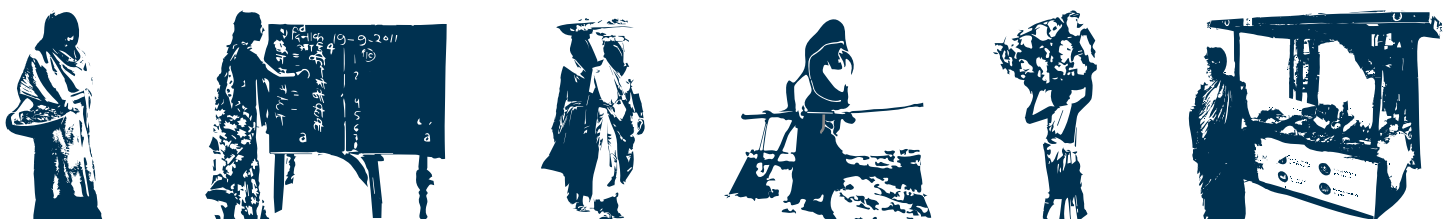
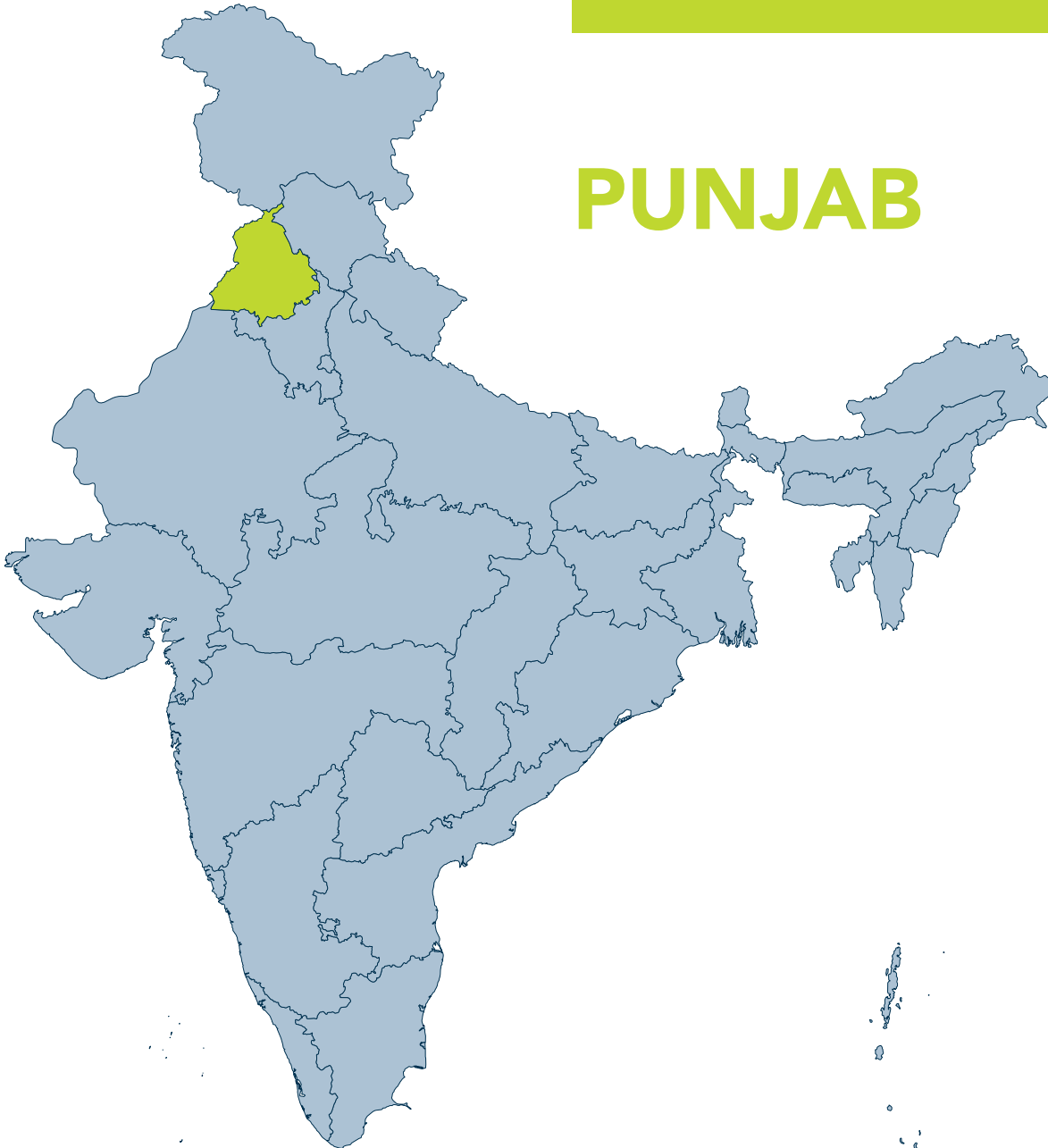


WOMEN'S WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION IN INDIA: **STATEWISE TRENDS**

