
A Study of Indian Employment Scenario: From 2011-12 to 2018-19

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Master of Philosophy

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Declaration

Dishi Agarwal, hereby declare that the thesis entitled "A Study of Indian Employment Scenario: From 2011-12 to 2018-19" submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of **Master of Philosophy** degree of this university is my original work and it has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other university.



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**This thesis is dedicated to Nani, Baba
Amma. Whom I lost during this
journey.**

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List of Abbreviations

- NSSO - National Sample Survey Organisation
- EUS - Employment Unemployment Survey
- PLFS - Periodic Labour Force Survey
- NCO - National Classification of Occupation
- NIC - National Industrial Classification
- UPSA - Usual Principal Subsidiary Activity
- LFPR - Labour Force Participation Rate
- GST - Goods and Services Tax
- CWS - Current Weekly Status
- GDP - Gross Domestic Product
- OBC - Other Backward Class
- SC - Scheduled Caste
- ST - Scheduled Tribe
- WPR - Workforce Participation Rate

Chapter 1

Tracing the Trends of Employment Structure in Post-Independent India

1.1 Post- Independence Trends in Employment

In post-independent India, the primary focus of leaders and policymakers was to ensure that the country achieves a high level of economic development. In order to do so, the government under the leadership of then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru brought centralized and integrated economic programs which most importantly involved Five Year Plans. When we study the initial documents of the First Five Year Plan, there seem to be a clear push for the developmental agenda which involves giving primacy to agriculture. As urban spaces were growing at a rapid pace, by the middle of 1953 the problem of unemployment started to shoot up in the newly developing urban areas. The size of plan was enlarged to incorporate schemes to generate additional employment (Krishnamachari, 1957). From the next plan onwards the expansion of employment opportunities was specially mentioned as one of the main objectives of the Plan. In the Second Five Year Plan, P.C. Mahalanobis, famously known as the father of modern statistics, stressed the importance of public sector development and rapid industrialization. Thus, India followed a developmental model which was based on planned

industrialization while emphasizing the importance of agriculture and public sector development. Thereafter in the formulation of third five year plan, among other things provision of extra employment for agriculture labourers was included to support them during the slack season. However, the geopolitical climate of the country changed a lot in this period due the two consecutive wars with China and Pakistan, which shifted the entire focus of the plan outlays.

In the years 1965-66 and 1966-67 Indian agricultural production declined severely due to massive droughts the country witnessed. Initiative were taken to fight the growing problem but increasing inequality and poverty juxtaposed that redistribution policies were either not implemented efficiently or were not sufficient (Uppal, 1978). This resulted in considerable growth in various sectors of the economy; however, studies Papola (1972) point out that this growth was not accompanied by an improvement in employment structure, furthermore, unemployment intensified during this period. Sustainable employment-led growth was needed. The government re-directed its focus on employment and unemployment issues; a working group committee was formed to assess employment, underemployment, and unemployment and suggest measures to generate employment (Bhagvati, 1973). Dantwala Committee of Experts on Unemployment Estimates set up by the Planning Commission in 1969 recommended that standardised concepts and definitions of the labour force, employment and unemployment be adopted by NSSO (National Sample Survey Office), which were then adopted in quinquennial surveys. NSSO survey (27th round) in 1972-73 was the first national level quinquennial employment-unemployment survey, intending to assess the intensity and vastness of the employment/unemployment situation in India. Many debates went into the survey methodology under the quinquennial programme (Krishna, 1973) . However, unlike the census and previous NSSO data, statistics were disaggregated into meaningful categories of age, sex, activity type, and sectors, so a comprehensive and internationally comparable assessment of employment structure and its trends is possible. Thus, addressing the problem of finding productive employment for all who seek it becomes more systematic. The 5th five-year plan(1974-78) stressed employment, poverty alleviation (Garibi Hatao), and justice. The government also introduced the Minimum Needs program to cater to the growing distress due to negligence on the front of employment generation.

Several studies to study the employment-unemployment structures and changes within started emerging. Debates around whether an import-substitution policy was moving in the right direction or export-led growth is needed (Raipuria, 1980; Sen, 1982), the regional impact of the green revolution (Chakravarti, 1973), impacts of increasing casualization of labour (Deshpande and Deshpande, 1985), how to understand the emerging informal economy (Papola, 1980), women's role in bringing sustainable development were fuming in the context of the employment situation of the country (Bardhan, 1985). Because unarguably good quality employment generation was the must to get an equitably distributive sustainable economic growth.

Minhas and Majumdar (1987) estimates of 27th (1972-73), 32nd (1977-78), and 38th (1983) NSSO's round show that the work participation rates for males, both rural and urban, are found to be almost constant throughout the period being about 63-64 per cent for rural males and about 57-58 per cent for urban males. For rural females, the work participation rate remained almost constant at about 38 per cent, whereas for urban females, there appears to have been a slight increase in the participation rate over this period. However, the reported open unemployment numbers were low and steady in this period. But this was not taken as a good sign. The peculiar feature of the employment situation in this period was that a large part of the workforce was either self-employed or casual wage labour. Furthermore, the share of regular/salaried employees is a tiny proportion of the total employed workforce, especially in rural areas.

India being an agriculture economy, 70 per cent of the rural sector workers have been employed in the primary sector in between 1972-73 and 1983 (Ghosh, 2016). Agriculture being the largest employer, it is difficult to address the problem of productive employment generation without dealing directly with the agriculture sector. Bhalla (1989) argues that multiple factors are required to generate desired growth in employment and labour productivity in agriculture. Major constraining factors are limited availability of cultivable land, lack of growth in other sectors to absorb increasing farm-dependent population, poor-agro climatic conditions, unequal land distribution, poor infrastructure, and inefficient technology. The lack of growth in job opportunities in non-farm sectors to absorb increasing farm-dependent populations became an essential factor responsible for poor employment figures in the 1970s. Thus, the increased pres-

sure on the agriculture sector to generate jobs and the need to improve productivity for the country for the increasing per capita food grain requirement. 1970's witnessed initiatives like the Green Revolution and subsequent mechanisation of agriculture activities. This led to an increase in agricultural yield with a decrease in the number of man-days in employment per hectare in the long run (Bhalla, 1989). Asserting the same, many studies show that the share of primary sector employment for both men and women declined between 1972-73 to 1983. Rural women and men's share in primary activity declined by three percentage point and six percentage points respectively (Planning Commission, 1985).

As the decline in agriculture employment continued, labour absorption by the non-agriculture sector boosted between 1972-73 to 1983. The trend was stronger for men than women (Basant and Kumar, 1989). According to NSSO estimates, 70 per cent of the increase in rural workforce in between 1977-78 to 1989-90 was absorbed by the non-agriculture sectors (Sen, 1996). Sen (1996) argued that external stimuli by the state played a pivotal role in rural employment generation in the non-agriculture sector. Other factors like interlinkages between agriculture prosperity and non-agriculture employment played an important role in states like Punjab and Haryana, where the income level has crossed the minimum threshold of agriculture income. Moreover, the tendency of the organized sector in industrially developed hinterlands to prefer casual workers over regular workers increased the incidence of rural worker employment there. The above factors are particular and circumstantial. The planned increase in government expenditure majorly gave the much-needed external stimuli on both the demand and supply side. Therefore, the increase in government expenditure led the non-agriculture sector to grow in the 1980s. Even when in the backdrop, 1983-87 agriculture stagnation and slower pace of urbanization was witnessed. Construction, Mining, and small-scale manufacturing were the main sectors providing non-agriculture employment in rural areas. The labour absorption in non-agriculture sectors included both categories of workers. One was the relatively rich section that vacated agriculture to obtain regular employment. The second one is the poorest rural worker, permeating the distress in the labour use tendency of agriculture. This era also witnessed rising real wages and falling incidence of poverty in India. Sen says the rise in real wages of unskilled agriculture

workers in rural and urban spaces was the major driver. Most of the employment generated in this period was casual in nature and was government funded, making the rural non-agriculture sector very exposed to changes in restrictive monetary policies and cuts in public expenditure.

From 1977-78 to 1993-94 the growth rate of organised employment matches the population growth rate but unorganised employment grew at a faster pace (Guhan and Nagaraj, 1995). The growth seen in both estimates was less than half of the economic growth rate of 5 per cent. The late 1980s witnessed credit-ration, a decline in public investment, and stagnant domestic demand. Only weakly labour elastic sectors like agriculture, construction, quarrying and petty trade were left for labour absorption. Leading to massive unemployment and underemployment.

Based on the NSSO classification of workers, many studies estimated increased casualization of the workforce in the 1970s and early '80s. The share of casual workers among urban male and female workers rose to 15.4 per cent and 28.4 per cent, respectively, in 1983. With the slight exception of the dip in the share of casual workers in 1987-88 estimates, the casualization of urban workers has intensified with the growing urbanization in pre-reform decades. Activity that dominated this absorption of the casual workforce were construction and agriculture (Bhalla, 1989). However, at the aggregate level, regular workers were the largest group among the urban male and female workers, with the average share being 40 per cent and 32 per cent for urban men and women respectively in 1980s (Gupta, 1999; Pais, 2002; Visaria, 1997). Although the conventional unemployment rates have been both meagre and without any significant trend changes, the sustained rise in the proportion of casual labourers among workers over the same period has been a disturbing feature in India. Sen (1988) finds that casual wage employees are the poorest class of workers in both rural and urban areas.

Between 1987 and 1991, a consumption-led boom occurred in the Indian economy (Sen, 1996). This boom was possible because the supply and demand-side constraints were resolved with increased government revenue expenditure financed by increasing deficits on the current account balance (Panagariya, 2005). This boom led the organized economy sector to grow both in terms of output and income, but this did not increase employment. Most of this growth in organized sector employment was coming

from the central government and its industrial undertaking. Bank's nationalization was one major play in this.

An important development of the 1980s was that, unlike its previous pattern, growth in organised sector employment came to a halt despite an increase in output growth (Goldar, 2000). Papola (1988) calculated employment elasticity to understand why employment levels were not affected by the growth of the organized sector. He estimated that the employment elasticity of unregistered manufacturing were much higher than registered manufacturing, tracing the relative growth of employment seen in the unorganized sector. The study on the manufacturing sector concludes that technological change within individual industry groups was the primary factor in the slower employment growth compared to output. And the structural changes in the industry only had a marginal role in employment generation in pre-reform times. Thus, the growth of the production in agriculture and the organized private sector failed to translate itself into higher direct employment in these sectors. This led to a continuous decline in employment elasticity of GDP growth during the 1970s and 1980s (Papola, 1994).

Nonetheless, the 1980s was a decade with accelerating above-average growth rates surpassing the 3.5 per cent, hindu rate of growth rate (Ghosh, 2004); this decade also witnessed some strong intersectoral linkages and improved standard of living. One reason for the decreased incidence of poverty was the massive flux of government expenditure. However, the cost for India was a brewing financial crisis of a rising deficit in the external current account balance, which later precipitated liberalization reforms.

1.2 Post-Liberalisation Trends in Employment

The late 1980s was the period when the advanced countries of the world were recovering from the aftermath of oil shocks and deflationary fiscal and monetary policies. These economic shocks had a very devastating effect on most third world countries. India did survive these shocks relatively well largely due to its planned industrialisation, import substitution strategy and technological self-reliance policies (Singh and Ghosh, 1988) . However, intellectuals (Bhagwati and Brecher, 1980) and government officials were emphasising the need to open the Indian economy to the rest of the world. Many policy

changes came under the leadership of then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, which promoted internal and external competition by relaxing government controls. And thereafter in 1991 India historically transitioned into the so-called Structural Adjustment Programme, giving a new direction to Indias economic and industrial policies.

The merits and demerits of the 1991 neo-liberal economic reform in India have been extensively discussed. However, before getting into the debate, it will be wise to discuss some essential aspects of liberalization. As the colossal debt crisis and the international pressure from the developed countries faux India into the liberalization reforms, it is clear that the primary feature of the reforms was to reduce the state's dependence by maintaining the debt to GDP ratio in control. Moreover, it was believed that the requirement to boost the economy earlier derived from the state expenditure would come from the 'animal spirit' of the private sector flourishing with the support of free & flexible international capital and liberalized imports and exports.

Indian neo-liberal growth has been critically discussed by several researchers over the years, like Chandrasekhar and Ghosh (1999), Chibber and Usmani (2013), Ghosh (1997), Kohli (2006), Nagaraj (1997), Patnaik, Chandrasekhar, and Ghosh (2004), and Sen (1996) , among others. All of them questioned the belief that the growth pick up seen in the last quarter of the 20th century in India can be attributed to the pro-market strategy of the Indian state vis-a-vis the liberalisation reforms. Firstly because the higher growth transition happened a decade before the 1991 liberalisation reforms. Moreover, Ghosh (2004) analysis of the GDP growth trend of India after a decade of liberalization reforms and argued that the transition to a higher economic growth trajectory occurred well before the reforms of the 1990s. The 1980s was the a period when the rate of growth of GDP was close to 6 per cent overall, with an acceleration in the second half of the decade. The second half of the 1990s was marked by a deceleration in the growth of the primary & secondary sectors. The only tertiary sector experienced a continuous rise in its growth rate in 1990s, some of which can be subjugated to increased government expenditure on salaries necessitated by the pay commission.

Krishna (1973) said the absorption of the employment backlog would happen with a 6.5 growth rate of GDP. Many other proponents of reforms used similar arguments. Growth certainly happened but was not enough to absorb the growing labour

force; hence, jobless growth emerged. The proponents of neo-liberal market reforms ignored evidence of market failure and strong links between private and public investment, especially in demand-constrained economies like India. The perception that the large middle-class population will provide the enormous market of consumer durables with the diffusion generated from the growth process was the faulty one, and the argument for employment inclusive growth reaffirmed its ground, and the need for appropriate public investment was mentioned by researchers like Ghosh (1992). The idea was that in India, there is a solid positive linkage between public and private investment. In opposition to the popular view that Public investment crowds out private investment. Public expenditure not only plays a role in the Keynesian multiplier in boosting the aggregate demand henceforth employment but also eases supply-side constraints like the lack of infrastructure faced by developing economies like India, making private production more efficient.

The importance of productive employment for countries like India is not debatable; nonetheless, the government's neo-liberal reforms in 1991 were not directly addressing it. Instead, policymakers assumed national and international markets liberalization and boosting agriculture exports will increase employment. Moreover, as the increase in rural employment in the 1980s led to a decline in poverty, similar results were expected from the 1991 structural adjustment reforms. Bhattacharya and Shaktivel (2004) discussed the impact of the reform on India's employment status in great detail using estimates from NSSOs 38th, 43rd, 50th and 55th round. The estimates show a decrease in the aggregate employment growth from 2.26 per cent in pre-reform period i.e. 1983-84 to 1993-94 to 1.01 per cent in post-reform period i.e. 1993-94 to 2000. This decline in employment growth was by all the sectors however the decline was most striking for the primary sector, where the employment growth almost stagnated in post-reform period. The deceleration in employment growth rate poses serious questions about the GDP growth patterns during 1991-2001.

Although primary workers had a very steep decline in employment generation rate, the employment growth rates minutely increased for marginal workers signalling a lack of decent work opportunities pushing workers to do whatever work they get for the survival of their household. Ghosh (2004) showed the income gap between agriculture

and non-agriculture activities widened by calculating the ratio of per worker domestic product in non-agriculture to that in agriculture. This ratio was about 2 in the 1950s and spiked well over 4 in the 1990s. The reason being even after some growth of opportunities in urban areas and migration to urban spaces, there was still a lack of generation of productive employment in urban spaces so that the benefits would diffuse in rural spaces as well. However, this increase in urban share also slowed down in 1991-2001, implying insufficient activity in urban areas to generate employment. Employment elasticity of output growth declined substantially for all major sectors between 1993-93 to 1999-2000 in comparison with the pre-reform estimates. Sectors like transport and finance-related activities were the only exception. For the agriculture sector, employment elasticity of the output growth went from 0.70 in pre-reform period to almost zero in post-reform period (Chandrasekhar and Ghosh, 2007; Gupta, 2002).

The macro trends of post-liberalization have seen fluctuations in the female workforce participation rate, whereas the male workforce participation rate had seen an increase in 2001 in rural and urban sectors. Although aggregate employment trends are significant post reforms, some significant changes were seen in the workforce structure, which prompted researchers to look into the sectoral and industrial patterns of employment generation. Broadly, setbacks were there in gainful employment creation and non-farm diversification. Sector-wise arguments are discussed in the following paragraphs.

As discussed earlier, Sen (1996) argued that the much appreciated diversification of rural employment contributing to more employment and decreased rural poverty in the 1980s is majorly credited to the stimuli given by the state, nonetheless with liberalization policies in 1991 and reversal of several public policies working in the above direction. The expectation would be that the diversification trend also reverses. However, the movement away from primary sector jobs was more intense in the late 1990s. According to the NSSO 55th round report, rural men and women's employment in the primary sector employment declined between 1993-94 and 1999-00, and the fall was sharper for the men as their employment share in the tertiary sector increased significantly (Sundaram, 2001). However, Ghosh (2004) argued that these trends are only ostentatious, and when viewed in concurrence with the rural sector's falling workforce

participation rate(WPR), which was at its lowest level in 1999-2000 since the last thirty years, i.e. 53 per cent for men and 30 per cent for women. The increase in student population ratios was insufficient to explain the decline in aggregate WPR levels of the rural population.

When the employment growth rate for the significant section was in rural areas, there was a decline in both agriculture and non-agricultural activities. It was more extreme for non-agriculture ones, and rural enterprise development was affected by decrease in rural credit due to liberalisation measures like cut in rural development government revenue expenditure, public infrastructure, and energy investments, reduction of state fund allocation, which impacting social expenditure, a primary source of public employment. A substantial slowdown was seen in urban areas in the rate of employment generation in the last decade of the 20th century. The work participation rate for urban males fluctuated in the band of 50-53 per cent from 1993-94 to 1999-00, implying no increase in employment opportunities for men in the 1990s. In the case of urban women workers, the aggregate trend was the decline in the workforce participation rate of more than 4 percentage point to just 11.4 per cent in 1999-00. Though some fluctuations were there within the decade, which led to the discussion about the “feminization” of employment, as employment in export-oriented manufacturing was growing, this was part of the global trend of women’s role in the East Asian export boom. Chandrasekhar and Ghosh (2002) argued that due to the inferior status, women workers had lower reservation wages and were available to work in subliminal conditions and exploitative contracts. With the increase in women’s employment, the bargaining power strengthened, and women workers started seeking equity in all forms of gender gaps in employment. As a result, the prime motive of cutting costs by hiring women workers started to fade away, which led to declining employment of women in the second half of the 1990s decade and, as this fall started much before the east Asian crisis.

The lack of development of the formal sector in India can be seen in the type of women’s employment in India. Underemployment was a widespread phenomenon in 1990s, and women are considered a source of subsidiary employment, the 1990s also saw a rise in home-based work done by women with minimal piece-rate wages (Mazumdar, 2004). India had become a viable source for multinationals due to the easy availability

of cheap labour and almost zero expectation of decent work conditions and labour norms. As a result, 1990 did see a deceleration and later on even a decline in organized sector employment, that too amidst a increase of industrial output and service sector output, which is one of the main components of organized sector in India. The reason being decline in public sector employment due to liberalization policies. Proponents of liberalization saw this downsizing technique as an improvement in productivity and reach towards more efficient methods. This decrease in the share of organized sector employment created significant problems in labour policies because, traditionally, all regulations affecting the workers can only be applied to the organized sector. Demands about changes in labour policy regimes to address the worker's issues in the massively growing unorganized sector were made.

Growing casualization as a phenomenon was being noted for decades before the 1990s. However, the average increase in male casual employment in urban and rural areas was especially high in the 1990s compared to previous decades. Proponents of the reforms argue this to be good as it increases flexibility in the markets, which will bring growth to the economy. However, they tend to ignore the increase in exploitative working conditions, surely deteriorating the population's standard of living. Unemployment estimates of NSSO over the '90s by Ghosh (2004) are 7 per cent & 10 per cent, respectively, for men and women. Acknowledging that unemployment estimates are bad indicators of levels of job unavailability, especially in India, which has massive underemployment. The estimates need to be looked at in conjunction with increased informal employment, which disguises most of the underemployment in urban areas in the service sector, especially in the 1990s, which is very difficult to estimate. Even after such high unemployment estimates and recognition of the increase in informal employment, these estimates were not enough to explain the decline in WPR in the latter half of the decade. The unemployed number in 1999-00 was greater than the employed number in the organized sector.

After a decade of neo-liberal reforms, widespread poverty and a slow rate of improvement in human development indicators should not come as a shock because, by design, it was embedded in the structural adjustment programme. The factor blamed is the reduction in urban infrastructure spending due to strict control over public sector

spending, priority sector credit allocation, the decline of small-scale exporters due to the removal of export subsidies, and the promotion of stock market-based investment rather than banks. All of this created hurdles in the production process of small enterprises, which are more labour-intensive. Above this, the pressure from the international market due to removal and reduction in tariffs increased the competition and made lots of marketing infeasible for the small firms in India. This increased competition even forced many manufacturers to resort to more capital-intensive techniques, which they ultimately import, hence not bringing more employment to the country. So, the output growth seen in various sectors of the economy had low labour absorption capacity. In the Indian case, the structural adjustment program reformers missed this Indian economic feature that public and private investments complement each other (Ghosh, 2004; Mitra, 2006).

1.3 Employment Trend after a Decade of Liberalisation

Neo-Liberal policies were ubiquitously criticized before the Employment-Unemployment Survey in 2004-05. Estimates of the 61st NSSO round were a relief for the proponents of reforms. The employment growth rate of 4.2 per cent per annum outpaced the growth rate of the working-age population, with the rural sector growing at 2.4 per cent per annum & urban at 3.7 per cent per annum. This huge employment growth was fuelled mainly by an increase in the employment of women. The share of self-employed workers increased, and that of casual workers decreased, opposing the trend of previous rounds. Most of the increase in employment of men happened in non-farm activities. The rate of informalisation accelerated with the construction sector playing a major role (Chand, Srivastava, and Singh, 2017; Ghosh and Chandrasekhar, 2007; Himanshu, 2011; Kundu and Mohanan, 2009) . Although an increase in employment was a success story of liberalisation reforms for many, the life quality does not seem to improve as most of the increase in employment was non-gainful. Critics noticed the lack of wage employment opportunities between 1999-2005 and argued the employment growth to be distress-driven (Ghosh and Chandrasekhar, 2007; Unni and Raveendran, 2007). Abraham (2009) and Himanshu (2011) claimed that the increase in the proportion of women in agriculture

majorly derived from the agrarian distress in that period, which pushed women to work on their farms. Women actively joined the farms to stop the agricultural household incomes from falling further. Himanshu included children, the elderly, and women in the reserve army of the labour force, who are pushed into the labour force in situations of distress. Mazumdar (2004) noticed the immediate increase in the share of unpaid family workers -a category recorded in the NSSO survey, which is the major category for the increase in women's employment in this period. This cannot be seen as a positive thing rather reflects the shift from paid employment to unpaid family work. Moreover, Sundaram and Tendulkar (2006) and Unni and Raveendran (2007) doubted the statistical validity of the 61st NSSO round. Rawal and Saha (2015) also questioned the credibility of the 61st round and were not satisfied with the explanations like the increase in labour absorption capacity or comparative shift to family labour. They mentioned a lack of explanatory evidence for these factors in primary studies or farm management surveys based on a larger scale.

