

**Towards Demystifying Self-employment in India:
*Delineation, Dimensionality, Differentia.***

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Presidential Address

64th National Conference of the Indian Society of Labour Economics, 2024

I begin by expressing my sincere thanks to the Indian Society of Labour Economics for the honour and privilege bestowed on me of being the President of this 64th Conference. My attempt is to fulfil this trust by focusing on an issue that is not only at the center of labour structure debates today, but additionally one that I believe strongly integrates the three interdependent and dialectically connected cornerstones of all analysis and research – academics, advocacy and action.

The primary motivation for focusing on self-employment and petty production is the changing narrative that I have witnessed during my decades-long field-based research. The first major question that labour economists generally ask is 'what work do you do'. The answer to this question from those self-employed has changed over time from '*hum apni marzi ke maalik hain*'(we are our own masters) to '*aur koi chaara nahin hain*'(we have no other alternative).

There are several additional reasons for selecting this particular theme. One, the rapidly declining employment opportunities for the majority of citizens of our country, especially those most vulnerable and marginalised. Two, the central concern today is

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availability of any form of livelihood sources, beyond the hope for 'good and decent' jobs which are now perceived as an unattainable luxury. Three, that the paradigm of growth-with-jobs has been replaced by one that not only pitches one against the other, but in fact clearly states that growth can take place only by disregarding employment and also labour rights. Four, that the majority of policies overtly support profits over wages and the control of capital over labour via supported centralisation of capital. Five, that the problem of declining labour market opportunities is sought to be resolved through self-employment, the implication obviously being that the current pattern of growth cannot – and more importantly – will not create jobs, and hence those seeking employment need to 'look after themselves'. Six, whether those who are self-employed or micro-enterprisiers are in reality innovators or are driven into self-employment and petty production as a last 'refuge'.

The theme of self-employment and petty production cuts through and simultaneously interlinks the three themes of this 64th Conference: Growth and Employment, Gig and Platform work, and Unpaid Economy and Labour Market. The pattern of growth and its connects as well as disconnects with not only employment but also the various kinds of employment. Gig and platform work that is by definition incorporated into self-employment and contains within itself elements of growth patterns and also the care economy with regard to gender flexibility. And of course care work which impacts growth and all forms, categories and sub-categories of employment.

The purpose is not to romanticise the past, but it is certainly to expand the process of demystifying the present with the hope that it will help in resolving the primary issues that are today so central to the lived realities of the massive mass of the unemployed, the underemployed, the unemployable, the under-paid and unpaid especially located in a context where existing inequalities have not only deepened but are being additionally combined with and strengthened by new forms of economic and extra-economic discrimination within the labour market. The objective and attempt is to locate the discussion of the essential foundations of self-employment and petty

production within the on-going process of primitive accumulation so as to unmask, extend and expand the debate, not close or conclude it.

The process of demystification is carried through via several routes, starting with locating India in the global context; capturing India's self-employment scenario over time; analysis of petty production and a subsistence need economy (Sanyal 2007) especially microenterprises in the MSME sector; expropriation of labour of even those already employed (Patnaik 2017) through evaluation of the standard components of quality of employment; extra-economic inequalities both existing and emerging, and assessing an illustration of partisan governmentality through evaluation of budgetary support to self-employment. Analysis is based mainly on secondary data both published and unpublished: even though sometimes not strictly comparable across time especially in terms of definitions, the trends that emerge are significant. Relevant literature published has been incorporated throughout instead of as a stand-alone section. And, while gender and societal exclusion are integrated into analysis, the extent of emerging community-based discrimination is significant enough to deserve a separate section.

I. LOCATING INDIA IN THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

As per the ILO definition of self-employment which includes the four sub-categories of employers, own-account workers, members of producers' cooperatives, and contributing family workers, India today has among the highest proportion of self-employed to total employed in the world at 75.7 percent for males and 77.9 percent for women, way above not only the world averages of 47.1 and 45.7 percent respectively, but also the South Asia average of 56.5 and 65.1 percent. Additionally, its proportion of particularly self-employed women is almost 20 percentage points higher than its neighbours Bangladesh and Pakistan which stand at 59.3 and 56.3 percent respectively (ILO 2024). The predominance of self-employment must additionally be viewed in the context of the fact that India has among the lowest labour-force participation rates (LFPR) in the world: as an illustration, its female LFPR

among the G20 nations has the lowest average: 30 percent between 2001 and 2007, 28 during 2008-2014, and a mere 23 percent during 2015-2021. Also, India reports the highest gender gap in employment rates at 57 percentage points; the highest rise in gender wage gap at about 40 percent; the largest self-employment gender gap at around 20 percentage points.

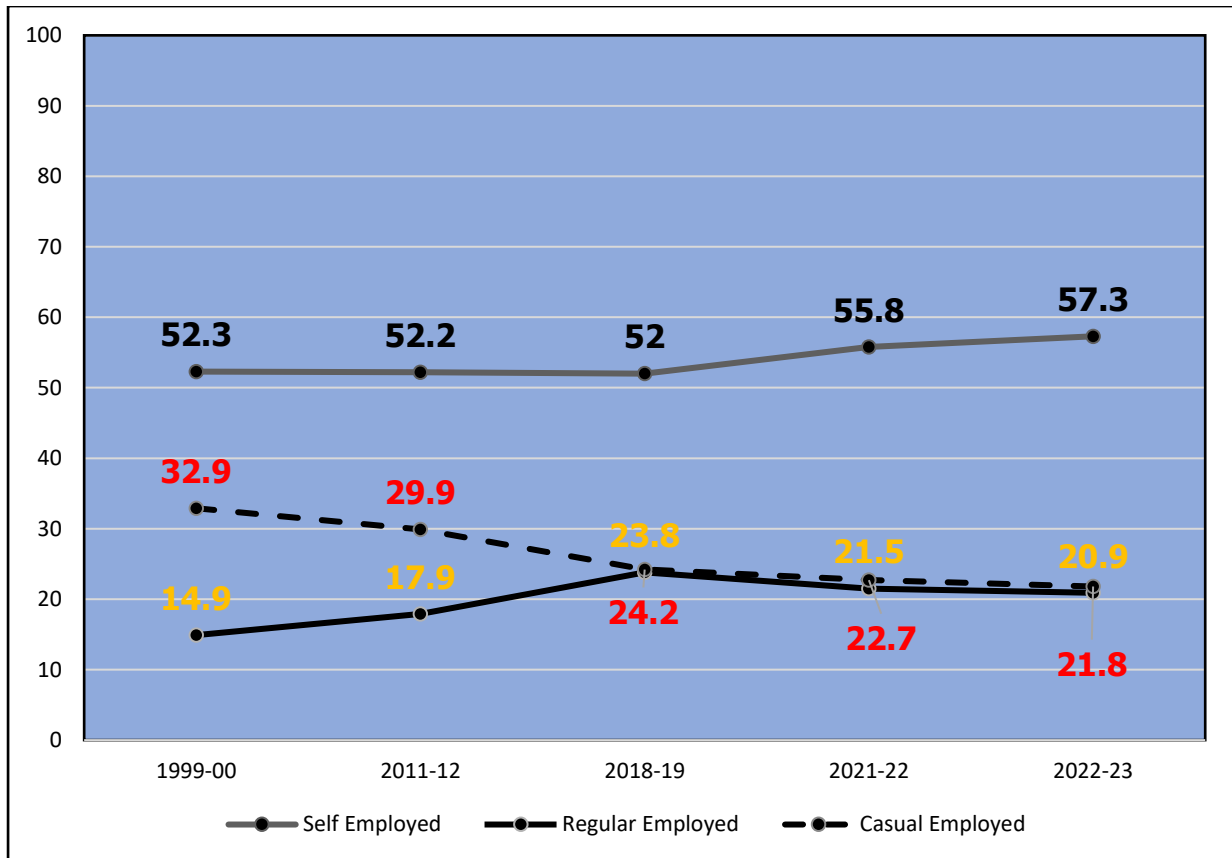
India's entrepreneurs too have not been performing well in in the past few years. India stands at a low of 57 out of the 65 countries ranked globally, down 3 from 2019, even though Bangladesh was able to maintain its ranking. India's Women's Advancement Outcomes ranking is at 63 today, down five ranks from 2019 (MIWE 2022). MIWE which captures changes in female and male entrepreneurial activity in 65 world economies records that India showed the second highest decline within just a year from 2020 to 2021 for both men at above 9 percent and women at over 10 percent. Further, its ranking in Knowledge Assets and Financial Access was 46/65 (MIWE 2022).

II. EMPLOYMENT TRENDS: THE INDIA PICTURE: PLFS

II.1: Trends: 1999-00 to 2022-23

The movement towards the predominance of self-employment in the Indian labour market has shown a consistent and a not too erratic expansion. This can be best understood by examining the relative shares of the three main categories of adult workers over the past two decades from 1999-00 to 2022-23 as captured in Indian data systems: salaried, casual and self-employed: an equivalent of the ILO definition which also includes members of producers' cooperatives is not available. This is followed by presenting the gendered and rural-urban trends across the three categories as well as heterogeneity among the self-employed: employers, own account and regular workers.

Table 1: 15+ Employment Status Shares: 1999-2000 to 2022-23



Source: Computed from EUS and PLFS, NSSO

The trends are clear: a consistent rise in the proportion of self-employment throughout the five PLFS, a steady fall of 12 percentage points in casual employment, a rather sharp rise in regular workers in 2018-19 and falling thereafter. The somewhat steep drop in casual workers is due primarily to the demonetisation of 2016 which threw almost the entire informal sector into structural turmoil. By 2022-23, casual and regular employment were almost equal though at significantly lower levels, with only the self-employed category expanding.

