Hired workers' share in unincorporated enterprises falls to 23.22 per cent, steepest yearly drop of 2026 so far

MoSPI's Quarterly Bulletin of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises for July to September 2026, which MoSPI released on 23 November 2026, read for who does the work in these enterprises.

Hired workers, who work for pay in units that they do not own, made up 23.22 per cent of all workers in India's unincorporated enterprises in July to September 2026. A year earlier the share was 25.91 per cent. It fell by 2.69 percentage points in a year, as MoSPI's bulletin of 23 November 2026 shows.

Hired workers' share of all workers dropped by 2.69 points, which is the largest fall that the three quarters of 2026 show, and only these have a figure a year earlier. MoSPI's quarterly bulletin began in January to March 2025, so the series starts there.

23.22 per cent

Hired workers' share of all workers, down 2.69 points in a year, the largest yearly fall of the three quarters of 2026

Shri Ajay Maken's office worked out every change in this brief from MoSPI's own bulletins and factsheets, and the brief is dated 24 November 2026.

Sources: MoSPI, Quarterly Bulletin of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (QBUSE), July 2026 to September 2026 (issued 23 November 2026); MoSPI, Quarterly Bulletin of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (QBUSE), July 2025 to September 2025 (issued 25 November 2025).

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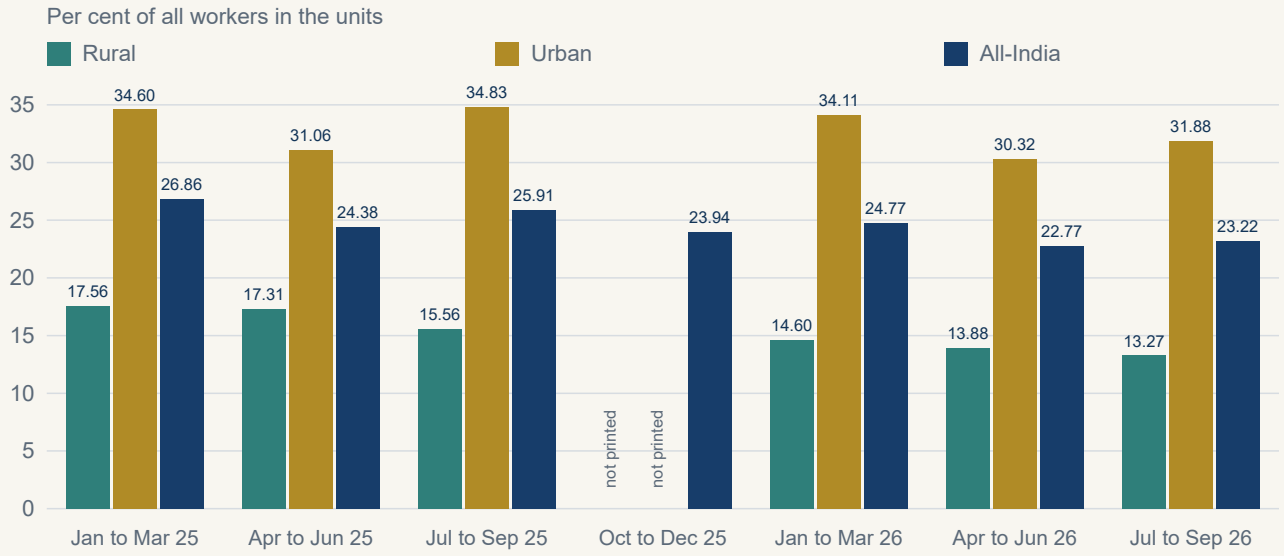
Who does the work in India's unincorporated enterprises, which are the shops, workshops and service units that are not companies? MoSPI's own bulletins give the share of hired workers in rural and urban units and in manufacturing, and the share of working owners. Beside them sit the share of units that hire, and what a hired worker's pay is worth after prices.

Hired workers' share fell 2.69 points in a year

A hired worker is a person who works for pay in a unit that he or she does not own. MoSPI's quarterly bulletin, which it released on 23 November 2026, puts hired workers at 23.22 per cent of all workers in unincorporated enterprises. That is the figure for July to September 2026. In July to September 2025 the share was 25.91 per cent, so it fell by 2.69 percentage points over the year.