Although NSSOs 61st round estimated a massive increase in women's employment, the survey in 2009-10 (NSSO 66th round) estimated a more striking fall. A bleak picture of a limited jobs creation with the massive departure from the labour force (especially by women) and slow employment growth in the non-agricultural sector was vivid between 2004-05 and 2009-10. The shift to education among the youth is a positive development but does not explain the decline of the labour force participation rate. Lack of adequate employment generation even after economic growth during this period let the government to enact the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act in 2006. If employment growth happened in 2004-05 this would not have been required (Chandrasekhar and Ghosh, 2011). Since 2009-10 was also a drought year, some doubted the reliability of the survey. Others tried to reason out the sudden decline in women's employment figure with the increase in girl school enrolments and the positive income effect of upward income mobility due to the growth in the economy Abraham (2013), Mehrotra *et al.* (2014), Rangarajan, Kaul, and Seema (2018), and Thomas (2012).

Mehrotra *et al.* (2014) added outmigration of men to be the other reason for the decline in the female labour force as the burden of housework increased on the women. However, various scholars argued out migration is the reason for the increase in womens

employment in 2004-05. Abraham (2013) blamed the gender norms of the patriarchal society. With the rise in household incomes, the households economic need for women declined, and women withdrew from the labour force. However, as most of this decline in the women's labour force was coming from poor rural households, the improvement in economic condition to be a significant driver of the fall in the women's labour force becomes contradictory (Kannan and Raveendran, 2012). Agnihotri, Mazumdar, and Neetha (2013) made a broad policy argument, scrutinising the implementation of 1991 liberalisation reforms and blaming them for the long-term trend of worsening employment scenarios. Rawal and Saha (2015) contended that the fall in women's employment because of a decrease in the labour absorption in agriculture was related to increased concentration of cultivable land and mechanisation. The lack of increase in non-farm employment opportunities makes the situation grimmer. Moreover, the hindrances in women's mobility due to the unavailability of basic amenities and other safety issues make the task challenging to shift the rural women workforce to urban areas.

The share of workers in non-farm activities increased slightly in 2009-10; this trend was in rhythm with the previous employment pattern in the non-farm sector. The participation of rural workers in the non-farm sector has been growing, although deceleratingly since the 1980s (Abraham, 2009; Bhalla, 2002; Bhaumik, 2002; Chadha and Sahu, 2002). However, contrary to the general notion, non-farm activities growth did not complement the agriculture sector as desired. Reasons being lack of better distributive effects Jatav and Sen (2013) and evidence of the inequitable distribution of the benefits of rural non-farm sectors Reardon *et al.* (2000). Several studies describe the growth in the non-farm sector as a manifestation of casual employment expansion in public works, which in turn appears to have been driven by MGNREGA (Chowdhury, 2011). MGNREGA happens to be a massive employer of the female labour force between 2004-05 and 2009-10, also described as a period of feminisation of casual work Jatav and Sen (2013).

Nine million new jobs were generated in NSSO's 68th round between 2009-10 and 2011-12. It was seen as a rebound from the stagnancy of 2004-05 and 2009-10 period. However, the average growth of employment within this period remained low at 2.5 million per year (Shaw, 2013). Usami and Rawal (2018) shows that changes in

employment in 2004-05 and 2011-12 are driven by low levels of employment creation in activities like construction, absorbing the male workforce with the lowest skills. Moreover, the declining labour absorption capacity of agriculture is pushing women out of the labour force. Construction unfolded as the employer of last resort, needing strenuous labour and hiring workers with minimum literacy levels.

NSSO's 68th round was the last quinquennial employment unemployment survey. After its discontinuation, a new survey was designed by NSSO - Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), and it was implemented in 2017-18, which created too much noise around the employment questions in the news and among academicians for many reasons. Firstly, the 2017-18 report was leaked due to the delay in releasing the data and report. After that, unemployment estimates were shockingly high relative to the previous estimates. This fear led some officials and scholars to doubt the comparability of the two data sets. Although statistically, the two rounds are comparable for the similarly defined estimates in both surveys. The comparison of the two survey estimates will be discussed in the next chapter.

Nonetheless, even before the estimates of the PLFS 2017-18 went viral, demonetisation happened in November 2016, the ghost of which might still be haunting our country, followed by the haphazard implementation of GST. Scholars were characterising the period after 2015-16 as jobless growth tenure, and the Long Kisan March of 2018 revalidated their statement signalling the churning of distress in the country. The PLFS estimates when released confirmed this characterisation.

Mehrotra and Parida (2021) argued that the employment crisis of 2011-12 to 2018-19 arose due to the stalled structural transformation as the non-farm sector failed to create effective demand for skilled workers. The employment crisis not only badly affected the real wages but also the GDP growth and incidence of poverty. This was in contradiction to the phase between 2004-05 to 2011-12 of India's structural transformation due to high GDP growth rates and poverty reduction. India started to be categorized as a lower middle-income country during 2004-05 to 2011-12 (Chauhan *et al.*, 2016).

However decline in the labour force was witnessed during 2004-05 to 2011-12 as well, slower for men and relatively faster for women. Various reasons, as discussed

earlier were argued for this like increase in enrolment of a student in secondary and higher education (Hirway, 2012; Kannan and Raveendran, 2012; Mehrotra *et al.*, 2014; Rangarajan, Kaul, and Seema, 2018; Thomas, 2012), increased mechanisation of the agricultural work (Himanshu, 2011), increased cultivable land consolidation (Rawal and Bansal, 2021) and rise in cost of cultivation (Narayanamoorthy, 2013). This decline in the labour force aggressively continued post 2011-12 even though the size of the working-age population and educated labour force increased (Kannan and Raveendran, 2019; Kapoor, 2015; Kapoor and Krishnapriya, 2019; Mehrotra and Parida, 2019). Supply-side factors like poor education, weak ability due to bad training quality, and labour market skill mismatches were argued to be the reasons (Agrawal and Agrawal, 2017; Ajithkumar, 2016; Hajela, 2012; Mitra, 2018; National Skill Development Corporation, 2013; Singh, Parida, and Awasthi, 2020; World Bank, 2008). This issue of skill was a direct phenomenon derived from the rise in open unemployment of educated youth (Ahmed, 2016; Mehrotra and Parida, 2019).

PLFS 2017-18 estimates were dramatic; not only was the trend of decline in female workforce participation rate continued, but it intensified. Furthermore, the upward rise in the youth unemployment rate is alarming and very concerning. Sundar and Sapkal (2019) direct this to the failed government policies to promote business, subsequently failing to create jobs for the highly educated younger cohorts. As the Indian economy is informal most of the regular employment is precarious in nature. Doubts are cast on the proponents of labour law reformers who understand employment as a mere number and do not think about its quality. Nath and Basole (2020) emphasised the requirement of good data and sound measures of employment generation over time. To close the debate around the absolute projections of employment statistics they used a demographically nuanced technique of cohort-component method. They mentioned two important aspects of employment trends first, an overall weakening in employment growth and a decline in the absolute number of employments in the case of women. The implication of this remains ambiguous to them as is it due to a decline in work opportunities or due to an improvement in household incomes. Some studies before them showed absolute increase of 23.6 millions in employment (Bhandari and Dubey, 2019), and other absolute decline of 9.1 million (Mehrotra and Parida, 2019), 6.2million

(Kannan and Raveendran, 2019), 15.5 million (Himanshu, 2019) and 9.9 million (Nath and Basole, 2020). The difference in estimates is basically due to the difference in the projection method. Whereas the estimate that has shown an increase in employment is using a different definition of employment than others i.e Bhandari and Dubey are using the usual principal status whereas others are using the usual principal subsidiary definition as a more general and comprehensive way to measure employment in India. Kannan and Raveendran (2019) characterized the period between 2011-12 to 2017-18 as job-loss growth regime defined as a net fall in employment when the output growth is positive. Mention how the employment crisis intensified from 2004 to 2005 as we moved from the phase of job-less growth to job-loss growth. They discussed multiple factors for such a regime like over-estimation of growth, mechanisation of agriculture, lack of growth in unskilled sectors like construction, immobility of women workers, and decline in public administration due to increased contractualisation. As the less educated workforce is the primary victim they hypothesized that the combination of demonetization and GST reforms adversely affected the unorganised sector, which majorly employs the less educated. This study will further the analysis of employment trends in India, by critically looking at the disaggregated employment trend between 2011-12 and 2018-19 for India using the data from NSSO and PLFS.

1.4 Gender, Caste and Labour Market Segmentation

While analysing the Indian employment structure, it becomes important to see it through the lens of caste and gender, as gender and social discrimination are key issues in the Indian labour market (Agrawal, 2014). The structural inequalities based on class, caste and gender have existed in Indian society for a long. And with the growing grimness of the employment scenario in the country, it becomes imperative to look at the employment situation through the lens of caste and gender. This section will be an assessment of the gender and caste situation in the labour market in India.

Indian capitalism can be characterised distinctively as a large-size, unorganised economy with low labour absorption capacity and comparatively high growth. Only 7 per cent out of the huge 390 million labour force are in the organised sector, i.e. they

work in registered firms and have access to social security systems (Harriss-White and Gooptu, 2001). The Indian labour market is too complicated to be modelled using supply and demand alone. The unorganised nature of our economy can be seen typically through small firms and workers without proper contract jobs. Even firms with a workforce of hundreds deliberately hire labour on casual contracts. Unorganised labour is selectively incorporated in practically every organised firm, including state-run corporations. Most of the work is unregulated by the state, evident from the enormous size of the informal economy; however, labour arrangements are still structured. Factors like non-class social identities control the market through segmentation and fragmentation.

The structural change component of labour reallocation and transfers to the productive sector has been deficient even when there was service led high output and productivity growth in the first decade of the 21st century. This was expected as India had investment-driven growth in this period. While only minor improvement was seen in employment structure, this period mainly witnessed improvement in real earnings and composition for all workers (Majid, 2019). However, this improvement was not equitably distributed across gender, social groups and regions. Many socio-economic studies have focused on this aspect. Like Harriss-White and Gooptu (2001) focused on the role of caste in shaping ideologies of status and work. According to her, caste plays an essential role in the labour market in India. It compartmentalises the labour market into non-competing groups with very constrained options, stratifies pay, screens entry into the non-farm economy and affects the status, quality and location of women's work. Constitutionally, caste and tribal people are entitled to positive discrimination in the public sphere to rectify their social and economic backwardness and deprivation. However, reserved posts only absorb a minuscule portion of qualified ones. The rest are left for the segmented labour market further reinforced with caste-based reservation, with limited job opportunities. She mentioned the role of caste in organising small traders/petty producers to support the local capital, thus limiting class conflict by unanimously pushing labour issues down. The reliance on vertical caste ties (where employed and employees belong to the same caste) seems to help the labour get work in the context of caste solidarity. Still, the same solidarity stops them from raising voices against exploitative practices. Caste status plays an essential role in inclusion

or exclusion from any particular sector of the labour market. Indian social structure facilitates and simplifies the control and organisation of labour. Liberalisation has intensified the struggle to fight the capital as it assumes the availability of cheap labour to be India's comparative advantage. Babara Hariss's work explains at a structural level how caste interacts with the labour market and shapes ideologies of status and work type. Giving insights into the functioning of caste in the Indian setup.

However, several micro studies have unidimensionally looked at caste based discrimination in the labour market in terms of occupation and wages. One of the earliest being Banerjee and Knight (1985), an urban field study talking about relatively profound caste discrimination in operative jobs than white-collar jobs. Due to a significant difference in the contacts used in the recruitment methods. They showcased Indian labour market discrimination against marginalised social groups (SCs/STs), specifically in recruiting non-public regular wage/salaried jobs. The role of networks in informal and personal recruitment is also emphasised by Deshpande and Newman (2007) & Jodhka and Newman (2007) while studying patterns in hiring practices. Employers were found to be conscious about the social identity of the applicants while showing allegiance to merit and simultaneously being ignorant about the unequal playing field in terms of caste, which produces merit. Significant differences among call-backs to the Hindu from non-marginalised castes and the other two categories of Dalit & Muslim were seen by Thorat and Attewell (2007). Siddique (2009) in a study based in Chennai tests for interaction between caste and gender and reveals that Dalit women received the lowest callbacks. She explored the intersectionality of caste and gender in determining the opportunities and roles in the labour market.

The above studies were based on primary data and a small survey showing the presence of caste based discrimination in the urban labour market in the form of job availability and acceptance. Adding to the literature are studies based on NSSO data analysing the presence of caste based discrimination in the labour market in the form of employment type and wages. Das and Dutta (2007) study based on NSSO's data for 2004-05 mentions that chances of securing a regular job are three times higher for Hindus from non-marginalised caste than SCs & STs. Wage discrimination was seen as the earning gap between SC/ST workers and non-SC/ST worker is about 15

per cent in urban labour markets. Madheswaran and Attewell (2007) concluded that marginalised sections are discriminated against in public and private sectors. It also mentions that occupational discrimination is extra noticeable than wage discrimination within a respective job.

Thorat, Mahamallik, and Sadana (2010) came up with empirical evidence on market discrimination of Scheduled Castes (SCs) in employment, wages, in the purchase of input and sale of output by SC farmers and entrepreneurs, as well as discrimination in non-market institutions in the education, health spheres such as food in schools, primary health centres and fair price shops. The study pointed out that low income and high poverty of SCs, among other reasons, are due to exclusion and discrimination. Thorat and Madheswaran (2018) finds that SCs not only lack endowments but also face unexplained discrimination, further revalidating the phenomenon of the marginalised section having high poverty and low income. Results also show favouritism towards non-marginalised caste referred to as High Caste in literature, in the private sector within areas like nature of employment and marital status. The evidence of caste based wage gap was more dominant among individuals belonging to higher quintiles of labour distribution. This discrimination against the marginalised section was operating through a channel of occupation segregation, it was found that job discrimination was more profound than wage discrimination. The latest analysis of Thorat (2021) have confined their analysis to urban regular salaried workers(15-65 years) and compared the level of caste based discrimination in the Indian Labour market in terms of employment, wage, and occupations. They found that caste based discrimination against SCs is much high in employment than in wages. Most of the above literature talked about the explained and unexplained differences among caste groups in the labour market. Caste channels into the system through local networks and social stereotypes which make access to basic endowments like education, vocational skills, merit, location, professional degree, and right information difficult. This is also a form of discrimination, whereas most of the above literature considers discrimination to exist only when there is an unexplained difference in attributes i.e. when an individual with the same endowments have different employment status and wages. Firstly, the huge caste based difference in acquiring endowments is also discriminatory in nature. Secondly, the later part of

the unexplained difference can be understood with a grassroots understanding of the channels through which caste functions. For these reasons, this study has not tried to differentiate between these two categories when trying to understand the intensity of caste based discrimination in the labour market. Moreover, these methods restrict the analysis to regular workers and urban areas mostly excluding the massive informal sector. This study in the next chapter has analysed the employment situation for different castes for all the individuals employed in the labour market in terms of employment status, occupation and wages.

When it comes to women, the private and public features of their labour are intertwined. Usually, the conception of wage (public) labour overlaps the private structures of family and social reproductions along with the caste dimensions which is inescapable. Labour is not a uniformly homogenous group, rather it generates from evident engagement with the material realities of everyday life. Bringing diversity into different labour arrangements is influenced by relations of gender, caste and class (Menon, 2019). Having discussed how the labour market is affected by caste, the focus will now shift to gender, especially women. This is a complex category and has been discussed and debated a lot in literature.

Multiple factors material, structural, and intersectional are responsible for the declining trends in the female labour force participation rate since the 1980s. The advent of the neoliberal regime and subsequent shift in macroeconomic policy further intensified these factors leading to a significant decline in female formal employment, which further boosted the informalisation process thus adversely affecting women's world of work. Apart from some critical concerns in informal sector employment like lack of security, bad working condition, and lack of many other decent work conditions, there is a strong gender dimension to it. Because the majority of the women are employed here. The overrepresentation of Women in casual work and self-employment in official estimates has continued (Papola, 2013). Women's wages and work conditions are far worse than their male counterparts. Lack of basic amenities like maternity leave and childcare benefits are absent, which also demotivates women to work outside their homes. NSSO estimates by Raveendran, Sudarshan, and Vanek (2013) and Dasgupta and Verick (2016) show that around 15 per cent of non-agricultural workers in India are home-based workers and

around 30 per cent are women employed in the non-agriculture sector are in home-based work.

The report of the National Commission on Self-Employed Women and Workers in the Informal Sector in 1988, *Shramshakti* states that all women are workers because they are producers and reproducers. Even when they are not employed, they are involved in socially productive and reproductive labour all of which are absolutely necessary for the survival of the society. Womens work as homemakers must be recognized as social/economic production. Even the time-use researchers are arguing for a long time that NSSO and now PLFS rounds are not covering the full picture in terms of engagement of women in economic activities (Hirway, 2012; Hirway and Jose, 2011). A major reason being the survey/questionnaire is not able to capture the work of women due to its informal nature or other multidimensionality. Along with this social constructs led to the discounting of some of the women's activities which should ideally be tagged as economic activities in these interviews. Time use survey also shed light on the time poverty aspect of a women's life, meaning that women not only work for long hours doing a petty tasks and relatively low wages or engaged in self-employment with minimal remuneration but along with that they are also involved in the unpaid labour required to meet the consumption need of their family members and themselves (Ghosh, 2021).

Scholars have talked about the biased definitions and methods to analyse gender work. Henceforth, it is not surprising that estimates based on official data show a declining trend in female labour force participation rate in paid work (Agnihotri, Mazumdar, and Neetha, 2013). This declining trend has continued in 2017-18 as well, with this temporal trend it is becoming more evident that more women are engaged either in domestic duties or unpaid self-employment (Dasgupta and Verick, 2016). The recent decline in womens employment rates also showcases a transition from paid to unpaid work. Ghosh (2021) argued that if women engaged in domestic duties of their households are included in the labour force then the workforce picture would be very different from the conventional one, which sees most women as not working. Within the set women were recognised as employed as well, most of them either casual workers or unpaid self-employed workers (Papola, 2013).

Bhogal (2019) claims the continued existence of inequalities in employment opportunities in India due to gender, caste and class. Moreover, it was found that women in India are paid 34 per cent less than men with similar qualifications and tasks. Irrespective of economic development, wage level holds a primary position in determining the standard of living of the earners and their families. And in retrospect indicating economic progress and social justice. India is labelled as an emerging economy in its status as a G20 member country, however, employment and wage figures paint a different picturesque. The share of wage workers is very low in the total Indian workforce in comparison to other emerging Asian countries. This is also because a large number of a worker in India are self-employed doing disguised labour, piece-rate work or engaged in petty trade. But this does not decrease the importance of wages, as changes in the wage level in the market directly impact the earnings of other labour.

As modern and traditional sectors still co-exist in the Indian economy, this dual nature henceforth has segmented the labour market as well. So any trend needs to be analysed in the context of class, caste and gender among other things. The wage level is an essential indicator of the living standard of the wage earner and their family, and it also indicates the overall economic progress and social justice. A large amount of literature exists on wage questions in India. Literature on a question like wage trends in the economy and specific sectors, wage disparities related to gender and social identity, and the relation between labour productivity and wage share. As most studies do not differentiate between casual and regular wages, studying this in detail becomes essential. Some aggregate trends in wages are mentioned below.

The wage growth of regular and casual workers in urban and rural areas had a positive trend since the 1980s; however, the post-reform growth is slower than the pre-reform period (Karan and Sakthivel, 2008). Along with the difference in wage earnings of the rural and urban sectors, casual and regular workers earn differential wages, and regular workers' wage growth is accelerating compared to casual workers (Sarkar and Mehta, 2010). Studies show an aggregate reduction of the wage gap in urban and rural areas, although the wage gaps are still significant (Hnatkowska, Lahiri, and Paul, 2012). As regular workers constitute formal and informal workers, the wage earnings of formal regular workers are significantly higher than those of regular informal workers (Papola

and Kanan, 2017).

Wage disparity in gender is a common characteristic of a labour market, and India's case is similar. Scholars have found evidence of substantial gender wage differences across industries, occupations, education levels, and locations of work. This gender wage disparity is starker in rural areas than in urban areas (Rustagi, 2005). There has been a decline in wage differences between men and women over the years due to the higher wage growth of women (Karan and Sakthivel, 2008). Many micro studies broke the wage differentials into endowment effects, which can be explained by productive characteristics and unexplained- discrimination effect and showed clear gender based discrimination against women in terms of wages earned (Chakraborty and Mukherjee, 2014; Duraisamy and Duraisamy, 2014; Glinskaya and Lokshin, 2005; Jacob, 2006; Kingdon and Unni, 1997; Mukherjee and Majumder, 2011; Poddar and Mukhopadhyay, 2019). Indian case significant portion belongs to the unexplained part. Duraisamy and Duraisamy (2014) study finds an increase in occupational segregation and a decline in the gender wage gap between 1983 to 2011-12. However, studies show gender discrimination in wages, partly from occupational and industrial segregation based on gender. Summing up till 2011-12, most of the studies show the presence of gender wage discrimination. However, the wage gap declines over time due to wage growth and better endowment effects among women like education, health facilities, and other endowments.

Despite the recognition of gender and caste equality in law and the presence of affirmative action in public spheres, the labour market is segregated on the basis of these individual identities now also. It is important to explore how these structural inequalities penetrate into the labour outcomes. Because poor labour market outcomes in terms of employment opportunities, job type and wage rates are converted into poor status of living. Thus increasing inequality in the society. The focus of the next chapter will be to explore how has the employment scenario changed in between 2011-12 to 2018-19. The special emphasis will be given to gender and caste dimensions. The study will try to explore how has the inequality in labour market changes in terms of employment type, occupation type and wages.

Chapter 2

Employment in India

2.1 Introduction

The Indian economy has been under pressure due to domestic and global factors for over a decade since the 2007-2008 global recession (Lokare, 2014). Additionally, with the implementation of the infamous twin blows of Demonetization (2016) and Goods and Services Tax (GST 2017), the shovel of recession pushed further for an already strained economy (Verma, Nema, and Verma, 2020). The revised estimates of national accounts statistics 2020-21 suggests the economic growth rate of India had declined from 8.3 per cent in 2016-17 to 3.7 per cent in 2019-20, the year before the pandemic. As there was a downward revision of estimate, it is clear that the economic health of India was worse than what was estimated. Within three year country economic growth declined by more than half, that too when no droughts, no major financial crisis, or no external shocks happened. The Indian economy was in recession before the pandemic hit in March 2020, which makes it crucial to understand what went wrong. Covid-19 crisis further intensifies the problem, as it is a compendious supply and demand shock for the world affecting output, inflation and employment. Tight and slack labour markets are coexisting due to it. Both, the stagflationary negative sectoral supply shocks and the deflationary negative demand shocks generated massive unemployment (Baqae and Farhi, 2020). The recession India was facing before Covid paved the way for stagflationary forces now (Victor *et al.*, 2021) .

The effect of the pandemic has been so cruel that all well being indicators like job availability, income level, poverty level, and overall inequality have worsened. The state of the Indian economy is abysmal from all dimensions, distress is widespread across all sectors. According to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy estimates the unemployment level moved to double digits at 14.73 per cent in the week ending on May 23,2020. Affecting mainly petty traders,casual labourers,and small and micro-enterprises. The jobs were lost by many regular salaried workers who end up engaging as informal workers. The rise is seen in the informal and contract labour mainly through gig economy leading increased vulnerability to future shocks (Reddy, 2021). The vulnerability of casual workers was very vivid, due to massive displacement of migrant workers who were displaced after the nationwide lockdowns imposed in 2020 (Kumar and Choudhury, 2021).