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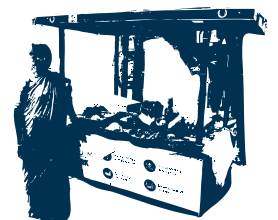
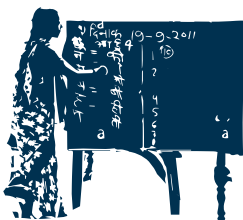
This series of state factsheets highlight important aspects of the status of women's employment in the states. The factsheets use secondary data provided by the National Sample Surveys' Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21. The factsheets also draw on data from the 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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The northern state of Punjab is primarily populated by farmers. It has a population of 2.77 crores and a land area of 50,362 square kilometres. Compared to the national average, which is INR 1,67,995, Punjab's per capita Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP)¹ (at current prices) in 2021-22 is roughly INR 1,88,015. The state's sex ratio² for 2017-19 was 891, which is lower than the comparable national average of 904. Additionally, this high number is primarily attributed to urban rather than rural areas improving because of increased literacy, effective medical care, and state-wide awareness. The Female Labour Force Participation Rate (FLFPR)³ is lower than the national average, which is 27.7 per cent and 18.6 per cent, at 19.4 per cent and 17.1 per cent in rural and urban areas, respectively. Punjab is doing well in terms of total literacy rates. Compared to the national average of 72.9 per cent, the state has a literacy rate⁴ of 75.8 per cent as per the 2011 Census. Additionally, the gender disparity in the literacy rate is 80.5 per cent for men and 70.7 per cent for women, which is similar to the national averages of 80.9 per cent and 64.7 per cent, respectively.



¹ Economic and Statistical Organization, Department of Planning, Government of Punjab, pp.13
<https://esopb.gov.in/static/PDF/EconomicSurvey-2021-22.pdf>

² Economic and Statistical Organization, Department of Planning, Government of Punjab, pp. 20
<https://esopb.gov.in/static/PDF/EconomicSurvey-2021-22.pdf>

³ Annual Report PLFS 2020-21, pp. A-66
<https://dge.gov.in/dge/sites/default/files/Annual%20report/Annual%20Report%20PLFS%202020-21.pdf>

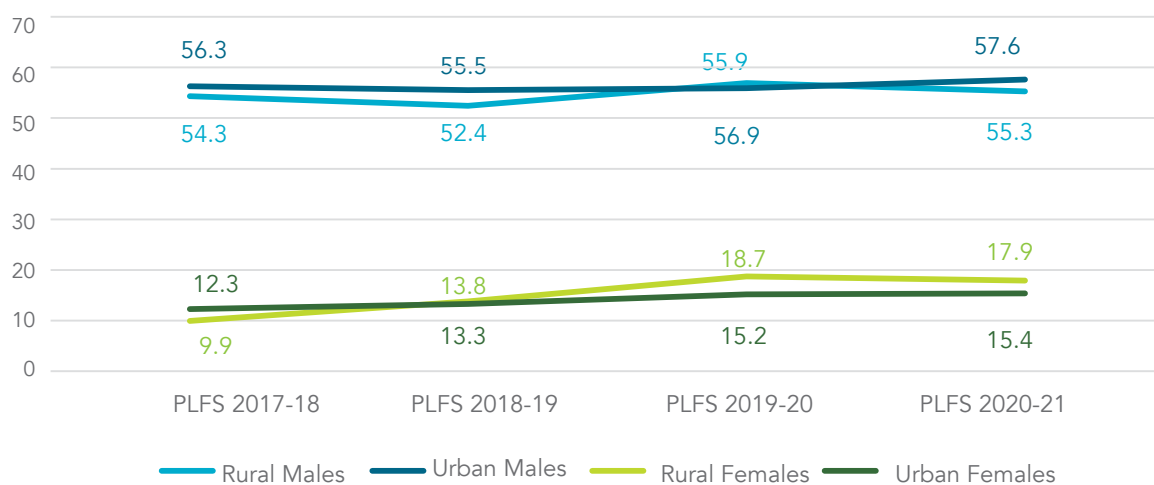
⁴ Economic and Statistical Organization, Department of Planning, Government of Punjab, pp. 127
<https://esopb.gov.in/static/PDF/EconomicSurvey-2021-22.pdf>



Trends in Female Workforce Participation Rates (FWPR)

- In 2020-21, the Workforce Participation Rate (WPR) in rural Punjab was 17.9 per cent which is lower than the national average by 9.2 percentage points. In the urban region, it was 15.4 per cent which is marginally lower by 1.6 percentage points than national figures.
- In the rural region, FWPR has doubled from 9.9 to 17.9 per cent between 2017-18 and 2020-21. On the other hand, in urban regions, there is a slight improvement by 3 percentage points from 12.3 to 15.4 per cent in the same period. This also shows the convergence of women's participation rate in both regions.
- The gender gap in workforce participation has reduced by 7 percentage points in the rural region between 2017-18 and 2020-21. In the urban region, there has been a marginal decrease by 1.8 percentage points across the same reference period.

