Press Note on Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) Quarterly Bulletin July-September 2026

LFPR and WPR improved in both rural and urban areas

Rural UR declined

Gain in employment in agriculture sector in rural areas

Posted On: 10 NOV 2026 4:00PM by PIB Delhi

Snapshots:

- **The overall LFPR for persons (15+ years) reported an increase to 55.5% in July-September, 2026 compared to 54.6% in the previous quarter.**
- **Rural LFPR (15+ years) recorded at 58.1%, an increase of 0.9 percentage points compared with same period of last year.**
- **Overall WPR (15+ years) stood at 52.7% during July-September, 2026, registering an increase of 1.0 percentage point over the previous quarter.**
- **Rural WPR increased by 1.4 percentage points quarter-on-quarter to 55.6% during July-September, 2026.**
- **The share of regular wage/ salaried employment in urban areas reported an increase of 0.3 percentage points to 49.6% compared to the previous quarter.**
- **During July-September, 2026 the share of self-employed in rural areas increased by 1.3 percentage points to 62.7% compared with last quarter.**
- **Rural agricultural employment increased by 3.8 percentage points over the quarter to 56.7% during July-September, 2026.**
- **Rural UR declined to 4.3% during July-September, 2026 from 4.8% in the previous quarter.**

1. Introduction

The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) conducted by NSO, MoSPI, is the primary source of data on activity participation and employment-unemployment conditions of the population. The PLFS survey methodology has been modified from January, 2025

to provide monthly and quarterly estimates of labour force indicators for both rural and urban India under the CWS framework.

Considering the need to generate high-frequency labour force indicators with wider coverage, the sampling methodology of the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) was revamped from January, 2025. The redesigned PLFS aims to achieve the following objectives:

- To generate key employment and unemployment indicators – namely Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR), Worker Population Ratio (WPR) and Unemployment Rate (UR) – every month for both rural and urban areas at the all-India level under the Current Weekly Status (CWS).
- To extend the Quarterly PLFS results to rural areas, thereby producing quarterly estimates of labour market indicators for both rural and urban India under the CWS framework.
- To provide annual estimates of key employment and unemployment indicators in both Usual Status (ps+ss) and Current Weekly Status (CWS) for rural as well as urban areas.

Earlier PLFS Quarterly Bulletins released up to December, 2024, presented labour market indicators only for urban areas. The Bulletin for April – June, 2025 marked the first in the series to provide estimates for both rural and urban areas and the current Bulletin for July – September, 2026 is the sixth in the series. In this Quarterly Bulletin*, efforts have also been made to provide estimates of the number of workers in absolute terms*.

This Quarterly Bulletin presents estimates of key labour force indicators — *Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR), Worker Population Ratio (WPR), Unemployment Rate (UR), and the distribution of workers by broad employment status and industry of work* — in the Current Weekly Status (CWS), separately for rural and urban areas at the all-India level. In addition, state-level estimates of LFPR, WPR, and UR in CWS are also provided for selected States.

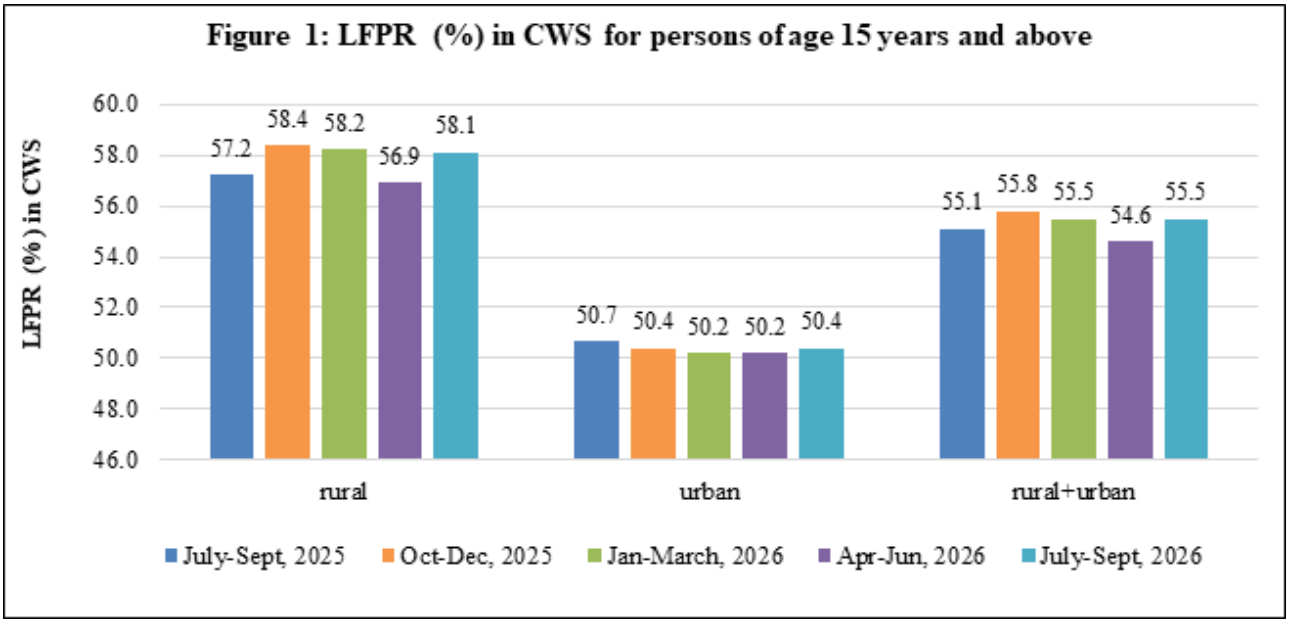
Key findings for persons of age 15 years and above following CWS:

