

Trends in Female Labour Force Participation

JHARKHAND



This series of state factsheets highlights key aspects of women's employment across states, drawing on secondary data from the National Statistical Office's Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS). The analysis incorporates the latest calendar year-based PLFS data (January–December, 2025), along with the earlier calendar year data for 2022, 2023, and 2024 to capture recent trends in women's employment. It is important to note that recent PLFS estimates are affected by revisions in survey methodology and sampling design introduced from January 2025, including expanded sample coverage and changes in stratification and rotational sampling. While these revisions improve representativeness and reliability, caution is required when comparing trends across pre- and post-revision periods.

Introduction

Jharkhand, endowed with rich mineral resources and extensive forest cover, has been a significant contributor to India's mining and industrial output, with major urban centres such as Jamshedpur, Bokaro, and Dhanbad. The state has recorded steady economic growth over the past decade, with real GSDP nearly doubling between 2011-12 and 2024-25 and nominal GSDP increasing more than three-fold. However, despite this growth, the economy remains largely agrarian, with a substantial share of the workforce dependent on agriculture, characterised by small and marginal landholdings, rain-fed cultivation, and low productivity.¹ Persistent socio-economic challenges such as poverty, regional disparities, and limited infrastructure continue to shape development outcomes, with migration emerging as an important livelihood strategy in response to constrained local employment opportunities.² Structural constraints, including low educational attainment and limited non-farm diversification, further condition employment patterns in the state.³

Within this broader context, women's employment remains closely tied to the structure of the economy. As per the PLFS 2017-18 data, a large proportion of women workers are concentrated in agriculture and informal activities, with limited representation in manufacturing and formal sector employment. Female labour force participation in Jharkhand has historically remained below the national average, a pattern that persists despite the state's large Scheduled Tribe (ST) population, among whom women have traditionally recorded relatively higher participation in agriculture and forest-based livelihoods. The fact that this demographic composition has not translated into above-average FLFPR points to the depth of structural barriers constraining women's labour market engagement in the state. Recent evidence further suggests stagnation and decline in participation in line with trends observed in other low-performing states. Women's labour market outcomes are further shaped by low education levels, small landholdings, and displacement, which constrain access to stable and higher-quality employment.

Overall, the literature highlights an employment structure characterised by informality, sectoral concentration, and limited diversification, particularly for women. This factsheet examines the evolving patterns of female labour force participation in Jharkhand, focusing on sectoral distribution, employment status, occupational structure, and the structural barriers shaping women's engagement in the workforce.

Trends in Female Workforce and Labour Force Participation Rates

In Jharkhand, the Worker Population Ratio (WPR) trends show persistent gender gaps. Rural male WPR remains high but declines in 2025 (79.4% in 2022 to 76.7% in 2025), while rural female WPR steadily falls from 55.5% to 49.6%. Urban male WPR declines until 2024 and partially recovers in 2025 (67.4% in 2022 to 66.4% in 2025), reflecting volatility, whereas urban female WPR remains very low and largely stagnant at 16-18%. Overall, the data points to widening gender disparities, declining rural women's employment, and fragile labour market conditions.

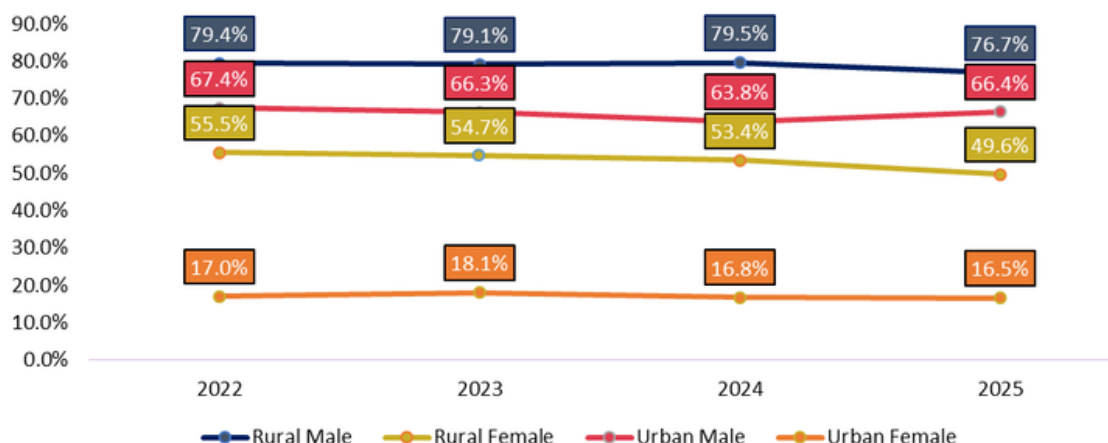
¹ Govt. of Jharkhand, Jharkhand Economic Survey 2025–26 (Executive Summary). Finance Department.

https://finance.jharkhand.gov.in/pdf/JES_ExecutiveSummary2025_26.pdf

² Mosse, D., Gupta, S., Mehta, M., Shah, V., Rees, J., & KRIBP Project Team (2002). Brokered livelihoods: Debt, labour migration and development in tribal western India. *Journal of Development Studies*, 38(5), 59–88. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220380412331322511>

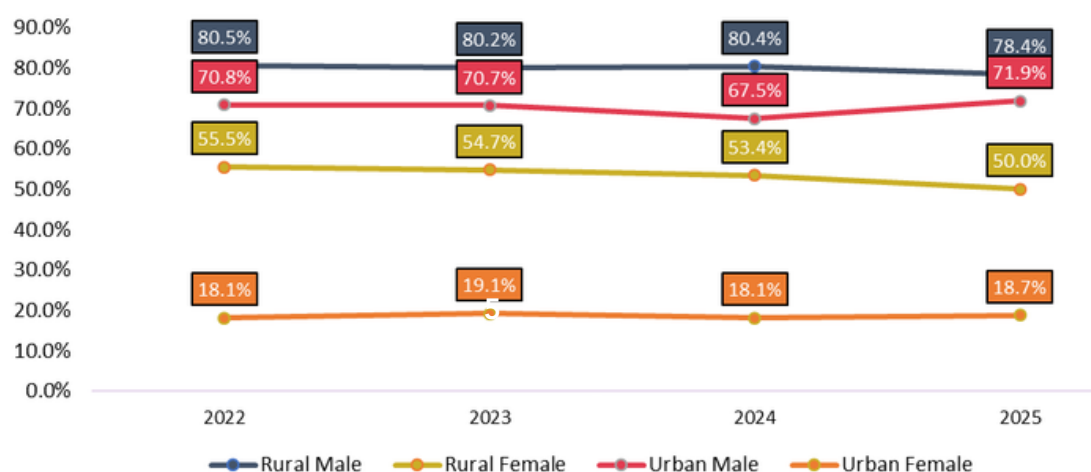
³ Kumar, S. Youth, Higher Education, and Employment: A Case Study of Jharkhand State. Semantic Scholar. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Youth--higher-education--and-employment--A-case-Kumar/738d7f509baf5f93f592dc24c1f09a526373ea1b>

Figure 1: Trends in WPR (15 Years and Above)



- In Jharkhand, LFPR trends from 2022 to 2025 reflect stable male participation but a clear decline among women, especially in rural areas. Rural male LFPR remains consistently high around 80% before dipping slightly to 78.4% in 2025, while rural female LFPR steadily declines from 55.5% to 50.0%, indicating a sustained reduction in women's labour force participation. Urban male LFPR shows some fluctuation, dropping in 2024 to 67.5% and recovering to 71.9% in 2025, suggesting volatility in urban labour markets. Urban female LFPR remains low and largely stagnant between 18-19%, pointing to persistent structural barriers. Overall, the data highlights a widening rural gender gap driven by falling female participation, alongside continued stagnation in urban women's labour force engagement.
- Compared to all-India trend of improving female LFPR, particularly the sharp rise in rural areas, Jharkhand shows a decline in rural and urban female LFPR. While male LFPR in Jharkhand broadly aligns with the national pattern of high and stable participation, it does not exhibit the modest upward gains. Overall, Jharkhand diverges from national trends by showing weaker outcomes for women's labour force participation.

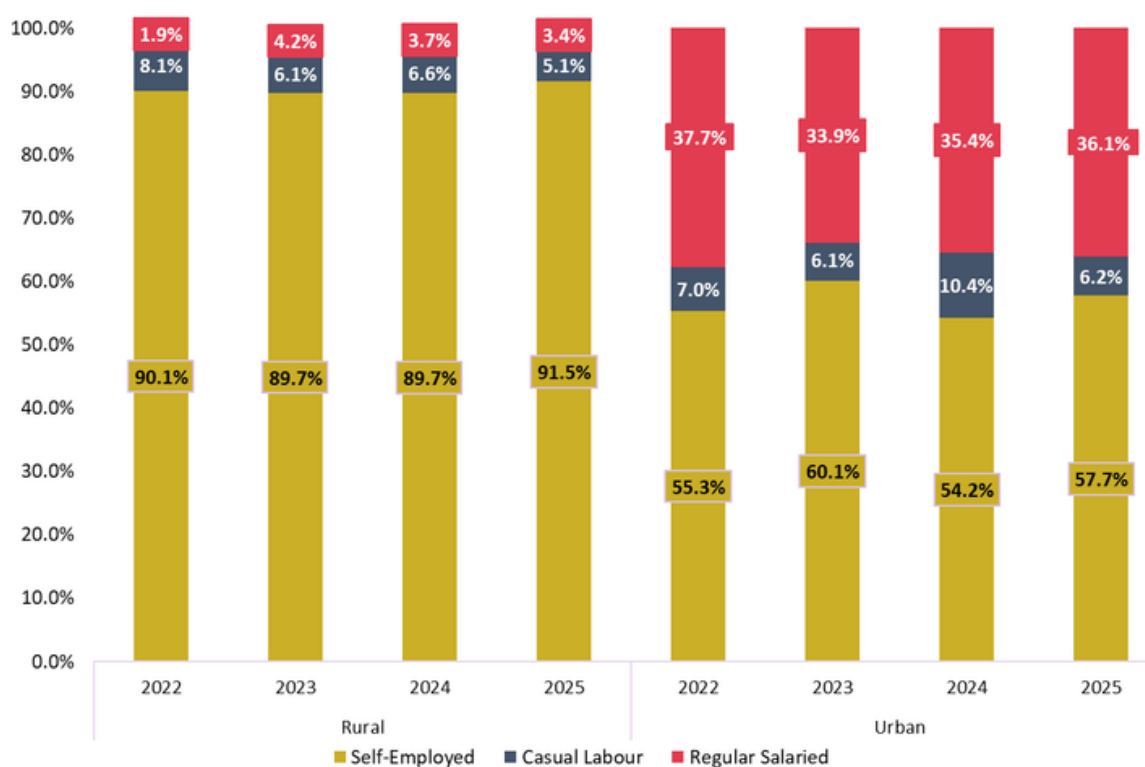
Figure 2: Trends in LFPR (15 Years and Above)



