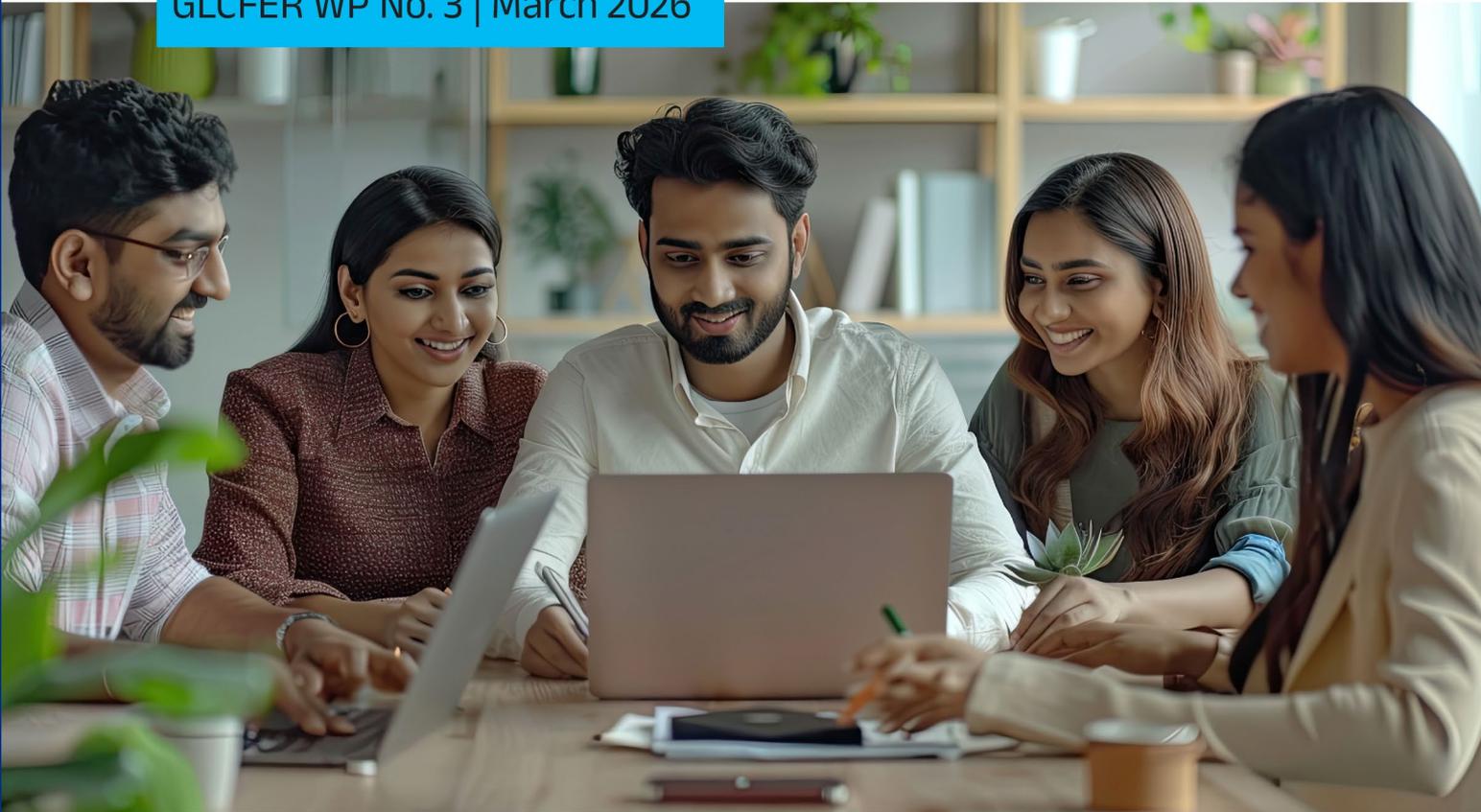


## **GREAT LAKES INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT Centre for Finance & Economics Research**

**Great Lakes CFER White Paper Series**

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# **Young Adults at Work in India**

**Intense work for some, Insufficient jobs for many**

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*This paper is intended for discussion within policy circles and among national and multilateral organisations working on youth employment and labour market challenges in India and other developing countries. It examines both the extent and intensity of paid work among young adults, with particular attention to gender, employer type, and interstate disparities. The presentation prioritises accessibility for a policy audience without compromising analytical rigour.*

## Citation guideline

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# Executive Summary

## Key Findings

Drawing on India's Time Use Survey (TUS) 2024, this paper analyses paid work participation and daily work intensity among young adults aged 20–29 years. The findings reveal a labour market that under-employs a large share of its youth, alongside excessive work burdens for many it does employ.

**1. Low participation, sharp divides.** Fewer than half (47%) of young adults are employed. Nearly 79% of young men but just about 18% of young women are in paid work. In Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, fewer than one in ten young women are employed. Women's low participation is the primary driver of interstate variation.

**2. Informal enterprises dominate.** 9.5% of young adults work in formal enterprises, compared to 37.2% in informal, household-based enterprises. In rural India, 85% of young adults is in informal enterprises. Even among graduates, slightly more work in informal enterprises.

**3. Overwork and underemployment coexist.** About one-quarter of young workers in formal enterprises exceed 8 hours of net work per day. At the other end, a third of workers in informal enterprises log fewer than 6 hours. When commuting is included, over one in three formal enterprise workers spend more than 9 hours per day on work-related activities.

**4. Gender gaps widen in informal enterprise work, narrow in formal enterprises in urbanised states.** Women's work hours drop by nearly 2 hours moving from formal to informal enterprises; men's barely change. In Delhi, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana, the gender gap in formal enterprise work hours falls below 30 minutes.

## Policy Recommendations

### *Remove binding constraints to raise women's employment*

Interstate variation in young adult employment is driven almost entirely by women's access to work. Women's employment is the single most consequential lever for realising India's demographic dividend.

- Reduce housing, transport, and safety barriers that constrain women's spatial mobility for employment.
- Expand institutional housing such as working women's hostels in major urban centres to enable young women to take up employment after completing higher education, particularly first-generation migrants who lack family networks in cities

- Target job creation in states with the weakest youth absorption - Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Odisha - through investment incentives and infrastructure development.
- Strengthen education-to-employment pathways through apprenticeships, job-matching platforms, and employer engagement with educational institutions.

### *Accelerate formalisation to raise labour productivity*

Shifting a young worker from an informal to a formal enterprise adds nearly 10% more work time. Formalisation raises effective labour input without increasing the total number of jobs.

- Simplify regulatory compliance to reduce the cost of formality for small and household enterprises.
- Extend and make portable social protection benefits to incentivise formal employment from the worker's side.
- Invest in rural formal enterprises infrastructure — agri-processing clusters, rural business parks, and procurement preferences for registered enterprises.

### *Address overwork and spatial mismatch*

The share of formal enterprise workers exceeding 8 hours more than doubles - from 26.7% to 63.2% - once commuting is included, signalling a structural spatial mismatch between jobs and housing.

- Improve job-housing integration in metropolitan areas by co-locating affordable housing with employment centres.
- Invest in urban public transport that operates reliably during non-standard work hours, with safe last-mile connectivity.

### *Reduce underemployment in informal enterprises*

Short work hours among informal workers - particularly women and in low-income states - likely reflect involuntary underemployment.

- Expand market linkages for household enterprises through supply chains, government procurement, and digital marketplaces.
- Create structured pathways from informal underemployment to formal work through skill certification and placement-linked training.
- Integrate time-use metrics into employment monitoring to distinguish adequate employment from disguised underemployment.

# Introduction

The way young people spend their time offers a powerful lens into a country's future. Today's young adults are tomorrow's workers, parents, and cultural and social ambassadors. Their daily allocation of time, across genders and regions, shapes the economy's productive capacity, the likelihood of regional convergence or divergence, and the transmission of social norms, among other outcomes.

Drawing on data from India's nationwide Time Use Survey (TUS) 2024<sup>1</sup>, this report analyses extracted data for young adults (20–29 years) to shed light on a central component of daily life: paid work. In the TUS, paid employment participation is divided into two employer types: 1) Employment in organisations, including corporations, government, and non-governmental organisations (hereafter referred to as Employment in Formal Enterprises), 2) Employment in household enterprises (hereafter referred to as Employment in Informal Enterprises).<sup>2</sup> Hence, we provide estimates by the employer type in rural and urban areas and by gender.

India is known for its demographic dividend - a large working-age population that can contribute to the economy. Today's young adults will remain in the working-age group for at least the next three decades. The key question is how much of this dividend is actually contributing directly to economic activity. A simple way to assess this is to examine two markers: **1) the percentage of young adults in India who are in paid employment.**<sup>3</sup> **2) the average number of hours they work per day in actual work (excluding a lunch break) and in commuting to work.**

States where young adults are less likely to be employed in paid work signal constraints on job creation or mobility, while states with higher participation rates indicate institutional and market structures that are more effective at absorbing young workers. The participation in paid work also reflects how many have a basic level of financial independence.

**By examining how much time young adults in India spend in work per day (excluding breaks), we move beyond conventional labour market indicators of participation rates. While time spent at work does not tell us about labour productivity, it signals the intensity and stability of labour market attachment:** more consistent work hours often reflect better-quality jobs and stronger employer demand, while shorter or fragmented work time may indicate underemployment, informality, or precarious work.

<sup>1</sup>The details of the Time Use Survey are provided Appendix 1.

