



A waste picker in Delhi.
Photo by Rashmi Choudhary



Informal Workers in India: A Statistical Profile

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Employment in India is overwhelmingly informal: 90 per cent of all workers are employed under informal arrangements nationally; in urban areas and in Delhi, the proportion is 80 per cent.

India's employment in 2017-2018 is estimated to be 461.52 million (**table 1**).¹ Just over 67 per cent of the nation's employed live in rural areas – a decrease from 71 per cent in 2011-12. In India, agriculture has always been a major component of the economy, although the share of agricultural workers in total employment decreased from 48 per cent in 2011-12 to 42 per cent in 2017-18. Consistent with this change is an increase in the share of non-agricultural workers in total employment – from 52 to 58 per cent. At both dates, a slightly higher share

of the non-agricultural workers were in urban rather than in rural areas: in 2011-12, 27 per cent were in urban areas compared to 25 per cent in rural areas; by 2017-18, the shares were 31 per cent and 27 per cent, respectively.

In 2017-18, women represented only 23 per cent of total employment – a decrease from 27 per cent in 2011-12. During this period, the share of non-agricultural employment in total employment increased for men from 42 to 48 per cent, but it remained very low, at 10 per

cent, for women. Women working in agriculture dropped from 17 to 13 per cent, while for men, the share dropped only from 31 to 30 per cent.

Table 1 reports the composition of employment by sex and by agriculture and non-agriculture. Table 2 reports the percentage of the population that is employed and the percentage of those employed who are informally employed. The employment rate of women is exceptionally low in India: 23 per cent nationally, 20 per cent in urban India and only 15 per cent in Delhi. By

¹ The data presented are from the 2017-18 Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) and the 2011-12 Employment and Unemployment Survey both collected by the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) of India. The data for both surveys were weighted by population adjusted multipliers. All tables other than table 1 include Delhi. Delhi is comprised of the New Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC), Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) and Delhi Cantonment.

Table 1: Employment in India, total, agricultural and non-agricultural by urban-rural and sex, 2011-12 and 2017-18: Millions and per cent of total employment in parentheses

Area	All workers			Agricultural workers			Non-agricultural workers		
	Total	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men
2011-12									
All India	467.72 (100.0)	126.77 (27.1)	340.95 (72.9)	223.41 (47.8)	78.55 (16.8)	144.86 (31.0)	244.31 (52.2)	48.22 (10.3)	196.09 (41.9)
Urban	135.39 (28.9)	27.02 (5.8)	108.37 (23.1)	9.10 (1.9)	2.93 (0.6)	6.17 (1.3)	126.29 (27.0)	24.09 (5.1)	102.20 (21.9)
Rural	332.33 (71.1)	99.75 (21.3)	232.58 (49.7)	214.31 (45.8)	75.62 (16.2)	138.69 (29.7)	118.02 (25.2)	24.13 (5.1)	93.89 (20.1)
2017-18									
All India	461.52 (100.0)	104.95 (22.7)	356.58 (77.3)	194.08 (42.1)	57.78 (12.5)	136.30 (29.5)	267.45 (57.9)	47.17 (10.2)	220.28 (47.7)
Urban	150.25 (32.6)	29.91 (6.5)	120.33 (26.1)	9.25 (2.0)	2.72 (0.6)	6.53 (1.4)	141.00 (30.6)	27.19 (5.9)	113.81 (24.7)
Rural	311.28 (67.4)	75.03 (16.3)	236.24 (51.1)	184.83 (40.0)	55.05 (11.9)	129.77 (28.1)	126.45 (27.4)	19.98 (4.3)	106.47 (23.1)

contrast, the employment of men is highest in Delhi at 85 per cent and decreases to 80 per cent in urban India and 77 per cent nationally.

Informal employment in India includes those working in the informal sector – that is, in all unincorporated private enterprises owned by individuals or households engaged in the sale and production of goods and services, operated on a proprietary or partnership basis and with less than 10 total workers, as well as domestic workers, contributing family workers, casual day labourers and workers in the formal sector

with no social security benefits provided by the employer.

Employment in India is overwhelmingly informal: 90 per cent of all workers are employed under informal arrangements (**table 2**). In urban areas and in Delhi, a smaller share is informally employed (around 80 per cent). Nationally, 92 per cent of women and 90 per cent of men are informally employed. However to some degree in urban areas and more so in Delhi, the ratio is reversed. In urban areas, the percentage of men's and women's

Table 2: Total employment and informal employment by sex in India, urban India and Delhi City, 2017-2018: Numbers in millions and per cent in parentheses

Area	Total employment			Informal employment as per cent of total employment		
	Total	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men
India	461.52 (100.0)	104.95 (22.7)	356.58 (77.3)	415.23 (90.0)	96.16 (91.6)	319.06 (89.5)
Urban India	150.25 (100.0)	29.91 (19.9)	120.33 (80.1)	119.00 (79.2)	23.45 (78.4)	95.55 (79.4)
Delhi	6.09 (100.0)	0.91 (14.9)	5.18 (85.1)	4.92 (80.7)	0.69 (76.4)	4.22 (81.5)

employment that is informal is roughly equal (79 and 78 per cent, respectively), while in Delhi a higher percentage of men workers than women workers are informally employed (82 per cent for men and 76 per cent for women).