A: Composition of Female Workforce

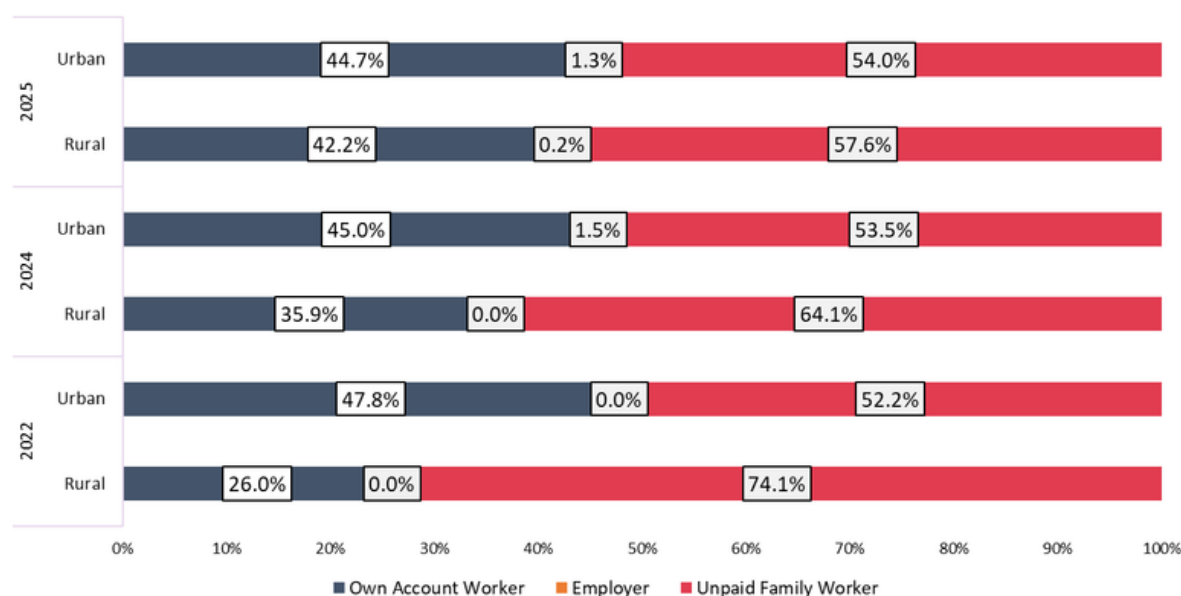
- In rural Jharkhand, self-employment dominates throughout the period, remaining extremely high at around 89-91% and rising to 91.5% in 2025. In urban areas, the share is lower and more volatile, increasing from 55.3% in 2022 and then dropping sharply in 2024, and partially recovering to 57.7% in 2025, reflecting shifts between employment types.
- Rural casual labour shows a steady decline from 8.1% in 2022 to 5.1% in 2025, suggesting a gradual reduction in reliance on daily wage work. In urban areas, the trend is more erratic, falling initially from 7% in 2022 to 6.1% in 2023, spiking to 10.4% in 2024, and then dropping again to 6.2% in 2025, indicating instability in casual employment opportunities.
- Rural Jharkhand has a very small share of regular salaried workers, increasing from 1.9% in 2022 to 3.4% in 2025, highlighting limited formal employment opportunities. In contrast, urban areas have a much higher and relatively stable share, fluctuating between 33-37%, though with a dip in 2023 and gradual recovery thereafter, indicating a more structured but still somewhat variable formal job market.
- Jharkhand broadly mirrors the all-India pattern in terms of the dominant employment categories, but with some sharper structural imbalances. For women, self-employment remains the dominant category in rural areas in both Jharkhand and at the all-India level; however, Jharkhand shows an even stronger concentration in self-employment including both rural and urban areas, indicating greater dependence on low-productivity, own-account work.

Figure 3: Type of Employment



- Among self-employed women in Jharkhand, the share of own account workers rises sharply in rural areas from 26.0% in 2022 to 42.2% in 2025, indicating a shift away from unpaid roles toward more independent work. In urban areas, the share remains relatively stable, with a slight decline from 47.8% to 44.7%.
- The share of women working as employers constitute a negligible share in both rural and urban areas. Rural levels remain near zero throughout, with only a marginal rise to 0.2% in 2025, while urban areas show a small but still limited presence, increasing from 0% to around 1.3-1.5%.
- The share of unpaid family workers declines steadily in rural areas from 74.1% to 57.6%, suggesting some movement toward more independent roles. In urban areas, however, it remains relatively stable, fluctuating slightly around 52–54%, indicating continued reliance on unpaid work.
- Jharkhand mirrors all-India trends with rising own-account work and declining unpaid family labour, but the shift is slower and levels remain less favourable. It continues to have lower own-account shares and higher dependence on unpaid work, with the share of women employers remaining even more negligible than the national average.

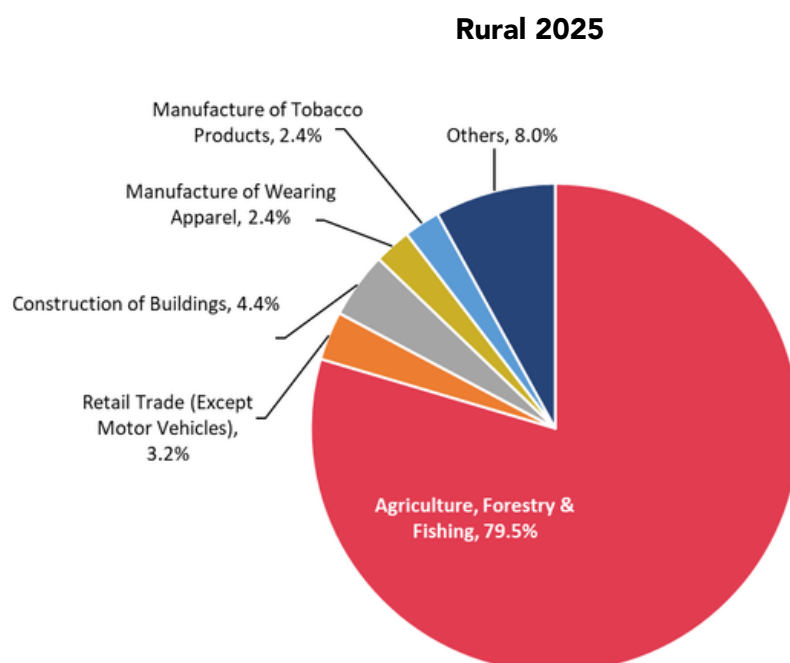
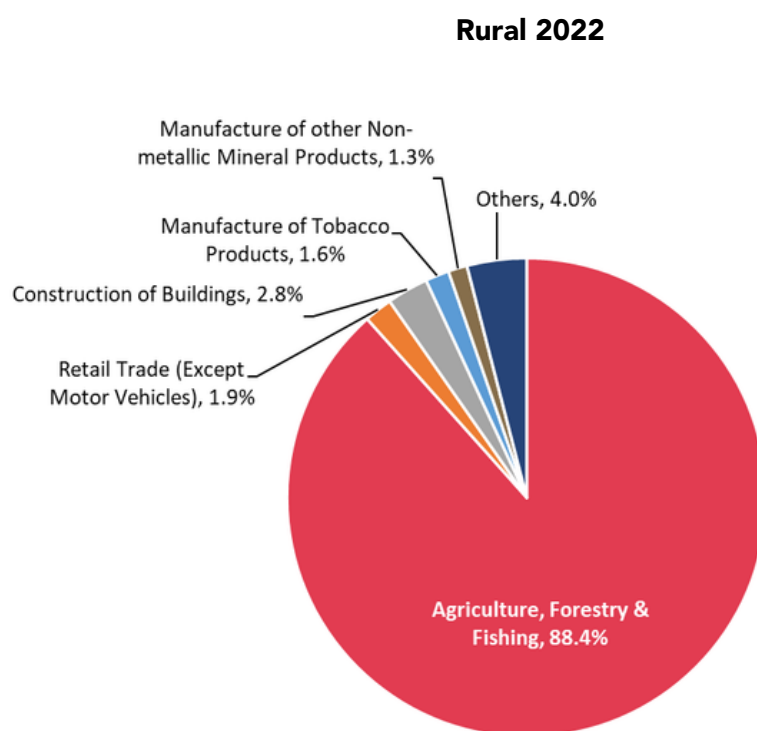
Figure 4: Distribution among Self-Employed Women