The all-India bar for July to September 2026 stands at 23.22 per cent, which is below every quarter of 2025. The rural and urban bars for that quarter also stand below where they stood a year earlier.

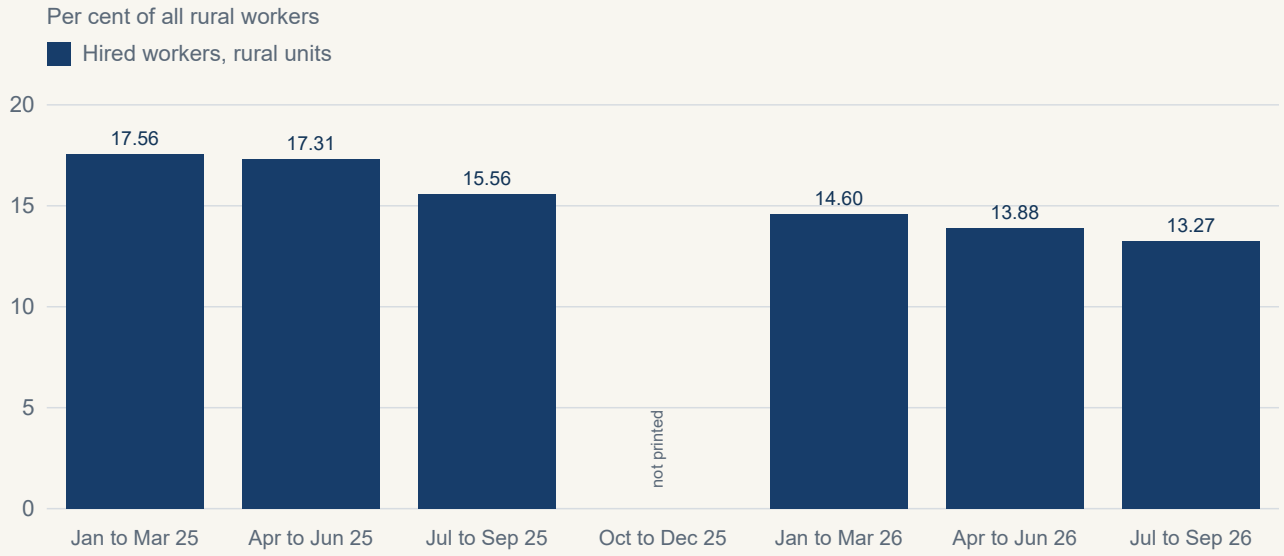
Of the seven quarters that MoSPI has published, only April to June 2026 had a lower share, at 22.77 per cent. In 2025 the share ran low in two quarters, and the latest share is below both of them. It stood at 24.38 per cent in April to June 2025 and at 23.94 per cent in October to December 2025.

The yearly fall of 2.69 points is larger than the fall of 2.09 points in January to March 2026, and larger than the fall of 1.61 points in April to June 2026. In each quarter of 2026 the hired share stood below its level a year earlier, and that was true in rural, urban and all-India units alike, in all 9 cases.

Sources: MoSPI, Quarterly Bulletin of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (QBUSE), July 2026 to September 2026 (issued 23 November 2026); MoSPI, Quarterly Bulletin of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (QBUSE), April 2026 to June 2026 (issued 21 August 2026); MoSPI, Quarterly Bulletin of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (QBUSE), January 2026 to March 2026 (issued 21 May 2026); MoSPI, Quarterly Bulletin of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (QBUSE), July 2025 to September 2025 (issued 25 November 2025); MoSPI, Factsheet of ASUSE 2025 (January 2025 to December 2025), with the quarter October to December 2025 (issued 24 March 2026); MoSPI, Quarterly Bulletin of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises, January to March 2025 and April to June 2025 (issued 3 September 2025).

