



PRESS NOTE

ON THE REPORTS

LABOUR MARKET DYNAMICS IN MILLION-PLUS CITIES

&

**URBAN UNINCORPORATED ENTERPRISE LANDSCAPE: ASUSE 2025
INSIGHTS FROM MILLION-PLUS CITIES**

NATIONAL STATISTICS OFFICE

MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

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**8 आषाढ़, शक संवत् 1948
29th June, 2026**

PRESS NOTE

**Labour Market Dynamics in Million-plus Cities
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Urban Unincorporated Enterprise Landscape: ASUSE 2025
Insights from Million-plus cities**

[January, 2025 – December, 2025]

Snapshot

Labour market dynamics for persons of age 15+ years:

- LFPR and WPR, based on usual status (ps+ss), exhibited a steady upward trend in million-plus cities during 2017-18 to 2025 and UR declined considerably in million-plus cities during the period from 2017-18 to 2025.
- In usual status (ps+ss), more than 55% of workers were engaged in regular wage/ salaried employment in million-plus cities. The proportion of workers engaged as casual labour in these cities was nearly half of that observed in urban India across genders.
- Million-plus cities had a higher share of workers engaged in public/ private limited companies (24.3%) compared to urban India (17.2%).
- The average nominal earnings from self-employment, regular wage/salaried employment, and casual labour in million-plus cities were 34.1%, 9.7% and 13.5% higher, respectively, than the corresponding levels observed in urban India.

Unincorporated Enterprise Landscape:

- 46 million-plus cities contribute 13% of establishments, 16% of employment, and 21% of GVA in India's unincorporated non-agricultural sector.
- Women-owned unincorporated proprietorship exceeds 40% in Surat, Vadodara, and Pune, highlighting strong female entrepreneurial participation in these cities.
- Women constitute a sizeable proportion of the workforce in the unincorporated sector in the million-plus cities, with their share surpassing 30 per cent in 19 out of the 46 cities.

NSO releases insights on labour market dynamics and urban unincorporated enterprise landscape for million-plus cities

As India advances towards the vision of *Viksit Bharat*, its cities are increasingly emerging as vital centres of economic activity, innovation and employment generation. A deeper understanding of the economic structure and dynamics of the cities assumes increasing importance for informed policymaking, efficient resource allocation and evidence-based governance.

With cities emerging as key engines of economic growth and job creation, the National Statistics Office (NSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), has introduced city-level estimates for 46 million-plus cities (cities with million-plus population as per Census 2011) based on the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2025 and the Annual Survey of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (ASUSE) 2025. The production of city-level estimates reflects NSO's commitment and growing capability to meet emerging data requirements and contribute to the evidence-base needed for effective governance. The two reports on million-plus cities, one based on PLFS and another based on ASUSE, representing a significant step towards strengthening urban statistics in India, are available on the website of the Ministry (<https://mospi.gov.in>).

A brief overview of the coverage, sampling methodology, and data collection mechanism of PLFS 2025 and ASUSE 2025 are provided in the Endnote along with a list of million-plus cities as per Census 2011.

Key findings of Labour market dynamics in million-plus cities (age 15+ years):