B: Distribution of Women Workers by Broad Industry Divisions

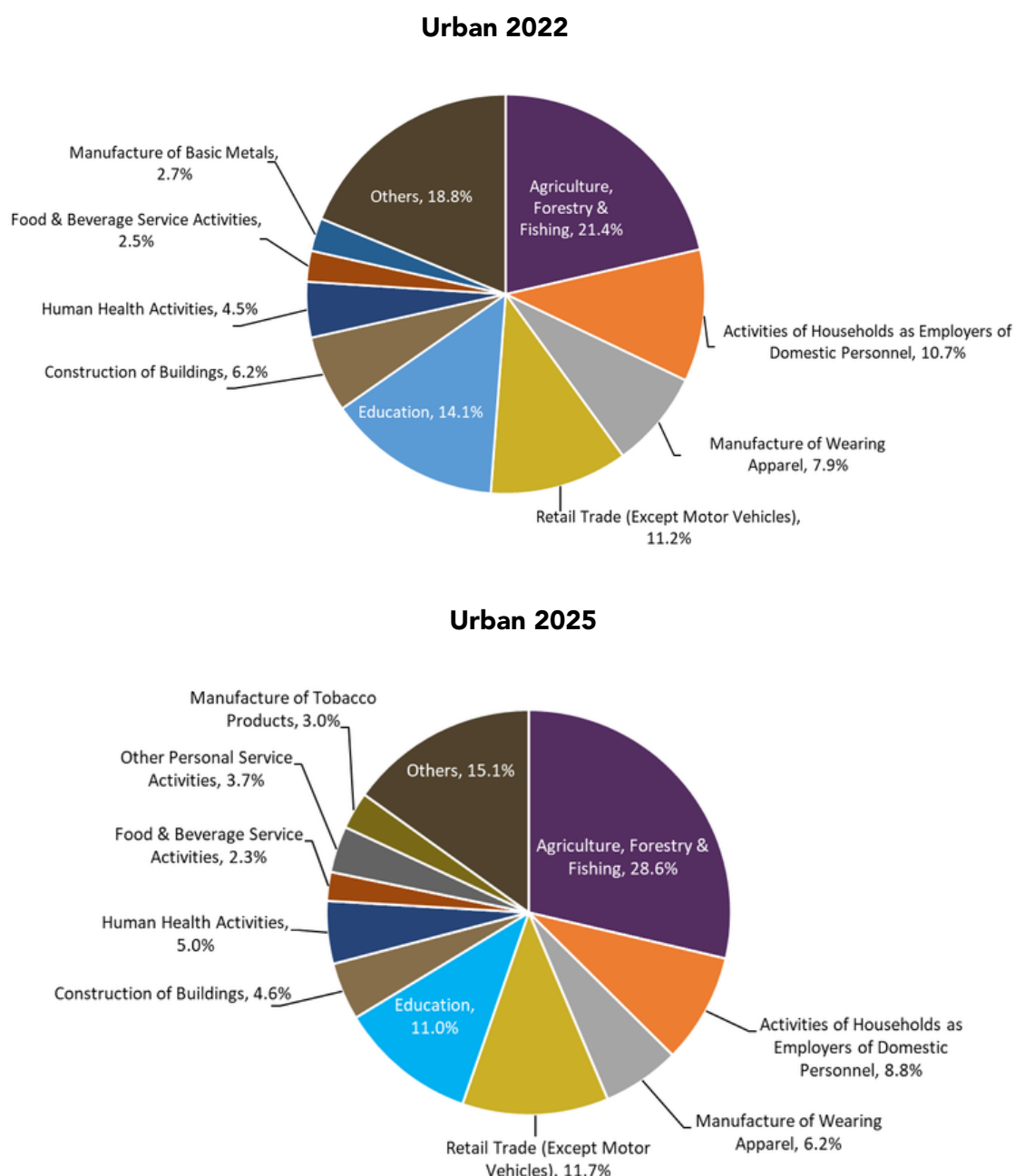
- Women's employment in rural Jharkhand remains heavily concentrated in agriculture, though its share declines sharply from 88.4% in 2022 to 79.5% in 2025, indicating some diversification; this is accompanied by increases in construction (2.8% to 4.4%), retail trade (1.9% to 3.2%), and manufacturing activities like wearing apparel and tobacco, while other sectors remain largely stable similar to all-India trends but with a higher dependence on agriculture in Jharkhand.

Figure 5A: Distribution of Women Workers by Broad Industry Divisions (Rural)



- Urban women's employment in Jharkhand shows a rise in agriculture (21.4% in 2022 to 28.6% in 2025) alongside declines in domestic work, apparel manufacturing, construction and education. Retail trade remained relatively stable, increasing marginally from 11.2% to 11.7%, while health activities rose from 4.5% to 5.0%. The emergence of sectors such as tobacco manufacturing and other personal services also points towards some diversification in urban women's employment.

Figure 5B: Distribution of Women Workers by Broad Industry Divisions (Urban)



C: Distribution of Women Workers Within Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing

- Agricultural work among rural women in Jharkhand remains heavily concentrated in growing of non-perennial crops, which, despite a dip from 85.4% (2022) to 80.0% (2024), rises again to 84.2% in 2025, indicating continued dominance. At the same time, animal production increases overall (4.6% to 10.3%) with some fluctuation, while mixed farming steadily declines (9.9% to 4.6%), suggesting a shift away from diversified farm activities toward more specialized roles.

- Among urban women, crop cultivation remains dominant but declines overall (80.8% to 75.8%), while animal production shows a significant rise (19.2% to 21.5%), indicating diversification within agriculture. Mixed farming emerges but remains marginal, and small increases in support activities are visible, pointing to a gradual broadening of agricultural roles beyond cultivation.

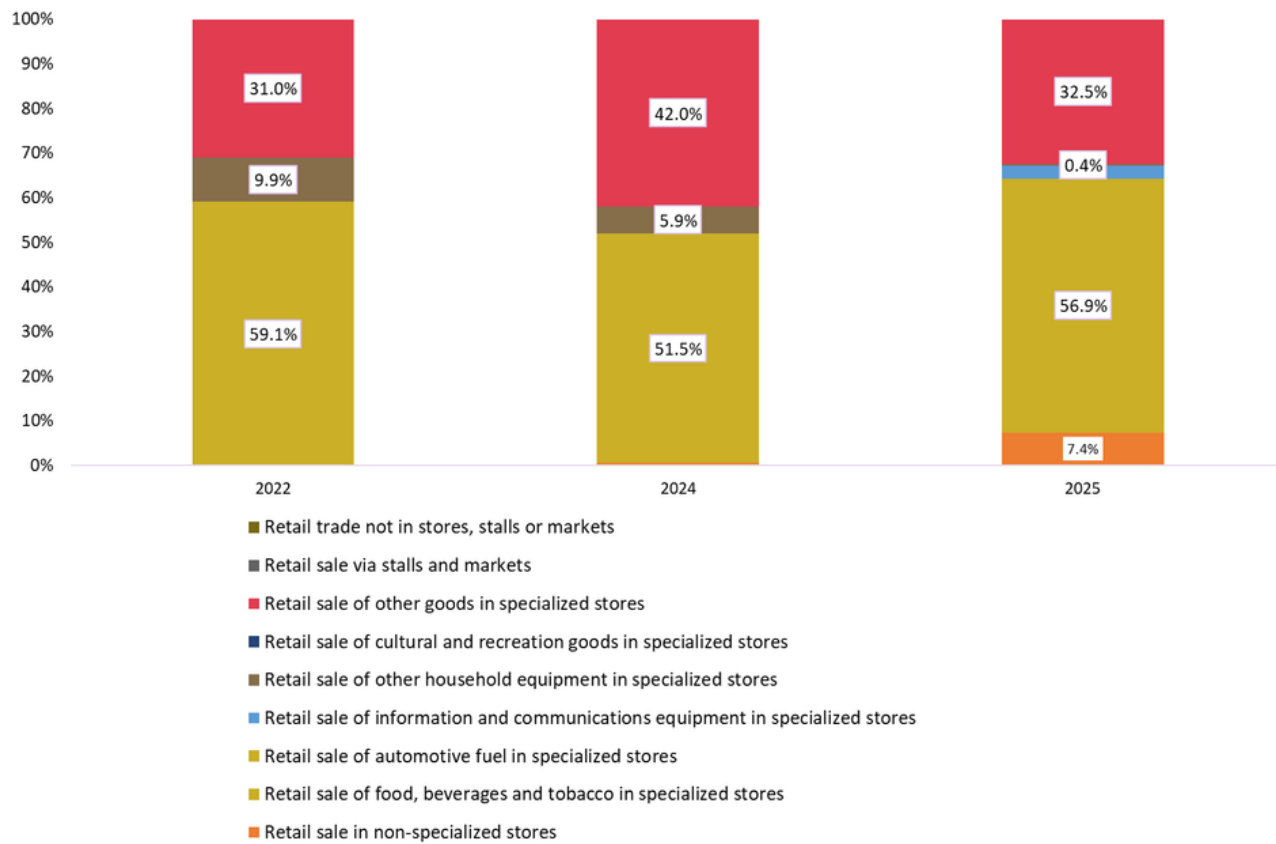
Figure 6: Distribution of Women Workers within Agriculture and Allied Activities



D: Distribution of Women Workers Within Retail Trade (Except of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles)

- In urban Jharkhand, retail work is more diversified compared to rural areas, with food, beverages, and tobacco retail remaining dominant but relatively stable (59.1% to 56.9%). There is a noticeable increase in non-specialised retail (0.5% to 7.4%) and a decline in “other goods” retail after a peak in 2024, alongside small but growing shares in electronics, household equipment, and fuel retail, reflecting a gradual broadening of retail activities among urban women.

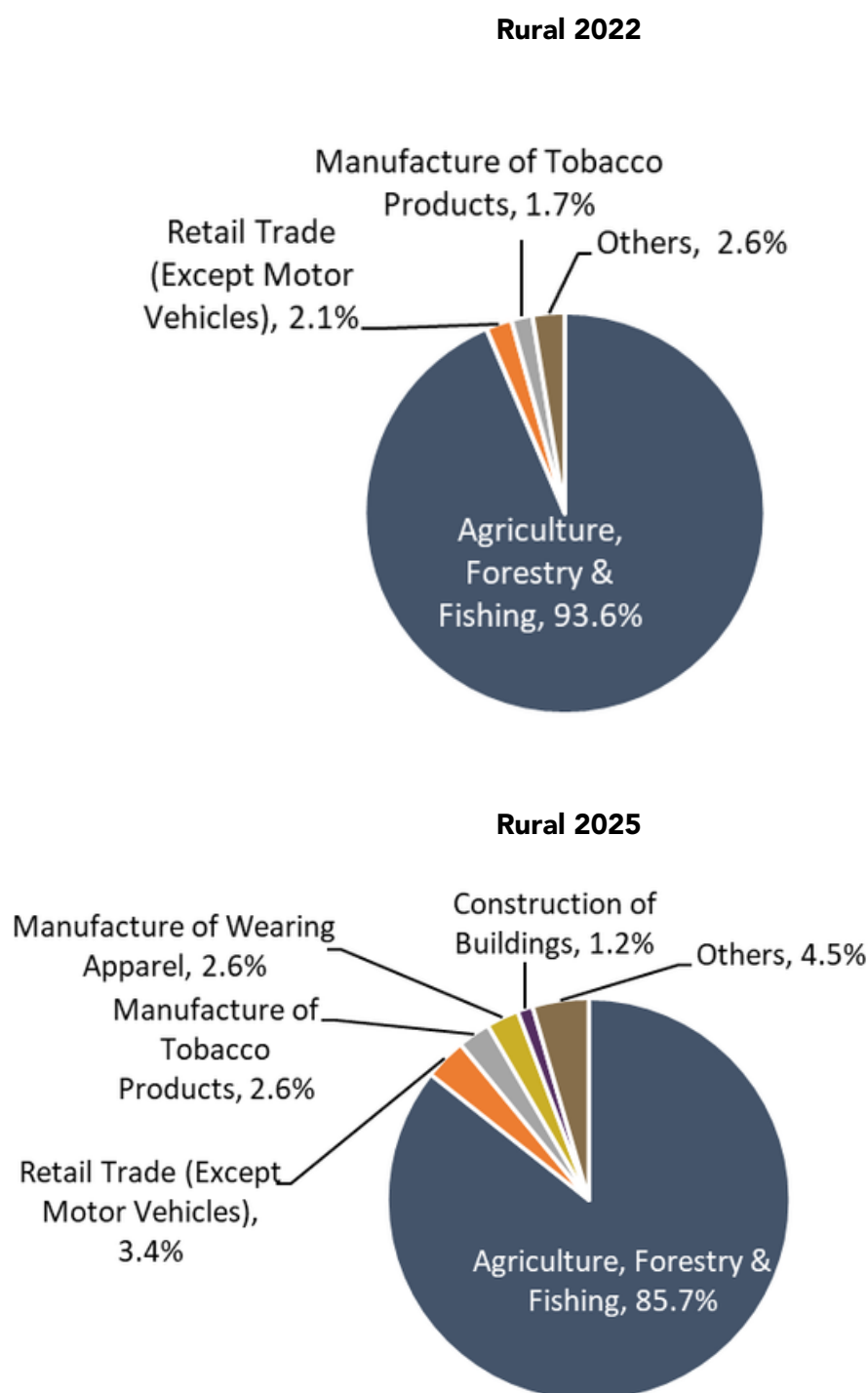
Figure 7: Distribution of Women Workers Within Retail Trade (Except of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles)



E: Distribution of Self-Employed Women Workers by Broad Industry Types

- Between 2022 and 2025, rural self-employment in Jharkhand remains heavily concentrated in agriculture, though its share declines from 93.6% in 2022 to 85.7% in 2025, indicating some diversification. This shift is accompanied by small increases in retail (2.1% to 3.4%), tobacco manufacturing (1.7% to 2.6%), and emergence of wearing apparel manufacturing (2.6%) and construction activities (1.2%) by 2025, suggesting gradual movement toward non-farm activities.