Figure 1: Workforce Participation Rate



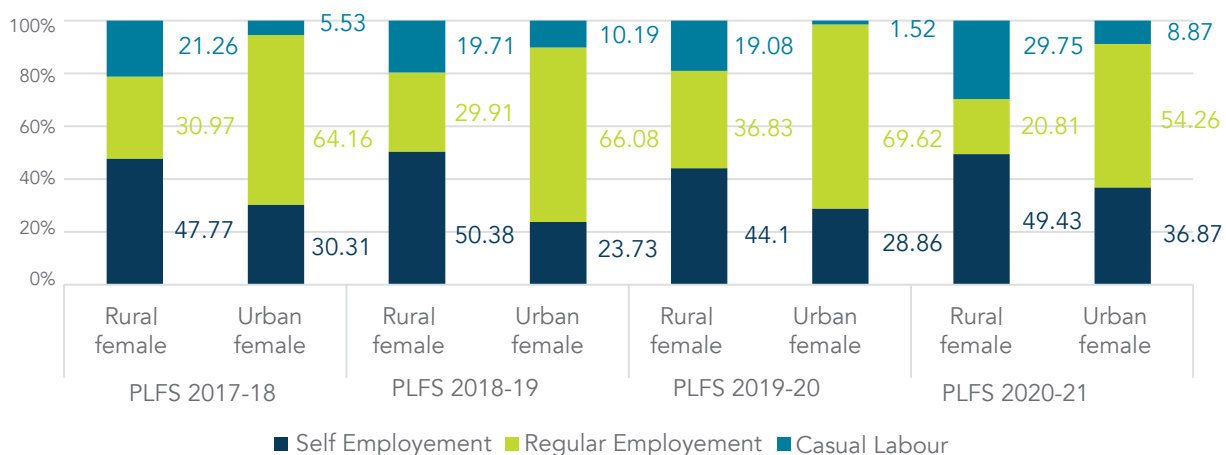
Source: PLFS 2017-18, PLFS 2018-19, PLFS 2019-20, and PLFS 2020-21, National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), Government of India (GoI). The WPR figures are calculated for males and females of all age groups.



Distribution of Women Workers by Status of Employment

- As per the usual status, regular employment is available to most women in the urban region whereas, in the rural region, women are primarily self-employed across the reference period which is consistent with national trends.
- The number of women workers in regular employment has decreased from 64.1 to 54.2 per cent in the urban region. The rural region too shows similar trends, with the number declining from 30.9 to 20.8 per cent between 2017-18 and 2020-21.
- The number of self-employed women is increasing across both regions. In the rural region, it jumped from 47.7 to 49.4 per cent while in the urban region it rose from 30.3 to 36.8 per cent between 2017-18 and 2020-21. Alongside, unpaid family work⁵ within self-employment has escalated from 26.4 to 32.5 per cent and, in rural areas, it has decreased from 26 to 20 per cent between 2018-19 and 2020-21.
- The number of women employed in casual work is greater in the rural region as compared to the urban region, which is consistent with the national figures. The data reveal that the number of women engaged in casual work has increased in both urban and rural areas from 5.5 to 8.8 per cent and 21.2 to 29.7 per cent, respectively.

Figure 2: Distribution of Women Workers by Status of Employment



Source: : Author's Estimates using Unit Level Data from PLFS 2017-18, PLFS 2018-19, PLFS 2019-20 and PLFS 2020-21.

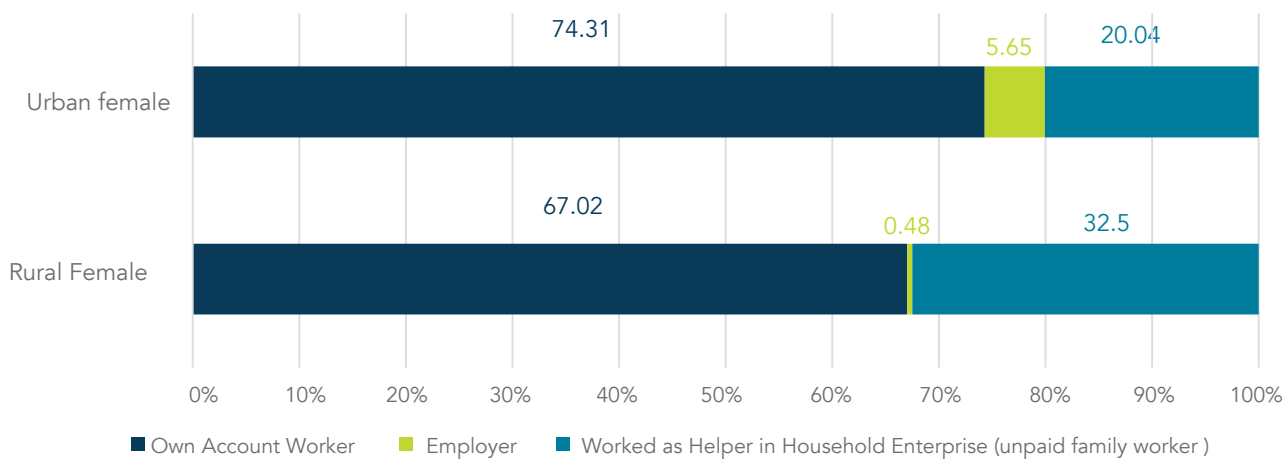
⁵ Author's Estimate using Unit Level Data from PLFS 2018-19 and 2020-21.

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- The proportion of women employed as employers and own account workers is higher in urban than rural areas across the reference period. On the other hand, the situation with unpaid family work is quite different with its numbers higher in rural than urban areas.

Figure 3: Distribution of Self-employed Women Workers

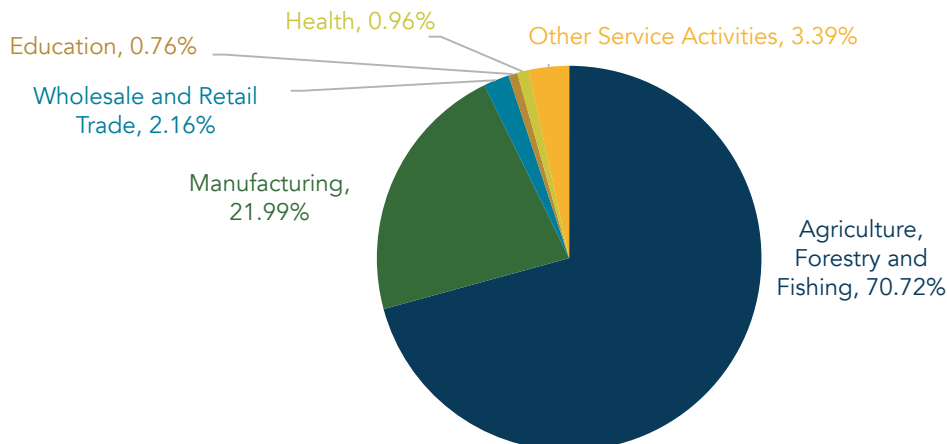


Source: Author's Estimates using Unit Level Data from PLFS 2020-21.

