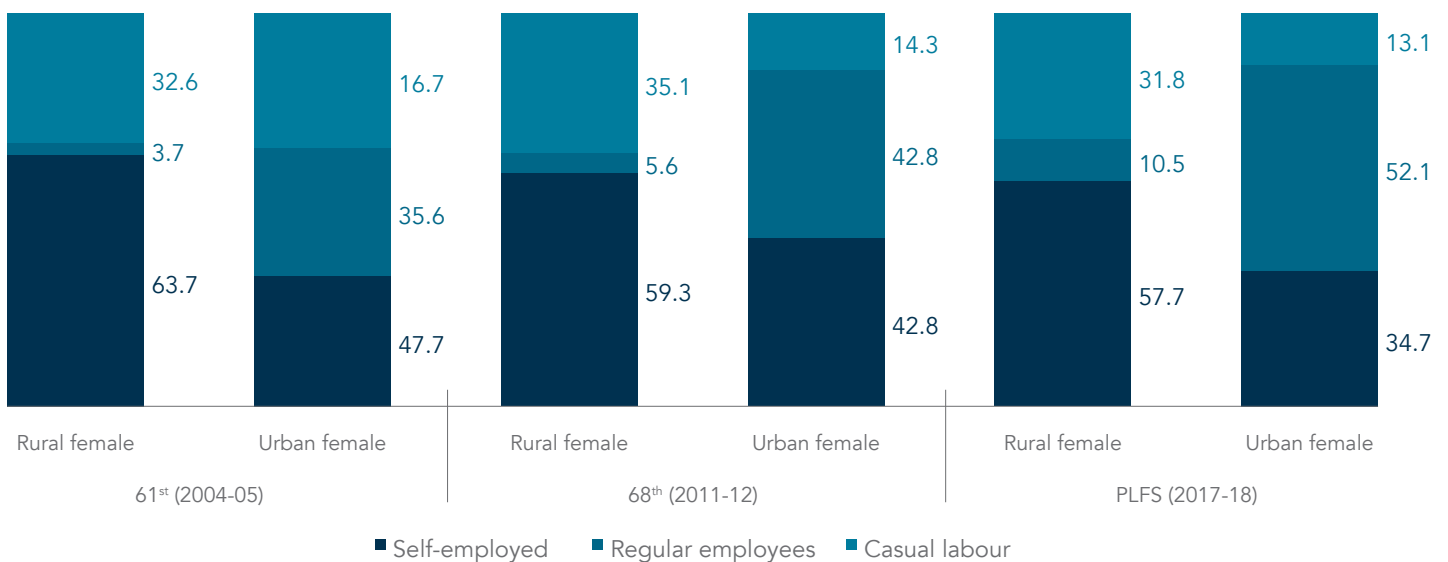
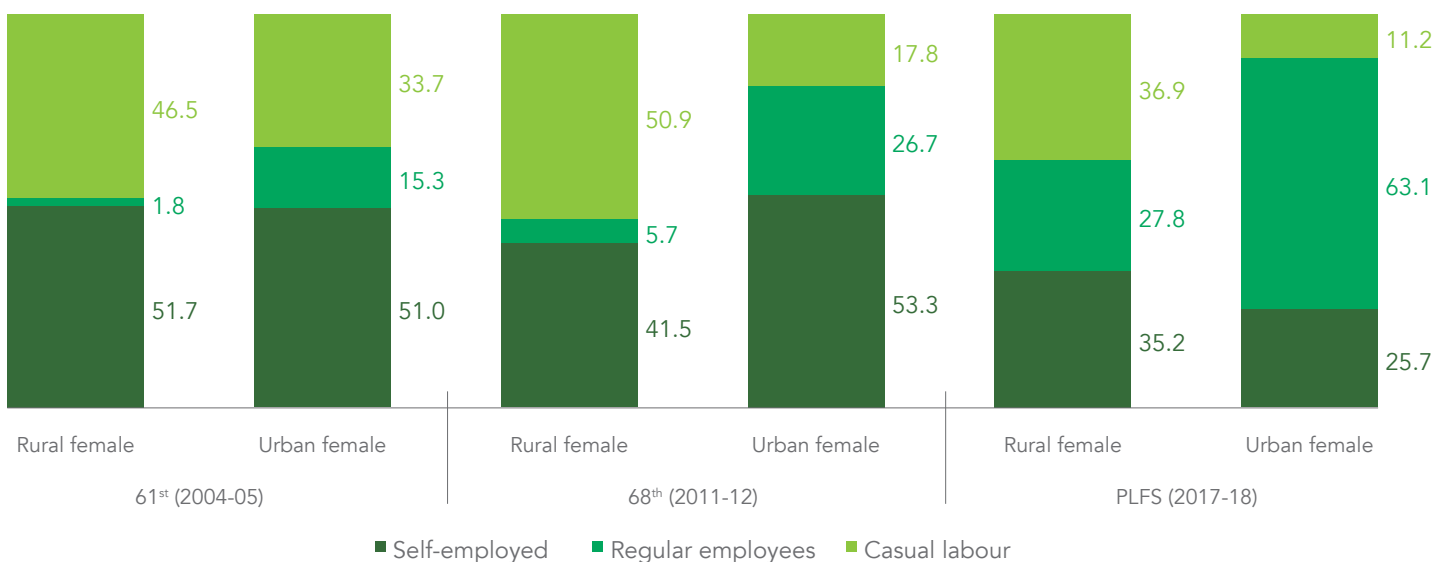