Legislation in India relating to social security benefits for workers includes the Employee's State Insurance Act, 1948, which provides medical, sickness, maternity and disablement benefits, and the Employee's Provident Fund & Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952, which provides retirement benefits. However, these Acts apply only to industrial establishments employing more than 10 workers and therefore do not cover most establishments in the country. The national government is now in the process of enacting a uniform labour code to integrate and redefine existing laws and regulations.

This brief focuses on six groups of workers who generally have limited or no work security and no social protection: *home-based workers*, *domestic workers*, *street vendors/ market traders*, *waste pickers*, *informal construction workers* and *informal transport workers*. These often-overlooked groups of workers are essential to the functioning of cities.

As table 4 will show, these worker groups are predominately informal. However two of the groups, construction and transport, comprise a larger sector that includes persons who work



A street vendor in Ahmedabad.
Photo by Julian Luckham

under formal as well as informal arrangements. For example, the transport sector includes workers in water, land and air transport sub-sectors as well as transport-related storage and warehousing. For this reason, only the *informal workers in transport and construction* are included in table 3. Workers in *transport* who are included are mainly in land transport.



A waste picker in Pune. Photo by Julian Luckham

Together these groups comprise 29 per cent of total employment nationally: 27 per cent among women and 30 per cent among men (**table 3**). In the urban areas, the six groups comprised 35 per cent of total employment: 40 per cent for women and 34 per cent for men. In Delhi, they comprised 27 per cent – 24 per cent for women and 27 per cent for men.

Informal construction comprises the largest of the worker groups nationally at 11 per cent of total employment and is among the largest of the worker groups in urban India and in Delhi at 9 per cent and 7 per cent, respectively. It is the most important source of employment for men nationally (13 per cent) and in urban India (11 per cent) and Delhi (8 per cent).

Table 3: Groups of workers by sex in India, urban India and Delhi, 2017-18: Millions and per cent of total employment in parentheses

Worker Group	India						India Urban						Delhi					
	Total		Women		Men		Total		Women		Men		Total		Women		Men	
Home-based worker	41.855	(9.1)	17.195	(16.4)	24.660	(6.9)	16.998	(11.3)	6.776	(22.7)	10.222	(8.5)	0.411	(6.8)	0.063	(6.9)	0.349	(6.7)
Domestic worker	5.235	(1.1)	3.399	(3.2)	1.836	(0.5)	3.811	(2.5)	2.825	(9.4)	0.986	(0.8)	0.223	(3.7)	0.118	(13.0)	0.105	(2.0)
Street vendor/ market trader	11.887	(2.6)	1.201	(1.1)	10.685	(3.0)	6.288	(4.2)	0.687	(2.3)	5.601	(4.7)	0.167	(2.7)	0.012	(1.3)	0.155	(3.0)
Waste picker	2.197	(0.5)	0.721	(0.7)	1.475	(0.4)	1.516	(1.0)	0.527	(1.8)	0.989	(0.8)	0.040	(0.7)	0.006	(0.7)	0.033	(0.6)
Informal construction*	51.937	(11.2)	5.155	(4.9)	46.781	(13.1)	14.174	(9.4)	1.188	(4.0)	12.986	(10.8)	0.387	(6.4)	0.015	(1.7)	0.372	(7.2)
Informal transport*	20.164	(4.4)	0.097	(0.1)	20.067	(5.6)	9.543	(6.4)	0.062	(0.2)	9.482	(7.9)	0.402	(6.6)	0.000	(0.0)	0.402	(7.8)
All groups	133.275	(28.9)	27.770	(26.5)	105.505	(29.6)	52.330	(34.8)	12.064	(40.3)	40.266	(33.5)	1.630	(26.8)	0.214	(23.6)	1.415	(27.3)

* Includes all informal workers in the general industry category. All other groups potentially include both formal and informal workers.



A domestic worker in Delhi.
Photo by Avi Singh Majithia

Informal Employment

All domestic workers, home-based workers and street vendors in all of the geographic areas are informal. Among waste pickers, a substantial share of workers is employed under formal arrangements – but even so, three-quarters or more are informal.