Indubitably, we are in peculiar circumstances due to the pandemic, and understanding any changes in the economy presently will be difficult without considering the pandemic. However, a glimpse of the status of the Indian economy before 2020 shows things were quite bad in terms of the overall parameter of well-being; problems such as a slow rate of job creation and lack of political commitment to improving working conditions which trapped a large section of the workforce without access to any employment security or social protection were present (Himanshu, 2019; Kannan and Raveendran, 2019).

Since, the Indian economy was hit by recessionary forces long before 2020 the employment crisis also predates Covid. The widespread distress and ongoing increase in inequality signals the same. According to Chancel *et al.* (2021) India's inequality level in terms of the ratio of the average income of Top10 over Bottom50 is very extreme. The welfare of the wealthy section is improving faster than people than the bottom 50 per cent of the income hierarchy. The bottom 50 per cent holds only 13 per cent of the income share, whereas the top 10 per cent holds 57 per cent of the national income. An overall income level across the globe also decreased in 2020. Nevertheless, the burden of the falling income level is shared disproportionately due to the rise in inequality. Why did the pandemic that hit worldwide increased inequality? Answer to this is not a puzzle for anyone well versed with the status of the Indian economy and the ways

in which pandemic was dealt with in our country. Government took steps to control the spread of the virus through massive lockdowns without considering the adverse impact on the informal economy, which created chaos and highlighted the deep rooted flaws in the society. It is essential to study the state and the structure of the Indian employment status to understand the basics of inequality in the society in which the pandemics hit. The Indian employment situation has always been a puzzling question for the economist, questions like why is the employment elasticity of manufacturing sector declining, what is the reason for the decline in agricultural productivity, where are the women workers going, when will the informal economy absorption stop and the growth in the informal economy be seen. Is non-farm diversification happening? All these are some basic questions which need to be addressed every now and then.

The employment situation in India faces challenges of various kinds. Documentations suggest that in the last decade, i.e. since 2010, every critical marker related to workers' well-being like employment generation, wage share, and work conditions have deteriorated despite the massive increase in wealth globally and historically unmatched levels of productivity increase (Jha, 2019). Not only is more the 3/4th of the world's labour force is engaged in informal work, mostly in regions that are tagged as developing, but the labour force of developed nations are also joining the same trap as more and more of them are tagged as precarious workers, workers with either zero or flexible contract, agency work, or platform work (Bonnet, Vanek, and Chen, 2019). The traditional framework of organising production, industrial relations and emphasis on the state in regulating capital and labour are history. Summarising the current labour situation worldwide, one can say that along with pre-existing challenges of decent structural transformation in the world of work, other issues are being added with time.

The pandemic highlighted the dysfunctionality of the capitalist system, as it is based on prioritising profits over the peoples need (Shang, Li, and Zhang, 2021). However, discomfort with the capitalist system is also very old in India, with the introduction of neo-liberal regime problems like increased pressure of finding decent employment prospects, increasing informalisation and contractualisation have strongly arisen among other things (Jha and Yeros, 2021; Patnaik, 2021b). Acknowledging the massive literature written on the above topic, the simplest way to explain neoliberalism will be to use

the Washington Consensus:- 'market knows and does the best for the economy; leave it to the market'. Moreover, rest are various types of it; the present one is contemporary globalisation, and according to Jha (2019), the structure of growth and accumulation now has adversely impacted overall outcomes for labour in this era. Kuhn, Milasi, and Yoon (2018) of the International Labour Organization states that South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa belong to the most questionable regions in terms of employment. They also account for more than 70 percent of workers stuck in the viciousness of unstable and unsafe employment conditions. India belongs to the same category, as its unemployed population has increased, and the share of people in vulnerable jobs is also increasing. Around 90 per cent of the job in India belongs to the Informal sector. Moreover, a report by the World Bank titled 'Jobless Growth?' paints a grim picture, as demographic transition all over the world is increasing the share of the working-age population in the majority of South Asia. This implies that such a country needs to generate employment, but its speed needs to be fast enough for the proportion of employed to remain constant. On the contrary, there is a perception that the advantages of an increase in the working-age population are offset by the fall in the employment rate, mainly due to a decline in women's employment (World Bank, 2018). The story is similar for India, which magnifies the challenges of the Indian employment situation. Simply attending to the quantity problem poses a considerable challenge, how and when will the quality issue be addressed.

2.2 Objective

An important parameter impacting employment is the productivity status of a country. National Account Statistics shows GDP growth numbers of India have been doing reasonably well from the start of 2011-12, with a growth rate of more than 5 per cent. The growth rate trajectory had an upward trend after that, reaching the peak in 2016-17, with a growth rate of 8.3 per cent. Thereafter it picked up a declining movement going 5.9 per cent in 2018-19. Considering that this fall came in the backdrop of a shock like demonetisation in November 2016, and then immediately after it, the GST reforms next year. Both these policy shocks rattled the economy from top to bottom. Mainly

bottom because the impact still has not been accounted for, primarily because of the inaccessible nature of the informal economy in India. However, the churning of crisis happened after 2011-12 itself, firstly as the high growth rate was not validated due to the mistrust of the new 2011-12 GDP series introduced in 2015 (Goldar, 2015; Nagaraj, 2015), secondly, a look at the real variable like capital formation, investment flows and foreign trade; a stagnation is witnessed in construction and industrial production since 2011-12 (Mazumdar, 2017).

The study of the employment situation plays a vital role in understanding the well being of any nation. Even though most of the macroeconomic parameters like GDP, debt to GDP ratio, Investment level, inflation, trade deficit are essential to understand, discuss and comment on the vital of any nation but very broadly. It becomes difficult to assess the individual's well-being through these parameters. On the other hand, assessing the employment statistics tells not just about the well being of the population but also its well-being distribution. This is a vital characteristic given the magnitude of poverty and inequality in our country. Moreover, a re-distributive policy which we lack heavily, cannot take the entire responsibility for this. India needs employment growth, so that burden of inequality can be decreased. Therefore a look at the change in the workforce structure of India becomes very necessary.

Setting the premise to study the employment situation in India; a comparison between 2011-12 and 2018-19 statistics needs to be done, i.e. the period which is characterised by high investment and growth rates and the period which faced the brunt of two successive policy shock and was in the recessionary pressure even before the pandemic become essential. Therefore, this study aims to look at the employment estimates from 2011-12 and 2018-19 and analyse the employment status in India. The study will looking to the change in employment structure with industry for respective gender and sector. Thereafter, the employment situation in India is analysed through the lens of caste and gender using tools like employment status, occupation and wages. The objective of this study are as follows-

1. To study the broad changes in the employment structure of working age population between 2011-12 and 2018-19 with respect to gender, industry and occupation.

2. To analyse the role of caste and religion in determining employment, occupation type and earnings.

2.3 Data Source and Methodology

The four potential sources to measure employment and unemployment are household surveys, enterprise surveys, administrative data and data from government schemes. The household survey is the most widely accepted and comprehensive way to collect employment data in any country (NITI Aayog, 2017). In a country like India where a majority of the population is either self-employed or engaged in a vast number of small unorganised enterprises. The other three measure a not able to do justice in capturing the data of the entire population.

Several agencies, departments, and ministries collect and disseminate data for employment in India. Some primary agencies involved in this task are the Central Statistical Office (CSO) and the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, the Labour Bureau of the Ministry of Labour and Employment and the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

The official household survey for India has been the Employment-Unemployment Survey conducted by NSSO under MoSPI. The Employment-Unemployment Survey (EUS) data have been used for the longest time i.e after independence, to assess the employment situation of the country. The other source of household level data is the Population Census under the Office of Registrar General and Census Commissioner. But it happens once in a decade making it pointless in analysing real time situations.

Labour force statistics provided by EUS is considered the most comprehensive survey in India (Pais and Rawal, 2021) .As it cover the households from all over India. In 1955, it was conducted for the first time in the 9th round of the NSSO. The current format of quinquennial surveys is based on the M.L.Dantwala committee report, which started in the 27th round in 1972-73. Since then, eight quinquennial surveys have been conducted with the last one taking place in 2011-12. The EUS survey is carried out over an entire year to account for seasonal variation in employment.However, the

problem with EUS is its quinquennial nature which makes the real time analysis of employment estimates difficult. To solve this issue, policymakers started the annual as well as quarterly EUS data collected by the Labour Bureau from 2009-10. It continued till 2015-16 and was discontinued thereafter.

A Task Force was set up in 2017 to examine this major concern and issues relating to timely and comprehensive employment data systems and recommend a way to suggest improvement in employment data. An important recommendation was to remove the quinquennial EUS done by NSSO, start the annual household survey with quarterly modules and revisit schedules (NITI Aayog, 2017). This survey is called as Periodic Labour Force Survey. There are three rounds of PLFS survey available now, for the years 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20. This study analyses the change in employment situation by comparing the two Periodic Labour Force Surveys (PLFSs) (2017-18 and 2018-19) with the EUS of 2011-12. Doubts have been cast on the compatibility of the two data sources (Abraham and Shrivastava, 2019; Bhalla and Das, 2018; Kapoor, 2019). However, the sample design and sampling frame of both the surveys are similar and their data capture methods are almost the same. Multiple-stage sampling method and the technique of probability proportion to size is used in sample selection for both surveys. Both PLFS and EUS used the recently available village census data for rural sample frame design and recent Urban Frame Survey Blocks are used for urban areas.

No significant difference was seen in the sample size of the EUS and PLFS survey. Nonetheless, some minor differences were present, like EUS is a quinquennial survey and PLFS full report is released annually, along with quarterly estimates for urban areas. Rotational sampling design is used in urban areas in PLFS, leading to 3 revisits also in urban areas. Even though both the surveys are based on stratified random sampling, the criteria for the second stage stratum is different. The EUS stratifies based on consumption expenditure and/or livelihood, albeit PLFS uses the level of education as the stratification parameter. Additionally, new variables are present in the PLFS survey like gross monthly earnings of self-employed. The data for the intensity of work is present in hours in PLFS, whereas in EUS it was in terms of half day and full day. Concerns raised about educated households receiving more weightage in the survey are not justified. As weights are assigned according to the second stage stratum within each

first stage units. Although in the PLFS, second stage stratification is based on education (the number of household members having a secondary and above level of education) criterion instead of the monthly per capita spending of the households, the selection of first stage units (villages and urban wards) and the hamlet groups (sub-blocks of large FSUs) in both these surveys are based on same population size criteria. This is why the overall composition of the sample is representative of the population.

Therefore, it is established that both NSSO quinquennial rounds and PLFS round can be compared without any doubt and distrust. Because both the surveys used a similar interview schedule (to collect employment and unemployment, and other socio-economic and demographic information) and covered an equally large number of households across the states and Union Territories of India. Furthermore, both these surveys followed the same multi-stage stratified random sampling method and collected information in four distinct phases (sub-samples) during a year to address the seasonality issues.

The analysis in this paper is based on UPISA (Usual Principal Subsidiary Activity) Status and CWS (Current Weekly Status) which are used to calculate the activity status of the individual. The industrial classification is based on the National Industrial Classification (NIC) 1998 and 2008 codes after due concordance. While categorising industries, the study has majorly used the sections mentioned in National Industrial Classification. Some of the sections which are clubbed are Section D (Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply) and Section E (Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities) are called Electricity & Other Public Utilities. The Industrial category, Other Services include all the sections from Section J to Section U. The industries included are Information and communication, Financial and insurance activities, Real estate activities, Professional, Scientific and technical activities, Administrative and support service activities, Public administration and defence; compulsory social security, Education, Human health and social work activities, Arts, entertainment and recreation, Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods and services producing activities of households for own use, Activities of extraterritorial organizations and bodies and Other service activities. The occupation categories used are based on the National Classification of Occupation code 2004. The wages, earnings

and salary were adjusted according to real prices of the base year 2011-12.

While doing the caste and religion based analysis the category a firstly based on the caste defined under social groups in the data sources, after categorising Schedule Tribe, Schedule caste and Other Backward Classes. Other Muslims category was also formed to separately looks at the trends of Muslims from rest of the individual included in the Others category. This was done because as (Sachar, 2006) showed Muslim being the minority are deprived in many well-being parameters. Furthermore the study is using NSSO round 68-EUS for the year 2011-12, PLFS round I and II i.e the year 2017-18 and 2018-19. The latest PLFS round for the year 2019-20 is not included in the analysis, because the validity of estimates for some quarters is questionable and the survey round was stalled due to nation wide lockdown in 2020.

The study has done the panel level analysis of the employment estimates, calculated using population weights available in the data sources. Table and graphs are used throughout the study to analyse the trends. The study is using two data sources-

1. NSSO 68th round, Employment-Unemployment Survey 2011-12
2. Periodic Labour Force Survey 2017-18 and 2018-19.

2.4 Understanding the Difference Between Work and Employment

One would not be exaggerating in saying that work and employment have been central in human experiences throughout different stages of civilisation (Pahl, 1988). Individuals tend to associate their self-worth with their employment status and income level. At an aggregate level, it can be wisely said that no development strategy can work without delivering qualitative employment opportunities to its masses. However, before proceeding one has to understand the definition of work and the difference between work and employment.

In the thread of arguments, work can be majorly defined in two ways. Firstly, in terms of physical activity i.e the use of force to move mass (Nord *et al.*, 1990) and secondly, as an activity undertaken to earn a living (Polanyi, 2001). The former

definition however attracts major criticism. Its vague nature forces it to fall into the trap of generalisations where all human activities can be considered as work; even the recreational activities done in the leisure time. So, it can be said that Nord's definition of work tends to ignore the context in which activities are done and thereby makes it incomplete. The other definition of the work shifts from the above issue and focuses on defining work from an economic perspective. Work is defined as any activity for which one is paid for, or some remuneration is given. As work is defined as something that is produced for economic gain, scope for other work related behaviours diminishes. People using this definition implicitly assumed the idea of considering labour as a commodity (Kaufman, 2004). It is limited in the sense that it ignores all the unpaid activity one does. For example, a domestic worker doing the work of cleaning, cooking, washing clothes, has been paid the remuneration for the activities done. Therefore, this counts as work. However, when the same tasks are done as a part of domestic duties by the homemaker, it will not be considered work. Because no remuneration is given in this case. It is assumed the activities of homemakers are part of social duties and cannot be economically valued. This contradicts the payment done for similar activities to domestic workers. Many scholars have noted the social and political problems with the economic definition of work, which ultimately devalues unpaid labour (Brief and Nord, 1990).

Combining the two definitions into defining work as “a purposeful activity directed at producing a valued good or service”, value implied in terms of economic gains (Kaufman, 2004). According to this definition, full-time homemakers are working when they are engaged in household activities like cleaning, care giving, cooking, and washing because all these activities contain the economic value because if this work is outsourced, someone will be paid to do them. Concluding on the relatively acceptable definition of work, let's shift our focus to employment and its distinction from work.

Work and Employment are used interchangeably in common parlance as well as in social sciences. However, the basic difference between work and employment is that being without employment doesn't debar the possibility of engagement in any kind purposeful activity channelled to produce valued goods and services (Jahoda, 1981). Employment can be defined as work done for material rewards under some contractual arrangements (Kaufman, 2004). In order to comprehend employment, one has to

understand the two essential aspects of the definition which is, that it is a contractual arrangement and it is done for material reward thereby attaching the economic aspect to it. Though employment does not necessitate the existence of both the aspects together. In the case of self-employment, a contract is not necessary. It includes individuals who are independently or with family support engaged in purposeful economic activity in anticipation of some economic gains. A contract provides an exchange relationship of the nature wherein one is selling their labour in exchange of money or other material rewards. Contracts can vary a lot in terms of formality and explicitness (Rousseau, 1989). Employment contracts can range from permanent to daily task based work.

When dealing with numbers and estimates regarding paid work or employment, one has to use the official definition that is used in the surveys. Works standards definition used by the UN system of national accounts (“System of National Accounts” 1993), is- “Workers are seen as coterminous with economically active persons and are those who are engaged in activities included within the boundary of production.” Their understanding of what constitutes a production boundary includes productive activities for other use and self consumption done within and outside the household boundary. However, it tends to shift into grey areas with care giving activities of social reproduction- like producing a child among many, especially after the existence of surrogate motherhood, which is considered an economic activity (Ghosh, 2021).

The latest intervention by the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians ILO (2013) in the definitions of work and employment refined the definitions by expanding the diameter of work: ‘Work comprises any activity performed by persons of any sex and age to produce goods or to provide services for use by others or own use’. Making work independent of its formal and informal character. The term “for own use” clarified that all domestic activities are part of work as well. Only activities that do not include the production of goods and services like self-care, begging, stealing, sleeping, and other recreational activities that one cannot outsource to others are excluded. If one considers these definitions of work, the concept is significantly enlarged and inclusive now. Moreover, employment is just considered a subset of work done for some payment or profit.

With this understanding of work, NSSOs definition of economic activity seems

limiting. The definition used by NSSO considers only the production of primary goods for own consumption as economic activity. This exclusion of goods other than primary goods produced for self consumption makes the definition of economic activity restrictive. Looking at the classification done by the NSSO survey, employment codes include principal and subsidiary activity status codes 11 to 72. Other than this NSSOs have a vast category neither working nor available for work which includes activity status codes 91 to 99. Code 92 and 93 are for individuals who are attending to domestic duties and engaged in the free collection of goods and services for household use. Here activities are done for their own consumption and no material reward is involved, so NSSO's definition of economic activity does not include these categories. However, the category for code 21:activities of unpaid household help is included in work. This category should not be a part of employment as they are neither getting paid nor earning any profit from their work. If the argument for including them comes from the perspective that they are working as a facilitator of economic activity, henceforth should be included as a part of working individuals. An argument should be extended to the inclusion of individuals who are tagged under codes 92 and 93. As this doesn't happen there seems to be a fallacy in NSSOs adaptation of its definition of work and employment. There is another fallacy with the category unpaid household helper, i.e no one is paid in a self-employed household. The household enterprise interacts with the market. It might or not earn a surplus which is used for the expenses of the entire household, henceforth all the members. In reality, no one even the owner of the enterprise is not paying himself/herself in the case of small informal self-employed households.

WPR and Unemployment

Primary variables that are used to study the employment situation is the workforce participation rate or worker population ratio. The WPR is defined as the no. of employed persons as a percentage of the total population. Column 1 of Table 2.4 shows the WPR for India for the years 2011-12, 2017-18 and 2018-19. However, the glitch in using WPR is that we are talking about work and including only employed individuals in the analysis i.e UPSCA code 11 to 51. Because NSSO considers only these activities

as economic activity. This might be because many social scientists usually use work and employment simultaneously, making it a little confusing to understand the two terms and their definitions. If one wants to talk about worker population ratio, then code 92 and 93 should also be included, which does not happen conventionally. Only some scholars like Ghosh (2021) have used it in their analysis, reversing many long term gender-based employment trends. This study will not be going into that. But at the same time will not discredit the work done by homemakers as a part of domestic duties, by not including them when estimating the percentage of workers. This study consciously limits the analysis to employed workers. Therefore, in this study the term WPR will not be used, instead the term a percentage of individuals employed will be used.

A look at the percentage of working age¹ employed individuals in Table 2.4 shows that there is a massive decline in their share between 2011-12 to 2018-19. An estimated 6.7 per cent of the working-age population was not employed in 2018-19 compared to 2011-12. This signals shortage of labour demand in the economy due to factors like slowdown of the economy and increased capital dependency. Decline in labour supply although an expected factor for the decline in employment doesn't hold true for a country like India, which is stocked with a huge reserve army of labour. Generally, people expect decent work i.e well paid qualitative work opportunities however most of the Indians are ready to work and are working below minimum wage rates also (Papola and Kanan, 2017). This happens due to the dearth of work available and availability of surplus labour.

Furthermore, a parallel rise in the unemployment population rate was also seen between 2011-12 to 2018-19. Signalling that people are actively seeking for work and not finding it. An increased unemployment population rate is a sign of shortage in labour demand, however it underestimates the shortage of labour demand. Unemployment rate has been defined as the percentage of working age individuals not getting employment when they actively seek for it in their principal activity status (basically code 81 according to NSSO definitions) divided by the entire working age population. Implying

¹Working age implies individuals belonging to the age group of 15-59 years.

Table 2.1: Activity distribution of working age (15-59 years) population for 2011-12, 2017-18 & 2018-19.

Year	WPR	SPR	DPR	UPR	OPR
2011-12	57	13	27	1.3	1.6
2017-18	49.5	14.9	30	3.4	2.2
2018-19	50.3	14.9	29.1	3.3	2.4

Note: WPR- Worker Population Ratio, SPR- Student Population Ratio, DPR- Domestic Duties Population Ratio, UPR- Unemployed(Open) Population Ratio, OPR- Others Population Ratio

Source: Author calculation

one needs to actively seek for work and not find it to be called unemployed. The problem is this definition ignores the social toll of being unemployed. There is a sense of disappointment and low self esteem associated with being called unemployed. And many people who are actively looking for work for a significant time and end up finding nothing prefer being tagged under anything than being called unemployed. This means while counting most of the secondary data sources underestimate the number of unemployed individuals. There is a gender dimension also in under counting unemployment, with women almost always doing paid and unpaid work simultaneously, many times they miss the chance of falling under the unemployed category when transitioning from paid and unpaid work to doing unpaid work only. While discussing unemployment, various categories come to a head like Open Unemployment, Disguised Unemployment (Under-Employment), Frictional Unemployment, Structural Unemployment, Cyclical/Seasonal Unemployment. Out of these, only open employment is covered by the principal activity status code 81 defined as sought work or did not seek but was available for work in the usual activity status. This highlights that the unemployment rate as a measure to study unemployment underestimates the severity of the situation because it excludes disguised unemployment, structural unemployment, and cyclical unemployment.

In a country like India, with massive inequality, poverty, and drudgeries life situations, everyone would want to have paid work under the right circumstances. So the idea that 46.4 per cent of the working-age population(see Table 2.4) is out of the labour force in 2018-19 is amusing to think. The fact that labour force only constitutes

definitionally approved employed and unemployed individuals, underestimates the true size of labour force, which for poor and developing country like India is most of its working age population. This raises another issue with using unemployment rate (UR) as a measure, because the UR is a fraction of the labour force and not the working-age population. Hence, we are using the estimated number of people unemployed as the percentage of the working-age population as a measure to study open unemployment. An added advantage is that this makes the estimate comparable with other measures. Like, in Table 2.4, only 3.3 per cent of the working age population was openly unemployed in 2018-19, with a rise of around 2 per cent points from 2011-12, whereas the size of the employed workforce shrank by 6.7 per cent points. Another reason for the decline in employment can be an increase in student population ratio, but data shows that it increased by only 1.9 percentage points between 2011-12 and 2018-19. Increase in open unemployment and student enrolment only explained 58 per cent of the fall in employment in the study period. It is curious to think that the rest of the working age population is just sitting idle, not looking for any work. To explore this further it is vital to understand the kind of people who went out of paid work in these seven years. In the next section, we will study the changes in the employment structure between 2011-12 to 2018-19.

2.5 Broad Changes in Employment Structure

Rural Women Facing the Brunt of Declining Employment Opportunities

It is established that measuring and understanding unemployment in India through available secondary data sources is not a very reliable exercise. From now onwards this study will only look at those who are employed. Moreover, we will see the changes in the composition of those employed with respect to gender, sector, and industry. Changes in the employment structure of those employed between 2011-12 and 2018-19 for respective gender and sector are shown in Table 2.2 and Table 2.3.