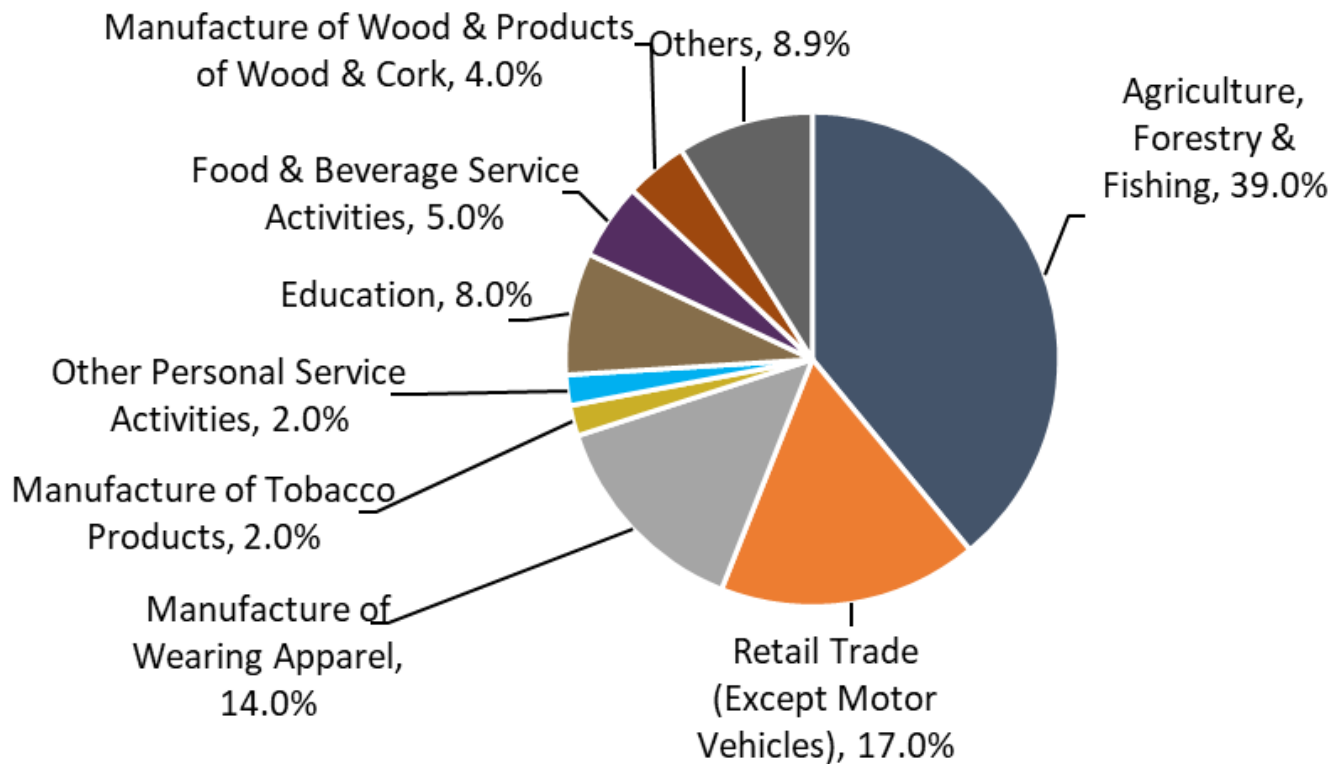
Figure 8A: Distribution of Self-employed women by Broad Industry Types (Rural)



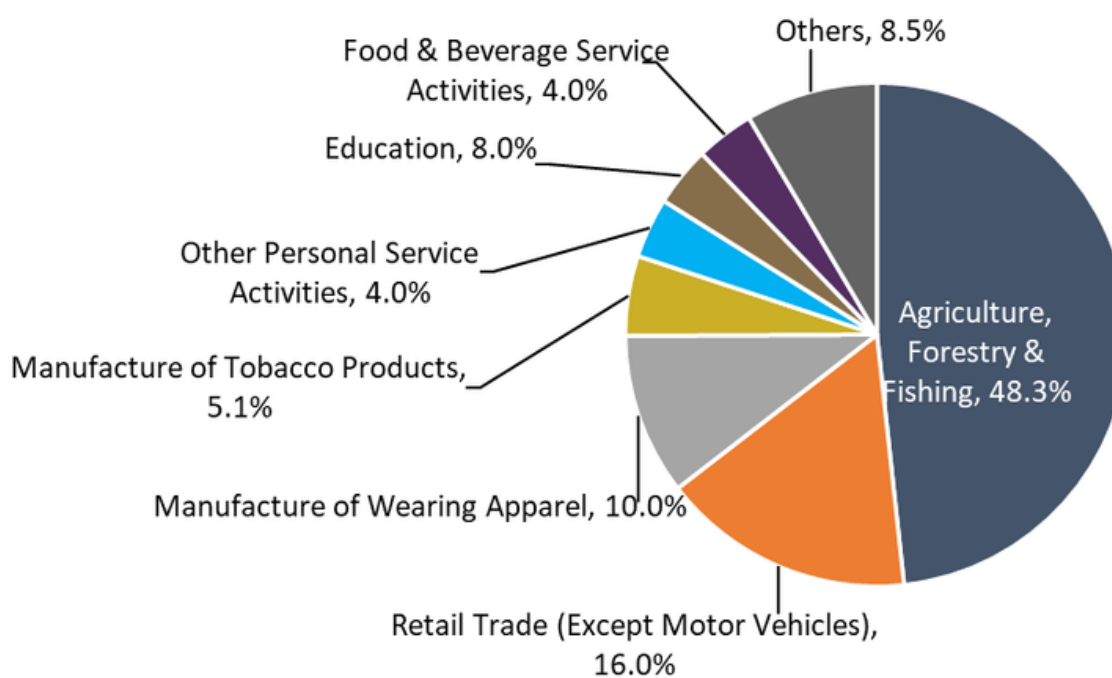
- Between 2022 and 2025, women's self-employment in urban Jharkhand shifts further toward agriculture (39.0% to 48.3%), while wearing apparel manufacturing declines (14.0% to 10.4%). The share in retail trade remains stable at around 16-17%, but there is diversification with the emergence of tobacco manufacturing (2.0% to 5.1%) and a rise in personal services (2.0% to 3.9%), indicating some diversification within urban self-employment. In contrast, the shares of women engaged in education (8.0% to 3.8%) and food and beverage services (5.0% to 3.8%) declined over the period.

Figure 8B: Distribution of Self-employed women by Broad Industry Types (Urban)

Urban 2022



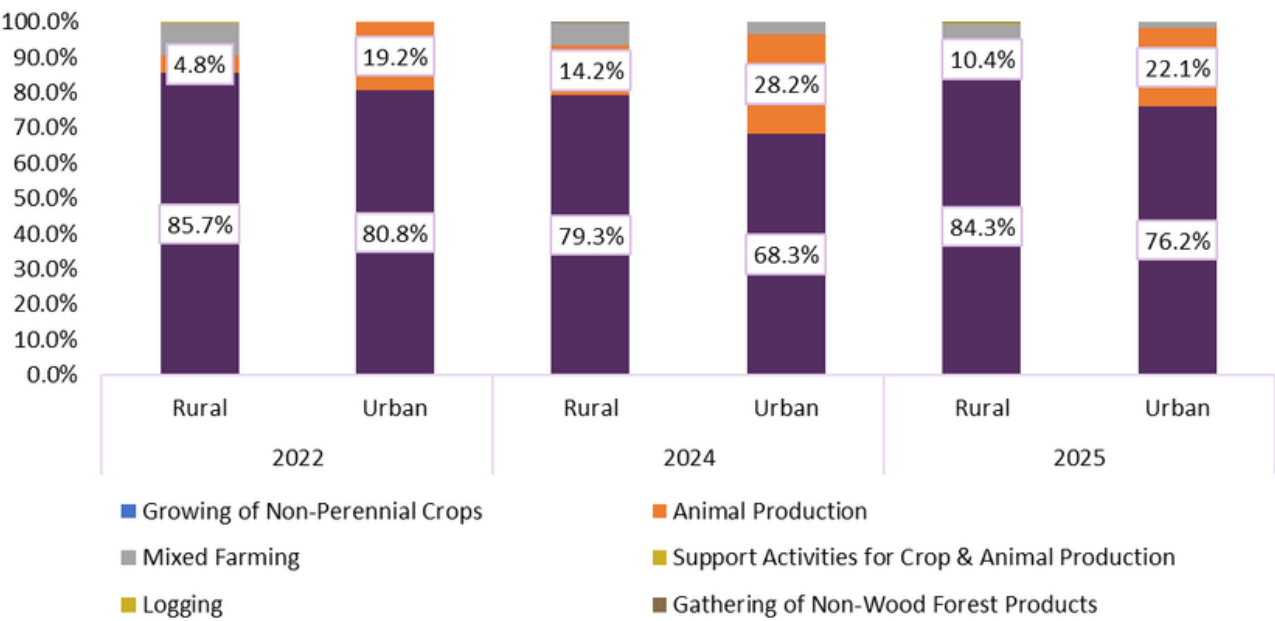
Urban 2025



F: Distribution of Self-Employed Women Workers Within Agri and Allied Activities

- Since agriculture dominates self-employment among rural women, crop cultivation remains the primary activity, dipping from 85.7% (2022) to 79.3% (2024) before recovering to 84.3% (2025). Within this, animal production increases overall (4.8% to 10.4%) while mixed farming declines (9.4% to 4.7%), indicating a shift toward more specialized agricultural roles.
- Similarly, with agriculture dominating urban self-employment, crop cultivation remains the largest share but declines overall (80.8% to 76.2%), even as animal production rises notably (19.2% to 22.1%, peaking in 2024) and mixed farming remains marginal and declines, suggesting gradual diversification within agricultural activities.