With the exception of *waste pickers*, *construction* and *transport workers*, all workers in each of the other three groups are employed under informal arrangements (**table 4**). Among *waste pickers*, from 10 to around 25 per cent are employed by local bodies, railways or

other agencies for cleaning the streets, railway tracks or other public places and receive social security benefits and therefore are formally employed. However, even among *waste pickers*, more than three quarters of workers are informal and a higher percentage of women than men are informal. For example in Delhi, all women *waste pickers* and 88 per cent of men *waste pickers* are informally employed. Also in the *construction* sector, all workers except about 3 per cent are informal. In the *transport* sector, about 90 per cent of workers are informal, although among women only 40 per cent are informal as most of them are employed formally in support services.

Home-based work is the largest of the worker groups in urban India, where it comprises 11 per cent of total urban employment, compared to 9 per cent of employment nationally and 7 per cent in Delhi. *Home-based work* is the most important source of employment for women nationally (16 per cent) and in urban India (23 per cent). In Delhi, however, a higher percentage of women workers are engaged in domestic work (13 per cent) than in home-based work (7 per cent).

Table 4: Groups of workers by whether informally employed and by sex in India, Urban India and Delhi: per cent

Worker Group	India			India Urban			Delhi		
	Total	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men
Home-based worker	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Domestic worker	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Street vendor/market trader	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Waste picker	76.2	83.9	72.4	77.4	80.7	75.7	90.0	100.0	88.1
Informal construction*	96.7	98.7	96.4	92.8	95.2	92.6	89.1	100.0	88.8
Informal transport*	89.7	40.2	90.3	85.5	34.8	86.3	79.4	0.0	83.1
All groups	96.6	98.8	96.1	94.4	97.7	93.5	91.3	90.5	91.4

* The denominator for these two groups of workers reflects all workers in the respective industry category.

Status in Employment

Own account work is the predominant status among *home-based workers* and *street vendors/market traders* in all three geographic areas; employee is the predominant status among *domestic workers*, *waste pickers* and *informal construction workers*. Among *informal construction workers*, employees are mainly casual employees except among women in Delhi, who are mainly regular employees.

Self employment with no employees, referred to as own account work, is the predominant status for *home-based workers* and *street vendors/market traders* (**table 5**).² More than 70 per cent of workers in the two groups are own account workers with the percentages reaching 84 per cent among *home-based workers* and 79 per cent among *street vendors/market traders* in

Employment status	India			Urban India			Delhi		
	Total	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men
Home-Based Workers									
Own account worker	72.7	66.1	77.2	72.5	68.0	75.5	83.6	100.0	80.6
Employer	2.8	0.7	4.2	4.0	1.0	6.0	9.4	0.0	11.0
Contributing family worker	17.6	28.1	10.3	17.4	25.1	12.2	7.1	0.0	8.3
Regular employee*	2.1	0.8	3.1	2.8	1.7	3.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
Casual worker**	4.8	4.2	5.2	3.4	4.2	2.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
Domestic Workers									
Own account worker	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Employer	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Contributing family worker	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Regular employee*	85.7	90.1	77.5	91.6	91.9	90.6	100.0	100.0	100.0
Casual worker**	14.3	9.9	22.5	8.4	8.1	9.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Street Vendors and Market Traders									
Own account worker	75.3	58.7	77.2	73.1	60.7	74.6	79.2	100.0	77.6
Employer	1.2	1.3	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.8	0.0	1.9
Contributing family worker	8.2	30.0	5.8	8.5	28.2	6.0	1.1	0.0	1.2
Regular employee*	9.4	5.7	9.8	11.3	6.2	11.9	15.6	0.0	16.8
Casual worker**	5.8	4.4	6.0	6.0	3.7	6.2	2.3	0.0	2.4
Waste Pickers									
Own account worker	13.9	7.9	16.9	13.3	8.0	16.1	6.0	0.0	7.2
Employer	0.3	0.0	0.4	0.4	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
Contributing family worker	1.5	2.0	1.3	1.9	1.7	2.0	22.1	0.0	26.4
Regular employee*	72.6	78.7	69.7	73.3	81.3	69.1	65.4	100.0	58.6
Casual worker**	11.7	11.5	11.8	11.2	9.0	12.4	6.5	0.0	7.8

² Many home-based workers classified as own account workers are likely to be sub-contracted, dependent workers. Such workers have contractual arrangements of a commercial nature to provide goods or services for another economic unit, are not employees of that unit but are dependent on that unit for the organization and execution of the work or for access to the market. Such workers are included in a new category of the International Classification of Status in Employment-18. Questions to identify such workers in future labour force surveys will improve data on the employment arrangements of informal workers, especially home-based workers.