Estimates in Table 2.2 show 75.8 per cent and 73.8 per cent of working-age rural

and urban men are respectively employed in 2018-19, an evident decline in comparison to 2011-12 when the percentage of rural men employed was 81.9 per cent of working-age rural men, and urban men employment share was 78.5 per cent of working-age population urban men. The percentage share of employed women is significantly less, 27.2 per cent of rural women of working age population are, and 20.2 per cent of urban women of working age population are employed in 2018-19. A decline of 9.9 per cent points from the 2011-12 share was seen in case of rural women whereas a minor decline of 0.9 per cent was seen for urban women. It is seen the decline seen in employment is driven majorly by the decline in rural women employment and than the rural and urban men.

This vast gap in the share of men and women employment derives from the fact that women engaged in domestic duties like care giving, housework, cooking and other social reproduction activities are not considered employed in data. Moreover, if one does not consider this fact, other factors like lack of mobility, access to a safe work environment, a bias towards hiring male employees, social constructs of marriage and children explain the vast gender gap in employment figures for years 2011-12 and 2018-19.

The gap between men's and women's employment estimates has increased in rural areas and decreased in urban areas. This is partly because rural women faced the highest decline in their employment estimates, i.e. a 9.9 per cent decline between 2011-12 to 2018-19. Whereas urban women only saw a slight decline of 1 per cent points. Decline in female labour force participation rate is something which India has been witnessing since 2000s (Kapsos, Bourmpoula, and Silberman, 2014). Studies were undertaken to analyse this trend of low and declining female LFPR attributed to education and income effect (Abraham, 2013; Rangarajan, Kaul, and Seema, 2018).

Employment crisis is common in most of the advanced capitalist economies; it happens when a significant proportion of the population is shunned out of employment. However, the Indian employment crisis is not only hitting those who are out of employment but almost everyone by reducing their days/time period of work (Patnaik (2021a)). This happens because a very tiny proportion of the workforce has full-time employment, rest are either self-employed like small shopkeepers, peasants or casual workers who are

Table 2.2: Percentage of working age (15-59 years) person employed (UPSA status)

Year	Rural		Urban	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
2011–12	37.1	81.9	21.1	78.5
2017–18	25.4	75.2	19.8	74.2
2018–19	27.2	75.8	20.2	73.8

Source: Author's calculation

dependent on the intensity of work. A look at Table 2.3 will establish this more clearly.

In terms of the composition of those employed in the type of work, individuals are primarily engaged in three categories: Casual workers, self-employed workers, and salaried/regular workers. A general consideration is that the work conditions in salaried jobs are better than in the other two categories because self-employment implies working in own fields, running tiny businesses like everyday necessity stores, or street vendors, among other things. The work condition and sustenance here is subjective to many random factors. And people who are doing very well being self-employed are just a tiny proportion of the workforce. Similarly, casual workers are mostly agricultural field labourers or construction workers; their plight and work condition are not hidden from anyone. However, this does not mean that salaried jobs are always better; with increased contractualization and uncertainty, the working conditions are deplorable, with them getting meagre wages, no certainty of jobs, no social security benefits and much more.

Table 2.3 shows a massive decline in the share of self-employed rural women and urban men among their respective working-age populations from 21.8 per cent and 31.7 per cent in 2011-12 to 16.1 per cent and 27.2 per cent in 2018-19, respectively. This decline of 5.7 per cent point and 4.5 per cent points among self-employed rural women and urban men, respectively, was one of the primary drivers of the fall in their employment. In fact, for urban men, it is a primary factor whereas, for rural women, a decline was also seen in the percentage of working-age rural women in casual works, from 13.1 per cent in 2011-12 to 7.9 per cent in 2018-19 i.e. a decline of around 5.2 percentage point in 7 years. Hence the massive 10 per cent decline seen among the working-age

Table 2.3: Percentage of working age (15-59 years) person employed (UPSA status) in broad categories of employment.

Type of Workers	Rural Women			Rural Men		
	2011–12	2017–18	2018–19	2011–12	2017–18	2018–19
Casual worker	13.1	8	7.9	30	21.9	22.3
Regular worker	2.2	2.8	3.2	9	11.4	11.7
Self-employed	21.8	14.6	16.1	42.9	41.9	41.8
Total	37.1	25.4	27.2	81.9	75.2	75.8

	Urban Women			Urban Men		
	2011–12	2017–18	2018–19	2011–12	2017–18	2018–19
Casual worker	2.9	2.6	2.1	11.6	11.2	10.5
Regular worker	9.3	10.6	11.3	35.2	35.2	36.1
Self-employed	8.9	6.6	6.8	31.7	27.8	27.2
Total	21.1	19.8	20.2	78.5	74.2	73.8

Source: Author's calculation

rural women is derived equally because of a decline in casual and self-employed workers. On the other hand, for rural men, the decline in employment in 2018-19 for 6.1 per cent points was a decline in the percentage share of working-age rural men who are casual workers. So the share of casual workers has seen a decline as a percentage of working-age men and women in urban and rural spaces between 2011-12 and 2018-19. Moreover, the decline is very extreme in the rural sector, signalling a farm/agricultural crisis as the rural sector in India is primarily agrarian, so the work available is also agrarian.

The percentage of urban women employed in the working-age population only declined slightly between 2011-12 and 2018-19 by less than 1 per cent points. The reason was the decline in the share of self-employed urban working-age women. On the other hand, the percentage of regular working-age women increased by 2 per cent points between the study period to 11.3 per cent in 2018-19. This increase is basically because of the increase in the share of domestic workers mainly. So, it is not a good sign in terms of the kind of work generated amidst the massive employment crisis.

The share of employed individual in regular employment increased slightly for all

the categories. But, a massive decline in the share of casual workers and self-employed between 2011-12 and 2018-19 also indicates that the quality of jobs that led to the increase in the share of regular workers might not be that good. This can be substantiated with Table 2.13 in the appendix, it shows the occupational distribution of regular workers for the years 2011-12 and 2018-19. There is a very slight change in the occupational distribution of regular workers within 7 years. There was an increase in the share of two occupational categories- personal and protective service workers and shops, stalls and market sales people and demonstrators. Personal service workers include house-keeping and restaurant service workers, domestic workers and other services related to personal care grooming; protective service workers include security guards and other related jobs. Most of these jobs are informal in nature with negligible social security and other benefits. Therefore, the minor improvement in the share of regular workers in 2018-19 should be taken with a pinch of salt.

Decline in Employment is Partially Due to Increase in Educational Enrolment.

It is argued that the rise in enrolment of educational institutes for youth is a major reason for the decline in the labour force (Mehrotra and Parida, 2017). As it is the youth mainly engaged in educational activities, it will be interesting to what percentage of the fall in youth employment is explained by the increase in educational enrolment of youth. Youth is defined as those aged between 15-29 years, henceforth including all who have the scope of being high school graduates to PHD scholars. Table 2.4 shows the changes in the distribution of the young generation in India across various activity statuses, i.e. employed, educated, engaged in domestic duties or unemployed. The fall in the share of employed individuals between 2011-12 and 2018-19 is stronger in rural areas. Moreover, there is a strong gender dimension, with women facing the major brunt of declining employment estimates. For the 12.2 per cent decline in the share of rural women employed in 2018-19, only a small part of the declined rural women's labour force was absorbed with a 6.2 per cent increase in the share of rural female students. This increase only explains the 50 per cent fall in employment of young rural

women. As the share of unemployed women also increased marginally, the rest of the rural women who were earlier employed in some work are now performing household activities only. The share of young rural women in domestic duties increased from 49.3 per cent in 2011-12 to 54.3 per cent in 2018-19. Share of young male students in the rural sector increased by 5.8 per cent between 2011-12 to 2018-19, to 38.7 per cent in 2018-19. However, the decline in the share of the employed young rural men was too massive and cannot be explained by an increase in the share of students. The share of young rural men in employment declined by 12.5 per cent point to 49.1 per cent in 2018-19; this can be explained by the rise in the share of unemployed young rural men to 9.8 per cent in 2018-19, the share increased by around 6.6 per cent points in 7 years. Now what is amusing is that in the rural sector, due to the ongoing agrarian distress, massive policy shocks like demonetisation and abrupt implementation of GST reforms, the economy was affected. Furthermore, the result of low availability of paid work declined massively, which was seen with rising unemployment among men. However, for women, the embedded patriarchy in the social structure dominated and they went back to being involved in domestic duties. The work they must have been engaged in before as well. Student enrolment did increase but not enough to explain the humongous decline in employment share. Moreover, Abraham (2013) also argued that increased education participation signal towards a status production activity in case of many women than a skill enhancement activity to increase their participation in the labour market.

In the urban sector, the employment share of young women and men declined by 3 per cent points and 8.2 per cent points respectively, between 2011-12 and 2018-19. The share of students in the young urban female and male population increased by only 4.4 per cent points for urban women and 1.3 per cent points for urban men. Henceforth, only in the case of young urban women one can argue that the increase in student share led to the decline in the urban women workforce. Whereas for urban men, there was a significant increase in the share of unemployed urban men from 4.9 per cent in 2011-12 to 10.9 per cent in 2018-19, a rise of 6 per cent points in 7 years. A majority of the urban economy is informal, and the brunt of random policy implementation and economic crisis affected the labour markets adversely.

Table 2.4: Percentage distribution of young (15-29 years) individuals across all activity type.

	Rural Women			Rural Men		
	2011–12	2017–18	2018–19	2011–12	2017–18	2018–19
	Employed	25.8	13.8	13.6	61.6	48.6
Engaged in Domestic Duties	49.3	55	54.3	0.6	1.2	0.7
Student	22.6	28	28.8	32.9	38.2	38.7
Unemployed	1.3	2.2	2.2	3.2	10.2	9.8
None of the above	1	1.1	1.2	1.7	1.7	1.8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

	Urban Women			Urban Men		
	2011–12	2017–18	2018–19	2011–12	2017–18	2018–19
	Employed	15.7	12.8	12.7	55.8	47.6
Engaged in Domestic Duties	49.2	46.1	45.2	0.3	0.6	0.6
Student	31.9	35.7	36.3	37.5	39.1	38.8
Unemployed	2.4	4.8	4.4	4.9	11	10.9
None of the above	0.8	0.7	1.4	1.5	1.7	2.1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

*Notes:*None of the above includes rentiers, pensioners, remittance recipients; not able to work due to individuals disability and others (including begging, prostitution, etc.).

Source: Author calculation

Shift from Recognised Unpaid Work to Unrecognised Unpaid work

The decline in the self-employed rural women workforce between 2011-12 to 2017-18 was significant. As self-employment is a diverse category, NSSO has classified it into three subcategories: own account worker, employer and unpaid family worker. Own account work is defined as an individual who worked in their own household enterprise with or without a few partners, they primarily run their enterprise without any hired support, although unpaid helpers can assist them with the work of their enterprise; Employer is the self-employed individual who hires people to work in their own household enterprise, and the unpaid family worker is other family members who help part-time or full time the household enterprise head in carrying out the work but are not paid for it because they belong to the same family unit. As they do not run the household enterprise

on their own but assist the concerned own account workers in running the household enterprise, a social hierarchy must exist between them. Otherwise, the existence of these two separate categories makes no sense. The significance of this social hierarchy becomes more prominent when the gender dimension is added to it. According to Table 2.5, among all the employed categories, the highest percentage, i.e. 15.1 per cent of working-age rural women are employed as an unpaid family worker in 2011-12, whereas for working-age rural men, the highest percentage of employment is among self-employed own account workers or private casual wage labourer with the percentage being 31 per cent or 29.2 per cent respectively in 2011-12. However, urban employment figures do not have the same story with the highest percentage(9.3 per cent) of working-age urban women employed in regular salaried jobs in 2011-12, and urban men as well the salaried jobs have the highest percentage of urban working-age men employed, percent being 35.2 in 2011-12. Henceforth, the category 'unpaid family workers' does have a gender dimension to it but predominantly in rural areas; this is because the nature of work is very different in urban and rural areas.

Furthermore, for women, this decline led to a simultaneous increase in their engagement in domestic duties as these tasks are also very time consuming. There is a possibility of women managing both the activities, i.e. the domestic duties and helping with the family's economic activity to produce good for the others and not getting any remuneration for either. However, they were recognised as a worker in the statistics. But with a decline in their share in 2018-19 according to PLFS estimates, they are considered out-of-labour forces and not even considered workers. The category "unpaid family worker" is very ambiguous in the sense that unpaid work of family members for economic unit of the household is considered self-employment than unpaid work done by family members, especially women as a part of domestic duties like caregiving, cooking, cleaning, child rearing, and many more managerial tasks should also be accounted for. Nonetheless, it is reasoned that domestic duties done by family members are not considered economic activity. However, the activity done by a family member supporting the economic workdone by other family members is considered because it is reproductive. Even if the contribution is unpaid at the individual level, the gains derived from the economic activity are assumed to benefit the entire household. Similar logic can

Table 2.5: Percentage of working age (15-59 years) person employed (UPSA status) diaagregated according categories of self-employment.

	Rural Women			Rural Men		
	2011-12	2017-18	2018-19	2011-12	2017-18	2018-19
own account worker	6.6	4.6	5.7	31	32.7	32.9
employer	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.9	1.3	1.4
unpaid family worker	15.1	9.9	10.3	11	7.9	7.5
regular salaried/wage employee	2.2	2.8	3.2	9	11.4	11.7
casual wage labour(public)	1.5	0.6	0.8	0.8	0.4	0.2
casual wage labour(other)	11.6	7.4	7.1	29.2	21.5	22.1
	Urban Women			Urban Men		
	2011-12	2017-18	2018-19	2011-12	2017-18	2018-19
own account worker	5.3	4.4	4.7	24.3	22	21.1
employer	0.1	0.1	0.2	2	2.5	3
unpaid family worker	3.5	2.1	1.9	5.4	3.3	3.1
regular salaried/wage employee	9.3	10.6	11.3	35.2	35.2	36.1
casual wage labour(public)	0	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.1
casual wage labour(other)	2.9	2.4	2	11.3	11.1	10.4

Source: Author calculation

go for domestic duties; if someone in the house is not present to carry out everyday household chores and provide for the basic needs like food, it will be difficult for the other members of the household to go out and engage in other economic activity which brings well-being to the household.

The rural sector, primarily being the farm economy, explains why so many women work as unpaid household help. Agricultural and allied activities are very labour intensive and require the contribution of all the family members in carrying out the various activities from sowing, weeding, harvesting, irrigation, winnowing, storing, transplantation, nursery management and many more. Furthermore, the 5.7 per cent decline in the self-employed working-age rural women between 2011-12 and 2018-19 was primarily due to the decline in the share of working-age rural women self-employed as unpaid family workers from 15.1 in 2011-12 to 10.3 per cent in 2018-19. Even for working-age rural men, there was a decline seen among self-employed men due to the

decline in the category of unpaid family workers. This decline in rural areas can be reasoned as an effect of the mechanisation of agricultural activities Madgavkar *et al.* (2019) along the increase in the share of land holding of large land owners in recent times. Both these factor work in conjugation to substitute the demand for agricultural labour.

2.6 Industry Wise Distribution of the Employed Workforce

The distribution of the working-age population within the industry and the relative shifts between 2011-12 and 2018-19 of the workforce across or from industries are essential parameters in the study of the structure of employment. It is important to highlight the industry which displaced workers from paid work. This will facilitate the formation of industry-specific policies that are employment generating. The industries are grouped as 1) Agriculture(including all allied activities), 2) Manufacturing, 3) Construction, 4) Mining and quarrying, 5) Electricity and other essentials, 6) Wholesale and Retail Trade, 7) Accommodation and Food, 8) Transport and Storage and 9) Other Services. The other essentials in the electricity sector include gas, steam and air conditioning supply, Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities. The industrial category 'Other Services' includes Information and communication, Financial and insurance activities, Real estate activities, Professional, scientific and technical activities, Administrative and support service activities, Education, Human health and social work activities, Arts, entertainment and recreation, Repair of computers and personal and household goods, Personal service activities, Activities of households as employers of domestic personnel, and Activities of extraterritorial organisations and bodies.

The shift and changes in employment among various industry groups are analysed in terms of changes in their percentage share in the working-age population of the respective gender and sector. Table 2.6 gives the industry-wise distribution of the working age population in rural and urban areas for both males and females. The figures are based on EUS and PLFS surveys, and all estimates are based on the usual status. That is, they include both principal status workers and also subsidiary status workers.

Table 2.6: Percentage of working age (15-59 years) person employed (UPSA status) by Industries.

Industry	Rural Women			Rural Men		
	2011-12	2017-18	2018-19	2011-12	2017-18	2018-19
Agriculture	27.8	18.5	19.2	47	39.4	38.2
Mining and Quarrying	0.1	0	0.1	0.5	0.4	0.3
Manufacturing	3.7	2.1	2.5	6.9	6.1	5.8
Electricity and Other Public Utilities	0	0	0	0.3	0.4	0.3
Construction	2.5	1.3	1.6	11.3	11.6	12.5
Wholesale and Retail Trade	0.9	0.8	0.9	5.9	6	6.6
Transport and Storage	0	0	0	3.6	4	4.3
Accommodation and Food	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.9	1	1
Other Services	2	2.4	2.6	5.7	6.3	6.6
Not Engaged in Economic Activities	62.8	74.5	72.8	18	24.8	24.2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Industry	Urban Women			Urban Men		
	2011-12	2017-18	2018-19	2011-12	2017-18	2018-19
Agriculture	2.2	1.7	1.5	3.9	3.4	3.1
Mining and Quarrying	0.1	0	0	0.7	0.4	0.5
Manufacturing	6	5	5	17.5	16.7	16.3
Electricity and Other Public Utilities	0.2	0.1	0.1	1.1	1	0.9
Construction	0.9	0.8	0.8	8.5	8.9	8.7
Wholesale and Retail Trade	2	2	2.1	17	15.2	15.5
Transport and Storage	0.2	0.2	0.2	7.4	7.4	7
Accommodation and Food	0.6	0.5	0.6	3.1	2.7	2.7
Other Services	8.9	9.5	9.9	19.1	18.5	18.9
Not Engaged in Economic Activities	79	80.2	79.8	21.6	25.8	26.3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Notes: The sum total might be little different from 100 due to rounding of decimal points.

Source: Author calculation

In rural areas, the agriculture sector continues to be the largest provider of employment in 2018-19 as well, with around 38.2 per cent of working-age rural men and 19.2 per cent of working-age rural women employed in the agriculture sector in 2018-19. However, the agriculture sector also witnessed the most significant decline in its employed share between 2011-12 and 2018-19, with the decline being 8.8 per cent for working-age rural men and 8.6 per cent points for working-age rural women. Henceforth, it is safe to say that for rural men and women, all the decline in their employment is coming due to diminishing work opportunities in the farm sector. For rural males, the second largest employer is the tertiary sector, with employment share being 27.2 per cent.

One of the biggest hurdles in the rural economy is to generate livelihoods capable of giving sustainable incomes for all households in rural India. Common sense dictates that it can be done by improving agricultural productivity and generating non-farm employment. Along with this, the provision of public services such as housing, education, health, and roads are the ways to complement it. Increased mechanisation and automation are making some improvements in increasing agricultural productivity; however, in hindsight, this can also be a major reason for the decline in farm workers. This push for capitalist development in agriculture has resulted in deepened rural poverty and inequality due to lack in the work opportunities available to the poor and marginalised sections. The lack of jobs in the non-farm sector just brings the rural labour to a massive employment crisis.

Farm workers can be broadly classified into two categories according to the NCO 2004 classification of agricultural workers, i.e. Agricultural Elementary Occupation Labourers and Market Oriented Agricultural and Fishery workers. According to the National Classification of occupation, Market Oriented Agricultural and Fishery Workers organise, plan and perform farming operations to grow and harvest crops, shrubs, fields or trees and produce a wide variety of animals and animal produce. The task is mainly done to sell the produce to wholesale buyers, marketing organisations, and markets. Therefore, this category might include petty farmers to big farmers, to middlemen who trade in mandis. Whereas, Agricultural Elementary Occupation Labourers perform simple and routine tasks in the production of crops and livestock, cultivation and main-

Table 2.7: Percentage of agriculture workers employed in various occupations

Occupation of Person Engaged in Agriculture		Rural Women			Rural Men		
		2011-12	2017-18	2018-19	2011-12	2017-18	2018-19
Market Oriented Agriculture and Fishery Worker	Casual Worker	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.5	0.7	0.5
	Regular Worker	0	0	0	0.1	0.1	0.1
	Self Employed	17.4	11.5	12.6	29.2	27.7	27.3
	Total	17.6	11.9	12.9	29.8	28.5	27.9
Elementary Occupation Labourer	Casual Worker	9.5	5.9	5.6	16	8.3	8.2
	Regular Worker	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3
	Self Employed	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.5	1.5	1
	Total	9.9	6.5	6.1	16.8	10.1	9.5

Source: Author calculation

tenance of gardens and parks, exploitation and conservation of forests, and conduct of aquaculture and fisheries operations. Tasks performed usually include: digging, raking and shovelling using hand tools; loading, unloading and stacking supplies, produce and other materials; watering, thinning, weeding and tending crops by hand or using hand tools; planting, harvesting, picking and collecting produce by hand; feeding, watering, and cleaning animals and keeping their quarters clean; monitoring livestock, reporting on their condition; preparing and operating nets, lines and other fishing tackle and deck equipment; grading, sorting, bunching and packing produce into containers; performing minor repairs on fixtures, buildings equipment, vessels and fences cite-NCO2004. All these complicated and drudgerious tasks are defined using the word “simple” in the NCO’s definition of elementary occupation labourer signals a class divide in the two occupational categories.

Table 2.7 shows the desegregated share of agriculture workers in different occupations and employment type for rural men and women, in light of the fact that farm employment declined massively between 2011-12 to 2018-19 for both rural men and women. It is important to see what kind of occupation was hit more by it. Since the class divide exists between the two occupational categories, with market oriented agriculture and fishery workers having the edge. This is also revalidated from the fact

that almost all the market oriented agriculture and fishery workers are self-employed and all the elementary occupation labourers are casual workers. It can be seen that the share of elementary occupation labourers declined from 9.5 per cent to 5.6 per cent for women and 16 per cent to 8.2 per cent for men between 2011-12 to 2018-19, whereas in other occupational category the decline was very less for men. This implies the loss of work was more intense in the elementary job category. Henceforth, one can further conclude that increased mechanisation of agriculture is substituting the work of agricultural labourers who were already struggling to sustain their livelihood.

Lewisian model of structural transformation argues that with growth in developing economies, employment in the primary (agriculture) sector will decline, and non-agricultural will increase because of the productivity and wage difference between the two sectors. So, the decline in farm employment seen in Table 2.6 among rural men and women between 2011-12 and 2018-19 can be seen partially as a long-term structural shift in the economy from farm to non-farm sectors. However, this is not the case of a structural shift because, for a 8.6 per cent and 8.8 per cent decline in working-age rural women and men employment share in the agriculture sector, no rise was seen in manufacturing sector employment in rural and urban areas. Employment in the manufacturing sector declined from 3.7 per cent in 2011-12 to 2.5 per cent in 2018-19 for working-age rural women, and the share of working-age rural men decreased from 6.9 per cent in 2011-12 to 5.8 per cent in 2018-19. Even in the construction sector, available as a lender of last resort for the distress driven rural workforce, very slight increase in the employment share was witnessed to compensate for the extensive decline in farm sector employment in the study period. The share of women workforce employed in the construction sector declined slightly between 2011-12 to 2018-19 in the rural and urban sectors, whereas for men, the share of the employed workforce increased minimally by 1.2 per cent in rural areas and in the urban sector it remains in the range of 8.5-9 per cent only. Therefore, the argument of structural transformation does not completely hold while explaining the decline in employment shares. Thus, the agricultural(farm) employment decline visible during 2011-12 to 2018-19 may be reasoned as partly an effect of a slowdown in agricultural GVA growth. During 2013-14, the agricultural GVA grew at 5.6 per cent per annum; during 2014-15, it fell to -0.2 per cent per annum and 0.6 per

cent in 2015-16. In 2016-17, the growth rate increased to 6.8 per cent, remained similar in 2017-18 and fell to 2.6 per cent in 2018-19². Given an average decline in agricultural GVA, a decline in employment may be partially due to declining scale effects.