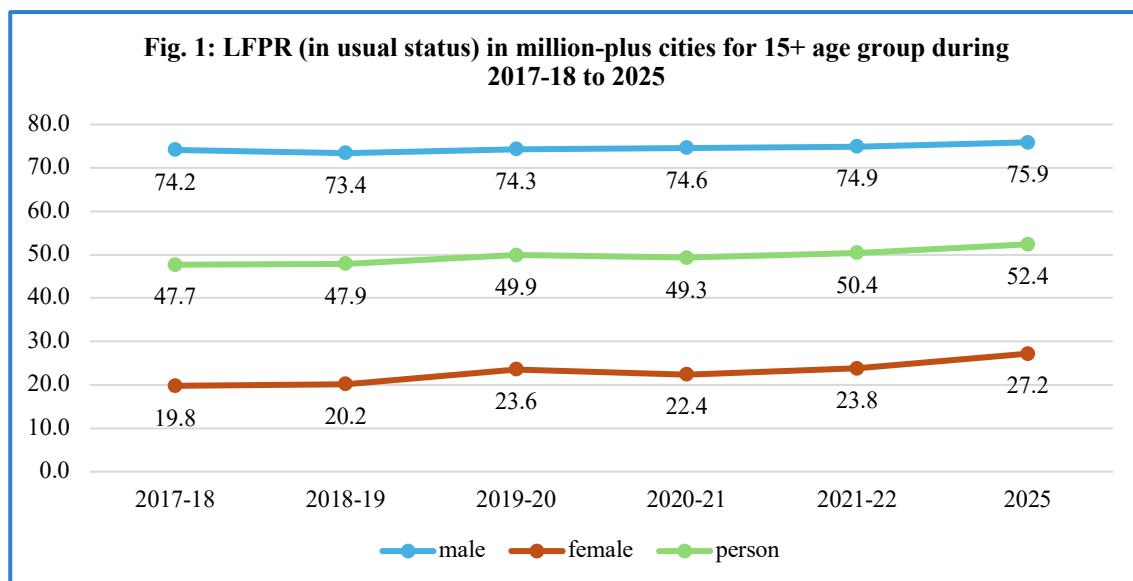
- The overall labour force participation rate, in usual status, increased to 52.4% in 2025, up from 50.4% in 2021-22 and 47.7% in 2017-18, indicating a sustained expansion in labour force engagement in million-plus cities.
- Female labour force participation, in usual status, showed a strong improvement, increasing from 19.8% in 2017-18 to 27.2% in 2025, reflecting a notable strengthening of women's participation in million-plus city labour markets.
- Female employment recorded notable gains in million-plus cities, with WPR, in usual status, rising from 17.9% to 25.5% between 2017-18 and 2025.
- Male unemployment, in usual status, decreased steadily, reaching 4.5% in 2025, down from 7.5% in 2017-18.
- Among males, 53.5% reported *want to continue study* as the main reason for not being in the labour force, whereas among females, 68.7% cited *child care/personal commitments in home-making* as the main reason.
- Earning levels in million-plus cities remained higher than those in urban India across all employment categories, with average earnings of ₹30,858 during the last 30 days for self-employed workers, ₹28,808 during the last month for regular salaried employees and ₹624 per day for casual labour, compared to ₹23,013, ₹26,258 and ₹550, respectively, in urban India.

- The unemployment rate in million-plus cities was nearly identical to that of urban India, with unemployment rates of 4.9% and 6.8% under the usual status and CWS approaches, respectively, compared to 4.8% and 6.8% for urban India.
- Both male and female workers in million-plus cities reported higher average hours of work than workers in urban India across broad status in employment.
- Million-plus cities recorded a lower proportion of youth (15–29 years) not in employment, education and training (NEET) under the usual status (22.2%) compared to urban India (25.0%).

Key Highlights of Labour market dynamics in million-plus cities

Steady rise in labour force participation (in usual status) in million-plus cities:

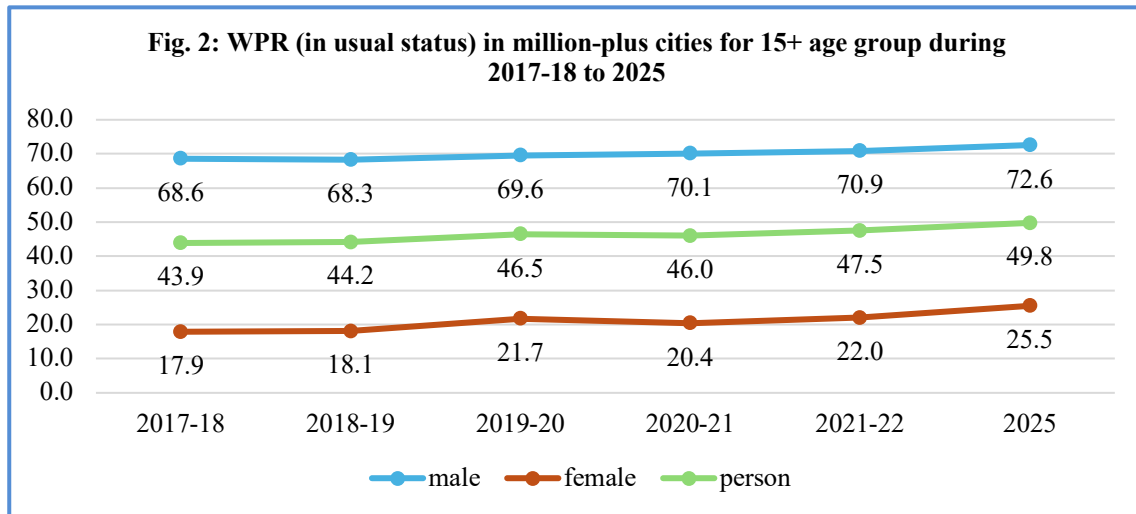
The Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) in million-plus cities, for the age group 15 years and above, exhibited a generally upward trend during the period 2017–18 to 2025. At the person-level, LFPR increased from 47.7 per cent in 2017–18 to 52.4 per cent in 2025, indicating a gradual strengthening of labour market engagement in large urban centres. Male LFPR remained consistently high throughout the period, rising moderately from 74.2 per cent to 75.9 per cent. After a slight decline in 2018–19, male participation recovered steadily. Female LFPR, though substantially lower than that of males, recorded the most notable improvement over the period. It increased from 19.8 per cent in 2017–18 to 27.2 per cent in 2025, representing a gain of 7.4 percentage points.