Table 5 (cont'd): Groups of workers by status in employment and sex in India, Urban India and Delhi, 2017-18: Per cent

Informal Construction Workers									
Own account worker	8.2	0.3	9.0	11.5	0.5	12.5	7.1	0.0	7.4
Employer	1.2	0.1	1.3	2.7	0.3	2.9	4.4	0.0	4.6
Contributing family worker	0.3	0.2	0.4	1.0	0.7	1.0	32.8	0.0	34.2
Regular employee*	4.3	1.6	4.7	9.0	3.9	9.5	3.9	100.0	0.0
Casual worker**	86.0	97.9	84.6	75.8	94.6	74.1	51.8	0.0	53.8
Informal Transport Workers									
Own account worker	48.0	7.9	48.2	50.7	6.4	50.9	72.6	0.0	72.6
Employer	1.5	1.0	1.5	2.2	1.6	2.2	3.2	0.0	3.2
Contributing family worker	1.1	2.8	1.1	1.4	4.4	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Regular employee*	35.8	85.0	35.6	33.6	82.4	33.3	24.2	0.0	24.2
Casual worker**	13.6	3.3	13.7	12.1	5.3	12.2	0.0	0.0	0.0

* Regular employees are those employed in the enterprises of others and receive salary or wages on a regular basis and not on the basis of daily or periodic renewal of contract.

**Casual workers are those employed in the enterprises of others and receiving wage on a daily or periodic work contract basis.

Delhi. While the majority of both women and men in both these groups are own account workers, there are some differences in the statuses in employment by sex. Among men *home-based workers* and *street vendors/market traders*, around 75 per cent in India nationally and in urban India but 81 per cent in Delhi are own account workers. Among women *home-based workers*, about two thirds in India nationally and in urban India but 100 per cent in Delhi, are own account workers. Among women *street vendors/market traders*, again the proportion in own account work is highest in Delhi at 70 per cent but around 60 per cent in the other two geographic areas.

Among *home-based workers* in India and urban India, more women than men are contributing family workers (25 and 28 per cent of women in comparison to 10 to 12 per cent of men, respectively). In Delhi, there are no contributing family workers among either women or men *home-based workers*. In Delhi, no women but a substantial share of men *home-based workers* are employers (11 per cent). In India and urban India, a lower percentage of men *home-based workers* are employers (4 and 6 per cent respectively), while just 1 per cent of women *home-based workers* are employers.

Among *street vendors/market traders*, there are also fewer contributing family workers (1 per

cent) in Delhi than in India and urban India (8 per cent for both). A substantial percentage of *street vendors/market traders* in Delhi are regular employees (17 per cent) and 2 per cent are casual workers. In contrast to Delhi, both nationally and in urban India, a lower percentage of *street vendors/market traders* are regular employees (9 per cent and 11 per cent respectively) while a higher percentage are casual workers (6 per cent in both geographic areas). Again in the composition of women and men *street vendors/market traders*, Delhi stands out. There are no contributing family workers among either women or men *street vendors/market traders* in Delhi; however, in India nationally and urban India, 30 and 28 per cent, respectively, of women *vendors/traders* are contributing family workers, compared to only 6 per cent of men in both geographic areas. In Delhi, no women *street vendors/market traders* and 2 per cent of men are employers. While in India national and urban India, 1 per cent of both men and women *street vendors/market traders* are employers.

All *domestic workers* are regular employees in Delhi compared to 91 per cent in urban India and 86 per cent nationally. There are only small differences between women and men *domestic workers* in Delhi and urban India. However, among domestic workers nationally, a higher percentage of men (23 per cent) than women (10 per cent) are casual workers; conversely, a higher percentage of women (90 per cent) than men (79 per cent) are regular employees.

Among *waste pickers*, employee is also the predominant status for both women and men. In India nationally, 79 per cent of women and 70 per cent of men are regular employees, 12 per cent of both women and men are casual workers, and 8 per cent of women and 17 per cent of men are own account workers. In urban India, 81 per cent of women and 69 per cent of men *waste pickers* are regular employees, 9 per cent of women and 12 per cent of men are casual workers, and 8 per cent of women and 16 per cent of men are own account workers. In Delhi, all women *waste pickers* are regular employees. By contrast, 59 per cent of men *waste pickers* are regular employees, 26 per cent are contributing family workers and 7 per cent are own account workers.

Informal construction workers are mainly casual workers in two of the geographic areas, accounting for 98 per cent of women and 85 per cent of men in India and 95 per cent of women and 74 per cent of men in urban India. However in Delhi, the relatively small number of women working in *informal construction* are all regular employees; but among men informal construction workers, 54 per cent are casual workers and 34 per cent are contributing family workers. In the other two geographic areas, 1 per cent or less of women and men are contributing family workers.



A construction worker in Ahmedabad.
Photo by Kendra Hughes

In India nationally and in urban India, 85 per cent of women but only one third of men in *informal transport* are regular employees. Around half of all men informal transport workers are own account workers: 48 per cent in India nationally and 51 per cent in urban India. Again, Delhi is different. There are no women in *informal transport* in Delhi. Among men informal transport workers, 73 per cent are own account workers and 24 per cent are regular employees.

Hours of work

Reflecting women's care and domestic responsibilities, the workweek in market-oriented work – in all geographic areas and in each of the worker groups – is shorter for women than for men except in *informal transport*.