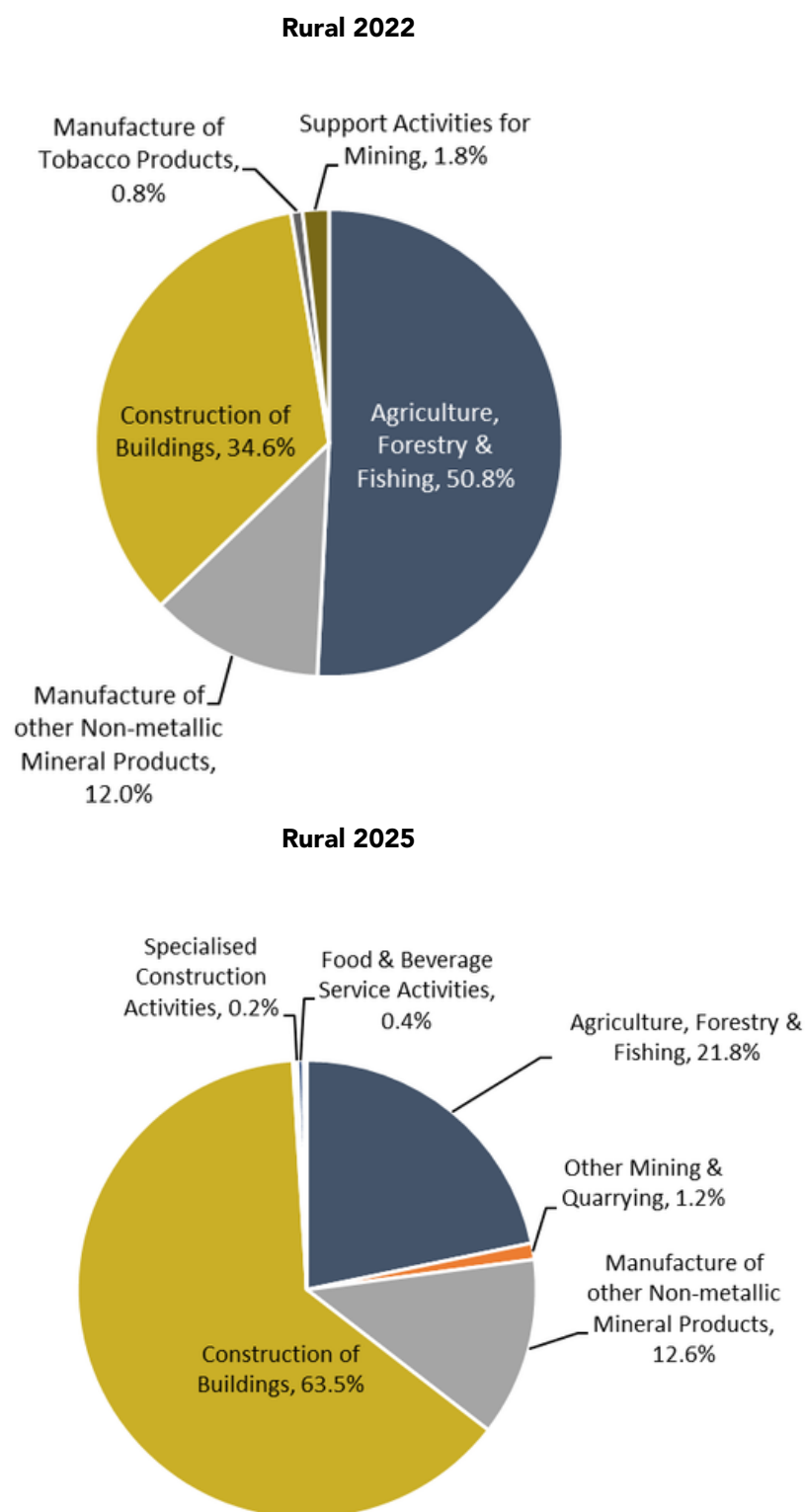
Figure 9: Distribution of Self-Employed Women within Agriculture and Allied Activities



G: Distribution of Casual Women Workers by Broad Industry Types

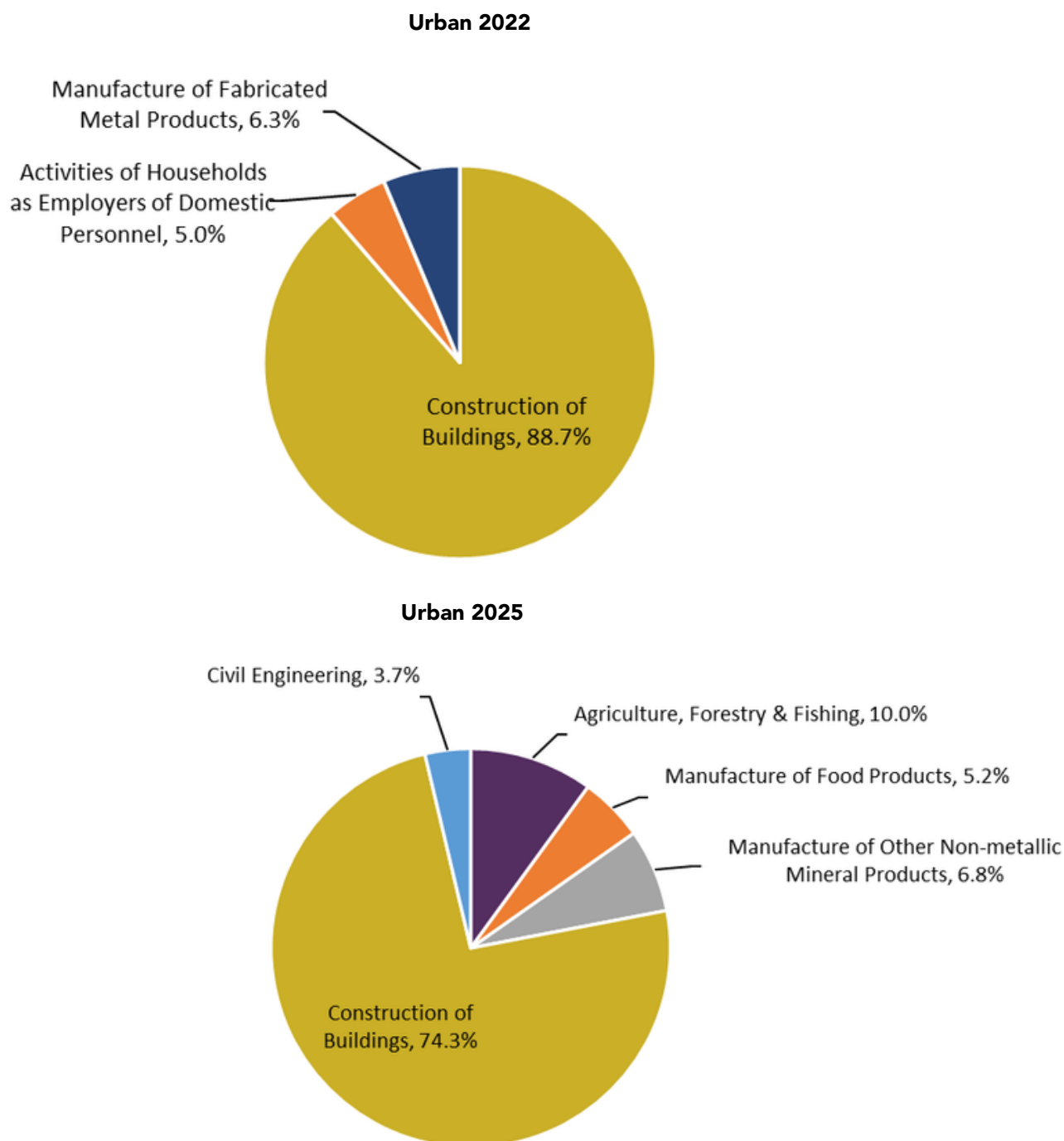
- For casual rural women workers in Jharkhand, employment in 2022 is concentrated in agriculture (50.8%) and construction (34.6%), with a notable share in manufacturing of non-metallic mineral products (12.0%). By 2025, there is a sharp shift toward construction (63.5%), while agriculture declines to 21.8%. Manufacturing activities remained relatively stable at around 12.6%, alongside small emerging shares in mining, services, and transport, indicating increasing concentration in construction. This mirrors the trends at the national level where a similar increase in construction was observed. However, the rise in construction is almost doubled in Jharkhand, much higher than all India levels.

Figure 10A: Distribution of Casual Women Workers by Broad Industry Types (Rural)



- For casual urban women workers, employment in 2022 is overwhelmingly concentrated in construction (88.7%), alongside smaller shares in domestic work (5.0%) and fabricated metal products manufacturing (6.3%). By 2025, construction remains dominant but declined to 74.3%, along with diversification through agriculture (10.0%), manufacturing (food products at 5.2% and non-metallic minerals at 6.8%) and civil engineering (3.7%), indicating a slight broadening beyond construction. This change mirrors the national trends where a similar decline in construction has been observed.