In rural units, the hired share fell to 13.27 per cent

In rural unincorporated enterprises, hired workers made up 13.27 per cent of all workers in July to September 2026. A year earlier they made up 15.56 per cent, so the share fell by 2.29 percentage points. The rural share stood below its level of a year earlier in every quarter of 2026. The largest of these yearly falls came in April to June 2026, when the share went from 17.31 to 13.88 per cent, a fall of 3.43 points.



Read in the order that MoSPI printed them, the rural shares fell at every step. They went from 17.56 per cent in January to March 2025 to 13.27 per cent in July to September 2026.

MoSPI has printed a rural share for six quarters. In the order that it printed them, the share fell at each of the 5 steps between them. MoSPI's annual factsheet gives no rural split of the worker shares for October to December 2025, so one step runs from July to September 2025 to January to March 2026. This brief measures the rural trend by the yearly falls, which set each quarter against the same season a year earlier.

Sources: MoSPI, Quarterly Bulletin of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (QBUSE), July 2026 to September 2026 (issued 23 November 2026); MoSPI, Quarterly Bulletin of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (QBUSE), April 2026 to June 2026 (issued 21 August 2026); MoSPI, Quarterly Bulletin of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (QBUSE), January 2026 to March 2026 (issued 21 May 2026); MoSPI, Quarterly Bulletin of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (QBUSE), July 2025 to September 2025 (issued 25 November 2025); MoSPI, Quarterly Bulletin of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises, January to March 2025 and April to June 2025 (issued 3 September 2025).

July to September 2026 against the same quarter of 2025

The table sets July to September 2026 beside the same quarter of 2025. It gives the share of each kind of worker, and the share of units that hire. MoSPI counts three kinds of worker. Hired workers work for pay, working owners work in a unit that they own, and others form a group that includes unpaid family members.

Share, per cent	July to September 2025	July to September 2026	Change
Units that hire, Rural	7.10	6.32	
Units that hire, Urban	20.79	18.67	
Units that hire, All-India	13.41	12.16	-1.25 points
Working owners, Rural	68.25	69.56	
Working owners, Urban	52.85	55.40	
Working owners, All-India	59.98	61.99	2.01 points
Hired workers, Rural	15.56	13.27	-2.29 points
Hired workers, Urban	34.83	31.88	-2.95 points
Hired workers, All-India	25.91	23.22	-2.69 points
Others, with unpaid family, Rural	16.19	17.17	
Others, with unpaid family, Urban	12.32	12.72	
Others, with unpaid family, All-India	14.11	14.79	

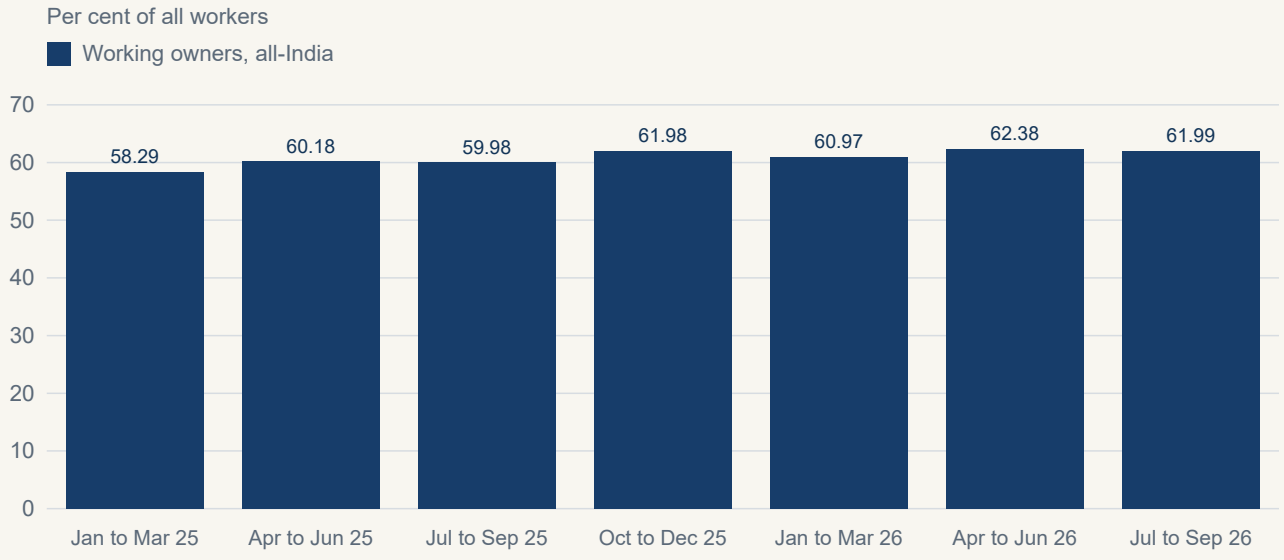
Every hired share in the table is lower than a year earlier, while the all-India working-owner share is higher. The change is shown where Shri Ajay Maken's office worked it out.

