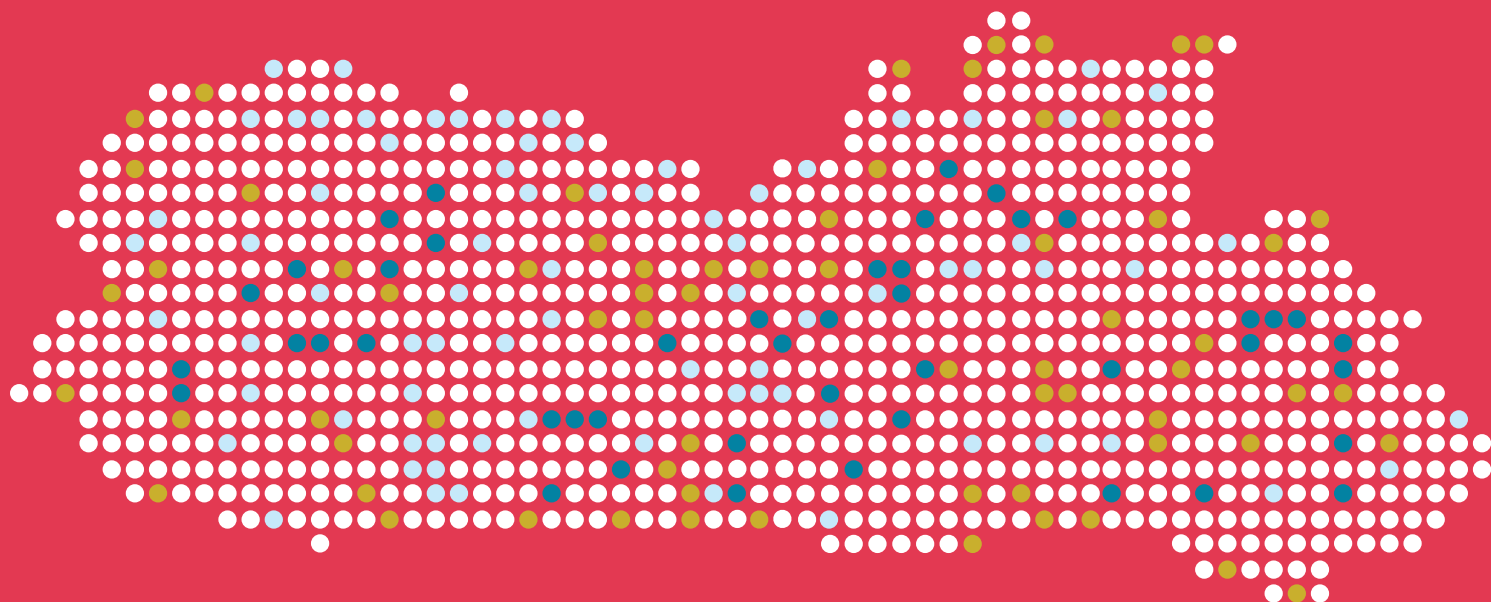


TREND IN FEMALE LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION IN Meghalaya



This factsheet highlights important aspects of the status of women's employment in Meghalaya. The factsheets use secondary data provided by the National Sample Surveys' Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), 2017-18 to 2023-24





