

More than six in ten graduates have no work, or a job below their degree

In 2025, 62.5 per cent of graduates in India's labour force had no work, or worked in a job below graduate level, on MoSPI's own survey data.

The share rose from 55.8 per cent in 2017-18 to 58.7 per cent in 2020-21.

62.5 per cent

of graduates in the labour force had no work, or a job below graduate level, in 2025

Of every 1,000 graduates in the labour force in 2025, 625 had no work or a job below graduate level. In 2017-18 the figure was 558, and in 2020-21 it was 587.

Shri Ajay Maken's office worked out every figure from MoSPI's unit-level records, and this brief is dated 16 October 2026.

Sources: Read on 15 October 2026. MoSPI, PLFS unit-level data, [microdata.gov.in catalogue 284 \(2025\)](https://microdata.gov.in/catalogue/284), [204 \(2017-18\)](https://microdata.gov.in/catalogue/204), [206 \(2020-21\)](https://microdata.gov.in/catalogue/206).

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This brief asks how many of India's graduates have no work, or work in a job below graduate level. MoSPI's own survey records answer that question, round by round, from 2017-18 to 2025.

Four findings from the Government's own data

In 2025, 62.5 per cent of graduates in India's labour force had no work, or worked in a job below graduate level, on MoSPI's own survey data.

Finding	What the Government's own data show
Six in ten	This share counts the graduates who had no work, together with those whose job was below graduate level. In 2025 it was 62.5 per cent. Between 2017-18 and 2020-21 it rose from 55.8 per cent to 58.7 per cent.
Of every 1,000 graduates	Of every 1,000 graduates in the labour force in 2025, 625 had no work or a job below graduate level. In 2017-18 the figure was 558, and in 2020-21 it was 587.
Women and men graduates	In 2025 the share was 59.6 per cent for women graduates and 63.5 per cent for men graduates. For women it rose from 50.1 per cent in 2017-18 to 55.0 per cent in 2020-21, and for men from 57.2 per cent to 59.7 per cent over the same rounds.
The Government's own grouping	The Government's own Economic Survey 2024-25 groups these jobs the same way. Its footnote 110 lists the semi-skilled jobs, as follows: "Semi-skilled occupations include clerks, skilled agricultural and fisherman, plant and machine operators, assembly workers, craft and related trades workers, service workers, shop and market sales workers".

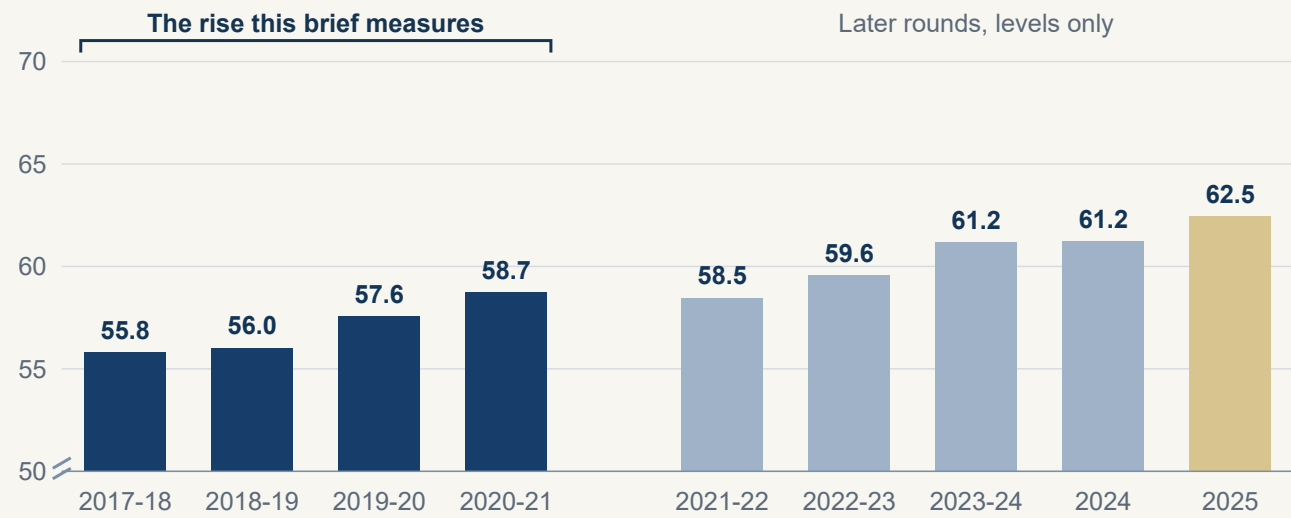
Sources: Read on 15 October 2026. MoSPI, PLFS unit-level data, microdata.gov.in catalogue [204](#) (2017-18), [216](#) (2018-19), [217](#) (2019-20), [206](#) (2020-21), [214](#) (2021-22), [210](#) (2022-23), [213](#) (2023-24), [254](#) (2024), [284](#) (2025); Ministry of Finance, Economic Survey 2024-25, Chapter 12, Table XII.4 and footnote 110.