In urban units the hired share fell by 2.95 points, to 31.88 per cent, and in rural units it fell by 2.29 points. The all-India working-owner share rose by 2.01 points, to 61.99 per cent. MoSPI's own bulletin says: “Percentage of hired-worker establishments has decreased across sectors in comparison to July to September 2025 quarter.”

Sources: MoSPI, Quarterly Bulletin of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (QBUSE), July 2026 to September 2026 (issued 23 November 2026); MoSPI, Press Note on QBUSE, July 2026 to September 2026 (English), 23 November 2026 (issued 23 November 2026); MoSPI, Quarterly Bulletin of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (QBUSE), July 2025 to September 2025 (issued 25 November 2025).

Working owners carry more of the work

Working owners are people who own the unit and work in it. They made up 61.99 per cent of all workers in July to September 2026, while a year earlier they made up 59.98 per cent. Of the seven quarters, only April to June 2026 had a higher share, at 62.38 per cent.



The working-owner share stood at 61.99 per cent in July to September 2026, which is the second highest of the seven quarters that MoSPI has published.

Units	Working owners, lakh
Rural	486.44
Urban	445.13
All-India	931.58

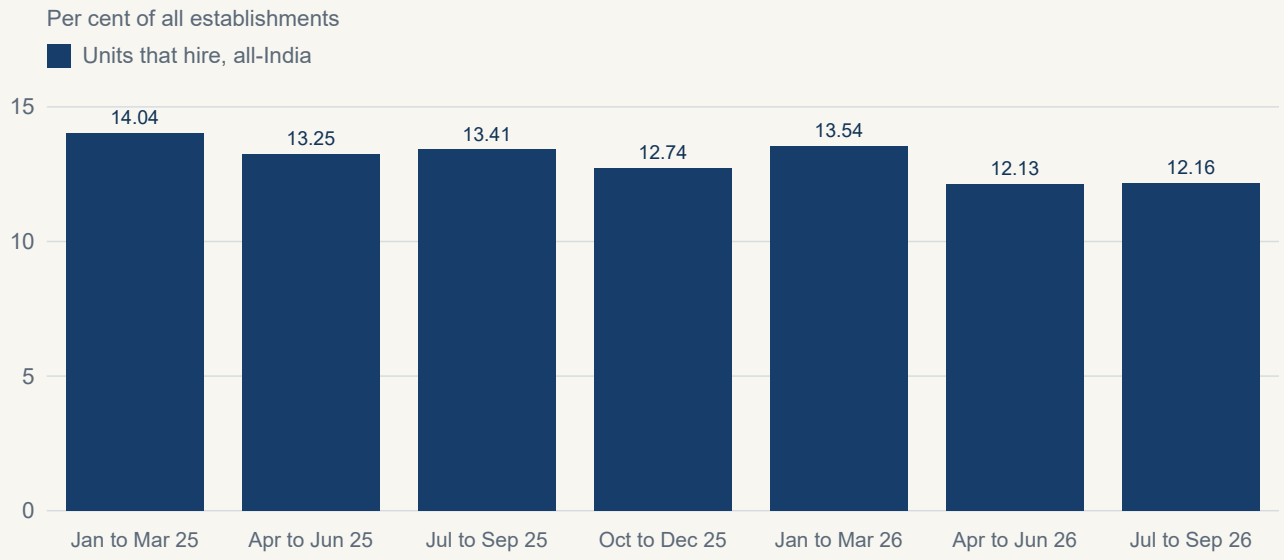
Shri Ajay Maken's office worked out these counts from the workers and shares that MoSPI printed. About 931.58 lakh working owners worked in these units across India.