<sup>2</sup>The details of the definitions of the employer type are provided in Appendix 1.

<sup>3</sup>We compare our aggregate estimates from the TUS with the periodic labour force surveys (PFLS) which is the primary source of the employment participation rates in India.

**Excessively long hours - especially once commuting time is included - however, signal excessive work pressure, traffic congestion, or poor job-housing matching,** with implications for worker well-being, productivity and burnout among employed, and long-term labour force retention.

We also examine, if not in paid work, how many young adults are continuing their education. This captures time investments that shape future economic outcomes and where productive potential is being built.

**We acknowledge that unpaid work - particularly household and care work - is economically and socially significant.** It results in a dual burden for women engaged in paid employment, with overall larger time spent in work (paid and unpaid) relative to men. The aim of this report is limited to compare the participation and time spent in paid work by India's young adults.

We find that **fewer than half of young adults are in paid employment.** This headline figure masks sharp **state-wise, gender, and employer-type disparities.** Employment participation varies widely across states, driven largely by differences in women's access to work, not men's.

**Among young adults who are employed, most work close to a standard-length workday, but averages conceal a dual reality: overwork in terms of time spent,** particularly when commuting time is included - most starkly for those working in formal enterprises and urban areas and **underemployment,** especially among women and workers in informal enterprises.

# Part A – Employment and Education

## Participation Rates – All India

The employment participation rate is defined as the percentage of people in the age group who report being in paid work on a normal workday at the time of the survey.

- **Nearly 47% of young adults (20-29 years) in India reported being in paid employment in 2024 (Figure 1).** The proportion of young adults employed in **urban areas (48.8%)** is higher than in **rural areas (45.6%).**
- In comparison, the employment participation rate for young adults (excluding unpaid workers) from the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2023-24 based on current weekly status was 39.8%. Hence, the estimates of employment participation provided in this report are on the higher side. This difference may arise from the different methodologies adopted, given the different nature of objectives.
- **Around 79% of young men and 18.2% of young women were in paid work** across India (Figure 2).
- **Less than one in ten young adults (9.5%) worked in formal enterprises while around 37.2% worked in informal enterprises** (Figure 3), indicating the continued dominance of informal, family-based enterprises in shaping youth employment pathways.
- The 'default' form of paid work, both in rural and urban areas, for young Indians is employment in informal enterprises (Figure 4), **In rural India, only 5.9% are in formal enterprises, while 39.8% of young adults are employed in informal enterprises, meaning nearly 85% of rural youth employment is informal enterprises,** reflecting the need for targeted efforts to expand formal job opportunities in rural India.
- **15% of young men and less than 5% of young women were employed in formal enterprises** (Figure 5), suggesting a limited absorption of youth into higher-quality employment.
- **Nearly 1 in 4 young men in urban areas is employed in formal enterprises compared to 1 in 10 in rural areas** (Figure 6). Mere 2.3% of rural young women are employed in formal enterprises compared to 9.8% in urban areas.
- Just over half of young men in urban areas work in informal enterprises compared to 70.3% in rural areas. (Figure 6)

- At lower education levels, employment participation is almost entirely concentrated in informal enterprises. Among illiterate young adults, **38.3%** are employed in informal enterprises compared to only **2.9%** in formal enterprises (Figure 7). The same is true for **primary education (46.3% vs 2.6%)** and **secondary education (45.7% vs 5.1%)**.
- Higher education improves access to jobs in formal enterprises but does not fully shift young adults away from informal enterprises, suggesting the lack of sufficient jobs creation in formal enterprises. Among young adults with **graduate education and above, 22.5%** are employed in formal enterprises, while a slightly higher **23.9%** remain in informal enterprises (Figure 7)
- At the all-India level, **11.0% of young adults aged 20–29 remain in education**, whether through colleges and universities, distance learning, or online courses (Figure 8). Education participation is **significantly higher in urban areas (16.0%) than in rural areas (8.7%)**, indicating that a larger share of urban youth delay entry into the labour market. **Gender gaps persist nationwide**, with **13.6% of young men** continuing in education compared to **8.8% of young women**.

## Part B – Time Spent in Work and Commute

- Young adults who are employed spend close to a full working day at work. **On average, employed young adults spend 6 hours 55 minutes per day in work-related activities, excluding breaks.** This indicates that once young people are employed, their work engagement is substantial
- Urban work hours per day are 1 hour longer (7h 35m) than rural work hours per day (6h 35m), indicating a greater intensity of employment (Figure 9).
- **Young men work substantially longer paid hours than young women.** Employed young men work **7h 20m** per day, compared to **5h 22m** for young women (Figure 10). However, if unpaid household and care work is added to paid work, employed young women work longer hours – **9h 31m among young women**, as against **7h 57m among young men**.
- Young adults employed in Formal enterprises work **7h 28 m per day**, about 45 minutes more than in informal enterprises (Figure 11). **Expanding institutional employment would raise effective labour input even without increasing overall jobs.** Shifting a young worker from an informal enterprise to a formal enterprise, mainly from the rural areas, would add nearly **10% more work time** per worker (Figure 12).

- Men's workhours are relatively stable across employer types; women's are not.**  
Men's work hours per day fall by only **28 minutes** when moving from formal (**7h 42m**) to informal enterprises (**7h 14m**), while women's hours drop by **1 hour 57 minutes (6h 50m compared to 4h 53m)** (Figure 13). This indicates persistent gender gaps in labour engagement, likely driven by unpaid care responsibilities, mobility constraints, or workplace barriers that limit women's ability to participate fully.
- Young men residing in urban areas work the longest and similar time irrespective of the employer type - 7h 50m in formal enterprises and 7h 59m in informal enterprises** (Figure 14), excluding the lunch break.
- Urban residence improves work intensity for women.** Urban women work **7h 05m** in formal enterprises and **5h 41m** in informal enterprises, compared to rural women's **6h 22m** and **4h 35m**, respectively (Figure 14).
- Across both formal and informal enterprises, workhours increase with higher education up to the **Secondary level – 7h 55m in formal enterprises and 6h 53m in informal enterprises and reduces thereafter, recording 7h 16m in formal enterprises and 6h 39m in informal enterprises at the 'Graduates and Above' level** (Figure 15).
- The single largest share of young adults works 7–8 hours per day (excluding breaks): 30.0% in formal enterprises and 22.1% in informal enterprises (Figure 16). Overwork is substantial and affects roughly one-quarter of young workers, as 26.7% of formal young workers and 24.8% of informal young workers spend more than 8 hours per day in work, excluding breaks (including 12.3% and 11.5%, respectively, working more than 9 hours).** This suggests that overwork is not an exception, but a common feature of both formal and informal employment among young adults.
- Underemployment is concentrated in informal employment.** At the lower end of the distribution, 15.5% of informal workers spend less than 4 hours per day at work, compared to only 3.6% in formal employment. Including those working 4–6 hours, 33.4% of informal workers work under 6 hours per day, versus 18.8% in formal enterprises.
- The informal employment distribution in terms of workhours is also more dispersed,** with higher shares at both very low hours (<4 hours) and very long hours (>9 hours). This bimodality reflects greater heterogeneity in terms of work quality, volatile demand, and/or limited worker control over hours, core features of job precarity.

- **Including commute time sharply increases long workhours, especially in formal enterprises** (Figure 17). When work and commute are combined, **more than 1 in 3 young adults in formal enterprises (36.6%) spend over 9 hours per day** on work-related activities. Even in informal enterprises, a substantial **26.9% young workers exceed 9 hours of work per day**.
- **Commute time disproportionately intensifies formal enterprises workhours. The jump from 26.7% working more than 8 hours (excluding workplace breaks and commute) to 63.2% working more than 8 hours (including commute, but still excluding workplace breaks) in formal employment** highlights how spatial mismatch between jobs and housing, congestion, and urban transport constraints magnify time burdens for young workers.

## Part C – State-level Employment Participation Rates and Time at Work

At the state-level, labour markets create very different experiences for young adults in employment. While average workhours for young adults in India do not appear long, this masks substantial variation – particularly among those employed in organisations – driven by differences in job roles and employer conditions.

- **There is a sharp inter-state divide in young adults' employment outcomes** (Figure 18) Employment participation ranges from **58.1% in Gujarat** to **37.5% in Bihar**, a gap of **20.6 percentage** points, pointing to substantial differences in states' ability to use their young demographic dividend.
- **Only a limited set of states have more than half of young adults in paid work** Just **eight states**—namely **Gujarat (58.1%), Maharashtra (54.6%), Punjab (54.1%), Karnataka (52.5%), Delhi (51.4%), Tamil Nadu (51.2%), Telangana (50.5%) and Haryana (50.2%)**—record employment participation above 50%.
- **Large northern and eastern states cluster at the lower end of participation** States such as **Bihar (37.5%), Uttar Pradesh (39.7%), Uttarakhand (38.1%), and Odisha (40.8%)** fall significantly below the national average, suggesting structural constraints in job creation.
- **Urban labour markets are strong in some states but weak in others (figure 19).** States such as **Himachal Pradesh (64.0%), Gujarat (58.6%), Haryana (55.2%), Punjab (54.8%), and Karnataka (54.6%)** show very high urban youth employment participation, well above the national urban average of **48.8%**.