Chart 4: Women’s status of employment - Bihar



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Self-employed women workers in Bihar have a lower share in unpaid family work and a higher share of own account work, compared to the national average (Chart 5)

- The share of unpaid family workers (defined as helpers in household enterprises) among women who are self-employed averages at more than 50 percent for India. However, this ratio is significantly lower in Bihar, at only 20 percent in rural areas and 12 percent in urban areas.
- Among women who are self-employed in urban areas, the share of own account workers is the highest in Bihar (87 percent) as compared to the all India average (66 percent), and even Bihar's own rural figures (76 percent).
- This is an interesting deviation and requires further analysis.

Chart 5: Distribution of self-employed women workers – India and Bihar, 2017-18



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The increase in regular work comes with a caveat (Charts 6 & 7)

- Increased regular employment does not imply better job opportunities for women as this form of work also includes components of informality.
- PLFS 2017-18 figures clearly show that regular work is characterised by presence of substantial informality among women workers in Bihar in both rural and urban areas.
- Incidence of informal contracts for women is substantially high – nearly 40 percent of regular women workers in rural areas and 57 percent of those in urban areas are employed in jobs without written contracts.
- More than 40 percent of women workers in regular employment were not eligible for paid leaves, in both rural and urban areas.
- More women workers in regular employment in urban Bihar received social security benefits as compared to their rural counterparts.
- However, there is a silver lining, as the prevalence of informality among regular women workers in Bihar is lower than the national average. At the all-India level, 71.4 percent of urban women and 58.5 percent of rural women who held regular wage work did so with no formal contract and almost 50 percent of women held jobs with no eligibility of paid leave or social security benefits.

Chart 6: Share of regular women workers by eligibilities for non-wage benefits - Bihar, 2017-18

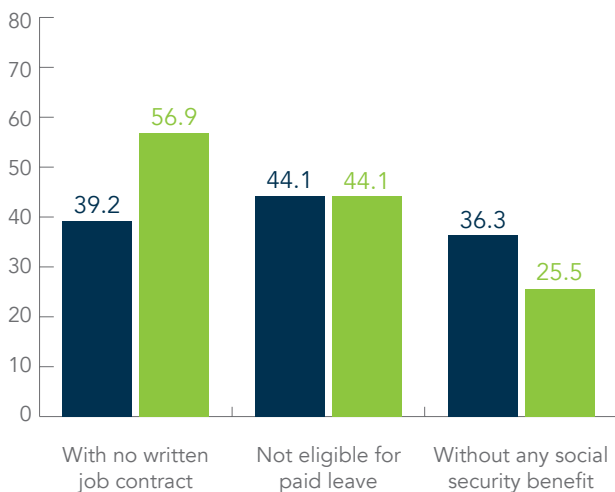
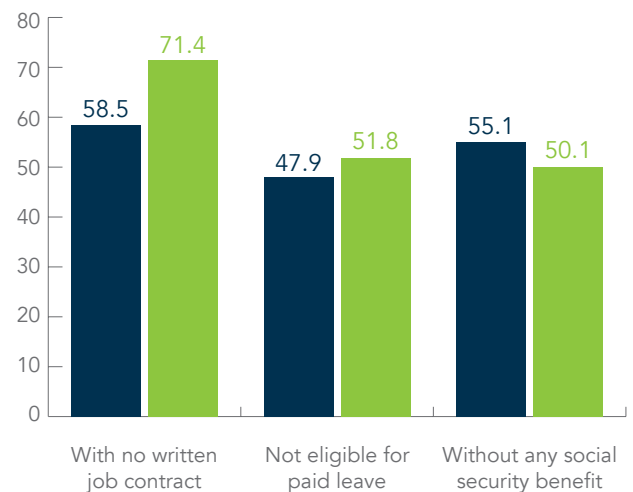