Share of Unemployed and Underemployed Graduates

This share counts the graduates who had no work, together with those whose job was below graduate level. In 2025 it was 62.5 per cent. Between 2017-18 and 2020-21 it rose from 55.8 per cent to 58.7 per cent.

Share of Unemployed and Underemployed Graduates

Per cent of graduates in the labour force (the axis starts at 50)



Source: MoSPI, PLFS unit-level data, worked out by the office of Shri Ajay Maken.

Each bar shows the share of graduates in the labour force who had no work, or who worked below graduate level. The brief measures the rise only across the four rounds from 2017-18 to 2020-21, and the later bars are levels. The axis starts at 50 per cent, and the gold bar is 2025.

Round	Period	No work or below graduate level, per cent
PLFS 2017-18	July 2017 to June 2018	55.8
PLFS 2018-19	July 2018 to June 2019	56.0
PLFS 2019-20	July 2019 to June 2020	57.6
PLFS 2020-21	July 2020 to June 2021	58.7
PLFS 2021-22	July 2021 to June 2022	58.5
PLFS 2022-23	July 2022 to June 2023	59.6
PLFS 2023-24	July 2023 to June 2024	61.2
PLFS 2024	January to December 2024	61.2
PLFS 2025	January to December 2025	62.5

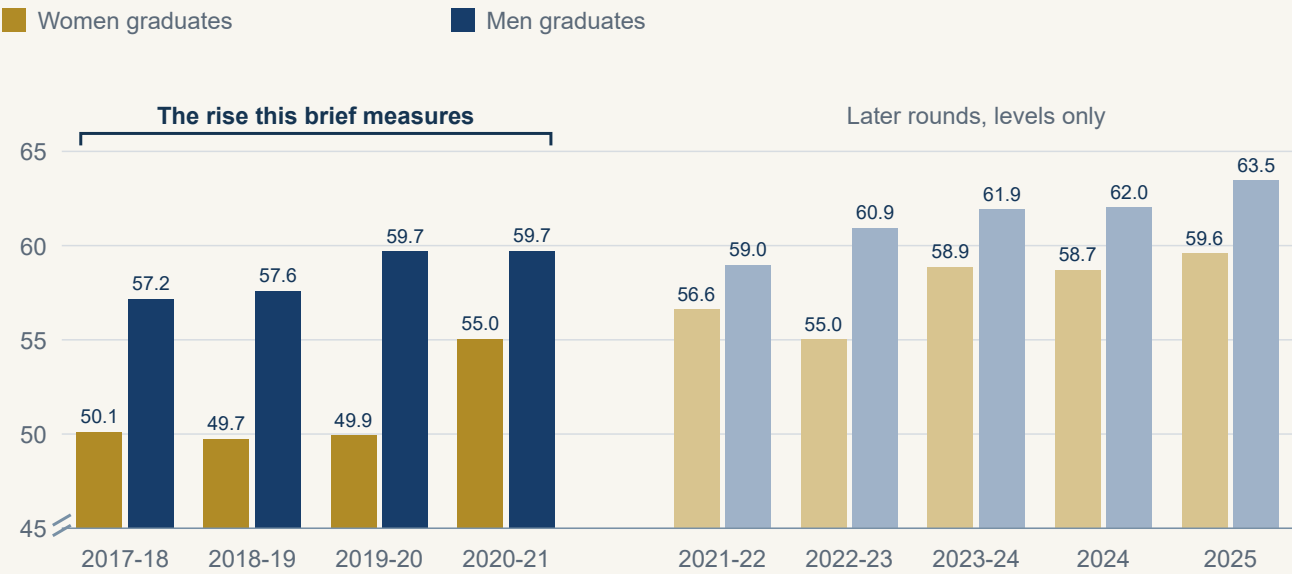
Sources: Read on 15 October 2026. MoSPI, PLFS unit-level data, microdata.gov.in catalogue [204](#) (2017-18), [216](#) (2018-19), [217](#) (2019-20), [206](#) (2020-21), [214](#) (2021-22), [210](#) (2022-23), [213](#) (2023-24), [254](#) (2024), [284](#) (2025).