The office also used MoSPI's printed counts and shares to see who the added workers were. It finds that 73.9 per cent of the workers that these units added over the year were working owners, who run the unit that they work in.

Sources: MoSPI, Quarterly Bulletin of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (QBUSE), July 2026 to September 2026 (issued 23 November 2026); MoSPI, Press Note on QBUSE, July 2026 to September 2026 (English), 23 November 2026 (issued 23 November 2026); MoSPI, Quarterly Bulletin of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (QBUSE), July 2025 to September 2025 (issued 25 November 2025).

Units that hire no one regularly make up most of the rise

A hired-worker establishment is a unit that employs at least one hired worker on a fairly regular basis. Such units made up 12.16 per cent of all establishments in July to September 2026, while a year earlier they made up 13.41 per cent. MoSPI calls the other units own-account establishments, because they employ no hired worker on a fairly regular basis. Shri Ajay Maken's office finds that they made up 94.5 per cent of the rise in establishments over the year.



The share of units that hire stood at 12.16 per cent in July to September 2026. Of the seven quarters, only April to June 2026 was lower, at 12.13 per cent.

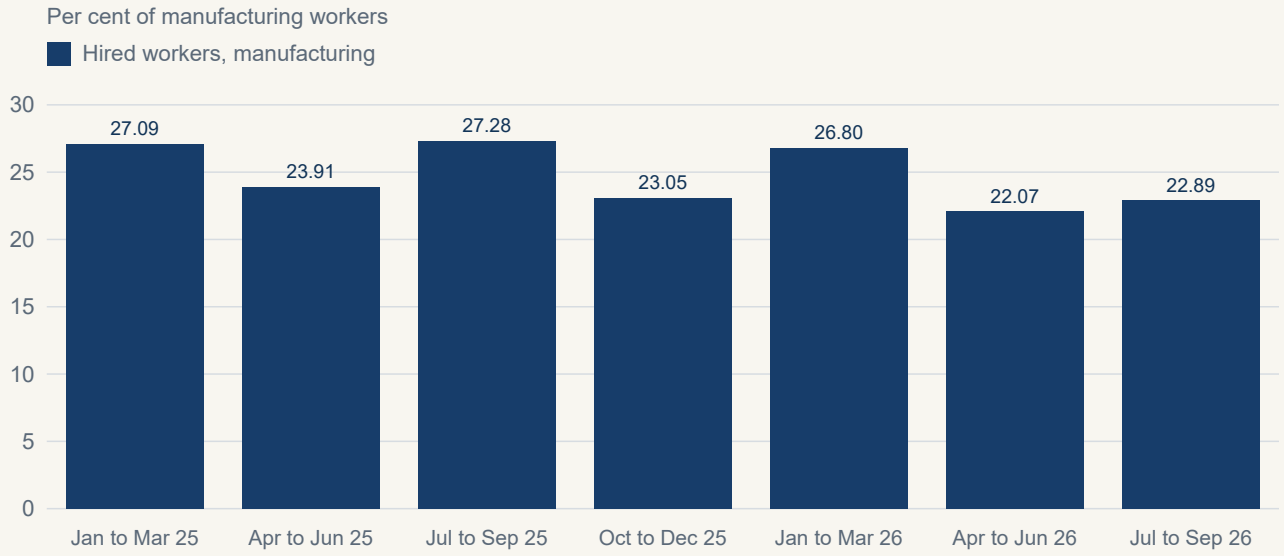
Quarter	Own-account units, lakh	Units that hire, per cent
January to March 2025	675.10	14.04
April to June 2025	689.00	13.25
July to September 2025	690.29	13.41
October to December 2025	686.41	12.74
January to March 2026	792.38	13.54
April to June 2026	762.08	12.13
July to September 2026	831.98	12.16

The office worked out each count of own-account units from the establishments that MoSPI printed and the share of units that hire.

