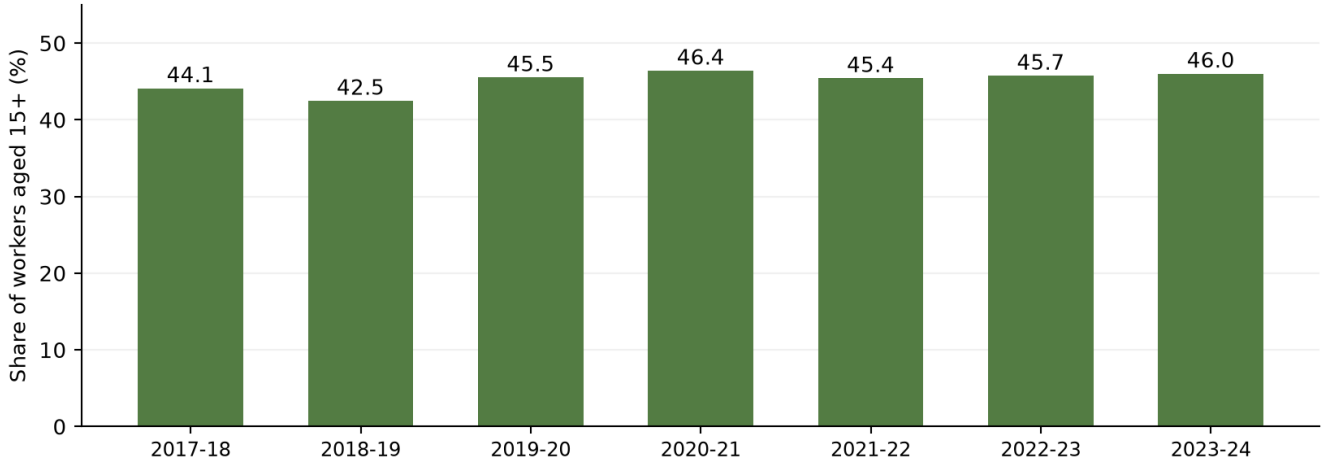
Agricultural employment in India

The only two rises in 34 years of ILO's modelled series for India, 1991 to 2025, came in 2020 (4.02 points) and 2023 (0.65 points). On MoSPI's own survey, agriculture's share of workers aged 15 and over rose from 42.47 per cent in 2018-19 to 46.01 per cent in 2023-24.

Between 2018-19 and 2023-24, agriculture's share of India's workers aged 15 and over rose from 42.47 per cent to 46.01 per cent, counting both main and subsidiary work, on MoSPI's own PLFS unit records. Unpaid helpers on family farms account for more than the whole rise: their share of all workers went from 10.87 per cent to 16.33 per cent, while the share of all other farm workers fell from 31.61 per cent to 29.68 per cent.

In this report: the reversal between 2018-19 and 2023-24; comparison with China; India and China from 1960; political periods; income growth.



Agriculture's share of workers aged 15 and over rose from 42.47 per cent in 2018-19 to 46.01 per cent in 2023-24, an increase of 3.54 percentage points. Both are July to June survey years.

China has moved workers out of agriculture much faster

Country	1991	2025
India	63.1%	41.6%
China	59.6%	21.7%

On the same ILO modelled series, India's 2025 agricultural share remained almost twice China's. Both figures come from the same ILO modelled series, which Our World in Data publishes for India and China in one indicator.

On MoSPI's own surveys, each read within its own design, agriculture's share of workers aged 15 and over fell by 9.48 points in the seven years from 2004-05 to 2011-12 (NSS, 58.32 to 48.84 per cent). It rose by about 1.9 points in the six years from 2017-18 to 2023-24 (PLFS, 44.11 to 46.01 per cent). The two surveys differ in design, so only the change within each survey is compared, and never a level across them.