MEGHALAYA



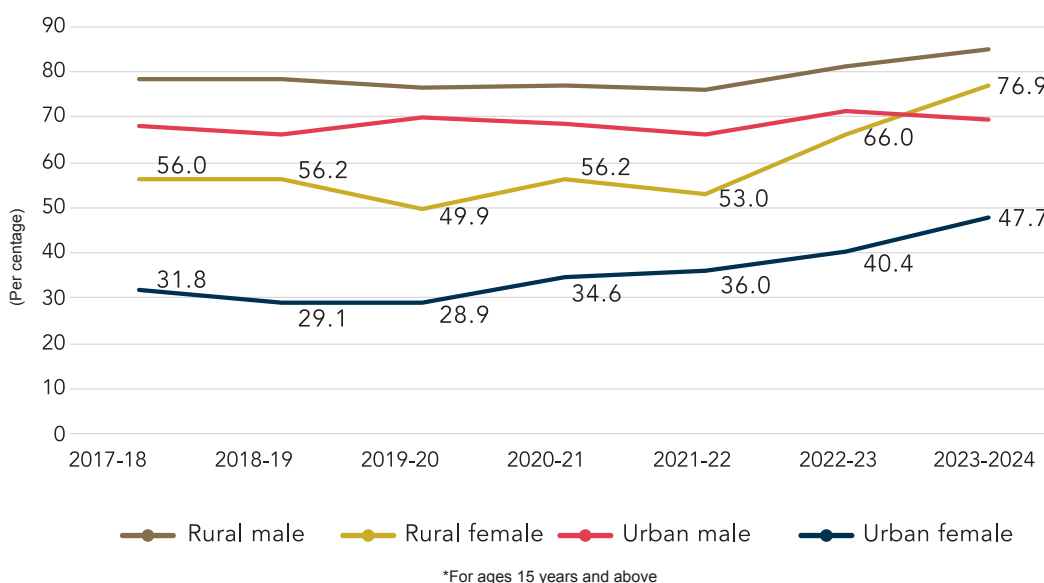
Introduction

Meghalaya's economy is significantly driven by the services sector, contributing a substantial 61.47 per cent to the Gross State Value Added (GSVA)¹. Formal sector employment, particularly within the public sector, is highly valued due to job security and favourable compensation. Women are notably present across all levels of this sector, reflecting long-standing traditions of women's empowerment rooted in the state's matrilineal social structure. Building upon this social foundation, various schemes target women's advancement in economic, health, and education domains². Economic empowerment is supported through initiatives such as MGNREGS and NRLM for livelihood enhancement, skill development for self-employment, and working women's hostels providing safe housing. Maternity benefits are offered through PMSMA, PMMVY, and NSAP to improve maternal and infant health outcomes. Educational programmes such as SABLA and SSA focus on adolescent girls and elementary education, complemented by scholarships for minority students. Furthermore, schemes provide supplementary nutrition and support for women facing difficult circumstances, collectively aiming to ensure their comprehensive development³. This context has contributed to Meghalaya maintaining a relatively high Female Labour Force Participation Rate (FLFPR) compared to other states in the country. The subsequent sections will delve into the specific data and factors influencing this FLFPR.

Trends in Female Labour Force Participation Rates

- Meghalaya is among the states with a significantly higher Female Labour Force Participation Rate (FLFPR) than the national average.
- The rural FLFPR in Meghalaya accelerated significantly after the COVID-19 pandemic year (2021-22), rising from 53 per cent to 76.9 per cent in 2023-24, surpassing the urban male Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR).
- Unlike India and other major states in the country, the urban FLFPR in Meghalaya also increased, from 31.8 per cent in 2017-18 to 47.7 per cent in 2023-24.
- The rural FLFPR is on an upward trend, which is expected to eventually converge with the male LFPR.

Figure 1: Trend in LFPR from PLFS 2017-18 to 2023-24





Distribution of Women Workers by Status of Employment

- In rural areas, the proportion of self-employed women workers remained high at 80.4 per cent in 2017-18, then significantly decreased to 53.4 per cent in 2020-21 before rising again to 64.3 per cent in 2023-24. Consequently, the proportions of casual and regularly salaried workers fluctuated between 2017-18 and 2023-24.
- In urban areas, the per centage of women engaged in self-employment witnessed an increase from 27.7 per cent in 2017-18 to 33.5 per cent in 2023-24. Simultaneously, the proportion of women in casual employment rose significantly from 3.1 per cent to 17.6 per cent over the same period, a trend that diverges from the national pattern. Furthermore, contrary to the overall trend in India, the per centage of women in regular salaried work decreased from 69.2 per cent in 2017-18 to 49.0 per cent in 2023-24. This indicates a potential shift, where the growth in self-employment and casual work among women in the state has likely come at the cost of regular salaried positions.

