

WHAT MATTERS FOR URBAN WOMEN'S WORK?

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Abstract

India is one of the lowest globally in terms of female labour force participation (FLFP), ranking only better than Pakistan in South Asia. While the decline in FLFP in rural areas is starkly visible, the urban FLFP has been consistently low since the 1980s despite higher economic growth and increasing level of education among females. The economic cost of such low FLFP (16.8%) is huge and if, for instance, it could be raised to the level of FLFP in China (61.5%), it has the potential to raise India's GDP up to 27%. This paper attempts to investigate the structural deficiencies behind this consistently low urban FLFP through a variety of perspectives, ranging from measuring the complexity of women's work to the implications of caste, location and family structure. It finds factors like presence of female-friendly industries, provision of regular salaried jobs and policies that cater to women's needs to work near home like availability of part-time work, can improve the situation, though prejudices arising from patriarchy require to be addressed to make these measures truly transformative and not palliative.

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1. How much do Indian Women work?

India is now (in 2017), 20th from the bottom, out of 187 countries, in terms of Female Labour Force Participation (FLFP), down 18 spots from its rank during the 1990s. In South Asia, India ranks second lowest only after Pakistan and globally, it is only better than the countries of Middle-East and North Africa (20.6 percent), but significantly lower than China (61.5 percent) and countries of East Asia and Pacific (60.1 percent), as well as Latin American and Caribbean countries (51.5 percent).¹ Indeed, at 16.8 percent, the latest estimate of India's urban FLFP is much lower than that of overall Middle East levels.

On the other hand, if Indian female labour force participation attained current Chinese levels, as above, it could add about 27 percent to GDP and if women in India had the same labour force participation rate (79.7 percent instead of 30.8 percent) as men and then India's GDP could rise by over 43 percent, that is, by INR 72 trillion.² That is an estimate of the loss caused by the low level of female workforce participation. Thus, even ignoring other reasons, of which there are many, possibly more important than economic activity (*see* Fletcher et. al 2017 for a review), for purely economic reasons one must ask: why is labour force participation in India so unequal?

Note that this does not even begin to address another important issue: is work, and therefore economic value, being measured properly? For example, care work, such as looking after people, seeing to their wants and needs, monitoring and maintaining machines, plants, animals is work that enables other 'work that is more socially valued to be productive. Yet, it remains largely unrecognized (see Box 1). This is discussed more extensively in the chapter on unpaid care work in this report.

BOX 1: Who Works More?

The definition of work is undergoing change, but slowly. If any 'activity performed by persons of any sex and age to produce goods or provide services for use by others *or for own use*'³ (emphasis added) is counted as work, activities classified as domestic duties or work for household use by the NSSO (codes 92 and 93) would need to be included as in Mondal et al. (2018). Using this expanded definition, if we construct an expanded Labour Force Participation Rate, the male LFPR in 2011-12 increases from 76.4 percent to 76.7 percent, but the female LFPR increases from 20.5 percent to 81.7 percent! This is because women comprise 99.4 percent of the workforce performing domestic duties or work for household use. Thus, once we take such unpaid work into account, women work much more than men.

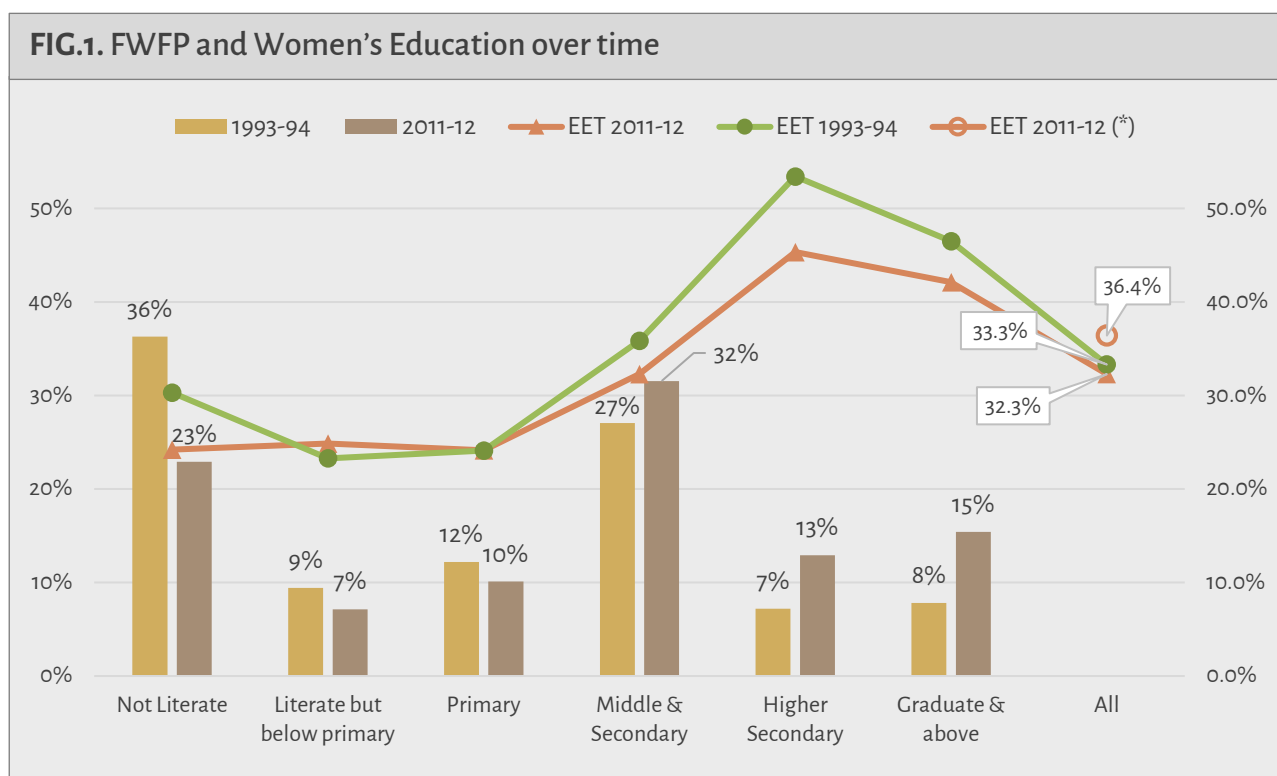
¹ This is from the ILO model estimate for 15+ population in the World Development Indicators of the World Bank, 2018.

² Derived from NSS 68th Round (2011-12) for males and females aged 15 years and above, and for both usual principal and subsidiary status. This assumes the additional female workers have the same productivity as the average worker. The increase is calculated using the provisional estimates for GDP at current prices at 167.7 trillion rupees for 2017-18.

³ Resolution concerning statistics of work, employment and labour underutilization, ICLS 2013 para 6, p. 2 https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---stat/documents/normativeinstrument/wcms_230304.pdf, accessed at 3rd March, 2019.

2. Are Urban Women leaving jobs to attend schools?

The National Sample Survey (NSS) data for India show that labour force participation rates of women (including principal and subsidiary status) have stagnated at about 15-16% in urban areas, and fallen substantially from 34% to 25% in rural areas, between 1983 and 2011. Fig.1 plots the share of women (aged 15 and above) in various levels of education along with the corresponding share of women who are in 'Education, Employment and Training' (EET) in urban areas during 1993-94 and 2011-12. It can be seen that while there's an increase of overall educational level across time, the EET has fallen for women at every educational level, except primary and below primary level. While this drop can be explained by more women leaving work than the number of women joining schools, the drop of EET for women who are completing education (graduate and above) refers to withdrawal of women from urban workforce even without the effect of schooling, especially at the higher levels of educational attainment. On the other end, the drop of EET for illiterate women over time may be explained by an increase in the level of female literacy, though a drop in FLFP at that segment is also evident in literature (Srivastava and Srivastava, 2010). Fig.1 also plots the overall EET levels, which also shows a marginal drop from 33.3% in 1993-94 to 32.3% in 2011-12. This drop does not correspond to the increase in educational level, indeed if adjusted for the change in levels of education⁴, the EET of 2011-12 should have increased to 36.4%, which refers to a larger decline over time.



SOURCE: Authors' analysis from NSS Employment-Unemployment Survey, 1993-94 and 2011-12

EET 2011-12 (*) refers to EET of 2011-12 derived from applying the educational levels of 2011-12 to the EET of 1993-94

⁴ This adjustment involves applying the current (2011-12) educational levels of women to the education specific EET levels of 1993-94.

3. Existing explanations of low and declining FLFP

There has been much discussion of women's work recently, but much of that has focused on why the low FLFP is declining further and relatively little attention has been paid to why it is low in the first place, especially in urban areas, where the latest (2015-16) official numbers (including subsidiary work) indicate urban FLFP of 16.6 percent and a female work force participation (FWFP) of 14.8 percent, with substantial variation across the country. One caveat to this is that many women report to be willing to work part-time, if it is 'available at [their] household'. If all these women are counted, the FLFP would increase by 21 percentage points (Fletcher, et. al. 2017).

The explanations of low and declining FLFP in India focus around the helix of cultural constraints and low returns from work. Factors such as education, both self and husband's, lack of skills, the competing responsibility of family care work, and social disapproval of working women are advanced as important cultural constraints of FLFP (Dasgupta et al. 2005, Kapsos et al. 2014). Concomitantly, issues of lower wages, low infrastructure provision, declining returns from agriculture and fragmentation of land and lack of 'suitable work' (Chaudhary & Verick 2014) reduce the returns from working. Depending on the viewpoint, the policy discourse also varies. Those privileging cultural explanations anticipate a slow change, while others argue that the solution lies in redressing structural constraints. This chapter tries to look a little deeper into this debate, to unpack viable interventions that could encourage more women to join the labour force.

FLFP has been falling relatively steadily since late 1970s in India, despite (or due to?) rapid economic growth, especially in the post-liberalization period (Mehrotra and Parida, 2017). The rate of decline increased recently, and is more pronounced in rural than in urban areas (Desai et al. 2018). One argument is that this is the manifestation of a cross-country regularity, a U-shaped association between income and FLFP (Schultz 1990 & 1991, Kottis 1990, Goldin 1995). As the economy grows and women move out from agriculture and labour-intensive jobs, FLFP falls, rising eventually with higher education and better jobs. This strong decline in FLFP is evident when we compare illiterate women (high) to women who have secondary or higher secondary education (low), until it rises for women with college education (Chatterjee et al. 2018). For men, on the other hand, there is a steady increase in participation with education.

3.1. Demand side explanations

The first reason for falling FLFP is the decline in farm jobs, which has led to the withdrawal of females from labour force in rural and rapidly transforming urban areas (Kannan and Raveendran 2012, Chatterjee et al. 2015) and they have not been able to find other jobs suitable for them. This explanation encompasses many effects. Some of the major ones are described below:

3.1.1. Decreasing demand for farm work

One premise, valid more for rural areas, is that there is decreasing demand for farm work, especially casual farm work where women are overrepresented (Bardhan 1985, Srivastava and Srivastava 2010), in part as a result of mechanization or a move away from the farm. It is unclear why this leads to a lower FLFP, instead of FWFP – that is, why women report themselves as out of the labour force, rather than unemployed, though some explanation can be found in their availability for part-time work at home (ibid).

3.1.2. Change in Sectoral Composition

Another is that women withdraw because sectors where work is available – agriculture and construction – where less educated women worked, are considered unsuitable once women become more educated. Per contra, even in a patriarchal society like Bangladesh similar to India, higher FLFP can result from growth of wage employment in industries like garments (World Bank 2012). So, another way to state this is that there is low demand for employment from such ‘suitable’ sectors.

Indeed, over the period 2011-12 to 2015-16, when there has been an absolute decline in manufacturing employment, the burden of adjustment has been disproportionately on women, as brought out in the accompanying case study, with the share of manufacturing in urban female workforce dropping from 28.5 percent to 21.5 percent, while the share in male workforce fell from 22.1 percent to 18 percent, which resulted in the share of women in manufacturing reducing from nearly a fourth to a fifth of the workforce.

3.1.3. Nature of Employment

A related reason is that the nature of work on offer – non-regular/ non-salaried employment – is no longer compatible with higher levels of education. Women, especially after attaining a moderate level of education, are reluctant to accept casual work, especially out of the household. Chatterjee et al. (2018) find that the decline in FLFP among women with more education is highest in casual work (both farm and non-farm), even more than the decline in unpaid household work. Sanghi et al. (2015) also find that women no longer prefer to be working as helpers or casual labourers unless they are paid well.

3.1.4. Occupational Segregation

Worryingly, it is precisely such work that is on offer. Chatterjee et al. (2018) also find that much of female employment is concentrated in semi-skilled or unskilled jobs, while desirable ‘white collar’ urban employment is mostly undertaken by men. Even when described as ‘professionals, associate professionals, administrators and managers’, most such urban women workers are either own account or unpaid family workers (Raju 2013, Mondal et al. 2018). Two-thirds of urban female unpaid family workers are home based. In rural areas, even in the education and health sectors, with a greater presence of the public sector, women disproportionately occupy irregularly paid and informal jobs in the form of para-teachers, auxiliary midwives or AASHA workers. This reflects occupational segregation, that is, women are slotted into specific job roles.

3.1.5. Wage Discrimination

There is also wage discrimination, where similarly qualified women are paid less than men – a third less by some estimates International Labour Organization, 2018) – for similar jobs. This is true across types of jobs. From the Fifth Annual Employment Survey, it can be seen that women are 1.9 to 2.4 times more likely to be in the bottom wage category as men. It is important to recognize that if reservation wages – the wage that will encourage a person to seek work – does not vary as much by gender, while market wages for women are much lower, fewer women will join the labour force. This is because they are discouraged by the inequality in wage offers, not because they voluntarily stay out of the labour force. This effect is likely to be more pronounced as more urban women become educated – indeed in many states a higher share of women possess college degrees than men. This issue is discussed in detail in the preceding chapter on wage inequality in this report.

3.1.6. Regulatory burden:

A number of states have specific regulations about workplace conditions for women which affect the incentive of employers to employ women. While these are advanced as a way to improve safety for women, they can also act as an employment dampener (Ghai 2018).

3.2. Supply Side Explanations

3.2.1. Women are studying instead of working:

A common explanation is that more women are attending educational institutions, which is why they are not in the labour force. While it is true that proportionately more women are being educated, the share of women more than 15 years old who are Neither in Education nor in Employment or Training (NEET) rose from 48 percent to 55.7 percent in rural areas but only slightly from 66.7 percent to 67.3 percent in urban areas over in 1993-94 to 2011-12 (National Sample Survey Organization, 1993-94, 2011-12, Chai 2018).