The PLFS of 2021-22 clearly reveals the combined massive negative impacts of economic slowdown, the demonetisation of 2016, the national COVID-induced lockdown with a mere 4-hour notice, and thereafter the lack of an empathic pandemic policy that drove workers back to their villages in a virtual repeat of the process of reverse migration that began in the wake of demonetisation. In this context it needs to be noted that the percentage of non-agricultural value-added growth which had

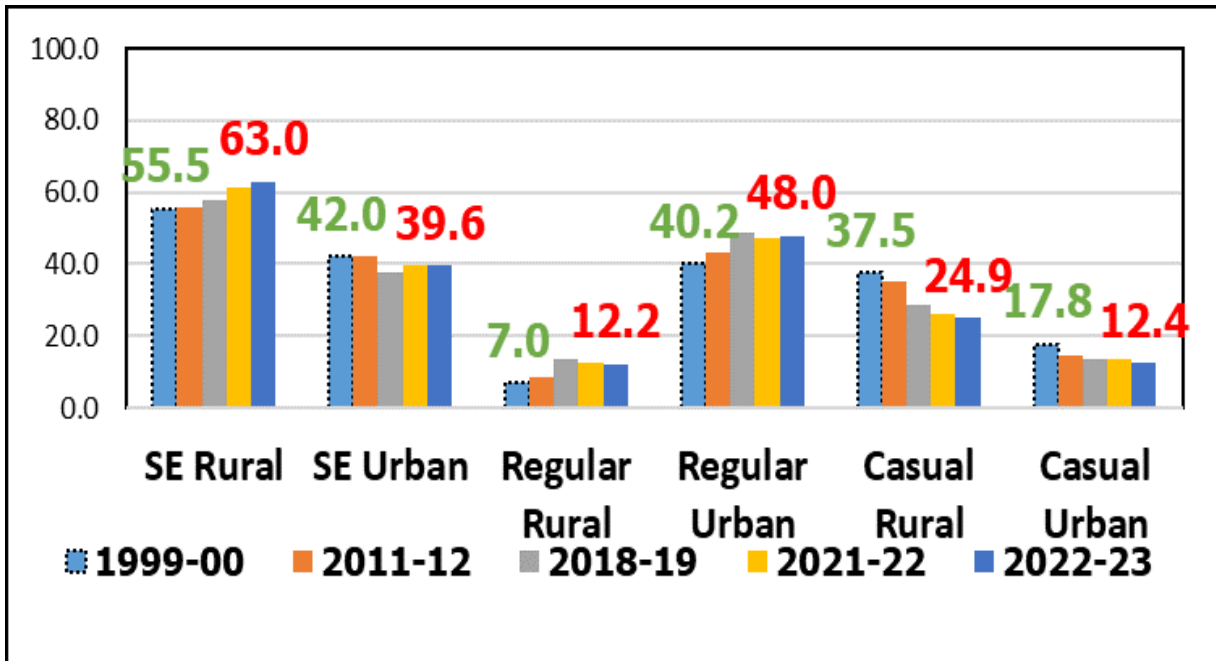
peaked at 7.7 percent during 2004-11, recorded its lowest share at a mere 3.4 percent in the post-demonetisation period 2017-21 (SWI 2023). The average annual growth rate of manufacturing which was 5.7 percent between 2005–06 and 2013-14, almost halved to 3.1 percent from 2014-15 to 2022-23 (Correa 2024). This is also the period when the growth rate began declining, from 8.26 in 2016-17 to 4.04 percent in 2019-20 (Aggarwal 2023). Simultaneously, the 66 percent LFPR of 2004-05 fell steeply by 14 percentage points to a low of 52 percent in 2017-18, with share of manufacturing in employment also declining from 12.8 percent in 2012 to 11.5 percent in 2018.

II.2: 15+ Employment Status Shares by Location

Graph 1 shows the clear rural-urban divide, India's labour market having altered significantly especially since 2018-19, rural regular work rising by over 5 and urban by almost 8 percentage points: whether the quality of employment has improved is another matter. Casual employment has fallen sharply by almost 13 percentage points in rural and over 5 percentage points in urban areas: predictably, the sharpest decline occurred in the post demonetisation and pandemic period. This also holds true of the urban self-employed, as many were not able to continue their micro-businesses due to lack of cash and also due to the compulsion to migrate back to their villages: it would have been interesting to examine this in greater detail but for the lack of migration data.

Rural India therefore appears to have emerged as the refuge for all those thrown out of the labour market, whether formal or informal, with petty production being the only source of survival. Total rural self-employment for 15+ years which had averaged about 55.6 percent between 1999-2000 and 2011-12 rose by two percentage points in 2018-19, another rise by 3.5 percentage points in 2021-22 to stand at 63 percent in 2022-23. Total urban self-employment on the other hand which averaged 42 percent till 2011-12 fell by 4 percentage points between 2011-12 and 2018-19, rising by merely 2 percentage points in the last two survey years. Over the past two-plus decades, rural self-employment for 15+ thus rose by 7.5 percentage points compared to the overall urban decline by almost three percentage points.

Graph 1: 15+ Employment Status Shares by Location (1999-00 to 2022-3)



Source: Computed from EUS and PLFS, NSSO

II.3: Gendered Structural Changes by Location

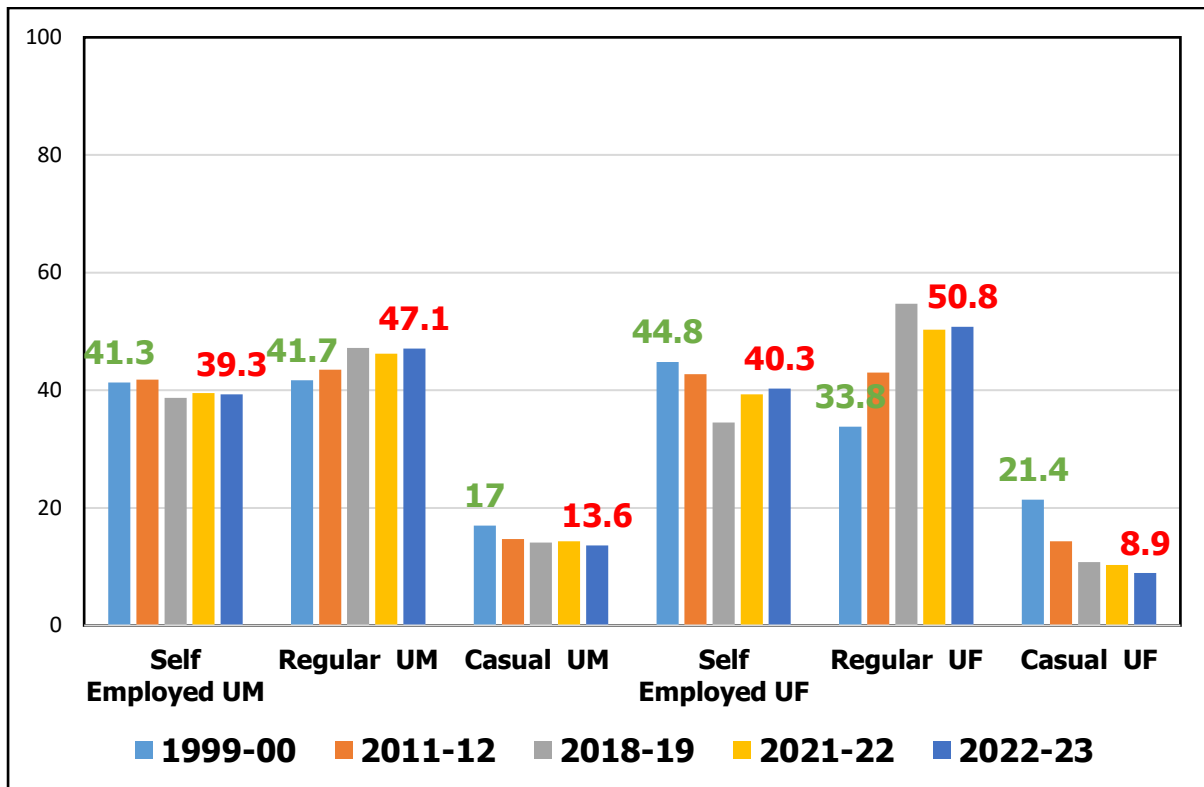
It would be instructive to examine gendered structural changes in the overall employment pattern before analysing gendered alterations in the three categories of workers. The share of men in agriculture fell by 21 percentage points from 71 to 49 percent between 1999-00 and 2022-23, that of women by less than ten percentage points from 86 percent to 76.2 percent. The steepest decline for both men and women occurred within a short period of five years between 1999-00 and 2004-05: a 6 percentage point fall for men and a huge 26 for women. And this in spite of a two percentage point rise for both male and female Work Participation Rates (WPR) and also LFPR. The gendered pattern changed within just a year from 2018-19 to 2019-20, rising for men by over two percentage points and for women by almost 6 percentage points. Thereafter the share of men in agriculture declined steadily while that of women rose: the figures today are 49 percent for men and over 76 percent for women.

That structural changes are highly gendered across both rural and urban sectors can be seen in Graphs 2 and 3. 2018-19 appears in the main to be the defining year for both male and female urban workers, all three categories changing in tandem: fall in self-employed and casual workers, accompanied by a rise in regular workers. The proportion of change however differs significantly. The highest rise of urban women regular workers was between 1999-00 and 2018-19 by 22 percentage points, men reporting a much lower 8 percentage point rise during the same period: both however are almost stagnant since then.

Women seem to have overtaken male urban regular workers today, recording almost 51 percent compared to 47 percent for men; also, the gender gap for urban regular workers has reversed over the last two decades, from 8 percentage points to 4 plus in favour of women. It is important to recall in this context that share of women in regular/salaried work is just about 20 percent of the 33 percent of all women who participate in the labour market. Also, the definition of the category of regular/salaried workers includes not only persons getting time wage but also persons receiving piece wage, and paid apprentices, both full time and part-time. Also defined as regular workers are domestic workers, Anganwadi and ASHA workers, and the many *Sakhis*, *Didis*, *Sahelis*, etc.