Distribution of Self-employed Women Workers by Broad Industry Types

- According to PLFS 2020-21, 49.4 per cent of women in rural areas and 36.8 per cent in urban areas are self-employed (Figure 2). In rural areas, 70.7 per cent of women work in agriculture and fishing, 21.9 per cent in manufacturing and 3.3 per cent in other services⁶.
- The urban region shows different trends with 30.8 per cent women are in manufacturing, and 21 per cent in wholesale and retail trade and other services⁷.
- The sectors that employ less than 10 per cent women are healthcare and education, amongst others, across both regions.

Figure 4a: Self Employed Rural Women across Industry Groups

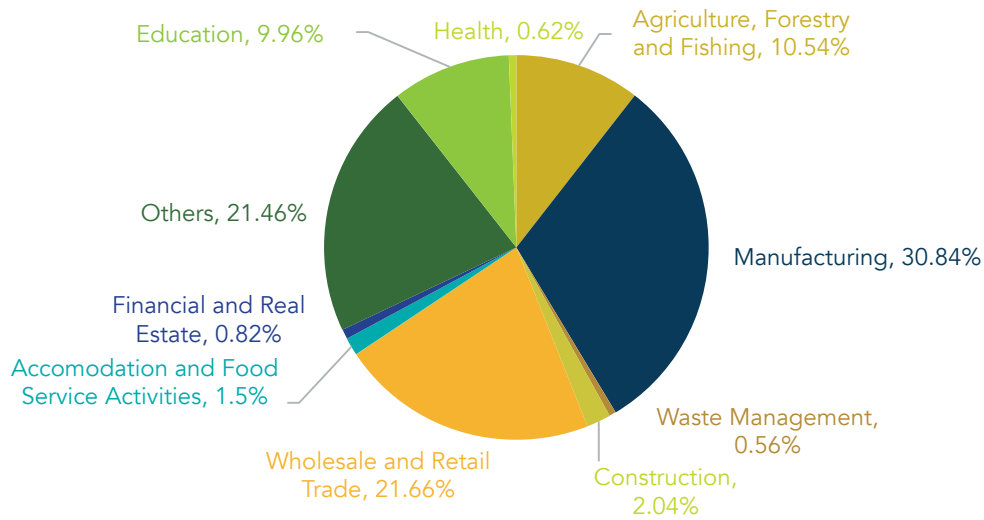


⁶ 'Others' category includes the following sectors: information and communication, professional, scientific and technical activities, administrative and support service activities, public administration and defence; compulsory social security, arts, entertainment and recreation and other service activities.

⁷ Ibid.



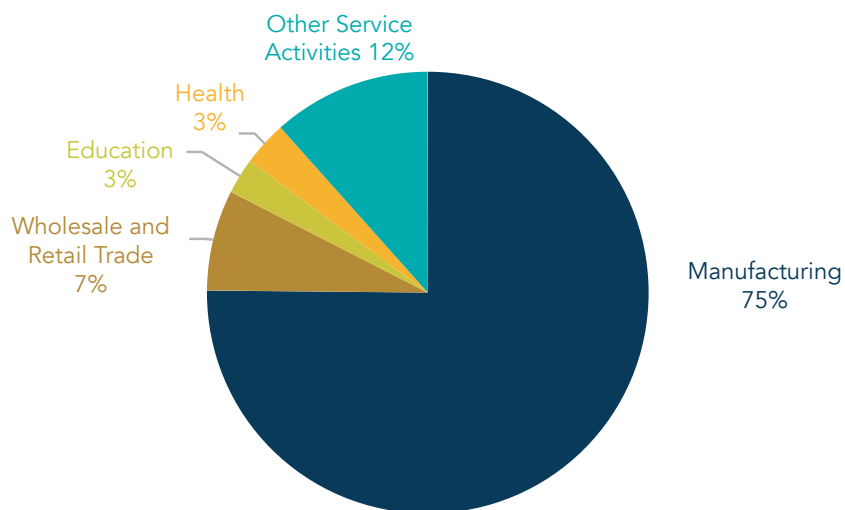
Figure 4b: Self Employed Urban Women across Industry Groups



Source: Author's Estimates using Unit Level Data from PLFS 2020-21.

- A deeper look into non-agricultural sectors reveal that, in rural regions, women are engaged in manufacturing, other services⁸ and wholesale and retail trade.

Figure 4c: Self Employed Rural Women across Industry Group in Non Agriculture Sectors



Source: Author's Estimates using Unit Level Data from PLFS 2020-21.

⁸ Ibid.



Distribution of Women Workers by Broad Industry Divisions

- In rural Punjab, 51.8 per cent women are engaged in agriculture, forestry and fishing which is lower than the national trends, followed by 16.7 per cent in manufacturing and the remaining spread across different industries.
- In urban Punjab, trends are different with 23 per cent women involved in the education sector, followed by 19 per cent in manufacturing.