The statistics in this section represent only one part of the workweek, the time workers in these groups spend on activities connected with market-oriented work. Especially for women, another important component of their workweek is their unpaid work caring for their households and families. Thus, with the exception of *informal transport* workers, the workweek – in all geographic areas and in each of the worker groups – is shorter for women than for men (**table 6**). However the long work week for both women and men is striking.

In India national and urban India, women *home-based workers* have the shortest average workweek of all worker groups: 53 per cent work 36 hours or less. In contrast, only a small percentage of men in this group work 36 hours or less: 10 per cent in India national, 8 percent in urban India and 6 per cent in Delhi. A high proportion of men *home-based workers* worked 53 hours or more: 67 per cent in India national, 73 per cent in urban India, and 87 per cent in Delhi had a workweek of 53 or more hours. Among women *home-based workers*, only 19 per cent in India, 27 per cent in urban India

Table 6: Groups of workers by hours of work per week and sex in India, Urban India and Delhi, 2017-18: Per cent

Hours	India			Urban India			Delhi		
	Total	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men
Home-Based Workers									
<=36 hrs	27.2	52.9	10.4	25.3	52.5	8.4	10.9	43.8	5.7
37-42 hrs	12.9	18.5	9.3	11.5	17.6	7.8	3.9	4.6	3.8
43-52 hrs	11.8	9.2	13.5	9.7	8.4	10.5	3.1	0.0	3.6
53-56 hrs	24.7	11.0	33.6	24.1	11.1	32.2	13.4	26.7	11.3
57+ hrs	23.4	8.4	33.2	29.4	10.5	41.2	68.7	24.8	75.7
Domestic Workers									
<=36 hrs	29.8	42.8	5.8	30.5	39.3	5.1	23.4	44.2	0.0
37-42 hrs	17.6	21.2	10.9	18.3	22.5	6.2	7.4	14.1	0.0
43-52 hrs	10.4	10.5	10.1	10.4	11.3	7.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
53-56 hrs	25.5	17.0	41.2	22.4	17.3	37.0	31.1	20.6	42.8
57+ hrs	16.7	8.4	32.1	18.4	9.6	43.9	38.1	21.1	57.2
Street Vendors and Market Traders									
<=36 hrs	8.4	29.0	6.2	8.0	28.5	5.5	3.3	46.8	0.0
37-42 hrs	8.9	16.9	8.0	8.1	11.5	7.6	4.4	21.1	3.1
43-52 hrs	11.1	10.7	11.2	9.2	10.0	9.1	4.7	32.1	2.6
53-56 hrs	39.1	28.3	40.2	37.4	33.7	37.9	34.4	0.0	37.1
57+ hrs	32.5	15.2	34.4	37.3	16.3	39.9	53.2	0.0	57.3
Waste Pickers									
<=36 hrs	11.4	21.9	6.3	13.0	24.7	6.7	28.1	100.0	22.5
37-42 hrs	6.4	10.4	4.4	6.6	8.3	5.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
43-52 hrs	7.7	9.9	6.6	8.7	10.5	7.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
53-56 hrs	60.4	49.9	65.5	56.9	49.0	61.1	17.9	0.0	19.3
57+ hrs	14.2	8.0	17.2	14.8	7.5	18.8	54.0	0.0	58.2



Construction workers in Ahmedabad.
Photo by WIEGO

but 51 per cent in Delhi 51 per cent work such long hours.

Among women *domestic workers*, 43 per cent of women in India national, 39 per cent in urban India and 44 per cent in Delhi work 36 hours or less a week, compared to only 5 to 6 per cent of men *domestic workers* in all areas. Most men *domestic workers* work 53 or more hours each week: 73 per cent in India and 80 per cent in urban India. In contrast, around one quarter of women *domestic workers* clock such long hours in India national and urban India, while in Delhi, 41 per cent do.

Among *street vendors/market traders*, 29 per cent of women nationally and in urban

Table 6 (cont'd): Groups of workers by hours of work per week and sex in India, Urban India and Delhi, 2017-18: Per cent

Informal Construction Workers									
<=36 hrs	23.6	40.0	22.2	21.4	26.7	21.0	10.0	63.1	7.9
37-42 hrs	11.9	13.9	11.7	10.1	15.8	9.7	2.7	0.0	2.8
43-52 hrs	12.0	15.7	11.7	11.5	16.5	11.1	5.6	0.0	5.9
53-56 hrs	39.5	23.5	40.8	36.7	27.5	37.5	40.1	0.0	41.7
57+ hrs	13.0	6.8	13.5	20.3	13.5	20.8	41.5	36.9	41.7
Informal Transport Workers									
<=36 hrs	6.2	0.4	6.2	5.4	0.7	5.5	2.9	0.0	2.9
37-42 hrs	4.7	4.7	4.7	3.8	7.7	3.7	2.1	0.0	2.1
43-52 hrs	9.0	0.0	9.0	8.3	0.0	8.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
53-56 hrs	34.8	80.8	34.6	30.8	78.2	30.6	6.2	0.0	6.2
57+ hrs	45.3	14.1	45.5	51.7	13.3	51.9	88.7	0.0	88.7

India have a workweek of 36 hours or less in comparison to only 6 per cent of men in both areas. High percentages of *street vendors/market traders*, especially men, work a long workweek: 44 per cent of women and 75 per cent of men nationally work 53 or more hours; in urban India, the shares are 50 per cent of women and 77 per cent of men. However in Delhi, no women but 94 per cent of men work such a long workweek.