Figure 2: Women Workforce Distribution across Type of Employment

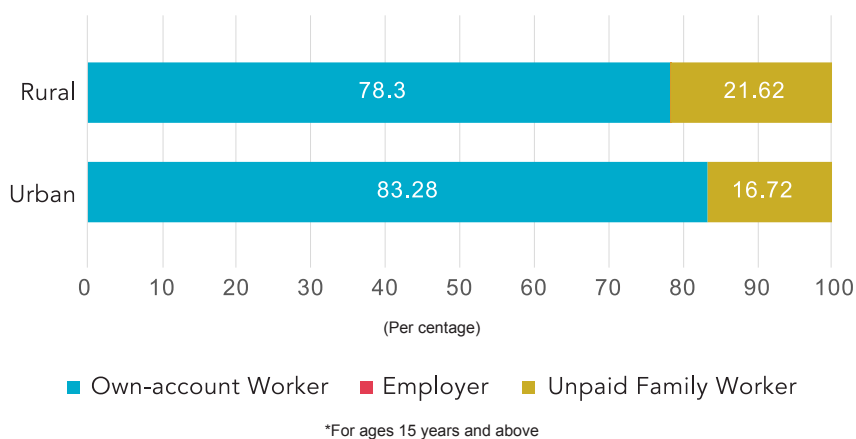


*For ages 15 years and above



- In rural Meghalaya, the majority of self-employed women are own-account workers, constituting over 78.3 per cent of this group. Both rural and urban regions exhibit a similar trend in the composition of their self-employed female workforce.