3.2.2. Patriarchy

Chai (2018) directly confronts the issue of low levels of FLFP by constructing a measure of patriarchy using the NFHS 2015-16 data and finds that it has a positive and significant correlation with share of college educated who are out of the labour force. Interestingly, some southern states such as Telangana or Andhra Pradesh turn out to be as patriarchal as northern states such as Haryana and Bihar.

3.2.3. Skill mismatch

Even in places where there is an increase in non-farm jobs in large cities, the skill level of female workers, who have been released from farm jobs are not aligned to the needs of such jobs.

3.2.4. Marriage-related relocation

This skill mismatch is exacerbated by the spatially hypergamous nature of marriage in India. The tendency to marry daughters away from their natal homes creates challenges for them to secure a job if they migrate to relatively developed spaces, especially from villages to cities. Studies dealing with long distance hypergamous marriages show how economic impediments such as low skills and cross-cultural hindrances have affected women's participation in market-oriented jobs at their spousal homes (Kaur 2004 & 2013).

3.2.5. Changing nature of household domestic activities

Coupled with the decline in agricultural jobs, a shift in the nature of household domestic activities has caused a decline in the post marriage work of rural women (Mehrotra 2017). As children stop working and older girl children stay in school, domestic work activities such as child and elderly care and other duties such as collection of fuel, animal rearing, etc. devolve on older women, who were earlier working. Increase in the share of nuclear families in both rural and urban areas intensifies this effect. The contribution of this additional 'reproductive labour' (see Box 5.1), which actually increased at a higher rate than the purely domestic duties is largely ignored while determining work force participation, even though such labour is necessary for survival (Naidu and Rao 2018).

3.2.6. Income-effect of the household

Increased household income leads to withdrawal of married women from the labour force (Abraham 2009, Srivastava and Srivastava 2010, Himanshu 2011, Sarkar et al. 2019, Chatterjee et al. 2018). This is exacerbated by the phenomenon (Behrman et al. 1995) where women usually marry more educated men. The consequent increase in income discourages the wife from joining the labour market. She is, instead, occupied in 'status producing household work' (Abraham 2009, Sarkar et al. 2019)

In this vein, MGNREGA is also a factor responsible for rural women's withdrawal from labour force. Some (Mehrotra 2017) have argued that a MGNREGA-induced increase in rural real wages after 2004-05 fostered male employment, and the increased income encouraged their wives to drop out of the labour force. Other studies (Desai et al. 2018, Mondal et al. 2018, Sarkar, et al. 2019) argue that MGNREGA instead increased women's participation in wage work in villages, especially where its implementation was strong. Since the wages for men and women are the same in this scheme, many families chose to have women participate in MGNREGA while men sought higher income elsewhere.

3.2.7. Infrastructure

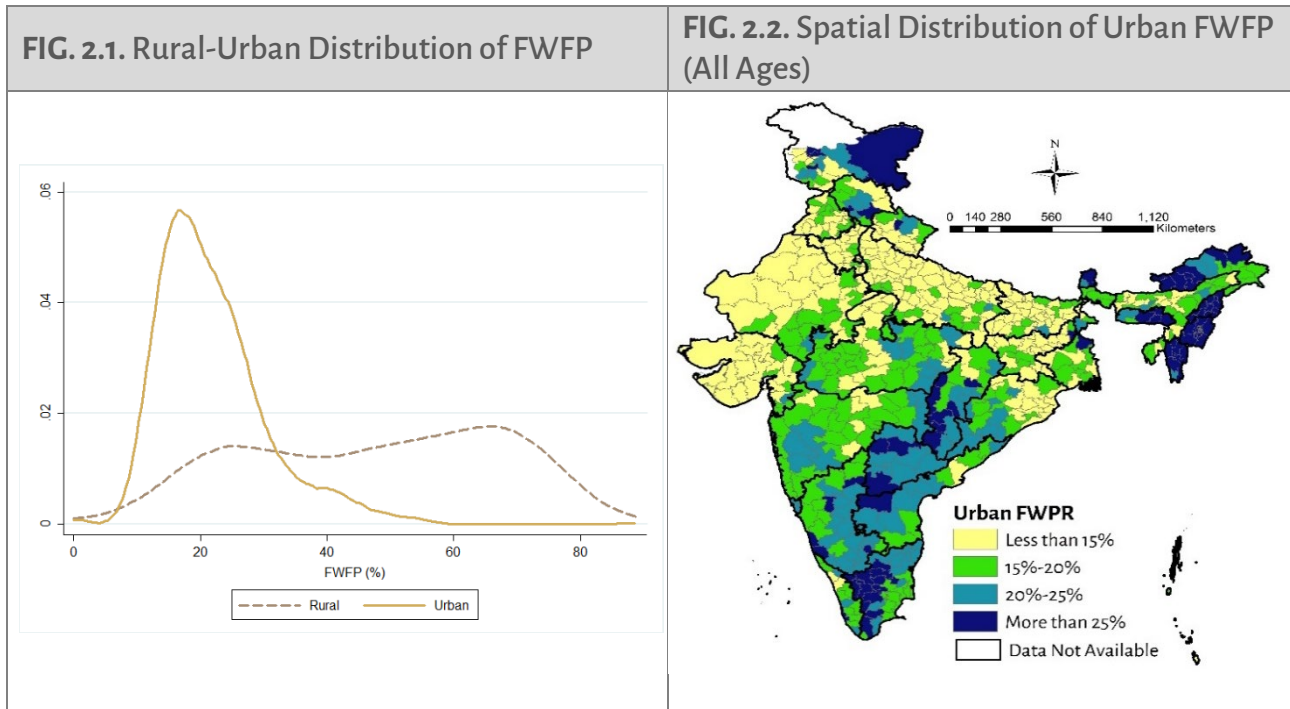
Other than the explanations above, lack of access to infrastructure, especially roads, is regarded as a major factor responsible for low rural FLFP. Empirical work using the IHDS surveys have shown that the construction of either a kutchra or a pucca road increases the odds of women's participation in non-farm work by 1.5 and 1.4 times, respectively (Lei et al. 2017), which, given the expansion in rural roads under PMGSY (Prime Minister's Gram Sadak Yojana or rural roads programme), should have led to higher FLFP. In urban areas, safe working environments for factory workers, childcare for informally employed women are forms of social infrastructure that can help in increasing FLFP (Sudarshan & Bhattacharya 2009).

4. What Matters for Urban Women's Work?

Much of the discussion thus far has been on the decline of FLFP. We will now focus on the low levels of participation in the urban non-farm sector. The reason for this is that the urban FLFP has been both low and stable, indicating a structural deficiency, as compared to rural FLFP. Furthermore, if it continues to be lower than its rural counterpart, the transformation from a rural farm to urban non-farm workforce will lead to a lower FLFP simply by the compositional effect. We also move from looking at FLFP to FWFP (female workforce participation) that is, from labour force to workforce participation, to disentangle industry related effects on women's work.

4.1. Choice of data matters

To begin with, it is useful to appreciate the variation in FWFP across India – that different parts of India have very different patterns of women's work. Fig. xx shows the distribution of rural and urban FWFP across 640 districts of India from the Census of 2011. As one can see, the rural FWFP distribution has much wider range than the urban distribution – 93 districts have an urban FWFP of more than 30 percent while rural FWFP is above this level in 476 districts. Similarly, while 317 districts have a rural FWFP of more than 50 percent, only 7 districts have an urban FWFP above this level.



SOURCE: Authors' analysis from Census 2011

But, is this a robust description of variation across districts? To answer this question, we bring together four datasets, namely (a) the various Economic Tables (B-series) and Primary Census Abstract of Census of India 2011, (b) NSS Employment-Unemployment Survey 2011-12, (c) IHDS panel and IHDS-II survey of 2011-12, and (d) NFHS-IV survey of 2015-16, each of whom have different definitions of work. In order to compare FWFP estimates across the four datasets, we focus on two categories of work: a stringent 'Full-time' work (see Table 1), and Total work, including 'Part-time' work, which measures work done other than or in addition to full-time work. We then calculate district wise FWFP for 367 districts for two measures of each of these four datasets and correlate them to each other.

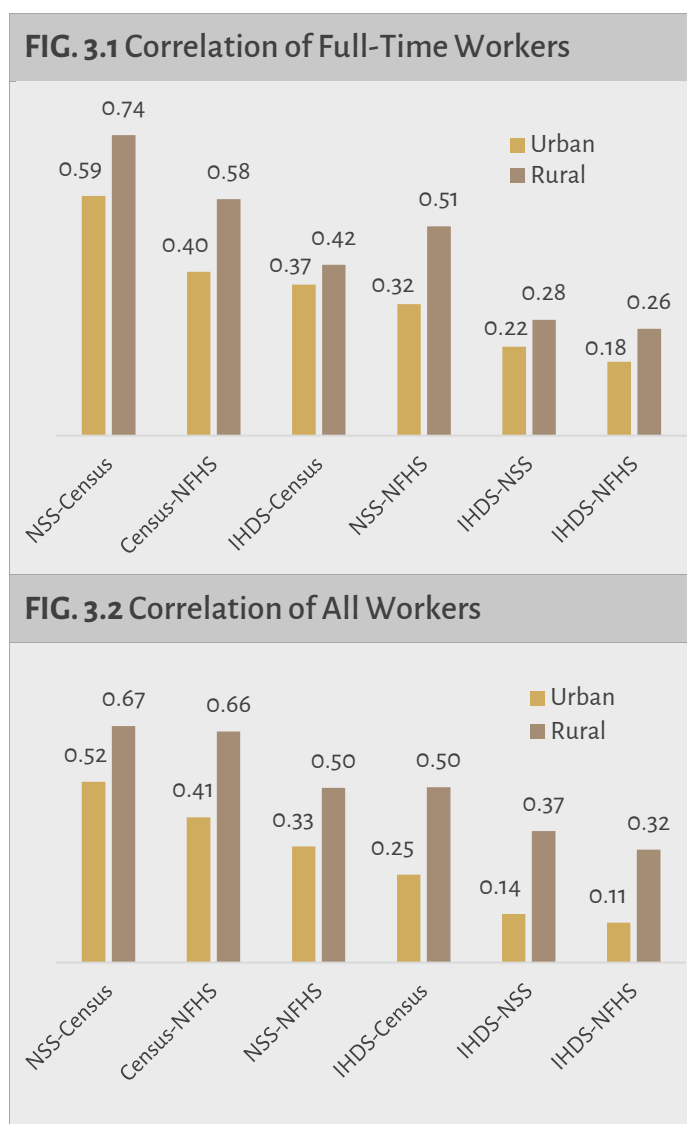
TABLE 1: Measures of FWFP across Various Datasets

| Data-Type | Rural | | Urban | |
|-----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | "Full-Time" | All Workers | "Full-Time" | All Workers |
| Census | 26.34 | 46.23 | 15.38 | 20.77 |
| NSS EUS | 27.79 | 38.16 | 16.38 | 19.95 |
| IHDS-II | 4.89 | 41.44 | 5.26 | 14.76 |
| NFHS-IV | 17.01 | 33.31 | 17.83 | 23.79 |

SOURCE: Authors' analysis from Census of India 2011, NSS EUS 2011-12, IHDS-II (2011-12) and NFHS-IV (2015-16)

What we find is that the one measure does not match the other, but it is low regardless of the measure used. The correlations, as shown in Fig. 3.1 and Fig 3.2 shows that the spatial pattern of FWFP, that is, which district is seen as having relatively higher FWFP and which is seen as relatively lower FWFP would vary depending on which dataset is

used. If the districts in the highest 25 percent (that is, 91 districts) for each of the datasets are considered, only 15 (27) common units show in case of Full Time-Rural (all Rural) workers, and 12 (13) units in case of Full Time-Urban (all urban) workers, indicating that there is considerable divergence of measurement even at the top end of the distribution. Depending on the data, urban FWPR (all work) can vary from 14.8 percent (IHDS-II) to 23.8 percent (NFHS IV) . The IHDS estimates are very different from the other datasets, especially if the part-time component is included. We need to measure female workforce participation better.



SOURCE: Authors' analysis using various data sources
 Note: All Correlation coefficients are statistically significant at 5% level, except the IHDS-NFHS pair in urban areas

BOX 2: Why is it difficult to measure women's work?

The complexity of measuring female workforce is evident by the low correlations across the four major datasets, as it tends to vary across different axes, some of which are the time engaged in work, number and fragmentation of work and kind of work. As mentioned above, while the activities classified as domestic duties or work for household use (like husking paddy or making baskets) are not classified as economically gainful work across most datasets, the contribution of such activities are often beneficial in terms of increasing savings by reducing consumption and other expenditure. While there is scope for debate that whether such activities should be termed as 'work', a lot of economically significant work done by women is masked by this exclusion where it is often hard to determine if the commodities produced by an unpaid women worker are for household or commercial use. Hence, a lot of differentiation in the estimates of women's work crops up by the way it is collected: as to what is considered as 'work', what is the minimal time applicable to be considered as 'work', or how many different works are recorded together, irrespective of the time employed to each of them (Appendix table A1).

While the differences across the four datasets in terms of FWFP is clear, there are not much variations within each datasets across 'Full-time' and 'Total work', except the IHDS-II. The full-time FWFP in IHDS is very low (5.3%) in urban areas, and it also shows the largest difference between full-time and total

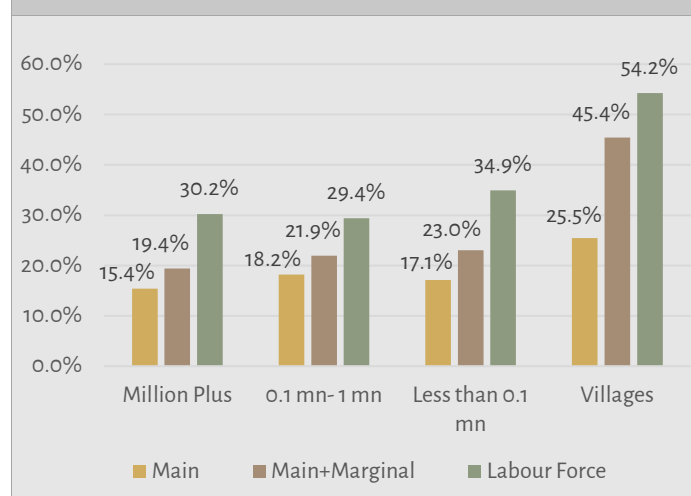
work. The IHDS-II records all the different kinds of jobs where a person was engaged in the preceding years of survey, and rather than defining work using a fixed time criteria, it records the total time spent in all the different kinds of work. Since the criteria to define 'full-time work' is relatively stringent in IHDS, it reports a lower share of full-time work for women (35.2%), but shows higher proportion of women doing non-full-time work with considerable variations. It is noteworthy that 12.4% of the non-full-time women workers in urban areas, as reported by IHDS; works for less than a month, a component often not captured by the 'usual work' definition in NSS. Within the females who have not worked full-time but worked more than a month, 71.5% are found to be working for more than 3 months and 33.3% more than 6 months in urban areas. While this shows the importance of detailing women's work for more meaningful estimates of FWFP, a lot of the women who are engaged in these part-time works primarily do household chores (37.8%) or are studying (4.8%). However, managing home and workspace together is one side of the story; the multiplicity of jobs done by women to substantiate household income is also a common factor in a part-time work scenario. The share of women doing more than one jobs are 6.4% for part-time salaried work, 10.2% for part-time household non-farm business and 15.2% for women who are doing part-time non-farm casual jobs in urban areas. Both of these factors points to the complexity of the work-sphere of women in and out of the family, which is flexible and fragmented in nature and difficult to measure.