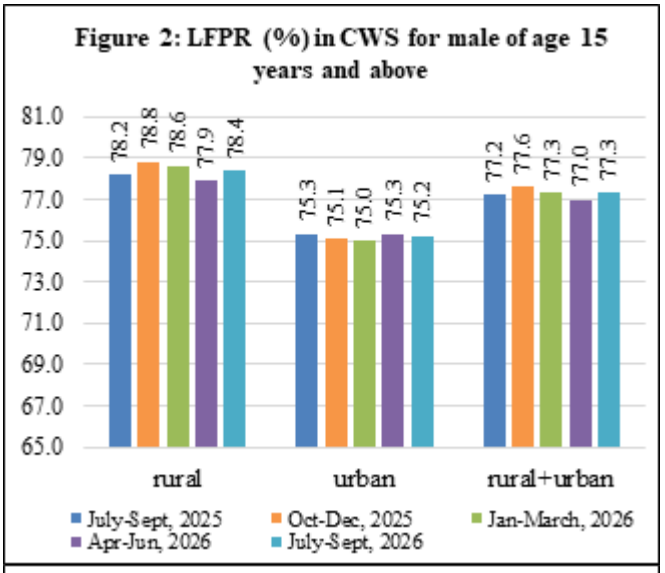
- ***Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) improved in both rural and urban sectors:*** Overall LFPR for persons of age 15 years and above increased to 55.5% during July-September, 2026 from 54.6% in the previous quarter. The improvement was driven by an increase in LFPR for both the rural and urban areas. In rural areas, LFPR for persons of age 15 years and above rose to 58.1% in the current quarter from 56.9% in the previous quarter. Similarly, urban LFPR increased marginally to 50.4% from 50.2% during the same period.

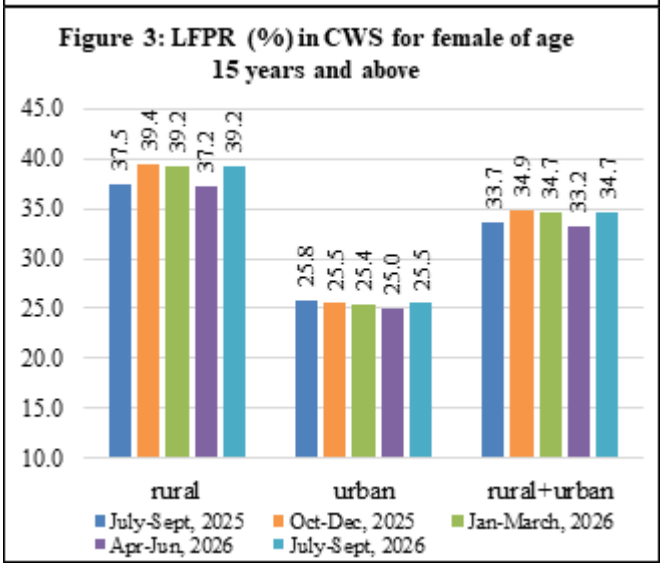
The overall female LFPR increased to 34.7% during the current quarter from 33.2% in the previous quarter. Among male, the urban LFPR registered a marginal increase, reaching 77.3% during the quarter from 77.0% in the quarter April-June, 2026.

