



PRESS NOTE

ON

PERIODIC LABOUR FORCE SURVEY (PLFS)

MONTHLY BULLETIN

September, 2026

NATIONAL STATISTICS OFFICE

MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA



**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION
NATIONAL STATISTICS OFFICE**

**Ashwin 23, 1948 (saka)
15th October, 2026**

PRESS NOTE

Urban labour force and workforce participation strengthened

Urban Female labour force participation reached highest level since October 2025

Overall UR remained stable, with a year-on-year decline

Snapshot:

- Overall LFPR (15+ years) stood at 55.5% in September 2026, registering an increase of 0.2 percentage points over September 2025.
- Urban LFPR (15+ years) increased to 50.7% in September 2026, up from 50.4% in August 2026.
- Overall Female LFPR (15+ years) rose by 0.5 percentage points year-on-year to 34.6% in September 2026. Rural Female LFPR increased by 1.0 percentage point to 38.9% over the same period.
- Overall WPR (15+ years) increased by 0.3 percentage points year-on-year to 52.7% in September 2026.
- Overall UR (15+ years) remained stable at 5.0% in September 2026, down by 0.2 percentage points from September 2025.
- Rural Female UR declined by 0.4 percentage points year-on-year to 3.9% in September 2026, the lowest level recorded during 2026.

A. Introduction

The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), conducted by NSO, MoSPI, is the primary source of data on labour force participation and employment and unemployment conditions. The PLFS survey methodology has been modified from January, 2025 to provide monthly and quarterly estimates of labour force indicators for the country.

Monthly results of PLFS are released in the form of Monthly Bulletins. It presents estimates of key labour market indicators viz. Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR), Worker Population Ratio (WPR) and Unemployment Rate (UR) at the all-India level following the Current Weekly Status¹ (CWS) approach.

The Monthly Bulletins for April, 2025 to August, 2026 have already been released. The present Monthly Bulletin for September, 2026 is the eighteenth in the series.

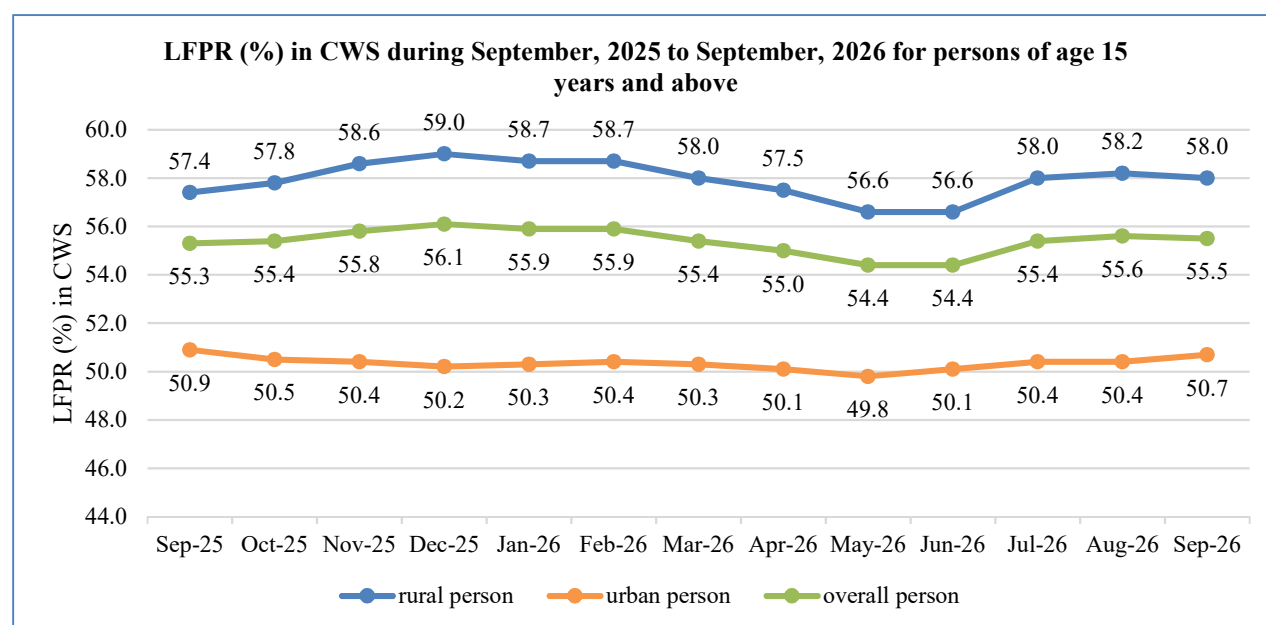
¹ The activity status of a person is determined on the basis of the activities pursued by the person during the specified reference period. The activity status determined on the basis of a reference period of last 7 days preceding the date of survey is known as the Current Weekly Status (CWS) of the person.

