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CASUAL WORKERS AND THEIR WAGES

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ABSTRACT

From 2004-05 to 2009-10, the proportion of casual workers had increased. This fact provides a motivation for investigating the relationship between proportion of casual labours and their wage rates. Also, there is a need to examine the wage inequality between male and female casual labours during 61st and 66th rounds. Using regression models, this paper has found evidence that there exists a negative impact of increase in proportion of casual workers on their wages. It was also found that though overall wage inequalities between male and female casual labours had increased, there were some industries/operations where these had gone down between 61st and 66th rounds. Furthermore, it was observed that there exists a negative correlation between female to male casual labour wage ratio and sex ratio of states.

KEYWORDS

casual worker, wage inequalities, wage rate.

I. INTRODUCTION

The worker's earnings level is regarded as a pointer of their economic status in society. In terms of wages earned and tenure security, casual labourers do not enjoy the same status as regular wage/salaried employees. NSS 66th round report shows that casual labourers (15-59 years) engaged in non-public works earned about 40 % of wages earned by regular wage/salaried employees (of the same age) in rural areas and about 33.5 % in urban areas in 2009-10. Moreover, at all India level, female casual workers earned about 65 % of wages of male casual workers in 2009-10. According to the same report, the proportion of casual workers (ps+ss) (out of total persons employed) had increased from 15 % to 17.5 % in urban areas and from 32.8 % to 38.6 % in rural areas from 61st to 66th round (NSS). Consequently, the following questions arise: (1) whether this increase in proportion of casual workers had any impact on their wages? (2) Though wage inequalities exist between male and female casual workers across industries/operations, whether these have narrowed down between 61st and 66th round and (3) finally, whether there exists any correlation between sex ratio and female to male wage ratio of casual labours.

NSS 66th round report points out that in 2009-10, the lowest decile class on MPCE[1] was constituted by 59.2 % of casual workers among males and 58 % among females in rural areas, and 43.7 % among males and 44.1 % among females in urban areas. It shows that large number of casual workers occupied lowest rung of expenditure class. In light of this, it becomes important to examine the effect of rising proportion of casual workers on their average wages? Furthermore, the prevailing practice of gender-wise wage differential makes imperative to enquire whether these differentials are going down or not and whether states which otherwise provide more equal opportunities to women have least wage differential.

The regression results show that there exists a negative impact, though very small, of increase in proportion of casual labours on their average wages. The analysis further shows that wage inequalities between males and females casual labours have gone down in large number of industries/operations between 61st and 66th round and a paradox seems to exist where states otherwise favourable to women observe highest gender wage differential.

The next section consists of a brief literature review, followed by data source in section III. Section IV talks about modelling and results, and Section V concludes.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Mukherjee (2007) has shown, using 50th, 55th and 61st round of NSSO data, through Theil Index that in the post-reform period, there has been a decline in wage inequalities between males and females. Using decomposition, he showed that the primary cause of rising wage inequalities in the same period was the rise in inequalities within males and females rather than between them. Furthermore, he demonstrated using Theil Index that at the aggregate level, disparities within occupations are rising for all occupations except Professionals and Sales workers. Moreover, Esteve-Volart (2004) has shown through study of sixteen Indian states over 1961-91 that gender discrimination has negative consequences for economic development. Harilal (1989) has shown while considering Kerala's construction industry that a gradual decline in the skill requirements in this industry has led to fall in the skilled-unskilled labour wage differential.

Mahajan & Ramaswami (2012) have shown that gender differentials in agricultural wages are maximum in states like Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Maharashtra (called Southern states by him), otherwise known for providing equal opprtunities to women. Furthermore, this study shows that greater female labour supply in the southern states is partly responsible for the greater gender wage differential in southern states as compared to northern states.