WPR (in usual status) in million-plus cities records sustained growth over time:

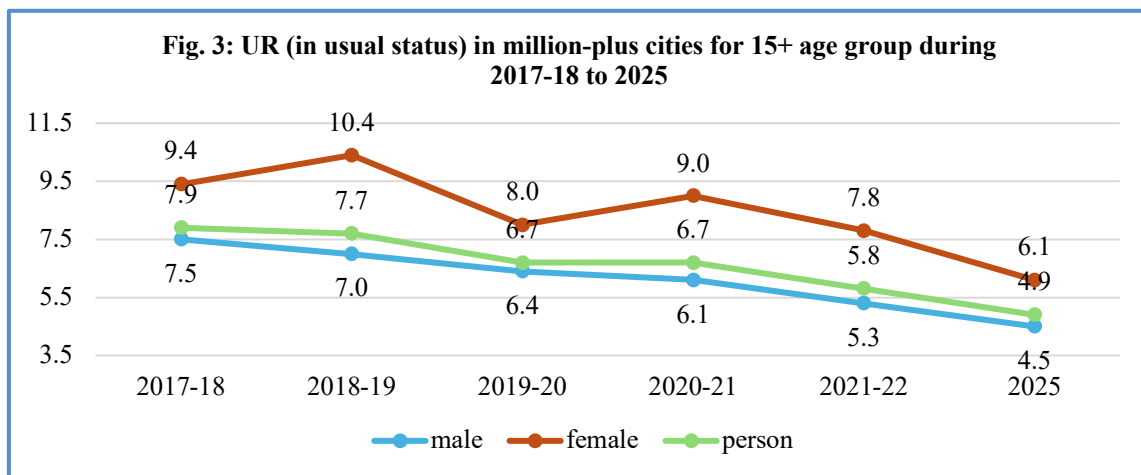
The Worker Population Ratio (WPR), for the age group 15 years and above, in million-plus cities, showed a sustained improvement between 2017–18 and 2025, reflecting a gradual expansion in employment opportunities and workforce absorption in large urban centres. At the person-level, WPR increased from 43.9 per cent in 2017–18 to 49.8 per cent in 2025, representing a gain of 5.9 percentage points. Male WPR increased moderately from 68.6 per cent to 72.6 per cent. Female WPR recorded a more pronounced increase over the period, rising from 17.9 per cent in 2017–18

to 25.5 per cent in 2025. The increase of 7.6 percentage points in female WPR exceeded the gain recorded for males.



Steady reduction in unemployment (in usual status) across million-plus cities:

The unemployment rate (UR), for persons of age 15 years and above, in million-plus cities exhibited a clear declining trend between 2017–18 and 2025, indicating an overall improvement in labour market conditions. At the person-level, the UR declined from 7.9 per cent in 2017–18 to 4.9 per cent in 2025, a reduction of 3.0 percentage points. Male unemployment rate has fallen from 7.5 per cent to 4.5 per cent. The female UR increased from 9.4 per cent in 2017–18 to a peak of 10.4 per cent in 2018–19 before declining substantially to 6.1 per cent in 2025.



Comparative statement in million-plus cities and other urban areas:

Table 1 provides an indicator-wise comparison of labour market outcomes for million-plus cities vis-à-vis other urban areas for persons of age 15 years and above.

Table 1: Comparison of Labour market outcomes for million-plus cities vis-à-vis other urban areas in India

Indicator	Million-plus cities	Other urban areas
Labour Force Participation Rate (in usual status)	52.4%	52.1%
Worker Population Ratio (in usual status)	49.8%	49.6%
Unemployment Rate (in usual status)	4.9%	4.7%
Percentage of persons working as regular wage/ salary employment (in CWS)	58.5%	42.9%
Percentage of persons working as casual labour (in CWS)	6.3%	14.4%
Percentage of workers involved in agricultural sector (in usual status, NIC 2008, Section A)	1.6%	10.1%
Percentage of workers involved in transport, storage and communication sector (in usual status, NIC 2008, Sections H & J)	13.6%	9.2%
Percentage of workers involved in other services (in usual status, NIC 2008, Sections K to U)	31.5%	24.1%

Key Highlights of Unincorporated Enterprise Landscape in million-plus cities

Drawing upon ASUSE 2025 data, this report presents the first comprehensive statistical assessment of the unincorporated economy in 46 million-plus cities of India, offering granular city-level insights based on nationally representative survey data.