Key findings for persons of age 15 years and above following CWS:

- Rise in urban Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR):***

The overall Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) for persons aged 15 years and above remained broadly stable at 55.5% in September, 2026, compared to 55.6% in August, 2026. In rural areas, LFPR was recorded at 58.0% against 58.2% in August, 2026, while the urban LFPR registered a moderate increase of 0.3 percentage points, rising from 50.4% in August, 2026 to 50.7% in September, 2026.

Over the year, the overall LFPR increased by 0.2 percentage points, from 55.3% in September, 2025 to 55.5% in September, 2026. During the same period, rural LFPR increased by 0.6 percentage points, from 57.4% to 58.0%, while urban LFPR registered a marginal decline of 0.2 percentage points, from 50.9% to 50.7%.

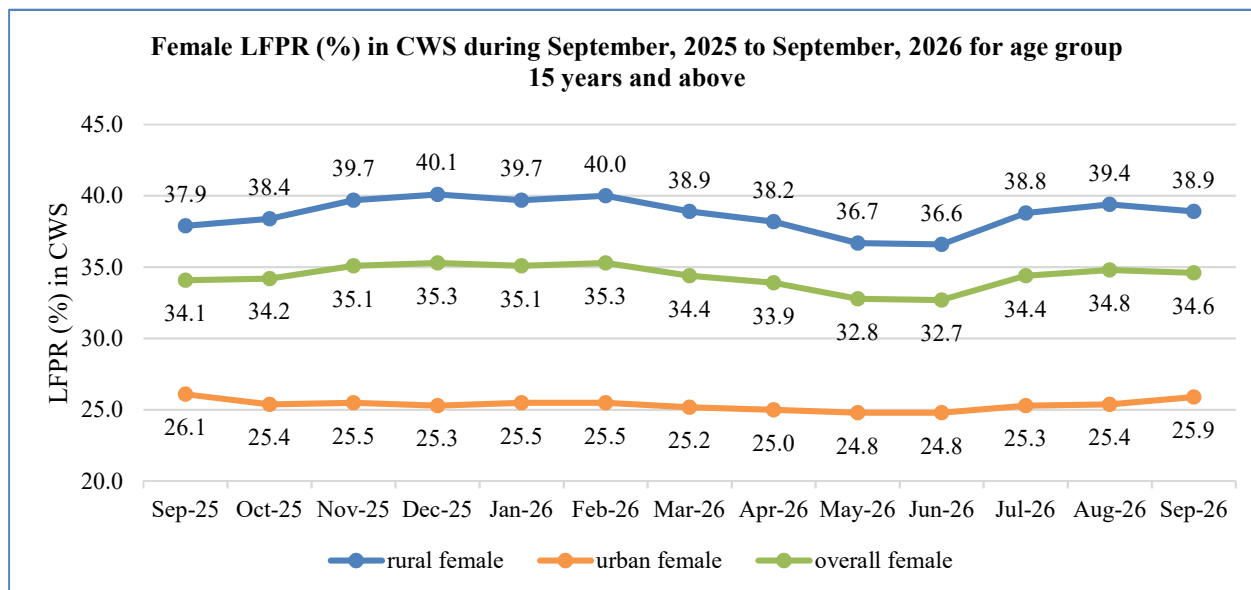


Urban LFPR showed a month-on-month improvement of 0.3 percentage points, reaching 50.7% in September, 2026.

- Female Labour Force Participation gains momentum in urban areas:***

The overall female LFPR stood at 34.6% in September, 2026, compared with 34.8% in August, 2026. Urban female LFPR recorded a notable month-on-month increase of 0.5 percentage points, rising from 25.4% to 25.9% and reaching its highest level since October, 2025. Rural female LFPR estimated at 38.9% in September, 2026 against 39.4% in the previous month.