III. DATA SOURCE

This work has been carried out using data from multiple sources: 2 quinquennial survey rounds of NSSO: 61st round (2004-05) and 66th round (2009-10), Census, 2011 and RBI's Handbook of Statistics on Indian Economy. It encompasses casual workers belonging to the age group 15-59 years[2]. Data on casual worker's wages (based on *Current Daily Status*) have been taken from *NSS reports* and on percentage of casual labours out of total persons employed (based on *Principal Status + Subsidiary Status*) have been extracted from *unit level data*[3].

NSS reports provide data on wages of casual labours engaged in public works other than Mahatma Gandhi NREG public works (code 41) and those engaged in other types of work (code 51) separately[4], therefore, combined wages for casual labours engaged in both types of work had to be calculated[5]. Data on sex ratio and service sector's share in state's Net State Domestic Product (NSDP) (at constant prices with base 2004-05) have been taken from census, 2011 and RBI's Handbook of Statistics on Indian Economy, respectively. Unless mentioned otherwise, wages written anywhere in this paper represent casual worker's wages.

[1]MPCE is monthly per capita consumer expenditure.

[2]According to Planning Commission, this is the most active working age group.

[3]In NSS reports, data given on percentage of casual labours out of total persons employed cover all age groups, but for the purpose of this study, data on casual workers belonging only to age group 15-59 years was required, therefore, required data was extracted from unit level data.

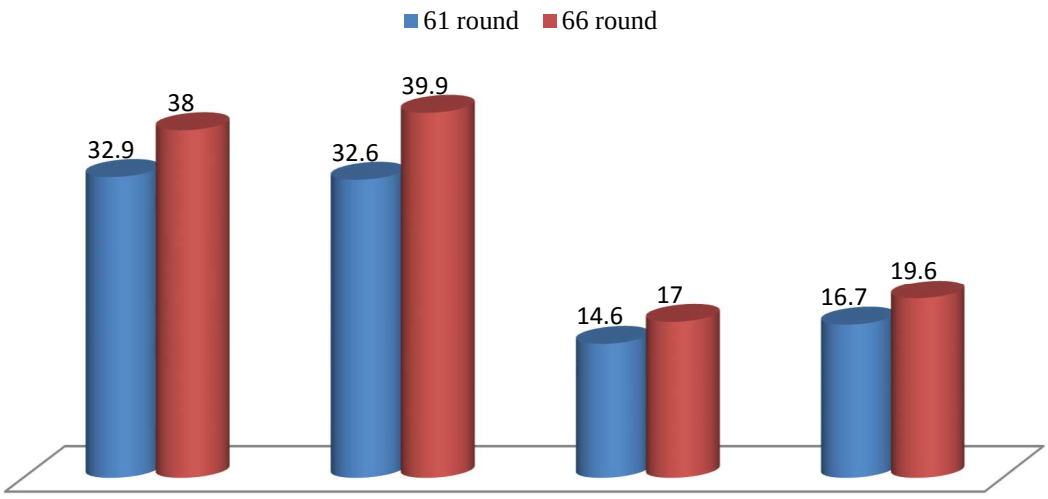
[4] In 66th round of NSS, in addition to 2 above mentioned codes, code 42 was also used which represented casual wage labours engaged in Mahatma Gandhi NREG public works. But in the usual activity status (which has been used in this study), code 41 which measures casual wage labours engaged in public works, include all types of public works and code 42 is not relevant in the usual activity status.

[5] Combined casual worker's wage for rural males = (Average wage/salary earnings of rural males$_{41}$*rural male sample person days$_{41}$ + Average wage/salary earnings of rural males$_{51}$* rural male sample person days$_{51}$)/ (rural male sample person days$_{41}$ + rural male sample person days$_{51}$). Similarly, casual worker's wage for rural females can be calculated. Since only code 51 is applicable for casual labours engaged in urban areas, there is no need to calculate combined wages for them.

IV. OBJECTIVES OF STUDY AND RESULTS

From 2004-05 to 2009-10, the proportion of casual workers had increased in each of the 4 category of workers mentioned in fig.1 and clearly this rise was highest (around 7 percentage points) for rural females. The casual workers in rural areas had increased by higher percentage than urban areas perhaps because of the impact of MGNREG programme (Chowdhury, 2011).