The shares of the other two categories of both male and female urban workers have fallen though at different levels and during different points of time. The major changes for both male and female casual workers occurred during 1999-00 and 2011-12: a two percentage point fall for men, with women's share falling by as much as one-third from 21.4 percent to 14.3 percent. The share of men has been almost the same since then, that of women falling further to stand at below 9 percent today. Similarly, the share of urban self-employed workers declined although the point of time of change was between 2011-12 and 2018-19: males by 3 percentage points, women by as much as 8 percentage points, neither having recovered significantly since then, men at about 39 percent, women a little higher at 40 percent today.

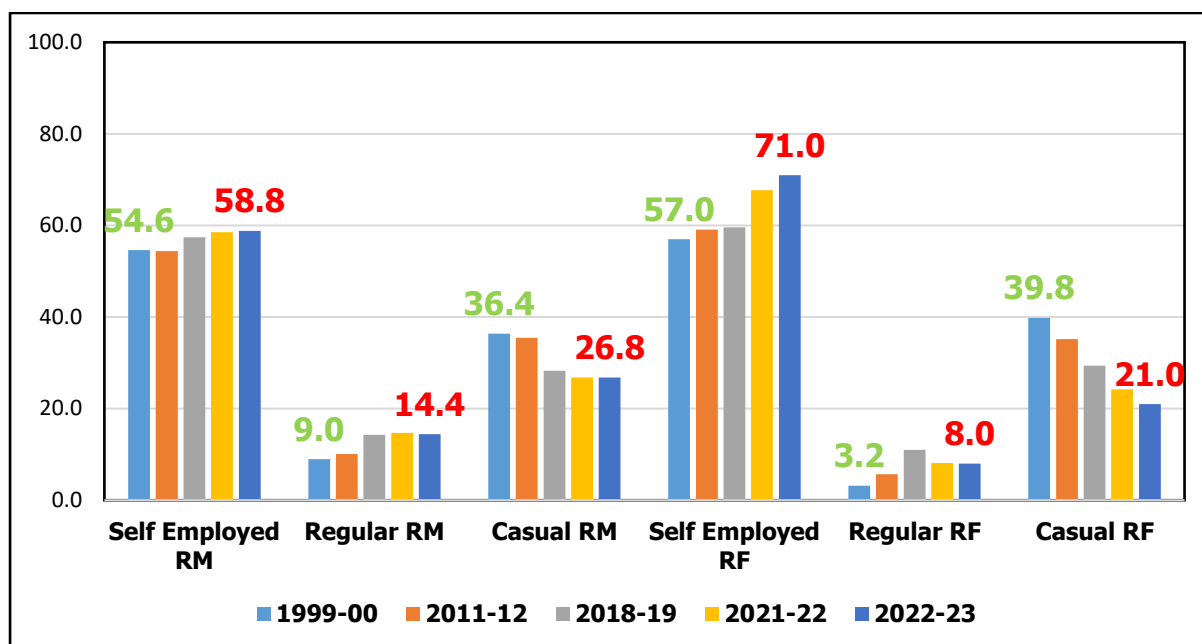
Graph 2: 15+ Gendered Urban Employment Shares (1999-00 to 2022-23)



Source: Computed from EUS and PLFS, NSSO

The pattern of change for rural workers is quite different from the urban: shares of regular and also self-employed workers both male and female rising, casual workers falling. The extent and time of change however differ across categories and gender. The major period of change was between 2011-12 and 2018-19 for all male workers and female regular and casual workers, that of self-employed rural women during the following time period of 2018-19 and 2021-22 onwards. The share of regular rural males and females rose by about 4 percentage points each, that of casual workers falling by 6 each. The category of self-employment however shows rather different trends across time and gender. While both report an increase, that of men was 3 percentage points and women at half a percentage point between 2011-12 and 2018-19. The major change for women came in the following period: rise from 59.6 percent to 67.7 percent to over 71 percent today. It needs to be reemphasised here that the only time the share of women in self-employment exceeded 60 percent was in 2004 when there was widespread rural distress.

Graph 3: 15+ Gendered Rural Employment Shares (1999-00 to 2022-23)

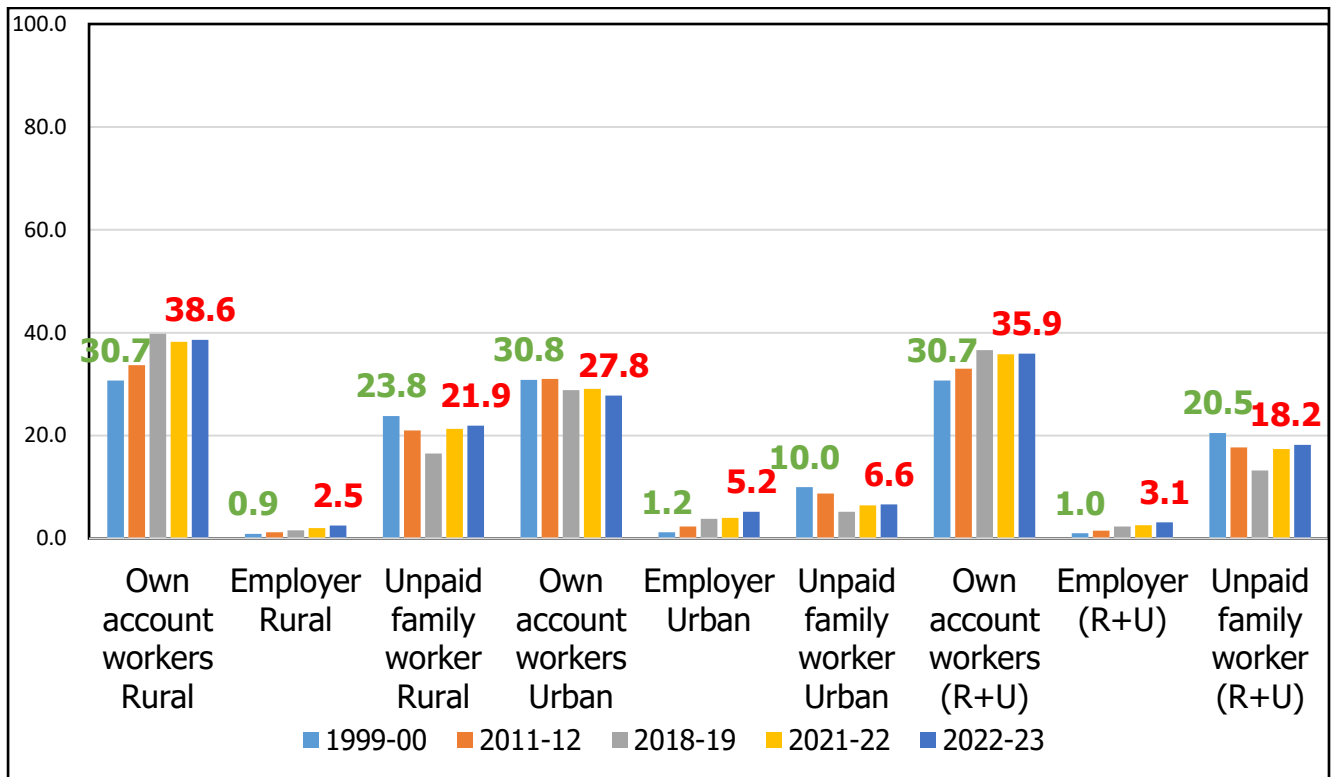


Source: Computed from EUS and PLFS, NSSO

II.4: Distribution of Self-employed Workers

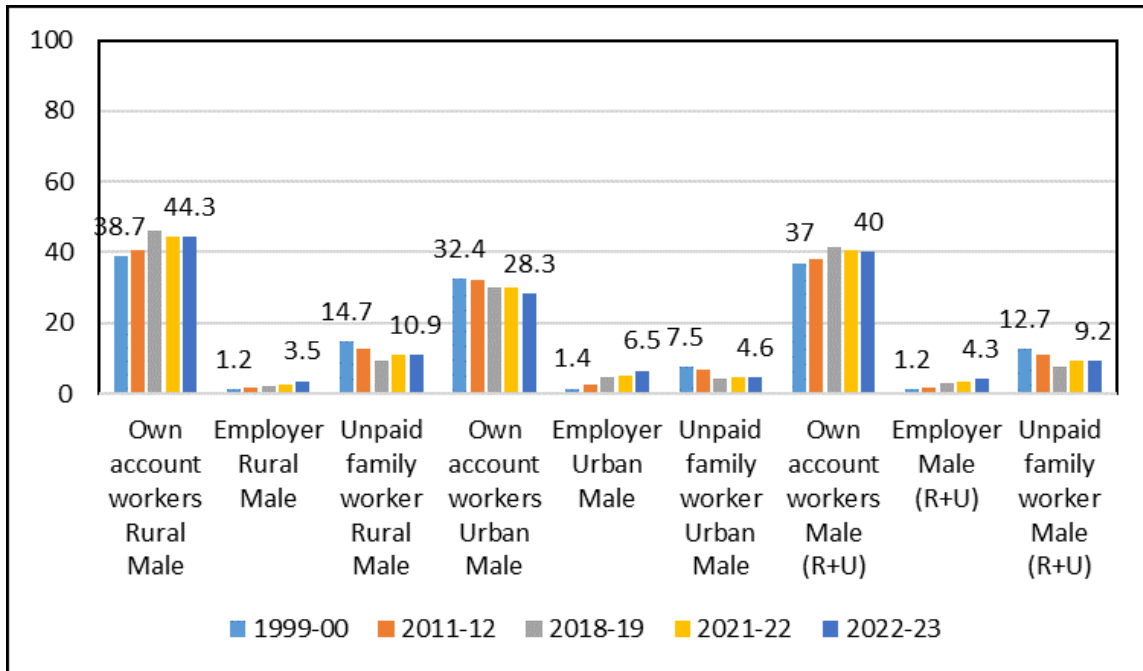
An essential component of the process of demystification of self-employment patterns comprises of examining regional and gendered variations among and between the three sub-categories. As can be seen in Graph 4, the smallest category is that of employers totaling merely 3.1 percent: though both have risen over the two decades, the urban rise is significantly higher. Rural own account workers (OAE) rose by almost 8 percentage points, urban OAE falling by 3 during the same time period between 2011-12 and 2018-19.