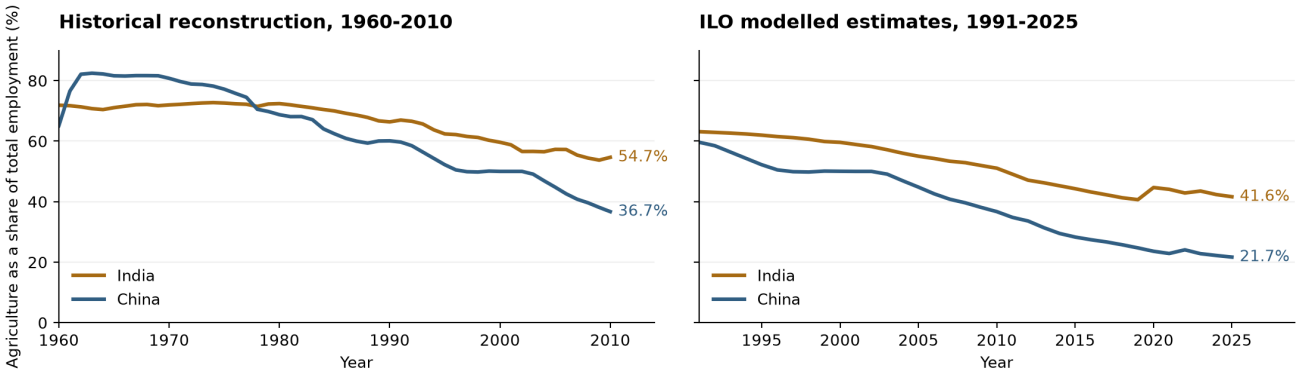
Primary sources: MoSPI PLFS microdata; PLFS 2025 release and comparability warning; RBI KLEMS workbook; Mehrotra, 1 October 2026; OWID sector table.

Sources: MoSPI PLFS/NSS unit data; office calculations, 29 October 2026. GGDC 10-Sector Database, January 2015. OWID / ILO / World Bank, 2026.

India and China from 1960

In this report: Historical reconstruction; modern ILO estimates; the annual record.

India and China: the movement out of agriculture



Sources: GGDC 10-Sector Database (January 2015), checked against OWID historical data; ILO via World Bank WDI (8 October 2026), checked against OWID.
Historical annual values include reconstructed estimates. Sources overlap but differ in level, so the two panels are not spliced into a single series.

Annual values cover every year from 1960 to 2025 across two sources. The historical GGDC reconstruction is retained separately from ILO modelled employment shares, which begin in 1991.

Year	Historical India	Historical China	ILO India	ILO China
1960	71.9%	65.1%		
1970	72.0%	80.8%		
1980	72.4%	68.7%		
1990	66.4%	60.1%		
1991	67.0%	59.7%	63.1%	59.6%
2000	59.6%	50.0%	59.6%	50.0%
2010	54.7%	36.7%	51.1%	36.7%
2019			40.7%	24.7%
2020			44.7%	23.6%
2025			41.6%	21.7%

Historical annual values include estimates between benchmark years. The sources differ in their overlap: India in 1991 is 67.0% in GGDC and 63.1% in ILO. A source change must not be read as an economic change.

In ILO’s modelled series, India’s share rose from 40.65 per cent in 2019 to 44.68 per cent in 2020, and in 2025 it stood at 41.63 per cent, still above its 2019 level. China’s share was 24.72 per cent in 2019 and 21.68 per cent in 2025.

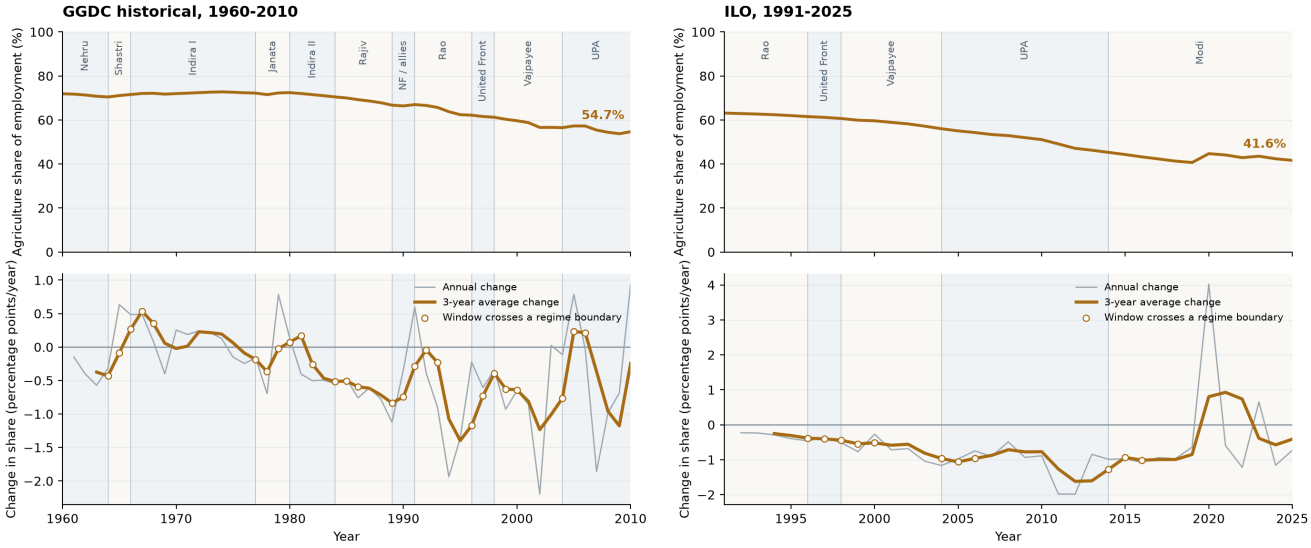
Sources: GGDC 10-Sector Database, January 2015; GGDC country methods, India p.79 and China pp.74-75; OWID historical series; ILO via World Bank WDI.