Figure 3: Distribution of Self-Employed Women

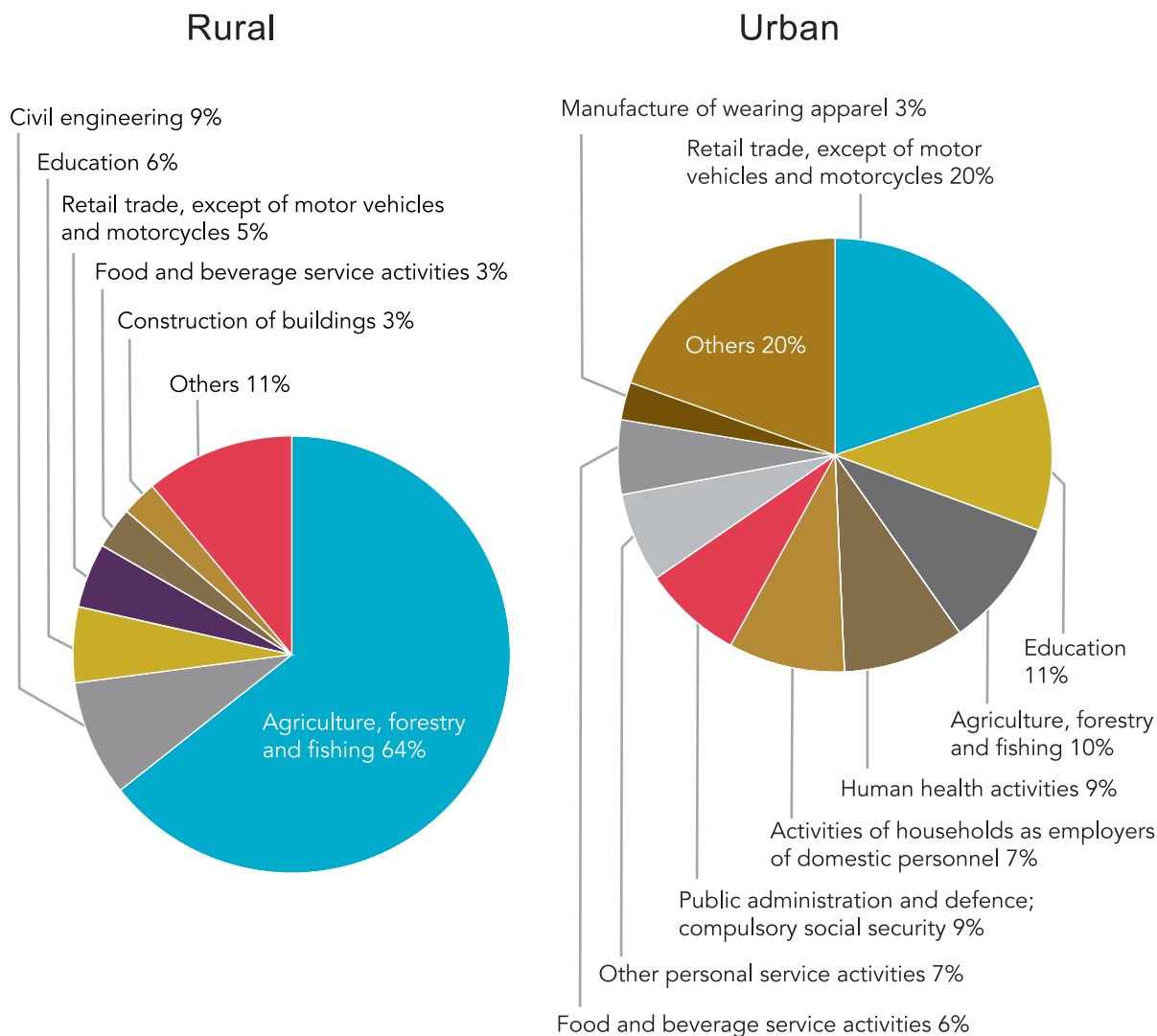


Distribution of Women Workers by Broad Industry Divisions

- Mirroring the national trend, the sectoral distribution of women in rural Meghalaya indicates that approximately 64.4 per cent are employed in agriculture and allied activities, followed by civil engineering at 8.6 per cent and education at 5.6 per cent.
- In urban areas, the primary sectors of employment for women are retail trade (19.8 per cent), education (10.9 per cent), and agriculture (10 per cent).



Figure 4: Distribution of Women Workers by Broad Industry Divisions



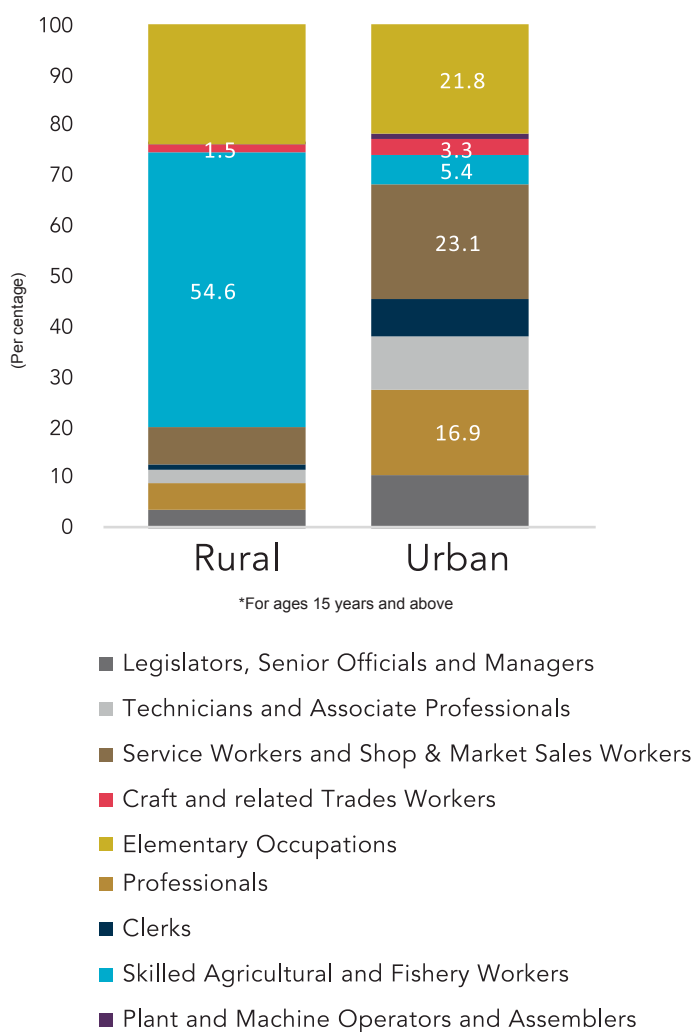
*For ages 15 years and above

Distribution of Women Workers by Occupation Types

- In the rural region of the state, over 54.6 per cent of women are skilled agricultural and fishery workers, followed by 24 per cent in elementary occupations.
- In urban areas, service workers and shop and market sales workers constitute the largest share at 23.1 per cent, followed by elementary occupations at 21.8 per cent.