Sources: MoSPI, Quarterly Bulletin of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (QBUSE), July 2026 to September 2026 (issued 23 November 2026); MoSPI, Quarterly Bulletin of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (QBUSE), April 2026 to June 2026 (issued 21 August 2026); MoSPI, Quarterly Bulletin of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (QBUSE), January 2026 to March 2026 (issued 21 May 2026); MoSPI, Quarterly Bulletin of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (QBUSE), July 2025 to September 2025 (issued 25 November 2025); MoSPI, Factsheet of ASUSE 2025 (January 2025 to December 2025), with the quarter October to December 2025 (issued 24 March 2026); MoSPI, Quarterly Bulletin of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises, January to March 2025 and April to June 2025 (issued 3 September 2025).

In manufacturing, the hired share fell 4.39 points

In 2026 MoSPI moved some activities, such as the repair of motor vehicles, from trade to services when it adopted a new industrial classification. That change touched trade and services, so manufacturing can still be set against 2025. In manufacturing units, hired workers made up 22.89 per cent of workers in July to September 2026, while a year earlier they made up 27.28 per cent. The working-owner share rose from 61.01 to 65.04 per cent.



Manufacturing's hired share was 4.39 points below a year earlier in July to September 2026, and it was 1.84 points below in April to June 2026.

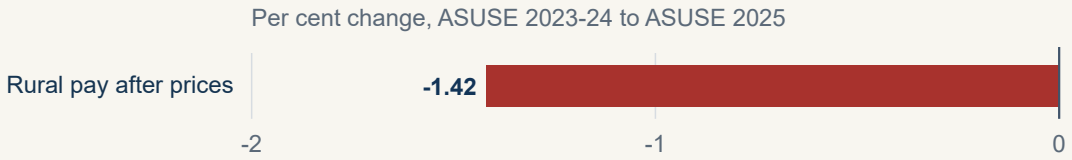
Share, per cent	July to September 2025	July to September 2026	Change
Units that hire	11.38	10.18	
Working owners	61.01	65.04	
Hired workers	27.28	22.89	-4.39 points
Others, with unpaid family	11.71	12.07	

In manufacturing, the shares of hired workers and of units that hire were lower than a year earlier, and the working-owner share was higher.

Sources: MoSPI, Quarterly Bulletin of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (QBUSE), July 2026 to September 2026 (issued 23 November 2026); MoSPI, Quarterly Bulletin of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (QBUSE), April 2026 to June 2026 (issued 21 August 2026); MoSPI, Quarterly Bulletin of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (QBUSE), January 2026 to March 2026 (issued 21 May 2026); MoSPI, Quarterly Bulletin of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (QBUSE), July 2025 to September 2025 (issued 25 November 2025); MoSPI, Factsheet of ASUSE 2025 (January 2025 to December 2025), with the quarter October to December 2025 (issued 24 March 2026); MoSPI, Quarterly Bulletin of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises, January to March 2025 and April to June 2025 (issued 3 September 2025).

Pay per hired worker fell in rural units after prices

In rural units, MoSPI's emolument per hired worker, which is the yearly pay that a unit gives each hired worker, formal or informal, was Rs 1,22,095 in ASUSE 2023-24, which ran from October 2023 to September 2024. It was Rs 1,24,516 in ASUSE 2025, which ran through 2025. Over the same months rural consumer prices rose 3.46 per cent, so after prices the rural pay fell 1.42 per cent.



After prices, pay per hired worker fell 1.42 per cent in rural units, because rural prices rose 3.46 per cent.

The figures after prices are the estimate of Shri Ajay Maken's office, because MoSPI prints pay in current prices only. In other services, pay after prices fell 1.95 per cent. In rural units of other services the pay fell in current prices, when it went from Rs 1,30,574 to Rs 1,29,066.

Sources: MoSPI, Press Note on ASUSE 2025 results, 24 March 2026 (issued 24 March 2026); MoSPI, Factsheet of ASUSE 2025 (January 2025 to December 2025), with the quarter October to December 2025 (issued 24 March 2026); MoSPI, Factsheet of ASUSE 2023-24 (October 2023 to September 2024) (issued 23 January 2025); MoSPI, Consumer Price Index (base 2012), eSankhyiki interface reply saved on 11 October 2026.