Sources: MoSPI PLFS/NSS unit data; office calculations, 29 October 2026. GGDC 10-Sector Database, January 2015. OWID / ILO / World Bank, 2026.

India: comparison across political periods

In this report: Employment shares; annual and three-year changes; regime averages; sensitivity to transition years.

India: agricultural employment across political periods



Negative rates: agriculture's share is falling. Positive rates: its share is rising. Bold line = (share[t] - share[t-3]) / 3.
Light shades and vertical lines mark broad political periods. Transition-year observations cover mixed tenures; shaded periods do not establish causation.
Sources: GGDC 10-Sector Database (2015), recalculated and checked against OWID; ILO via World Bank WDI / OWID (2026). Historical estimates include reconstructed years.
The two sources overlap but differ; no rates cross the source boundary. China: Deng is a reform-era convention; India: short coalition governments are grouped.

The bold line averages three annual changes: (share in year t - share in year t-3) / 3. The faint line shows each annual change. Rates are percentage points per year. Negative values mean a falling agricultural employment share. Hollow markers flag windows that cross a political boundary.

Modern ILO estimates: comparison within India

Political period	Boundary observations	Opening / closing (%)	Average pp/year	Excluding transitions: years	Sensitivity pp/year
P.V. Narasimha Rao	1991-1996	63.13 / 61.51	-0.32	1992-1995	-0.31
United Front period	1996-1998	61.51 / 60.65	-0.43	Too short	Too short
Vajpayee / NDA	1998-2004	60.65 / 56.00	-0.77	1999-2003	-0.68
Manmohan Singh / UPA	2004-2014	56.00 / 45.25	-1.07	2005-2013	-1.10
Modi / NDA	2014-2025	45.25 / 41.63	-0.33	2015-2025	-0.27

A regime average is the endpoint change divided by elapsed years. It is not the average of overlapping smoothed windows. The sensitivity column excludes the calendar years in which leadership changes; short periods may have too few observations. Boundary observations cover mixed tenures. The first observed year and the latest available year are retained.

The ILO series shows a faster decline during the UPA boundary window, 2004-2014, than during 2014-2025 under Modi. Excluding transition years leaves that ordering unchanged. The later period includes the pandemic reversal; a single average conceals it. The workbook contains every historical regime and both measures.