On a year-on-year basis, overall female LFPR increased by 0.5 percentage points, from 34.1% in September, 2025 to 34.6% in September, 2026. Rural female LFPR registered an increase of 1.0 percentage point, from 37.9% to 38.9%, while urban female LFPR remained broadly stable at around 26% (25.9% in September 2026, compared with 26.1% in previous year).



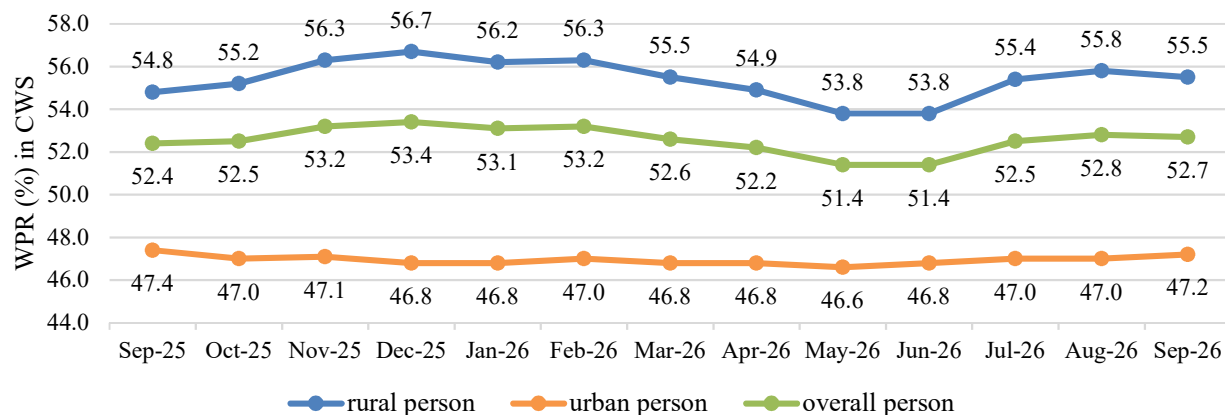
Rural female labour force participation registered a year-on-year increase of 1.0 percentage point, recorded at 38.9% in September, 2026.

- Urban workforce participation strengthened across genders:**

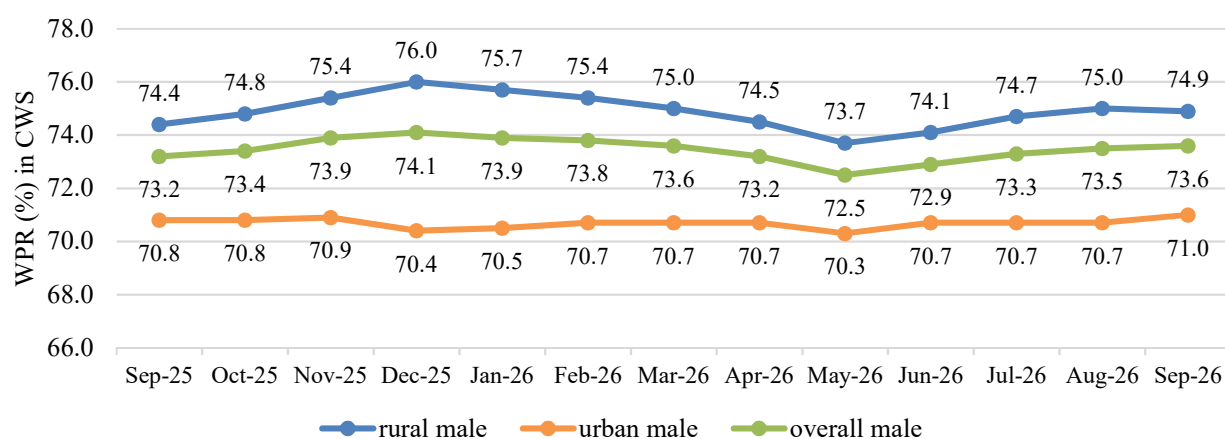
The overall Worker Population Ratio (WPR) remained broadly stable at 52.7% in September, 2026, compared with 52.8% in August 2026. Urban WPR reached its highest level at 47.2% since October, 2025. This improvement was reflected across genders, with urban male WPR rising from 70.7% to 71.0% and urban female WPR increasing from 23.2% to 23.5%. Rural WPR moderated from 55.8% to 55.5% over the month.