Chart 7: Share of regular women workers by eligibilities for non-wage benefits - All-India, 2017-18



■ Rural female ■ Urban female

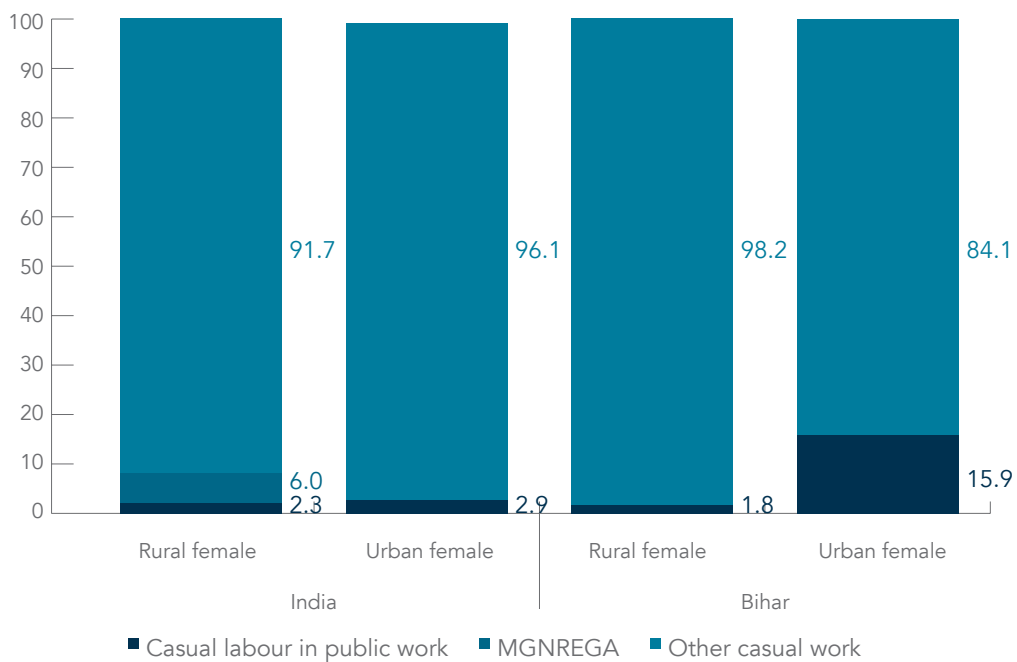
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Casual work of women in Bihar does not show much presence of MGNREGA work (Charts 8 and 9)

- Casual work of women captured by the PLFS denotes the daily wage work that women perform. It also includes public works in construction and work under MGNREGA.
- However, casual work for women is dominated by non-public works both for Bihar and India.
- It is interesting to note that PLFS 2017-18 did not capture MGNREGA work for casual workers by the current weekly status.
- This does not imply that there was no MGNREGA work generated in Bihar, but suggests that the number of person-days created were significantly lower than the norm of 100 days per household, leading perhaps to the NSSO missing out such workers in their sample.