On a year-on-year basis, the overall LFPR recorded an increase of 0.4 percentage points, rising from 55.1% in July-September, 2025 to 55.5% in July-September, 2026. Rural LFPR also improved by 0.9 percentage points, increasing from 57.2% to 58.1%

during the same period, while the urban LFPR declined marginally by 0.3 percentage points.







Overall LFPR for persons aged 15 years and above stood at 55.5% during July-September 2026, registering an increase over both the previous quarter and the corresponding quarter of 2025

- ***Workforce participation increased:*** Overall Worker Population Ratio (WPR) for persons of age 15 years and above increased to 52.7% during the quarter July-September, 2026, from 51.7% in the previous quarter. WPR in rural areas increased to 55.6% from 54.2% in the last quarter. In urban areas, WPR remained largely stable at 46.9% during July-September, 2026, compared with 46.8% in April-June, 2026. Among male, WPR increased to 73.4% in the current quarter from 73.0% in the previous quarter, while the female WPR rose notably to 32.8% from 31.3% over the same period.

  In comparison with the corresponding quarter of the previous year, the overall WPR increased by 0.5 percentage points during July-September, 2026. Rural WPR also recorded an increase of 0.9 percentage points over the same period. Urban WPR maintained stability in the current quarter compared with the previous year.

Figure 4: WPR (%) in CWS for person of age 15 years and above

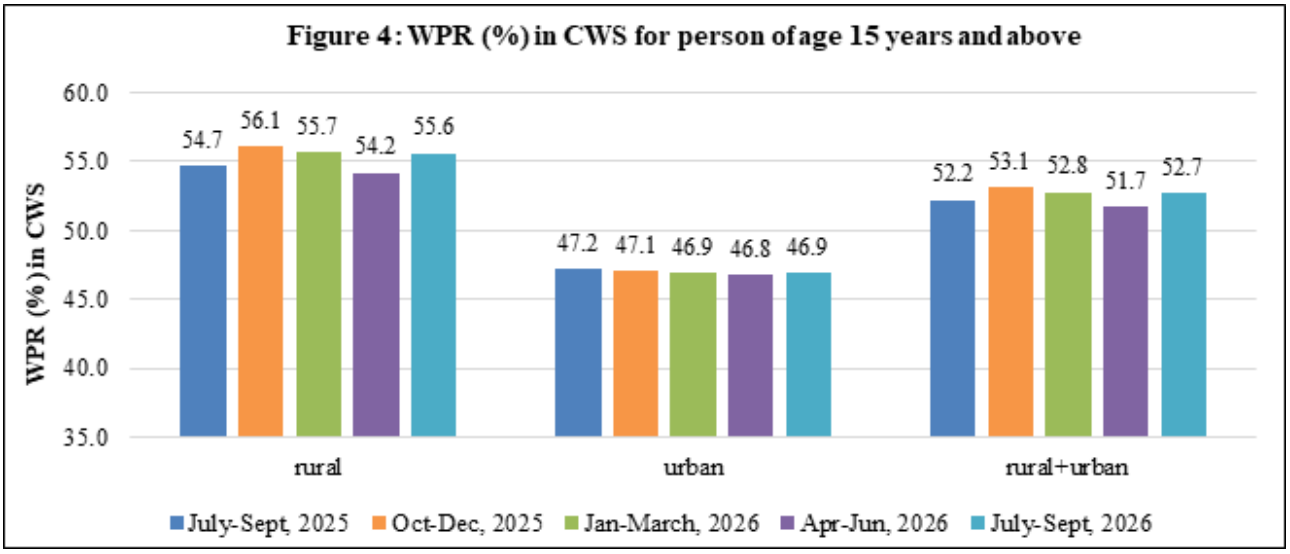


Figure 5: WPR (%) in CWS for male of age 15 years and above

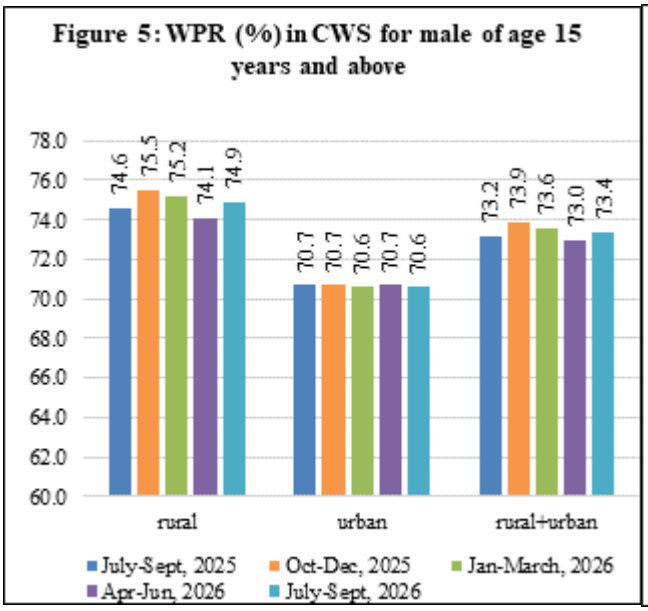
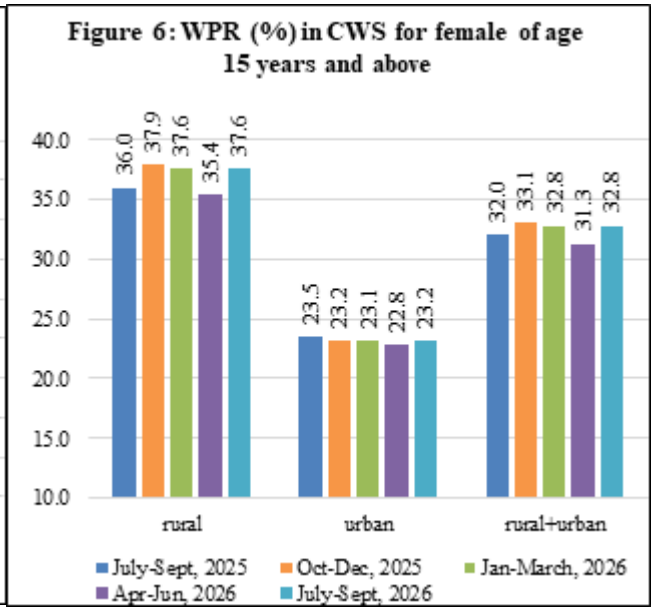


Figure 6: WPR (%) in CWS for female of age 15 years and above

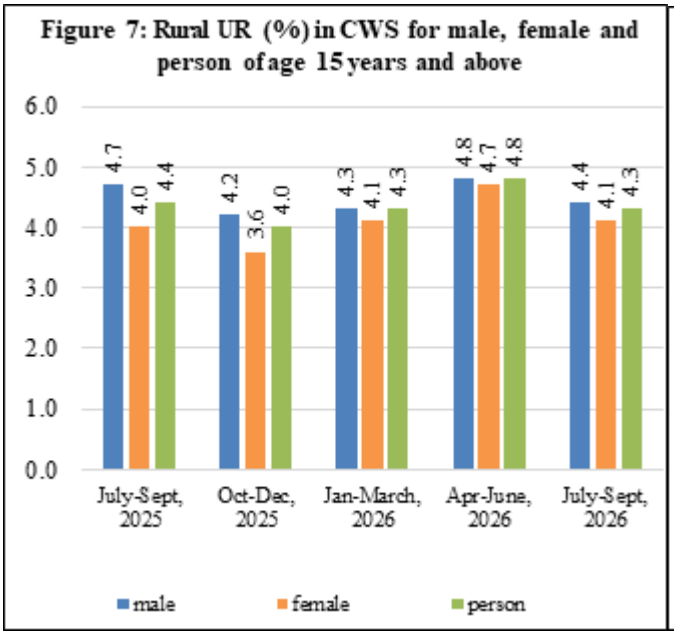


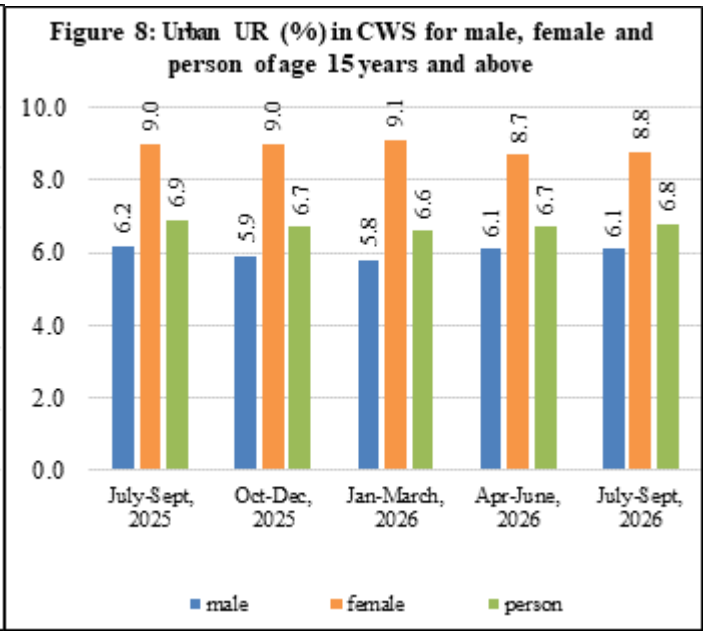
Compared with the previous quarter, WPR improved for both male and female aged 15 years and above, reaching 73.4% and 32.8%, respectively, in July-September 2026.