Every share MoSPI has printed, quarter by quarter

The table holds every hired-worker share that MoSPI has printed for the seven quarters from January to March 2025. It gives them for rural, urban and all-India units, and beside them it gives the all-India shares of working owners and of units that hire.

Quarter	Hired, rural	Hired, urban	Hired, all-India	Working owners, all-India	Units that hire, all-India
January to March 2025	17.56	34.60	26.86	58.29	14.04
April to June 2025	17.31	31.06	24.38	60.18	13.25
July to September 2025	15.56	34.83	25.91	59.98	13.41
October to December 2025	Not printed	Not printed	23.94	61.98	12.74
January to March 2026	14.60	34.11	24.77	60.97	13.54
April to June 2026	13.88	30.32	22.77	62.38	12.13
July to September 2026	13.27	31.88	23.22	61.99	12.16

Each quarter of 2026 has a lower all-India hired share than the same quarter of 2025. For October to December 2025 MoSPI printed no rural or urban split.

MoSPI's bulletin says that “users may interpret quarterly movements with caution, considering limitations of area frame, potential sampling variability and short-term fluctuations in activity levels.” So each quarter is set against the same quarter a year earlier, which compares like seasons. The rural steps are read only in the order that MoSPI printed them.

Sources: MoSPI, Quarterly Bulletin of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (QBUSE), July 2026 to September 2026 (issued 23 November 2026); MoSPI, Quarterly Bulletin of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (QBUSE), April 2026 to June 2026 (issued 21 August 2026); MoSPI, Quarterly Bulletin of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (QBUSE), January 2026 to March 2026 (issued 21 May 2026); MoSPI, Quarterly Bulletin of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (QBUSE), July 2025 to September 2025 (issued 25 November 2025); MoSPI, Factsheet of ASUSE 2025 (January 2025 to December 2025), with the quarter October to December 2025 (issued 24 March 2026); MoSPI, Quarterly Bulletin of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises, January to March 2025 and April to June 2025 (issued 3 September 2025).

The next results are due on 21 March 2027

MoSPI released this bulletin on 23 November 2026, which was two days after the date that its own Advance Release Calendar had listed, 21 November 2026. The calendar lists the ASUSE 2026 factsheet on 21 March 2027, and the bulletin for October to December 2026 comes with it.

Event	Date
This bulletin released	23 November 2026
Date in MoSPI's calendar	21 November 2026
Next results due	21 March 2027

The table gives the date of this bulletin, the date that MoSPI's calendar had listed for it, and the date listed for the next results.

The next all-India hired share will be read against the same quarter a year earlier, when the share was 23.94 per cent. MoSPI printed no rural split for that quarter, so a rural share for October to December 2026 will have no figure a year earlier to be set against.

From April 2027 MoSPI proposes to run the survey on the financial year, as its press note says: “ASUSE 2027-28 is proposed to be conducted from April 2027 to March 2028, aligning the survey period with the financial year.”

Sources: MoSPI, Press Note on QBUSE, July 2026 to September 2026 (English), 23 November 2026 (issued 23 November 2026); MoSPI, Advance Release Calendar 2026-27 (updated 25 May 2026) (issued 25 May 2026); MoSPI, Factsheet of ASUSE 2025 (January 2025 to December 2025), with the quarter October to December 2025 (issued 24 March 2026); MoSPI, Press Note on the placement of the ASUSE 2027-28 schedule, 26 October 2026 (issued 26 October 2026).

How the figures were made

Every share in this brief is one that the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) printed. The shares come from its quarterly bulletins, which run from January to March 2025 to July to September 2026, and the factsheet of ASUSE 2025 gives October to December 2025. Pay comes from the factsheets of ASUSE 2023-24 and ASUSE 2025, and prices come from MoSPI's consumer price index on base 2012.

Shri Ajay Maken's office worked out every change in percentage points as the later share less the earlier. It worked out each count of working owners and of own-account units when it multiplied MoSPI's printed total by MoSPI's printed share. Pay after prices is the ratio of the two rounds' pay, which is divided by the ratio of the price index that is averaged over each round's months, less one.