4.2. Location matters

The overall urban FWFP is lower (20.8 percent as per Census 2011) than rural FWFP, but the spatial distribution of urban FWFP also has substantial regional variation, with districts of southern and NE states showing considerably higher participation than the rest of the country (Fig. 2.1). Some of these urbanized regions, especially the districts in southern India, areas around Delhi-NCR, Punjab, West Bengal, Odisha and parts of coastal Maharashtra also shows a higher concentration of full-time workers to total urban female workers (>30%) (Fig. 5).

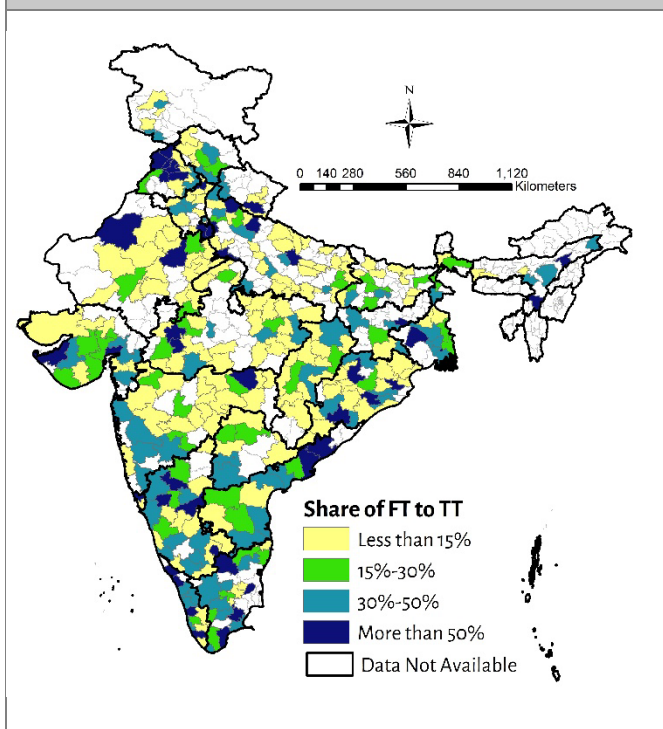
A disaggregation of urban FWFP across cities of various size-classes (Fig. 4) shows that women's participation in work is lower in million plus cities compared to smaller urban areas. The difference between main and marginal work is also much higher in small towns than the larger ones, indicating that a lot more women are associated with subsidiary work in such areas compared to larger cities, a pattern that also emerges in other studies that look at location effects on FWFP (Chatterjee et al. 2015). This is very different from the males where the difference is stable across the various settlements. The smaller towns (villages are shown for comparison) also show larger proportion of women seeking jobs, as the FLFP goes up from 30.2 percent in million plus cities to 34.9 percent in small towns, as per census 2011 (FLFP in mid-size towns is similar to large cities). So, location matters and women in smaller towns participate proportionately more in the workforce than those in larger cities.

FIG.4. Distribution of different FWFP estimates across various settlements (15-59 yrs.)



SOURCE: Author's analysis from Census 2011

FIG.5: Spatial Distribution of Share of Full-Time to Total Workers



SOURCE: Author's analysis from IHDS-II

A deeper dive to the labour market across different urban categories unravels certain interesting facts regarding the locational differentiation of FLFP. Though the overall share of women working in main and marginal activities are higher in smaller towns, the contribution of more educated women (graduate and above) to the workforce is much higher in million plus cities (30.8%) than smaller towns (17.6%). Educated women constitutes the largest share of urban workforce in million-plus cities, while illiterate women are the largest part of female workforce in smaller cities. While this partly is explained by the higher subsidiary work among women in smaller towns, it is also the different composition of labour market in different cities which shapes women's work in these various places.

The industry of work and occupational profile of urban women differs across various urban categories. Since the city-specific data on industry and occupation is not yet available from Census 2011, the districts have been categorized as

'million-plus city districts' and 'other districts' for comparison. It can be observed that smaller city districts have higher share of activities like household manufacturing and construction, while service sector except education and health activities dominate the job landscape of million-plus city districts (Fig. 6.1). The higher participation of young, educated women in a wider range of service activities is the characteristics of larger cities, while women in smaller cities are primarily engaged in unpaid work in household manufacturing or Government jobs in education and health activities⁵. The difference in occupational profile also mimics this difference; women in million-plus city districts are more engaged in jobs like legislators, managers, professionals or clerical activities, while women in other districts mostly work as teaching associate, trained health professionals and crafts workers (Fig. 6.2). The share of other blue collar jobs like elementary occupations does not differ much across large and small city districts. Hence, a more flexible labour market in larger cities allows a pool of educated women to participate in a range of skilled activities, while less educated women in smaller cities are mainly engaged in unpaid work and educated women are waiting to get into Government jobs in education and health sector. While the absence of skilled jobs like information and communication services or jobs in the financial sector in smaller cities restricts their range of work in smaller cities, a lower real wage of living in larger cities, along with various other factors related to safety and security increases their opportunity cost of moving to larger cities.

⁵ The share of young women (20-29 years) to total female workforce is much higher in million plus city districts (27.3%) than other districts (23%). The FWFP of women in similar age group is 20.5% in million-plus city districts and 18.8% in other districts. As per NSS 2011-12, the share of women doing unpaid family work is higher in non-million cities (13.5%) than million-plus cities (8.9%), while the share of women engaged in regular salaried jobs in the Government/PSU sector to total regular salaried women (excluding domestic work) is higher in non-million cities (40%) than million-plus cities (26%).

FIG. 6.1. Difference in Industry of Work of Female Workers across Large and Smaller City Districts

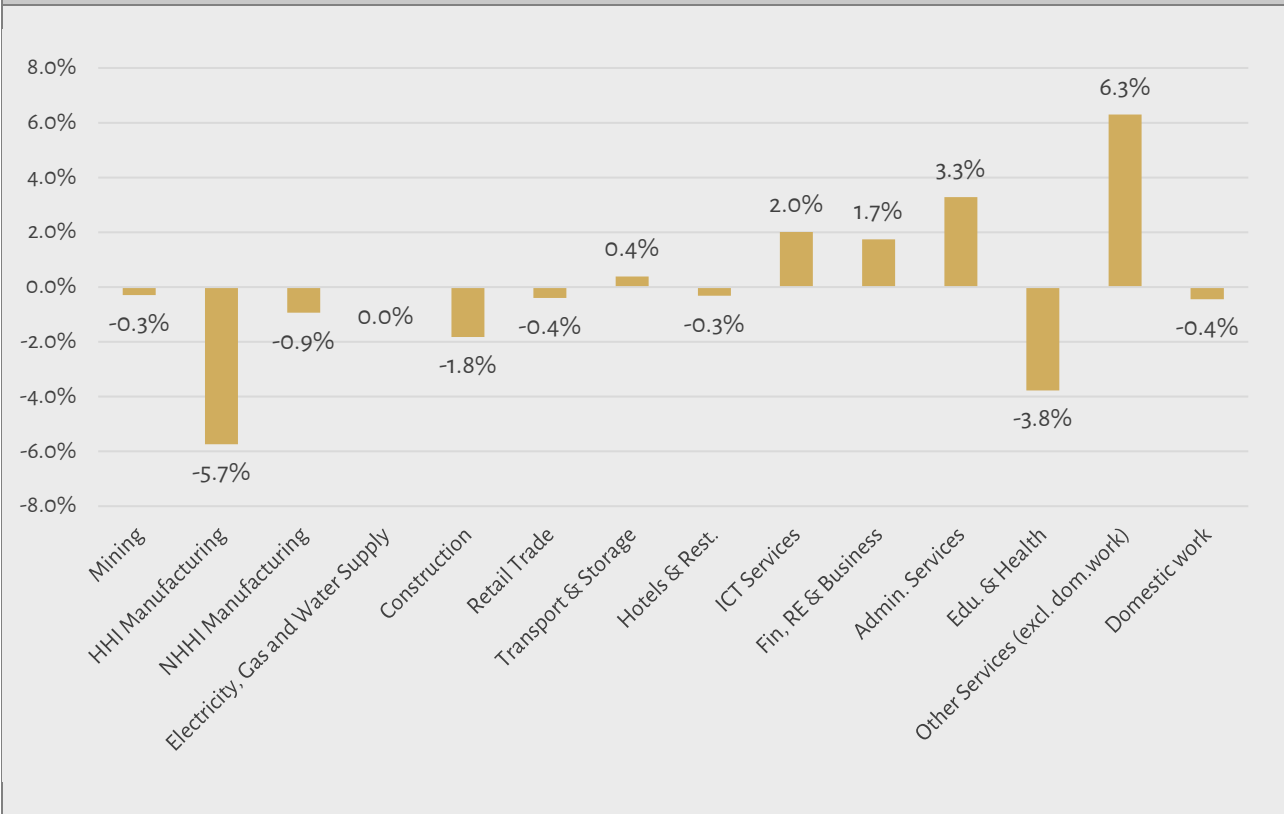
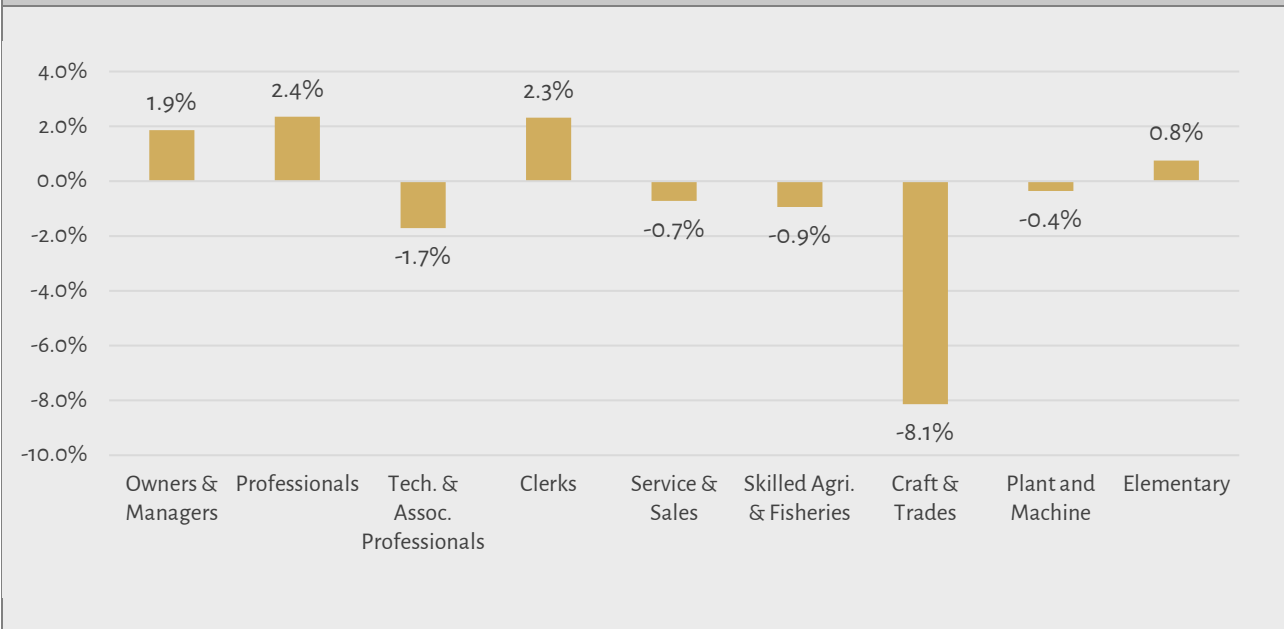
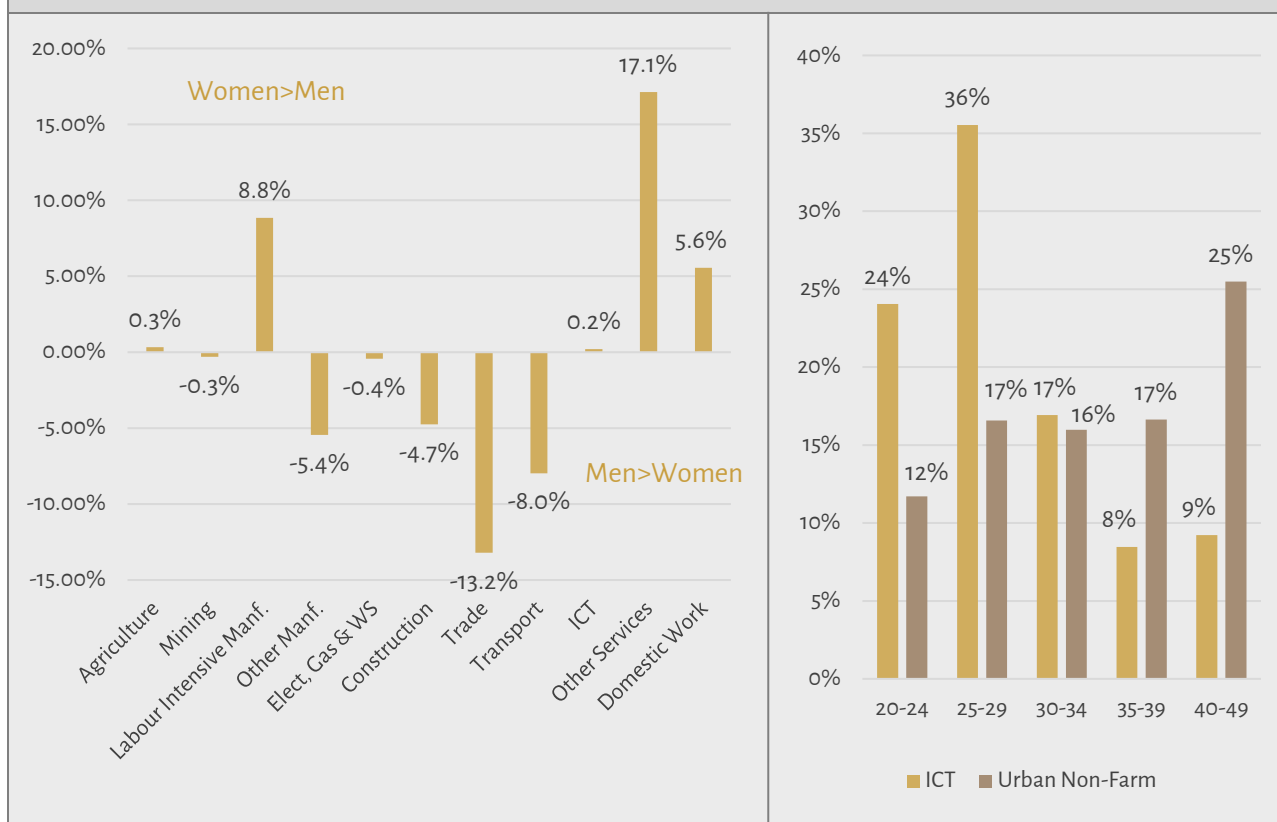


FIG. 6.2. Difference in Occupations of Female Workers across Large and Smaller City Districts



SOURCE: Author's analysis from Census 2011

BOX 3: Manufacturing or Services: Where is the potential for women's work?