Figure 10B: Distribution of Casual Women Workers by Broad Industry Types (Urban)



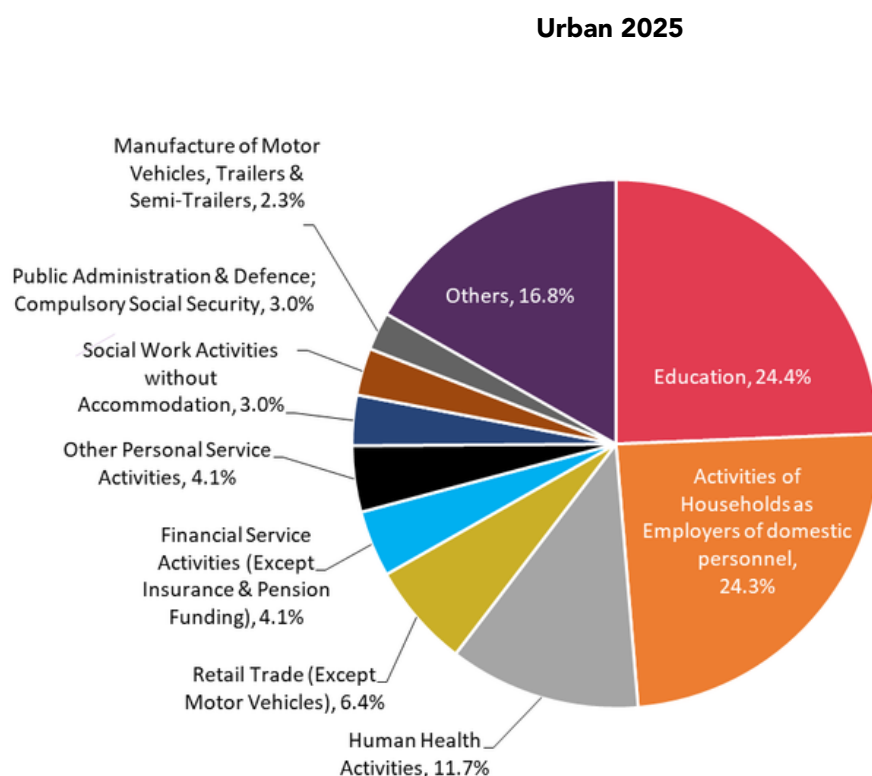
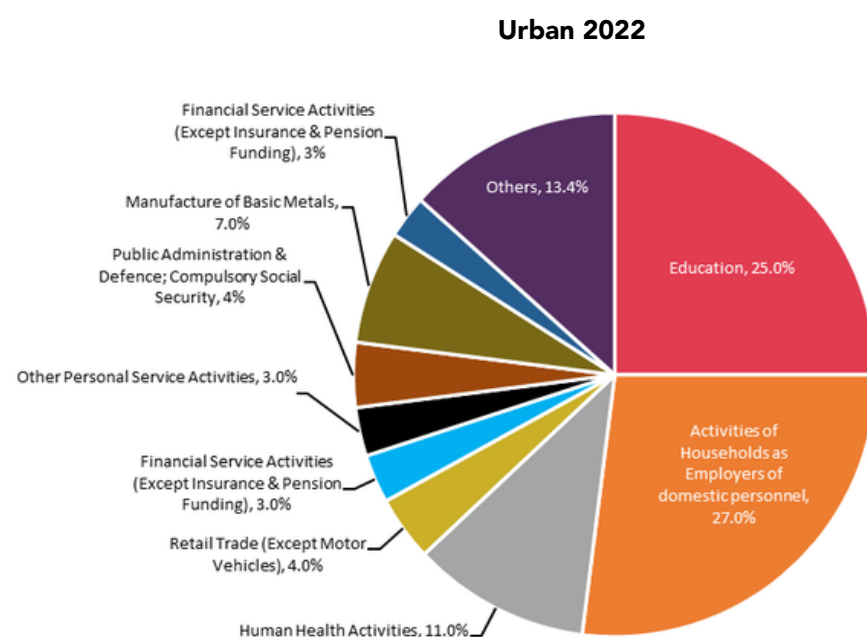
H: Distribution of Regular Salaried Women Workers by Broad Industry Types⁴

- Urban regular salaried employment among women in Jharkhand shows a clear shift away from domestic service towards more structured service-sector jobs between 2022 and 2025. The share of employment in activities of households as employers of domestic personnel declines sharply from 27.0% to 24.3%, while education remained one of the largest sources of salaried employment, accounting for around one-fourth of urban regular salaried work across both years.

⁴ The sectoral disaggregation of regular salaried employment is presented for urban areas only. The share of regular salaried workers among rural women remains very small making industry-level disaggregation statistically unreliable and analytically less meaningful.

- Health activities also show a strong rise (11.0% to 11.7%) among urban regular salaried workers, indicating growing absorption in care-sector jobs, while retail trade, financial services and other personal services register moderate increases over time. . At the same time, public administration declined slightly, and manufacturing activities remained limited, with only small shares emerging in motor vehicle manufacturing. Overall, the structure reflects a gradual transition toward education and health-driven salaried work, alongside a declining dependence on domestic employment.

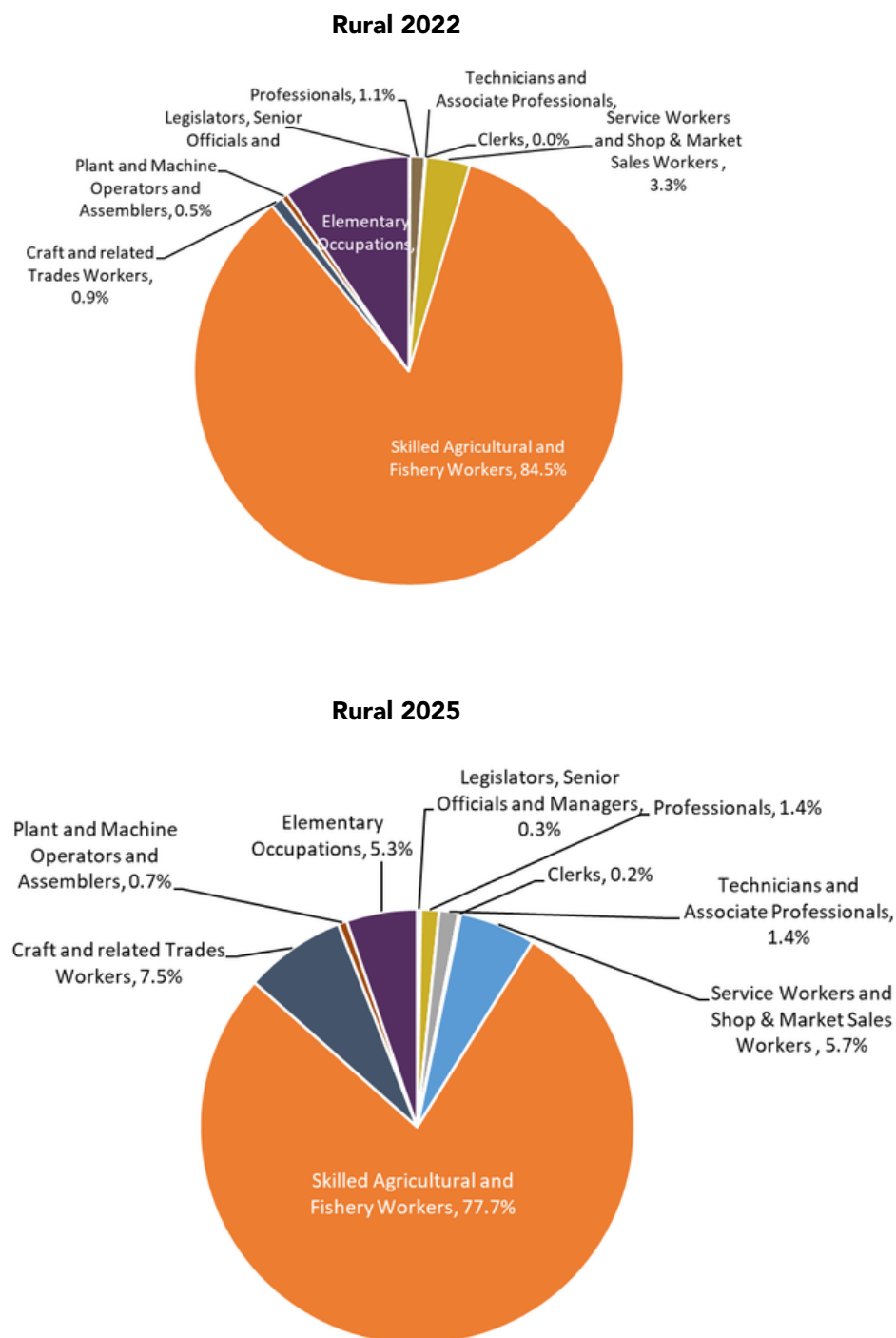
Figure 11: Distribution of Regular Salaried Women Workers by Broad Industry Types



I: Distribution of Women Workers by Occupation Types

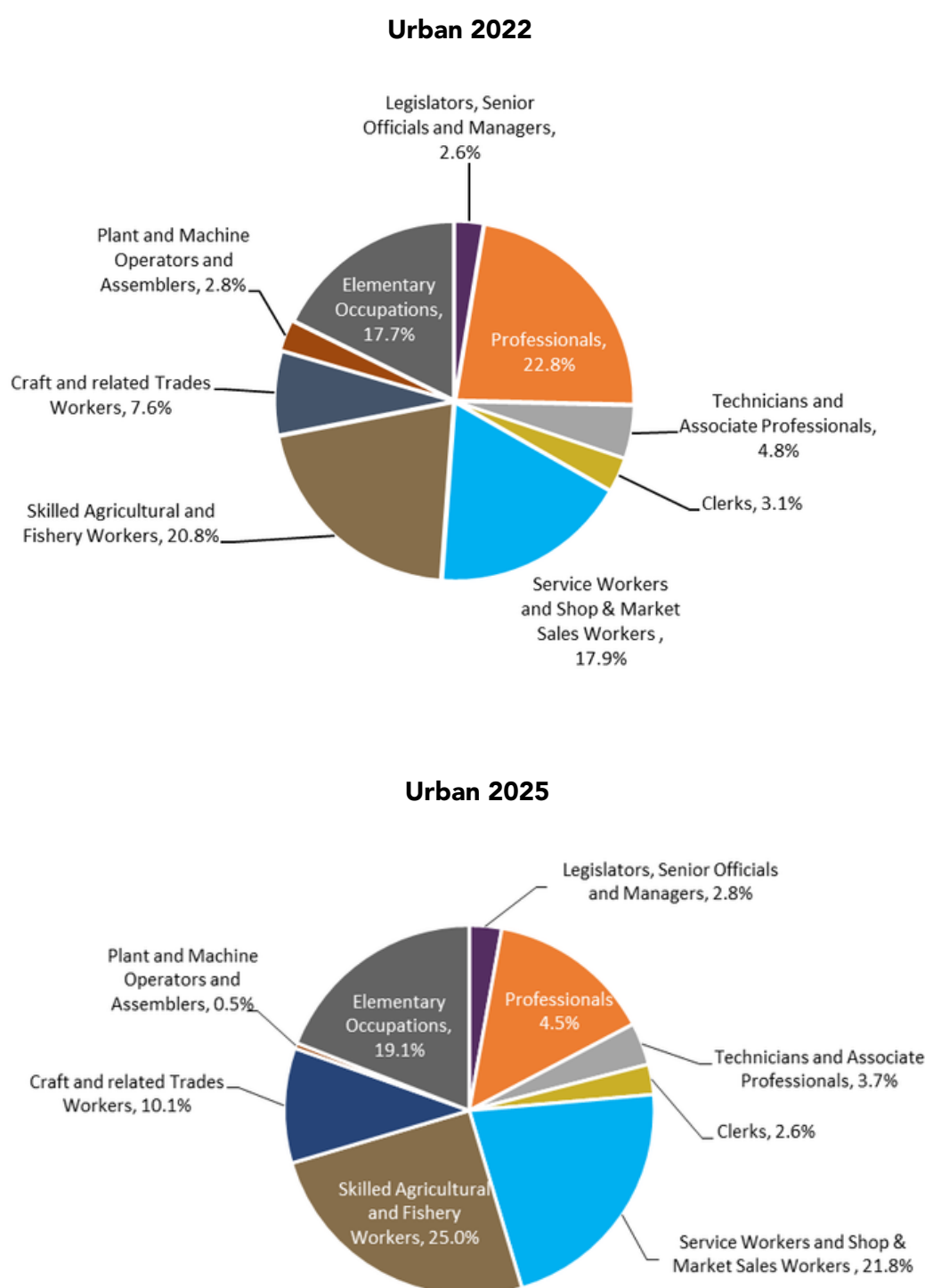
- Between 2022 and 2025, women's rural employment in Jharkhand remains overwhelmingly concentrated in skilled agricultural work, though it declines from 84.5% to 77.7%, indicating diversification. This is accompanied by increases in service workers (3.3% to 5.7%), craft and trade workers (0.9% to 7.5%), and technical and associate professional roles (0.1% to 1.4%). Meanwhile, elementary occupations decline (9.6% to 5.3%), and higher-skilled categories like professionals and managers remain very low with minimal change, highlighting limited upward occupational mobility.