Other than defying the expectation that fall in farm employment would be absorbed in two major industries, i.e. manufacturing and construction. Other sectors like Trade and Transport, though in an unorganised structure, are expected to absorb the rural workforce. However, minimal increase is seen in the share of working-age rural men employed in the Wholesale and retail trade industry and Transport and Storage. For rural women, the only industry that seems to absorb the declining female workforce is the service sector, which includes professions like assistant teachers, which can also include anganwadi workers.

In Urban areas, working-age men are mainly employed either in Other Services, Manufacturing or Trade, with their percentage share being 19.1 per cent, 17.5 per cent and 17 per cent respectively in 2011-12. However, all the sectors faced a decline in their employment share, with the percent of working-age urban men employed in other services being reduced to 18.9 per cent in 2018-19, a negligible decline and the manufacturing sector employment share of working-age urban men falling to 16.3 per cent. The share of employment of working-age urban men in Whole Sales and Retail Trade decreased to 15.5 per cent in 2018-19. All sectors other than construction faced some decline in their employment share of working-age urban men between 2011-12 to 2018-19. The nature of jobs that were affected due to this declining share of employment is something to explore further. The urban sector is mainly informal, and the kind of jobs that declined during the study period must also be informal. This brings us to the major policy changes that happened in 2016-17, like Demonetisation and GST reforms both, affected the informal economy very harshly and declining urban male employment is one such signal.

²Data taken from RBI DBIE(2021)

Table 2.8: Percentage of working age (15-59 years) individuals employed (UPSA status) in service sector.

Service Sector	Rural Women			Rural Men		
	2011-12	2017-18	2018-19	2011-12	2017-18	2018-19
Domestic Work	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3
Education, Health and Social Work	1.3	1.7	1.8	1.9	2.2	2.3
Security,Investigation and Compulsory Social Security	0	0	0	0.1	0.2	0.1
Other Services	0.5	0.4	0.6	3.5	3.6	3.8
Total	2	2.3	2.6	5.7	6.3	6.5

Service Sector	Urban Women			Urban Men		
	2011-12	2017-18	2018-19	2011-12	2017-18	2018-19
Domestic Work	1.7	1.8	2	0.7	0.6	0.8
Education, Health and Social Work	3.9	4.3	4.4	4.1	4	4.1
Security,Investigation and Compulsory Social Security	0	0	0	0.4	0.7	0.6
Other Services	3.3	3.3	3.5	13.9	13.2	13.4
Total	8.9	9.4	9.9	19.1	18.5	18.9

Source: Author calculation

For Urban Women, major sectors that employ women are either other services or construction, with more than 40 per cent of the employed working-age women are in 'Other Services' and around 28 per cent of the in the construction sector in 2012-12. As the absolute decline in employment was witnessed in other sectors, urban women's employment proportion also declined between 2011-12 and 2018-19. However, the decline is very less than the decline seen in the other categories. Furthermore, the share of working-age urban women employed under the category of 'other services' increased by 1 per cent points giving us the figure of 9.9 per cent in 2018-19. This minute increase becomes very significant when employment loss is the general phenomenon of the market and only few industries in the service sector are generating employment. Table 2.8 shows the disaggregated employment share for men and women in the rural and urban sectors for the 'Other services' category. It shows that for rural women and men, a slight rise was seen in employment for the people working in the 'Education, Health and Social Work' category, which can be seen as a growing presence of anganwadi workers in the rural areas. For urban working-age population, the percentage of working women employed increased for two subcategories, i.e. 'Domestic Personnel Employer' and 'Education, Health and Social Work', whereas, for men, no significant change was seen in the study period.

2.7 Changes in Employment Structure at Different Occupational Skill Level.

Decline in Employment of Skill Level I and II workers

These declining trends of employment shares signal the inability to provide work to a significant proportion of the population looking for work, but these trends does not align with unemployment figures. Table 2.15 shows that the proportion of working-age women unemployed did not rise much between 2011-12 to 2017-18, whereas the unemployed proportion of the working-age men did rise, but by 3.3 per cent points for rural and 3.4 per cent points for urban men. The unemployment figures are incapable of understanding the movement of the labour force. Moreover, it can be argued that

measures like UPSC status and CWS status, which have a recall period of 365 days or a week, are unable to capture the changes in the intensity of the work done, which ultimately decides the workers wages. Not having enough employment has been a dominant feature of Indian labour markets since liberalisation; however, after 2011-12, this problem has aggravated further, as can be seen by the steeply declining employment shares. For understanding the country's unemployment intensity, a reasonable proxy measure is per capita real earnings of workers, peasants, agricultural labourers, artisans, craftsmen, fishermen, and such like, whose unemployment rate is our real concern; and excluding corporate lawyers, executives etc (Patnaik, 2021a).

It is logical to assume that the average worker's real earnings per day of work cannot increase when unemployment increases or the intensity of work declines. An increase in unemployment implies that the labour supply is greater than the demand; therefore, from the basic wage-price setting, it is said that the average worker's real earning per hour of work cannot increase. However, real earnings per capita fall when the amount of work available per head of the workforce decline because of the decline in the number of hours that an individual was working earlier. Obviously, in such circumstances, the average worker's real earnings per head cannot be increased until and unless the dominance of the surplus appropriating section of the society, i.e. the upper crust like doctors, executives, lawyers, and other professionals declines. So, decrease in real earnings per capita of the workforce engaged in daily wage or hourly wage system can be seen as a signal of rising unemployment. By genuine workers, this study is referring to peasants, agricultural labourers, artisans, craftsmen, fishermen, construction workers, personal service workers etc.

To analyse the labour market situation regarding the amount of hourly work available to employed people, an analysis of changes in per capita earnings over time becomes essential. However, not all the earnings depend on the hours worked; most high-end jobs just focus on the results and not the hours worked, whereas, in low-paid, low-skill jobs, earnings are directly related to work hours. Henceforth, it is necessary to re-group the employed population based on their job type. The Ministry of Labour and Employment has classified Occupations in the National Classification of Occupation based on the skill level of job type. Two broad dimensions of skill are used, one is

skill level which describes the range of tasks and duties involved and the second is skill specialization which talks about the field of knowledge required which can be proxied in terms of education level.

There are four levels of skill, Skill Level I requires primary education and involved routine and simple manual tasks, Skill level II requires secondary education and involves tasks related to operations of some machinery or electrical equipment, Skill level III requires a first university degree and Skill Level IV requires post-graduate university degree both these skill level involves tasks related to complex technical or practical problem solving which require creative thinking and decision making aptitude. Nine broad occupational divisions in NCO 2004 are classified based on these skill levels. The category of Professional belongs to the Skill Level IV, Associate Professional Skill Level III, Elementary Occupation the lowest, Skill Level I and the rest of the categories belong to the Skill Level II. Skill Level II includes these broad occupations Clerks, Service Workers and Shop and Market Sales Workers, Skilled Agricultural and Fishery Workers, Craft and Related Trades Workers and Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers. There is also a category of Legislators, Senior Officials, and Managers, which is not classified based on skill type. However, we will include this category with skill levels I and II only. For the analysis purpose, this study has grouped occupations into three types, Skill Level I, Skill Level II and Skill Level III and IV. The top skill level includes Legislators, Senior Officials, Managers, Professionals and Associate Professionals; the Middle Skill level includes all occupations with skill level II; and the Low Skill level includes skill level I, i.e. Elementary Occupation.

Before looking at the earning trends of these three broad occupational categories for respective gender and sector, let us look at how the occupation wise employment situation has changed over the study period for the three skill categories. Table 2.9 displays the trend in the percentage of working-age individuals employed in occupations categories at various skill levels in 2011-12 and 2018-19.

Table 2.9: Percentage of working age person employed based on occupational skill level for the year 2011-12 and 2018-19.

		<u>Rural Women</u>		<u>Rural Men</u>	
Occupation's Skill Level		2011-12	2018-19	2011-12	2018-19
Skill Level I	(Manual Task and Primary Education)	12.4	8.2	26.4	20.2
Skill Level II	(Machine and Tool Based Task and Secondary Education)	22.8	16.6	48.7	47.5
Skill Level III and IV	(Creative Thinking Based Task and Graduation)	2	2.5	6.6	8
		<u>Urban Women</u>		<u>Urban Men</u>	
Occupation's Skill Level		2011-12	2018-19	2011-12	2018-19
Skill Level I	(Manual Task and Primary Education)	4.6	3.9	11.3	10.4
Skill Level II	(Machine and Tool Based Task and Secondary Education)	9.5	9	42.8	39.8
Skill Level III and IV	(Creative Thinking Based Task and Graduation)	6.8	7.3	24.2	23.4

Notes: The skill description and educational requirements are not necessary criteria, and are mentioned in an holistic way in National Classification of Occupation,2004.

Source: Author calculation

Table 2.9 shows that most of the working age population is employed in skill level II, that is they are engaged in activities which usually requires secondary level education and tasks are related to operation of machinery or electrical equipments. For working age rural women employment in skill level II declined by 6.8 percentage, this is most happening due to the decline in share of Market oriented agriculture workers. The share of working age urban men in skill level II also declined by 3 per cent. For the other to the decline was very low. The decline in share of employed individuals in rural areas is majorly for skill level 1, for working age rural men the employment share in skill level I declined by 6.2 per cent and for women the share declined by 4.2 per cent. The share of individuals employed in skill level III and IV increased by 0.5 per cent and 1.4 per cent for rural women and men respectively. Share of working age urban men employed in skill level 3 and 4 occupation is highest. This show their dominance in the better source of livelihood. For working age urban men the decline in employment share was seen in all the three occupational categories. It can be argued the economic crisis was affecting the entire economy and not some specific sector hence the decline seen in employment of urban men was for all kinds of occupational categories. The share of working age urban women employed in skill level III and IV also increased slightly. It can be argued the job which are supposed to be better pay and have relatively decent work conditions have increased slightly in between 2011-12 and 2018-19 but the increase is no where close to the fall in rest of the jobs. Possibly increase education qualification must be the reason for it but still there are not enough jobs to absorb the growing workforce.

According to table 2.10 majority of casual workers in rural and urban spaces are skill level I workers, although a small but significant proportion, 5.7 per cent of rural men workers and 5.4 per cent of urban men workers are skill level II casual workers. The share of regular salaried workers is very low and distributed almost equitably between the three skill types of occupations for women in rural areas. For urban women, and regular workers, 4.9 per cent of working age urban women are in skill level III and IV and 4.3 per cent in skill level II jobs. Their share in skill level I jobs is slightly less, i.e. 2.1 per cent. Both rural and urban men most of the regular workers belong to skill level II and then skill levels III and IV. Although the share of regular men workers in Skill Level

Table 2.10: Disaggregated percentage of working age (15-59 years) person employed in various employment type based on occupational skill level for the year 2011-12 and 2018-19.

Occupation's Skill Level		Rural Women		Rural Men	
		2011-12	2018-19	2011-12	2018-19
Skill Level I	Casual Worker	11.4	7	23.4	16.6
	Regular Worker	0.5	0.6	1.3	1.7
	Self Employed	0.5	0.5	1.8	1.9
	Total	12.4	8.1	26.5	20.2
Skill Level II	Casual Worker	1.6	0.8	6.5	5.7
	Regular Worker	0.7	1.1	5.6	7.2
	Self Employed	20.4	14.6	36.6	34.6
	Total	22.7	16.5	48.7	47.5
Skill Level III and IV	Casual Worker	0	0	0.1	0.1
	Regular Worker	1	1.4	2.1	2.8
	Self Employed	1	1	4.5	5.1
	Total	2	2.4	6.7	8
Occupation's Skill Level		Urban Women		Urban Men	
		2011-12	2018-19	2011-12	2018-19
Skill Level I	Casual Worker	1.8	1.3	5.2	4.8
	Regular Worker	2.2	2.1	3.6	3.9
	Self Employed	0.6	0.5	2.5	1.7
	Total	4.6	3.9	11.3	10.4
Skill Level II	Casual Worker	1	0.8	6.2	5.4
	Regular Worker	3	4.3	21.5	21.1
	Self Employed	5.4	3.9	15.1	13.3
	Total	9.4	9	42.8	39.8
Skill Level III and IV	Casual Worker	0	0	0.2	0.2
	Regular Worker	4	4.9	10	11
	Self Employed	2.8	2.4	14.1	12.2
	Total	6.8	7.3	24.3	23.4

Source: Author calculation

I is relatively small in rural and urban areas, the share is significant enough to explain the dichotomy of the regular worker's category. Skill Level I include only elementary occupation labourers, this implies that some of the elementary occupation labourers are in regular employment. Implying that even with regular employment people work in adverse conditions in low-paying jobs, a classic example of this is domestic workers. Self-employed individuals are also majorly in skill level II jobs in rural and urban spaces other than urban men, whose employment share is similar for both the skill level II and III and IV occupations. The percentage share of skill level III and IV individuals is very low for all individuals other than Urban Men where most of the skill level III and IV occupations are concentrated.

As mentioned earlier, there has been a severe decline in the employment share of all categories other than urban women. Now this decline affected individuals employed in various occupational skill levels differently because of the inequalities and structural differences existing between all these occupations. For casual workers employed in skill level I occupations, the percentage of working-age rural women employed declined by 4.4 per cent, and the percentage of working-age rural men employment declined by 6.8 per cent between 2011-12 to 2018-19. Working-age rural men and women employed in skill level II casual work also declined, but the intensity was less. In urban areas, fewer people are employed in casual work, and there was a slight decline seen in their percentage share of working-age population employment in various occupational skill levels. Table 2.2 has shown an overall rise in regular workers' employment share of the working-age population between 2011-12 to 2018-19 for all sector and gender categories. Now, Table 2.9 tells the skill type of the occupations which experienced the increase. For rural women, employment share increased for skill levels II, III and IV. In the case of working-age rural men employment share increased by 1.6 per cent for persons employed in skill level II occupations, whereas for the other two categories the rise was minor. For working-age urban women also, the rise of 1.3 per cent and 0.9 per cent was seen in employment share skill level II and skill level III and IV occupations respectively, wherein the case of working-age urban men employment share declined slightly for persons employed in skill level II occupations, although the share of working-age urban men employed in skill level III and IV jobs increased by 1 per cent. Basically, in rural

areas share of skill level II occupation increased for regular workers, whereas in urban areas both III and IV and II skill level occupation saw an increase. Moving on to self-employed individuals, mainly dominated by skill level II occupations in rural areas, a sharp decline is seen in the share of rural women and men employed in skill level II occupations between 2011-12 to 2018-19. In urban areas, a decline was seen in the employment share of all occupational categories, with skill levels II and I facing the major brunt.

Table 2.10 underlines that the fall in the employment of skill level I workers is quite higher than the increase in the employment of better skilled workers. So, this implies that the market are not able to generate sufficient employment for all kinds of skilled workforce and especially low skilled workforce. Increased automation and other technological advances is one the reason resulting in reducing the demand for the low skill casual workers. So, there is an immediate need for policies which encourages absorption of low skilled workers in the labour force. Policy actions that are directed towards enhancing the population's skill level through education or vocational training are also desirable.

Decline in Real Earnings of Skill Level III and IV workers

It is interesting to look at the changes in earnings for people belonging to different skills; if there is a decline in average real per capita earnings of skill level I and II individuals, one implication can be that the hourly work available to them has decreased or it could be that the wage rate has declined due to increase in surplus labour. Figure 2.1 shows the per capita real monthly earnings of the skill level I, II, III and IV workers for the period 2011-12 and 2018-19. We are not analysing self-employed workers' earnings because associated data is unavailable for the year 2011-12. Skill Level III and IV casual workers are also excluded from the figure because only a negligible share belongs to this category which is self-explanatory from the absurdness of the category itself. Firstly the gender and sector based gap in earnings are very evident for all the categories. Skill Level III and IV urban men in regular employment are the highest-paid, and Skill Level I casually employed rural females are the lowest paid among all occupations. Furthermore, rural

males earn more than urban women for all occupational categories other than regular salaried skill level III and IV job types. This shows that gender plays a critical role in determining one's pay scale. Moreover, the gender wage gap becomes more robust with the skill level, with the gap between skill levels III and IV urban regular male and female worker's real monthly per capita earnings ranging between ₹8000 in 2011-12 to ₹5000 in 2018-19. The same gap for middle-skill regular workers ranges between ₹2000 in 2011-2 to ₹3000 in 2018-19.

The per capita real earnings of regular workers from different skill level varies a lot. Skill Level III and IV urban male regular workers earnings were around ₹23000 per month on an average in 2018-19, whereas the earnings of a skill level II regular salaried urban male worker are around ₹11000 on an average in 2018-19 and for skilled level I regular salaried workers the earning lie closes to ₹8000 per month in 2018-19. Also, note that very few skill level I workers are regularly salaried, and most of them are casual and self-employed workers only. So, a positive correlation between skill level and earnings exists for regular salaried workers. Whereas for the casual worker's category, both skill level I and skill level II workers earn in a similar range, implying that the casual nature of the work dominated the skill level of the occupation when it comes to the determination of wages. Therefore, for a person with relatively better skills, the earnings would not improve if the nature of work is casual.

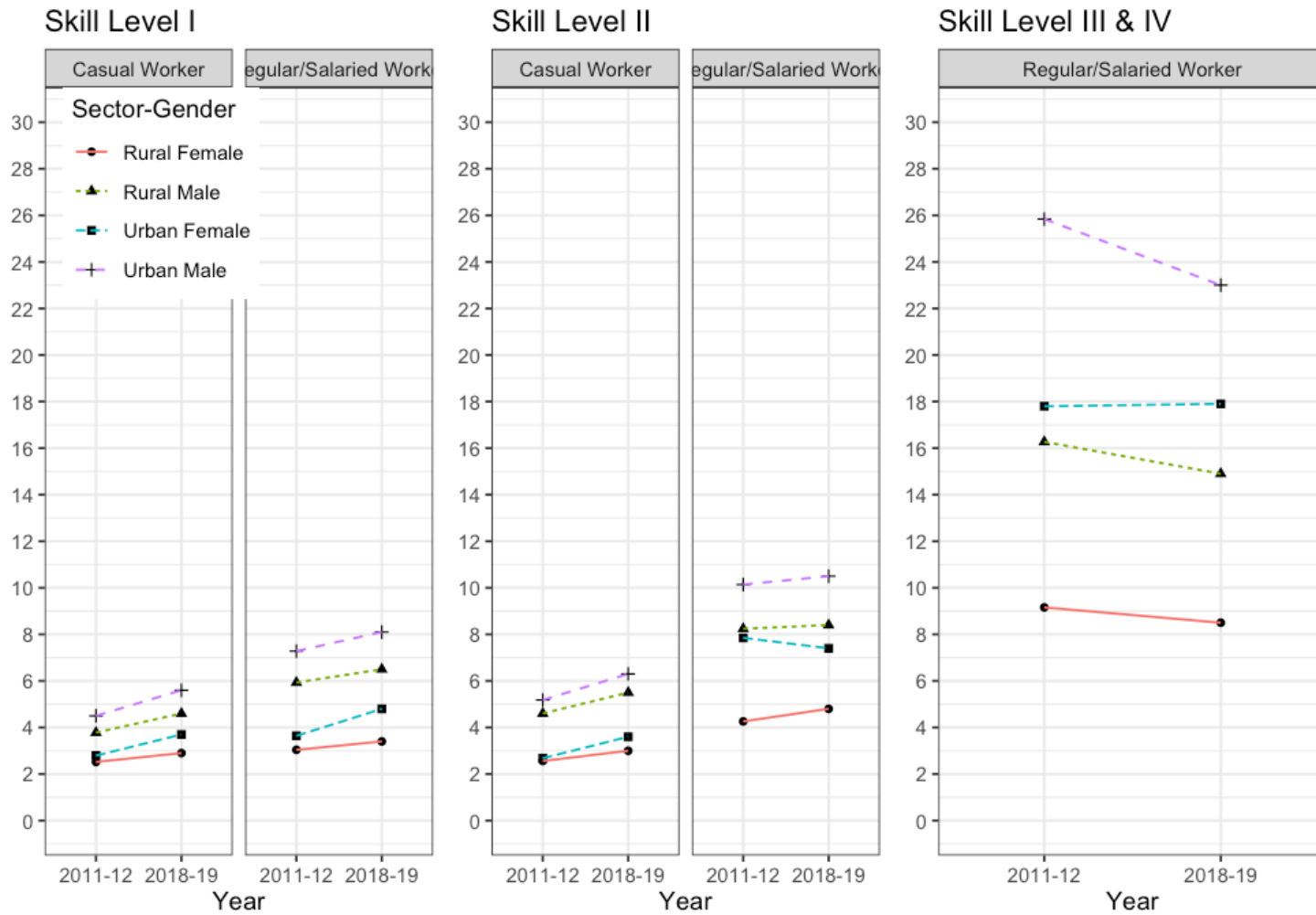
A look at the real per capita monthly wages of the skill level I and skill level II workers. The figures indicated that for skill level I and II casual workers, average per capita real monthly earnings for both the sector and gender increased slightly between 2011-12 to 2018-19. As this increase is very minimal unlike the trends observed previously where the earnings of casual workers were growing very fast. This is signalling the paucity in the labour demand not only in terms of increased open unemployment but also in terms of the intensity of work available to the low skilled casual workers which are stopping the wage rate to grow at the market price and thereby the real monthly per capita earnings. For the low skilled regular worker, though their share in employment is meagre, a slight increase in real per capita average monthly earnings was seen for all kinds of workers, predominantly urban female workers, between 2011-12 to 2018-19.

Except for urban women in regular work, per capita average real monthly earn-

ings for all categories of skill level II workers in casual and regular work increased slightly between 2011-12 to 2018-19. Now the share of urban women employed in Skill level II regular work has increased in the study period the decline in earnings is a bad signal on the quality of jobs generated. With the combination of the above facts, it can be argued that the quality of jobs generated in this category was worse in 2018-19, as the per capita declined on average. The increase in earnings of regularly employed rural women in skill level II jobs is starker than the others. And there was also a slight increase in the employment proportion as well for this category (see Table 2.10). Therefore the quality of jobs might have been at par or better than the jobs available previously.

For skill level III and IV workers per capita, earnings declined between 2011-12 to 2018-19 for everyone except urban women. average per capita monthly earnings of urban women employed in regular skill level III and IV jobs remained stagnant. As the percentage of the employed workforce in this category increased for all the gender and sectors in the study period, one implication is that the quality of new jobs generated was very poor that they brought down the entire per capita real monthly wage by ₹3000 rupees for urban men to ₹500 for rural women. However, as the increase in share is very small(less than equal to 1 per cent), the new low-paying jobs cannot solely bring the average down. Therefore, it can be said that the economic crisis which was churning for a long time in the country impacted the rewards of the labour market adversely. As this impact is seen most harshly in the most privileged section of the society. So it is easy to conclude that not only there is a lack of qualitative employment generation in the economy to absorb the skill level I and skill level II labour force, but the bare minimum employment generation in the skill level III and IV category is also abysmal, so much that they are bringing the entire real per capita earnings down for skill level III and IV regular workers.