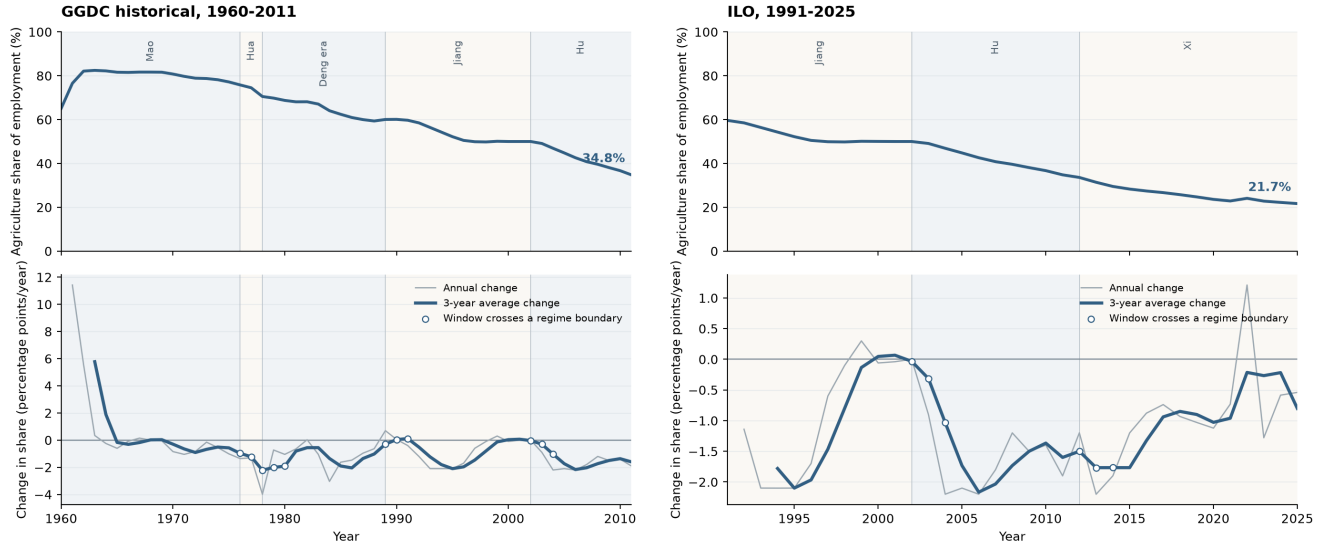
Political shading describes timing; it does not estimate a leader's causal effect. Shares can fall even as agricultural headcounts rise. Historical reconstructions and modern ILO estimates remain separate, including in overlap years.

Sources: MoSPI PLFS/NSS unit data; office calculations, 29 October 2026. GGDC 10-Sector Database, January 2015. OWID / ILO / World Bank, 2026.

China: comparison across political periods

In this report: Employment shares; annual and three-year changes; regime averages; sensitivity to transition years.

China: agricultural employment across political periods



Negative rates: agriculture's share is falling. Positive rates: its share is rising. Bold line = (share[t] - share[t-3]) / 3.
Light shades and vertical lines mark broad political periods. Transition-year observations cover mixed tenures; shaded periods do not establish causation.
Sources: GGDC 10-Sector Database (2015), recalculated and checked against OWID; ILO via World Bank WDI / OWID (2026). Historical estimates include reconstructed years.
The two sources overlap but differ; no rates cross the source boundary. China: Deng is a reform-era convention; India: short coalition governments are grouped.

The bold line averages three annual changes: (share in year t - share in year t-3) / 3. The faint line shows each annual change. Rates are percentage points per year. Negative values mean a falling agricultural employment share. Hollow markers flag windows that cross a political boundary.

Modern ILO estimates: comparison within China

Political period	Boundary observations	Opening / closing (%)	Average pp/year	Excluding transitions: years	Sensitivity pp/year
Jiang Zemin	1991-2002	59.64 / 50.00	-0.88	1991-2001	-0.96
Hu Jintao	2002-2012	50.00 / 33.60	-1.64	2003-2011	-1.79
Xi Jinping	2012-2025	33.60 / 21.68	-0.92	2013-2025	-0.81

A regime average is the endpoint change divided by elapsed years. It is not the average of overlapping smoothed windows. The sensitivity column excludes the calendar years in which leadership changes; short periods may have too few observations. Boundary observations cover mixed tenures. The first observed year and the latest available year are retained.

The ILO series shows its fastest decline among these three leadership windows during Hu Jintao's period. The Jiang window begins in 1991 because ILO coverage starts then. China uses broad leadership eras. The Deng reform-era boundary at 1978 does not mean that Hua ceased holding office that year.