Figure 12A: Occupational Classification of Women Workers (Rural)



- Between 2022 and 2025, women's urban employment in Jharkhand became more concentrated in service and agriculture-related occupations. The share of service workers and sales workers increased from 17.9% to 21.8%, while skilled agricultural and fishery workers rose from 20.8% to 25.0%. Craft and related trades also increased from 7.6% to 10.1%, alongside a slight rise in elementary occupations. In contrast, the shares of professionals, technicians, clerks, and machine operators declined over the period, indicating limited expansion in higher-skilled urban employment despite some occupational diversification.

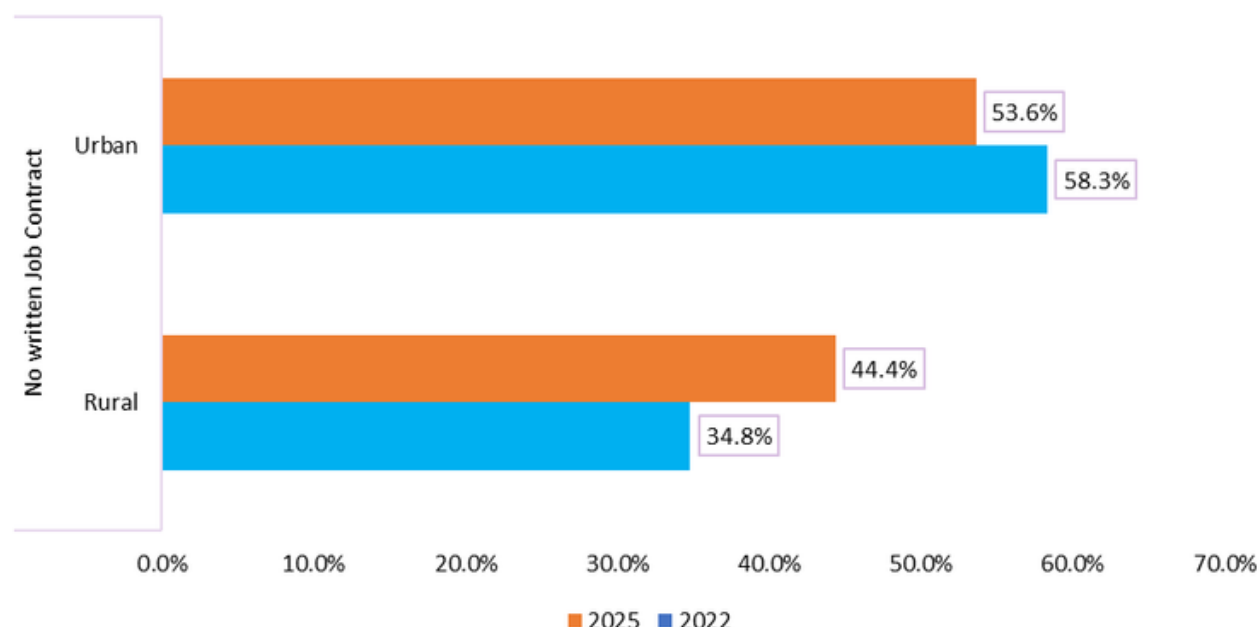
Figure 12B: Occupational Classification of Women Workers (Urban)



J: Condition of Work in Regular Employment

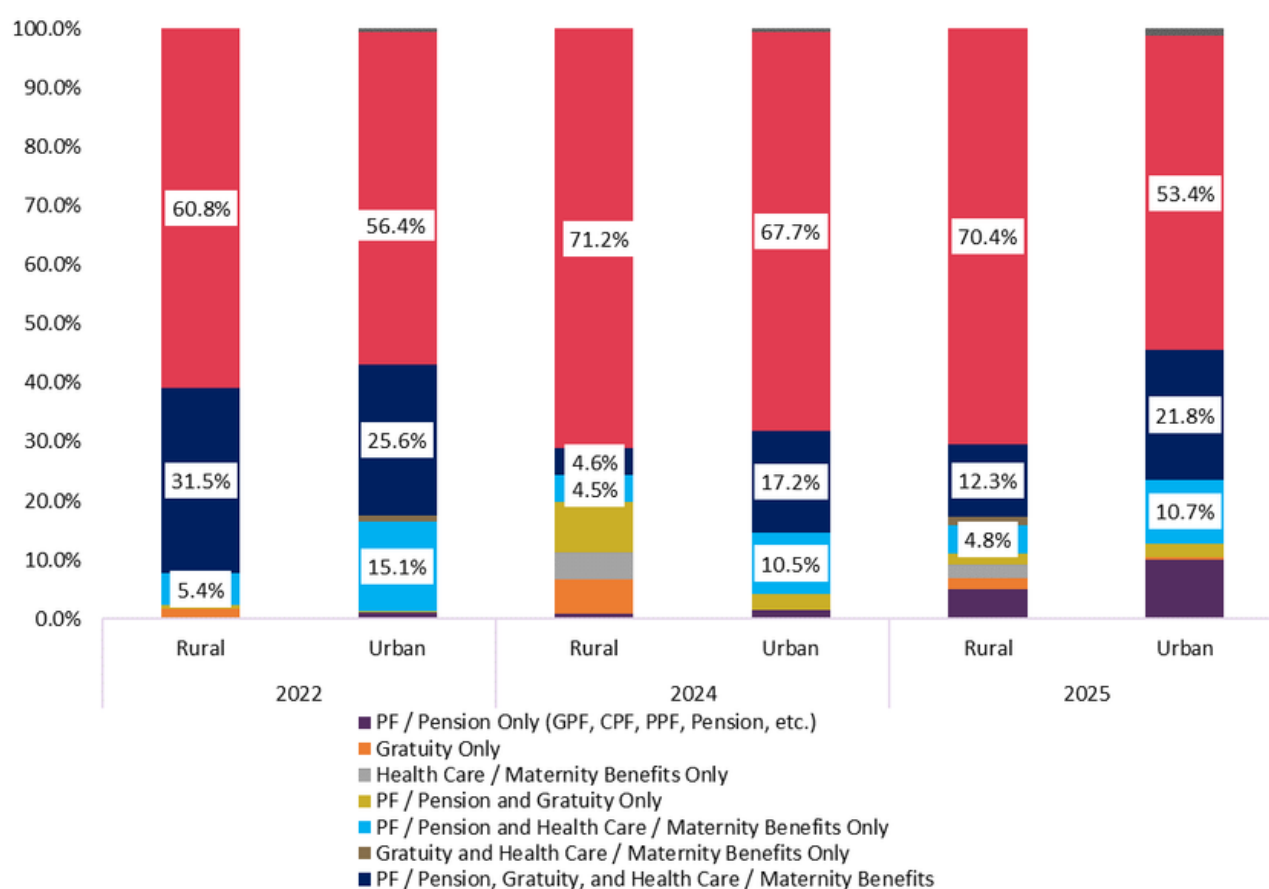
- Working conditions in regular employment remain largely informal, with limited improvement over time. Lack of a written job contract persists especially in rural areas, with an increase from 34.8% to 44.0% between 2022 and 2025. At the same time, there is a decline in urban areas as women with no job contract decrease from 58.3% to 53.6% in the same time period.

Figure 13: Status of Job Contract



- In rural areas, social security coverage among women in regular employment remains very limited, with the share not eligible for any benefits rising from 60.8% (2022) to 70.4% (2025). At the same time, comprehensive coverage declines sharply after 2022, with a shift toward partial benefits like PF/pension only or combined with health benefits, indicating increasingly fragmented access.
- At the same time, coverage in urban areas is relatively better but still inadequate, with the share not eligible declining from 56.4% to 53.4%. There is a move away from full benefit packages toward partial coverage, alongside some increase in PF/pension-only access (1.1% to 9.9%), reflecting modest improvement but continued fragmentation.