Figure 2.1: Real per capita average monthly earnings (in thousands) of working age (15-59 years) population employed in different skill levels of occupations.



2.8 Role of Caste and Religion in Employment Determination

Results shown earlier suggest that the job challenge in India has worsened since 2011-12. The declining pace of job creation wreaks immense suffering on the Indian workforce. However, the burden of this suffering might be different based on the social locations of the members of the working-age population. Like Scheduled Castes (SCs), who exist at the lower end of India's social ladder, are usually the worst sufferers of labour market outcomes. Prolonged and deep-rooted social discrimination and present socio-economic realities further the labour market disadvantages faced by SCs. The role caste plays in labour market employment, occupation type, and daily wage rate has been recognised in studies like (Madheswaran and Attewell, 2010; Thorat and Attewell, 2007; Thorat and Neuman, 2012).

It is important to look at the intersectionality of various individual identities which impact the employment outcome in the labour market. The most significant ones are caste and religion other than gender. The connection between caste, religion and gender is critical to understanding the Indian employment situation. Which individual identity dominates the other is very debatable, and it is better to acknowledge that all channels play a very important role in determining the outcomes related to employment, occupation and wages in the labour market. Caste sustains in the system through endogamy (Ambedkar, 1916), a practice of marrying within a local community, clan or tribe. One's community place an important role in determining their social location which affects them in parameters like networks, cultural capital and economic capital. All these things play an important role in procuring skills and endowments required to perform better in the labour market. Similar is the case with Muslims, their religious identity is directly linked to their socioeconomic deprivation, (Sachar, 2006) gave empirical proof to substantiate it. In the recent political-economic climate of the country, with increasing hate crimes against the community (Salam, 2019) it is crucial to understand the labour market situation of the community.

This study categorizes workers into the following socio-religious categories: Schedule Tribe (ST), Schedule Caste (SC), Other Backward Class (OBC), Muslims and Oth-

ers. Scheduled Tribes (ST), Scheduled Castes (SC), and Other Backward Class (OBC) are recognised as socially disadvantaged groups, receiving the benefits of affirmative action in the form of reservation policy in education and employment. The report by Sachar (2006) analysed different development indicators for Muslims, and found that Muslims rank somewhere between ST/SC's and Hindu OBC's. The category Others is a residual one consisting of Hindu upper castes, Sikhs, Jains, Zoroastrians, Christians and a few others. The other category is considered relatively privileged in terms of many developmental indicators. A holistic approximation of Indian social hierarchy emerges in the used socio-religious grouping.

Caste and Type of Employment

Recognising the socio-religious categories might affect the labour market outcomes of the working-age population differently within respective gender and sector. Table 2.11 and Table 2.12 shows the percentage of the working-age population of the respective social category employed (UPSA) in three broad activity types in the years 2011-12 and 2018-19. The calculation is done separately for rural men, rural women, urban men and urban women. Table 2.11 shows estimates for rural men and women and Table 2.12 for the urban men and women.

For working-age rural women, the highest percentage of working women belong to ST followed by SC and OBC in 2011-12, 2017-18 and 2018-19. This aligns with the fact that most women belonging to ST and SC have to financially also contribute to the functions of the households, because of the weak economic and social conditions they live in. Working-age rural women belonging to Muslim and Other categories also support the household by engaging in household duties but may not go out of the house due to patriarchal constructs that restrict their mobility. Other than that, households in the Other's category are usually rich in capital and land resources, reducing the need for women to go out and find work. The study period has seen a massive decline in the employment percentage of working-age rural women, Table 2.11 shows that although women belonging to all social categories faced a decline in employment, the fall was sharper for ST and SC rural women in comparison to OBC, Muslim and Other category.

The brunt of the decline in employment opportunities is faced more harshly by the rural women belonging to the marginalised section.

In terms of the type of work, working-age rural women composition is slightly different for the ST than other socio-religious categories. The share of working-age SC women employed as casual workers is the highest within the category, whereas for the rest socio-religious categories share of self-employed rural women dominates. For rural women belonging to Muslim and Other categories, more than 60 per cent of the employed women are self-employed. A decline in the share of self-employed and casual workers happened across all the socio-religious categories. However, for ST and SC working-age rural women, the majority of the decline was 9.1 per cent (ST) and 8 per cent (SC) was experienced for the casual workers and the rest 6 per cent fall was in the share of self-employed. For, OBC working-age rural women around 5 per cent decline was witnessed in both employment types. For the Muslim and Other category working-age rural women, as most of the women employed are self-employed the decline also majorly happened for this category, a fall in the share of 9.4 per cent (Muslim) and 7.3 per cent (Others) was seen. The share of working-age muslim rural women employed is the least among all the social categories. The share of working-age rural women employed as regular workers increased between 0.8 per cent to 1.2 per cent for all the categories. Although this is a very minor increase, as regular workers are supposed to have relatively decent pay and work-condition this is like a drop of water in a deserted land.

In the case of working-age rural men, approximately 86 per cent to 80 per cent of them were employed within their respective socio-religious category in 2011-12 the share dropped to range between 80 per cent to 74 per cent. The employment share was highest for ST men followed by Muslim, SC, OBC and Others. Most of the working age rural men are self-employed in respective socio-religious categories as well, except of SC rural men, most of whom are casual worker. Lack of human and physical capital are major constraints in having quality employment, and landlessness is highest among the SC (Sengupta, 2009). Therefore, high concentration of SC working age rural men in casual workers is expected, because self-employment activities in rural areas are usually associated land ownership. The decline in employment share of working age

Table 2.11: Percentage of working age (15-59 years) person employed (UPSA status) in different activities from respective socio-religious groups in rural sector.

Social Group	Type of Workers	Rural Women			Rural Men		
		2011-12	2017-18	2018-19	2011-12	2017-18	2018-19
Scheduled Tribe	Casual Worker	21.2	14	12.1	33.9	25	27
	Regular Worker	1.9	3.2	3.1	5.3	8.4	9.3
	Self Employed	31.9	22.5	26.4	46.8	46.6	44
	Total	55	39.7	41.6	86	80	80.3
Scheduled Caste	Casual Worker	20.4	12.4	12.4	46.7	35.6	35.7
	Regular Worker	2.1	2.8	3.3	8	10.2	11
	Self Employed	17.3	10.3	11.7	28.1	30.1	29
	Total	39.8	25.5	27.4	82.8	75.9	75.7
OBC	Casual Worker	11.9	6.8	6.9	27.8	18.8	18.8
	Regular Worker	2.2	2.6	3	8.4	11.3	11.2
	Self Employed	21.9	15.2	17.1	45.4	44.3	44.8
	Total	36	24.6	27	81.6	74.4	74.8
Muslim	Casual Worker	5.3	3.7	3.5	29.9	24.5	24.2
	Regular Worker	1.2	1.6	2.2	9	12.5	13.4
	Self Employed	18.9	9.6	9.5	44.9	36.8	42
	Total	25.4	14.9	15.2	83.8	73.8	79.6
Others	Casual Worker	5.4	3.5	3	15	10.7	10.2
	Regular Worker	2.9	3.4	3.7	13.6	14.6	15.1
	Self Employed	21.8	14.7	14.5	50.8	48	48.8
	Total	30.1	21.6	21.2	79.4	73.3	74.1

Source: Author calculation

rural men was more dominant among SC, OBC and ST rural men. In case of rural men as the decline in casual workers share was the primary driver of the decline in their employment. This pattern remained consistent when seen for respective socio-religious categories. Slight 2-3 per cent decline in share of self-employed working age rural men was also seen. The increase in share of regular workers ranged between 4.4 per cent to 1.5 per cent, highest rise in share was witnessed for Muslim and ST men, whereas the lowest was for Other category rural men. A rise of 5.2 per cent was seen in employment share of self-employed muslim rural men in a period of 1 year, i.e between 2017-18 and 2018-19. Data shows this rise in mainly in Retail Trade and Mixed Farming.

Table 2.12: Percentage of working age (15-59 years) person employed (UPSA status) in different activities from respective socio-religious groups in urban sector.

Social Group	Type of Workers	Urban Women			Urban Men		
		2011–12	2017–18	2018–19	2011–12	2017–18	2018–19
Scheduled Tribe	Casual Worker	8.7	6.5	4.3	18.2	15.7	16.2
	Regular Worker	9.9	12.5	11.4	40.4	35.7	36.5
	Self Employed	9.3	4.7	5.1	17.4	19.3	18.8
	Total	27.9	23.7	20.8	76	70.7	71.5
Scheduled Caste	Casual Worker	4.7	4.2	3.9	20.5	18.8	17.9
	Regular Worker	12.5	13.6	13.7	35.9	34.3	35.5
	Self Employed	7.7	6.5	5.6	22.6	21.2	19.8
	Total	24.9	24.3	23.2	79	74.3	73.2
OBC	Casual Worker	3.3	2.8	2.5	13.9	13	12
	Regular Worker	7.8	9.5	10.3	31.9	32.4	33.3
	Self Employed	10.4	7.7	7.8	33.7	29.1	28.1
	Total	21.5	20	20.6	79.5	74.5	73.4
Muslim	Casual Worker	2.5	1.4	1	11.8	12.3	14.6
	Regular Worker	4.8	4	5.2	24.5	28.7	28.7
	Self Employed	8.4	5.3	8.5	42.9	35	33.9
	Total	15.7	10.7	14.7	79.2	76	77.2
Others	Casual Worker	1.1	1.2	0.7	4.3	5	3.7
	Regular Worker	10.5	11.9	13.1	40.8	40.2	41.7
	Self Employed	7.4	6.1	5.7	31.9	28.5	28.4
	Total	19	19.2	19.5	77	73.7	73.8

Source: Author calculation

The average share of working-age urban women in employment is less than rural women. In the urban sector, for women, the percentage of working-age women employed from the respective social categories is higher for ST and SC women relative to OBC and Other category urban women and lowest for Muslim women. This is true for all years. The pattern is similar to that of rural women; however, the gap in the employment proportions of working-age women of different social groups declines in the case of urban working-age women. Although, the decline in employment share is not much in the case of working-age urban women. In the case of ST urban women, the share of casual and self-employed workers declined by 4.4 per cent and 4.2 per cent

respectively. For SC and OBC urban women also the share of working-age urban women in casual work and self-employment declined (1-2 per cent) between 2011-12 and 2018-19. For Muslim women, a slight decline in the share of casual workers was experienced, whereas for the Others category working age urban women a slight dip in self-employed working-age women's share was seen. Similar to the pattern seen for self-employed rural men, self-employed urban women's share increased by 3.2 per cent in a year as well. Now, this happening because of some survey anomaly or not, needs to be explored further. The majority of the decline in urban working-age women's employment share is because of the ST, SC and Muslim women, again implying the burden of recession and policies like demonetisation, which were expected to hit the informal sector more, are affecting the socially backward section of the society more than the non-backwards ones. The increase was seen in the share of working-age urban women employed as a regular worker among all the socio-religious categories. However, the rise was strongest for Other and OBC urban women. As regular employment is considered to be relatively better than the other two types, the domination of Other and OBC urban women in this category reinstates the fact the ST, SC and Muslim urban women are in a relative socially disadvantageous position.

For working-age urban men percentage of them employed from respective social category range from 71-77 per cent in 2018-19, with the decline in share between 2011-12 to 2018-19 being less than 7 per cent to more than equal to 2 per cent. Other than Muslim urban men, in rest of the socio-religious categories the share of regular employment among working age urban men was the highest. The decline in employment share was highest for the OBC men followed by SC and ST urban men. The decline was least for Muslim men, but this happened in the backdrop of the share of self-employed urban men declined by 9 per cent and a rise of 2.8 per cent in casual worker share and 4.2 per cent in regular workers share was seen. This is only sub-category for which the share of casual workers increased in the study period. The rise in share of regular workers is also highest among all the urban men. Only, for working age ST and SC urban men the share of regular worker declined, in that as well the decline was very sharp for ST urban men, their share declined from 40.4 per cent to 36.5 per cent between 2011-12 and 2018-19. So, it can be concluded that irrespective of the gender or sector, all individuals

belonging to ST and SCs faced the harsher wrath of the declining jobs than the other non-backward castes.

Occupational Segregation

A vital pattern to observe the above analysis is the existence of some segregation in type of employment on the basis of socio-religious categories. Caste and religion based occupational segregation in the labour market can be explained as, if one belongs to a particular caste, let us say SC, then the probability of finding a job in the involving menial task will be remarkably higher than the with better work conditions. Like the fact that, most of the manual scavengers belong to SC (Shahid, 2015). Segregation fundamentally contributes to social inequality by promoting differential treatment on the basis of different identities (Reskin, 1993), which in Indian case are gender, caste and religion. The presence of these stark differences in jobs of people belonging to different social categories can lead to the macroeconomic climate of the country affecting individuals from different social groups differently. The differential trends in the job loss can be seen in Table 2.11 and Table 2.12. The presence of caste based segregation has been studied previously, and the literature on this is ever growing from Agrawal (2016), Deshpande (2011), and Mansoor and Abraham (2021); these studies give the data based evidence of the existing occupational segregation in the Indian labour market based on caste and gender.

This study continues this analysis by plotting the share of working-age individuals employed in various occupations for the respective socio-religious categories for 2011-12 and 2018-19. Nine broad occupations have been used for the analysis, which is ranked according to the skill level of the occupations by National Classification of Occupation. Now the top to the bottom ranking of the occupation goes like Legislators, Senior Officials and Managers, Professional, Assistant Professional, Clerks, Service Workers and Shop and Market Sales Worker, Market-Oriented Agriculture and Fishery Worker, Craft and Related Trade Worker, Plants Machine Operator and Assembler, and Elementary Occupation Labourer.

Rural Women are employed in three occupations majorly, i.e being elementary

Figure 2.2: Percent of working-age (15-59 years) rural women employed in different occupation for respective socio-religious categories in 2011-12 & 2018-19

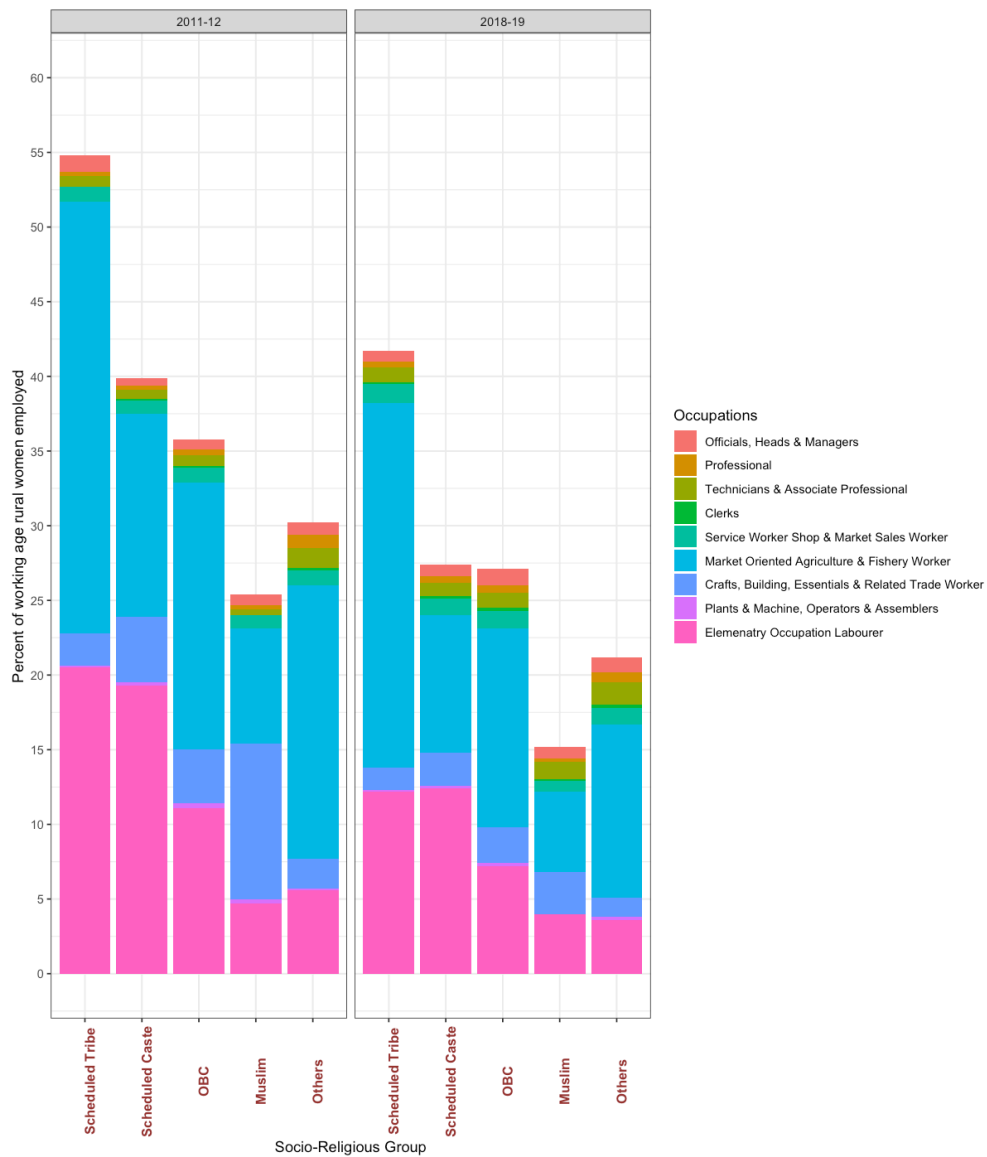
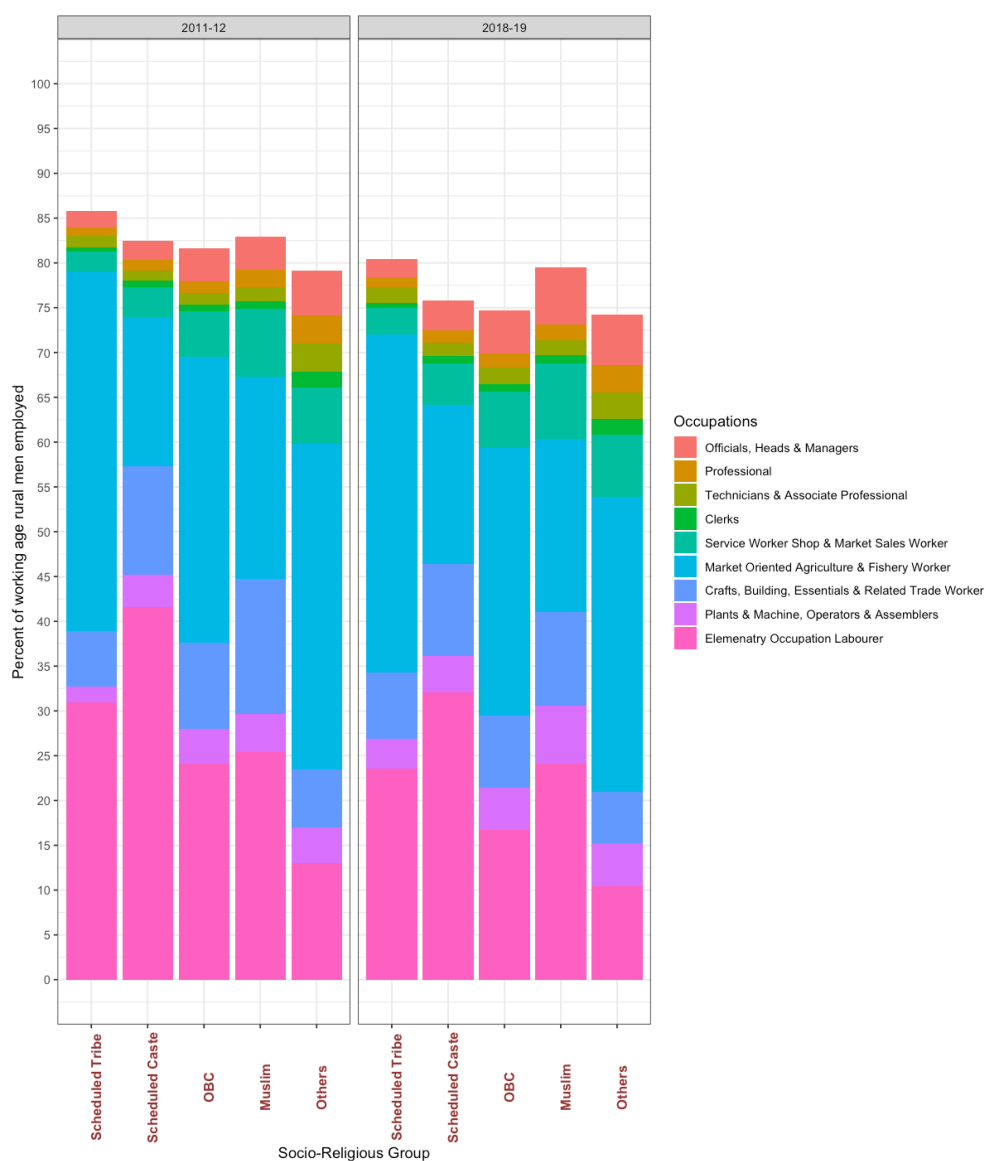


Figure 2.3: Percent of working-age (15-59 years) rural men employed in different occupation for respective socio-religious categories in 2011-12 & 2018-19



occupation labourer, Market-oriented agriculture and fishery worker and, Crafts, Building, Essentials and Related Trade Worker. For working-age rural women, it is seen in figure-2.2 that both in 2011-12 and 2018-19, the share of working-age SC rural women employed as Elementary Occupation Labourer is very high in respect of the other socio-religious categories. The employment share of working-age ST, OBC and Other category rural women is highest in the Occupation Market-oriented agriculture and fishery work. This shows that working-age rural women belonging to SC are primarily concentrated in elementary work, which is dangerous, low-paying work with no job security, social security, or other benefits. This pattern was seen among working-age rural men, urban women and urban men. (see figures- 2.3,2.4,2.5). The over-representation of working-age SC individuals in elementary occupations is relatively less stark for urban men. As rural women faced a massive decline in employment, it must be expected that the occupational distribution might be changed. A comparison of the occupation distribution of working-age rural women for a respective social group in 2011-12 and 2018-19 suggests that no major difference exists other than the slight increase in the share of better-skilled top-end occupations. According to appendix Table 2.16, the better skill level occupations for the share increased slightly are Technicians and Associate Professional and Officials, Heads and Managers. The share of Other category rural women was highest in the better skill occupations. Also, Majority of the Muslim women work as crafts and related trade workers and experienced a massive decline in their share.

Agriculture-based occupations hold the largest share among the employed working-age rural men and women. There are two types of agriculture-based occupations: one that is market-oriented and the second are elementary labourers. The Forward caste representation was dominated in market-oriented agriculture jobs, and the Non-Forward Caste representation was dominated in elementary labour. This can be due to the unequal landholding where the land is concentrated in the hands of the Forward Caste individuals (Rawal and Bansal, 2021), which makes them culturally and socially stronger, and by transitivity, this leads to better labour market opportunities for them.

For, rural men's occupation segregation was less stark than rural women's, as other than Agriculture based occupation and Crafts and Related Trade Work, they are also employed in Plant and Machine based operating and Assembling jobs. Their

share in Service and Market Sales based Jobs and Official, Heads and Managers is also relatively higher than rural women. The pattern for Market-Oriented Agriculture worker and Elementary Occupation labourer occupational share is similar to rural women, with SC primarily working as elementary occupation labourers. The share of rural men employed in better-paying occupations is highest for Others Category, followed by Muslims, OBC, SC and ST(see appendix table 2.17). Indicating the occupations which are relatively better in work conditions and rewards are dominated by socially advantageous communities.