Figure 5a: Industry Wise Distribution of Rural Women Workers

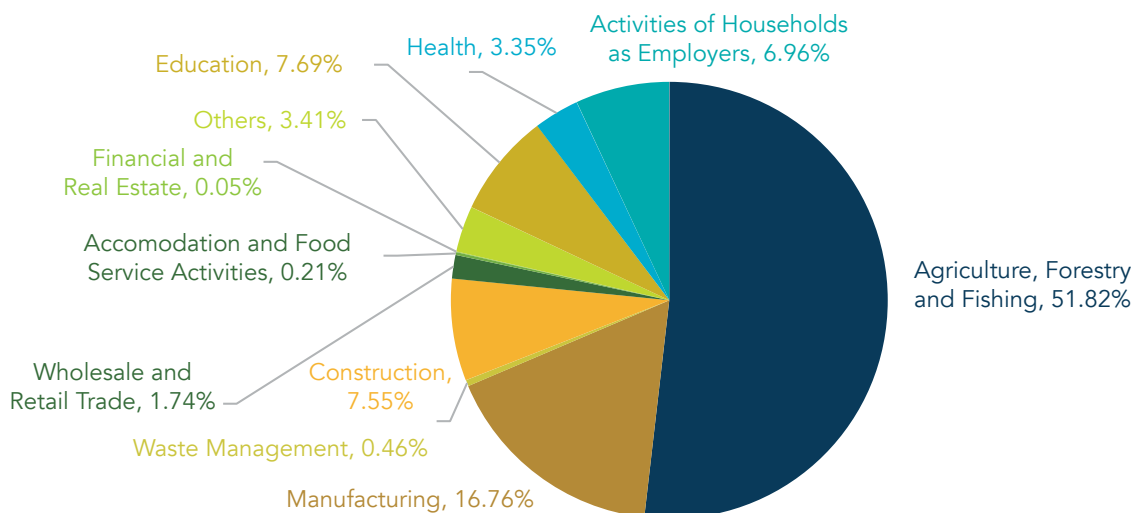
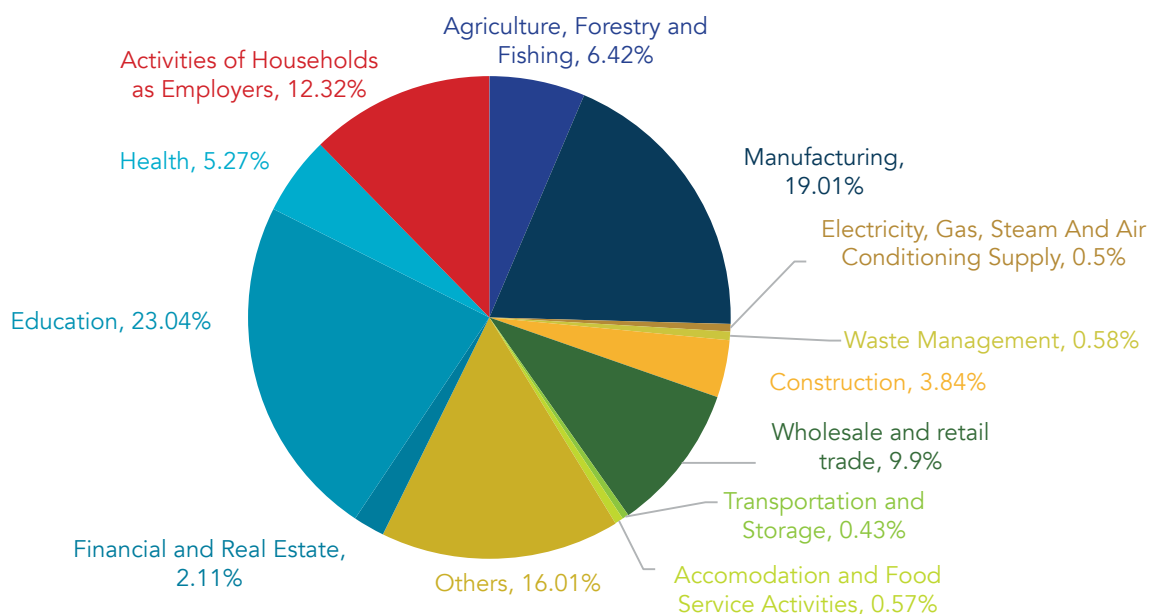
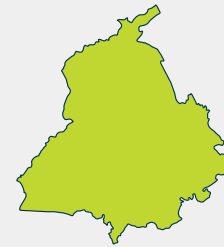


Figure 5b: Industry Wise distribution of Urban Women Workers



Source: Author's Estimates using Unit Level Data from PLFS 2020-21.



Distribution of Women Workers by Occupation Types

- In rural Punjab, 35.2 per cent women are involved in skilled agriculture and fishery work. Around 32.6 per cent women are engaged in elementary occupations.
- In urban Punjab, the distribution is different with 26.1 per cent women engaged in elementary occupations and 23.1 per cent women are professionals.
- Across both regions, less than 10 per cent women are working as clerks, legislators, and technicians.