**Graph 4: 15+ Rural-Urban Distribution of Self-employed Workers
(1999-00 to 2022-23)**



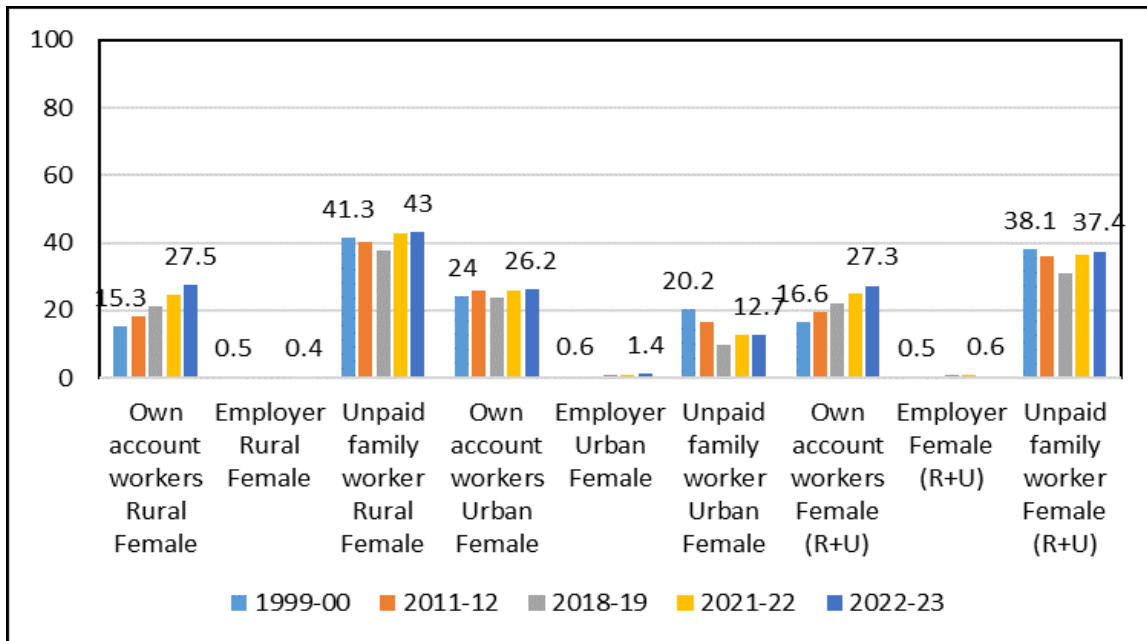
Source: Computed from EUS and PLFS, NSSO

**Graph 5: 15+ Rural-Urban Distribution of Self-employed Males
(1999-00 to 2022-23)**



Source: Computed from EUS and PLFS, NSSO

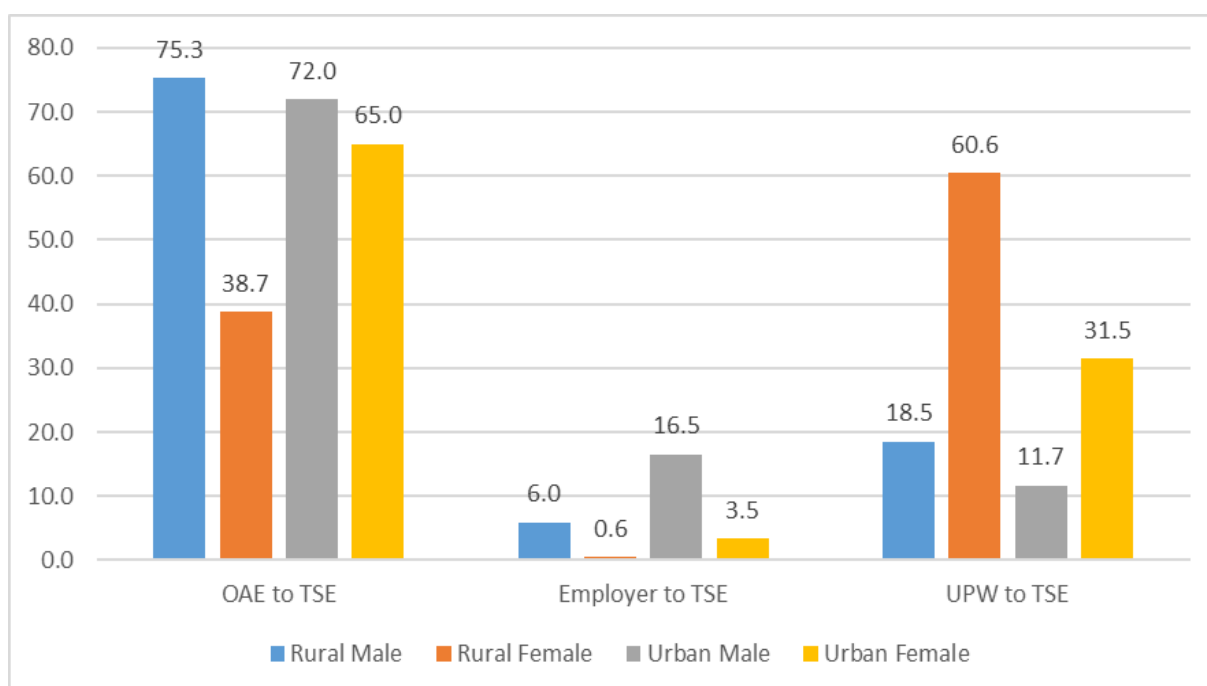
**Graph 6: 15+ Rural-Urban Distribution of Self-employed Females
(1999-00 to 2022-23)**



Source: Computed from EUS and PLFS, NSSO

As can be seen in Graphs 5 and 6, the gendered patterns provide some explanation of the seemingly contradictory changes. Amongst the employer category, both urban men and women report an increase: though men are today five times more than their female counterparts, their share is a low of merely 6 percent. Rural women employers have actually declined, to stand at merely 0.4 percent today. OAE urban male shares fell over time by about 4 percentage points, women recording a 2 percentage point rise. Rural OAE increased for both men and women, though the rate of increase for women was higher. The gender divide is quite steep: rural OAE men report 44.3 percent, women 27.5 percent. Regional gendered differentiations also hold for unpaid family workers (UFW). Both rural and urban males declined steadily: this was the case for women UFW too up to 2018-19 when their share started increasing. Four-fifths of the 85 million new jobs added between 2017-18 and 2021-22 are accounted for by self-employment of which almost half are of UNFW, and only 14 percent of regular workers (Aggarwal 2023).

Graph 7: 15+ Sub-categories of Total Self-employed: 2022-23 (%)



Source: Computed from EUS and PLFS, NSSO

(See Appendix I for shares and Appendix II for actuals)

As of today, 328 million persons are self-employed, 63.7 percent of them men. Within the sub-categories of self-employment three-fourth of rural males are OAE, about 3 percentage points higher than their urban counterparts. The figures for rural women are 39 percent and for urban women 65 percent. However, it must be pointed out here that less than one million urban women own OAEs. While women UFW account for more than 60 percent of rural and almost one-third of urban self-employed, the share of men is not insignificant: over 18 percent of rural and 12 percent of urban male self-employed are UFW.

III. RE-DEFINING SELF-EMPLOYMENT: CMIE

The concept of self-employment has been redefined by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) in keeping with the ILO-compliant definition that excludes unpaid family labour, which the NSSO does not. The results are indeed startling and need to be identified.

CMIE's Consumer Pyramids Household Survey (CPHS) captures self-employment in India's workforce among persons aged 15+ years under four occupations

- Qualified self-employed professionals whose occupation is determined by a formal educational degree, and who operate on their own premises.
- Self-employed entrepreneurs with some capital and skill including taxi drivers, self-run shops, platform app based workers etc.
- Home based workers with almost nil capital investment: bidi workers, data-entry, etc.
- Politician/Social Worker/Activists: fulltime paid or voluntary workers.

The period between 2016-17 and 2022-23 has witnessed a huge and steady rise in the share of self-employment: from 10.2 percent of the total workforce in 2016-17, to 15.7 in 2019-20, 16.6 in the pandemic year of 2020-21, and 17.4 percent in 2022-23. This increase by over 7 percentage points represents the addition of 28.6 million self-employed persons to the total workforce, their share in total employment doubling from 8.8 to 16.5 percent. The overwhelming majority at more than nine-tenths being

self-employed entrepreneurs. All other categories of self-employment declined over these years: the share of home based-workers who comprised a little over one percent of total employment in 2016-17 fell to 0.6 per cent in 2022-23, the other two staying below one percent over this period.

Table 2: CMIE Self-employment: 2016-17 to 2022-23 (shares)

| Share in Total Employment (%) | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Year | Total Employment | Self-Employment | | | | |
| | | Total | Qualified Self Employed Professionals | Self-Employed Entrepreneur | Home-based Worker | Politician/Social Worker/Activist |
| 2016-17 | 100.00 | 10.21 | 0.33 | 8.75 | 1.05 | 0.09 |
| 2017-18 | 100.00 | 12.64 | 0.22 | 11.28 | 1.08 | 0.06 |
| 2018-19 | 100.00 | 13.79 | 0.27 | 12.30 | 1.14 | 0.08 |
| 2019-20 | 100.00 | 15.68 | 0.31 | 14.11 | 1.17 | 0.08 |
| 2020-21 | 100.00 | 16.63 | 0.30 | 15.33 | 0.90 | 0.10 |
| 2021-22 | 100.00 | 15.97 | 0.26 | 15.00 | 0.64 | 0.07 |
| 2022-23 | 100.00 | 17.43 | 0.27 | 16.48 | 0.62 | 0.06 |

| Share in Self-employment (%) | | | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Year | Self-Employment | | | | |
| | Total | Qualified Self Employed Professionals | Self-Employed Entrepreneur | Home-based Worker | Politician/Social Worker/Activist |
| 2016-17 | 100.00 | 3.21 | 85.64 | 10.28 | 0.87 |
| 2017-18 | 100.00 | 1.74 | 89.22 | 8.54 | 0.50 |
| 2018-19 | 100.00 | 1.94 | 89.24 | 8.24 | 0.59 |
| 2019-20 | 100.00 | 2.00 | 89.98 | 7.48 | 0.54 |
| 2020-21 | 100.00 | 1.79 | 92.15 | 5.44 | 0.62 |
| 2021-22 | 100.00 | 1.65 | 93.90 | 4.02 | 0.43 |
| 2022-23 | 100.00 | 1.55 | 94.55 | 3.57 | 0.32 |

(Source: Computed by CMIE, February 2024. See Appendix III for actuals).