The report on the unincorporated enterprise landscape based on ASUSE 2025 data provides valuable insights into the scale, composition and economic significance of enterprises operating across these cities through a set of carefully selected indicators. Taken together, these 46 million-plus cities account for about 13% of the establishments, 16% of the workers, and 21% of the Gross Value Added (GVA) of the unincorporated non-agricultural sector, highlighting the significant contribution of these cities to the country's urban economy.

Urban Concentration of Unincorporated Business and Workforce

- Kolkata, Surat, and Greater Hyderabad emerged as the leading centres of entrepreneurial activity, jointly accounting for more than 22% of the total estimated establishments across all million-plus cities.
- A similar concentration was observed in employment. Greater Hyderabad, Delhi, and Kolkata recorded the highest estimated number of workers in the unincorporated sector, together contributing around 22% of the total workforce employed in unincorporated enterprises across million-plus cities.
- Women entrepreneurs play an important role in the growth of the unincorporated sector in the million-plus cities. In 32 of the 46 cities, more than 20% of the establishments are run by a female proprietor.

Productivity Performance of Million-Plus Cities

- Million-plus cities were observed to exhibit higher productivity levels than other urban areas, as measured by Gross Value Added (GVA) per worker and GVA per establishment (Table 2). This underscores the role of large urban centres as hubs of economic activity, enterprise growth, and value creation.
- Among the million-plus cities, Pimpri Chinchwad, Greater Hyderabad, and Delhi recorded the highest GVA per worker, while Faridabad, Pimpri Chinchwad, and Greater Hyderabad emerged as the top performers in terms of GVA per establishment.

Employment Characteristics and Role of Female Entrepreneurship

- The analysis also highlights the stronger employment-generating capacity of enterprises in million-plus cities. The proportion of establishments employing at least one hired worker {referred to as Hired Worker Establishments (HWEs)} was higher in million-plus cities compared to other urban areas. Similarly, these cities recorded greater participation of women in entrepreneurial activities.
- In 15 out of the 46 million-plus cities, at least one-fourth of the establishments employed one or more hired workers on a fairly regular basis.
- Female workers exhibit significant participation in the workforce across the million-plus cities, with the share of female workers exceeding 30 per cent in as many as 19 of the 46 cities.
- Srinagar, Greater Hyderabad, and Delhi recorded the highest proportions of Hired Worker Establishments, with more than 40% of establishments in each of these cities employing at least one hired worker on a regular basis. Female entrepreneurship was particularly prominent in Surat, Vadodara, and Pune, where women-owned establishments accounted for over 40% of all enterprises.

Comparative statement in million-plus cities and other urban areas: Table 2 provides an indicator-wise comparison of unincorporated enterprises for million-plus cities vis-à-vis other urban areas.

Table 2: Comparison of unincorporated enterprises for million-plus cities vis-à-vis other urban areas in India

Indicators	Million-Plus Cities	Other Urban Areas
GVA per Worker (Rs.) (for market establishments)	2,11,433	1,80,177
GVA per establishment (Rs.) (for market establishment)	4,17,012	3,23,945
Emolument per hired worker (Rs.) (for hired worker establishment)	1,69,130	1,49,536
Percentage of Hired Worker Establishments	24.28	19.04
Percentage of Female owned Proprietary Establishments	27.69	25.27

Endnote

A. Introduction

The Government of India conducts large-scale sample surveys to generate reliable and timely statistics on labour markets and the unincorporated non-agricultural sector. The **Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)** provides estimates of employment and unemployment indicators, while the **Annual Survey of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (ASUSE)** captures the characteristics and performance of unincorporated non-agricultural establishments. Geographically, the surveys cover the rural and urban areas of the whole of India (except some of the villages in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, which are difficult to access).

Considering the need to generate high-frequency labour force indicators with enhanced coverage, the sampling methodology of PLFS was revamped from January 2025. Further, to maintain uniformity with international practices of reporting labour force indicators, the survey period of PLFS has been shifted from the July–June cycle (agricultural year) to the January–December cycle (calendar year) from 2025 onwards.