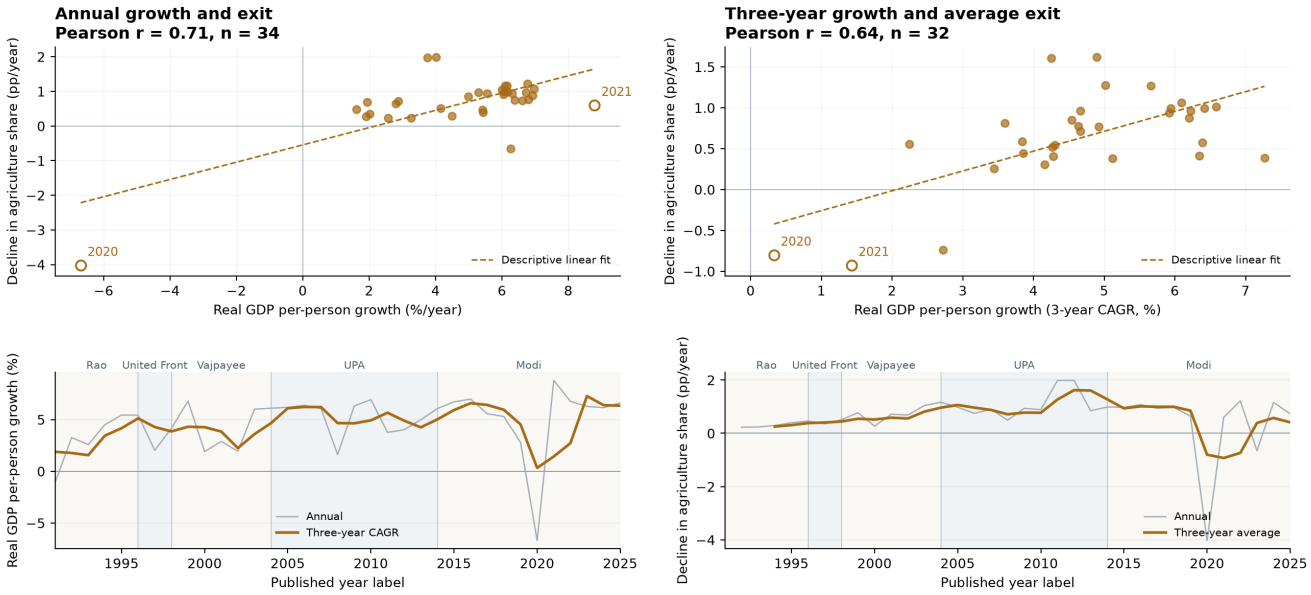
Political shading describes timing; it does not estimate a leader's causal effect. Shares can fall even as agricultural headcounts rise. Historical reconstructions and modern ILO estimates remain separate, including in overlap years.

Sources: MoSPI PLFS/NSS unit data; office calculations, 29 October 2026. GGDC 10-Sector Database, January 2015. OWID / ILO / World Bank, 2026.

India: income growth and the shift from agriculture

In this report: Annual and three-year associations; pandemic sensitivity; timing and interpretation.

India: income growth and the shift away from agriculture



Annual correlation excluding 2020-2021: r = 0.24 (n = 32). Positive exit means a falling agriculture share; negative exit means a rising share. Three-year windows overlap. The fit describes association, not a causal effect. Light shades mark political periods.

Source: house World Bank WDI, 8 October 2026. Real GDP per person: NY.GDP.PCAP.KD, checked against OWID; agriculture share: ILO modelled estimates. India uses fiscal-year national accounts, China calendar-year accounts. Published year labels are retained; one-year timing sensitivities are reported separately.

Matched comparison	Employment years	Pairs	Pearson r	Spearman rho
Annual changes	1992-2025	34	0.71	0.46
Annual excluding 2020-2021	1992-2025	32	0.24	0.46
Annual pre-pandemic	1992-2019	28	0.35	0.55
Three-year overlapping	1994-2025	32	0.64	0.49
Three-year excluding pandemic windows	1994-2025	28	0.32	0.44
Three-year non-overlapping	1994-2024	11	0.74	0.66

Positive r means faster real GDP-per-person growth coincides with a faster decline in agriculture's employment share. Exit is measured in percentage points per year. GDP is an output-based income proxy. Three-year observations overlap; the non-overlapping calculation uses eleven complete windows anchored in 1991. Pandemic exclusions leave gaps within the displayed year ranges.

India's full-sample annual association weakens sharply when the pandemic years are excluded. Its rank correlation changes less, showing how much the unusually large pandemic movements affect the linear result. Income-year timing shifts also change the result substantially.