SOURCE: Authors' analysis from Census of India 2011

Note: While there is a substantial difference between men and women in terms of workforce participation, the difference in the sectors of work is more mixed. The figure at the left shows the difference between the sectoral share of men and women, i.e., the share of construction workers in the male workforce is 7.3 percent higher than the share of construction workers in the female workforce. Thus, women have a much higher share of their workforce in labour intensive manufacturing, services and domestic work, while men dominate in construction, transport and trade. Thus, it would appear that there are both manufacturing as well as service-based strategies are feasible pathways to increasing FWPR. The share of modern services like Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to total urban non-farm workforce is higher in young (20-29 years) urban working women (5.2%) than men (3.3%). This difference is even higher in million-plus city districts (women are 2.8 percentage points higher than men) than other districts, where it is only 0.8 percentage points higher participation in ICT activities than men. The figure at the right shows that in younger age-cohorts, urban women have larger concentration of ICT activities than the overall non-farm work, while such activities comprises 9% of modern services work within 20-29 year age-group. Factors like these are important to design the work and skill development policies of younger women in urban areas.

4.3. Industrial Structure matters

Women's work is more concentrated in specific regions and in specific industries (Box 5) compared to men's work. A common explanation for low FWPR is a dearth of suitable job opportunities where women choose to work, taking into account the wider social structure in the country that determines that women's place of work should be near to where they live (Das & Desai 2003, Klasen & Pieters 2015). So, do more women join the workforce where the share of 'female friendly' industry is high?

In order to check the effects of a district's job structure on FWFP, a measure is constructed which quantifies the share of all workers in ten industries (see Table 2). These ten industries have the highest share of women workers (to total women workers) and thus count as 'female friendly'. We then look at the relationship between the urban FWFP and the intensity of presence of these ten industries in a district.⁶ Does FWFP increase with a rise in the share of such female friendly industries in a district?

TABLE 2: Top ten industries of Women's work

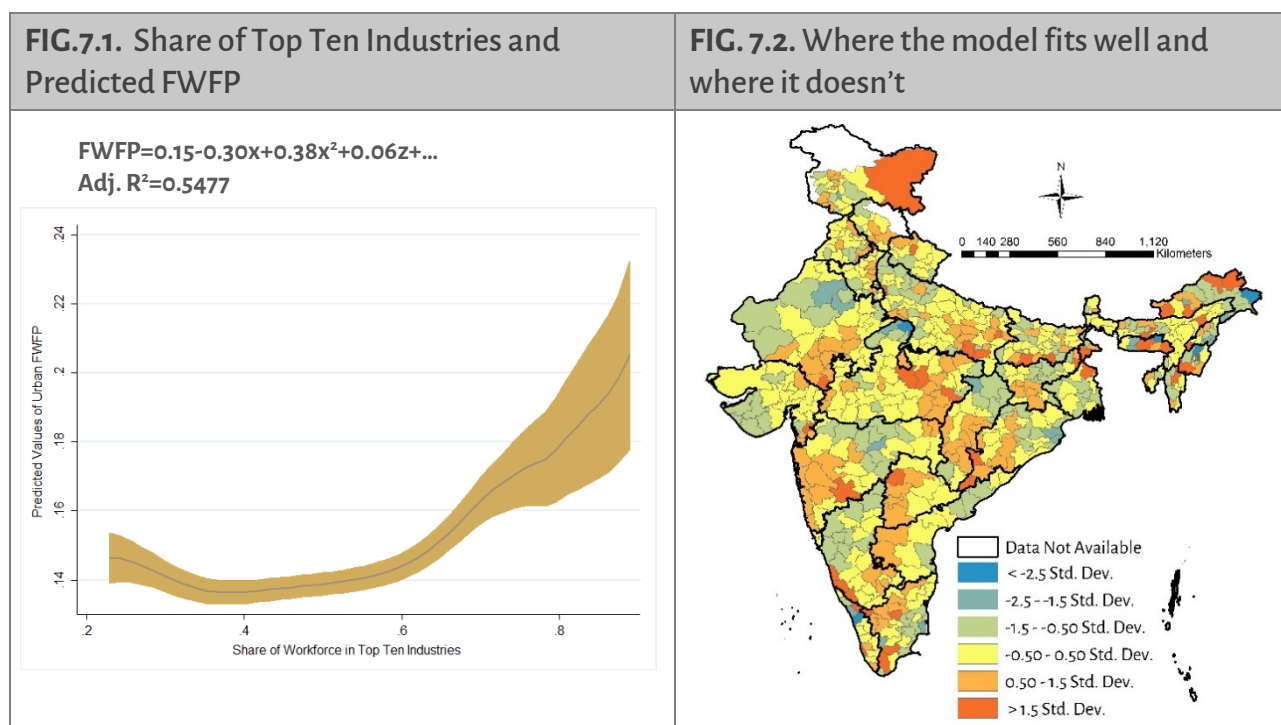
| NIC Div. | NIC Name | Urban Females | Share in workforce (%) | Urban Males | Share of Females (%) |
|----------|---|---------------|------------------------|-------------|----------------------|
| 85 | Education | 3.3 | 13.2% | 3.1 | 50.9% |
| 47 | Retail trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles | 1.5 | 6.1% | 15.5 | 8.9% |
| 14 | Manufacture of wearing apparel | 1.2 | 4.9% | 2.6 | 31.9% |
| 86 | Human health activities | 1.2 | 4.8% | 1.3 | 47.5% |
| 97 | Activities of households as employers of domestic personnel | 1.2 | 4.7% | 0.3 | 80.9% |
| 96 | Other personal service activities | 1.1 | 4.3% | 1.5 | 42.0% |
| 13 | Manufacture of textiles | 1.0 | 4.0% | 3.3 | 23.0% |
| 41 | Construction of buildings | 0.9 | 3.8% | 6.7 | 12.3% |
| 12 | Manufacture of tobacco products | 0.9 | 3.7% | 0.3 | 77.5% |
| 84 | Public administration and defence; compulsory social security | 0.9 | 3.5% | 5.7 | 13.2% |
| | Total of top ten sectors | 13.1 | 53.1% | 40.2 | 24.6% |
| | Total Urban Non-Farm Workforce | 24.7 | 100% | 97.4 | 100% |

SOURCE: Authors' analysis from Census of India 2011

The results from the analysis show that industrial structure of the district matters substantially, though not entirely in explaining the variation in urban FWFP. The predicted urban FWFP shows that the relationship is weak when the share of top ten industries is low, but increases with it after the share of top industries crosses a threshold (Fig. 7.1) and the variation in this measure explains 55 percent of the variation in urban FWFP across all districts. The FWFP however remains low even in districts with a large share of female friendly industries, below 20 percent. In the top ten percent of the districts ranked by presence of the ten female-friendly industries, the FWFP is about 21.7 percent compared to other districts, where it is only 14.9 percent. Similarly, their share in the labour force in these districts is 27.7 percent compared to 19.7 percent in other districts. So, in the presence of such industries, the increase in participation also results in higher share of the total labour force. Per contra, for men, there is no appreciable difference in work force participation rate across these two groups of districts.

⁶ Statistically, the urban FWFP is regressed on this measure, controlled by the district's urbanization rate and state-specific fixed effects.

In the accompanying map (Figure 7.2), the shades of blue refers to districts where fewer women are actually working than is predicted by the industrial structure of the district. The yellow shaded areas are districts where the model describes the variation in urban FWFP relatively well while areas with orange shades are districts where the actual urban FWFP is higher than predicted by the industrial structure of the district. There are 284 yellow-shaded districts out of 640, which indicates that in a large part of the country, after controlling for the regional structure and urbanization, the industrial structure actually determines the participation of women in work. In most other areas, the urban FWFP is higher than predicted by the industrial structure of the district.



4.4. Caste Matters

The urban FWFP of Scheduled Castes (21.1 percent) are higher than Non-SC/STs (16.5 percent) but it shows a strong and positive correlation with Non-SC/ST women, indicating that districts that have higher workforce participation of Non-SC/ST women, usually have higher participation of SC women as well.⁷ However, the industries in which they work are very different, with SCs concentrating in construction and services such as waste collection while the Non-SC/ST women are more likely to work in education and health services (Table 3). Even within industries such as construction where SCs are relatively more concentrated (Fig. 8.1), they are engaged in more menial jobs than the Non-SC/STs in the same sector (Fig. 8.2). For example, there are no SC women in the NSS sample who are in supervisory, professional or managerial jobs in construction, while about 15 percent of Non-SC/STs in construction are engaged in such jobs. On the other hand, the share of SCs (67 percent) is much higher in elementary occupations under construction, while it is only 34 percent for Non-SC/STs.

⁷ In case of males, the urban workforce participation of non-SC/STs (61.1 percent) is higher than that of SCs (59.9 percent). ST women (27.7 percent) also work more than non-SC/ST women in urban areas, while the case of males it is different. The correlation coefficient of SC and Non-SC/ST women is 0.61, while the rank correlation is even stronger (0.71).

BOX 4 A: Unpacking the complexity of women's work

When urban women work, they are more likely to have formal jobs, as per the NSS data, as compared to men – indicating a gender difference in the quality threshold to enter the job market. While the share of unpaid family workers among women aged 15-49 years (12.4%) are more than men (7.1%), the share of regular salaried workers is higher within females (53.4%) than males (46.4%). The share of casual labourers is also lower in case of females (11.2%) in urban areas in comparison to males (14.9%). The participation of women in the formal sectors⁸ (40.6%) is also considerably higher than men (29.3%). It is notable that the formal and regular salaried work in NSS also encompasses domestic work as maids and caretakers, which is 9.3% of the overall urban female non-farm workforce and 21.8% of the salaried and formal non-farm workforce. But even if we leave the domestic workers, the participation of women in other formal activities like Government jobs is also higher (14.5%) than men (10.7%), which is evident in their high participation in jobs in education and health sectors.

A more detailed picture of formality in women's work can be traced from the IHDS data, which allows analysis along three axes of employment, viz. (i) the nature of enterprises, (ii) the time employed in work and (iii) the nature of wages or earnings received through work.

Unpacking women's jobs through a composite matrix of these three axes provides a much disaggregated view of formality and flexibility attached with their work. The following table represents the share of urban salaried (including daily and piece rate wage workers) women under each of these segments, in order to provide a sense of the nature of women's engagement in different kinds of jobs⁹. It can be observed that unlike the NSS, the nature of work is less regular in case of females than males in the IHDS, while the gap is much higher if only full-time work is considered. While there are substantial variations in the workforce structure of urban women who are engaged in wage and salaried jobs, three main types of work-patterns are evident with specific occupational distribution:

- **Full-time regular jobs:** This is the largest component of salaried work done by urban women. The overall share of women working in full-time salaried work is 40%, and only 15.1% are working as permanent full-time worker in Government/PSU organizations. Women in this category are mainly engaged in occupations like teachers, nurses, clerks or clerical supervisors in public and private sector. There are also few women who are doing skilled jobs like computer operator, book-keeping and accountants in private firms.
- **Part-time casual and contractual jobs:** This is the second largest component of wage and salaried work done by urban women. Workers in this group comprise 22% of the urban female salaried workforce and are mainly engaged by private employers or private firms as maids, cooks, waiters, house-keepers, tobacco, textile and garment workers, construction labourers and loaders, and other care services like launderers.
- **Part-time regular jobs:** About one-third of the women (29.6%) in the regular salaried jobs are reported to be working part-time and this is the third largest component of salaried urban women's work (16.8%). The nature of employers are mainly private and most of the workers are engaged as teachers, maids, sweepers, cooks, waiters, house-keepers and Government health and ICDS workers. In NSS, these workers are usually covered by the umbrella term of 'regular salaried' work but the nature of jobs vary much from the full-time regular jobs.

⁸By formal, this means women working in non-proprietary and partnership enterprises.

⁹This analysis is limited within women who don't do multiple jobs and are engaged in urban non-farm work.

BOX 4 B: Fragmentation of Urban Women's Work

| | Casual: Daily Wage | | Casual: Piece Rate | | Contract: <1 year | | Regular/ Permanent/ Longer Contract | | Total | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|---------------|-----------------------|---------------|----------------------|---------------|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| | Full- Time | Part- Time | Full- Time | Part- Time | Full- Time | Part- Time | Full- Time | Part- Time | Full- Time | Part- Time |
| Govt./PSU | 0.8% | 0.5% | 0.2% | 0.0% | 0.4% | 0.4% | 15.1% | 5.3% | 16.6% | 6.2% |
| Private firm | 3.6% | 2.7% | 1.3% | 1.3% | 2.6% | 1.4% | 9.6% | 4.3% | 17.1% | 9.7% |
| Private employer | 6.7% | 7.6% | 0.7% | 2.7% | 4.2% | 4.3% | 14.0% | 6.0% | 25.6% | 20.6% |
| Other govt. programs | 0.1% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.1% | 0.0% | 1.0% | 0.9% | 1.3% | 1.0% |
| Others | 0.3% | 0.7% | 0.0% | 0.4% | 0.0% | 0.1% | 0.3% | 0.2% | 0.7% | 1.3% |
| Total | 11.6% | 11.4% | 2.3% | 4.4% | 7.3% | 6.2% | 40.0% | 16.8% | 61.2% | 38.8% |

Hence, as per the IHDS data, a lot of the wage and salaried work of urban women is private and part-time in nature. The share of casual jobs is more in case of men (18.1%) than females (13.9%) if only full-time work is concerned but it gets higher for females (29.7%) than males (23%) if part-time jobs are added. The importance of part-time jobs are significant in both regular and casual employment for women and especially for women employed in private sectors.