Figure 5: Occupational Classification of Women Workers

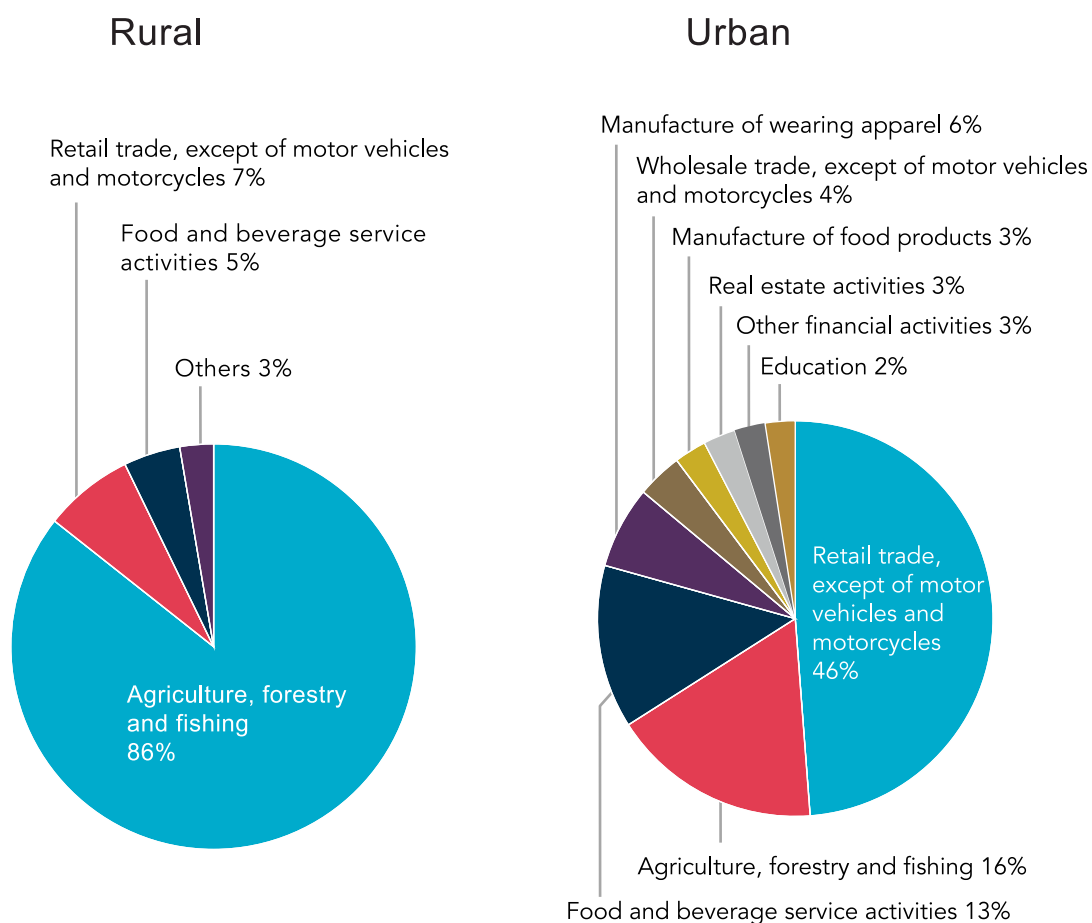


Distribution of Self-employed Women Workers by Broad Industry Types

- Among self-employed women in rural Meghalaya, over 85.6 per cent work in agriculture, followed by retail trade at 7.2 per cent, a pattern similar to the national distribution.
- The urban distribution of self-employed women is primarily concentrated in retail trade (45.7 per cent) and the agricultural sector (16.1 per cent). This is contrary to the national trend.