Share of Unemployed and Underemployed Graduates: Women and Men

In 2025 the share was 59.6 per cent for women graduates and 63.5 per cent for men graduates. For women it rose from 50.1 per cent in 2017-18 to 55.0 per cent in 2020-21, and for men from 57.2 per cent to 59.7 per cent over the same rounds.

Share of Unemployed and Underemployed Graduates

Per cent of women and of men graduates in the labour force (the axis starts at 45)



Source: MoSPI, PLFS unit-level data, worked out by the office of Shri Ajay Maken.

The gold bars are women graduates, and the blue bars are men graduates. The brief measures the rise only across the four rounds from 2017-18 to 2020-21, and the later bars are levels. The axis starts at 45 per cent.

Round	Period	Women graduates, per cent	Men graduates, per cent
PLFS 2017-18	July 2017 to June 2018	50.1	57.2
PLFS 2018-19	July 2018 to June 2019	49.7	57.6
PLFS 2019-20	July 2019 to June 2020	49.9	59.7
PLFS 2020-21	July 2020 to June 2021	55.0	59.7
PLFS 2021-22	July 2021 to June 2022	56.6	59.0
PLFS 2022-23	July 2022 to June 2023	55.0	60.9
PLFS 2023-24	July 2023 to June 2024	58.9	61.9
PLFS 2024	January to December 2024	58.7	62.0
PLFS 2025	January to December 2025	59.6	63.5

Sources: Read on 15 October 2026. MoSPI, PLFS unit-level data, microdata.gov.in catalogue [204](#), (2017-18), [216](#) (2018-19), [217](#) (2019-20), [206](#) (2020-21), [214](#) (2021-22), [210](#) (2022-23), [213](#) (2023-24), [254](#) (2024), [284](#) (2025).

The Government's own grouping

The Government's own Economic Survey 2024-25 groups these jobs the same way. Its footnote 110 lists the semi-skilled jobs, as follows: "Semi-skilled occupations include clerks, skilled agricultural and fisherman, plant and machine operators, assembly workers, craft and related trades workers, service workers, shop and market sales workers".

The Survey calls graduates in such jobs "underemployed in roles below their educational qualifications", and this brief uses the word underemployed in that sense.

NCO division	Occupations	How this brief counts it
1	Managers	not counted as below graduate level
2	Professionals	not counted as below graduate level
3	Technicians and Associate Professionals	not counted as below graduate level
4	Clerks/Clerical Support Workers	below graduate level
5	Service and Sales Workers	below graduate level
6	Skilled Agricultural, Forestry and Fishery Workers	below graduate level
7	Craft and Related Trades Workers	below graduate level
8	Plant and Machine Operators, and Assemblers	below graduate level
9	Elementary Occupations	below graduate level

This brief counts divisions 4 to 9 as below graduate level, which follows the Survey's own grouping. Like the Survey's table, it counts division 3, technicians and associate professionals, as work that matches a graduate degree.