- ***Overall and rural Unemployment Rate (UR) declined:*** Overall UR for persons of age 15 years and above improved to 5.1% during the current quarter, compared with 5.4% in the previous quarter. During the same period, the rural UR fell to 4.3%

from 4.8%, while urban UR remained broadly stable at 6.8 % against 6.7% in the previous quarter.

Compared with the corresponding quarter of 2025, the rural UR remained largely unchanged at 4.3% during July-September, 2026 compared with 4.4% during July-September, 2025. Rural male UR declined by 0.3 percentage points to 4.4% during July-September, 2026 from 4.7% during July-September, 20265. Urban UR registered marginal improvements for both male (6.2% to 6.1%) and female (9.0% to 8.8%) over the same period.

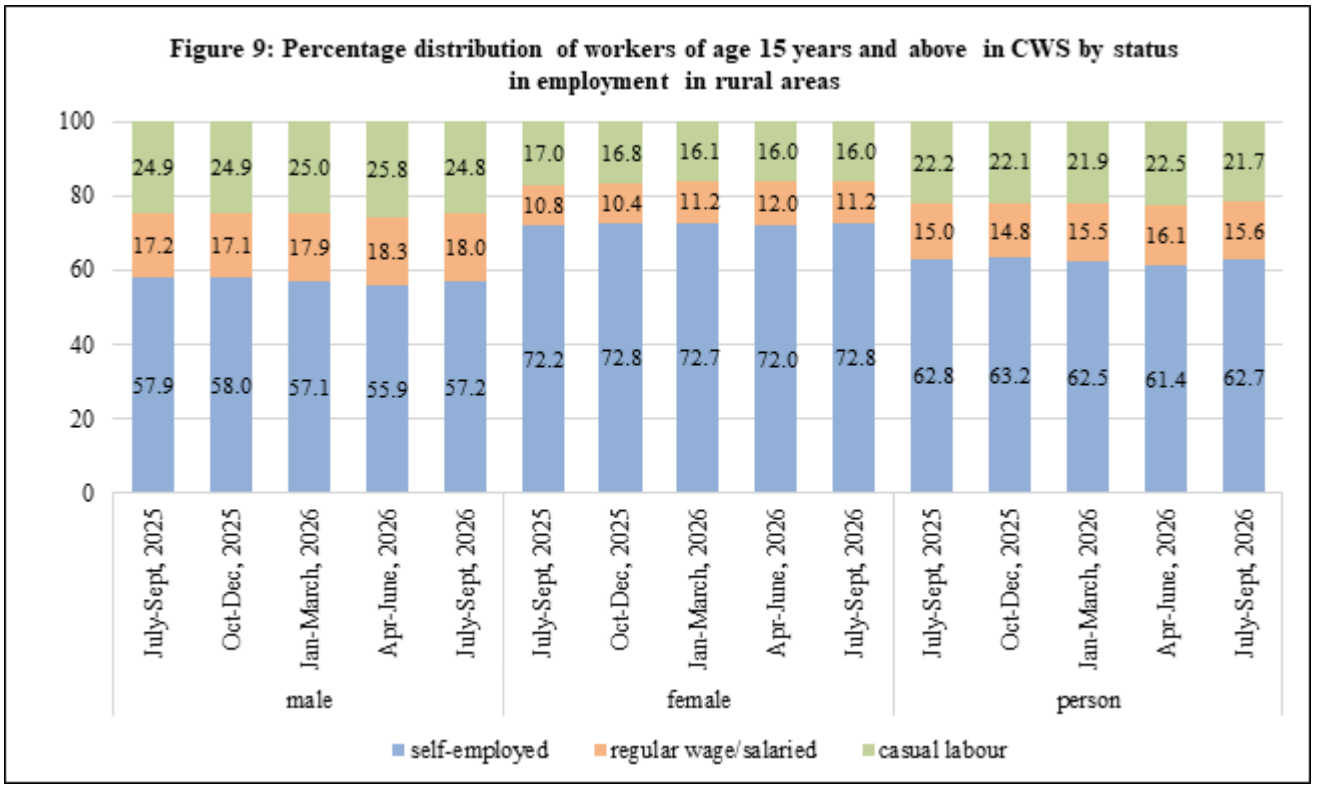


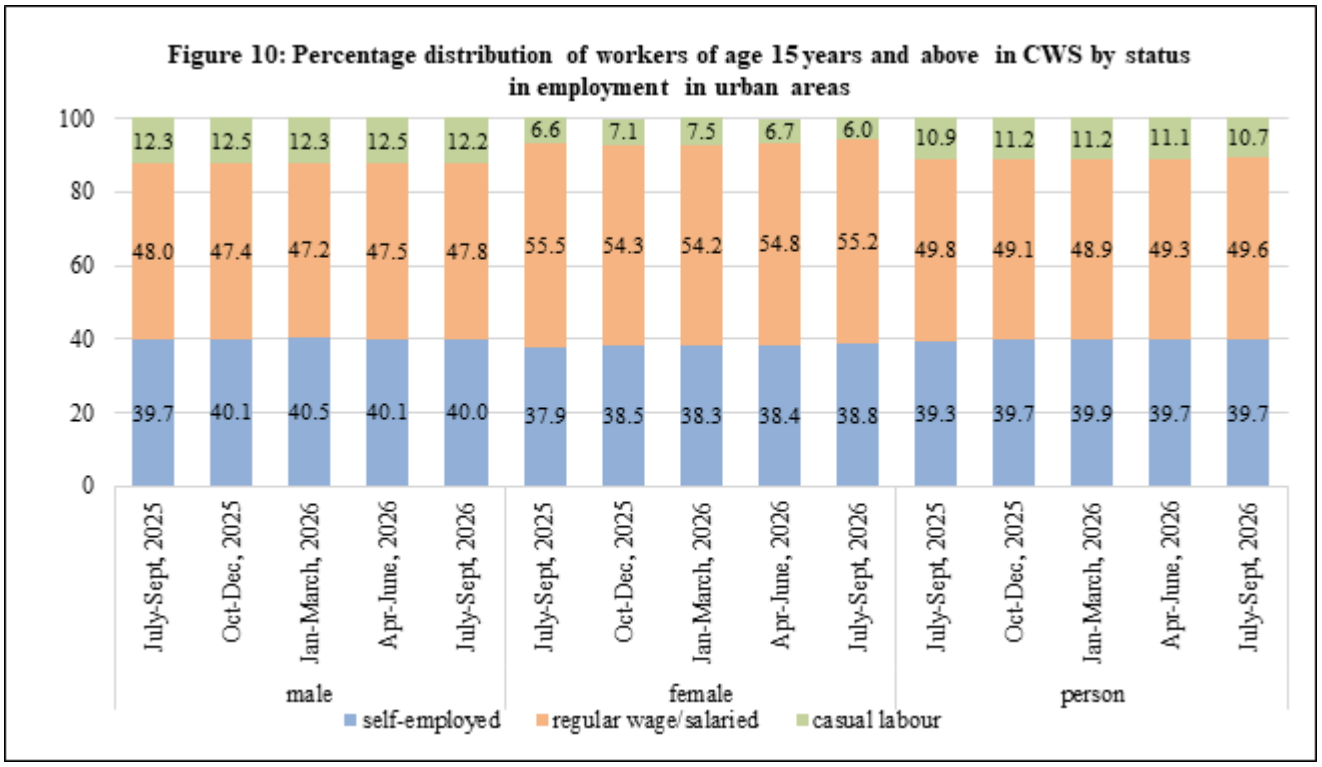


Overall UR for persons of age 15 years and above improved to 5.1% in July-September, 2026 compared to 5.4% in previous quarter.

- ***Rural self-employment and urban regular wage/ salaried employment increased:*** The share of workers in rural areas engaged in self-employment increased to 62.7% in the current quarter from 61.4% in previous quarter. In urban areas, share of regular wage/ salaried workers increased to 49.6% from 49.3% in the previous quarter. In both rural and urban areas, the share of workers engaged in casual labour declined during July–September, 2026 compared with the previous quarter. In rural areas, it decreased from 22.5% to 21.7%, while in urban areas, it declined from 11.1% to 10.7%.