IV. PETTY PRODUCTION: ENTREPRENEURS AND ENTERPRISES

The definitions used for MSMEs as per the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Act, 2006, were amended in July 2020, and the following major changes were brought in:

- Removal of difference between manufacturing and service sectors
- Micro enterprise, where the investment in Plant and Machinery or Equipment does not exceed Rs. 1 crore and turnover not more than Rs. 5 crores
- Small enterprise, where the investment in Plant and Machinery or Equipment does not exceed Rs. 10 crore and turnover does not exceed Rs. 50 crores
- Medium enterprise, where the investment in Plant and Machinery or Equipment does not exceed Rs. 50 crores and turnover is less than Rs. 250 crores.

Further amendments introduced as of 28.03.2022 included Agricultural, SHGs & Start-ups in category of MSMEs (MSME 2022).

It should be noted at the outset that the 'latest' official data on MSMEs (MSME 2022-23) relate to the 73rd NSS Round (2015-16), and that the figures are based on an annual growth rate of 4.5 percent: no explanation or justification has been provided for continuing to use this growth rate especially in the context of the disruptions that have taken place due to demonetisation, the somewhat haphazard nature of implementation of GST and of course the impact of the pandemic and the less-than adequate policy response.

Of the 633.88 lakh unincorporated MSMEs, 31 percent were in manufacturing, 36 percent in trade and 33 percent in the ubiquitous 'others' category. Predictably, 99.5 percent were micro enterprises, distributed almost equally between urban and rural areas. About 96 percent were proprietary concerns, 79.6 percent owned by males, the rural-urban difference being just about one percentage, and female ownership declining as enterprise size increased. Proprietary OAEs and establishments owned by transgenders are a miniscule 0.01 percent. Udyam Registration as on 31 December 2022 in fact reveals an increasing gender divide at 81:19. (ibid p. 44). It needs to be noted that these 633.88 lakh enterprises include Self Help Groups (SHGs) which constitute about 1.82 percent of the total and 2.15 percent of OAEs.

While it is estimated that more than two-thirds of the total were owned by all Socially Backward Groups, Other backward Castes (OBCs) constituted the bulk at almost half, with Scheduled Castes (SC) and Schedule Tribes (ST) accounting for merely 12.45 percent and 4.10 percent respectively. Again predictably, SC and ST ownership declines sharply as enterprise-size increases (MSME 2022-23).

The Report also states that MSME sectors have “been creating 11.10 crore jobs” (ibid p. 35), 35 percent in trade, 33 percent in services and the least at 32 percent in manufacturing: the gender ratio is 76:24, the rural urban being 45:55. The micro sector accounted for an overwhelming 97 percent of total employment provided to 1076.19 lakh persons, small and medium merely 2.88 percent and 0.16 percent respectively. Micro single worker firms and firms with up to three total workers had accounted for 93 percent of all microenterprises in 2010, increasing to 94 percent in 2015. During these five years, their share of total employment went up from 74.6 percent of all workers to 78 percent and 68.6 percent respectively. On the other hand, micro firms with 10-19 workers reported an annual decline of 5 percent (Basole and Chandy 2019).

As of today, the share of own-account-enterprises not hiring even one worker is 84.2 percent of all MSMEs, implying that all are 'self-employed'. However, the number of workers per OAE is 1.28: this anomaly can be probably explained by the fact that several other categories of workers are added to 'working owners', that is, "working owners, persons who are in the payroll of the enterprise, unpaid family members who help in the entrepreneurial activities and other helpers and apprentices”.

Data relating to women-owned MSMEs are neither clear nor consistent: the MSME records it as 20.4 percent of 63 million, whereas the IFC 2022 records the number as 15 million which is 23.8 percent, 2.7 million of them being women-owned very small enterprises (WVSEs), defined as enterprises run by women which have less than 20 employees and turnover between INR 1 to 5 million. Women-owned enterprises are

being increasingly informalised, the proportion of them without hired workers rising over time: also, almost fourth-fifth are self-financed. Additionally, loans from SHGs finance merely just about one percent of women-led enterprises. It is hence obvious that the scale of operation tends to be smaller for women than for men (Basole and Chandy 2019), and that entrepreneurship for women remains mostly a necessity-driven activity with limited scope for innovation (Samantroy and Tomar 2018). Further, the net income gap between SC and ST businesses is high at 55 percent due to discrimination. They are smaller in scale, generally unregistered, and dependent mainly on family workers (Deshpande and Sharma 2015).

In this context it needs to be noted that in India gender-based share of necessity-driven entrepreneurship reports a rather significant change within just a year. While that for men fell by 4 percentage points between 2020 and 2021, that of women rose sharply by almost 8 percentage points from 84.1 to 92 percent during the same period (MIWE 2022).

As is widely known, the entrepreneur as an agent of innovation and restructuring in the economy was first spoken about by Knight and then of course Schumpeter who dealt with the transformative role by entrepreneurs via increasing competition and shaping markets. However, as all entrepreneurs are not a homogenous category and cannot obviously be lumped either together or combined with self-employment, there is urgent need to not only differentiate but also to demystify inter- and intra-heterogeneity so as to make policies more relevant and more focused primarily on where they should be in terms of equality and equity.

Much of standard mainstream literature lists the differences between a self-employed person and an entrepreneur in predictable terms: the latter has a vision; can take and also control risk; focuses on a wider spectrum of products and services often beyond market interest; can strategise in the long-term; receives profits; owns assets; is motivated, creative, courageous, flexible, resilient; etc.

Somewhat recent literature has attempted to demarcate two essential types of entrepreneurship. Schoar (2010) terms them as 'subsistence' and 'transformational'; Warnecke (2013) defining them as 'necessity' and 'opportunity' entrepreneurs. Going a step further (Vossenbergh 2013) incorporates into entrepreneurship analysis existing gender-based social norms, and asserts that women in developing countries are primarily 'necessity' entrepreneurs located in the informal economy.

V. QUALITY OF EMPLOYMENT

V.1: Regular Work as 'Best' Work

PLFS 2023-24 reports that the best quality regular wage/salaried jobs have fallen from 22.8 in 2017-18 to 20.9 percent in 2022-23. The quality of employment is generally based on three components: wages, written job contracts, and availability of social security benefits (Nayyar 2012): to this we add the hours of work. Before examining trends in wages and earnings for self-employed, we give a snapshot of the situation concerning particularly regular workers: the 'best quality' employment perceived to be a high share of regular salaried workers with social security and a written job contract.

The situation of the regular wage/salaried worker – the only category for whom 'quality of jobs' data is collected – has declined in the last five years when seen in terms of provident fund/pension, gratuity, healthcare/maternity benefits etc, the 'no social security' proportion rising from 49.6 to 53.9 percent, representing a one percentage point increase every year. The sharpest deterioration in 'quality' is among male rural regular workers whose lack of access to social security benefits rose from an already high 51.6 percent in 2017-18 to almost 60 percent in 2022-23, that of their female counterparts increasing from 54.9 to 58 percent. The extent of reduced access to social security benefits is somewhat less worse in urban areas: 46.5 to 47 percent for males and 49.8 to 51.1 percent for women. On the other hand, women workers with no job contracts fell from 57.8 to 50.2 percent in rural areas and from 71.72 to 55.61 percent in urban areas (Deshpande 2023). As of today, 59.6 percent

of all male regular workers in India do not have a written job contract, women at 55.8 percent; 47.8 percent of men and 43.5 percent of women do not have access to paid leave; 53.1 percent of men and 56.5 percent of women have no access to any social security benefit whatsoever. In total, two-fifth of all regular male workers and one-third of all women regular workers are denied any of the above (PLFS 2022-23).

V.2: Wages and Earnings

The RBI's Financial Stability Report of 2023, based on CMIE calculations, reports that both rural and urban wages not only in real terms but also nominal for all categories of workers are not merely stagnant but have been declining since 2018, the levels today at 2012 prices being much less than five years ago: the sharpest decline has been since Q3 2022 (RUPE 2023).

Between 2017-18 and 2021-22, real wages of regular workers fell by around 5 percent, their average wage now negative at – 2.9 percent. Real monthly earnings for men fell by Rs 231 from Rs. 21,138 to Rs. 20,907 in 2022-23, and for women from Rs. 16,084 in 2017-18 to Rs. 15,997 in 2022-23 (PLFS 2023-24).

Casual workers are the only category that has witnessed an increase, though at a marginal level of +0.6 percent between 2017-18 and 2022-23 (PLFS 2022-23). Monthly average wages for men rose by Rs 1216 from Rs. 7,906 to Rs. 9,122, that for women less than half of men by Rs 572 from Rs. 4,724 to Rs. 5,296. A related issue is how many days and what kind of work especially women are able to access.

Earnings of the self-employed have declined by 1.8 percent over the last six years. In 2018-19 those self-employed earned more than two-thirds of regular workers: this fell to below 63 percent in 2021-22. A male own-account worker got half and women one-

third of regular wage. Helpers predictably received the lowest: men about 42 percent and women less than 30 percent of regular workers (Aggarwal 2023).

Even today self-employment earnings are only 85 percent of what they were in the April-June 2019 quarter (SWI 2023). This is so especially for women whose real earnings fell by Rs 618 from Rs 5955 to Rs 5337, thereby increasing the gender gap even further (PLFS 2022-23). The sharpest decline over 2017-18 and 2021-22 for all those self-employed was for the poorest 20 percent of own-account workers (Ghatak 2024). The ratio of rural self-employed women's earnings to their male counterparts fell from 45 percent in July-Sept 2018 is as low as 39 per cent in April-June 2022. The situation in urban areas is even worse, the ratio falling from 47 to below 40 percent (Chandrasekhar and Ghosh 2024).