Fig. 1: Proportion of Casual Labours out of Total Persons Employed at All India Level (PS+SS)



OBJECTIVE 1: INVESTIGATING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PROPORTION OF CASUAL LABOURS AND THEIR WAGE RATES

To investigate this relationship, two OLS regressions have been run: one for 61st round and another for 66th round (NSS). In 61st round, data is available on 9 states (in total, there are *36 observations* as for each category of workers: rural male, rural female, urban male, urban female, there are 9 observations) and in 66th round, data is available on 14 states (there are *56 observations* as for each category of 4 above mentioned workers, there are 23 observations). The rural and urban casual worker's wages have been converted to real wages using CPI-AL (base 1986-87) and CPI-IW (base 2001)[6], respectively.

MODEL

In this model, casual worker's real wages have been regressed upon four independent variables: proportion of casual workers out of total persons employed, percentage share of service sector in state's NSDP[7], gender dummy and area dummy.

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{1i} + \beta_2 X_{2i} + \alpha_1 D_{1i} + \alpha_2 D_{2i} + \epsilon_i$$

where, Y_i = casual worker's real wages;

X_{1i} = percentage of casual workers out of total persons employed;

X_{2i} = percentage share of service sector in state's NSDP;

D_{1i} = 1, if casual worker is female,

= 0, otherwise;

D_{2i} = 1, if casual worker belongs to rural area

= 0, otherwise;

ϵ_i = random error term

RESULTS

TABLE 1 (61st round)

	Dependent Variable: Casual worker's real wages		
Independent Variables	**Coefficient**	**Standard Error**	**t-statistic**
Casual Workers (%)	- 0.2059137	0.0380498	- 5.41***
Share of Services in NSDP (%)	0.130257	0.0918427	1.42#
Gender	- 5.282253	0.7748721	- 6.82***
Area	6.118918	0.9980252	6.13***
Constant	8.758022	5.431972	1.61#

Adj. R-square = 0.6956, Number of observations = 36, F-statistic = 21.00***, Correlation between casual workers and share of services in NSDP = 0.179.

Notes: *statistically significant at 10% level, **statistically significant at 5% level, ***statistically significant at 1% level, #statistically insignificant.

Table 1 demonstrates that in 61st round, after controlling for gender, area and share of services in state's NSDP, there exists a significant negative impact of increase in proportion of casual workers on their wages, i.e., with a 1 % increase in proportion of casual workers, there is a fall of Rs. 0.20 in their wages. It means that greater proportion of casual labours in workforce exerts downward pressure on their wages.

[6] Data on CPI-IW (Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers) and CPI-AL (Consumer Price Index for Agricultural Labourers) have been taken from Labour Bureau, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India.

[7] This variable has been considered because the share of services sector in most of the state's NSDP at factor cost (at constant prices with base 2004-05) was greater than 50 % in 2009-10. Moreover, in urban areas, more than 60 % of casual labourers estimated person days are spent in services sector in both 61st and 66th rounds.

TABLE 2 (66th round)

	Dependent Variable: Casual worker's wages		
Independent Variables	**Coefficient**	**Standard Error**	**t-statistic**
Casual Workers (%)	- 0.1361153	0.0624851	- 2.18**
Share of Services in NSDP (%)	0.3558505	0.0993929	3.58***
Gender	- 6.702787	1.367283	- 4.90***
Area	7.076989	1.806233	3.92***
Constant	- 3.412837	6.321191	- 0.54#

Adj. R-square = 0.4385, Number of observations = 56, F-statistic = 11.74***, Correlation between casual workers and share of services in NSDP = 0.289.
Notes: *statistically significant at 10% level, **statistically significant at 5% level, ***statistically significant at 1% level, #statistically insignificant.
In 66th round also, we get similar results where after controlling for gender, area and share of services in state's NSDP, with a 1 % increase in proportion of casual workers, there is a fall of Rs. 0.13 in their wages. It means that supply side of casual labour market plays a dominant role in determining their wages.