  A year-on-year comparison indicates a reduction in the proportion of workers engaged in casual labour employment. In rural areas, the share declined by 0.5 percentage points from 22.2% in July-September, 2025 to 21.7% in July-September 2026. Similarly, in urban areas, it decreased marginally by 0.2 percentage points from 10.9% to 10.7% during the same period. In rural areas, share of workers in self-employment remained stable while regular wage/ salaried employment increased by 0.6 percentage points over the year. In urban areas, self-employment increased by 0.4 percentage point, while for regular wage/ salaried employment declined marginally in comparison with the same quarter of last year.





The share of workers engaged in casual labour employment declined during July-September, 2026, both quarter-on-quarter and year-on-year

- ***Share of agriculture sector increased in rural areas, tertiary sector remained stable in urban areas:*** The sectoral distribution of employment continued to reflect the distinct rural–urban employment patterns, with the rural workforce predominantly engaged in agriculture and the urban workforce concentrated in the tertiary sector. In rural areas, the share of workers engaged in agriculture increased from 52.9% in April–June, 2026 to 56.7% in July–September, 2026. The share of workers engaged in the secondary sector, including mining and

quarrying, stood at 21.9% against 24.4% in the previous quarter. In the tertiary sector, it is estimated at 21.4% in the current quarter against 22.7% in the last quarter.

Compared with July–September, 2025, the share of rural workers engaged in the secondary sector, including mining and quarrying, increased from 21.0% to 21.9%, while the share in the tertiary sector remained broadly stable, increasing marginally from 21.3% to 21.4% in July–September, 2026. In urban areas, the share of workers engaged in secondary and tertiary sectors remained broadly stable.

Figure 11: Percentage distribution of workers of age 15 years and above in CWS by broad industry of work in rural areas