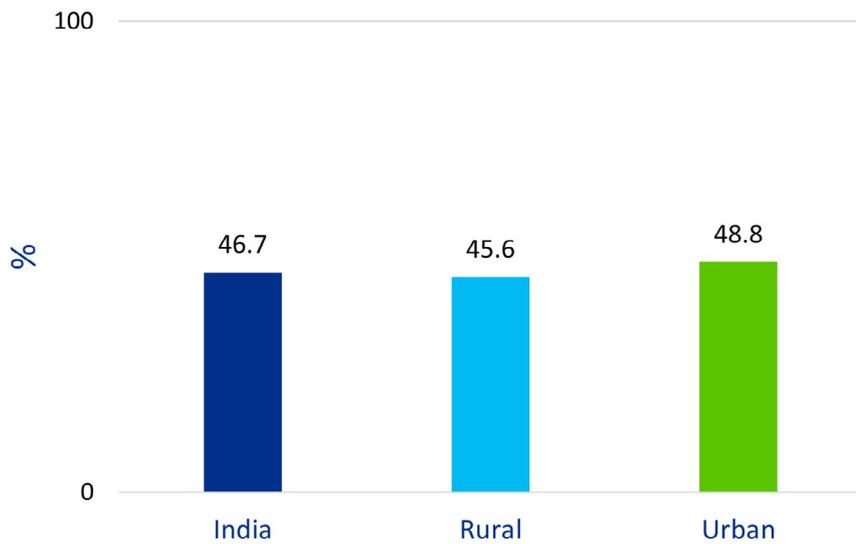
- Other states with large young population such as **Bihar (36.1%), Odisha (40.1%), Uttar Pradesh (41.9%), and Jharkhand (41.4%)** have weak urban absorption of **young workers**, suggesting limited job creation even in cities.
- **Urban–rural gaps differ sharply across states.** Some states show a **large urban advantage**, such as: **Himachal Pradesh: 64.0% urban vs 43.4% rural.** Others show **higher rural participation**, such as: **Telangana: 44.2% urban vs 56.3% rural and Madhya Pradesh: 43.1% urban vs 50.4% rural.** This suggests **different spatial employment structures** across states.
- Some **Low-performing states remain weak in both urban and rural areas (Figure 19).** Bihar records low participation in both settings (**36.1% urban, 37.7% rural**). **Uttarakhand (41.1% urban, 37.2% rural) and Odisha (40.1% urban, 40.9% rural)** show similarly weak outcomes.
- **Formal enterprise employment remains below 20% in all major states (Figure 20) with the following top 5 states:** Karnataka: 19.6%, Uttarakhand: 18.8%, Delhi: 18.8%, Tamil Nadu: 18.6%, and Maharashtra: 17.6%.
- **Even high-performing states in terms of young adults’ employment participation rely heavily on informal enterprise employment.** Examples include Punjab: 46.5% informal vs 7.7% formal, Gujarat: 46.3% informal vs 11.8% formal and Maharashtra: 37.0% informal vs 17.6% formal.
- The highest female employment participation is observed in **Telangana (31.3%), followed by Chhattisgarh (26.5%), Andhra Pradesh (26.4%), Gujarat (26.2%), and Tamil Nadu (26.0%).** However, even in these states, **less than one in three young women** is employed (Figure 21).
- **In several large states, fewer than one in ten young women are employed.** Female employment participation is particularly low in: **Bihar: 6.9%, Uttar Pradesh: 9.8%, Uttarakhand: 11.2%, Jammu & Kashmir: 12.2%**
- While urban workhours are longer than rural ones across states, **the intensity is especially high in Delhi, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Himachal Pradesh, where work plus commute averages at least nine hours a day** (Table 1)
- **In several states, especially in the northern states, work hours per day (excluding breaks), relative to all-India averages, are longer in both formal and informal enterprises** - (Table 2) - Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Gujarat
- In Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Delhi, and Jammu & Kashmir, workhours **in the informal enterprises are nearly or more time-intensive** than in formal enterprises.

- Low-income states show shorter workhours in the informal enterprises, indicating time-related underemployment: States such as: Odisha, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, show relatively short informal workdays, consistent with irregular work availability and disguised unemployment, rather than preference for shorter hours.
- **Men's formal-enterprises workhours are remarkably uniform across states** (Table 4). Young men's average time at work clusters around **7h 30 m – 8h** in most states. This suggests that **once men enter formal enterprise employment, their work intensity is relatively standardised across India.**
- **Young men's workhours in informal enterprises are also long and relatively uniform across states**, clustering between **6h 36m and 7h 48m**, with the highest in **Delhi** (close to 9 hours) and **8.0 hours** in **Tamil Nadu**. This suggests that **informality does not necessarily imply fewer hours for men**, but rather fewer protections.
- **In more urbanised and economically advanced states, the difference in time at work in formal enterprises by young men and women is much smaller (< 30m):** Delhi, Telangana, Tamil Nadu (Table 4). This suggests that where labour markets are deeper and institutional support is stronger, women's work in formal enterprises more closely resembles men's in intensity and stability

## Part A – Employment and Education Participation Rates – All India

**Figure 1**

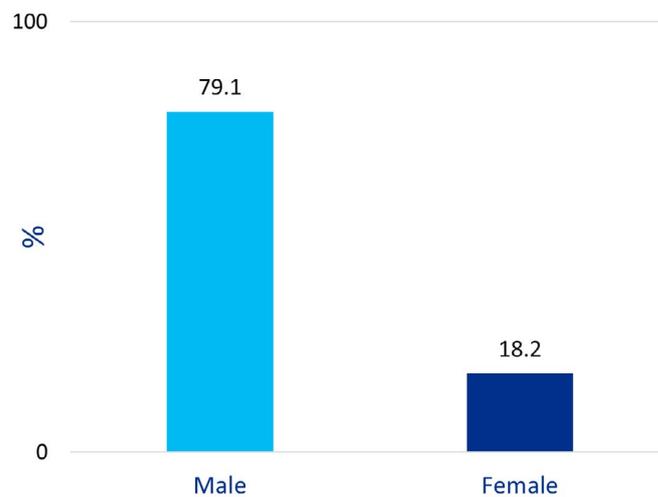
Employment Participation Rate by Place of Residence (%)  
Young Adults (20-29 Years), India, 2024



Source: Young adults at work in India, 2026

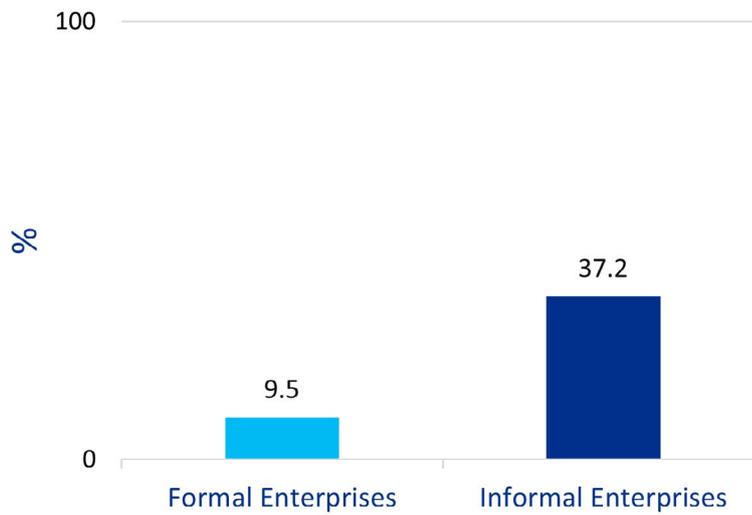
**Figure 2**

Employment Participation Rate by Gender (%)  
Young Adults (20-29 Years), India, 2024



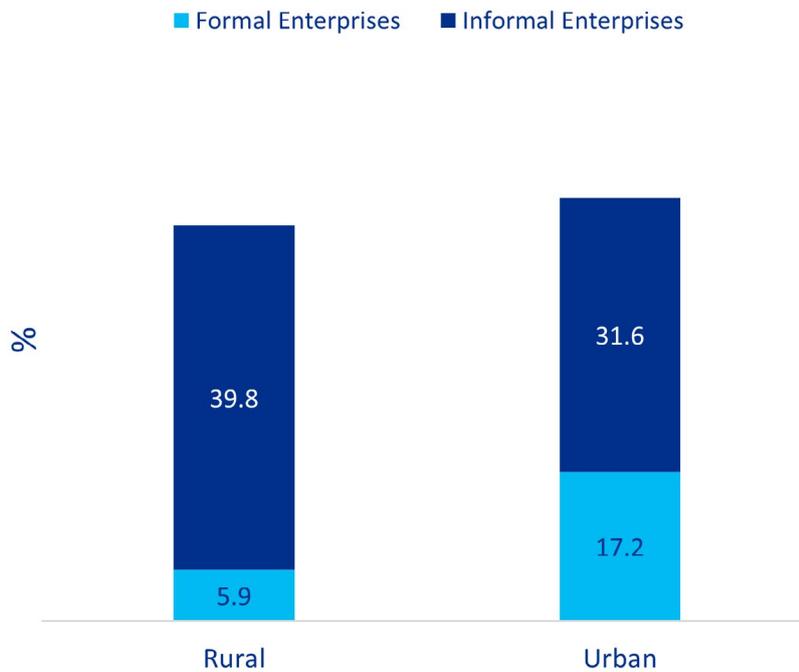
Source: Young adults at work in India, 2026