OBJECTIVE 2: EXAMINING THE WAGE INEQUALITY BETWEEN MALE AND FEMALE CASUAL LABOURS DURING 61ST AND 66TH ROUNDS

For this part, nominal wages have been considered. It can be clearly seen from fig. 2 and 3 that on average, female casual labours earn lower wage than male casual labours across all industries/operations in urban as well as rural areas[8] (except one operation in rural areas[9]) in both 61st and 66th round which indicates that wage inequality exists between male and female casual workers across industries/operations.

Fig. 2: Average wage earnings per day received by casual wage labourers engaged in different industries in urban areas

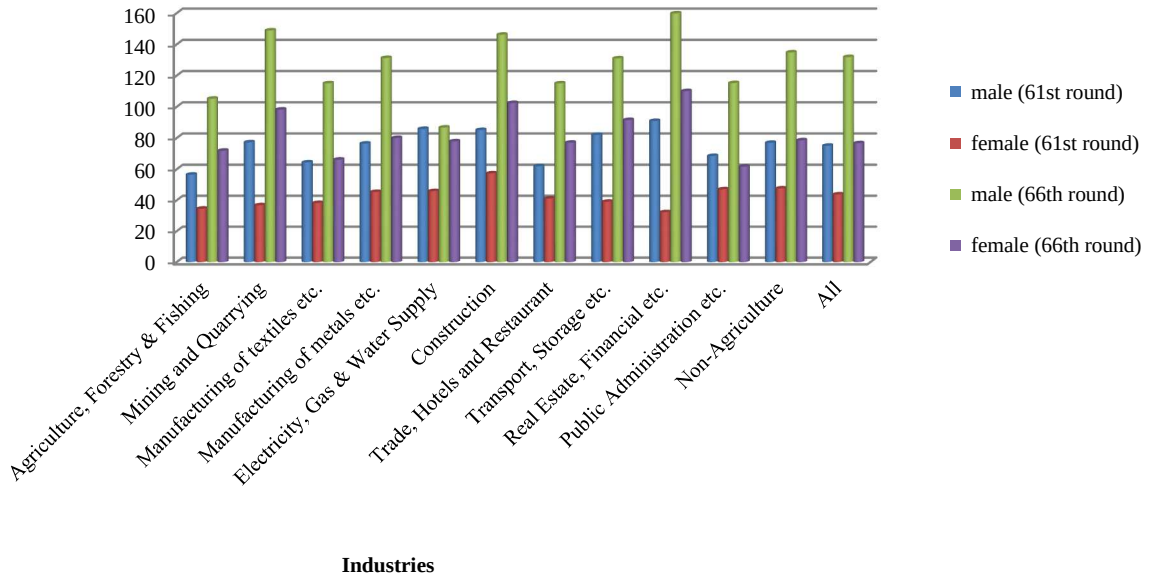
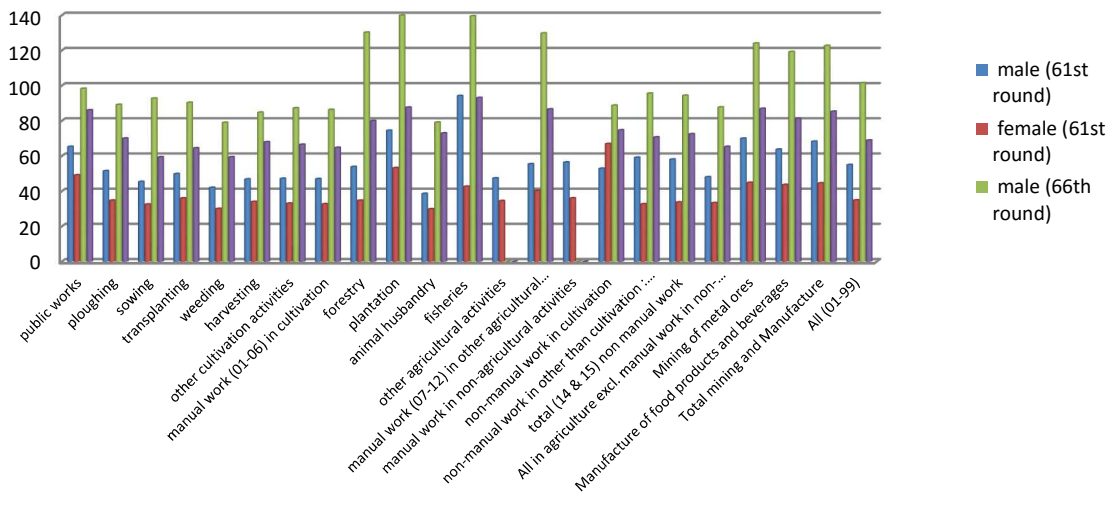