The issue of wages and earnings needs to be additionally viewed in the context of the recently released fact sheet on MPCE (MPCE February 2024) which presents data in nominal terms. Adjusting for 2011-12 prices using CPI rural and urban for 2022-23 and CPI AL and IW before 2011-12, the CAGR of MPCE shows a steep decline: 7.48 for rural and 5.59 for urban between 2009-10 and 2011-12, to 3.13 and 2.66 respectively for the period 2011-12 to 2022-23.

V.3: Hours of Work

Occupational and location differentiations for men appear quite strongly in relation to the average number of hours actually worked in a week. Male casual and salaried workers both rural and urban worked for similar hours: a little above 41 hours for casual, a much higher 51 hours for those salaried. The issue here therefore is whether the 'quality' of regular employment is in reality good as the workhours extend beyond those legally mandated. The pattern of hours worked in both these categories where women are concerned is similar but at significantly lower levels: 42 and 43 hours in

regular rural and urban jobs respectively; a little above 34 hours as casual workers both rural and urban (PLFS 2022-23).

Most startling are the hours that those who are self-employed work: the highest at more than 52 hours for urban men, and 44 hours for rural: for women the corresponding figures are 35 and 30 hours per week. Correlating hours of work with earnings reveals the meagre returns to labour for especially those who are self-employed in urban areas. Simultaneously, between 2018-19 and 2021-22, the total number of hours worked per day fell by 8 percent for all male workers, and by an almost double 16 percent for women. For different categories of workers the decline from 2017-18 to 2021-22 was 8.5 to 7.5 hours for regular workers, 6.3 to 5.7 for casual, and 7 to 6.1 hours per day for those self-employed (Goldar and Aggarwal 2023).

VI. COMMUNITY-BASED LABOUR MARKET DISCRIMINATION

That extra-economic discrimination and inequalities are integral to the nature of labour market structures is a given, and have been dealt with at least partially in earlier analysis. Here is identified a form of discrimination that is being reinforced and strengthened at increasing levels on which little research has yet been conducted: that on the basis of religion.

The Labour Force Participation Rate by usual status (ps+ss) for all ages for Muslims has changed significantly over the last 3 PLFS, declining from 35.5 in 2020-21 to 35.1 percent in 2021-22, the sharpest fall being over the last year to 32.5 percent. While urban Muslim men report a rise of about 6 percentage point to stand at 55.8 percent today, that of rural Muslim male workers fell by a huge 9 percentage points, from 54 to merely 45 percent in 2022-23 (PLFS 2022-23).

Discrimination against urban Muslims which was already at a high of 59 percent of the total employment gap in 2004-05 rose sharply to almost 69 percent in 2019-20. In 2019-20, 15.6 percent of the urban Muslim population aged 15 and above had regular salaried employment, compared to 23.3 percent of non-Muslims. Additionally, regular-salaried non-Muslims in urban areas earned an average of Rs. 20,346 per month, almost double of salaried Muslims who received Rs. 13,672. And despite their overrepresentation in urban self-employment, Muslims earned Rs. 11,421, significantly less than the Rs. 15,878 earned by their non-Muslim counterparts. During the first quarter of the COVID-19 pandemic, unemployment among rural Muslims rose by 17 percent more than for non-Muslims, bringing the rural Muslim unemployment rate to a high of 31.4 percent (Oxfam 2022). The LedBy Hiring Bias Report of 2022 reports the net discrimination rate for Muslim women workers at being more than 47 percent.

The State of Working India 2023 Report has done some innovative research on the emerging discrimination against Muslims: The main results are summarised below:

- Persistent under-representation in regular wage work
- A statistically significant earnings penalty for Muslim salaried workers since 2017
- Increased discrimination against Muslims in modern services
- Urban Muslim women are much less likely to be employed than Hindu women
- At the top decile Muslim workers earn 75 percent of what Hindu workers earn
- Caste differences within Muslim or Hindu women matter much less in regular work than the difference between Hindu and Muslim women as a whole.

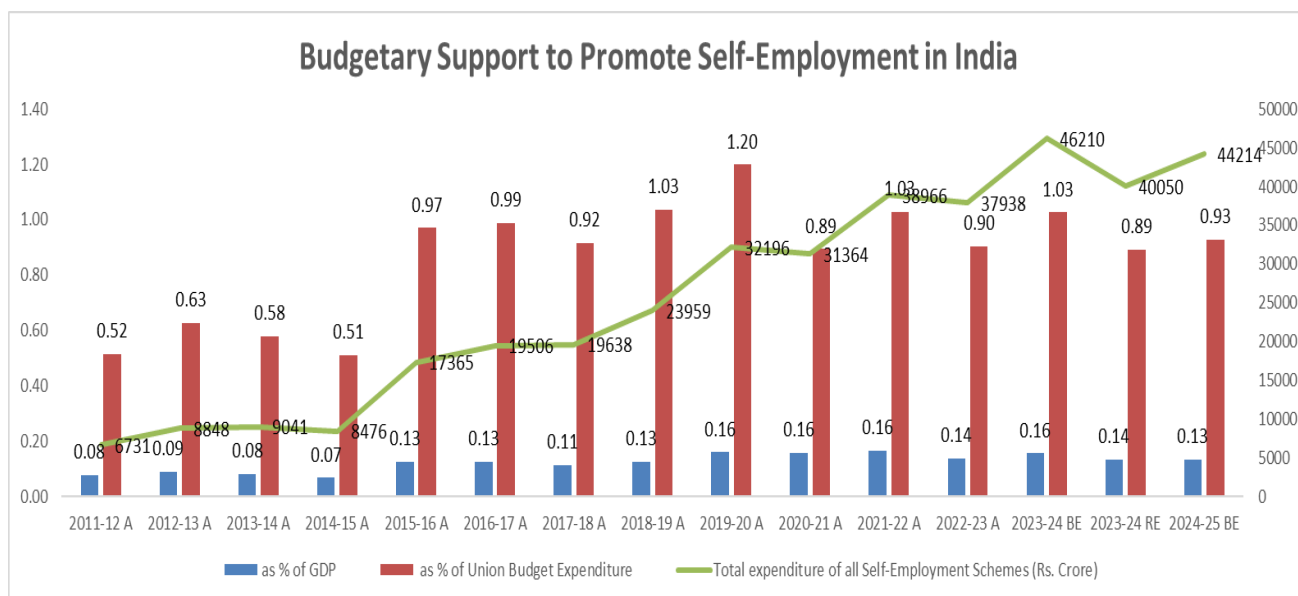
VII. PARTISAN GOVERNMENTALITY: BUDGETARY SUPPORT TO SELF-EMPLOYMENT

An essential element of the process of demystification of self-employment is to what extent and in which manner State support has manifested itself in financial articulation. As a detailed analysis of each and every scheme is not possible in this paper, we begin by examining 18 key schemes targeting self-employment in

India over the period 2011-12 to 2024-25 along with GDP and Union Government expenditure data. This is followed by prioritising the four major schemes which account for nine-tenths of total budgetary allocations. It needs to be pointed out here that the schemes come under ten different ministries.

As can be seen from Graph 8, there are significant though somewhat erratic changes in 2015-16 in all parameters whether in terms of share of total Budget, share of GDP, Actual Expenditure (AE), Budget Estimates (BE), and Revised Estimates (RE). The dips in AE came in the post-demonetisation year of 2017-18 and again in the COVID year of 2020-21. The share of all 18 self-employment schemes to Union Budget Expenditure was the highest ever at 1.20 percent in 2019-20, falling thereafter to 0.93 in BE of 2024-25, lower than the 0.97 percent of 2015-16 when the 'significant' change had begun. Simultaneously, the share of budgetary support to self-employment as percentage of GDP has come back to the 0.13 percent that had existed in 2015-16. It is interesting if not intriguing that the RE of 2023-24 is 4 percent lower than the BE of 2023-24, representing a decline in allocations by a not insignificant Rs. 6000 crores. The most intriguing is the scheme Startup India which recorded an AE of Rs 10 crores in 2017-18, peaking to an AE of Rs 44.21 crores in 2022-23, and though it shows an RE of Rs. 45.6 crores in 2023-24, has virtually disappeared in the 2024-25 Interim Budget with a BE of Rs. 0.01 crores.

Graph 8: Budgetary Support for all Self-employment Schemes: 2011-12 to 2024-25 (Rs crores and shares)