As mentioned above, the occupational distribution of women's work shows certain specificity in terms of the nature of jobs; but some of the major occupations are hard to define in terms of how formal or regular they are. For example, teaching is the largest occupation (15.9%) of urban women (15-49 years), as per IHDS-II, but the distribution of teachers are not concentrated in any of the categories of work described above. The share of full-time workers in teaching is 59.3%, and only 23.9% are engaged as regular full-time workers in Government/PSU institutions¹⁰. In full-time teaching, 20% of the workers are engaged in casual or contractual work. About 11.3% of the teachers are doing part-time work on casual or contractual basis in various sectors. Hence, the variation is quite high even within teachers, and they are distributed across various layers of formality which makes the composition of urban women's work even more complex¹¹.

There are six common industries which are part of top ten industries of SC, ST and Non-SC/ST women. These industries are education, health, retail trade, administrative services, domestic work and other personal services. The share of domestic work is much higher within the urban non-farm workforce of SCs than Non-SC/STs. Together, these six industries constitute 38.6% of the SC females, 40.4% of the ST females and 36.1% of the Non-SC/ST female workers in urban areas.

¹⁰ The total share of full-time regular or permanent workers in teachers is 47.7%.

¹¹ Other than salaried or wage work, the share of women engaged in unpaid work is 32.5% in urban areas, out of which 27.9% are doing it on part-time basis, mostly as shopkeepers (43%), managers of their own enterprises (19%) and tailors (6.2%).

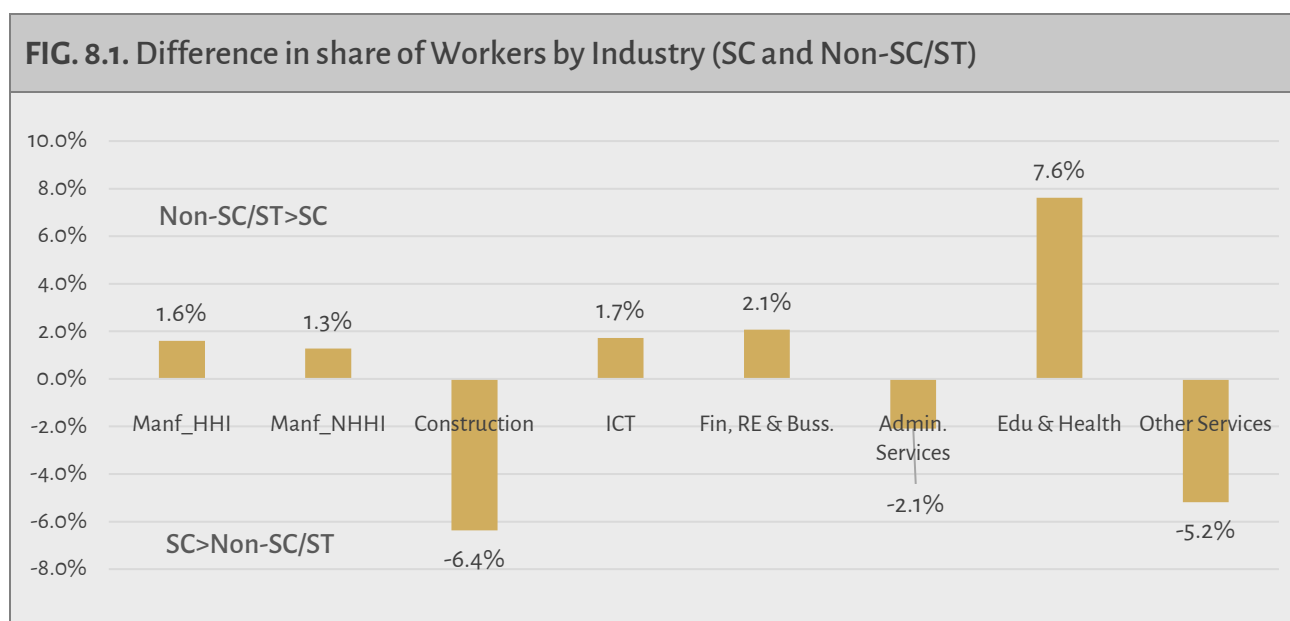
TABLE 3: Top ten industries of Women's work by Social Groups

| NIC Divisions | SC | ST | Non-SC/ST |
|---|-------|-------|-----------|
| Education | 7.5% | 11.3% | 14.3% |
| Retail trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles | 5.1% | 7.7% | 6.2% |
| Human health activities | 4.9% | 5.1% | 4.8% |
| Activities of households as employers of domestic personnel | 8.6% | 4.1% | 4.0% |
| Other personal service activities | 6.8% | 6.9% | 3.8% |
| Public administration and defence; compulsory social security | 5.7% | 5.3% | 3.0% |
| Manufacture of textiles | 0.0% | 0.0% | 4.3% |
| Manufacture of wearing apparel | 3.8% | 0.0% | 5.2% |
| Construction of buildings | 7.1% | 9.8% | 0.0% |
| Manufacture of tobacco products | 3.0% | 0.0% | 4.0% |
| Crop and animal production, hunting and related service activities | 0.0% | 3.4% | 0.0% |
| Specialized construction activities | 2.7% | 3.3% | 0.0% |
| Office administrative, office support and other business support activities | 0.0% | 0.0% | 3.3% |
| Civil engineering | 0.0% | 3.1% | 0.0% |
| Share to Total Urban Workforce | 55.3% | 59.9% | 52.9% |

SOURCE: Authors' analysis from Census of India 2011

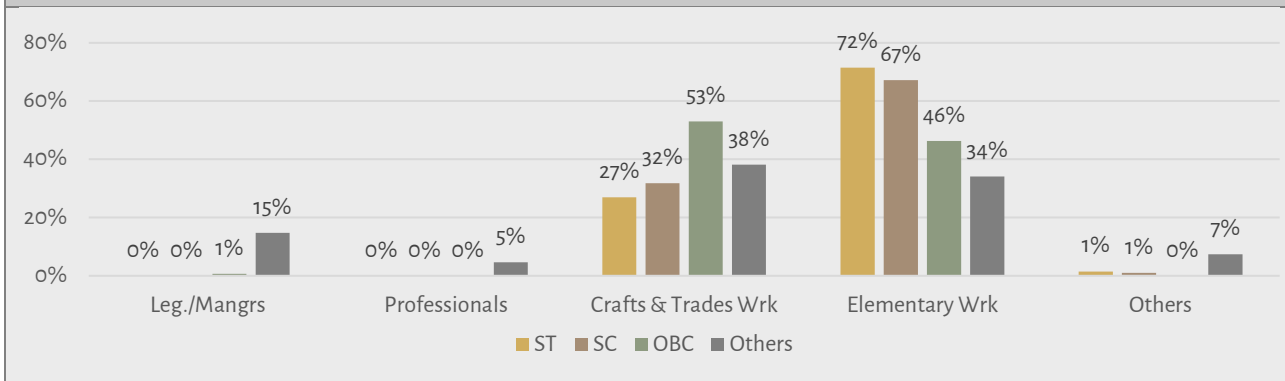
NOTE: Shaded numbers are top ten industries

Thus, caste matters both for participation and for occupation. Being non-SC/ST does appear to reduce the participation of women in the workforce – in part because they are less present in more menial occupations.



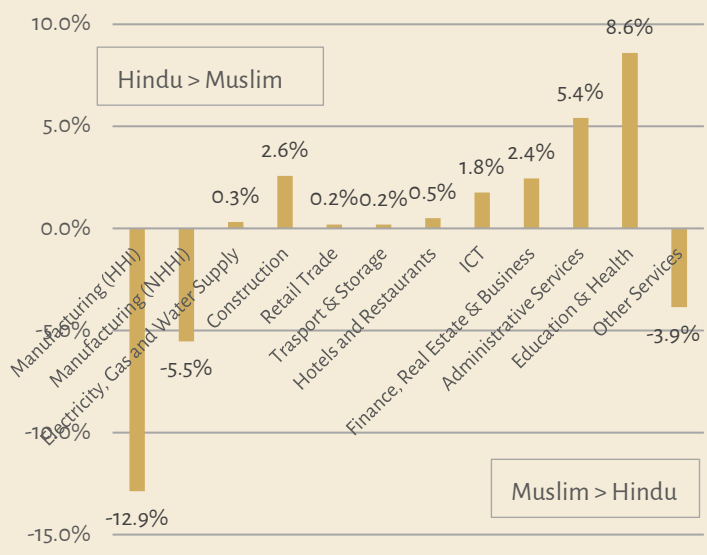
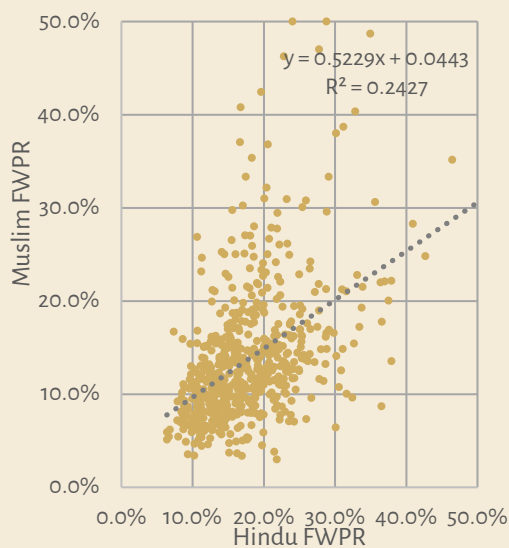
SOURCE: Authors' analysis from Census 2011

FIG.8.2. Occupational Classification of Workers by Social Groups in Construction



SOURCE: Authors' analysis from NSS EUS 2011-12

BOX 5: Does Religion Matter?



While there is a lot of variation across districts, there does not seem to be a systematic difference in FWFP between Hindus and Muslims. Broadly, if proportionately more Hindu women work in a district, Muslim women are also more likely to work in that district. However, the industries of work differ. According to the Census 2011, Muslim women are more likely to work in manufacturing (disproportionately as unpaid workers in family enterprises), while Hindus are more likely to work in public and social services (as wage workers). Though the urban national Muslim FWFP (12.5 percent) is lower than the Hindu FWFP (18.2 percent), urban Muslim female workers are concentrated in certain districts. A closer look reveals that where urban Muslim FWFP is high and more than Hindu FWFP (more precisely, 128 districts¹² consisting of 23 percent of Muslim female workers), 47.4 percent of them are engaged in household manufacturing, as compared to only 12.5 percent in other districts – indicating that the districts with very high Muslim FWFP have a specific industrial

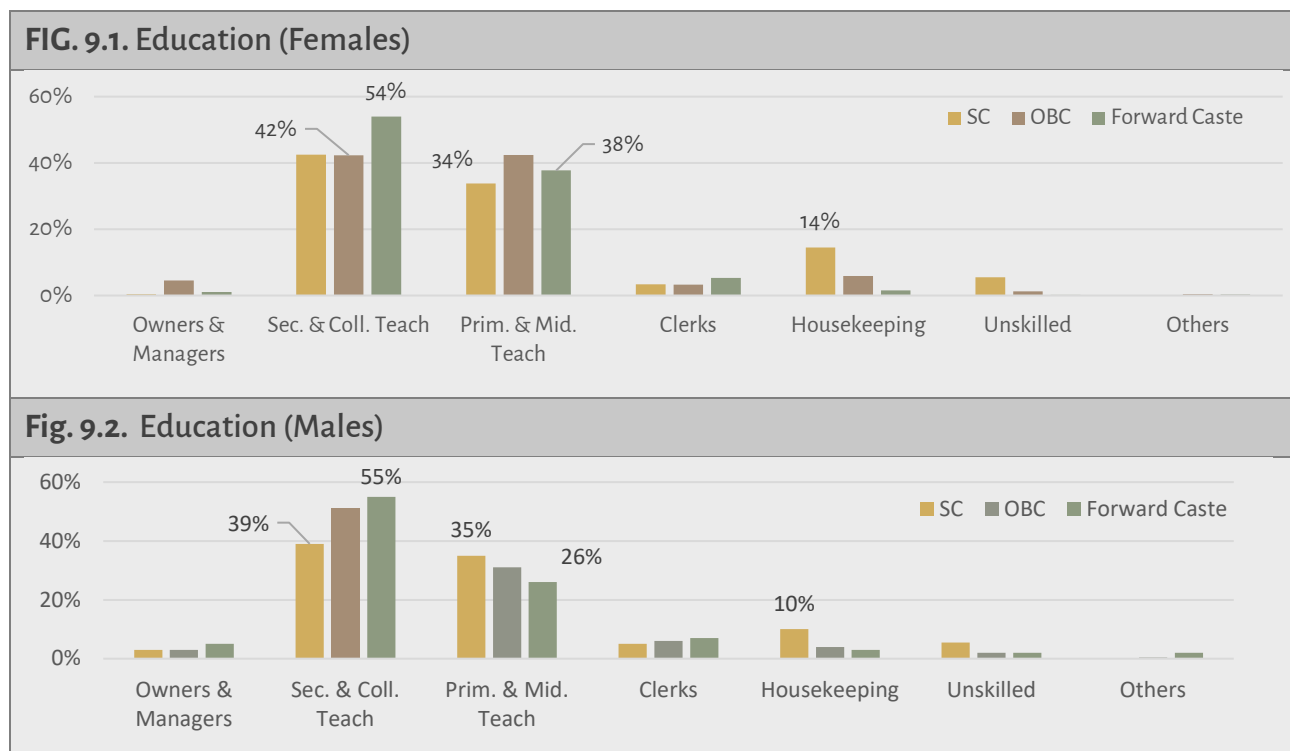
¹² These are districts around Varanasi, Mirzapur, Sonbhadra and Azamgarh in UP, Malda, Murshidabad and Nadia in West Bengal, Satna, Damoh, Sagar, Panna, Rewa, Jabalpur and Ashoknagar in Madhya Pradesh as well as Dharmapuri and Krishnagiri districts of Tamil Nadu, the districts around Bangalore, and the Rayalseema region of Andhra Pradesh.

structure. A list of districts where the participation of Muslim women in household industry is high have given in Appendix Table A3. It is also possible that there are cultural reasons for the low participation of Muslim women in public and social services.¹³

While manufacturing is the key sector where urban Muslim women work, there are also spatial variation in economic activities within them. Muslim women in urban areas of UP, Bihar, Rajasthan, West Bengal, MP and Tamil Nadu shows higher participation in household and Non-household manufacturing, while in Assam they are engaged in construction activities and more in administrative, education, health and trade services in Kerala. Half of West Bengal's urban Muslim women are engaged in household manufacturing, while a substantial number of them are engaged in service activities in Haryana, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh, and in Non-household manufacturing in Tamil Nadu.