**Figure 3**  
**Employment Participation Rate by Type of Employer (%)**  
**Young Adults (20-29 Years), India, 2024**



Source: Young adults at work in India, 2026

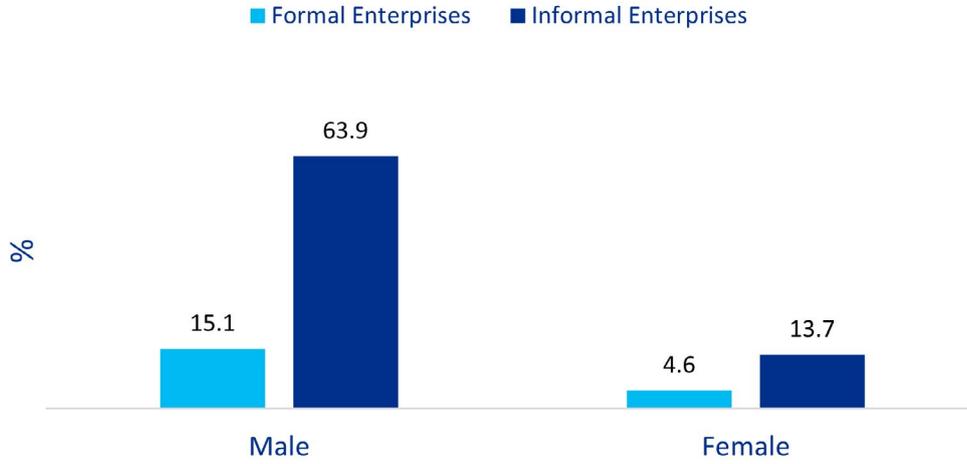
**Figure 4**  
**Employment Participation Rate by Type of Employer and**  
**Place of Residence (%)**  
**Young Adults (20-29 Years), India, 2024**



Source: Young adults at work in India, 2026

**Figure 5**

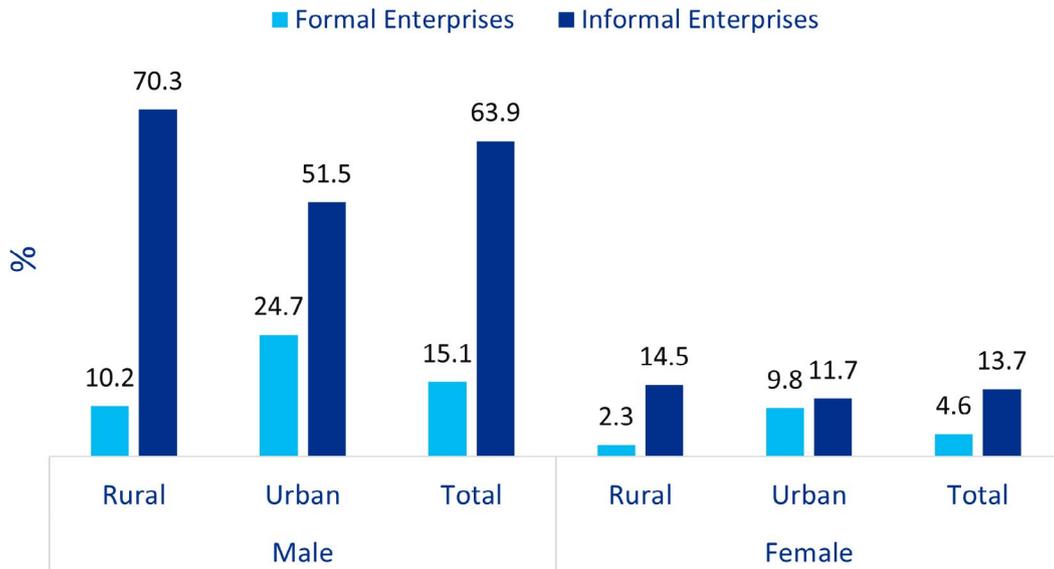
Employment Participation Rate by Type of Employer and Gender (%)  
Young Adults (20-29 Years), India, 2024



Source: Young adults at work in India, 2026

**Figure 6**

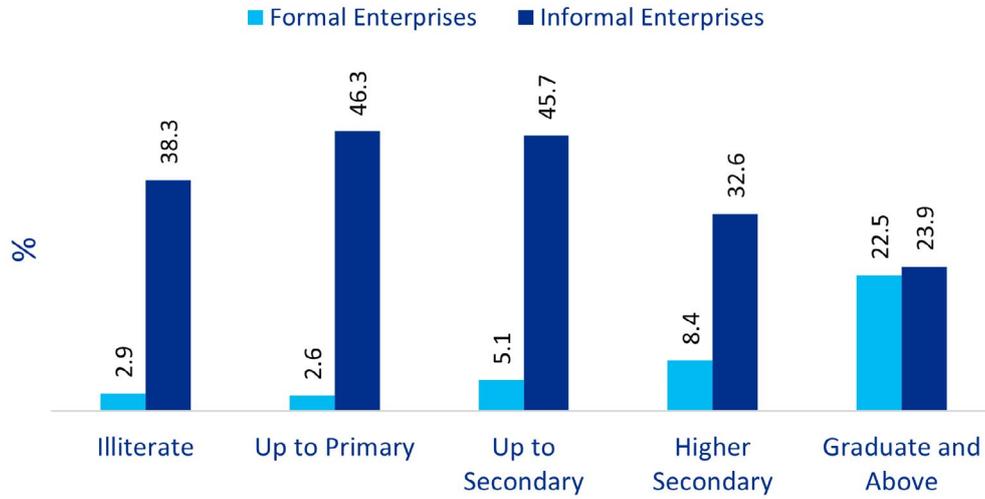
Employment Participation Rates (%)  
Young Adults (20-29 Years), India, 2024



Source: Young adults at work in India, 2026

**Figure 7**

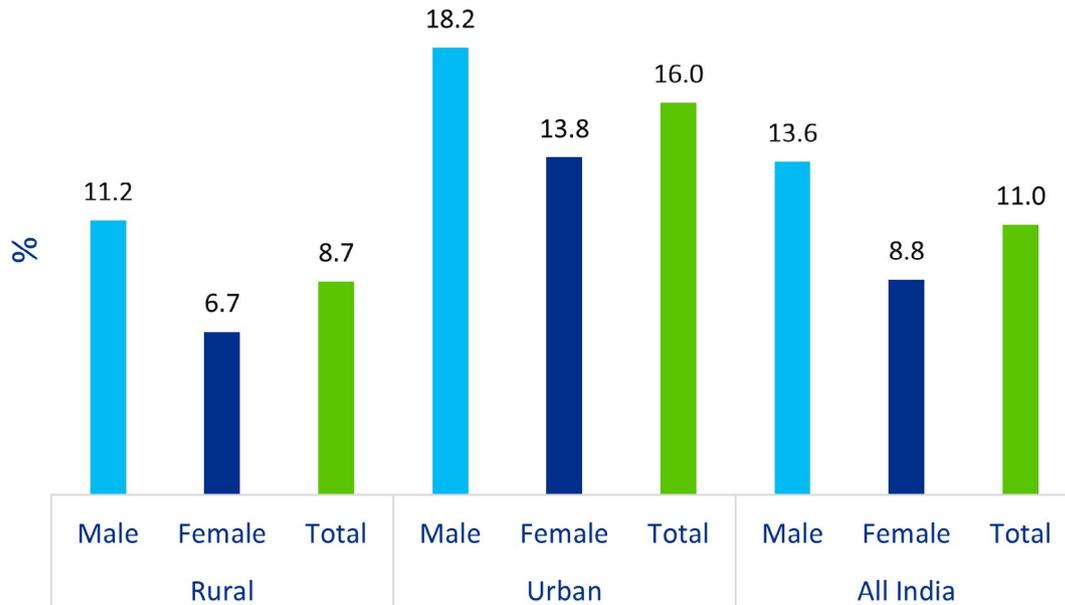
**Employment Participation Rate by Education Levels (%)  
Young Adults (20-29 Years), India, 2024**



Source: Young adults at work in India, 2026

**Figure 8**

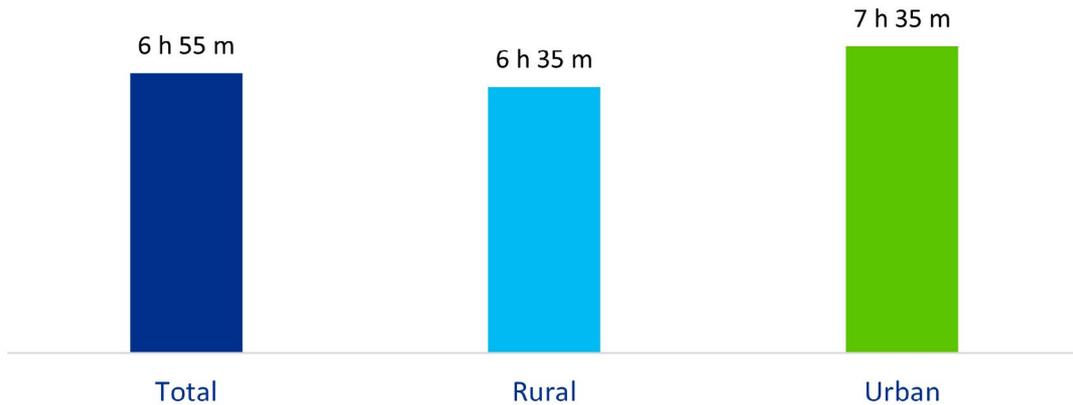
**Education Participation Rates (%)  
Young Adults (20-29 Years), India, 2024**