Figure 6a: Occupation types of Rural Women

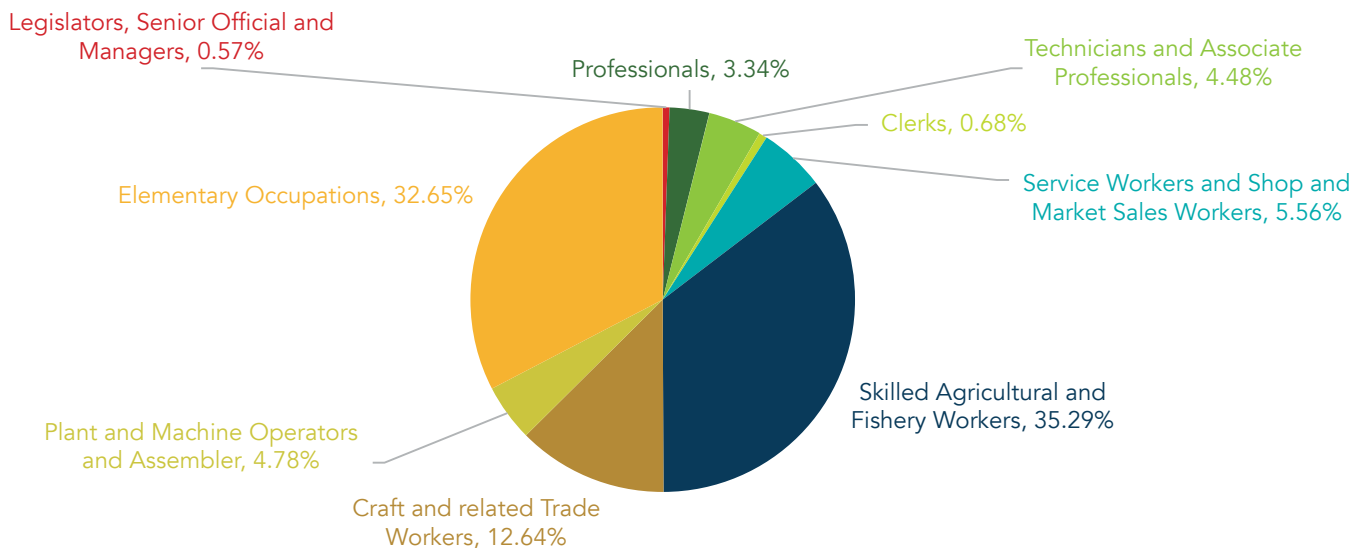
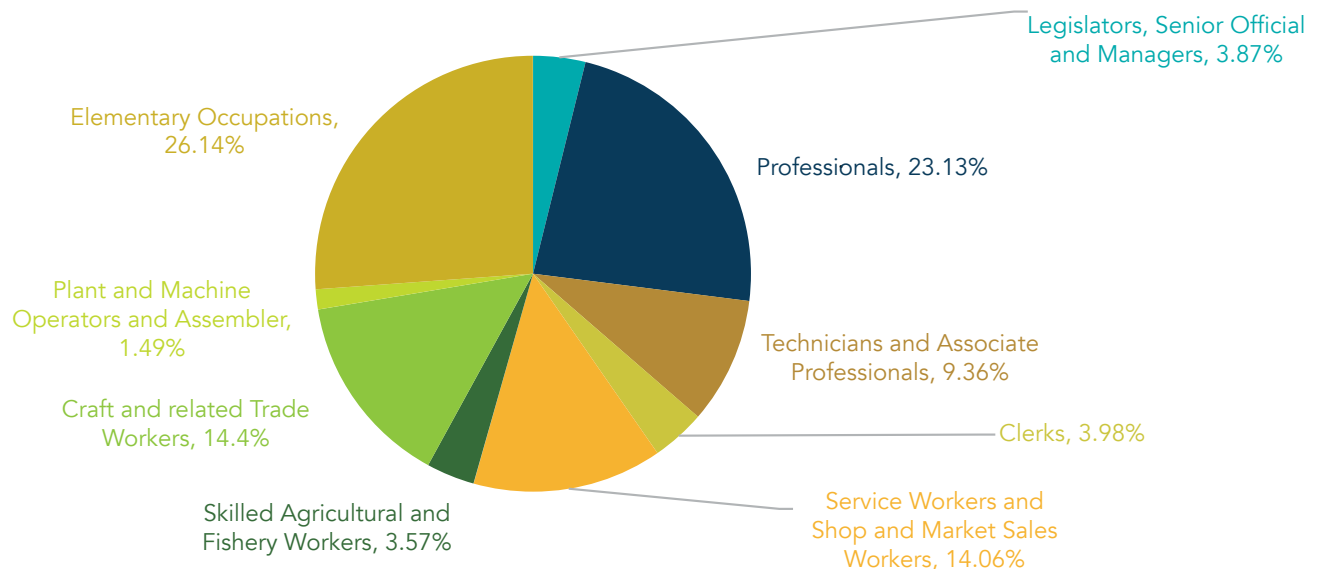


Figure 6b: Occupation types of Urban Women



Source: Author's Estimates using Unit Level Data from PLFS 2020-21.



Distribution of Women Regular Workers by Broad Industry Types

- According to PLFS 2020-21, 20.8 per cent of women are regularly employed in rural areas, compared to 50.2 per cent in urban regions (Figure 2). In the rural region, 35.1 per cent women are in the education sector while 31.2 per cent are involved in household activities as employers. The sectors that saw the greatest decline in women's workforce are education, manufacturing, finance and real estate. On the other hand, FWFP increased in health and household activities as employer sectors between 2017-18 and 2020-21⁹.
- In the urban region, women are distributed similarly across sectors: 35.6 per cent are in education and 20.2 per cent household activities as employers. These low figures can be attributed to a decrease in women's workforce in education, manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade and finance and real estate sectors from 2017-18 onwards.
- The sectors that engaged less than 10 per cent women workers across both regions are finance and real estate, wholesale and retail trade and waste management, amongst others.