Chart 8: Distribution of Casual women workers by current weekly status: India and Bihar, 2017-18

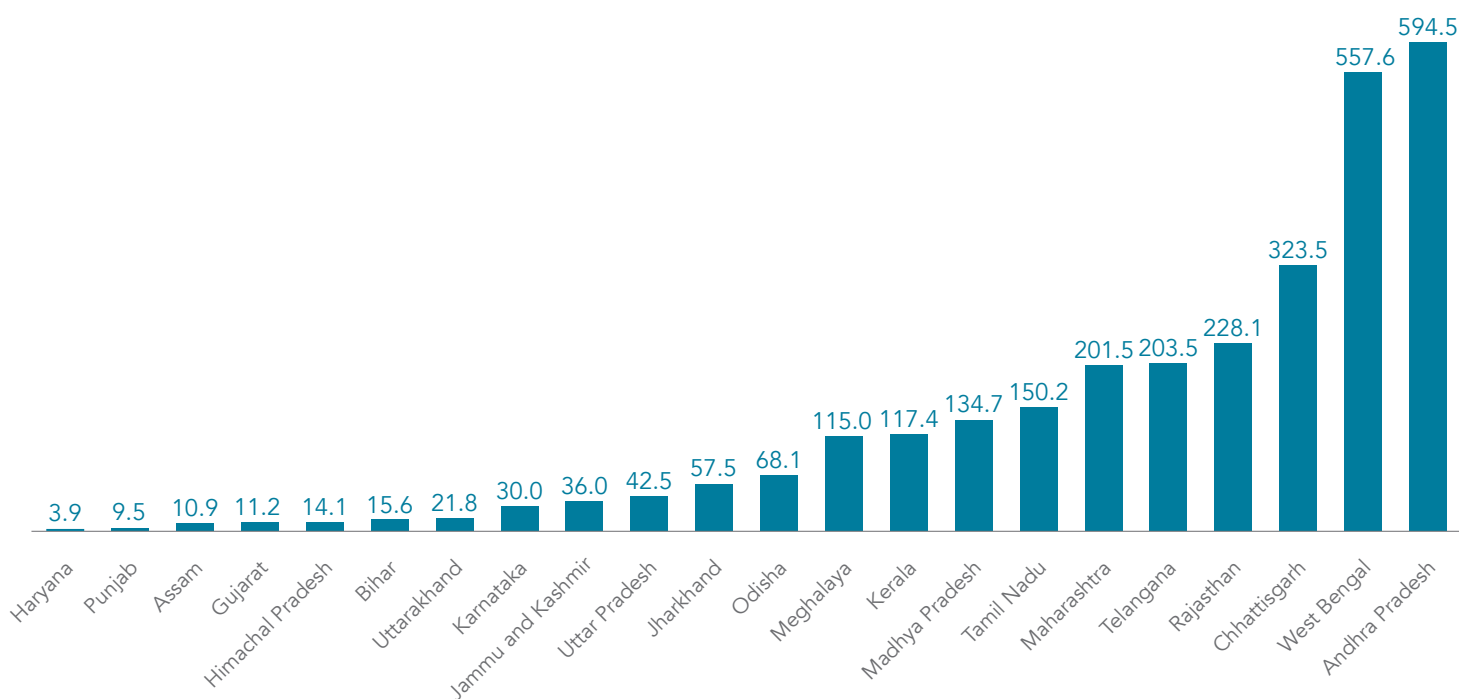


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- The above point of less number of person-days being created under MGNREGA in Bihar can be testified by the fact that the number of households that completed 100 days of employment in Bihar were only 15,555 in 2017-18, with the state ranking 6th from below (Chart 9).
- The total number of person-days generated in Bihar was 82 million of which around 40 million were accounted for by women (www.nrega.gov.in).
- The total person-days created in India for the same year were almost 2.3 billion indicating that Bihar constituted only 3.5 percent of the total person-days created in the country that year.

Chart 9: Number of households completing 100 days under MGNREGA (in thousands): 2017-18



Apart from having the lowest female work force participation rate in India, certain interesting trends characterise Bihar's working women's population. Some of these are not adequately studied by the labour force surveys of India and thus need further interrogation. Two of such trends relate to:

- a. Significant share of own account enterprises in women's self-employment
- b. Low MGNREGA work for women workers in Bihar

In terms of exploring opportunities for improving FWPRs in Bihar, it would be worthwhile to examine these trends.

The factsheet is prepared by Sona Mitra and Hiya Singh Rajput, IWWAGE – Lead at KREA University. Copyright ©2020

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