4.4.1. Interaction of gender and caste

While the industrial structure and occupational patterns are differentiated by caste in women's work, is there an effect of gender within caste, especially in industries such as education or health where women from most social groups are represented? We have already seen that there are clear differences by caste with the non-SC/ST being concentrated in health and education, but when we look within education, we find that both SC men and women tend to do similar kinds of jobs. Both of them have significant presence in teaching, but their presence in housekeeping and unskilled work is disproportionately higher than in other castes (Figure 9.1 and 9.2).

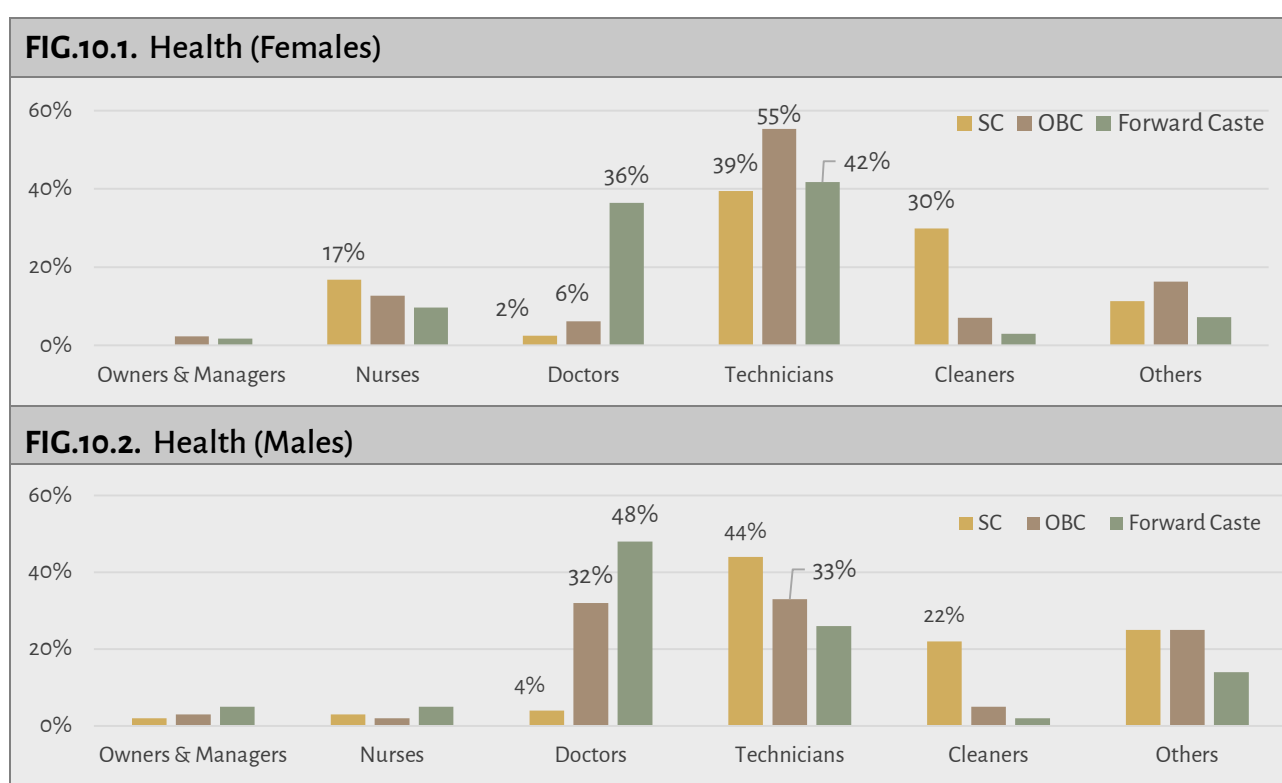


SOURCE: Authors' analysis from NSS EUS 2011-12

¹³ A recent report (Kara, 2019) claims (for their survey data) that in the home based garment industry, '99.3% of the workers were either Muslims or... Scheduled Caste.' This is not supported by NSS data, where (in 2011-12), Muslim women were 17.8 percent and Scheduled Castes and Tribe women were 11 percent of the workforce respectively. It also claims that '95.5% of workers were female' while in the NSS, only 59.1 percent of urban home based garment workers are female.

However, in case of health, there is evidence of difference across both caste and gender. SC women and men are significantly overrepresented in cleaning work. While 30 percent of SC women (and 22 percent of men) working in the health sector are employed in cleaning work (as compared to single digit shares for other castes), there are very few doctors (2 percent) among SC women and only a little more (4 percent) among SC men. There is, however, a significant share (56 percent) of SC women working as nurses or technicians.

However, in case of OBCs, while only 6 percent of the women are doctors and 68 percent are nurses or technicians, among OBC men 32 percent are doctors, which is less than upper caste men (48 percent), but much higher than SC men. Hence, the share of doctors among OBC women remains low and comparable to SC men, OBC men are catching up with upper caste men, referring to a narrowing caste divide but persistent gender divide within the OBCs (Fig. 10.1 and 10.2).



SOURCE: Authors' analysis from NSS EUS 2011-12

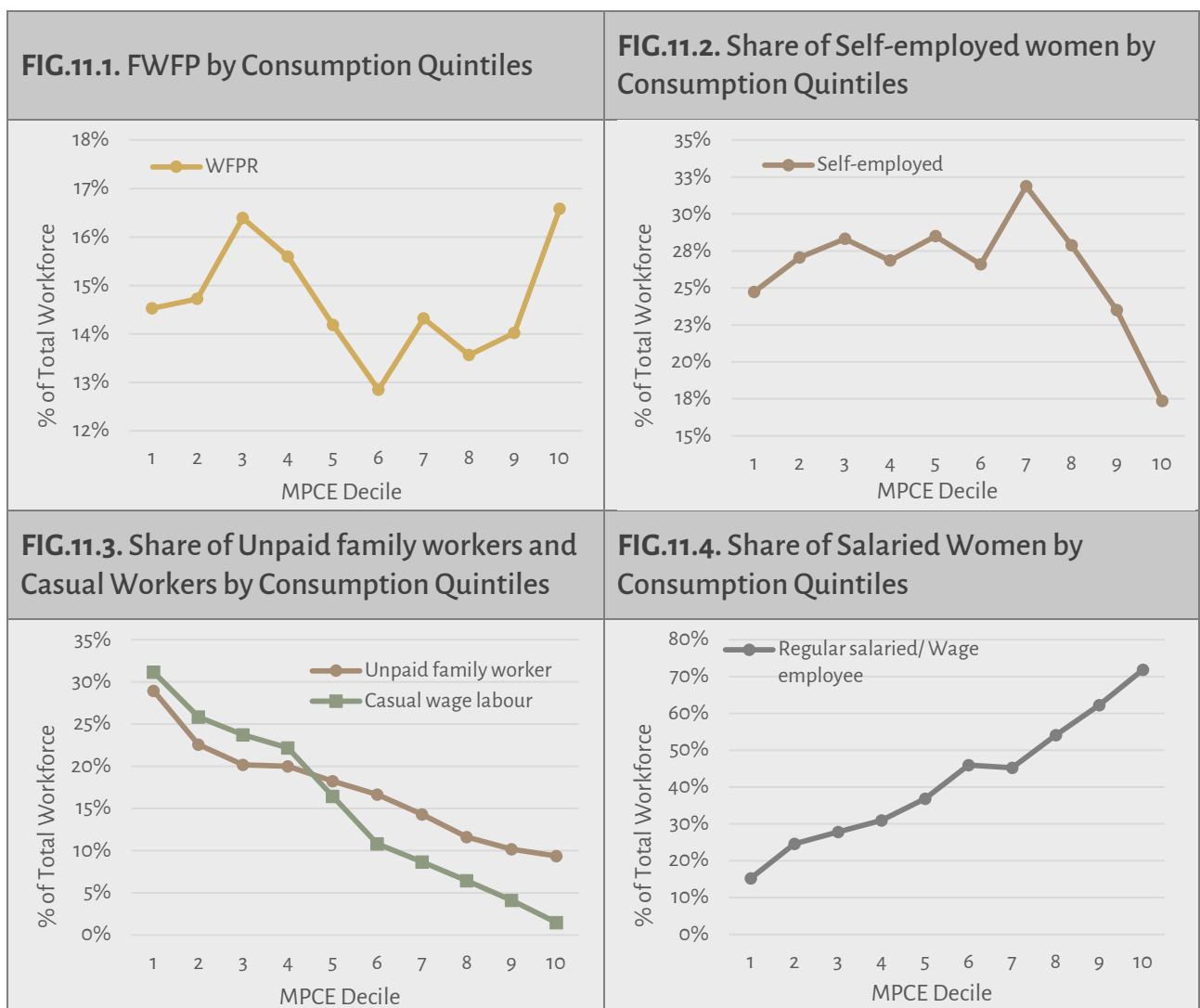
These intersections of gender and caste at different levels show that the manner in which caste affects women's work is layered and complicated and not amenable to simple solutions.

4.5. Income Matters

It is difficult to decipher whether income matters from the data, since the presence of a working woman in the household would raise the household's income and thus higher income households would be associated with a higher share of working women. However, Sarkar et al. (2019), using careful statistical techniques to analyse the IHDS data finds that an increase in income of other members of the household and change in the asset ownership of a household lowers a woman's probability of entry into and increases the probability of exit from the workforce overall, but not so clearly in urban areas, where it is affected by change in assets but not in income.

So, while there does seem to be indirect indications of a negative income effect on women's work, this is not so clearly evident when it comes to urban areas.

However, the pattern of employment is very different across consumption quintiles. Figure 11.1 shows that the urban FWFP varies irregularly within a range of 13 percent to 16 percent across household consumption quintiles. However, this overall variation masks significant changes in the structure of work, as shown in other panels (Fig. 11.2-11.4). As households' economic condition improves, the effect on self-employment is limited, though proportion of women in self-employment (as a share of women in the workforce) drops sharply for the top 20 percent of the households. In contrast, the share of women in unpaid work in household enterprises and casual work drop steadily as economic condition improves, with casual work decreasing faster than unpaid work at home. Women also have a higher incidence of home based work (25 percent compared to 10 percent for men, based on NSS 2011-12), which can lower income (see the chapter on unpaid care work for a more detailed discussion). Finally, as expected, increase in the share of women in regular salaried/wage work (as a share of women in the workforce) is associated with improved economic condition. In this, the possibility of reverse causality, that is, an improvement in economic condition because someone finds regular salaried work, cannot be ruled out.



SOURCE: Authors' analysis from NSS EUS 2011-1

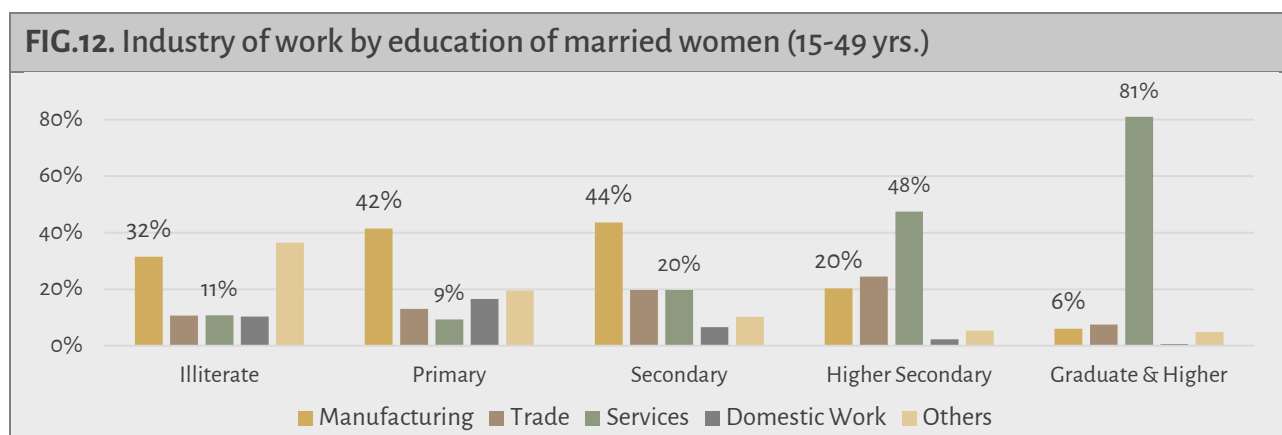
4.6. Education and Family Structure Matters

In this section, we look at the effect of education and family structure on the work of married women aged 15-49. We focus on married women because married women constitute about 65 percent of the urban female workforce within 15-49 years and this allows us to investigate the interactions between husband's work and education and the women's propensity to work. The workforce structure of married women differs from the total women workforce in urban areas, for example, the share of salaried workers among married women is lower (35.8 percent) than total women (47.4 percent).

BOX 6: Costs and Benefits of Multiple employers: Domestic work in India

According to the Census, domestic work ranks fifth among the occupations employing women, accounting for 4.7 percent of the work force. Also, women comprise over 80 percent of the workers in this sector. Many of these workers are employed in multiple households (Neetha 2019, Neetha and Palriwala 2011). In their sample of 500 workers in Kolkata, Qayum and Ray (2003) found that 77 percent of the workers were part-timers. In the IHDS-II data also, 60 percent of domestic workers are part-time. While this work is 'part-time' from the employers' point of view, implying that each worker spends limited time in each household. For the workers, however, the total number of hours spent in multiple households could amount to a full working day or even more (Neetha and Palriwala 2011). Such 'part-time work is both more unstable and more flexible.' Neetha and Palriwala (2011: 108). It carries the risk of arbitrary dismissal and unlike older arrangements for family retainers, no living arrangements are provided (Neetha 2019). Employers prefer the arrangement because it allows them to hire multiple workers for various needs, such as cooking, cleaning, childcare, etc. (Neetha 2019). From the workers' perspective too, part-time domestic work grants relatively greater autonomy, bargaining power and flexibility (Ray and Qayum 2010; Neetha and Palriwala 2011). For example, workers can return to their homes within the day to take care of domestic responsibilities, particularly childcare (Neetha and Palriwala 2011). Workers are not tied to a single employer, and 'no one employer can hope to command their full attention and loyalty' (Qayum and Ray 2003: 533).