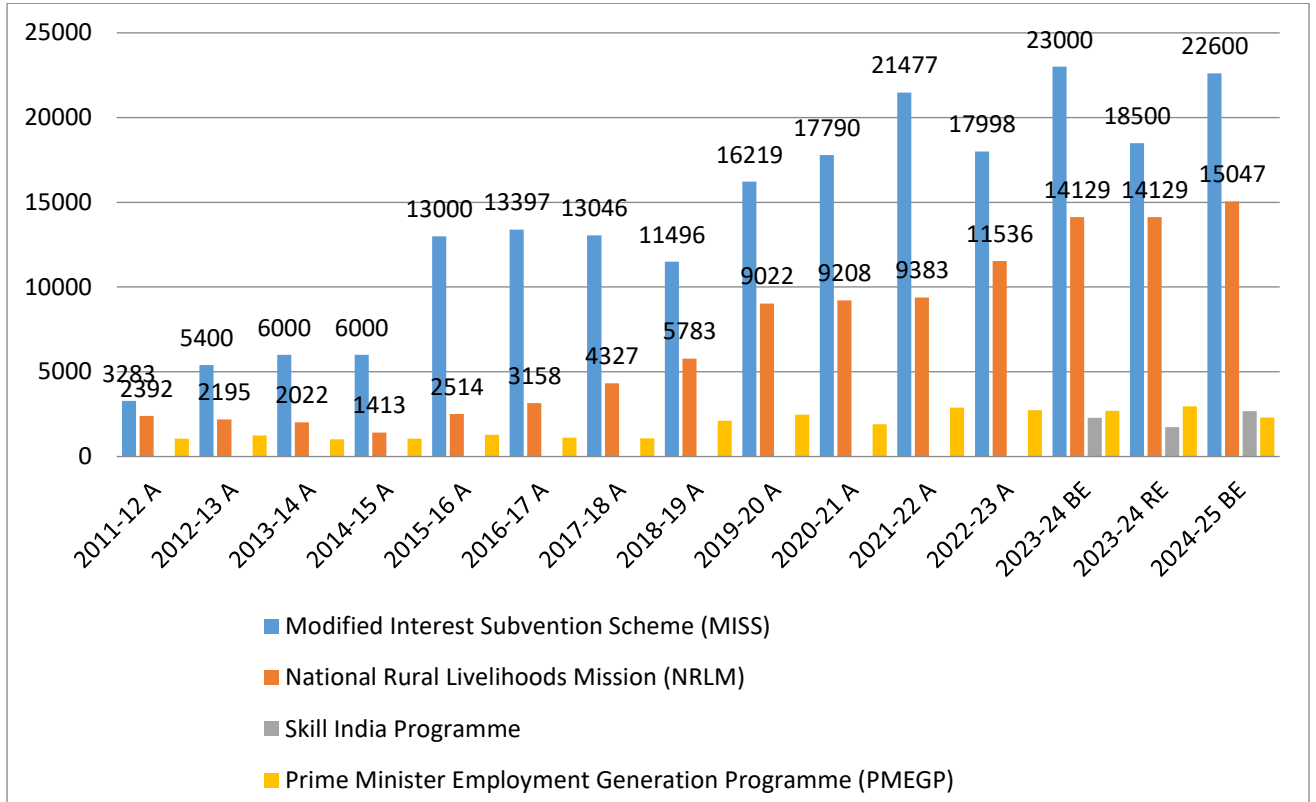


Source: Compiled by CBGA from Union Budget documents, various years.

Graph 9 presents expenditure data on the four major self-employment schemes that together account for an average of nine-tenth of the total allocations for self-employment over the entire period, accounting for 96.4 percent of the BE of the current budget. It needs to be noted here that none of the schemes are new, some having been re-named:

- Modified Interest Subvention Scheme (MISS: launched in 2006-7)
- National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM: launched in 2011)
- Skill India Programme (National Skill Development Program of 2010)
- Prime Minister Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP: launched in 2008).

Graph 9: Budgetary Allocations to Four Major Schemes of Self-employment: 2011-12 to 2024-25 (Rs crores and shares)



It needs to be stated at the outset that these schemes are primarily credit-linked, thereby intensifying the level of indebtedness of those who are already earning way below a living wage.

Since its launch in 2006-07, MISS has always received the highest proportion of budgetary distribution within self-employment schemes, followed by NRLM, also a credit-linked scheme, which was initiated in 2011. This trend has continued for both schemes till today, including the PMEGP which has consistently received the third largest allocations but at significantly lower levels. The RE of the Skill India Programme was reduced to Rs 1733 crores in 2023-24 even though it had a BE of Rs 2278 crores: the BE in the Interim Budget is Rs 2686.

MISS is listed as a self-employment scheme when it is in reality an interest subvention scheme for providing short term credit to farmers at subsidised interest rates. That it constitutes more than half of total self-employment budgetary support today in fact hugely reduces financial commitment to enhance self-employment even in quantitative terms.

Simultaneously, allocations for PMEGP, which is a credit linked subsidy programme for generating self-employment through establishment of micro-enterprises in the non-farm sector, have reduced steeply over time: from 15.7 percent of total self-employment AE in 2011-12, to 5.8 percent of BE in 2023-24, to a mere 5 percent in BE of the current budget: today the BE of 2024-25 on PMEGP is not even one-third of what the AE was more than a decade ago.

Simultaneously, the budget of the Ministry of Labour and Employment has fallen by half over the past 3 years in nominal terms; the reduction would of course be much more in real terms. In 2021-22 the AE was Rs 24,033 crore, falling to Rs 16,893 crore in BE 2022-23, and further to Rs 13,221 crore in the 2023-24 BE. Today the Interim Budget of 2024-25 has reduced the BE to Rs 12,531 crore, just about half of the AE of merely three years ago.

VIII. IN LIEU OF A CONCLUSION

The interconnectedness of a multiplicity of issues within the theme of self-employment needs to be perceived within the context of the process of primitive accumulation being undertaken by current paradigm of growth which is increasingly not only minimising but additionally forsaking the essence of development in the true concept of the term. Consequently, myriad aspects are so intrinsically interrelated and complex, the policy ramifications so fundamental that to construct a 'conclusion' would be too ambitious and also presumptuous. In lieu therefore are identified the results of

the process towards demystification initiated, going beyond of course more than a mere summary of results, and of necessity located within the on-going process of primitive accumulation.

- All data related to employment markets in the past few years epitomise the amalgamation and consolidation of several policies that have massively and hugely altered labour structures: economic slowdown; low value-added growth; centralisation of capital; focus on non-labour intensive sectors; the national lockdown; inadequately planned implementation of GST; demonetisation; a less than empathetic pandemic response policy.....the list is long.
- Given the prevailing pattern of growth and the reductionist articulation of inclusive development, there appears to be little hope for those seeking employment to access regular work which is considered to represent the best quality of employment. The components of 'good' quality are limited: there is a fall in real wages of regular workers; weekly hours of work are much higher than that mandated by law; 60 percent do not have written job contracts; almost half are considered ineligible for paid leave; 54 percent do not receive any form of the three basic social security benefits of provident fund/pension, gratuity, healthcare/maternity benefits etc.
- Casual work too is not an option, its proportion declining steeply especially after demonetisation. Though this is the only kind of employment that reports a wage rise, the extent of increase is just about half a percent. Simultaneously both days of work available and hours worked in a day have reduced. Demonetisation also resulted in a new phenomenon: half-day work at half-salary, the main impacted being migrants, female-headed households, Muslims and those not in their prime of youth (Dewan and Sehgal 2018).
- The sole and only recourse to earn a livelihood is consequently self-employment, perceived increasingly as *the* panacea: the last refuge for the deprived. Now often referred to by researchers as a form of disguised

unemployment, self un(employment), solo self-employment. The inclusion of gig and platform workers in the definition of self-employment denies them whatever few 'benefits' are available including regular work hours, social security, minimum wages etc. In this context, the predominance of self-employment and what I term as self-survival additionally shrinks the space for labour movements and organising (Dewan 2020; Mazumdar and Neetha 2020; Tripathi and Mishra 2021).

- Quantitative macro data on entrepreneurs and microenterprises is not only limited but also confused, with little clarity, additionally excluding the impacts of the various policies and economic events over the last eight years: this even though much independent research has been conducted on this issue not only in terms of quality but even quantity. During the pandemic, almost two-third of MSMEs especially those owned by women had faced severe cash crunch, one-fourth on the verge of closure (Dewan et al 2023; Dewan 2022). As of March 2022, not even 20 percent were able to avail credit, representing an 82 percent financial exclusion.
- The process towards demystification of the extent of intra-heterogeneity among enterprises and entrepreneurs necessitates focusing on policies that centre equality and equity: the overwhelming majority at nine-tenths of all microenterprises are necessity driven especially for women – with the numbers increasing by the day.
- Consequently, the debate on entrepreneurship needs to be extended into and within the historically contextual location of production, and where women are concerned, additionally and irrevocably, in the system of reproduction and also re-production as unfolding in the process of primitive accumulation. An important illustration is that of SHGs in several developing countries, and the ideology on which they are often based. While recognising its historical and pioneering role in generally economically empowering women, several aspects need to be noted: lending for self-employment is only one of several tools and

not the strategy to empower women; poorer households are poor not because their women are not working but because there are no sufficient and 'decent' earning opportunities available at 'fair' wages for any household member; perception of women as 'beneficiaries' instead of as active agents and participants of change; the State transferring its responsibility of providing jobs by insisting that citizens undertake their own economic empowerment through 'assisted' self-employment (Dewan 2011). Prentice (2017) extends this argument in her analysis of garment workers in Trinidad, asserting that microenterprise development is underpinned by an ideology that the solution to poverty is the integration of the poor into market relations, and that poverty is the systematic though unintentional exclusion of the poor from the capitalist economy.

- For the majority of those self-employed, the household functions as a site of production, of re-production of the means and tools of production, and where most of what is created is consumed by the household. And for women, irrevocably combined with reproduction of the labourforce.
- A major consequence of the dominance of self-survival in all its avatars whether as micro entrepreneurs or gig workers or unpaid family helpers is the rigidification of the societal gender-based division of labour. The prevalence of stereotypical gender roles and expectations from women regarding care and household responsibilities especially in developing countries (Rani and Gobel 2022) combined with severely inadequate State-support to reduce unpaid work of women and also increasingly single male migrants (Dewan 2017) reinforces not only patriarchal divides but also creates new segmentations and rigidities.
- Fiscal articulation by a partisan State via budgetary allocations to support the only sector where workers eke a livelihood even though often at levels of destitution is not only grossly inadequate but in reality subverts improvement in the quality of self-employment as well as the potential of micro-

entrepreneurs by excluding incentives required in reality: guaranteed prices and off-takes; work spaces; de-digitalisation etc etc. There are several illustrations of the lack of adequate allocations and also policy objectives that do not take into account the evidence-based requirements of the self-employed, the micro-entrepreneurs and microenterprises. The major policy initiatives are credit-based and production-linked incentives: an allocation of \$24 billion over five years when \$11.4 billion alone is needed just for the 27 lakh WVSEs who constitute about 4 percent of the 633.88 lakh MSMEs; introduction of yet another rather absurdly named scheme for creating '*lakhpati didis*'.