Sources: Read on 15 October 2026. [Ministry of Finance, Economic Survey, 2024-25, Chapter 12, Table XII.4 and footnote 110.](#)

Annexure: how the figures were made

MoSPI publishes the unit-level records of the Periodic Labour Force Survey on microdata.gov.in. This brief works out every figure from those records. Each person carries the survey's own weight, so that the figures describe India and not only the people interviewed.

Before any figure was used, the same code reproduced MoSPI's published unemployment rate for graduates. It matched in every annual round from 2017-18 to 2023-24 and in 2025, each time to one decimal. MoSPI published no rate for graduates for calendar 2024, so the code was checked there against MoSPI's published rates for all persons.

Every rise this brief states is measured from 2017-18 to 2020-21, and each is more than twice its standard error, so it is larger than sampling error alone would be likely to produce. The other rounds are printed as levels.

Every figure is rounded once, to one decimal, from the unrounded result. The downloadable files carry each round's figure, together with the address of its MoSPI data.

Round	Rates checked	Result
PLFS 2017-18	graduates, women graduates and all persons	matches to one decimal
PLFS 2018-19	graduates, women graduates and all persons	matches to one decimal
PLFS 2019-20	graduates, women graduates and all persons	matches to one decimal
PLFS 2020-21	graduates, women graduates and all persons	matches to one decimal
PLFS 2021-22	graduates, women graduates and all persons	matches to one decimal
PLFS 2022-23	graduates, women graduates and all persons	matches to one decimal
PLFS 2023-24	graduates, women graduates and all persons	matches to one decimal
PLFS 2024	all persons, men and women, participation and the worker ratio	matches to one decimal
PLFS 2025	graduates, women graduates and all persons	matches to one decimal

Each row names what was checked against MoSPI's own published report for that round, and it gives the result.

Annexure: sources

Every figure in this brief is worked out from MoSPI's unit-level records of the Periodic Labour Force Survey. Each source below is linked to its public address.

Source	Where
MoSPI, PLFS July 2017 to June 2018, unit-level data (microdata.gov.in catalogue 204)	the catalogue page
MoSPI, PLFS July 2018 to June 2019, unit-level data (microdata.gov.in catalogue 216)	the catalogue page
MoSPI, PLFS July 2019 to June 2020, unit-level data (microdata.gov.in catalogue 217)	the catalogue page
MoSPI, PLFS July 2020 to June 2021, unit-level data (microdata.gov.in catalogue 206)	the catalogue page
MoSPI, PLFS July 2021 to June 2022, unit-level data (microdata.gov.in catalogue 214)	the catalogue page
MoSPI, PLFS July 2022 to June 2023, unit-level data (microdata.gov.in catalogue 210)	the catalogue page
MoSPI, PLFS July 2023 to June 2024, unit-level data (microdata.gov.in catalogue 213)	the catalogue page
MoSPI, PLFS January to December 2024, unit-level data (microdata.gov.in catalogue 254)	the catalogue page
MoSPI, PLFS January to December 2025, unit-level data (microdata.gov.in catalogue 284)	the catalogue page
MoSPI, Annual Report, PLFS, July 2017 to June 2018	pdf:283-284
MoSPI, Annual Report, PLFS, July 2018 to June 2019	pdf:252-253
MoSPI, Annual Report, PLFS, July 2019 to June 2020	pdf:261-262
MoSPI, Annual Report, PLFS, July 2020 to June 2021	pdf:267-268
MoSPI, Annual Report, PLFS, July 2021 to June 2022	pdf:274-275
MoSPI, Annual Report, PLFS, July 2022 to June 2023	pdf:140-141
MoSPI, Annual Report, PLFS, July 2023 to June 2024	pdf:208-209
MoSPI, Key employment and unemployment indicators, PLFS, calendar year 2024	pdf:5
MoSPI, Annual Report, PLFS, 2025	pdf:227-228
Ministry of Finance, Economic Survey 2024-25, Chapter 12, Table XII.4 and footnote 110	pdf:443-445

The data come from the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Periodic Labour Force Survey, unit-level data. The analysis is this brief's own, and so is any error in it.