Figure 6: Distribution of Self-employed Women Workforce by Broad Industry Types

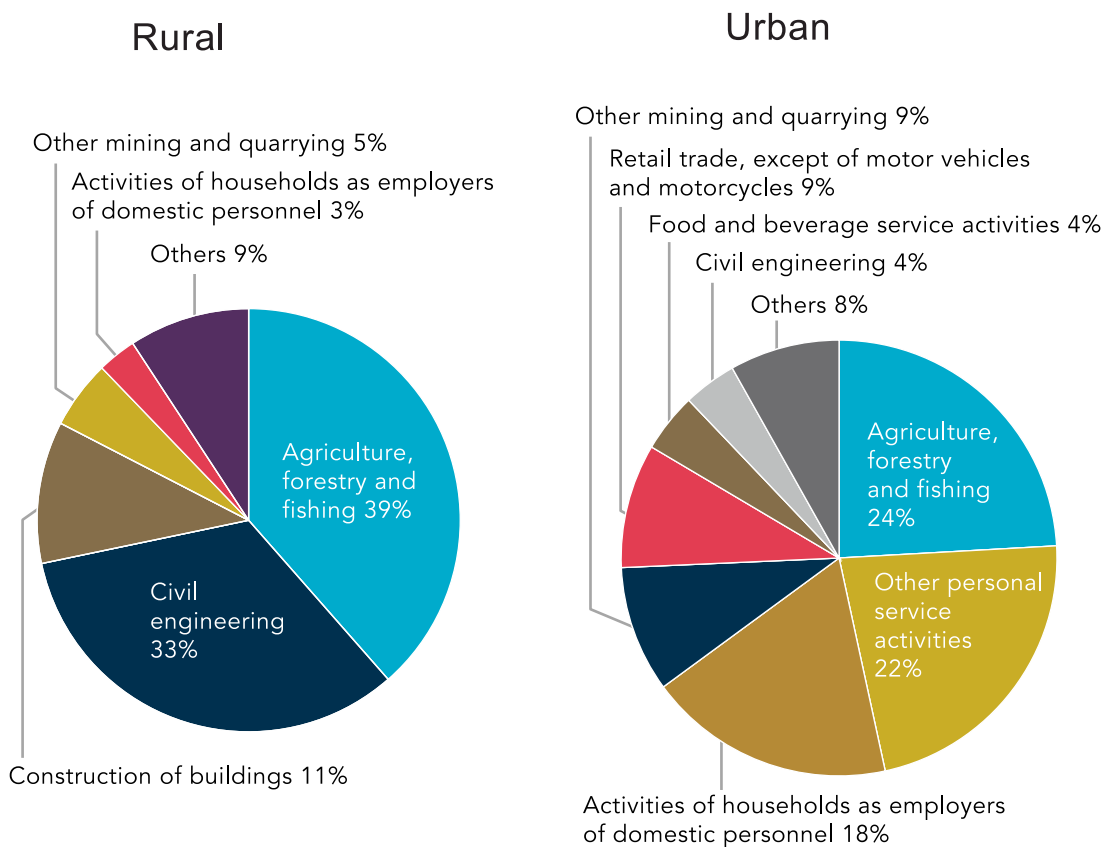


*For ages 15 years and above

Distribution of Casual Women Workers by Broad Industry Types

- In rural areas, 38.5 per cent of women in casual employment work in agriculture, and 33.2 per cent work in civil engineering. The proportion of casual women workers in agriculture is notably lower compared to the national average for casual women workers in India.
- In urban areas, 24.1 per cent of casual workers are employed in agriculture, followed by the other personal service activities sector, which accounts for 22.5 per cent.