## Part B: Time Spent in Employment (excluding breaks) and Commute

Figure 9

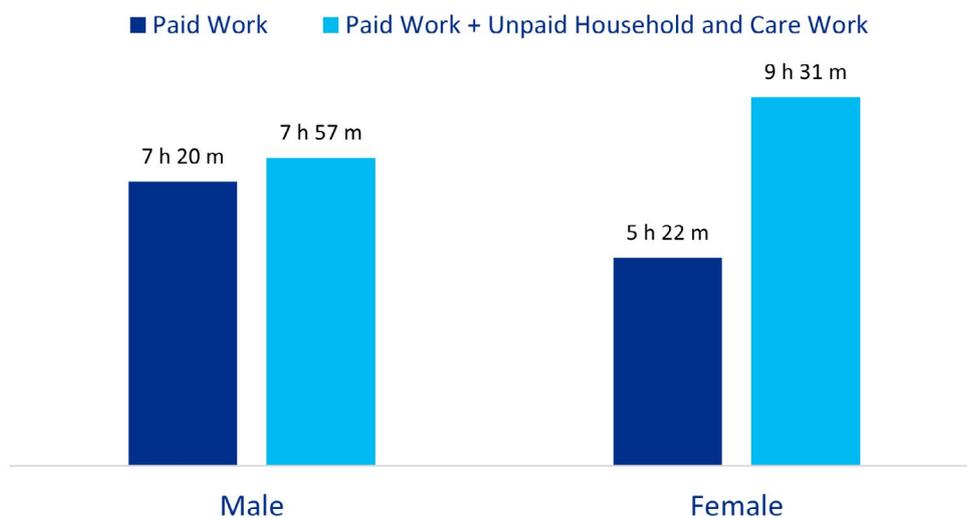
Average Time Spent Per Day in Work (Excl. Breaks) by Place of Residence  
Young Adults (20-29 Years), India, 2024



Source: Young adults at work in India, 2026

Figure 10

Average Time Spent Per Day at Work (Excl. Breaks) by Gender  
Young Adults (20-29 Years), India, 2024



Source: Young adults at work in India, 2026

**Figure 11**

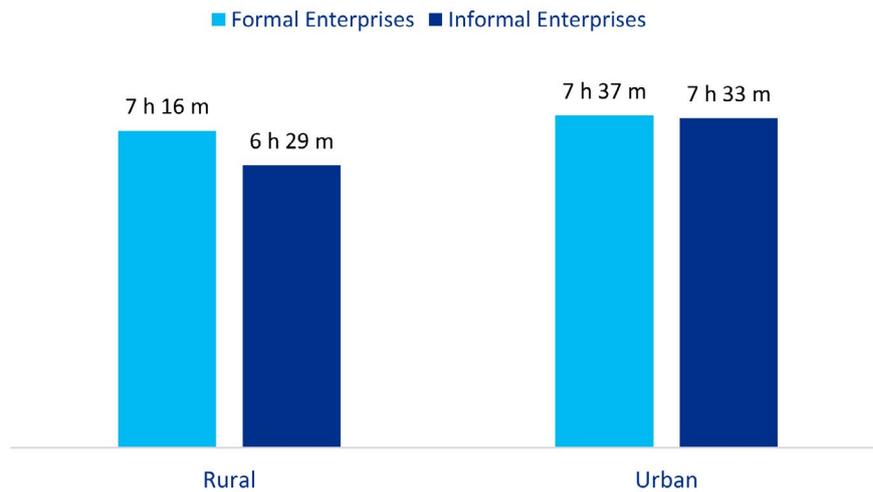
Average Time Spent Per Day a in Work (Excl. Breaks)  
by Employer Type  
Young Adults (20-29 Years), India, 2024



Source: Young adults at work in India, 2026

**Figure 12**

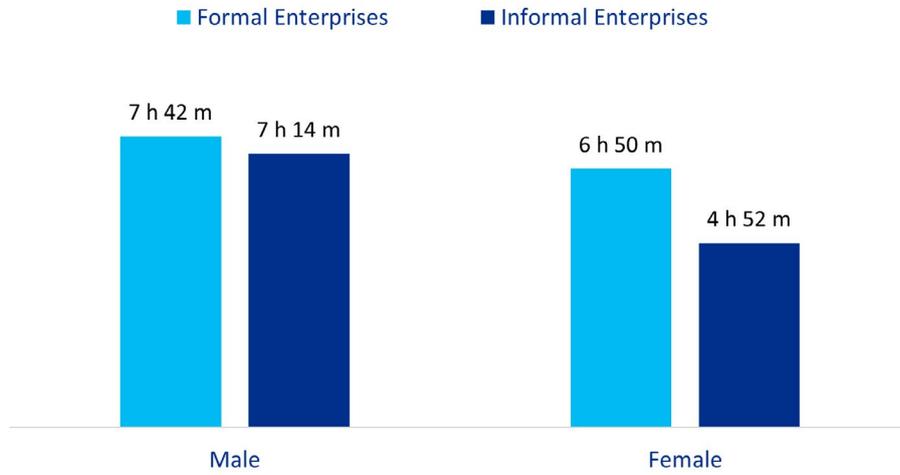
Average Time Spent Per Day at Work (Excl. Breaks) by Employer Type  
and Place of Residence  
Young Adults (20-29 Years), India, 2024



Source: Young adults at work in India, 2026

**Figure 13**

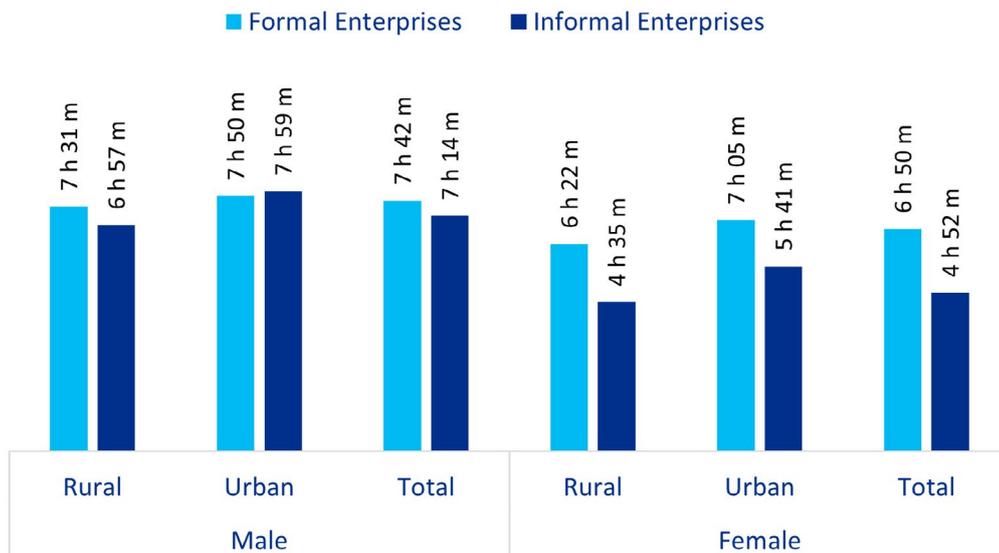
Average Time Spent Per Day at Work (Excl. Breaks) by Gender and Employer Type  
Young Adults (20-29 Years), India, 2024



Source: Young adults at work in India, 2026

**Figure 14**

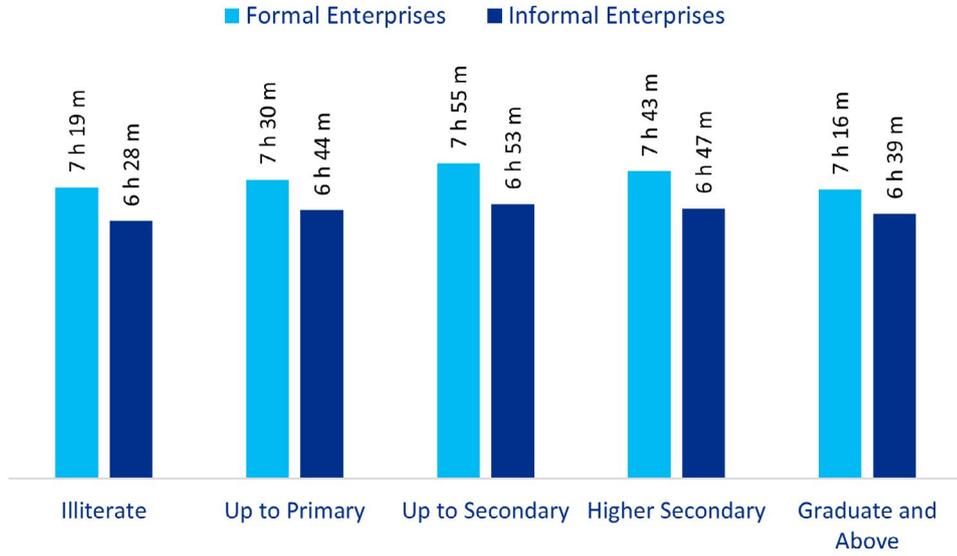
Average Time Spent Per Day in Employment (Excl. Breaks)  
Young Adults (20-29 Years), India, 2024