On a year-on-year basis, overall WPR increased by 0.3 percentage points, from 52.4% in September, 2025 to 52.7% in September, 2026. Rural WPR recorded an increase of 0.7 percentage points, from 54.8% to 55.5%, while urban WPR remained broadly stable at around 47%. At the all-India level, male WPR rose by 0.4 percentage points to 73.6%, while female WPR increased by 0.5 percentage points to 32.8% over the same period.

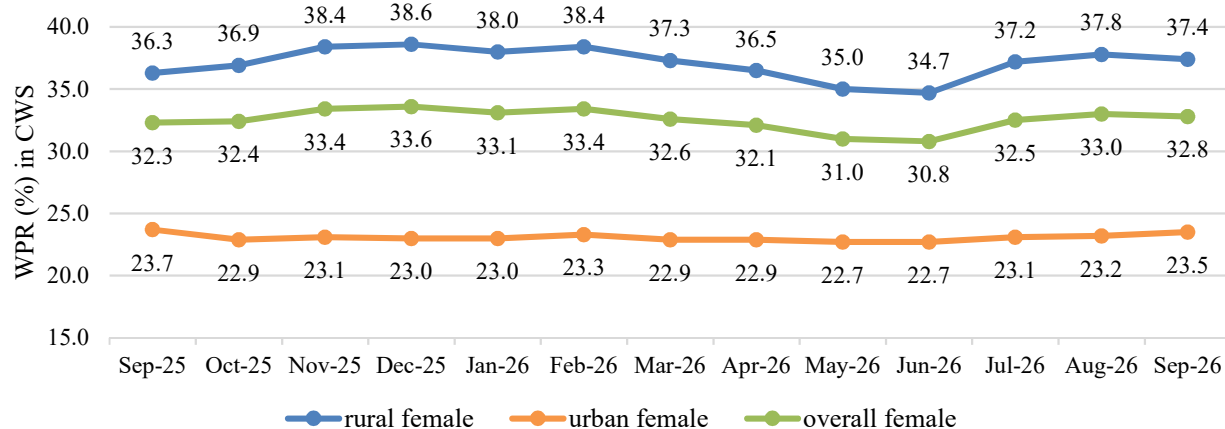
WPR (%) in CWS during September, 2025 to September, 2026 for persons of age 15 years and above



WPR (%) in CWS during September, 2025 to September, 2026 for male of age 15 years and above



WPR (%) in CWS during September, 2025 to September, 2026 for female of age 15 years and above