Figure 7a: Industry Wise Distribution of Regular Wage Rural Women

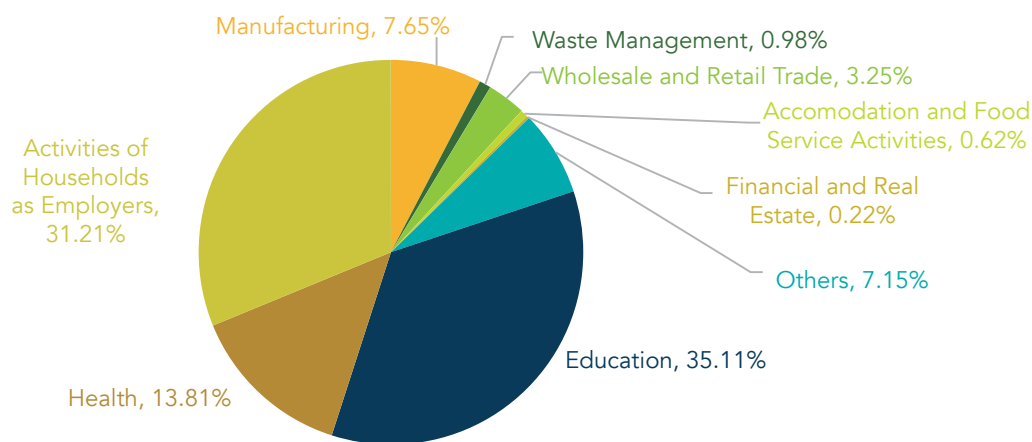
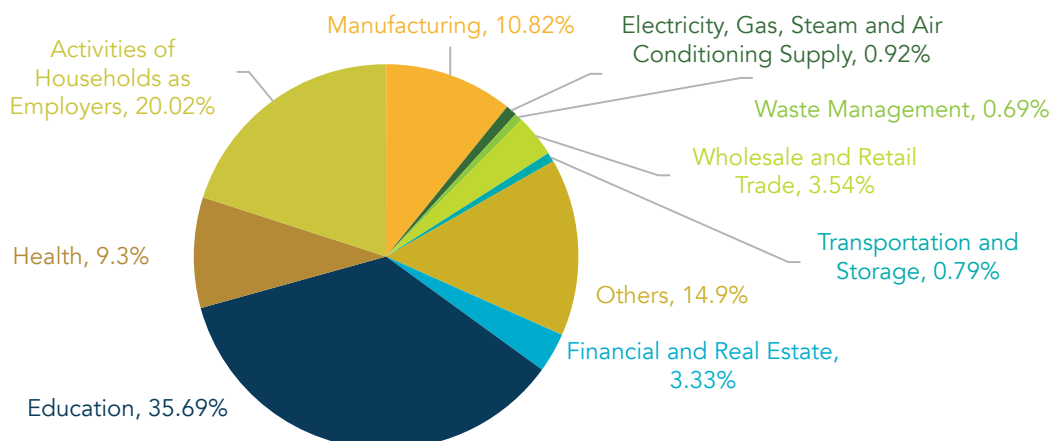


Figure 7b: Industry Wise distribution of Regular Wage Urban Women



Source: Author's Estimates using Unit Level Data from PLFS 2020-21.

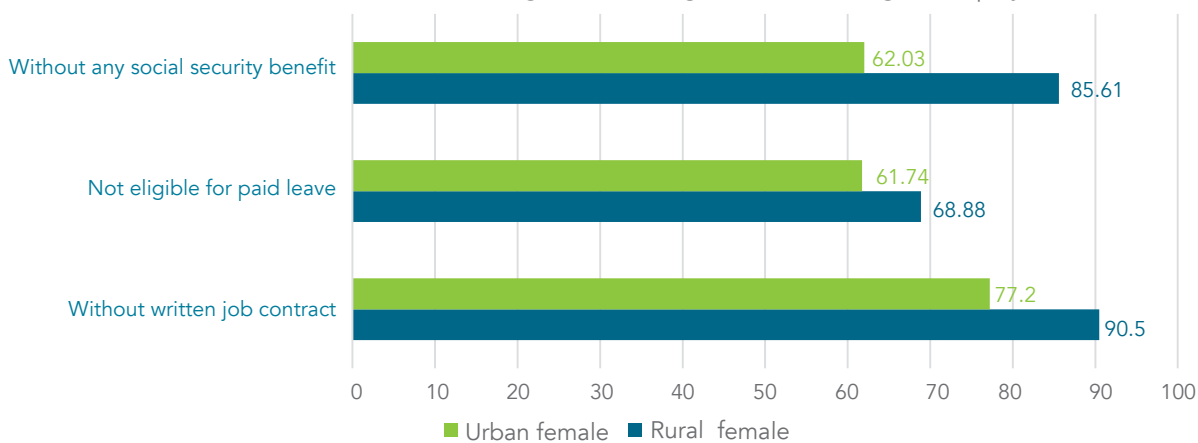
⁹ Author's Estimates using Unit Level Data from PLFS 2017-18 and PLFS 2020-21.



Condition of Work in Regular Employment

- The number of women employed as regular or salaried employees has been decreasing over the reference period across both urban and rural areas because of vulnerable working conditions.
- The data imply that women are more vulnerable to terrible working conditions in the rural region as compared to the urban region. PLFS 2020-21 shows that, in the rural areas, around 90.5 per cent women do not have a written job contract, 85.6 per cent have no social security benefits and 68.8 per cent are not eligible for paid leave. The situation is also concerning in urban areas where 77.2 per cent women do not have a written job contract, 62 per cent have no social security benefits and 61.7 per cent not eligible for paid leave.