Source: Young adults at work in India, 2026

**Figure 15**

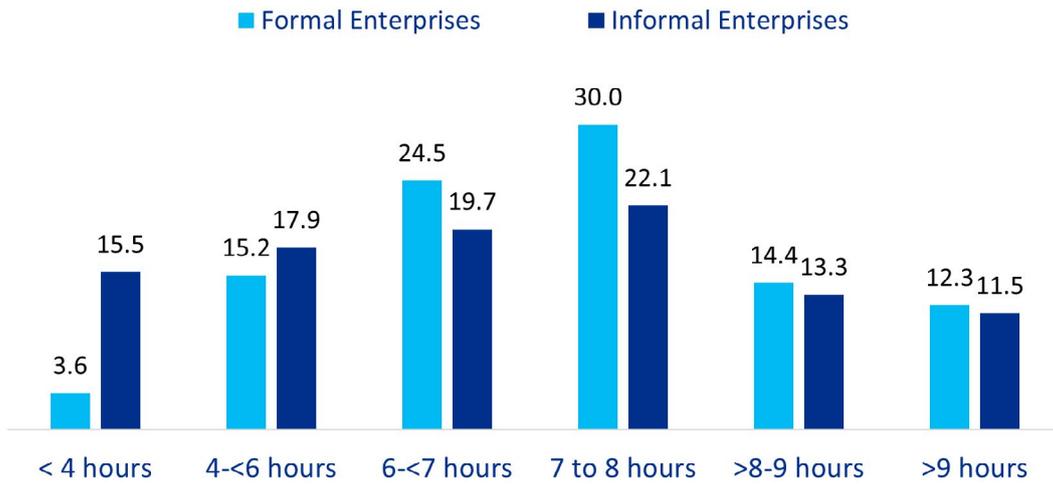
Average Time Spent Per Day in Employment (Excl. Breaks) by Education Level  
Young Adults (20-29 Years), India, 2024



Source: Young adults at work in India, 2026

**Figure 16**

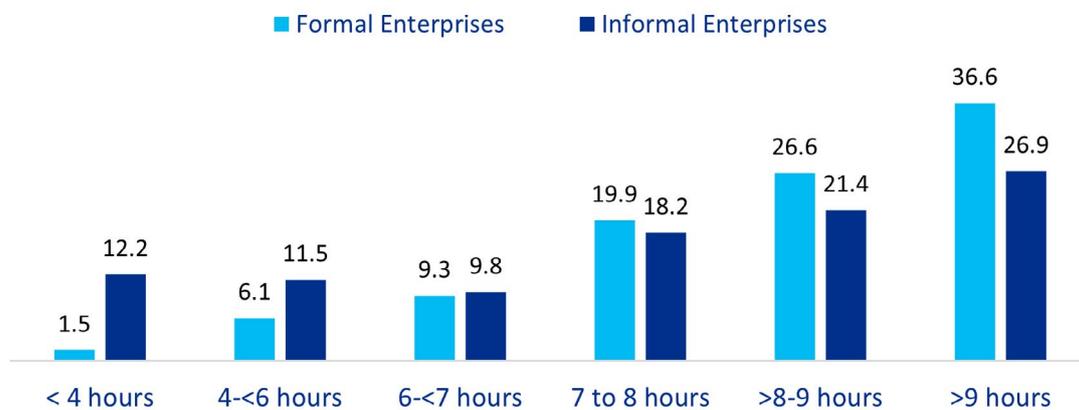
% of Employed by Time Spent Per Day in Work (Excl. Breaks)  
Young Adults (20-29 Years), India, 2024



Source: Young adults at work in India, 2026

**Figure 17**

% of Employed by Time Spent Per Day in Work (Excl. Breaks) and Work Commute  
**Young Adults (20-29 Years), India, 2024**

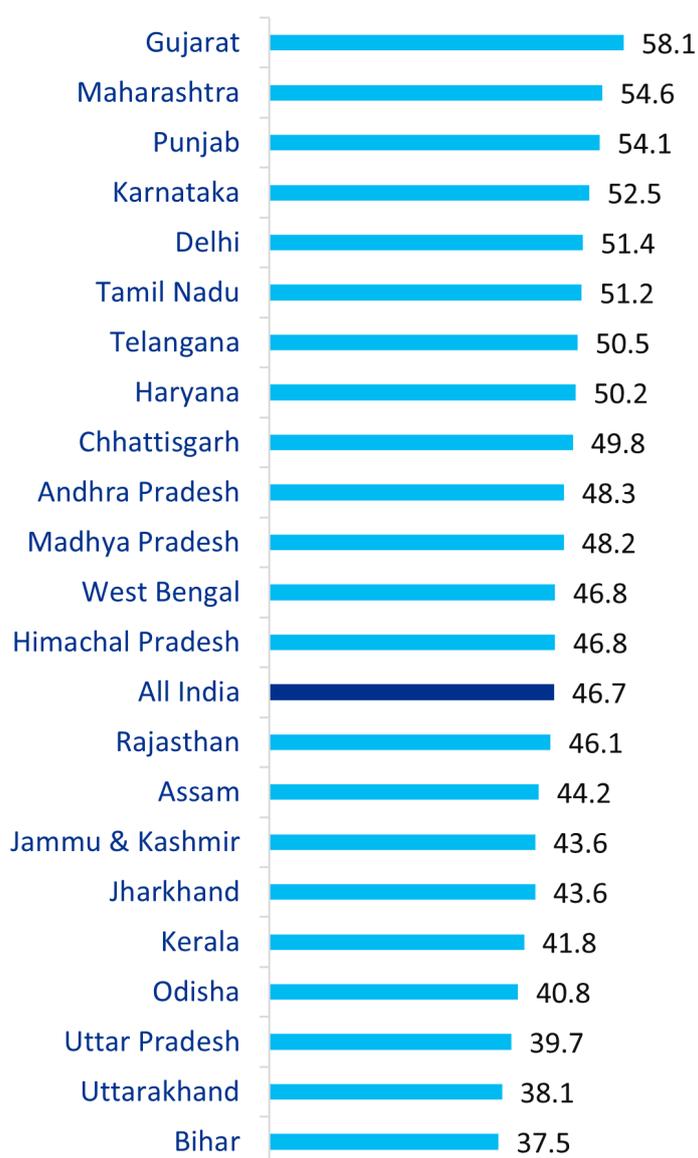


Source: Young adults at work in India, 2026

## Part C: State-Level Employment Participation Rates and Time Spent

Figure 18

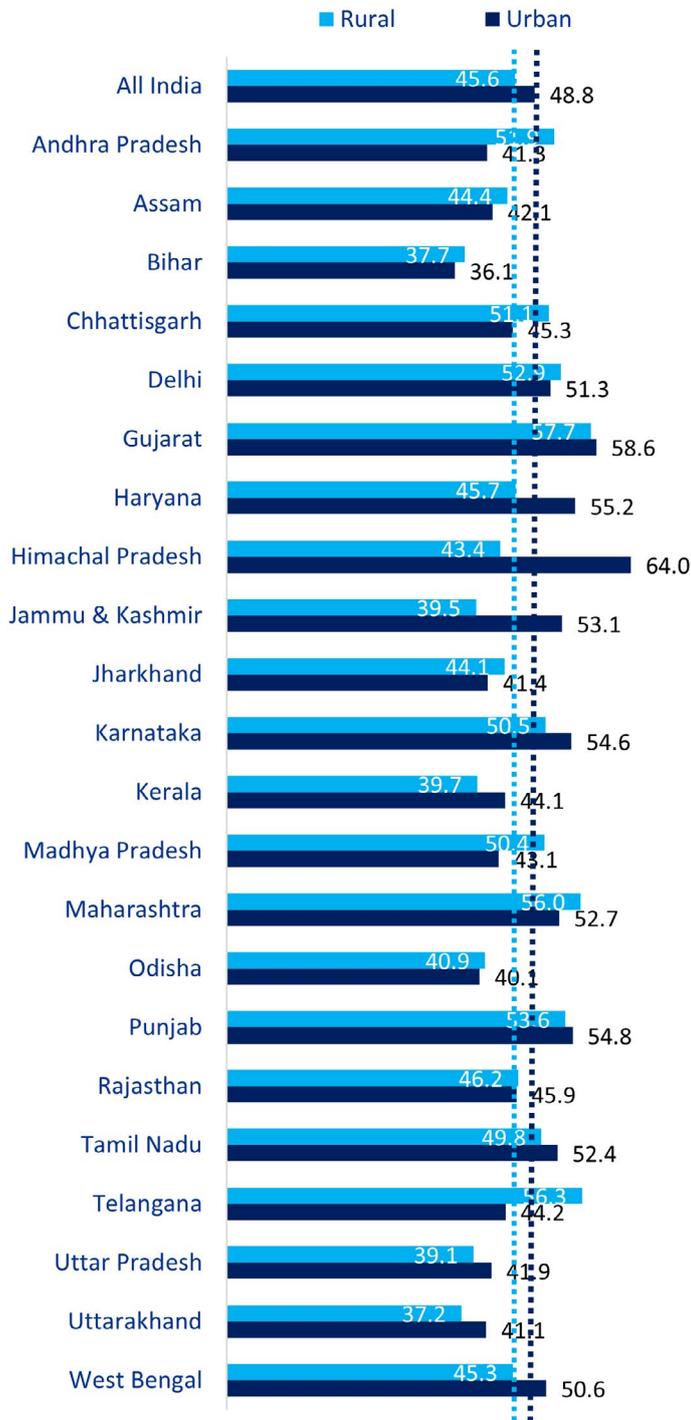
State-Wise Employment Participation Rate (%)  
Young Adults (20-29 Years), India, 2024