Coming to the Urban sector, figures 2.4 and 2.5 the occupational share of working-age men and women for respective socio-religious groups. It is seen that occupational distribution is much more stratified in urban areas than in rural. However, this stratification is also skewed when compared across different social groups. If we consider individuals employed in high-paying jobs like professionals the concentration is very high for urban men and women belonging to the Others category. The Share keeps declining when one moves from OBC to Muslim, ST and SC for urban men(see appendix table 2.19). And for urban women the share declines when one moves from OBC to ST, SC and Muslim(see appendix Table 2.18). The difference in the concentration of Muslim women and men can be derived from the fact that very few Muslim women are employed. The share of ST individuals being high in relatively good jobs in urban areas is seen, because only 10% of them live in urban areas, and among that set, they can reap the benefit of affirmative action policies which provide them with a relatively secure source of livelihood. For, precarious and relatively less paying jobs the concentration is higher for SC working-age urban men and women in both the years.

For urban women, employment in middle-skill jobs increased slightly between 2011-12 to 2018-19, especially for SC urban women, as their share in the occupation - Service worker Shop and Market Sales Workers increased. The share of individuals employed in crafts and related trade occupations declined almost for every socio-religious category in urban areas. This implies that this decline in employment was majorly due to the decline in work opportunities of the women engaged in elementary occupations. There has been a decline in the employment share of all kinds of low-skill occupations for working-age urban men across all social categories and occupations, thereafter

Figure 2.4: Percent of working-age (15-59 years) urban women employed in different occupation for respective socio-religious categories in 2011-12 & 2018-19

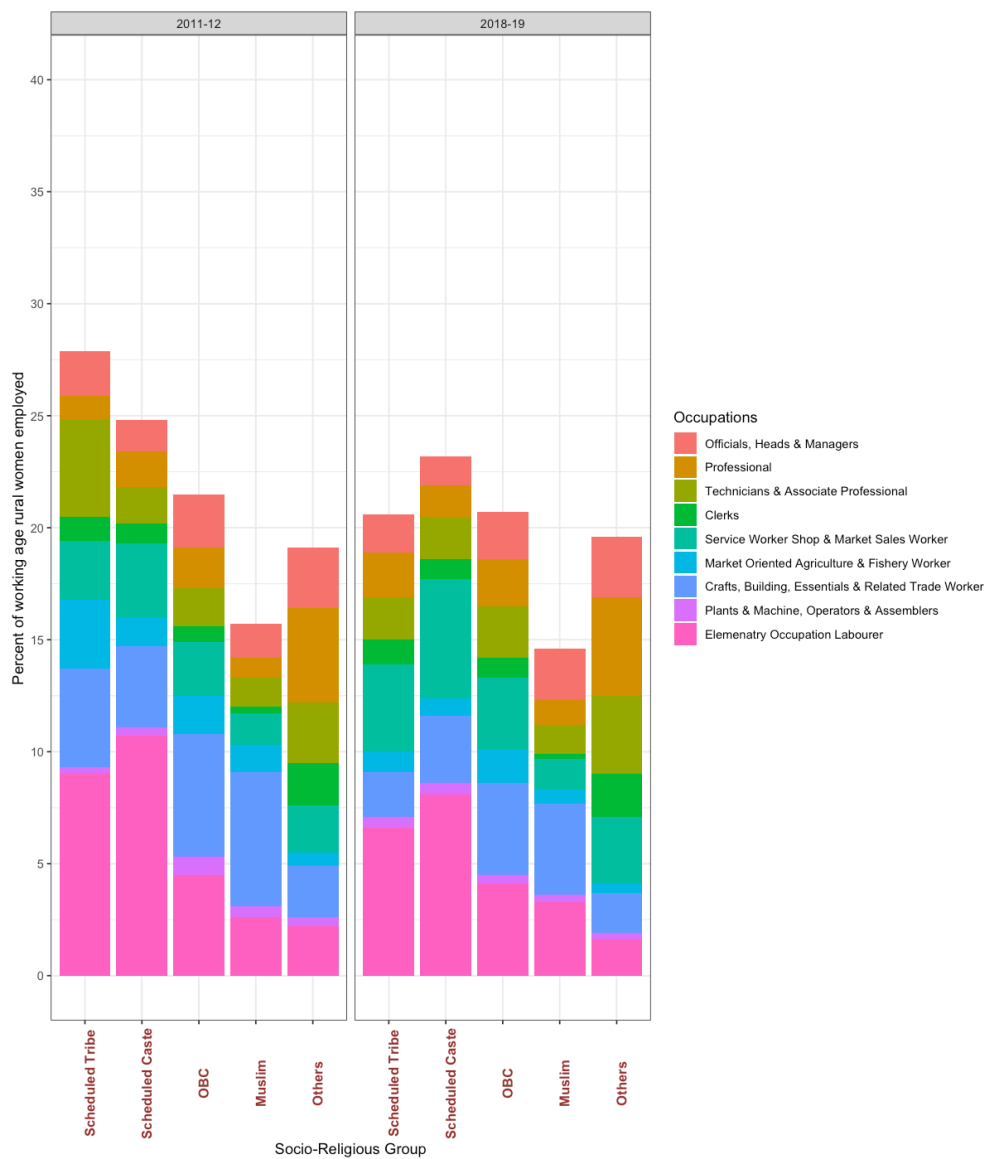
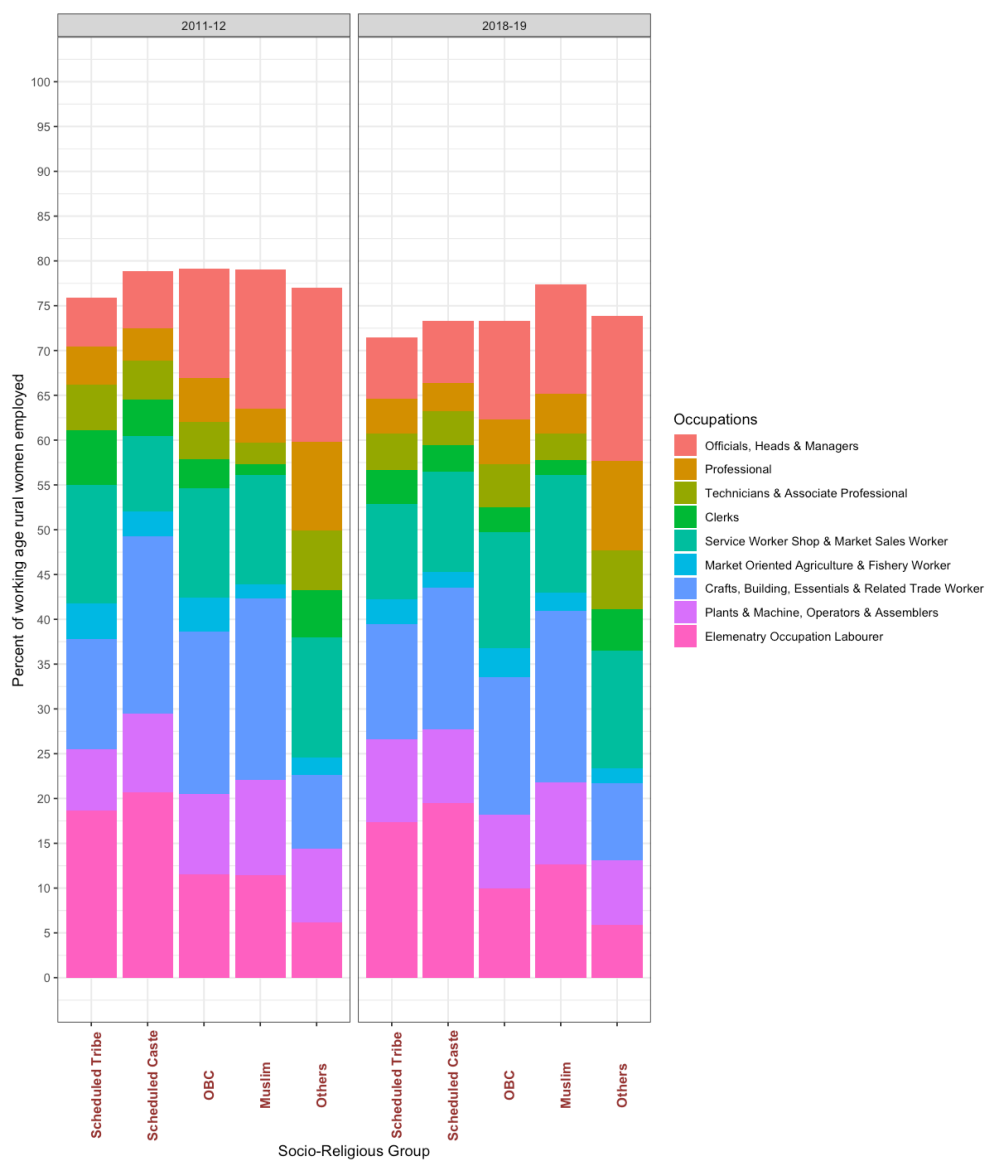


Figure 2.5: Percent of working-age (15-59 years) urban men employed in different occupation for respective socio-religious categories in 2011-12 & 2018-19



leaving the occupation distribution unchanged for them between 2011-12 and 2018-19. Moreover, in terms of the over-representation of the Forward caste in high skill better paying jobs, the share of working-age urban men professionals, associate professionals and clerks belonging to the Other category are highest.

The results of these Occupational Segregation and Employment Trends highlight the deep-rooted problem of caste-based inequality in our country. Such caste-based discrimination leads to equal opportunity denial in the labour market and adversely impacts the income and poverty levels of the individuals facing this discrimination. This discrimination in income and poverty level of non-forward social groups is jointly caused due to the disadvantage they face in getting employment and the massive concentration of such individuals in the informal sector occupation. Furthermore, they also face the brunt of declining low wages, further amplifying their distress. For analysing such situations, this study looks at how the per capita real monthly earnings in various employment categories have changed over time for the individual belonging to different socio-religious categories.

Caste Based Earnings Differentials

For the analysis purpose, real per capita monthly earnings are calculated for individuals employed in CWS. The broad employment categories taken are Self-Employed(excluding unpaid household helpers), Regular/Salaried Worker and Casual Worker. This categorisation was done because in the data sources used,earnings are given separately for these categories, and merging them would generate misinformation. There is slight difference in EUS and PLFS schedule to report wage and salary earning. In EUS, weekly earnings and wages are reported for casual and regular worker for all the activity they are engaged in. Whereas in PLFS, for daily wage earned in week is recorded for all seven days. For regular worker monthly gross earning received or receivable in the preceding calendar month were recorded.In the case of self-employed individuals, the PLFS data set, for the first time, gave a monthly estimate of their gross earnings. Henceforth no data earning data is available for self-employed individuals for the year 2011-12.Moreover, earning of self-employed workers are only calculated for the individual engaged as own

account workers and employers. The sub category un-paid household workers was excluded because there were no gross earnings reported for them. As some category have a very small sample size, 95% confidence interval are also calculated to check the validity of calculated earnings. The vertical bar in fig 2.6, 2.7 and 2.8 are the 95% confidence interval calculated around the average earnings of individuals from respective categories.

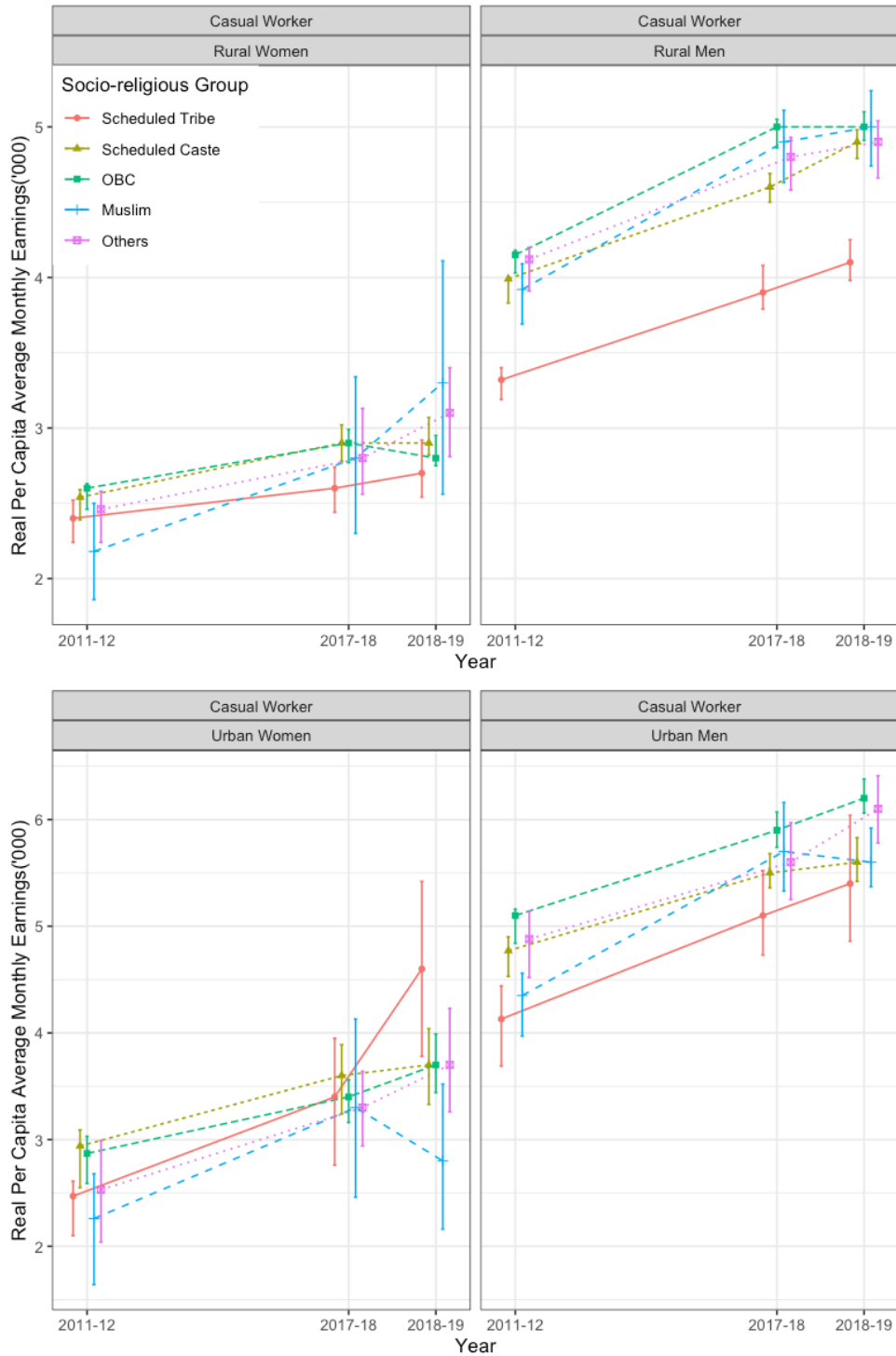
A huge earning difference is seen when one compares estimates of rural women earnings in fig 2.6, 2.7 and 2.8 to rural men earning. For casual worker (see fig 2.6), rural men real earning range from ₹4000 to ₹5000 per month whereas for rural women the real monthly earning range from ₹2300 to ₹3200 in 2018-19. So, on an average rural men casual workers earn ₹1550 more than rural women casual workers in a month. Rural men in regular employment earn between ₹9000 to ₹11,000 whereas women earn between ₹5000 to ₹8000 in 2018-19. Rural men in regular employment (see fig 2.7) earn at least ₹3000 more than regularly employed rural women. Moreover the casual workers earn very less in comparison to regular workers in rural areas, average pay of casual workers in rural areas is less ₹4000 in 2018-19 whereas for the casual worker the average rural earning are around ₹13000. So, rural regular worker on an average earn 2 times more than casual workers. The gross earning of self-employed (see fig 2.8) rural women is abysmally low, ranging between ₹1900 to ₹3500 per month and for rural men it range between ₹5200 to ₹7000 per month. This average is pulled up, when entire self-employed population is taken into consideration. For women most of the rural women are reported as unpaid household helper (see Table 2.5). With the given data structure either one can look at the household level earning of self-employed individuals. Because a household level enterprise can't be systematically divided in individual earning. Therefore, the category of un-paid household helper doesn't make much sense because no one is actually getting paid in an household enterprise. Everyone in managing their household expenses from the gross earning of the household enterprise. Therefore, for self-employment the earning should be seen as an average earning for all men and women in the household. But, this study is doing an individual level analysis, therefore for the earnings of self-employed individual we are only looking at the ones whose gross earning are reported in the data. The combine average of self-employed (excluding unpaid household helpers) rural workers lie similar to that of casual worker, signalling that they don't have any

better work rewards than casual workers in rural areas. The above analysis implies that a clear gender-based earning gap exists in the rural sector.

The story holds for the urban sector as well; The earnings of casual women worker in urban areas is approximately ₹3700 per month and for urban men the range is ₹5500 to ₹6000 per month in 2018-19. The gender wage gap in earning of casual worker is higher in urban areas. For regular worker in urban areas, the women real monthly earning range between ₹8000 to ₹16000, and for men the range in ₹11000 to ₹17000. The earning of regular urban workers are very high than rural regular workers, moreover the gender gap in earning is relatively lower than rural sector regular workers gender wage gap. For Self-employed urban worker (excluding unpaid household helpers), real per monthly earning range between ₹2500 to ₹8500 for women and ₹8500 to ₹16500 for men. There is very large variation within earning of self-employed urban men and women, the gender wage gap is also very high ranging from ₹6000 to ₹8000 per month. The gender gap in wage/earning is more at the low-income level than the upper one in both sectors. Therefore, the burden of gender-based discrimination in wages is more when one is doing a low paid job. Establishing that gender-based discrimination exists in rural and urban sectors. Let us analyse how the socio-religious groups affects the pay gap for rural women, rural men, urban women and urban men.

Figure 2.6 shows the real per capita average monthly earnings of casual workers belonging to different social groups for 2011-12, 2017-18 and 2018-19. The confidence interval of Muslim rural and urban women and ST urban women are very large. Therefore no concrete interpretation can be given for them. For rest of the casual workers, a slight increase in earnings was seen for the individual categories. However, the rate of growth is very small and if compared with the growth in earnings between 2004-05 to 2011-12 (Srivastava and Padhi, 2020), the growth of earnings in casual workers seen between 2011-12 and 2018-19 falls very short. In terms of socio-religious categories, almost everyone earns in the same price range because the nature of work is such that everyone operated from the same playing field. However, even in such circumstances, ST casual workers earn the lowest in the case of rural men and women, and urban men. This tells about the deprived and isolated social location of ST workers. For urban women casual workers, all the categories analysed earn similar. The slight increase seen in earnings

Figure 2.6: Socio-religious group based per capita average real monthly earnings of casual workers for the years 2011-12, 2017-18 & 2018-19



of casual men workers is starker than women workers, as for rural women they were stagnated. As there has been a collapse in the growth of earnings of casual workers and the overall decline in employment of casual workers seen in all the categories. The distress in the labour market is visible in all the parameters, as not only people are not getting employment, but the ones who are employed also do not see any significant improvement in their work conditions. And the burden of this distress is also more on the ST community and least on the socially privileged section i.e Others.

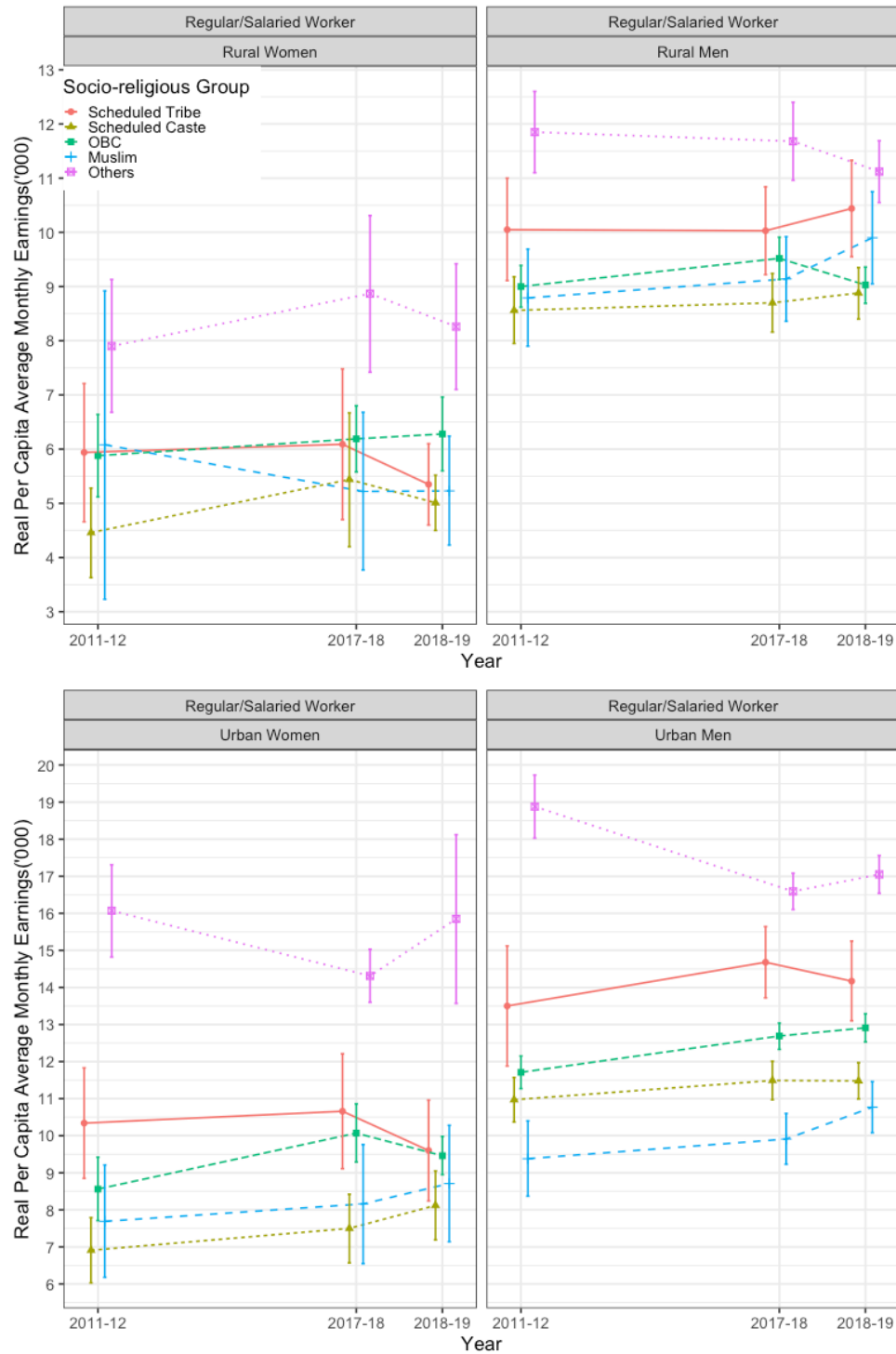
For regular salaried individuals (see fig 2.7), it is seen the earnings have stagnated for the most in the study period and showed some decline in the case of other categories. As discussed large differences in earnings exists, when one compares the rural sector and urban sector, as well as between men and women. Regular salaried employment has seen an increase in its share for all the individual categories except for ST urban men(see Table 2.11 and 2.12). Stagnation and decline seen in real earnings in the study period indicate that the quality of jobs generated was average and below average only. Within the rural sector, the earnings of the Other's category is very the highest, with men earning ₹11000 per month and women earning ₹8000 per month in 2018-19. Whereas the SC community earns the least, with men earning ₹9000 and women earning ₹5000. Regular jobs included individuals benefiting from affirmative action which provide public employment, even after that large gaps in earnings signal a differential reward system for individuals belonging to different socio-religious categories. Moreover, occupational segregation and networks also play a role. Real monthly earnings of Others category rural men and ST and Muslim rural women declined. The decline was starker for women than men, signalling the crises hit the disadvantaged group more extremely than the privileged one. And the crisis is so intense that the most privileged are also affected by it.