Figure 7: Distribution of Casual Women Workers by Broad Industry Types



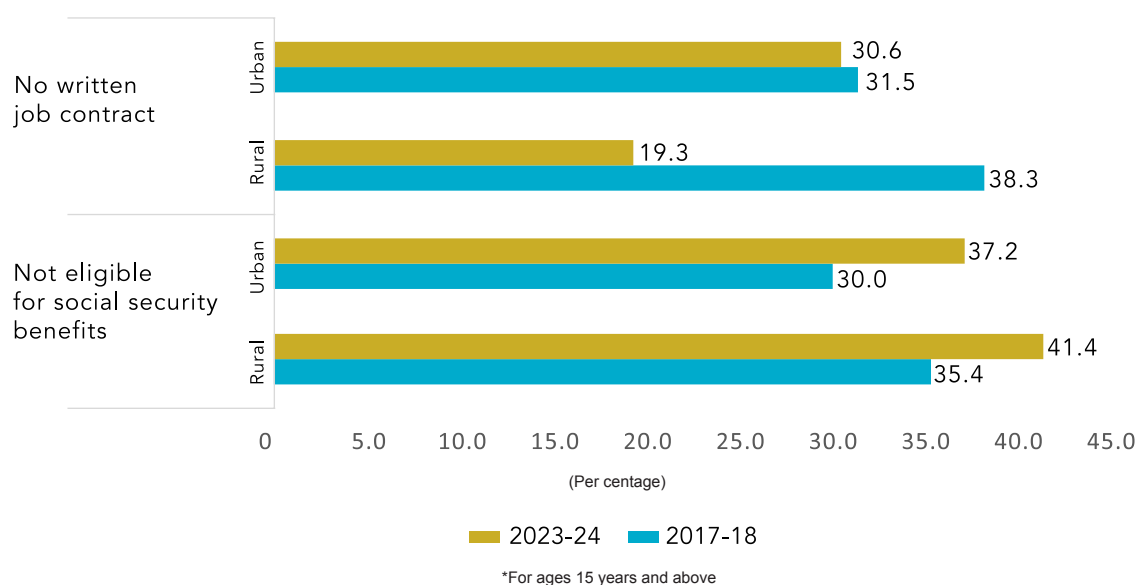
*For ages 15 years and above

Condition of Work in Regular Employment

- Over the past seven years, Meghalaya has seen a significant increase in the proportion of regularly salaried working women without social security benefits. In rural areas, this figure rose from 35.4 per cent in 2017-18 to 41.4 per cent in 2023-24, while urban areas experienced a more pronounced increase from 30 per cent to 37.2 per cent during the same period.
- Regarding job security, the proportion of regularly salaried women in rural areas without written job contracts has sharply decreased from 38.3 per cent in 2017-18 to 19.3 per cent in 2023-24. Conversely, urban areas have experienced a marginal decrease in the proportion of women without job security, declining from 31.5 per cent in 2017-18 to 30.6 per cent in 2023-24.