Source: Young adults at work in India, 2026

**Figure 19**

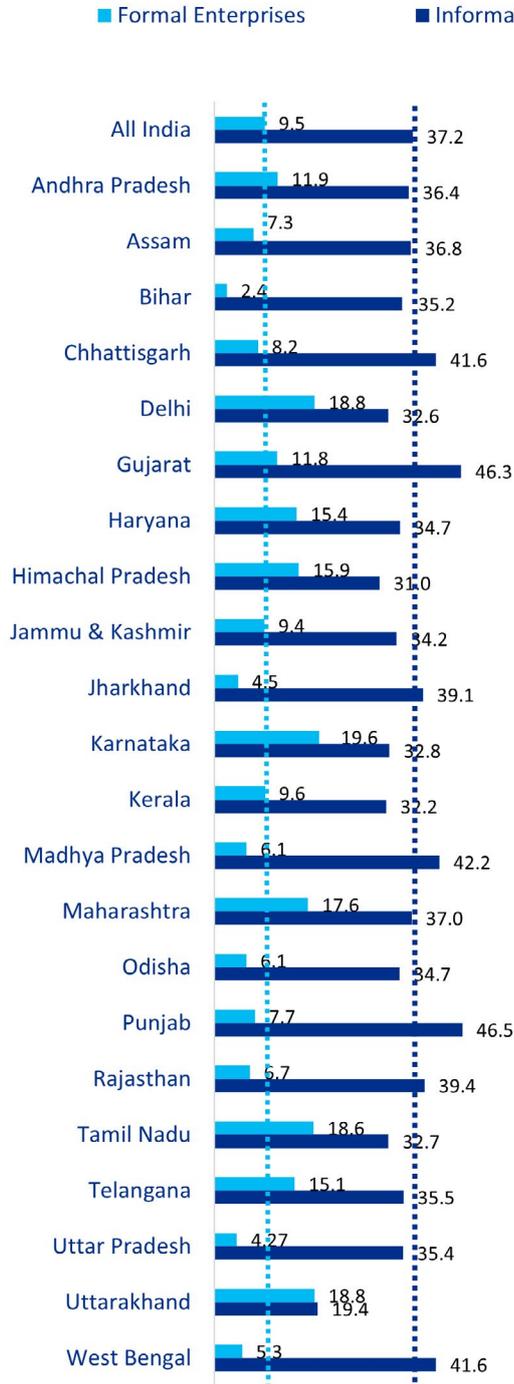
State-Wise Employment Participation Rate by Place of Residence (%)  
**Young Adults (20-29 Years), India, 2024**



Source: Young adults at work in India, 2026

**Figure 20**

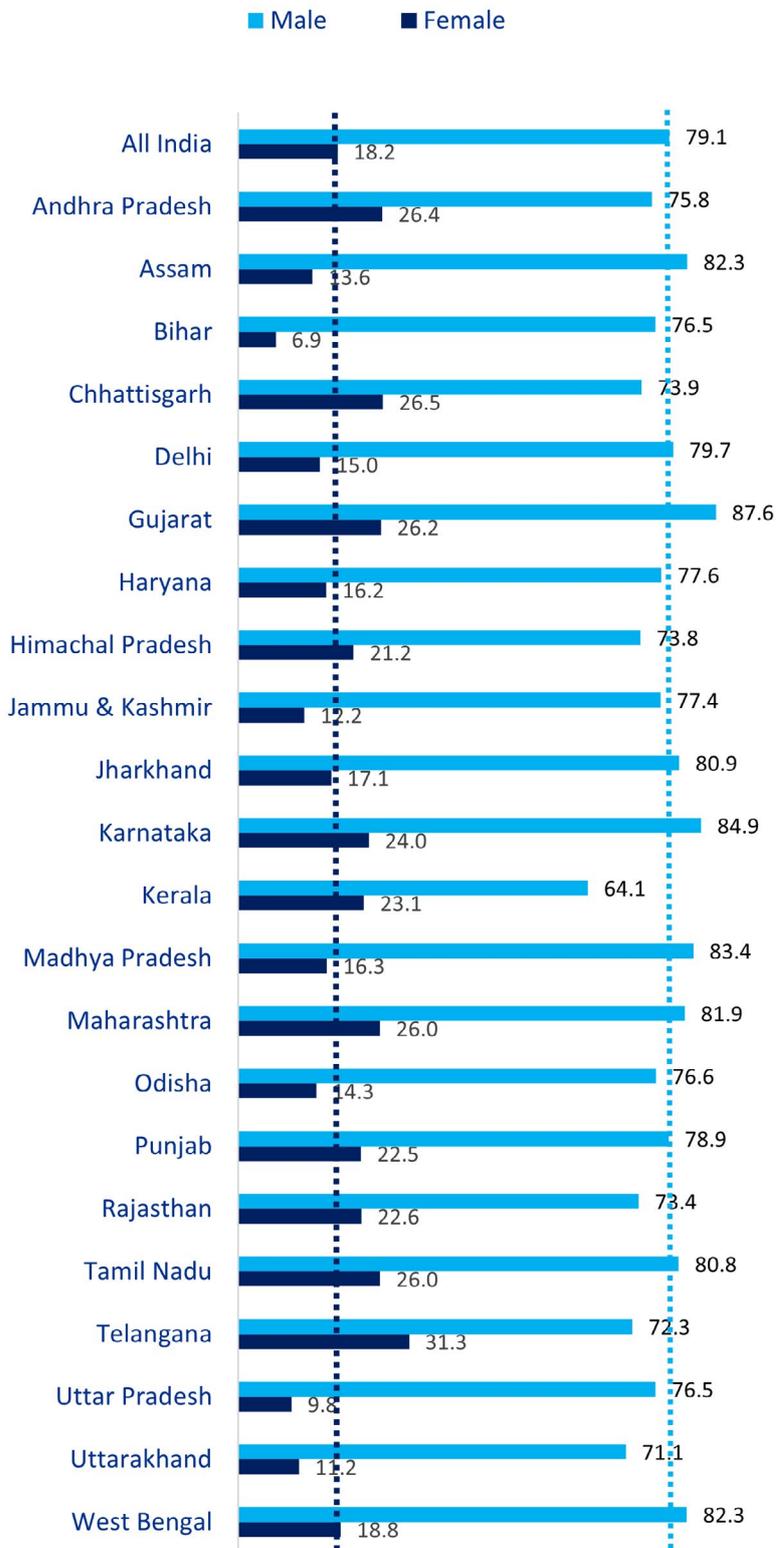
State-Wise Employment Participation Rate by Employer Type (%)  
**Young Adults (20-29 Years), India, 2024**



Source: Young adults at work in India, 2026

**Figure 21**

State-Wise Employment Participation Rate by Gender (%)  
Young Adults (20-29 Years), India, 2024



Source: Young adults at work in India, 2026

**Table 1**

State-wise Average Time Spent Per Day by Place of Residence  
**Young Adults (20-29 years), India, 2024**

State	In work (excl breaks)		In work including com- muting time (excl breaks)	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
<b>All India</b>	<b>6 h 35 m</b>	<b>7 h 35 m</b>	<b>7 h 33 m</b>	<b>8 h 38 m</b>
Andhra Pradesh	7 h 03 m	7 h 08 m	8 h 01 m	8 h 05 m
Assam	6 h 33 m	7 h 08 m	7 h 38 m	8 h 15 m
Bihar	6 h 29 m	7 h 22 m	7 h 22 m	8 h 13 m
Chhattisgarh	6 h 26 m	7 h 43 m	7 h 25 m	8 h 39 m
Delhi	8 h 19 m	8 h 30 m	9 h 25 m	9 h 38 m
Gujarat	6 h 33 m	7 h 53 m	7 h 41 m	9 h 00 m
Haryana	6 h 58 m	7 h 53 m	8 h 05 m	8 h 53 m
Himachal Pradesh	6 h 55 m	8 h 12 m	7 h 46 m	9 h 03 m
Jammu & Kashmir	6 h 55 m	7 h 17 m	7 h 57 m	8 h 15 m
Jharkhand	6 h 18 m	7 h 22 m	7 h 12 m	8 h 14 m
Karnataka	6 h 47 m	7 h 38 m	7 h 50 m	8 h 37 m
Kerala	6 h 45 m	7 h 17 m	7 h 55 m	8 h 25 m
Madhya Pradesh	6 h 12 m	7 h 20 m	7 h 06 m	8 h 11 m
Maharashtra	6 h 48 m	7 h 43 m	7 h 50 m	9 h 00 m
Odisha	6 h 12 m	6 h 53 m	7 h 05 m	7 h 58 m
Punjab	7 h 05 m	7 h 47 m	7 h 55 m	8 h 38 m
Rajasthan	6 h 25 m	7 h 31 m	7 h 13 m	8 h 22 m
Tamil Nadu	7 h 18 m	7 h 42 m	8 h 29 m	8 h 54 m
Telangana	6 h 27 m	7 h 24 m	7 h 31 m	8 h 28 m
Uttar Pradesh	6 h 37 m	7 h 32 m	7 h 29 m	8 h 25 m
Uttarakhand	6 h 37 m	7 h 03 m	7 h 41 m	8 h 09 m
West Bengal	6 h 19 m	7 h 05 m	7 h 19 m	8 h 05 m