Fig. 3: Average wage earnings per day received by casual wage labourers engaged in different types of operations in rural areas



[8] For rural areas, data on operations: other agricultural activities (code 12) and manual work in non-agricultural activities (code 13) was missing in 66th round.
[9] This operation is non-manual work in cultivation where female casual labours average wage was higher than male casual labours average wage in 61st round.

However, the increase in female casual labour wages had been higher than that of male casual labour wages in most of the industries/ operations between 61st and 66th round. As we can see in fig. 2, in urban areas, female casual labour wage had increased by greater percentage than male casual labour wage in almost all industries except 2 industries 'Manufacturing of Textiles, Food Products, Paper, Tobacco etc.' and 'Public Administration, Health and Social Work, Education' between the same period. This increase was highest (240 %) in industry 'Financial Intermediation, Real Estate, Renting and Business Activities' which could be due to the launching of MGNREG programme by government in 2006 that must have exerted upward pressure on wages in real estate sector (fig.4). In rural areas, except 6 operations, in all other operations, female casual labour wage had increased by greater percentage than male casual labour wage between 61st and 66th round (fig. 5).

Fig.4: Growth rate of male and female wages in urban areas (industry-wise) between 61st and 66th round

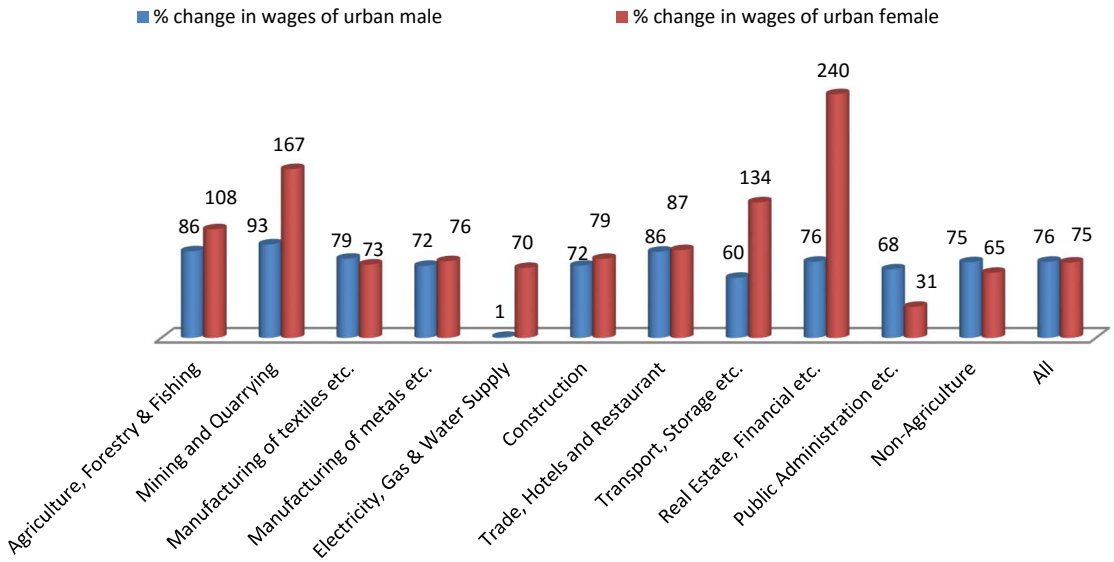
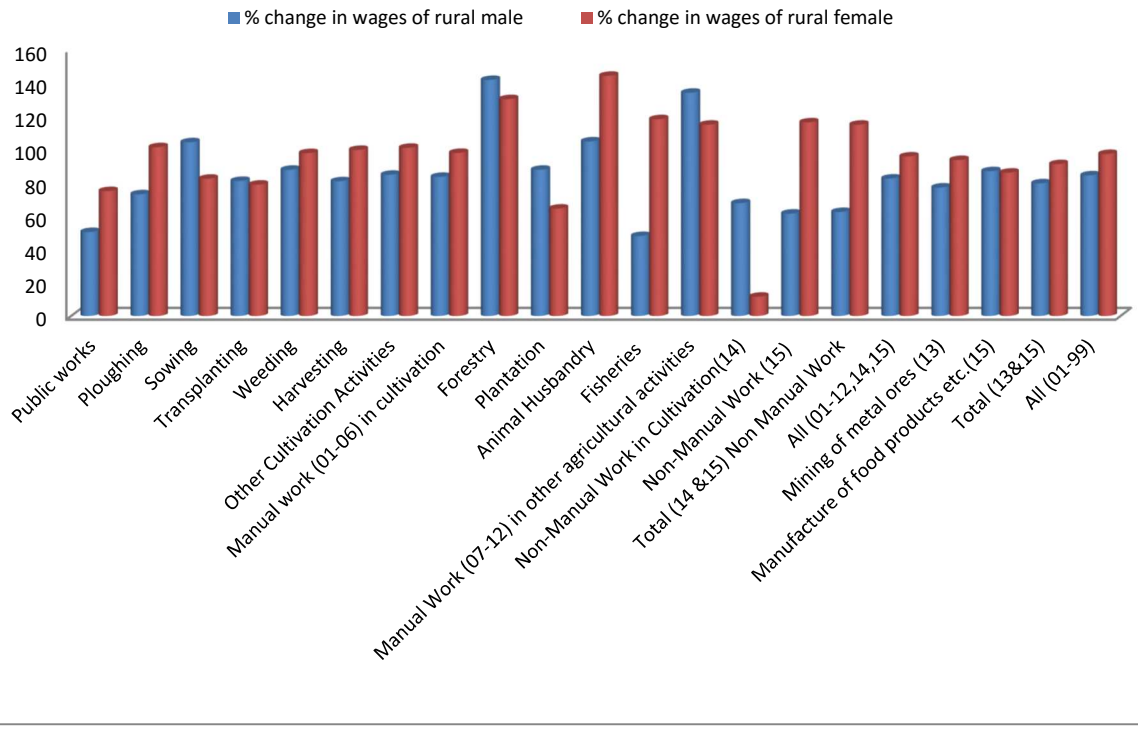


Fig.5: Growth rate of male and female wages in rural areas (operations-wise) between 61st and 66th round



As table 3 shows, this greater increase in female casual labour wage as compared to male wage has led to improvement in female to male wage ratio from 61st to 66th round in large number of industries/operations in rural as well as urban areas[10] and this improvement had been highest for the industry 'Financial Intermediation, Real Estate, Renting And Business Activities' in urban areas (in which female casual labours average wage had increased from around 35 % to about 70 % of male casual labour average wage from 61st to 66th round) and for the operation 'Fisheries' in the rural areas.