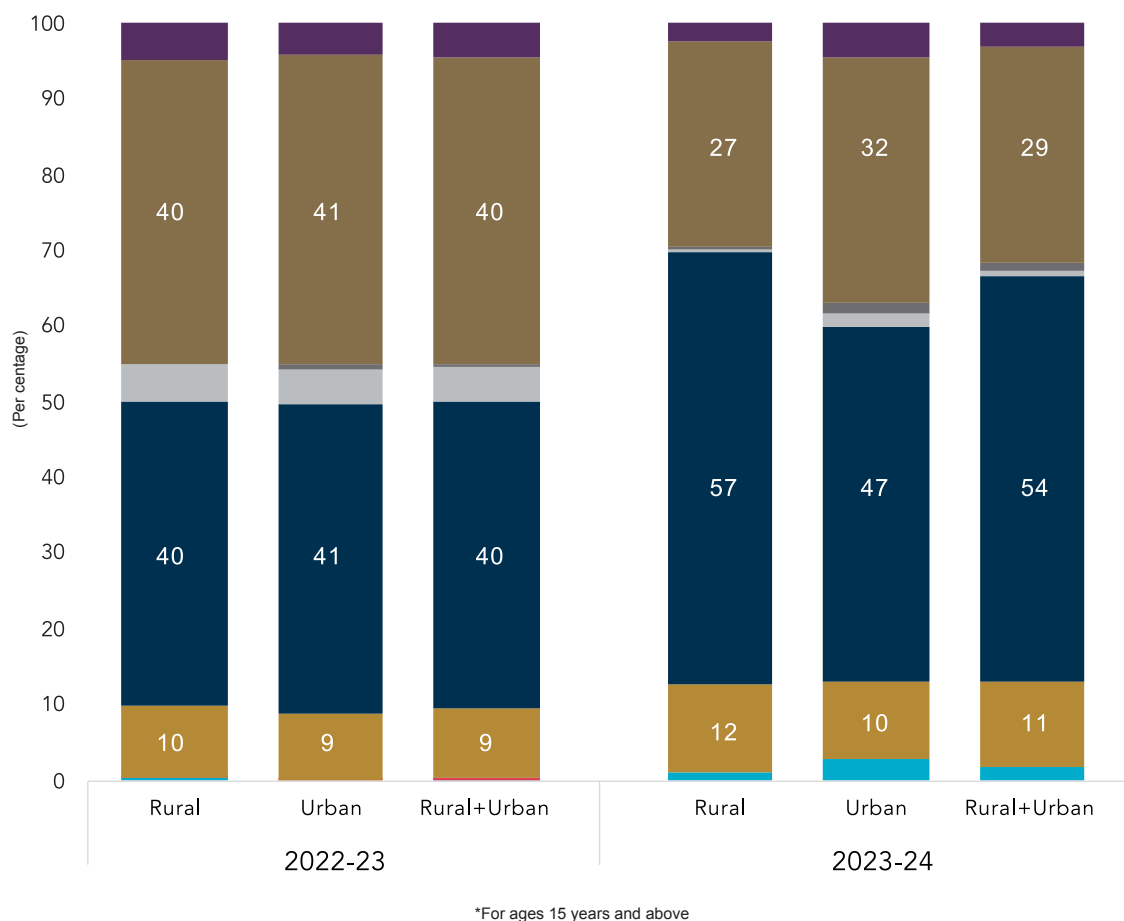
Figure 8: Presence of Social Security and Job Contracts - For Regular Salaried Women



Reasons for Not Being in the Labour Force

- Contrary to the trend observed in most of India, the primary reason cited by individuals for not participating in the labour force in 2023-24 is the 'desire to continue studying', with the share of 57 and 47 per cent in rural and urban regions, respectively. The prevalence of this reason has increased over the past year in both rural and urban areas. Conversely, the proportion of individuals citing 'domestic chores and care work' as their reason for non-participation has decreased.
- In rural areas, the proportion of women identifying childcare and domestic chores as the main obstacle to their participation is 27 per cent. In urban areas, this proportion is 32 per cent in 2023-24.

Figure 9: Reason For Not Being in the Labour Force



- Did not have the request train/qualification/age for work
- Health/age related reason
- Social reasons
- Child care/personal commitments in home making
- Non availability of work a convenient location
- Want to continue study
- Finacially well-off
- Others

Conclusion

Meghalaya's FLFPR is significantly higher than the average for India and many other states. Although the proportion of self-employed women has risen in both rural and urban areas, the overwhelming majority (over 75 per cent) are own-account workers. Distinctly, unlike most Indian states, Meghalaya has seen an increase in casual labour among women in both rural and urban areas. In urban settings, retail trade is the primary occupation for self-employed women, contrasting with the national trend. Among regularly salaried women, while the proportion lacking social security benefits has increased between 2017-18 and 2023-24, the proportion with written job contracts has also risen during this time. Given the prevalence of a matrilineal social structure across various communities in the state, the barriers to FLFPR differ from those in other Indian states. Therefore, tailored policy interventions are necessary to promote convergence between female and male LFPR. These should focus on investing in quality educational opportunities, creating more regular salaried jobs with enhanced social security benefits, and fostering more opportunity-driven employment in sectors like retail trade, which could attract more self-employed women from the agricultural sector.



Endnotes

¹ <https://www.rbi.org.in/Scripts/AnnualPublications.aspx?head=Handbook+of+Statistics+on+Indian+States>

² <https://ijcrt.org/papers/IJCRT2204094.pdf>

³ <https://www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jhss/papers/Vol.29-Issue11/Ser-2/D2911022633.pdf>



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