*Source: Young adults at work in India, 2026*

**Table 2**

State-wise Average Time Spent Per Day in Employment (excl breaks)  
by Employer Type

**Young Adults (20-29 years), India, 2024**

State	Formal Enterprises	Informal Enterprises
<b>All India</b>	<b>7 h 29 m</b>	<b>6 h 47 m</b>
Andhra Pradesh	6 h 56 m	7 h 07 m
Assam	6 h 53 m	6 h 34 m
Bihar	6 h 46 m	6 h 35 m
Chhattisgarh	7 h 24 m	6 h 34 m
Delhi	8 h 13 m	8 h 39 m
Gujarat	8 h 05 m	6 h 53 m
Haryana	8 h 00 m	7 h 12 m
Himachal Pradesh	7 h 58 m	6 h 49 m
Jammu & Kashmir	6 h 41 m	7 h 09 m
Jharkhand	7 h 20 m	6 h 23 m
Karnataka	7 h 21 m	7 h 07 m
Kerala	7 h 13 m	6 h 57 m
Madhya Pradesh	7 h 16 m	6 h 23 m
Maharashtra	7 h 42 m	6 h 57 m
Odisha	6 h 56 m	6 h 12 m
Punjab	7 h 31 m	7 h 22 m
Rajasthan	7 h 21 m	6 h 38 m
Tamil Nadu	7 h 25 m	7 h 34 m
Telangana	7 h 32 m	6 h 34 m
Uttar Pradesh	7 h 27 m	6 h 45 m
Uttarakhand	7 h 06 m	6 h 23 m
West Bengal	7 h 24 m	6 h 26 m

Source: Young adults at work in India, 2026

**Table 3**

State-wise Average Time Spent Per Day in Employment (excl breaks) by Gender  
**Young Adults (20-29 years), India, 2024**

State	Male	Female
<b>All India</b>	<b>7 h 42 m</b>	<b>6 h 50 m</b>
Andhra Pradesh	7 h 14 m	6 h 14 m
Assam	7 h 12 m	6 h 05 m
Bihar	6 h 52 m	6 h 11 m
Chhattisgarh	7 h 46 m	6 h 04 m
Delhi	8 h 19 m	7 h 53 m
Gujarat	8 h 16 m	7 h 16 m
Haryana	8 h 07 m	7 h 20 m
Himachal Pradesh	8 h 12 m	7 h 10 m
Jammu & Kashmir	6 h 49 m	6 h 15 m
Jharkhand	7 h 41 m	5 h 21 m
Karnataka	7 h 40 m	6 h 44 m
Kerala	7 h 42 m	6 h 41 m
Madhya Pradesh	7 h 28 m	6 h 38 m
Maharashtra	7 h 50 m	7 h 14 m
Odisha	7 h 11 m	6 h 11 m
Punjab	7 h 44 m	6 h 39 m
Rajasthan	7 h 50 m	5 h 42 m
Tamil Nadu	7 h 36 m	7 h 03 m
Telangana	7 h 37 m	7 h 21 m
Uttar Pradesh	7 h 37 m	6 h 37 m
Uttarakhand	7 h 13 m	6 h 27 m
West Bengal	7 h 34 m	6 h 55 m

Source: Young adults at work in India, 2026

**Table 4**

State-wise Average Time Spent Per Day in Employment (excl breaks)  
by State and Gender

**Young Adults (20-29 years), India, 2024**

	Formal Enterprises		Informal Enterprises	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
<b>All India</b>	<b>7 h 42 m</b>	<b>6 h 50 m</b>	<b>7 h 14 m</b>	<b>4 h 53 m</b>
Andhra Pradesh	7 h 14 m	6 h 14 m	7 h 43 m	5 h 46 m
Assam	7 h 12 m	6 h 05 m	6 h 56 m	4 h 24 m
Bihar	6 h 52 m	6 h 11 m	6 h 53 m	3 h 50 m
Chhattisgarh	7 h 46 m	6 h 04 m	7 h 01 m	5 h 26 m
Delhi	8 h 19 m	7 h 53 m	8 h 53 m	6 h 04 m
Gujarat	8 h 16 m	7 h 16 m	7 h 26 m	5 h 00 m
Haryana	8 h 07 m	7 h 20 m	7 h 35 m	4 h 53 m
Himachal Pradesh	8 h 12 m	7 h 10 m	7 h 30 m	4 h 33 m
Jammu & Kashmir	6 h 49 m	6 h 15 m	7 h 26 m	5 h 01 m
Jharkhand	7 h 41 m	5 h 21 m	7 h 15 m	3 h 38 m
Karnataka	7 h 40 m	6 h 44 m	7 h 32 m	5 h 19 m
Kerala	7 h 42 m	6 h 41 m	7 h 08 m	6 h 23 m
Madhya Pradesh	7 h 28 m	6 h 38 m	6 h 45 m	4 h 32 m
Maharashtra	7 h 50 m	7 h 14 m	7 h 19 m	5 h 43 m
Odisha	7 h 11 m	6 h 11 m	6 h 33 m	4 h 44 m
Punjab	7 h 44 m	6 h 39 m	7 h 49 m	5 h 19 m
Rajasthan	7 h 50 m	5 h 42 m	7 h 34 m	4 h 06 m
Tamil Nadu	7 h 36 m	7 h 03 m	7 h 59 m	6 h 17 m
Telangana	7 h 37 m	7 h 21 m	7 h 04 m	5 h 34 m
Uttar Pradesh	7 h 37 m	6 h 37 m	7 h 12 m	3 h 48 m
Uttarakhand	7 h 13 m	6 h 27 m	6 h 57 m	3 h 38 m
West Bengal	7 h 34 m	6 h 55 m	7 h 00 m	4 h 28 m

Source: Young adults at work in India, 2026

# Appendix 1

## Details of Time Use Survey, Definitions of Employer Types, and Selection of States

The Time Use Survey of India (TUS), conducted by the National Statistical Office under the Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation, records how individuals allocate their time over a full 24-hour reference period (4:00 AM to 4:00 AM), using 30-minute time slots. Within each slot, respondents may report multiple activities, with one identified as the major activity. The 2024 survey was conducted over January 2024 to December 2024 and is representative at the state level.

The TUS records daily activities under nine major headings: paid employment and related activities; production of goods for own final use; unpaid domestic services; unpaid caregiving services; unpaid volunteer and trainee work; learning activities; socialising, community participation and religious practice; culture, leisure and mass media use; and self-care and maintenance. We extracted data for people aged 20-29 years and calculated population estimates based on this nationally representative sample. The state-level analysis has been carried out for the 22 major states, including Assam from the North-Eastern states. Among the union territories (UTs), only Delhi is included, which is the 12th-largest economy among all states and UTs (based on average share in national GDP over the last 5 years).

In the TUS, paid employment participation is divided into two employer types: 1) Employment in organisations, including corporations, government, and non-governmental organisations. We refer to this as Employment in Formal Enterprises, 2) Employment in household enterprises. We refer to this as Employment in Informal Enterprises since these are unincorporated enterprises. Although individuals may report working across both formal and informal enterprises, we find that the incidence of such overlap among young adults (20-29 years) is small, at 0.26%.

Formal Enterprise Employment includes

1. Employment in corporations, government and non-profit institutions. Employment under the government includes those working in public works programs, such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) Scheme, which is demand-driven rather than market-driven. While in TUS it is not possible to identify these workers, our estimates from the Periodic Labour Survey 2023-24 suggest that among young adults (20-29 years), public works employment, including MNREGA, accounted for only 0.15%.
2. Employment-related travel

## Informal Enterprise Employment

1. Growing of crops for the market in household enterprises
2. Raising of animals for the market in household enterprises
3. Forestry and logging for the market in household enterprises
4. Fishing for the market in household enterprises
5. Aquaculture for the market in household enterprises
6. Mining and quarrying for the market in household enterprises
7. Making and processing goods for the market in household enterprises
8. Construction activities for the market in household enterprises
9. Other activities related to employment in household enterprises to produce goods
10. Vending and trading of goods in household enterprises
11. Providing paid repair, installation, maintenance and disposal services in households and household enterprises
12. Providing paid business and professional services in households and household enterprises
13. Transporting goods and passengers for pay or profit in households and household enterprises
14. Providing paid personal care services in households and household enterprises
15. Providing paid domestic services
16. Other activities related to employment in households and household enterprises providing services
17. Employment-related travel

It is important to note that workers in both types of enterprises can hold formal or informal jobs, depending on the nature of their job contracts. For example, in formal jobs, workers receive legal and social protection such as a provident fund, health insurance, paid leave, and a written job contract. In general, the share of formal jobs tends to be higher in formal enterprises.

The paid work activity can occur at any time of day or night. The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020, consolidates earlier laws about the definition of full-day work in India and considers a standard workday of 8 hours. Draft rules indicate that break times are to be included in the total spread of the workday. Earlier labour laws (e.g., the Factories Act and state Shops & Establishments Acts) have required rest breaks, such as a 30-minute break after about five hours of continuous work, and these norms continue to inform break provisions until unified rules under the Code are fully in place.

Our estimates of time in work exclude breaks. Consequently, estimates of work time are closer to net productive time than to time spent at the workplace. We consider net productive time of 7–8 hours per day (excluding breaks) as consistent with a standard full workday, while much shorter hours suggest underemployment and much longer hours (especially with commute) indicate overwork or labour market stress.





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