ASUSE covers unincorporated non-agricultural establishments engaged in Manufacturing, Trade and Other Services sectors across rural and urban India. The survey covers establishments operated under proprietorships, partnerships (excluding Limited Liability Partnerships), cooperatives, societies, trusts and other eligible ownership categories. The sampling design of ASUSE 2025 has been revised to enable quarterly selection of sample units. To facilitate this shift, the sample size has been increased by approximately 1.5 times over the previous survey.

B. Coverage of Million-Plus Cities

Million-plus cities refer to cities having a population of 10 lakh or more as per Census 2011. Non-million-plus urban areas comprise all other urban areas of India. Together, these categories constitute the entire urban region of the country.

The present reports provide estimates for million-plus cities based on data collected during January–December 2025 under PLFS and ASUSE.

C. Sampling Design and Data Collection

Both PLFS and ASUSE follow scientifically designed stratified multi-stage sampling frameworks.

The First Stage Units (FSUs) comprise Census villages in rural areas (Panchayat wards in rural Kerala) and Urban Frame Survey (UFS) blocks in urban areas. In large FSUs, an intermediate stage of sampling is undertaken through hamlet groups in rural areas and sub-blocks in urban areas. The Ultimate Stage Units (USUs) are Establishments in ASUSE and Households in PLFS. Establishments/Households in selected FSUs are first listed and subsequently surveyed as per the prescribed sampling design. Data are collected primarily through oral enquiry for the reference period using Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) on tablets.

D. Sample Size

PLFS 2025

The estimates presented in the report are based on the first-visit samples surveyed during January–December 2025. Out of 10,153 FSUs/urban blocks/sub-units surveyed in urban India, 1,630 FSUs/urban blocks/sub-units pertained to million-plus cities. A total of 1,21,754 households were surveyed in urban India, of which 19,541 households belonged to million-plus cities. The number of persons aged 15 years and above covered was 3,95,080 in urban India and 60,843 in million-plus cities.

ASUSE 2025

Data were collected from 6,70,289 establishments (2,94,144 rural and 3,76,145 urban) spread over 24,153 surveyed FSUs (10,219 rural and 13,934 urban). For the 46 million-plus cities taken together, 39,616 establishments were surveyed from 1,543 FSUs.


E. List of Million Plus Cities

Sl. No.	Million-Plus City	State/UT	Sl. No.	Million-Plus City	State/UT
1.	Greater Visakhapatnam	Andhra Pradesh	24.	Navi Mumbai	Maharashtra
2.	Vijayawada		25.	Pimpri Chinchwad	
3.	Patna	Bihar	26.	Pune	
4.	Raipur	Chhattisgarh	27.	Thane	
			28.	Vasai Virar	
5.	Delhi	Delhi	29.	Amritsar	Punjab
6.	Ahmedabad	Gujarat	30.	Ludhiana	
7.	Rajkot		31.	Jaipur	Rajasthan
8.	Surat		32.	Jodhpur	
9.	Vadodara		33.	Kota	
10.	Faridabad	Haryana	34.	Chennai	Tamil Nadu
11.	Srinagar	Jammu & Kashmir	35.	Coimbatore	
12.	Dhanbad	Jharkhand	36.	Madurai	
13.	Ranchi		37.	Greater Hyderabad	Telangana
14.	Bengaluru	Karnataka	38.	Agra	Uttar Pradesh
15.	Bhopal	Madhya Pradesh	39.	Prayagraj	
16.	Gwalior		40.	Ghaziabad	
17.	Indore		41.	Kanpur	
18.	Jabalpur		42.	Lucknow	
19.	Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar	Maharashtra	43.	Meerut	
20.	Greater Mumbai		44.	Varanasi	
21.	Kalyan-Dombivali		45.	Howrah	West Bengal
22.	Nagpur		46.	Kolkata	
23.	Nashik				

F. Note to Users and Caveats

The estimates presented for million-plus cities are based on sample survey data and should be interpreted with consideration of differences in demographic characteristics, economic structure, industrial composition, local conditions, and sampling variability across cities.

To facilitate informed use of the estimates, measures of statistical reliability, in the form of Relative Standard Errors (RSEs) and confidence intervals, have been provided and may be referred to when interpreting and using the estimates.

<p>The reports on <i>‘Labour Market Dynamics in Million-plus Cities’</i> and <i>‘Urban Unincorporated Enterprise Landscape: ASUSE 2025 Insights from Million-plus Cities’</i> are available on the Ministry's website (https://www.mospi.gov.in).</p>	<p>Scan QR code to access MoSPI Publications/ Reports</p> 
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