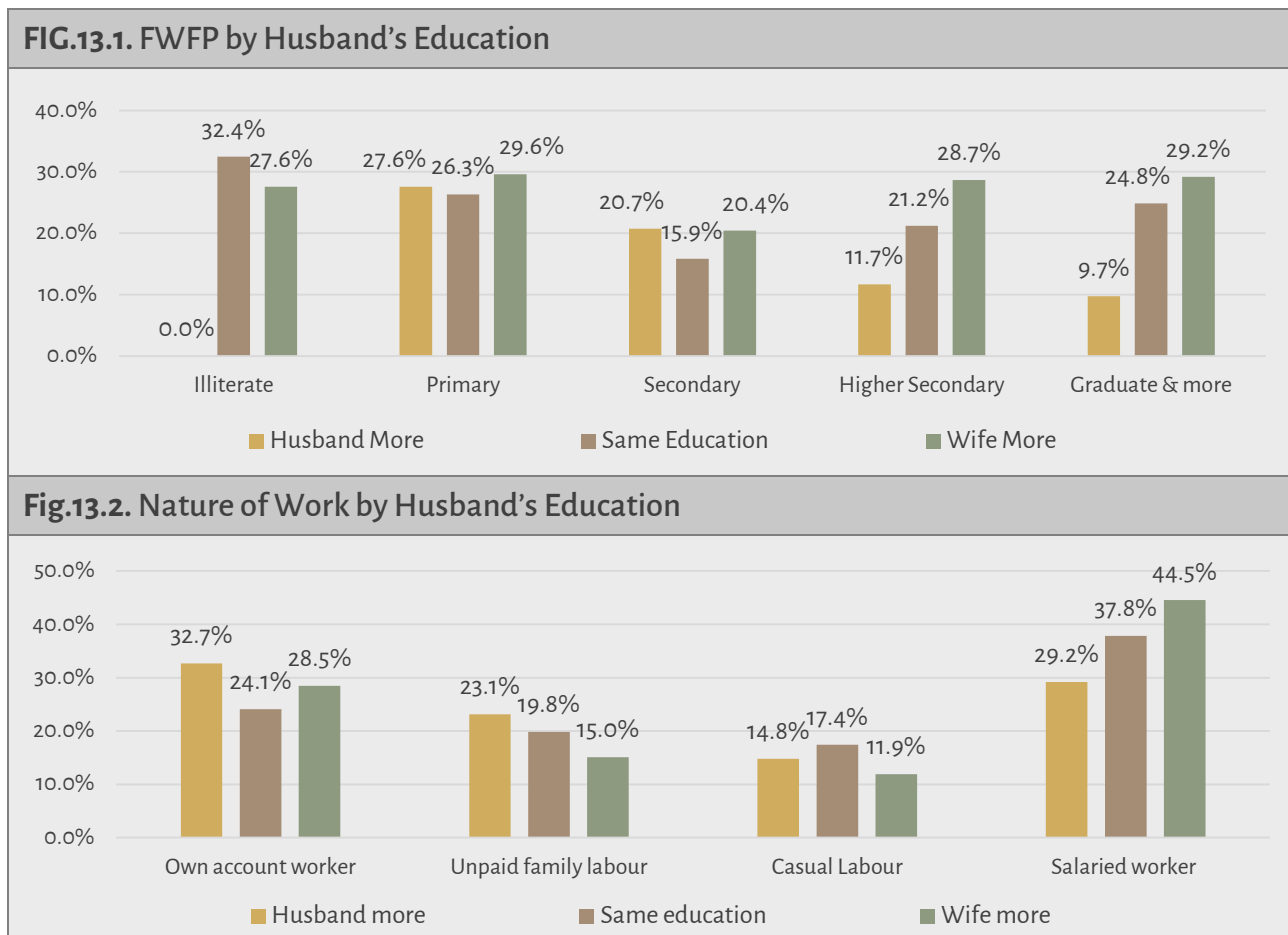
In urban areas, manufacturing, services, trade and domestic work comprise 81 percent of the married women workforce. Within these four key sectors, increasing education leads to a change in industrial composition of work. For example, only 20 percent women with secondary schooling are employed in services but this share increases to 81 percent for women with graduate degrees (Fig.12). The opposite relationship can be observed for labour intensive manufacturing work, where the share of less educated women is higher.



SOURCE: Authors' analysis from NSS EUS 2011-12

4.6.1. Relationship with education of husband

The education level of the wife in relation to the husband matters. Increased education of married women in comparison to their husbands leads to an increase in work force participation. While higher education women increases their likelihood of being in salaried jobs, the share of such jobs in the total work of women is even higher if women are more educated than their husbands. On the other hand, if the husbands are more educated than wives, then the wife is more likely to own a business or work as an unpaid family worker (Figure 13.1 and 13.2) – two-thirds of whom are home-based.



SOURCE: Authors' analysis from NSS EUS 2011-12

4.6.2. Relationship with husband's industry of work

The nature and industry of jobs where married women are engaged in urban areas depends a lot on their husbands' industry of work. Urban married women are much more likely to work in the same sector as their husbands (Table 4), and the share of women working in their husband's sector to total women in that sector is usually 3-6 times of the share of that sector to total women workforce. In the case of most of the sectors, women who do not work in their husband's sector are mainly distributed in labour intensive manufacturing and services, and if these three are added, it constitutes over 80 percent to 90 percent of working women across various sectors of working men. It can be observed that only wives of transport and construction workers have a somewhat more diversified job profile, and are not concentrated in these three sectors. However, the share of women working in transport sector is only 0.4 percent of the total urban female workforce.

TABLE 4. Association between married women and their husband's Industry of work

| Husband Wife | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | Total | Ratio* |
|-----------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|--------|
| A | 75% | 20% | 4% | 4% | 6% | 13% | 4% | 6% | 4% | 2% | 12.1% | 6 |
| B | 0% | 31% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0.2% | .. |
| C | 12% | 12% | 76% | 27% | 14% | 19% | 18% | 29% | 13% | 3% | 26.0% | 3 |
| D | 0% | 0% | 3% | 33% | 0% | 4% | 3% | 4% | 3% | 1% | 5.4% | 6 |
| E | 0% | 12% | 0% | 1% | 41% | 1% | 0% | 1% | 1% | 0% | 1.1% | 36 |
| F | 1% | 0% | 1% | 0% | 1% | 31% | 2% | 2% | 1% | 1% | 5.4% | 6 |
| G | 4% | 8% | 3% | 5% | 4% | 6% | 44% | 10% | 5% | 6% | 13.3% | 3 |
| H | 0% | 0% | 0% | 1% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 2% | 0% | 0% | 0.4% | 5 |
| I | 6% | 11% | 9% | 26% | 33% | 14% | 15% | 30% | 69% | 34% | 27.6% | 3 |
| J | 1% | 6% | 3% | 4% | 0% | 11% | 13% | 16% | 5% | 54% | 8.5% | 6 |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | |

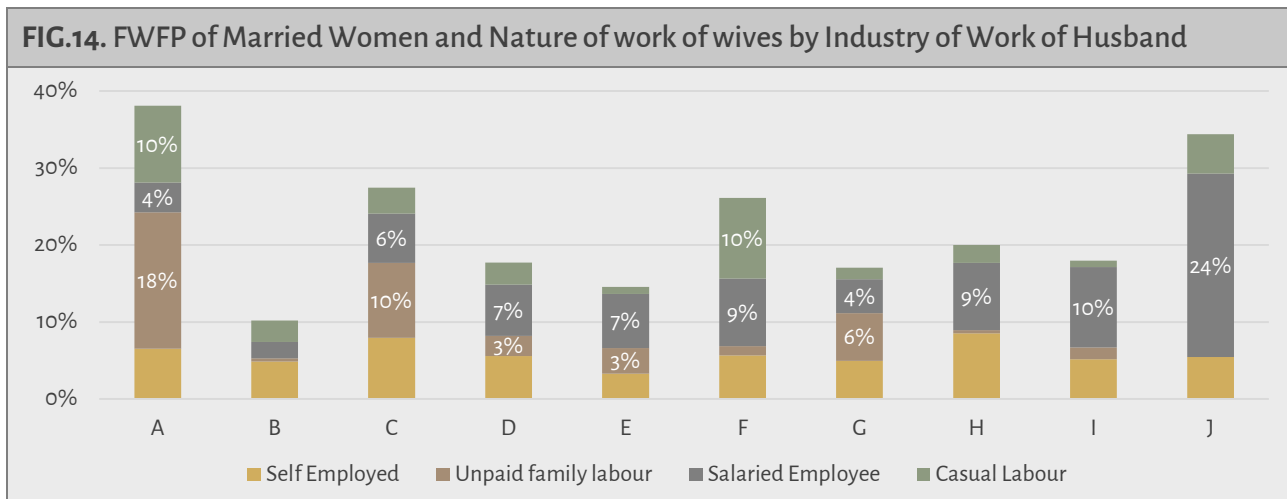
SOURCE: Authors' analysis from NSS EUS 2011-12

NOTE: A:Agriculture, B:Mining, C: Labour Intensive Manufacturing, D:Other Manufacturing, E: Electricity, Gas & Water Supply, F: Construction, G: Trade, H: Transport, I: Services, J: Domestic Work

*Ratio refers to ratio of the share of women in same sector as their husbands to share of sector to total women workforce

The nature of work undertaken by married women also depends largely on the industry where the husband works. Working wives are more likely to be unpaid helpers in case the husband works in labour intensive manufacturing near home or in a trade or service business. In such scenario, the wife is more likely to work as a craft worker in the business. However, in case of trade, if the husband does not own the trade business but works as a salaried wage worker then the wife can also be a wage worker or can run a small business herself. Similarly, if the husband works as a wage worker in the service sector, the wife is more likely to be a salaried professional in the same sector (Fig.14). While older wives are less likely to be working with husbands in manufacturing, younger wives are more likely to be working in the same sector of their husbands, if the husbands are engaged in services.

There are specific social markers for women who work in the same sector with their husband. While wives and husbands who work together in labour intensive manufacturing are more likely to be Muslims, OBCs or SCs, they are more likely to be upper caste Hindus in case they work together in retail trade or in the service sector.



SOURCE: Authors' analysis from NSS EUS 2011-12

NOTE: A: Agriculture, B: Mining, C: Labour Intensive Manufacturing, D: Other Manufacturing, E: Electricity, Gas & Water Supply, F: Construction, G: Trade, H: Transport, I: Services, J: Domestic Work

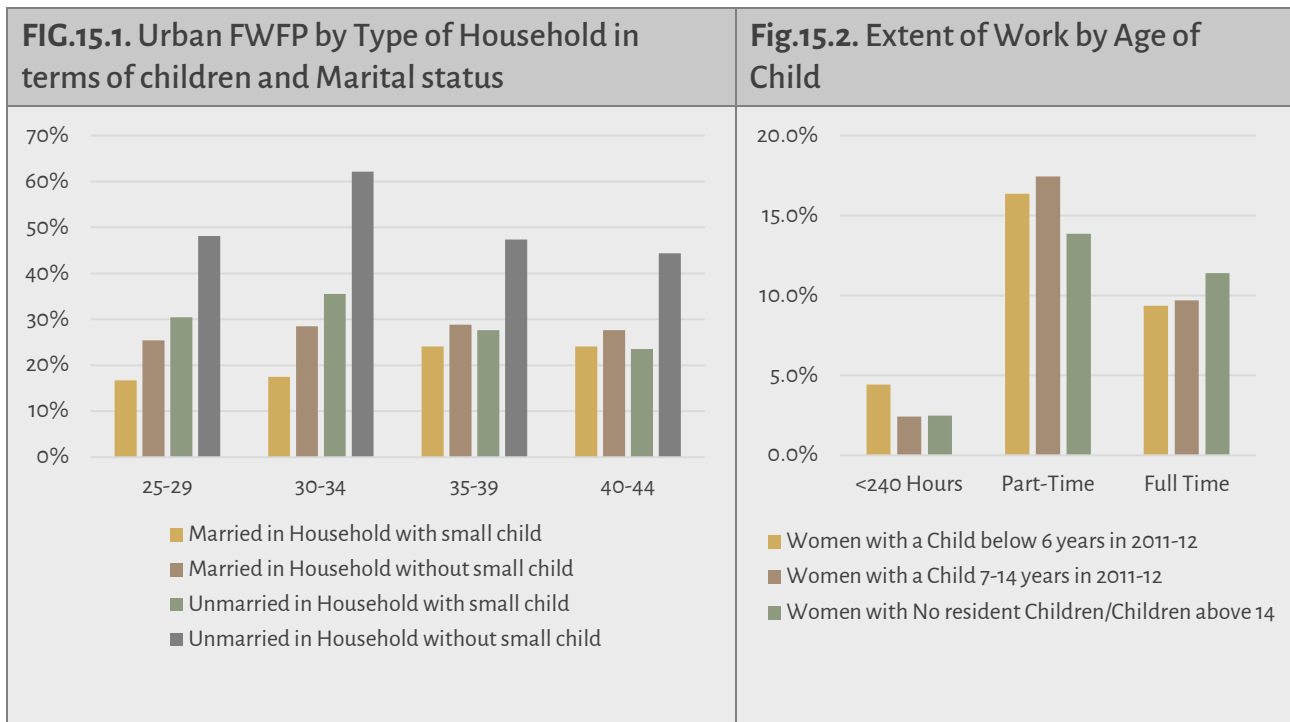
Thus, not only does education of the woman matter, its interaction with the education of their husband matters. Furthermore, women are much more likely to be in the same industry as their husbands.

4.7. Children Matter

Finally, we look at the effect of children on FWFP. Given the nature of survey data, it is not easy to check the effect of children on women's workforce participation. We approach this in two ways: the first one is through an indirect measure in which the urban households surveyed by the NSS is divided into two groups: households with at least one child below 5 years of age and all other households. Across these two kind of households, the difference in workforce participation of married and unmarried women (aged 25-44 years) are compared. The share of unmarried women living in a household with a child is 0.8 percent to total urban women in the selected age-group, and the share of married women in such households is 58.8 percent. In households without such a child, the share of unmarried and married women to total urban women is 4.9 percent, and 35.5 respectively.

Results show that women are more likely to work in households that do not have a child, and such likelihood is more for unmarried women in those households (Fig.15.1). The workforce participation of married women in households with a child is the least, followed by married women in households without a child, and thereafter (younger) unmarried women in households with a child and unmarried women in household without a child. This is suggestive of the dual burden of marriage and childbearing on workforce participation.

Unlike the NSS which does not allow to map every child in the household with its mother, IHDS-II survey allows an exact match of the mother and child. Hence, a more direct approach is taken to ask whether workforce participation is affected if any woman has a child below 6 years, and between 7 to 14 years. The 0-6 years children are taken as a separate group because they are most likely the children of women who have given birth to a child between the previous and recent round of IHDS. However, unlike NSS, the IHDS results does not show any change in overall FWFP across the women who has such a child, but there is a small tendency to shift from full-time work to more part-time or occasional work for those women, and more so for women who have a child aged 0-6 years and have probably given birth over the survey interval (Fig.15.2).