Among *waste pickers*, the majority of women (57 per cent) both nationally and in urban India and an even higher percentage of men (83 per cent in India and 80 per cent in urban India) work 53 hours or more each week. In Delhi, there is a sharp contrast between men and women: all women *waste pickers* work 36 hours or less while 78 per cent of men work 53 hours or more.

Among women *informal construction workers*, 30 per cent nationally and 41 per cent in urban India work 53 hours or more a week while 40 per cent and 27 per cent, respectively, work 36 hours or less. Among men *informal construction workers*, the majority work 53 or more hours per week (54 per cent in India and 58 per cent in urban India) and around 22 per cent in both areas work 36 hours or less. In Delhi, 63 per cent of women *informal constructions workers* work 36 hours or less per week while 37 per cent work more than 57 hours. Among men, 83 per cent work more than 53 hours per week.

Most women in *informal transport* in both areas work 53 hours or more a week: 94 per cent in India and 92 per cent in urban India, compared to 80 and 82 per cent of men, respectively, and 89 per cent in Delhi.

Income from Employment

In all six worker groups, women earn less than men and women's earnings are generally below the minimum wage. Although men in the six worker groups have higher earnings than women, the only worker group in which men earn the minimum wage or higher across all three geographic areas is *home-based work*.

In India, the recommended minimum wage is 375 rupees per day or 46.88 rupees per hour (assuming an average workday of eight hours). However, women's earnings in all groups of workers are generally below the minimum wage (**table 7**). Only in Delhi do two groups of women workers – in *home-based work* and *informal construction* – earn the minimum earnings. Although men in the six worker groups have higher earnings than women, the only worker group with earnings reaching the minimum wage or higher for men in all three geographic areas is *home-based work*. Men in *informal construction* and *informal transport* also earn a minimum wage nationally and in urban India. In Delhi, only men street vendors and market traders do not earn the minimum wage.

Overall earnings are somewhat higher in urban India than in all India and higher still in Delhi. Nationally, only men in *home-based work* earn more than the minimum wage – but the amount is only a rupee or so higher. In urban India, men *home-based workers* earn around 59 rupees per hour and men in *informal construction* and *informal transport* earn around the minimum wage. In urban India, among women informal workers, those in *informal transport* have the highest earnings – just under minimum wage at 45.39 rupees.

While all worker groups have higher earnings in Delhi, men on the whole earn more than women in Delhi, as well as in the two other geographic areas. In Delhi, among *home-based workers*, women earn 69.04 rupees per hour while men earn 73.73 rupees on average; among *waste pickers*, women earn 20 rupees while men earn 62.04 rupees. The exception is *informal construction*, in which women in Delhi earn, on average, 64.89 rupees while men earn just 48.48 rupees; however, men out earn women in the other two geographic areas.

Table 7: Average hourly earnings of groups of workers by sex, urban India and Delhi (rupees)

	India	Urban India	Delhi
Home-Based Workers			
All	39.75	48.73	73.08
Women	23.93	29.34	69.34
Men	48.24	59.06	73.73
Domestic Workers			
All	28.71	28.56	36.66
Women	24.56	25.17	25.67
Men	36.33	38.26	49.01
Street Vendors & Market Traders			
All	38.87	41.39	45.58
Women	29.07	31.52	42.43
Men	39.68	42.32	45.82
Waste Pickers			
All	38.53	39.46	57.84
Women	30.41	30.86	20.00
Men	42.46	44.11	62.07
Informal Construction Workers			
All	38.89	45.45	49.13
Women	26.15	30.97	64.89
Men	39.95	46.60	48.48
Informal Transport Workers			
All	42.94	47.35	59.39
Women	45.99	45.39	0.00
Men	42.93	47.36	59.39



Home-based workers in Delhi.
Photo by Rashmi Choudhary

Age

The vast majority of all groups of workers nationally and in urban India are between 25 to 53 years of age.

In India and urban India, the majority of both women and men in all worker groups are in the peak employment ages of 25-54 (**table 8**). This large age group accounts for 79 to 82 per cent of *informal transport workers* and 72 to 77 of workers in the other groups nationally and in urban India, respectively. In Delhi, 96 per cent of all workers in the five groups are between ages 25 to 54.