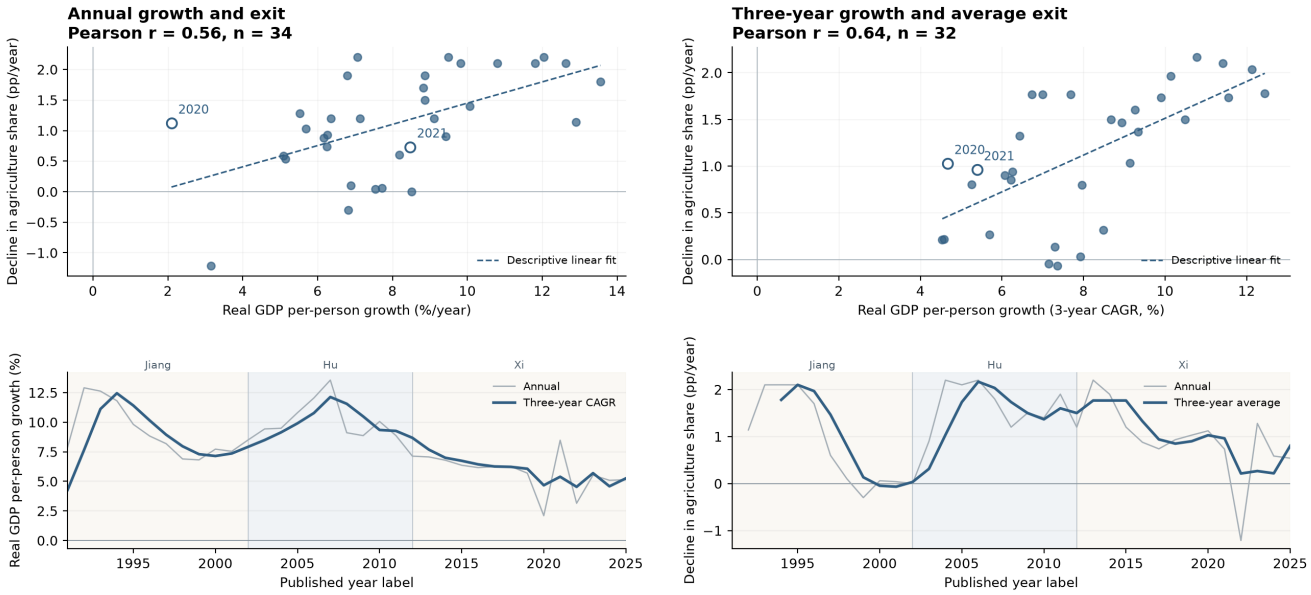
India national accounts use fiscal years and China uses calendar years. Published year labels are retained. Employment shares are ILO modelled estimates. Real GDP per person is World Bank NY.GDP.PCAP.KD, from the house release dated 8 October 2026 and checked against OWID.

Sources: MoSPI PLFS/NSS unit data; office calculations, 29 October 2026. GGDC 10-Sector Database, January 2015. OWID / ILO / World Bank, 2026.

China: income growth and the shift from agriculture

In this report: Annual and three-year associations; pandemic sensitivity; timing and interpretation.

China: income growth and the shift away from agriculture



Annual correlation excluding 2020-2021: r = 0.61 (n = 32). Positive exit means a falling agriculture share; negative exit means a rising share. Three-year windows overlap. The fit describes association, not a causal effect. Light shades mark political periods.

Source: house World Bank WDI, 8 October 2026. Real GDP per person: NY.GDP.PCAP.KD, checked against OWID; agriculture share: ILO modelled estimates. India uses fiscal-year national accounts, China calendar-year accounts. Published year labels are retained; one-year timing sensitivities are reported separately.

Matched comparison	Employment years	Pairs	Pearson r	Spearman rho
Annual changes	1992-2025	34	0.56	0.56
Annual excluding 2020-2021	1992-2025	32	0.61	0.58
Annual pre-pandemic	1992-2019	28	0.51	0.52
Three-year overlapping	1994-2025	32	0.64	0.65
Three-year excluding pandemic windows	1994-2025	28	0.62	0.63
Three-year non-overlapping	1994-2024	11	0.63	0.69

Positive r means faster real GDP-per-person growth coincides with a faster decline in agriculture's employment share. Exit is measured in percentage points per year. GDP is an output-based income proxy. Three-year observations overlap; the non-overlapping calculation uses eleven complete windows anchored in 1991. Pandemic exclusions leave gaps within the displayed year ranges.

China's positive annual association remains under pandemic exclusion, ranks and one-year timing shifts. This consistency supports a descriptive link between growth and structural change; it does not identify a causal effect.

India national accounts use fiscal years and China uses calendar years. Published year labels are retained. Employment shares are ILO modelled estimates. Real GDP per person is World Bank NY.GDP.PCAP.KD, from the house release dated 8 October 2026 and checked against OWID.

Sources: MoSPI PLFS/NSS unit data; office calculations, 29 October 2026. GGDC 10-Sector Database, January 2015. OWID / ILO / World Bank, 2026.