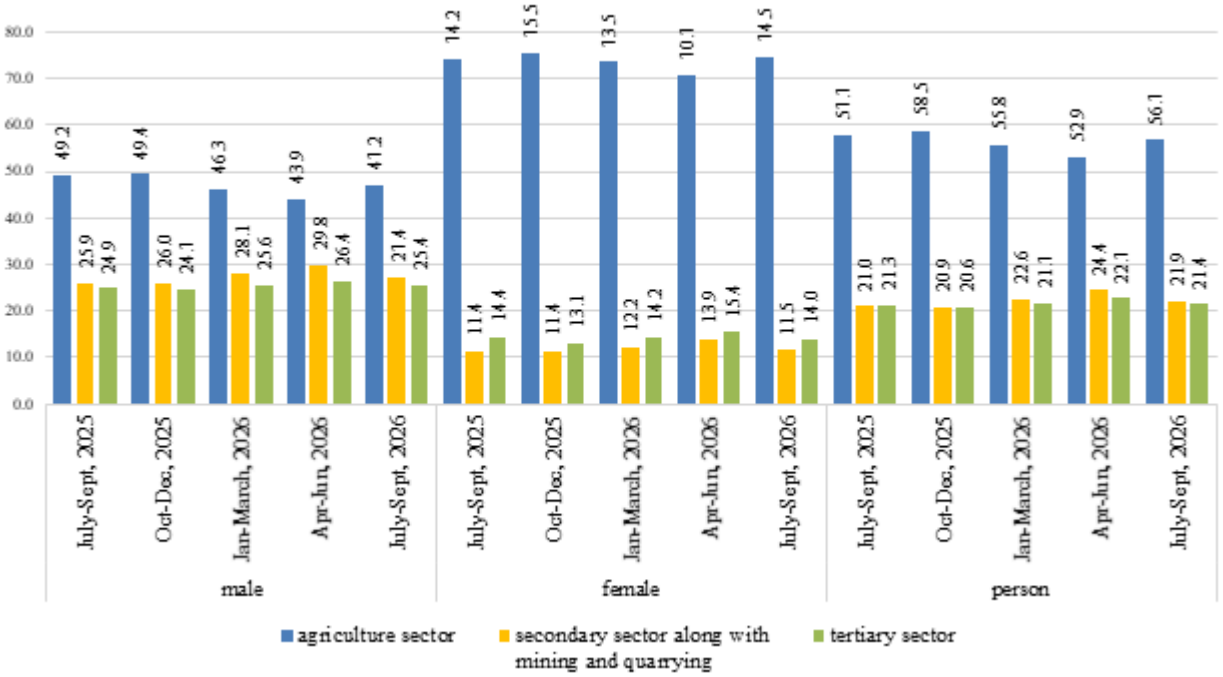
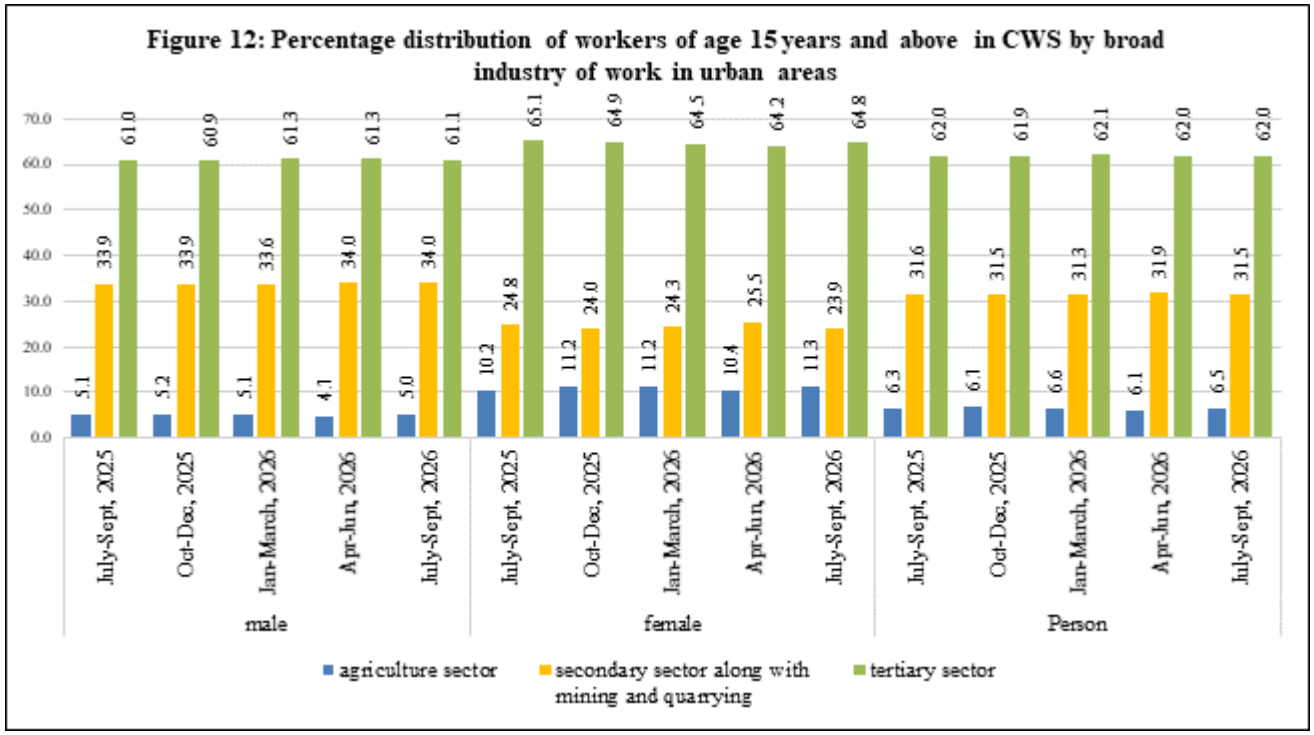


Figure 12: Percentage distribution of workers of age 15 years and above in CWS by broad industry of work in urban areas



Over the year, rural employment shares in the secondary sector rose from 21.0% to 21.9%, while the tertiary sector remained stable at around 21.4%

Using the projected population figures of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), the absolute number of workers aged 15 years and above has been estimated. On average, 57.9 crore persons aged 15 years and above were employed in the country during the quarter July-September, 2026, of which 40.5 crore were male and 17.4 crore were female.

At the all-India level, the quarterly estimates are based on information collected from a total of 5,55,593 persons surveyed.	
Persons surveyed in rural areas 3,16,683	Persons surveyed in urban areas 2,38,910

The Quarterly Bulletin for the quarter July-September, 2026 is available on the website of the Ministry (https://www.mospi.gov.in).	**Scan the QR code to access the Publications/ Reports**

***

Samrat

(Release ID: 2334642) Visitor Counter : 474
Read this release in: Urdu , हिन्दी , Gujarati , Tamil , Kannada

Share

1495 words | 6 min read