Table 8: Groups of workers by age group and sex in India, Urban India and Delhi, 2017-18: Per cent

Age Group	India			Urban India			Delhi		
	Total	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men
Home-Based Workers									
15-24	12.1	14.3	10.5	11.3	13.5	9.8	14.6	19.1	13.7
25-34	24.3	26.6	22.7	23.9	26.3	22.3	10.6	16.9	9.4
35-44	26.7	28.1	25.7	27.1	29.9	25.3	31.2	31.0	31.3
45-54	20.7	19.5	21.5	20.6	17.9	22.5	32.4	12.4	36.0
55 +	16.3	11.5	19.6	17.0	12.4	20.1	11.3	20.6	9.6
Domestic Workers									
15-24	8.7	7.3	11.4	9.3	7.9	13.1	6.6	2.2	11.4
25-34	22.2	20.7	25.0	22.1	21.5	23.9	19.6	24.1	14.6
35-44	30.2	31.0	28.6	29.6	30.0	28.4	28.0	18.2	39.0
45-54	23.7	24.9	21.4	23.9	26.5	16.4	18.1	17.1	19.2
55 +	15.2	16.1	13.7	15.1	14.1	18.1	27.7	38.3	15.8
Street Vendors and Market Traders									
15-24	11.2	8.4	11.5	10.3	5.5	10.9	10.1	0.0	10.9
25-34	25.0	15.9	26.1	27.0	17.1	28.2	38.3	0.0	41.2
35-44	26.9	27.7	26.9	26.3	29.0	26.0	28.5	0.0	30.7
45-54	21.5	25.6	21.1	20.2	21.9	20.0	13.7	46.8	11.1
55 +	15.3	22.4	14.5	16.2	26.5	14.9	9.4	53.2	6.0
Waste Pickers									
15-24	9.1	2.1	12.6	9.4	2.7	12.9	16.1	0.0	19.2
25-34	26.0	18.1	29.9	28.4	21.1	32.3	48.2	64.8	44.9
35-44	26.9	25.8	27.4	27.4	27.3	27.5	6.5	0.0	7.8
45-54	24.0	34.0	19.1	21.5	29.2	17.4	6.0	0.0	7.2
55 +	14.0	20.0	11.0	13.4	19.7	10.0	23.2	35.2	20.9

Table 8 (cont'd): Groups of workers by age group and sex in India, Urban India and Delhi, 2017-18: Per cent

Informal Construction Workers									
15-24	16.3	6.7	17.3	13.9	9.7	14.3	15.0	36.9	14.1
25-34	29.8	27.8	30.0	28.9	26.0	29.2	18.3	0.0	19.0
35-44	27.0	31.0	26.6	28.6	28.2	28.6	45.1	0.0	46.9
45-54	18.0	21.2	17.6	19.7	25.4	19.2	17.5	63.1	15.6
55 +	8.9	13.3	8.4	8.9	10.7	8.7	4.2	0.0	4.4
Informal Transport Workers									
15-24	13.6	10.8	13.6	8.8	9.3	8.8	0.7	0.0	0.7
25-34	32.8	64.7	32.6	29.6	54.6	29.4	21.1	0.0	21.1
35-44	30.1	12.3	30.2	32.3	16.9	32.4	43.2	0.0	43.2
45-54	16.9	10.3	16.9	20.6	16.2	20.6	31.5	0.0	31.5
55 +	6.6	2.0	6.6	8.7	3.1	8.7	3.5	0.0	3.5

However, the age distribution of workers is somewhat different in Delhi than in the other areas, especially for women. In *home-based work*, *domestic work*, *street vending/market trading* and *waste picking*, a high percentage of women – substantially higher than for men – are in the older age categories than in the other areas and a substantially higher percentage of women than men. For example in Delhi, among *domestic workers*, 38 per cent of women are 55 years or older in comparison to 16 per cent of men; among *street vendors/market traders*, 53

per cent of women and 6 per cent of men are in the oldest age group; and among *waste pickers*, 35 per cent of women but 21 per cent of men are in this older age group. In Delhi, there are also significant differences between the ages of women and men in *informal construction*. A higher percentage of women than men workers in informal construction are between 15 to 24 years of age (37 per cent compared to 14 per cent) and between 45-54 (63 per cent compared to 15 per cent).



A street vendor in Ahmedabad.
Photo by Julian Luckham

Education

Over 60 per cent of women in *domestic work, street vending, waste picking and informal construction* have not completed primary school, in comparison to only 35 per cent or less of men.

The limited education of workers in these groups – especially women – is striking (**table 9**). Over 60 per cent of women workers in four of the groups – *domestic workers, street vendors/market traders, waste pickers and informal construction workers* – have not completed primary school: as many as three-quarters of women domestic workers in Delhi. A lower percentage of men in these worker groups (35 per cent) have not completed primary school. Women and men in *informal construction* in Delhi are exceptions. A high percentage of the relatively few women in this group have completed graduate education or higher (63 per cent) and another 37 per cent have completed secondary education. By contrast, 54 per cent of men in *informal construction* have not completed primary school and only around 5 per cent have completed graduate education.