The survey covers unincorporated units in manufacturing, trade and services, and it leaves out construction and farming. The quarterly bulletin leaves out selected units of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, Ladakh, and rural Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland. In 2026 MoSPI moved some repair work from trade to services, so this brief compares only manufacturing across years by activity.

Term	Meaning
Unincorporated enterprise	A shop, workshop or service unit outside farming and construction that is not a company, because its owner runs it alone or with partners. MoSPI's survey of these units is ASUSE.
Hired worker and working owner	A hired worker works for pay in a unit that he or she does not own, and MoSPI says that hired workers include formal as well as informal hired workers. A working owner owns the unit and works in it.
Hired-worker and own-account establishment	A hired-worker establishment is a unit that employs at least one hired worker on a fairly regular basis. An own-account establishment is a unit that employs no hired worker on that basis.
Percentage point	The difference between two percentages. When a share moves from 25.91 to 23.22 per cent, it falls by 2.69 percentage points.
Emolument per hired worker	The yearly pay that a unit gives each hired worker, which MoSPI prints in current prices in its annual factsheets. After prices means after the rise in the consumer price index over the same months.

The terms are those of MoSPI's bulletins and factsheets, and the meanings put them in plain words.

Sources: MoSPI, Quarterly Bulletin of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (QBUSE), July 2026 to September 2026 (issued 23 November 2026); MoSPI, Press Note on QBUSE, July 2026 to September 2026 (English), 23 November 2026 (issued 23 November 2026); MoSPI, Factsheet of ASUSE 2025 (January 2025 to December 2025), with the quarter October to December 2025 (issued 24 March 2026); MoSPI, Consumer Price Index (base 2012), eSankhyiki interface reply saved on 11 October 2026.

The documents behind this brief

Each source below is a MoSPI publication, and each links to the address where MoSPI publishes it.

Source	Public address
MoSPI, Quarterly Bulletin of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (QBUSE), July 2026 to September 2026 (issued 23 November 2026)	www.mospi.gov.in
MoSPI, Quarterly Bulletin of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (QBUSE), April 2026 to June 2026 (issued 21 August 2026)	www.mospi.gov.in
MoSPI, Quarterly Bulletin of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (QBUSE), January 2026 to March 2026 (issued 21 May 2026)	www.mospi.gov.in
MoSPI, Quarterly Bulletin of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (QBUSE), July 2025 to September 2025 (issued 25 November 2025)	www.mospi.gov.in
MoSPI, Factsheet of ASUSE 2025 (January 2025 to December 2025), with the quarter October to December 2025 (issued 24 March 2026)	www.mospi.gov.in
MoSPI, Quarterly Bulletin of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises, January to March 2025 and April to June 2025 (issued 3 September 2025)	www.mospi.gov.in
MoSPI, Press Note on QBUSE, July 2026 to September 2026 (English), 23 November 2026 (issued 23 November 2026)	www.mospi.gov.in
MoSPI, Press Note on ASUSE 2025 results, 24 March 2026 (issued 24 March 2026)	www.mospi.gov.in
MoSPI, Factsheet of ASUSE 2023-24 (October 2023 to September 2024) (issued 23 January 2025)	www.mospi.gov.in
MoSPI, Consumer Price Index (base 2012), eSankhyiki interface reply saved on 11 October 2026	api.mospi.gov.in
MoSPI, Advance Release Calendar 2026-27 (updated 25 May 2026) (issued 25 May 2026)	www.mospi.gov.in
MoSPI, Press Note on the placement of the ASUSE 2027-28 schedule, 26 October 2026 (issued 26 October 2026)	www.mospi.gov.in

Every figure in this brief comes from one of these documents, or is worked out from them in the way that the method page explains.

Sources: MoSPI, Quarterly Bulletin of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (QBUSE), July 2026 to September 2026 (issued 23 November 2026); MoSPI, Press Note on QBUSE, July 2026 to September 2026 (English), 23 November 2026 (issued 23 November 2026).