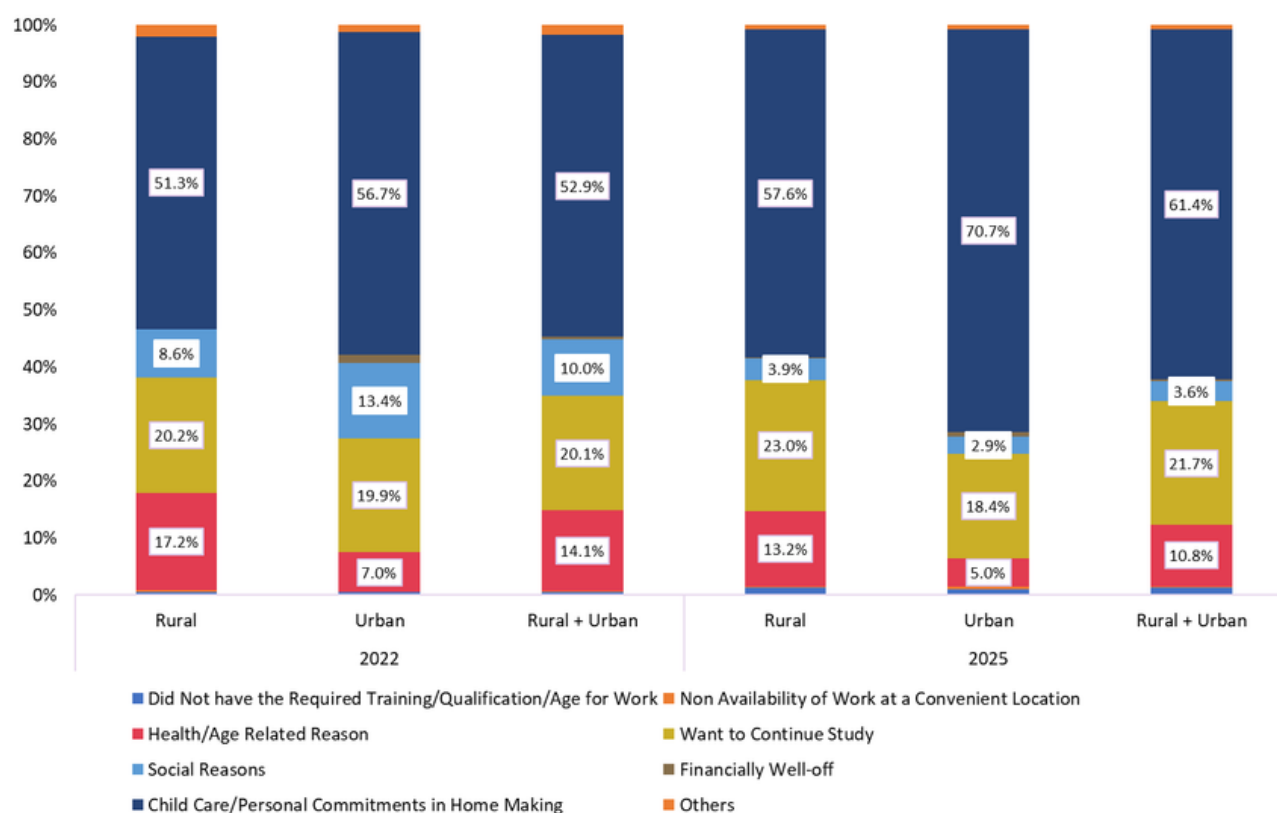
Figure 14: Extent and Composition of Social Security Coverage among Women in Regular Employment (2022–2025)



K: Reason for Not Being in the Labour Force

- The reasons for women not being in the labour force are overwhelmingly driven by domestic responsibilities, with child care and home-making commitments increasing from 51.3% (rural) and 56.7% (urban) in 2022 to 57.6% and 70.7% respectively in 2025, showing a particularly sharp rise in urban areas. Education-related reasons also remain significant, rising overall (20.1% to 21.7%), especially in rural areas, indicating continued engagement in studies.
- For urban and rural combined, health and age-related factors decline over time (14.1% to 10.8%), while social reasons drop sharply (10.0% to 3.6%), suggesting some easing of social constraints. Other factors such as lack of training, non-availability of work, and financial well-being remain minimal, indicating that structural and care-related constraints dominate women's exclusion from the labour force in Jharkhand.

Figure 15: Reason for Not Being in The Labourforce



CONCLUSION

Overall, the analysis of labour market indicators for Jharkhand reveals a persistent concentration of women's work in agriculture, self-employment, and informal activities, with limited and uneven movement into non-farm and formal employment. Across rural and urban areas, women's participation remains highly segmented as rural women continue to be largely engaged in agricultural self-employment including own-account and unpaid family work, while urban women show a more diversified employment profile including agriculture, domestic service, education and retail but with limited access to stable salaried jobs and continued dependence on low-productivity activities. Occupational and industrial distributions further highlight slow diversification, with agriculture remaining dominant, construction emerging as a key casual employment absorber, and low absorption of women in manufacturing and high-skill occupations. Social security coverage among regular women workers also remains fragmented, with a large share still outside any form of protection, particularly in rural areas, indicating persistent informality in employment conditions. And, domestic responsibilities continue to be the primary reason for women's exclusion from the labour force.

These patterns are closely linked to the structural features of Jharkhand's economy and its policy landscape. The Jharkhand State Livelihood Promotion Society (JSLPS) and Sakhi Mandal networks under DAY_NRLM have mobilised over 2.66 lakh women's self-help groups, providing bank credit linkages and collectivisation support, interventions that can be directly linked with the rise in own-account work among rural women from 26% in 2022 to 42% in 2025. The Palash Brand initiative has created market linkages for SHG-based produce through dedicated retail outlets, reinforcing this shift.⁵ The JOHAR project has targeted tribal and rural women through agricultural value chain development and livelihood diversification, consistent with observed increases in animal husbandry within agriculture.⁶ The Phoolo Jhano Ashirwad Abhiyan has provided livelihood transition support to over 32,000 women engaged in 'hadiya' production, supporting movement into more stable activities.⁷ For broader economic security, the Mukhyamantri Maiya Samman Yojana⁸ provides monthly income support to women from lower-income households, addressing the financial vulnerability that domestic responsibilities pose for women's labour force participation. The Mukhyamantri Rojgar Srijan Yojana further supports self-employment by offering subsidised loans of up to ₹25 lakh to women in Sakhi Mandals and marginalised groups.⁹ While these interventions have meaningfully expanded women's access to credit, markets, and livelihood platforms, their impact has largely been in strengthening self-employment rather than enabling transitions into formal wage employment. The overall evidence therefore points to a labour market where women's work is expanding within informal and self-employed segments, but decent wage/salaried opportunities for stable, diversified, and formal employment and the structural conditions needed to create them remain limited.

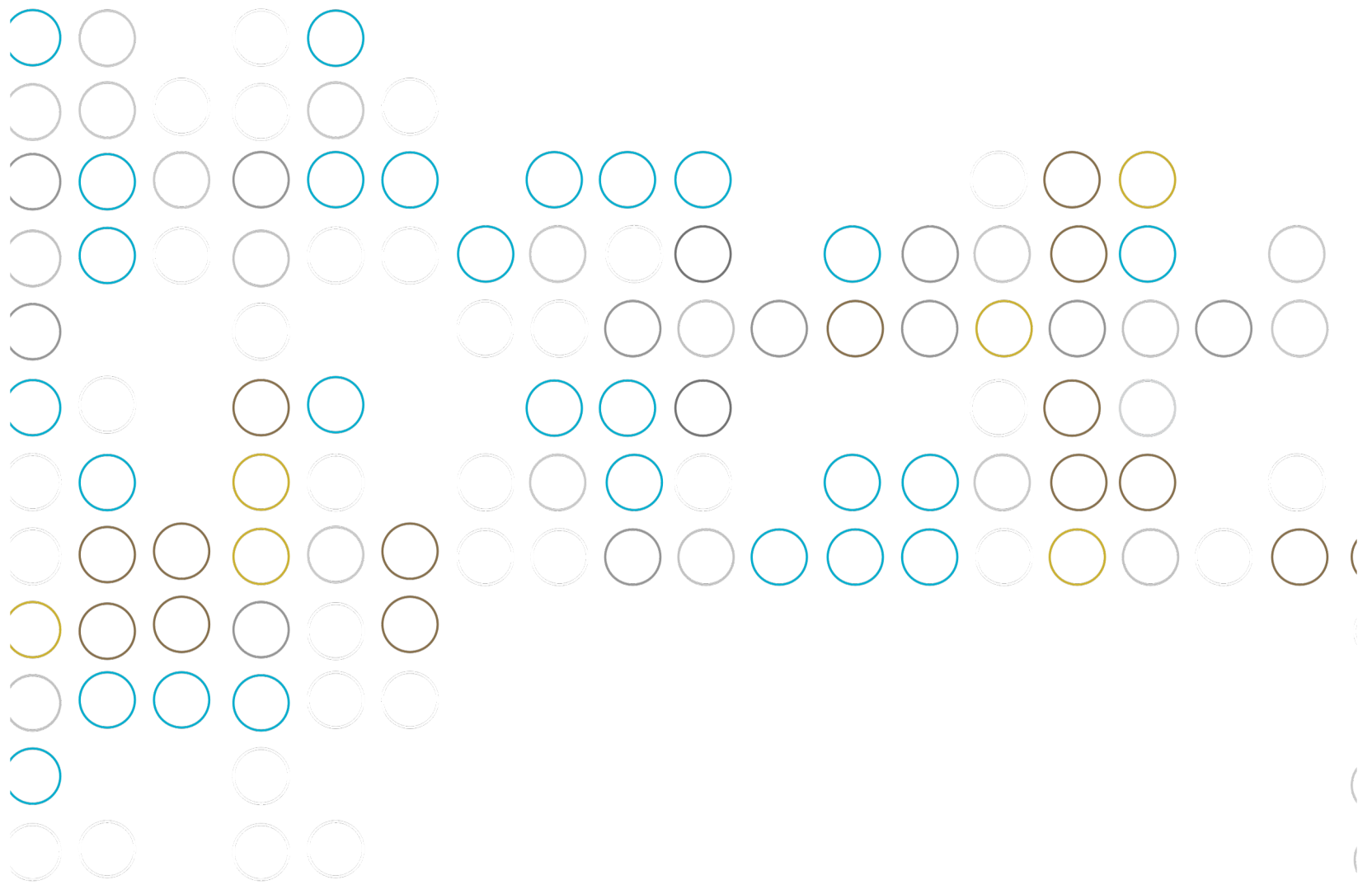
⁵ PTI, & Pti. (2025, January 26). Committed to realise dreams of people; appointments on 48K posts soon: Hemant. National Herald.<https://www.nationalheraldindia.com/politics/committed-to-realise-dreams-of-people-appointments-on-48k-posts-soon-hemant-soren>

⁶ Singh, S. (2025, June 15). World Bank-backed JOHAR project delivers on rural livelihood promise. The Statesman. <https://www.thestatesman.com/india/world-bank-backed-johar-project-delivers-on-rural-livelihood-promise-1503445750.html>

⁷ The Avenue Mail. (2021, June 16). Phoolo-Jhano Ashirwad Abhiyan a game changer for rural women's livelihood. The Avenue Mail.<https://avenuemail.in/phoolo-jhano-ashirwad-abhiyan-a-game-changer-for-rural-womens-livelihood/>

⁸ Government of Jharkhand. Mukhyamantri Maiya Samman Yojana (MMMSY). <https://mmmsy.jharkhand.gov.in/>

⁹ Government of Jharkhand. Chief Minister Employment Generation Programme (CMEGP). <https://cmegp.jharkhand.gov.in/>



This factsheet has been prepared by Vidhi and reviewed by Bidisha Mondal.

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