TABLE 3

Operations (Rural Areas)	Wage Ratio* (61st round)	Wage Ratio* (66th round)	Industries (Urban Areas)	Wage Ratio* (61st round)	Wage Ratio* (66th round)
Public Works	0.753	0.876	Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	0.612	0.683
Ploughing	0.675	0.785	Mining and Quarrying	0.477	0.660
Weeding	0.715	0.752	Manufacturing of metals etc.	0.594	0.610
Harvesting	0.727	0.802	Electricity, Gas & Water Supply	0.535	0.898
Other Cultivation Activities	0.701	0.762	Construction	0.674	0.701
Animal Husbandry	0.774	0.922	Trade, Hotels and Restaurant	0.664	0.670
Fisheries	0.453	0.667	Transport, Storage etc.	0.477	0.699
Non-Manual Work in other than Cultivation: agri. & non-agri. Activities	0.553	0.740	Real Estate, Financial Intermediation etc.	0.355	0.689
Mining of Metal Ores	0.641	0.701			

Note: * It shows female to male casual labour wage ratio.

The above analysis raises an interesting question, though wage inequalities exist between male and female casual workers across industries/operations, whether these have narrowed between 61st and 66th round and to answer this question, Modified Sopher's Index[11] has been calculated.

TABLE 4

	Modified Sopher's Index (Urban Areas)	
Industries	**61st round**	**66round**
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	0.633	0.682
Mining and Quarrying	1.026	1.106
Manufacturing of Textiles etc.	0.696	1.007
Manufacturing of Metals, Vehicles etc.	0.745	1.052
Electricity, Gas and Water Supply	**0.925**	**0.183**
Construction	0.611	0.951
Trade, Hotels and Restaurant	0.549	0.770
Transport, Storage and Communications	**1.051**	**0.811**
Financial Intermediation, Real Estate, Renting and Business Activities	**1.465**	**1.180**
Public Administration, Health and Social Work, Education etc.	0.525	1.114
Non-Agriculture	0.691	1.162
All	0.760	1.136

In the above mentioned table, we can clearly see that in urban areas, wage inequalities between males and females have gone down in 3 industries between 61st and 66th round and this decrease had been highest in the industry 'Electricity, Gas and Water Supply'. Moreover, in rural areas also, wage inequalities have gone down in many operations between these 2 rounds (Table 5) and least wage inequality exist in operation 'Animal Husbandry' in 66th round.

TABLE 5

	Modified Sopher's Index	
Operations	**61st round**	**66round**
Public works	**0.397**	**0.246**
Ploughing	**0.499**	**0.401**
Sowing	0.412	0.716
Transplanting	0.413	0.549
Weeding	0.410	0.434
Harvesting	**0.400**	**0.357**
Other Cultivation Activities	**0.444**	**0.441**
Manual Work (01-06) in Cultivation	0.452	0.461
Forestry	0.562	1.030
Plantation	0.492	1.093
Animal Husbandry	**0.310**	**0.131**
Fisheries	**1.189**	**0.974**
Manual Work (07-12) in other Agricultural Activities	0.419	0.885
Non-Manual Work in Cultivation	**0.336**	**0.292**
Non-Manual Work in Other than Cultivation : Agri. & Non-Agri. Activities	**0.766**	**0.516**
Total (14 & 15) Non Manual Work	**0.701**	**0.452**
All (01-12, 14,15)	0.457	0.477
Mining of Metal Ores	0.621	0.753
Manufacture of Food Products and Beverages	0.516	0.769
Total Mining and Manufacture	0.591	0.759
All (01-99)	0.584	0.673

[10] Here only those industries/operations have been shown in which female to male casual labour wage ratio has improved from 61st to 66th round. Changes in female to male wage ratio in all industries/operations have been shown in appendix.

[11] Modified Sopher's Index = $\ln (X_2 / X_1) + \ln ((200 - X_1) / (200 - X_2))$, where $X_2 > X_1$.