In urban areas, the difference in earnings for individuals belonging to different socio-religious groups is starker. Furthermore, the gap is larger among men than women. For urban women, real monthly earnings stagnated within the study period with a very tiny increase seen in earnings of SC, Muslim and OBC women. And the real monthly earnings of ST urban women declined slightly. In terms of earning gap, SC rural women earned the least(₹8000 per month), Muslim women earned ₹500 more than SC, OBC

and ST women earned ₹1500 more than SC women and Others category women earned ₹8000 more than SC women. The gap between the other category and the rest of the socio-religious category is very high. The privileges of the other category in terms of physical and human capital are so high that the reward system of the labour market is very biased in their favour. ST women have the second-highest earnings among rural men and women. This is because around 10 per cent of all the ST population live in urban areas. And one primary factor in finding employment in urban areas is the affirmative action policies which provide better paid regular employment. Therefore the average wage of an ST individual is pulled up. The fact to note is that even after this situation their earnings lag far behind the other category.

Among urban men regular workers, the Muslim men earn the least (₹11000 per month), SC men earn ₹500 more than Muslim men, OBC men earn ₹2000 more than Muslim men, ST men earn ₹3000 more than Muslim men and Others category men earn ₹6500 more than Muslim men. The gap between the earnings of Others and the rest of the category has declined in the study period. However, this decline is primarily because of a ₹2000 decline in the regularly employed urban men's earnings. For the rest of the socio-religious category, the earnings either remained stagnant or increased very slightly in the case of ST and Muslim men. Decrease in gap of average real monthly earnings happened mainly because of the decline in earnings of the privileged section of the society, which signal that this is happening because of the economic distress brewing in the country. Even though the share of ST working-age men employed in regular work declined by 4 per cent (Table 2.12), their average real monthly earning increased. Reason could be that regular employment also includes government jobs. For obvious reasons, the probability of leaving a government job is very low, so the decline seen in employment must be from fall in non-public employment. Non-Public employment usually pays less to the discriminated section of the society. Along with that, the government jobs pay scale keeps updating itself, and the seventh pay commission increased the monthly salaries of government employees significantly since 2016. Thereby, it can very well be the case that an increase is seen because of the average monthly salary of the ST categories because of the domination of government jobs individual in these categories. Therefore, even after the decline in the wage gap, the gap is still very huge to show

Figure 2.7: Socio-religious group based per capita average real monthly earnings of regular/salaried workers for the years 2011-12, 2017-18 & 2018-19

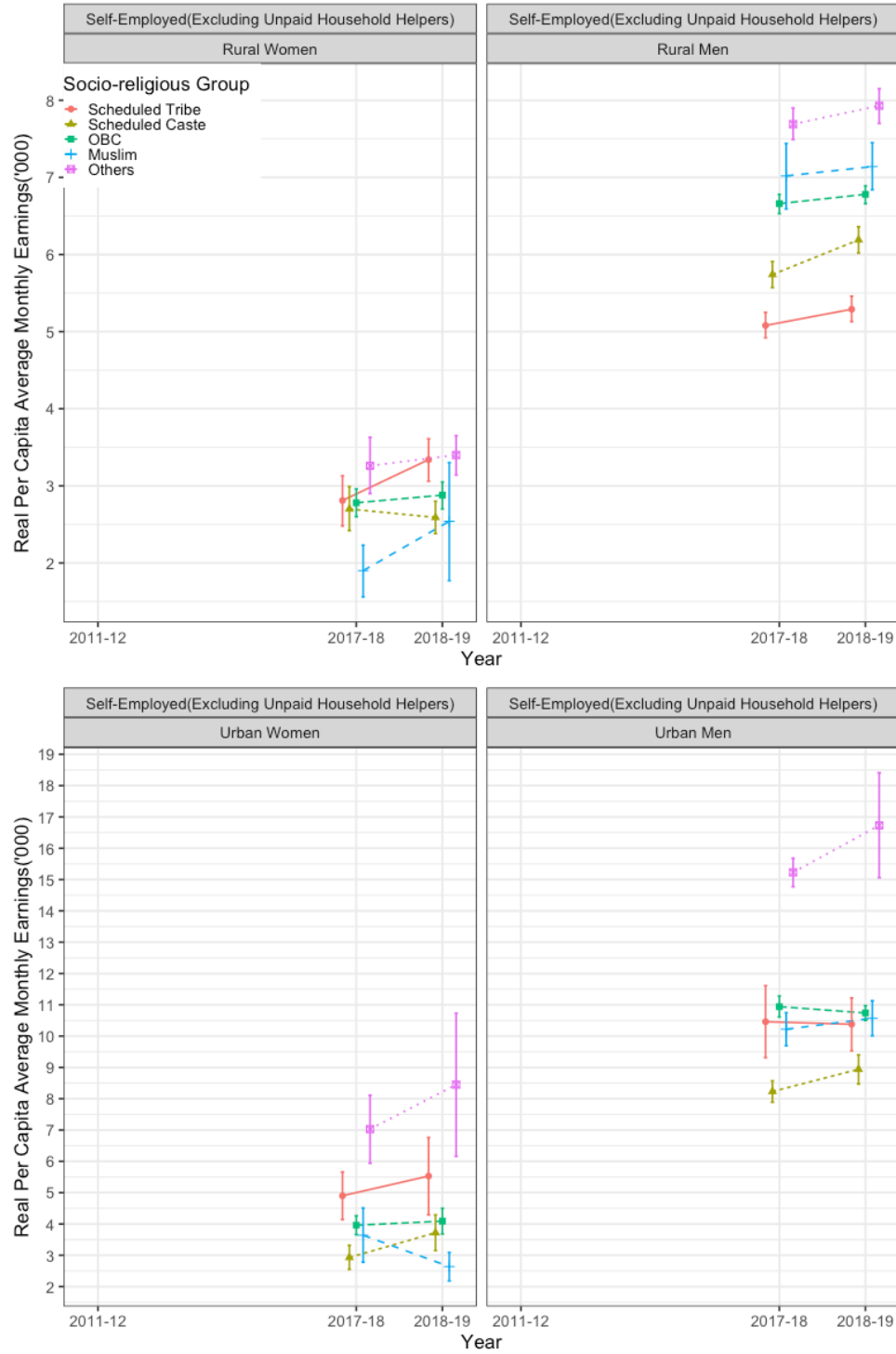


the existence of massive discrimination in the labour market due to visible and invisible reasons.

For self-employed(excluding unpaid household helpers) individuals, nothing can be said about the trend of their real gross monthly earnings as the data is not available for the year 2011-12. Although, a look a figure 2.8 show that the earnings gap exists between various socio-religious category. In the rural sector, women belonging to all the social category earns around ₹2000 to ₹35000 per month.Muslim and SC rural women earnings where the least.So, even with an abysmally low level of earning there exist a difference between the real gross earning of Muslim, SC and the rest of the socio-religious categories. This show the plight and difficult circumstances the SC and Muslim women survive in. For rural men, the real gross monthly earnings of ST are the minimum i.e around ₹5200 per month, whereas the real gross monthly earnings of Other category rural men is the highest(₹7800 per month), followed by Muslim, OBC and SC. These earning gaps within all the socio-religious categories exist because the relatively privileged sections dominate the other in terms of endowments, cultural capital and social locations. The discriminatory practices also affect the networking, reach of various non-dominant socio-religious category individuals.

The gap in gross earnings of self-employed(excluding unpaid household helpers) individuals is starker in the case of urban areas, especially among men. For self-employed(excluding unpaid household helpers) urban women, Muslim, OBC and SC women's real monthly gross earnings are the least ranging between ₹2500 to ₹4000. Whereas the Others category and ST women's average real month earnings are ₹8500 per month and ₹6000 per month approximately. The point to note that is the share of Muslim and OBC women in self-employment is the highest. So, the women involved in very low-paying self-employment activities like street vendors usually belong to SC, OBC and the Muslim community. Whereas, the Others category and ST urban women are engaged in better-earning activities. The gap in average monthly gross earnings of self-employed(excluding unpaid household helpers) urban men from the Others category and SC is ₹7500. The average monthly earnings of the rest of the socio-religious lies in the same range very close to the earnings of SC urban men. The urban spaces are a hub of huge business agglomerations, and the fact that owning and running a factory

Figure 2.8: Socio-religious group based per capita average real monthly earnings of self-employed individuals(excluding unpaid household helpers) for the years 2017-18 & 2018-19



and street vending both come under self-employed(excluding unpaid household helpers) occupation might lead to such a huge difference in wages of the self-employed(excluding unpaid household helpers) individual from different social groups. But, this re-validates the fact that entrepreneurial growth and success are possible only for forward caste individuals because of the primitive material history of privileges. Another point to note is, as the variation in confidence interval of average real gross earnings of self-employed individuals are relatively less. This might be due to generalisation that exist when one report the gross-earning. Because, at the level of household enterprises it is rarely the case that people main the accounts of their earning.

So it can be concluded that the collapse in growth of earnings is more intense among regular workers and in urban areas. The exemplification of the economic crisis is widespread and not limited to the casual worker and unprivileged section of the society and is affecting the most privileged lot i.e. the upper caste urban men. The series of economic policy shocks like demonetization and GST reforms along with the ongoing agrarian distress in the study period is the genesis of the economic crisis effects of which, are seen in the labour market outcomes in 2018-19.

Some Studies Agrawal (2014), Das and Dutta (2007), and Madheswaran and Attewell (2007) use the differential endowment argument to explain the wage gap. It is argued that different levels of individual endowment like level of educations, number of sibling, monthly per capita expenditure determines the kind of employment one is getting and therefore the wage/earning. So, the difference seen in wages of individuals for various social group primarily comes from these factors. When the wage difference among individuals of different castes is seen, even after levelling for endowment difference, it can be said that there is caste based discrimination in the wage market. Results discussed above show a massive wage gap among individuals belonging to different caste categories. Arguing that these gap exist because of endowment differences and maybe some level of discrimination is not justifiable. Because, it is crucial to question why such massive endowment differences exist among individuals from different caste categories. Caste based discrimination is inherited in the differential ownership of these endowment. Otherwise, it would not be the case the individuals only from upper caste are good in acquiring skills which helps them in earning better in the labour market.

The caste brings various good and bad factors that either add or subtract from their capability to acquire the right skills and networks, which helps them perform and earn in the labour market. And, its seen the all the perks lies in the basket of forward caste individuals.

2.9 Conclusion

The assessment of the employment situation shows that the 6.7 per cent decline in the employment share of the working age population between 2011-12 and 2018-19 was primarily led by the falling employment opportunities for the indigent section of society. The brunt of declining employment was faced by the rural sector working age population more than the urban sector. And rural women more than rural men, thus re-validating the presence of gender based inequality in the system. Moreover, the socio-religious structural inequalities was evident as the share of individuals from marginalised communities losing jobs was more than non-marginalised communities individuals. This shows ignorance of the labour market policy to provide equal opportunities to everyone. Moreover, targeted employment policy generation is needed because the people missing out on paid work belong more to the distressed section of society, for whom the playing field of the labour market is very uneven.

The increased percentage share of students among the young population only partially explained the decline in employment. Therefore, it is important to note that major macroeconomic changes in the country between 2011-12 to 2018-19 like the shift in political regime with the results of the 2014-15 election. Thereafter major policy changes like demonetization and GST reforms happened which were a huge shock for the informal economy especially. Along with that, the government's fiscal policy measures were conservative with strict inflation targeting. Even international trade wars affected the supply chains domestically. All these factors weakened the demand side of the economy evident from the weak domestic output growth seen after 2017. All this naturally gets reflected in job losses and poor employment growth in India.

Self-employment and casual work, both the categories saw a decline in the employment share between 2011-12 to 2018-19. As both, activity types are informal in

nature, the need to strengthen and boost the informal economy is a must. Moreover, it was peculiar that the decline seen in self-employment in the rural sector was only due to a decline in the employment share of the category unpaid household help. For sure the changes in the agriculture sector with increased mechanisation contributed to it. Furthermore, the high concentration of women in the unpaid work category reveals how bounded women are by their social structure. Womens work whether paid or unpaid is defined and limited by their household roles. The decline seen in womens employment does show the declining opportunities in the rural economy. But it is also a strong comment on the massive ignorance of the labour market on the needs of women to work comfortably in the labour market. Lack of policy initiatives regarding childcare leave, creches, maternity leave, safe mobility and work environment shows ignorance. This leads to the concentration of women in activities which a relatively friendly to their needs like teaching. As seen by a slight rise is seen in the percentage of working age women employed in regular activities like teaching.

This study has analysed the earnings trends provided by the PLFS and EUS 2011-12, which are categorised according to skill levels. According to the results, earnings growth plummeted between 2011-12 and 2018-19. The growth of earnings did fall for all the skill types but the intensity was more for highly skilled regular workers, among them also for urban men's the salaries declined. The decline in earnings of a relatively privileged section of the labour force is a sharp commentary on the status quo of the others. For casual workers, stagnancy in monthly earnings is also very significant, because their earnings are on an average below the minimum wage level. As most of them are paid on daily basis, there is no guarantee that they even get the minimum monthly wages. Along with that, the decline in the salary of regular workers signals a dearth of work in the economy. All this confirms the poor economic performance of the country due to successive policy shocks in the study period.

The study also analysed the socio-religious group based earnings trends for 2011-12 and 2018-19. Results show the clear presence of gender, caste and religion based differential wages with the marginalised section earning the least. The differential earnings were higher among regular and self-employed(excluding unpaid household helpers) workers. Whereas casual workers have relatively same pay level. Caste based occupa-

tional segregation is one important contributing factor behind it. It is worrisome that after years of affirmative actions and other anti-discriminatory policies caste based discrimination is very much prevalent in society. It is required that caste based affirmative action enter the private market also to correct the labour market inequality.

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2.10 Appendix

Table 2.13: Occupational distribution of regular worker

Occupation	Year		
	2011-12	2017-18	2018-19
Machine Operators and Assemblers	5.6	4.4	4
Agriculture, Fishery and Related Labourer	1.9	1.5	1.5
Corporate Managers	3.3	3.1	3
Customer Service Clerks	1.4	1.4	1.5
Drivers and Mobile Plant Operators	7.8	8.4	8.2
Extraction and Building Trade Workers	2.7	2	2.1
General Managers	0.5	0.7	0.8
Legislators and Senior Officials	0.6	1.6	1.2
Life Science and Health Ass. Professional	1.7	1.4	1.6
Life Science and Health Professionals	0.8	1.4	1.3
Market Oriented Skilled Agriculture and Fishery Worker	0.6	0.8	0.8
Metal, Machinery and Related Trade Worker	6.1	5.6	5.4
Mining, construction, manufacturing and Transport labourer	4.1	5.6	5.7
Models, Sales Person and Demonstrator	6.7	8.1	8.5
Office Clerks	8.7	7	7
Other Ass. Professional	3.5	3.8	3.7
Other Crafts and Related Trade Worker	4.4	4.6	4.6
Other Professionals	2.1	2.2	2.1
PME Science Professionals	3.3	3.2	3.2
Personal and Protective Service Worker	9.1	8.9	9.9
Physical and Engineering Science Ass. Professional	1.9	2.4	2.3
Precision, Handicraft, Printing and Related Worker	1	1	1.4
Sales & Service Elementary Occupation	8	7.1	6.7
Stationary-Plants and related Operators	2	1.2	1.1
Subsistence Agriculture and Fishery Worker	0	0	0
Teaching Professionals	5.6	5.4	5.2
Teaching Assistant Professional	6.5	7.1	6.9
Total	100	100	100

Notes: The sum total might be little different from 100 due to rounding of decimal points.

Source: Author calculation

Table 2.14: Enterprise distribution of regular worker

Enterprise	Year		
	2011-12	2017-18	2018-19
HH Patnership	1	0.3	0.3
Female	1	1.1	0.8
Non HH Patnership	2.2	1.1	1.4
OThers	2.9	4.1	3
Co-operative/NGO's	2.9	3	3.3
Employer's HH	3.5	3.7	4.2
Public/Private limited company	19.6	21.2	23.4
Govenment/Public/Local Body	29.5	28.2	27.8
Male	35.6	35.7	34.2
Total	98.2	98.4	98.4

Source: Author calculation

Table 2.15: Percentage of working age(15-59 years) individuals unemployed in 2011-12, 2017-18 and 2018-19.

	Rural Women			Rural Men		
	2011-12	2017-18	2018-19	2011-12	2017-18	2018-19
Employed	37.2	25.5	27.2	82	75.2	75.8
Unemployed	0.7	1.1	1.1	1.6	5.1	4.9
	Urban Women			Urban Men		
	2011-12	2017-18	2018-19	2011-12	2017-18	2018-19
Employed	21	19.8	20.2	78.4	74.2	73.7
Unemployed	1.2	2.5	2.3	2.5	5.9	5.9

Source: Author calculation

Table 2.16: Number of rural women employed in different occupation per 1000 working age (15-59 years) rural women from respective social group

Occupation	ST		SC		OBC		Muslim		Others	
	2011-12	2018-19	2011-12	2018-19	2011-12	2018-19	2011-12	2018-19	2011-12	2018-19
Officials, Heads and Managers	1.1	0.7	0.5	0.8	0.7	1.1	0.7	0.8	0.8	1
Professional	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.9	0.7
Technicians and Associate Professional	0.7	1	0.6	0.9	0.7	1	0.4	1.2	1.3	1.5
Clerks	0	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0	0.1	0.2	0.2
Sub-Total	2.1	2.2	1.5	2.3	1.9	2.8	1.4	2.3	3.2	3.4
Service Worker Shop and Market Sales Worker	1	1.3	0.9	1.1	1	1.2	0.9	0.7	1	1.1
Market Oriented Agriculture and Fishery Worker	28.9	24.4	13.6	9.2	17.9	13.3	7.7	5.4	18.3	11.6
Crafts, Building, Essentials and Related Trade Worker	2.2	1.5	4.4	2.2	3.6	2.4	10.4	2.8	2	1.3
Plants and Machine Operators and Assemblers	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.3	0	0.1	0.2
Elementary Occupation Labourer	20.5	12.2	19.3	12.4	11.1	7.2	4.7	4	5.6	3.6
Total	54.8	41.7	39.9	27.4	35.8	27.1	25.4	15.2	30.2	21.2

Source: Author calculation

Table 2.17: Number of rural men employed in different occupation per 1000 working age (15-59 years) rural men from respective social group

Occupation	ST		SC		OBC		Muslim		Others	
	2011-12	2018-19	2011-12	2018-19	2011-12	2018-19	2011-12	2018-19	2011-12	2018-19
Officials, Heads and Managers	1.9	2	2.2	3.3	3.7	4.8	3.7	6.4	5	5.6
Professional	0.9	1.1	1.2	1.4	1.3	1.6	1.9	1.7	3.1	3.1
Technicians and Associate Professional	1.3	1.8	1.1	1.5	1.3	1.8	1.6	1.7	3.1	2.9
Clerks	0.4	0.5	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.9	0.8	0.9	1.8	1.8
Sub-Total	4.5	5.4	5.2	7.0	7.0	9.1	8.0	10.7	13.0	13.4
Service Worker Shop and Market Sales Worker	2.3	3	3.3	4.6	5.1	6.3	7.6	8.4	6.3	6.9
Market Oriented Agriculture and Fishery Worker	40.1	37.7	16.7	17.8	31.9	29.8	22.6	19.4	36.3	32.9
Crafts, Building, Essential and Related Trade Worker	6.2	7.4	12.1	10.3	9.6	8.1	15	10.4	6.5	5.8
Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers	1.7	3.3	3.6	4	3.9	4.7	4.3	6.5	4	4.8
Elementary Occupation Labourer	31	23.6	41.6	32.1	24.1	16.7	25.4	24.1	13	10.4
Total	85.8	80.4	82.5	75.8	81.6	74.7	82.9	79.5	79.1	74.2

Source: Author calculation

Table 2.18: Number of urban men employed in different occupation per 1000 working age (15-59 years) urban men from respective social group

Occupation	ST		SC		OBC		Muslim		Others	
	2011-12	2018-19	2011-12	2018-19	2011-12	2018-19	2011-12	2018-19	2011-12	2018-19
Officials, Heads and Managers	2	1.7	1.4	1.3	2.4	2.1	1.5	2.3	2.7	2.7
Professional	1.1	2	1.6	1.4	1.8	2.1	0.9	1.1	4.2	4.4
Technicians and Associate Professional	4.3	1.9	1.6	1.9	1.7	2.3	1.3	1.3	2.7	3.5
Clerks	1.1	1.1	0.9	0.9	0.7	0.9	0.3	0.2	1.9	1.9
Sub-Total	8.5	6.7	5.5	5.5	6.6	7.4	4.0	4.9	11.5	12.5
Service Worker Shop and Market Sales Worker	2.6	3.9	3.3	5.3	2.4	3.2	1.4	1.4	2.1	3
Market Oriented Agriculture and Fishery Worker	3.1	0.9	1.3	0.8	1.7	1.5	1.2	0.6	0.6	0.4
Crafts, Building, Essentials and Related Trade Worker	4.4	2	3.6	3	5.5	4.1	6	4.1	2.3	1.8
Plants and Machine, Operators and Assemblers	0.3	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.8	0.4	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.3
Elementary Occupation Labourer	9	6.6	10.7	8.1	4.5	4.1	2.6	3.3	2.2	1.6
Total	27.9	20.6	24.8	23.2	21.5	20.7	15.7	14.6	19.1	19.6

Source: Author calculation

Table 2.19: Number of urban women employed in different occupation per 1000 working age (15-59 years) urban women from respective social group

Occupation	ST		SC		OBC		Muslim		Others	
	2011-12	2018-19	2011-12	2018-19	2011-12	2018-19	2011-12	2018-19	2011-12	2018-19
Officials, Heads and Managers	5.5	6.9	6.4	6.9	12.2	11	15.5	12.2	17.2	16.2
Professional	4.2	3.9	3.6	3.2	4.9	5	3.8	4.5	9.9	10
Technicians and Associate Professional	5.1	4	4.4	3.8	4.1	4.8	2.4	2.9	6.6	6.6
Clerks	6.1	3.8	4	2.9	3.3	2.8	1.2	1.7	5.3	4.6
Sub-Total	20.9	18.6	18.4	16.8	24.5	23.6	22.9	21.3	39.0	37.4
Service Worker Shop and Market Sales Worker	13.2	10.7	8.5	11.2	12.2	12.9	12.2	13.1	13.4	13.1
Market Oriented Agriculture and Fishery Worker	4	2.7	2.7	1.8	3.8	3.3	1.6	2.1	2	1.7
Crafts, Building, Essentials and Related Trade Worker	12.3	12.9	19.8	15.8	18.1	15.3	20.2	19.1	8.2	8.6
Plants and Machine, Operators and Assemblers	6.8	9.2	8.8	8.2	9	8.2	10.7	9.2	8.2	7.2
Elementary Occupation Labourer	18.7	17.4	20.7	19.5	11.5	10	11.4	12.6	6.2	5.9
Total	75.9	71.5	78.9	73.3	79.1	73.3	79	77.4	77	73.9

Source: Author calculation