Home-based workers are generally better educated than other worker groups. But among this group, a higher percentage of women than men have less than a primary education: in India nationally, 41 per cent of women versus 23 per cent of men; in urban India, 33 per cent

Table 9: Groups of workers by highest level of education and sex in India, Urban India and Delhi, 2017-18: Per cent

Level of education*	India			Urban India			Delhi		
	Total	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men
Home-Based Workers									
Below primary	30.6	41.3	23.1	24.0	32.7	18.2	11.3	20.1	9.8
Primary & middle	37.4	35.3	38.8	35.1	36.1	34.4	35.0	12.9	39.0
Secondary & Higher secondary	22.2	17.2	25.6	25.9	21.4	28.8	37.4	21.8	40.2
Graduate & above	9.8	6.1	12.4	15.0	9.7	18.6	16.2	45.2	11.0
Domestic Workers									
Below primary	50.9	61.1	32.1	54.9	60.6	38.7	56.8	74.7	36.7
Primary & middle	37.1	33.1	44.7	34.6	33.7	37.1	30.5	22.9	39.1
Secondary & Higher secondary	10.0	5.1	18.9	8.7	5.0	19.5	12.6	2.4	24.2
Graduate & above	2.0	0.7	4.3	1.8	0.8	4.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
Street Vendors and Market Traders									
Below primary	32.2	63.0	28.7	30.0	64.6	25.7	22.6	67.9	19.1
Primary & middle	38.5	24.9	40.1	38.8	22.3	40.8	54.9	32.1	56.7
Secondary & Higher secondary	22.7	9.4	24.2	23.3	10.9	24.9	11.3	0.0	12.1
Graduate & above	6.5	2.7	7.0	7.9	2.2	8.6	11.2	0.0	12.1
Waste Pickers									
Below primary	44.6	63.6	35.3	48.6	66.5	39.1	29.9	100.0	16.2
Primary & middle	39.2	26.3	45.5	38.9	28.7	44.3	49.1	0.0	58.7
Secondary & Higher secondary	14.0	9.4	16.3	11.1	4.8	14.4	18.6	0.0	22.2
Graduate & above	2.3	0.7	3.0	1.4	0.0	2.2	2.4	0.0	2.9
Informal Construction Workers									
Below primary	36.7	65.1	33.5	34.5	62.6	31.9	52.0	0.0	54.1
Primary & middle	43.7	27.2	45.5	42.3	28.8	43.5	27.4	36.9	27.1
Secondary & Higher secondary	17.3	6.3	18.5	18.7	4.8	19.9	13.8	0.0	14.4
Graduate & above	2.3	1.4	2.5	4.6	3.7	4.7	6.7	63.1	4.5

of women versus 18 per cent of men; and in Delhi, 20 per cent of women versus 10 per cent of men. However among *home-based workers* in Delhi, 45 per cent of women and 11 per cent of men are at the highest education level, having completed graduate education or above. *Home-based work* covers a range of different activities including professional and technical work and in Delhi, women engaged in professional work are more likely than men to work at home. Additional data shows that 70 per cent of women *home-based workers* in Delhi are engaged in education (tutoring), some work in real estate, and the rest are in other service activities.

Informal transport workers have higher levels of education than workers in the other groups. Further, in India national and urban India, women have higher levels of education than men. (No women are in *informal transportation* in Delhi.) In this group, 10 per cent of women and 20 per cent of men nationally have less than a primary education, compared to 15 per cent of women and 19 per cent of men in urban India. At the opposite end of the education hierarchy, 47 per cent of women have graduate level education or higher in comparison to 4 per cent of men nationally, while; in urban India, 23 per cent of women and 6 per cent of men have this level of education.

Table 9 (cont'd): Groups of workers by highest level of education and sex in India, Urban India and Delhi, 2017-18: Per cent

Informal Transport Workers									
Below primary	20.1	9.6	20.2	18.5	15.0	18.5	23.3	0.0	23.3
Primary & middle	46.0	7.0	46.2	45.7	10.2	45.9	39.4	0.0	39.4
Secondary & Higher secondary	29.3	36.7	29.3	29.6	52.1	29.5	33.9	0.0	33.9
Graduate & above	4.5	46.7	4.3	6.2	22.7	6.1	3.4	0.0	3.4

* The levels of education in India are: **Primary education** - 5th class/grade; **Middle level** - 8th class/grade; **Secondary level** - 10th class/grade; **Higher secondary level** - 12th class/grade; **Graduate & above** - a degree certificate from a recognised university after undergoing a three-year course or more.



A home-based worker in Ahmedabad.
Photo by Paula Bronstein/Getty Images Reportage

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