- The past several years have witnessed not only an alarming increase in economic inequalities but also extra-economic inequalities that are manifesting themselves through labour market 'discrimination'. The major manifestations are the deepening of gender and caste based differentiations, especially those between OBCs and SC/ST. Of major concern is the relatively newly emerging community based divides, Muslims reporting lower LFPR; reduced access to good quality jobs; significantly lower wages; higher unemployment levels.
- Self-employment increasingly implies not only poor quality of jobs and earning differentials, but also a level of existence that is purely survivalist. This is precisely where universalisation of basic income as well as social security policies enter the debate, perceiving them as societal rights and not as the reductionist, paternalistic and patriarchal concept of 'security'.
- The institutionalisation of the inequalities between capital and labour are legitimised and legalised via the four Labour Codes that "seek to improve the business environment in the country largely by reducing the labour compliance burden of industries". These Codes redefine work, worker and workplace; worsen the working conditions by increasing the work day beyond the ratified ILO Convention; introduce an unpaid day of rest; replace labour inspectors by web-based inspection schemes and self-certification of compliance by employers; reinforce and create gender stereotyping; exclude Transpersons;

do not mandate inclusion of women members; deny representation from workers' organisations; alter rules for formation of trade unions.

This attempt to demystify self-employment is fundamentally and essentially an attempt to demystify its location in the on-going process of primitive accumulation, the results reflecting the several ways in which this is manifesting itself: the dominance of self-employment and petty production especially in the context of centralisation of capital which is increasingly State-aided; 'degree of monopoly' which reduces the real income of the petty production sector and of even the already employed workers; the creation and maintenance of a 'subsistence' need economy as a 'private' space of production; fiscal policies such as demonetisation and uniformity in taxation that equate commodities of petty producers and corporations; partisan governmentality resulting in intensifying indebtedness of those already heavily indebted; surplus appropriation of labour in both absolute and relative terms masquerading as exclusion and marginalisation. The 'way forward' needs to be collectively deliberated, discussed and debated, incorporating the essentials elements of integrating academic research, advocacy, and action.

Appendix I:

Status of Employment (15+ years, UPSS): 1999-00 and 2022-23

| | Rural | | | Urban | | | All | | |
|-----------------------------|-------|--------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|--------|-------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| 1999-00 | | | | | | | | | |
| Self Employed | 54.6 | 57.0 | 55.5 | 41.3 | 44.8 | 42.0 | 51.0 | 55.2 | 52.3 |
| <i>Own account workers</i> | 38.7 | 15.3 | 30.7 | 32.4 | 24.0 | 30.8 | 37.0 | 16.6 | 30.7 |
| <i>Employer</i> | 1.2 | 0.5 | 0.9 | 1.4 | 0.6 | 1.2 | 1.2 | 0.5 | 1.0 |
| <i>Unpaid family worker</i> | 14.7 | 41.3 | 23.8 | 7.5 | 20.2 | 10.0 | 12.7 | 38.1 | 20.5 |
| Regular Employed | 9.0 | 3.2 | 7.0 | 41.7 | 33.8 | 40.2 | 18.0 | 7.8 | 14.9 |
| Casual Employed | 36.4 | 39.8 | 37.5 | 17.0 | 21.4 | 17.8 | 31.0 | 37.0 | 32.9 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| 2011-12 | | | | | | | | | |
| Self Employed | 54.4 | 59.1 | 55.8 | 41.8 | 42.7 | 42.0 | 50.7 | 56.0 | 52.2 |
| <i>Own account workers</i> | 40.4 | 18.3 | 33.7 | 32.3 | 25.8 | 31.0 | 38.0 | 19.7 | 33.0 |
| <i>Employer</i> | 1.5 | 0.4 | 1.2 | 2.7 | 0.5 | 2.3 | 1.8 | 0.4 | 1.5 |
| <i>Unpaid family worker</i> | 12.5 | 40.4 | 21.0 | 6.7 | 16.5 | 8.7 | 10.8 | 35.9 | 17.7 |
| Regular Employed | 10.1 | 5.7 | 8.7 | 43.5 | 43.0 | 43.4 | 19.9 | 12.8 | 17.9 |
| Casual Employed | 35.5 | 35.2 | 35.4 | 14.7 | 14.3 | 14.7 | 29.4 | 31.2 | 29.9 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| 2018-19 | | | | | | | | | |
| Self Employed | 57.4 | 59.6 | 58.0 | 38.7 | 34.5 | 37.8 | 51.6 | 53.3 | 52.0 |
| <i>Own account workers</i> | 46.3 | 21.3 | 39.8 | 30.1 | 23.7 | 28.8 | 41.3 | 21.9 | 36.6 |
| <i>Employer</i> | 2.0 | 0.5 | 1.6 | 4.5 | 1.1 | 3.8 | 2.8 | 0.7 | 2.3 |
| <i>Unpaid family worker</i> | 9.1 | 37.8 | 16.5 | 4.1 | 9.6 | 5.2 | 7.5 | 30.8 | 13.2 |
| Regular Employed | 14.3 | 11.0 | 13.4 | 47.2 | 54.7 | 48.7 | 24.4 | 21.9 | 23.8 |
| Casual Employed | 28.3 | 29.4 | 28.6 | 14.1 | 10.8 | 13.5 | 24.0 | 24.7 | 24.2 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| 2021-22 | | | | | | | | | |
| Self Employed | 58.5 | 67.7 | 61.5 | 39.5 | 39.3 | 39.5 | 53.1 | 62.0 | 55.8 |
| <i>Own account workers</i> | 44.6 | 24.5 | 38.2 | 30.0 | 25.9 | 29.1 | 40.5 | 24.8 | 35.8 |
| <i>Employer</i> | 2.7 | 0.6 | 2.0 | 5.0 | 0.8 | 4.0 | 3.4 | 0.7 | 2.6 |
| <i>Unpaid family worker</i> | 11.2 | 42.6 | 21.3 | 4.5 | 12.6 | 6.4 | 9.3 | 36.5 | 17.4 |
| Regular Employed | 14.7 | 8.1 | 12.6 | 46.2 | 50.3 | 47.1 | 23.6 | 16.6 | 21.5 |
| Casual Employed | 26.8 | 24.2 | 26.0 | 14.3 | 10.3 | 13.4 | 23.2 | 21.4 | 22.7 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| 2022-23 | | | | | | | | | |
| Self Employed | 58.8 | 71.0 | 63.0 | 39.3 | 40.3 | 39.6 | 53.5 | 65.3 | 57.3 |
| <i>Own account workers</i> | 44.3 | 27.5 | 38.6 | 28.3 | 26.2 | 27.8 | 40.0 | 27.3 | 35.9 |
| <i>Employer</i> | 3.5 | 0.4 | 2.5 | 6.5 | 1.4 | 5.2 | 4.3 | 0.6 | 3.1 |
| <i>Unpaid family worker</i> | 10.9 | 43.0 | 21.9 | 4.6 | 12.7 | 6.6 | 9.2 | 37.4 | 18.2 |
| Regular Employed | 14.4 | 8.0 | 12.2 | 47.1 | 50.8 | 48.0 | 23.2 | 15.9 | 20.9 |
| Casual Employed | 26.8 | 21.0 | 24.9 | 13.6 | 8.9 | 12.4 | 23.3 | 18.8 | 21.8 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: Computed from EUS and PLFS, NSSO

Appendix II:

15+ Sub-categories of Self-employed to Total Self-employed: 2022-23

(in millions & shares)

| | Rural | | | Urban | | | All | | |
|-----------------------------|--------|--------|--------|-------|--------|-------|--------|--------|--------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| <i>Own account workers</i> | 124.0M | 41.1M | 165.7M | 31.7M | 9.0M | 40.7M | 156.7M | 50.2M | 206.6M |
| <i>Employer</i> | 9.8M | 0.6M | 10.7M | 7.3M | 0.5M | 7.6M | 16.9M | 1.1M | 17.8M |
| <i>Unpaid family worker</i> | 30.5M | 64.3M | 94.0M | 5.2M | 4.4M | 9.7M | 36.1M | 68.7M | 104.8M |
| Self Employed | 164.6M | 106.1M | 270.5M | 44.0M | 13.8M | 57.9M | 209.7M | 120.0M | 329.8M |

| | Rural | | | Urban | | | All | | |
|-----------------------------|-------|--------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|--------|-------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| <i>Own account workers</i> | 75.3 | 38.7 | 61.3 | 72.0 | 65.0 | 70.2 | 74.8 | 41.8 | 62.7 |
| <i>Employer</i> | 6.0 | 0.6 | 4.0 | 16.5 | 3.5 | 13.1 | 8.0 | 0.9 | 5.4 |
| <i>Unpaid family worker</i> | 18.5 | 60.6 | 34.8 | 11.7 | 31.5 | 16.7 | 17.2 | 57.3 | 31.8 |
| Self Employed | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: Computed from EUS and PLFS, NSSO

Appendix III:

CMIE Self-employment 2016-17 to 2022-23 (actuals)

| Persons in Self-employment (actuals) | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Year | Total Employment | Self-Employment | | | | |
| | | Total | Qualified Self Employed Professionals | Self-Employed Entrepreneur | Home-based Worker | Politician/Social Worker/Activist |
| 2016-17 | 412,719,415 | 42,157,323 | 1,351,345 | 36,102,678 | 4,335,115 | 368,185 |
| 2017-18 | 411,398,738 | 52,018,865 | 904,389 | 46,409,769 | 4,442,889 | 261,818 |
| 2018-19 | 406,106,308 | 55,986,876 | 1,086,059 | 49,960,545 | 4,611,884 | 328,388 |
| 2019-20 | 408,893,383 | 64,111,534 | 1,279,432 | 57,688,283 | 4,796,886 | 346,933 |
| 2020-21 | 387,214,188 | 64,400,622 | 1,155,608 | 59,342,897 | 3,503,852 | 398,265 |
| 2021-22 | 401,857,446 | 64,185,834 | 1,057,854 | 60,272,824 | 2,581,289 | 273,867 |
| 2022-23 | 405,686,931 | 70,718,305 | 1,098,421 | 66,864,031 | 2,526,826 | 229,027 |

Computed by CMIE: February 2024

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