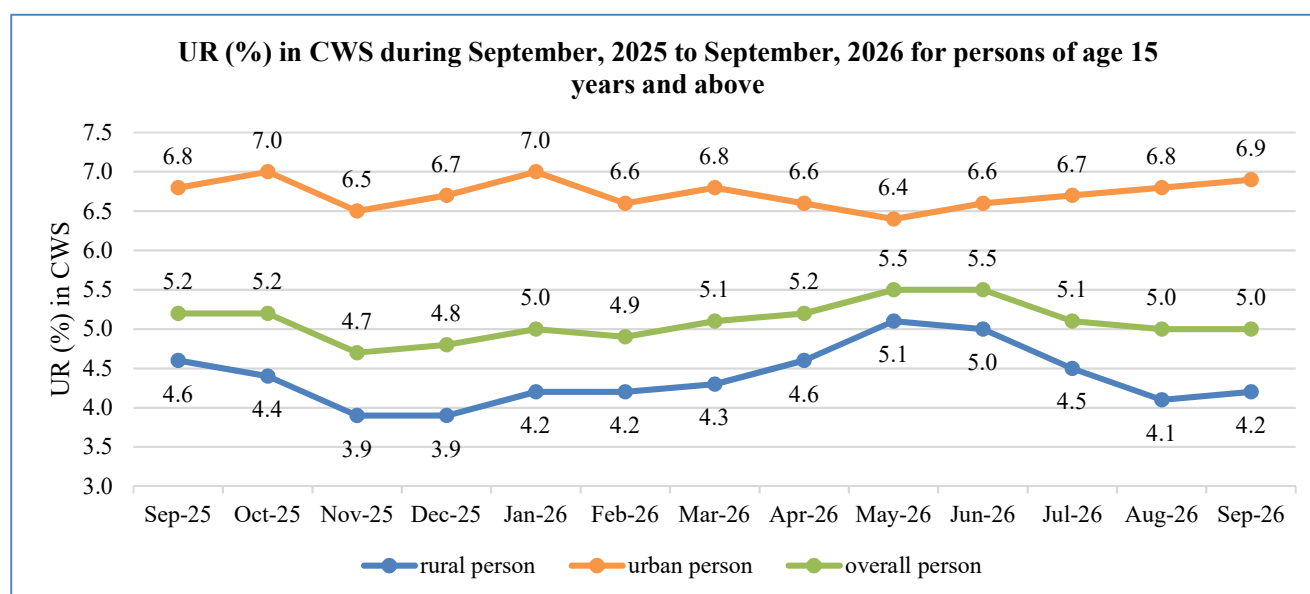


Urban workforce participation strengthened across genders in September, 2026, with both male and female WPR rising by 0.3 percentage points, over the month.

- **Overall Unemployment Rate (UR) remained stable:**

The overall Unemployment Rate (UR) among persons aged 15 years and above remained steady at 5.0% in September, 2026, compared with August, 2026. Rural UR remained broadly stable at 4.2%, against 4.1% in the previous month, while urban UR edged up marginally from 6.8% to 6.9%.

Compared with September, 2025, the overall UR declined by 0.2 percentage points and reached at 5.0% in September, 2026. Rural UR declined by 0.4 percentage points, from 4.6% in September, 2025 to 4.2% in September, 2026. UR in urban areas remained broadly stable from 6.8% in September, 2025 to 6.9% in September, 2026.