Figure 8: Working Conditions in Regular Employment

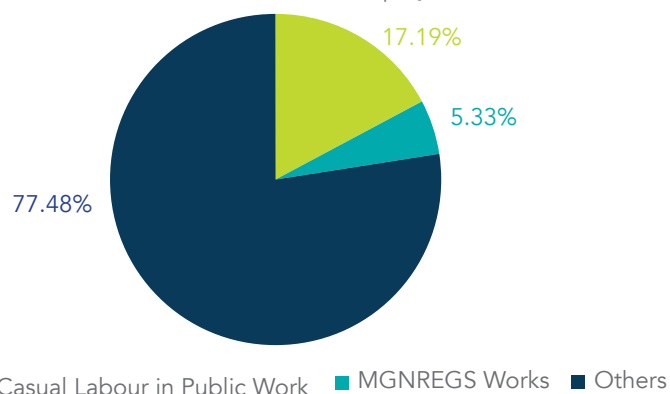


Source: Author's Estimates using Unit Level Data from PLFS 2020-21.

Women workers in rural casual employment

- PLFS 2020-21 depicts that 29.7 per cent women are employed as casual labourers in the rural areas (refer Figure 2).
- Around 77.4 per cent rural women are engaged in non-public work, followed by 17.1 per cent women in public work and 5.3 per cent women involved in the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS).

Figure 9: Women Workers in Casual Employment



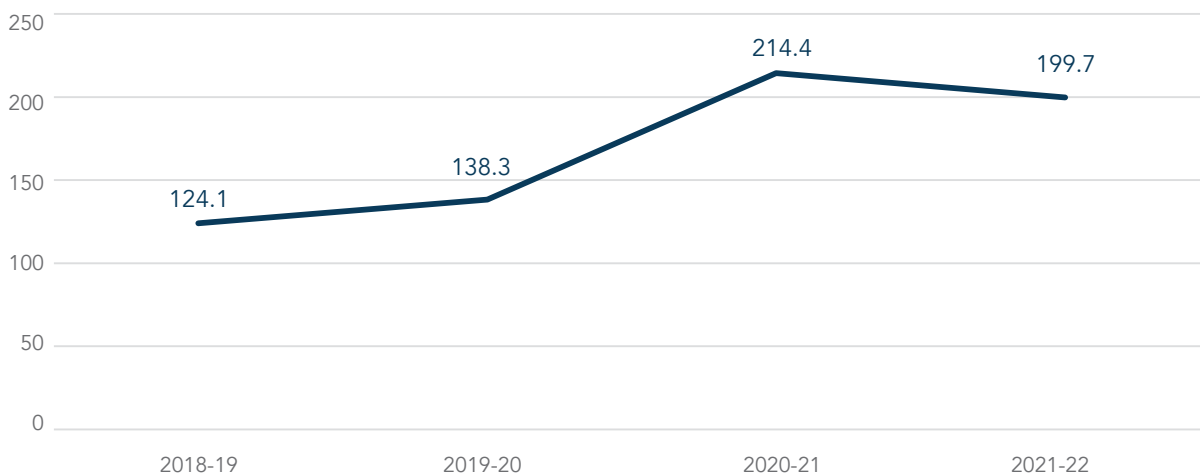
Source: Author's Estimates using Unit Level Data from PLFS 2020-21

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- The number of women person-days under MGNREGS has been significantly lower than in other Indian states. In 2021-22, women person-days dropped to 199.7 lakhs¹⁰ from 2020-21.
- Currently, 15.4 lakh women from rural Punjab are registered under MGNREGS, of which 60.8 per cent are active members¹¹. The low participation of women in MGNREGS may be a result of the registration process being complicated, the fact that women typically earn less money than men, more job cards are issued than jobs actually created, and the absence of child care facilities, which frequently forces women to work in the fields for longer hours¹².

Figure 10: Women Persondays under MGNREGA (In Lakhs)



Source: Author's Estimates using MGNREGA Dashboard.

¹⁰ Author's estimates using MGNREGA dashboard

https://mnregaweb4.nic.in/netnrega/all_lv_details_dashboard_new.aspx?Fin_Year=2022-2023&Digest=ftWywJ4W7YwKLDX82gF7Mw

¹¹ Author's estimates using MGNREGA dashboard for 2022-23

¹² (Bishnoi, Rampal, & Meena, 2015): Constraints experienced by women work force in MNREGA in Punjab and Rajasthan, India

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CONCLUSION

The majority of rural women in Punjab are self-employed and work in agriculture, fishing, and manufacturing with one-third working as unpaid family workers in low productivity jobs without social benefits. The number of regular salaried female workers is declining in both locations due to unsafe working conditions, less bargaining power and lack of awareness. The number of casual workers is expanding in both regions, with a minuscule fraction in MGNREGS due to lack of knowledge, difficulty filling out forms and registering, and demanding work that is sometimes difficult for women to execute.

However, Punjab has undertaken certain encouraging steps in increasing female workforce participation rate and decreasing the gender gap, particularly in rural areas, but there is still a long way to go.

The factsheet is prepared by Suchika Gupta and, reviewed by Sona Mitra and Bidisha Mondal, IWWAGE – Lead at KREA University. Copyright @2022

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