SOURCE: Authors' analysis from NSS EUS 2011-12

SOURCE: Authors' analysis from IHDS-II

Care work for other family members also plays a role in determining whether a woman will work. However, at this stage, empirical studies, such as Sarkar, et al. 2019, seem to indicate that the presence of an older family member does not lead to a statistically significant drop in FWFP. This could be because such family members could take over child care duties, which partially counteracts the effort involved in caring for them. This issue is discussed in more detail in the chapter on unpaid care work. Also, as the accompanying case study shows, women may choose to stay at home to supervise the upbringing of older school-going children, beyond the usual age of child care provision.

5. Policy Implications

There is much that has not been explored in this chapter, in particular the issue of patriarchy and how it affects female workforce participation, some of which are addressed in other chapters. Nor must we ignore the role of early education and wider behavioural change campaigns in combating prejudices that emerge from patriarchy. It is important to recognize that as long as these prejudices persist, other measures can only be palliative and not transformative.

While different sources of data do give a conflicting picture of the spatial pattern of women's work in India, they all agree that female work force participation is very low, especially in urban areas. However, much of the analysis and patterns that follow draw upon patterns in the data – which may vary by source. We have tried to use census data wherever possible to limit the sampling differences but it would be useful for policy to probe why estimates of FWFP vary so widely across data sources.

FWFP is also higher in smaller towns as compared to larger cities. This may be due to the differential skills involved or the ease of navigating a smaller town or the ability to undertake subsidiary work. Policy needs to focus on smaller urban areas to ensure that they stay women-friendly.

If there are jobs, the women will come, but not too many – at least in urban areas. While there is an increase in FWFP if the share of 'female-friendly' industries and services increase, the rise in FWFP is not large. Moreover, while the share of women's work in services as a share of all working women is relatively more compared to men, it is also relatively more in labour intensive manufacturing too. So, policy can adopt a two-pronged approach—to increase employment opportunities in both labour intensive manufacturing and services. However, while it is important to do this, we must recognize that it will at best be a partial solution.

Caste still continues to matter, especially in accessing particular types of work. In part, this can be because of the lack of opportunity to acquire specific skills. Furthermore, within caste, gender may play an exacerbating role, as seen in the health sector. Policies to increase access to hitherto disadvantaged social groups must be sensitive to the fact that gender could be an additional hindrance in overcoming such disadvantage.

To the extent that a rise in income affects FWPR negatively, it reflects cultural preferences that do not perceive an intrinsic benefit in women's work – adopting only an instrumental approach to their employment. Fortunately, the effect in urban India may be weak. However, it is also true that rising income can enable women to give up precarious casual work or unpaid work in home enterprises, and focus on self-employment and regular salaried/ wage work.

It is also the case that more educated women are more likely to be doing regular salaried/ wage work. This is more so the case if she is as well or better educated compared to her husband, when she is more likely to participate in the work force, as well as work at regular salaried/ wage positions. It is important for policy to continue the focus on female education to build on recent gains.

This implies that the importance of policy to increase regular salaried jobs is even greater for encouraging women and especially educated women to join the workforce. Furthermore, investing in women's education would mean that they are more likely to be as well or better educated compared to their husbands and hence more likely to work. The attachment to the husband's industry is perhaps due to the familiarity of the industry and it is important to undertake information dissemination exercises to broaden the choices of such women. As we are now getting more educated entrants into our workforce, it is important to recognize that our manufacturing does not appear geared to leverage the productivity gains that come from such educated workers, as is evident by lack of opportunities for workers who have completed schooling in manufacturing.

Childcare (more than elder care) has been an issue and it does seem to affect both participation and the nature of work (part-time vis-à-vis full time). Even as a variety of policy initiatives (leave, child care facilities, etc.) are implemented, it is important to recognize that the ability to do part-time work may be important in retaining women (and men) in the workforce, post the arrival of a child. Firms may need to explore the possibilities of going beyond full-time work to retain their workforce. As the chapter on unpaid care work argues, location (home based or elsewhere) and timing of work affects the participation of women significantly and in a complicated manner.

6. Conclusion

There are no silver bullets or simple answers to mitigate the inequality between female and male labour force and workforce participation. Even though there is variation across the country, the participation rates of women in the workforce is low by international standards even in locations where it is relatively high in our context. Yet, it is important to pursue this endeavour because the benefits are many and multi-faceted – ranging from economic advancement to a social environment that is more nurturing and facilitative for all genders, for this inequality is as much a loss for men as it is for others.

Much of what can be done is similar to what is needed to redress other inequalities – the focus on smaller towns, on caste inequities, on increasing jobs in manufacturing, on ensuring that more such jobs have regular wages, etc. The improved educational profile of women has many other benefits – from enabling access to new job markets to enabling more meaningful decision making at home. Similarly, as manufacturing policy creates jobs that can leverage educated workers, educated women may be able to go beyond services in seeking employment opportunity. Yet, in pursuing these paths, it is important to always keep in mind that gender brings its own complexities that add to the inequities brought on by location, by caste and lack of good jobs. If policymakers are sensitive to these nuances, more meaningful progress can be achieved towards equity.

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Appendix

TABLE A1. Definition of Work at Four Datasets

| Data Source | A | B | C | D | E | F |
|-------------|---|--|---|---|-----|---|
| Census | Two: 1) Main 2) Marginal | None | Six Months or more | No | No | Yes (Only Primary Goods except Plantation crops; Self-production of fixed assets for own use) |
| NSS EUS | Two: 1) Usual Principal Status 2) Usual Subsidiary Status | 30 days | Work done through maximum time of the year | Yes* (But only one more than Principal Activity) | No | Yes (Only Primary Goods & self-production of fixed assets for own use) |
| IHDS-II | Four: 1) Missing Hours 2) <240 Hours 3) Part Time 4) Full-Time | None | Full time: >=2000 Hours and 250 Days Part-time: > 240 hours but not FT | Yes | Yes | Yes (Both Primary and Other Goods; Animal Rearing not included while calculating 'Work') |
| NFHS-IV | Three: 1) All Year 2) Seasonal 3) Occasional | Two Definitions: Any time last 7 days/last year | Not clearly defined | No | No | Not clearly defined |

SOURCE: Compiled from various datasets by Authors

NOTE: A-Categories of Work, B-Minimum Time-period to consider as 'Work', C-Time to consider 'Full-time Work', D-Whether captures multiple industries of work (at same time), E-Whether captures fragmented work, F-Whether 'Production for Self-Consumption' (like animal rearing) is considered as work

Reference period is one year for all the datasets (For NFHS-IV, worked in last year have been used)

*Though NSS captures one additional subsidiary work done along with the principal work at the same time, the total usual workers estimate from NSS (UPS+USS) disregards the subsidiary work done by persons who are engaged in some form of principal work

TABLE A2.1. Top 5% Districts of Urban FWFP

| Sl. No | State | District | Urban FWFP |
|--------|-------------------|------------------|------------|
| 1 | Nagaland | Peren | 78.34 |
| 2 | Manipur | Thoubal | 44.29 |
| 3 | Mizoram | Serchhip | 43.31 |
| 4 | Mizoram | Champhai | 41.85 |
| 5 | Manipur | Ukhrul | 41.71 |
| 6 | Manipur | Bishnupur | 41.05 |
| 7 | Manipur | Tamenglong | 38.88 |
| 8 | Arunachal Pradesh | Upper Siang | 37.75 |
| 9 | Meghalaya | Jaintia Hills | 37.26 |
| 10 | Jammu & Kashmir | Kulgam | 36.74 |
| 11 | Tamil Nadu | Namakkal | 36.44 |
| 12 | Mizoram | Aizawl | 36.42 |
| 13 | Tamil Nadu | Erode | 36.29 |
| 14 | Meghalaya | West Khasi Hills | 35.78 |
| 15 | Manipur | Churachandpur | 35.64 |
| 16 | Nagaland | Longleng | 35.48 |
| 17 | Nagaland | Mon | 35.44 |
| 18 | Manipur | Imphal East | 35.44 |
| 19 | West Bengal | Murshidabad | 35.28 |
| 20 | Nagaland | Phek | 35.08 |
| 21 | Manipur | Imphal West | 34.81 |
| 22 | Mizoram | Kolasib | 34.43 |
| 23 | Mizoram | Mamit | 34.17 |
| 24 | Manipur | Chandel | 34.16 |
| 25 | Nagaland | Tuensang | 33.43 |
| 26 | Arunachal Pradesh | Tawang | 33.28 |
| 27 | Tamil Nadu | The Nilgiris | 33.09 |
| 28 | Arunachal Pradesh | West Kameng | 32.80 |
| 29 | Arunachal Pradesh | Dibang Valley | 32.79 |
| 30 | Tamil Nadu | Virudhunagar | 32.77 |
| 31 | Tamil Nadu | Tiruppur | 32.66 |
| 32 | Mizoram | Lunglei | 32.30 |

TABLE A2.2. Top 5% Districts of Urban FWFP (outside North-Eastern States)

| Sl. No | State | District | Urban FWFP |
|--------|-----------------|------------------|------------|
| 1 | Jammu & Kashmir | Kulgam | 36.74 |
| 2 | Tamil Nadu | Erode | 36.29 |
| 3 | West Bengal | Murshidabad | 35.28 |
| 4 | Tamil Nadu | The Nilgiris | 33.09 |
| 5 | Tamil Nadu | Virudhunagar | 32.77 |
| 6 | Tamil Nadu | Tiruppur | 32.66 |
| 7 | Karnataka | Dakshina Kannada | 31.60 |
| 8 | Tamil Nadu | Perambalur | 31.52 |
| 9 | Tamil Nadu | Tirunelveli | 31.48 |
| 10 | Chhattisgarh | Janjgir - Champa | 30.59 |
| 11 | Tamil Nadu | Karur | 30.14 |
| 12 | Tamil Nadu | Theni | 30.01 |
| 13 | Chhattisgarh | Dhamtari | 29.34 |
| 14 | Chhattisgarh | Bilaspur | 29.13 |
| 15 | Tamil Nadu | Dindigul | 28.63 |
| 16 | Jharkhand | Pakur | 28.48 |
| 17 | Jammu & Kashmir | Ganderbal | 28.30 |
| 18 | Tamil Nadu | Salem | 28.10 |
| 19 | Tamil Nadu | Dharmapuri | 27.54 |
| 20 | Karnataka | Bangalore | 27.28 |
| 21 | Chhattisgarh | Narayanpur | 26.97 |
| 22 | Andhra Pradesh | Kurnool | 26.76 |
| 23 | Andhra Pradesh | Nizamabad | 26.71 |
| 24 | Karnataka | Bijapur | 26.56 |
| 25 | Uttarakhand | Rudraprayag | 26.41 |
| 26 | Andhra Pradesh | Karimnagar | 26.38 |
| 27 | Andhra Pradesh | Mahbubnagar | 26.32 |
| 28 | Tamil Nadu | Coimbatore | 26.13 |
| 29 | Karnataka | Udupi | 26.06 |
| 30 | Jammu & Kashmir | Bandipore | 25.85 |
| 31 | Karnataka | Gadag | 25.62 |
| 32 | Kerala | Alappuzha | 25.55 |

SOURCE: Authors' analysis from Census of India 2011

This analysis considers undivided Andhra Pradesh

TABLE A3: Top 5% Districts with Muslim Urban Women Workers engaged in HH Manufacturing

| State | Name | Share of Total Muslim Urban Women HH Industry Workers * | Share of HH Industry Workers to Total Muslim Urban Women Workers* |
|-----------------|----------------------------|---|---|
| West Bengal | Murshidabad | 17.19% | 85.39% |
| West Bengal | Haora | 3.92% | 52.55% |
| Uttar Pradesh | Mau | 3.77% | 77.64% |
| Uttar Pradesh | Varanasi | 2.39% | 53.67% |
| Uttar Pradesh | Bareilly | 2.38% | 35.16% |
| Karnataka | Dakshina Kannada | 2.37% | 66.92% |
| West Bengal | Maldah | 2.02% | 53.34% |
| Tamil Nadu | Tirunelveli | 1.88% | 56.49% |
| Uttar Pradesh | Azamgarh | 1.73% | 70.07% |
| West Bengal | South Twenty Four Parganas | 1.38% | 24.10% |
| Uttar Pradesh | Kannauj | 1.19% | 72.51% |
| Jammu & Kashmir | Srinagar | 1.06% | 10.95% |
| Karnataka | Tumkur | 1.04% | 42.37% |
| Tamil Nadu | Vellore | 0.99% | 31.67% |
| Madhya Pradesh | Jabalpur | 0.98% | 32.07% |
| Madhya Pradesh | Sagar | 0.95% | 70.93% |
| Uttar Pradesh | Allahabad | 0.94% | 22.71% |
| Uttar Pradesh | Moradabad | 0.90% | 23.48% |
| Andhra Pradesh | Hyderabad | 0.89% | 5.48% |
| Uttar Pradesh | Lucknow | 0.87% | 13.37% |
| West Bengal | Kolkata | 0.85% | 12.10% |
| Maharashtra | Mumbai Suburban | 0.83% | 7.58% |
| Karnataka | Davanagere | 0.82% | 35.06% |
| West Bengal | Nadia | 0.78% | 56.42% |
| Uttar Pradesh | Rampur | 0.77% | 35.05% |
| Andhra Pradesh | Karimnagar | 0.77% | 43.58% |
| Andhra Pradesh | Kurnool | 0.75% | 18.38% |
| Maharashtra | Thane | 0.70% | 8.36% |
| Karnataka | Kolar | 0.70% | 40.66% |
| Uttar Pradesh | Kanshiram Nagar | 0.69% | 63.15% |
| Andhra Pradesh | Anantapur | 0.68% | 22.20% |
| West Bengal | North Twenty Four Parganas | 0.67% | 16.78% |
| INDIA | | 56.49% | 57.82% |

SOURCE: Authors' Analysis from Census of India 2011. This analysis considers undivided Andhra Pradesh.

* The first column shows the concentration of workers in a district, e.g., Murshidabad has 17.2% of the total Muslim urban women household industry workers while Varanasi has 2.4%. These 32 districts in total have 56.5% of such workers. The second column shows the intensity of household industry work in a district; for example, in Murshidabad 85.4% Muslim urban women workers are employed by household industry while the corresponding number in Varanasi is 53.7%. In these 32 districts, 57.8% of the Muslim urban women workers are in the household industry.



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