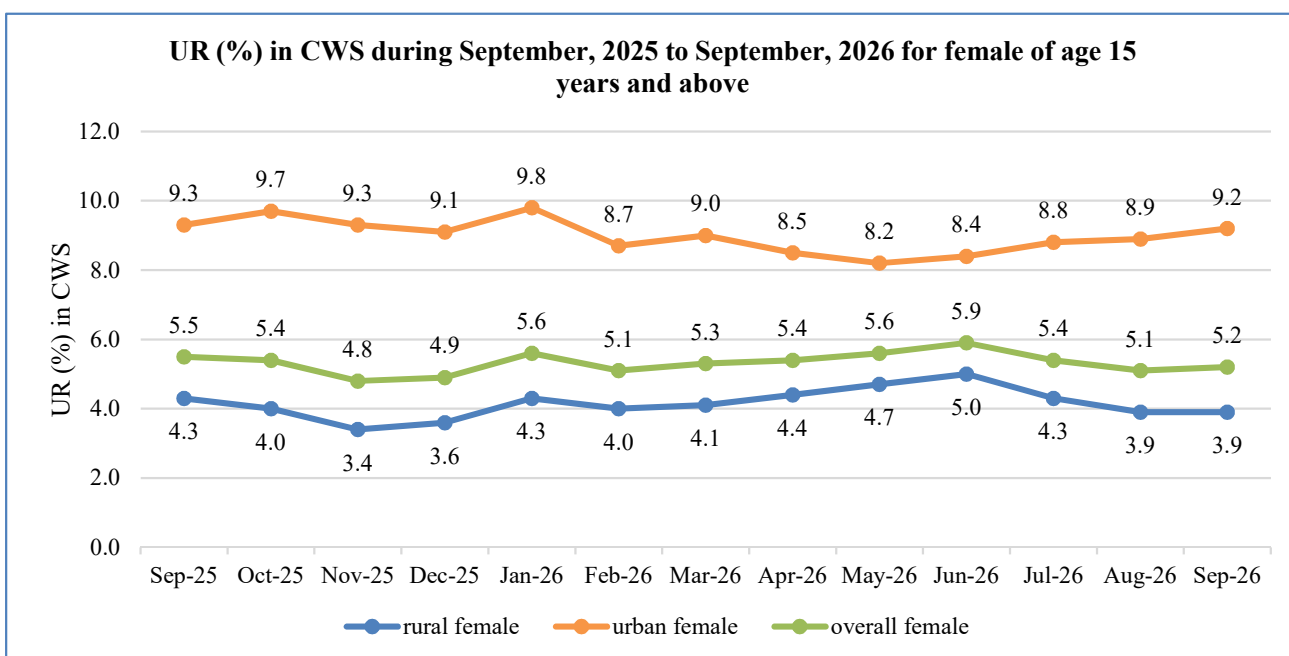
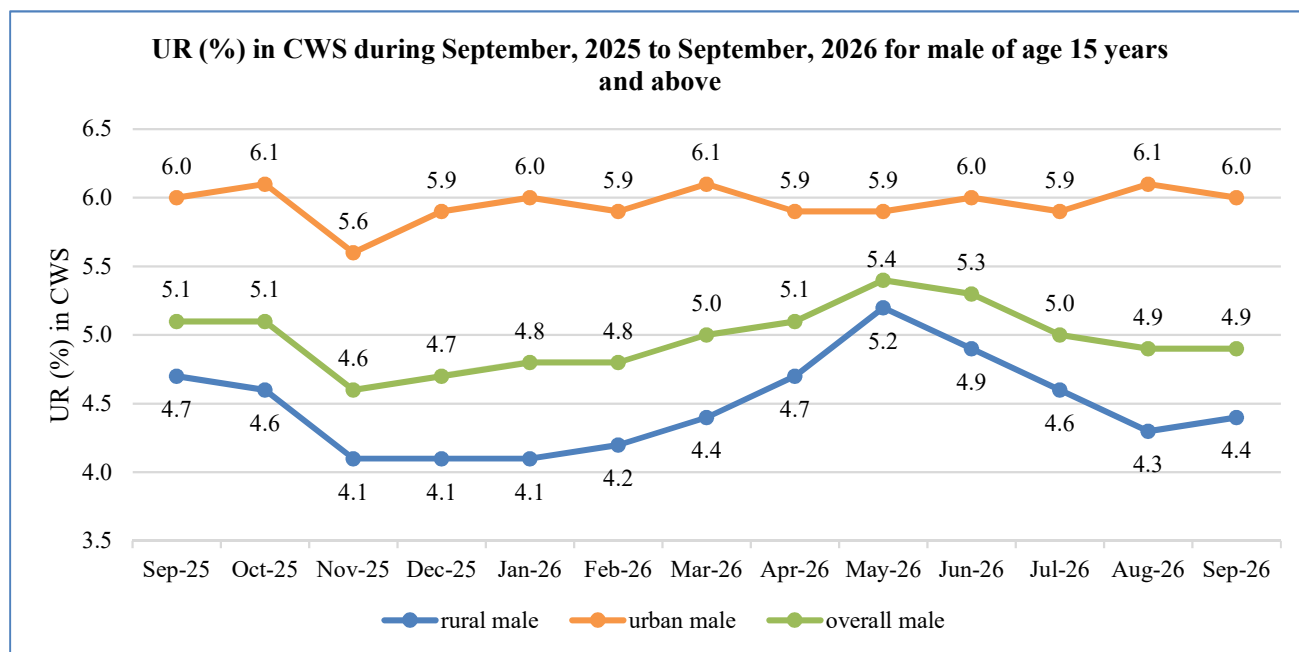
Rural UR recorded a year-on-year declined of 0.4 percentage points, reaching 4.2% in September, 2026

- **Unemployment Rate declined year-on-year for both male and female:**

The overall male UR among persons aged 15 years and above remained stable at 4.9% in September, 2026 compared with the previous month, continuing the downward or stable trend observed since June, 2026. Urban male UR decreased from 6.1% in August, 2026 to 6.0% in September, 2026. Among female, the overall UR remained broadly stable at 5.2%, compared with 5.1% in the previous month. Rural female UR stood at 3.9%, its lowest level recorded during 2026, while urban female UR increased marginally from 8.9% to 9.2%.

A year-to-year comparison indicates that overall male UR declined by 0.2 percentage points to 4.9% in September, 2026, while overall female UR decreased by 0.3 percentage points over the

same period. The decline was particularly evident in rural areas, where male UR decreased by 0.3 percentage points, from 4.7% to 4.4%, and female UR fell by 0.4 percentage points, from 4.3% to 3.9%.



Unemployment rates declined year-on-year for both genders, with rural female UR reaching its lowest level during 2026.

At the all-India level, the monthly estimates are based on information collected from a total number of 3,70,513 persons surveyed.

persons surveyed in rural areas
2,11,333

persons surveyed in urban areas
1,59,180

The Monthly Bulletin for September, 2026 is available on the Ministry's website (<https://www.mospi.gov.in>).

Scan QR code to access MoSPI Publications/ Reports