OBJECTIVE 3: TO ASSESS WHETHER STATES HAVING HIGHER SEX RATIO ALSO HAVE HIGHER FEMALE TO MALE WAGE RATIO

Here nominal wages have been considered. It is generally expected that states which are doing better on sex ratio parameter will have lower wage inequalities between males and females, and correlation between sex ratio and female to male wage ratio should be positive, if such correlation exists at all.

TABLE 6

States	Female to Male casual labour wage ratio*	Sex ratio (2011)**	States	Female to Male casual labour wage ratio*	Sex ratio (2011)**
Jammu and Kashmir	**0.949**	**883**	Mizoram	0.725	975
Himachal Pradesh	0.924	974	Gujarat	0.705	918
Arunachal Pradesh	0.881	920	Rajasthan	0.702	926
Manipur	0.870	987	Uttar Pradesh	0.700	908
Tripura	0.795	961	Punjab	0.659	893
Chhattisgarh	0.786	991	**Meghalaya**	**0.639**	**986**
Assam	0.783	954	**Andhra Pradesh**	**0.636**	**992**
Madhya Pradesh	0.782	930	**Haryana**	**0.607**	**877**
Bihar	0.775	916	Maharashtra	0.598	925
Uttarakhand	0.770	963	**Tamil Nadu**	**0.526**	**995**
West Bengal	0.769	947	**Kerala**	**0.521**	**1084**
Jharkhand	0.763	947	all-India	0.651	940
Correlation			**- 0.291[12]**		

Notes: *Female to Male casual labour wage ratio has been calculated for 66th round (2009-10) of NSSO; **Sex ratio (defined as number of females per 1000 males) for the year 2011 has been taken from census, 2011.

However, it can be seen from the table that correlation between female to male casual labour wage ratio and sex ratio is negative. States like Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh which were counted as topmost 3 states (out of 28 Indian states) in terms of sex ratio in Census, 2011 figure among the bottom 5 states in terms of female to male wage ratio of casual labours, along with Haryana which had the lowest sex ratio among all 28 Indian states. In fact, in Kerala and Tamil Nadu, female casual labours earn almost half of the male casual labours. On the other hand, the state of Jammu and Kashmir which had 2nd lowest sex ratio in 2011 among all 28 Indian states has highest female to male wage ratio. It shows that greater equality between males and females in terms of sex ratio cannot ensure wage equality between them.

V. CONCLUSION

The above findings suggest that gender wage differentials have narrowed down between 2004-05 and 2009-10 in some industries/operations. In 2009-10, the least gender wage differential existed in industry 'Electricity, Gas and Water Supply' in urban areas and in operation 'Animal Husbandry' in rural areas. The negative correlation between casual worker's wages and sex ratio of states shows that gender wage gap is not a right indicator of female's economic freedom in a state. Southern states which are well ahead of others in providing equal opportunities to women lag behind in wage gap. Since casual workers are worse off in terms of working conditions than regular wage/salaried employees and there exists a negative impact of their increasing proportion in total persons employed on their wage rate, it provides a reason to control 'casualization of workforce'. So the issues raised at the outset have more or less been addressed. However, there exists a further scope for improvement in the results obtained with utilization of unit level data[13].

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[12] Correlation comes out to be - 0.283 if data on sex ratio is taken from NSS 66th round report.

[13] Number of words used excluding Tables, Graphs are 2,482.

APPENDIX

TABLE 7

Operations (Rural Areas)	Wage Ratio* (61st round)	Wage Ratio* (66th round)	Industries (Urban Areas)	Wage Ratio* (61st round)	Wage Ratio* (66th round)
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Sowing	0.717	0.640	Manufacturing of textiles etc.	0.595	0.575
Transplanting	0.723	0.714	Manufacturing of metals etc.	0.594	0.610
Weeding	0.714	0.752	Electricity, Gas & Water Supply	0.535	0.898
Harvesting	0.727	0.802	Construction	0.674	0.701
Other Cultivation Activities	0.701	0.762	Trade, Hotels and Restaurant	0.664	0.670
Manual Work (01-06) in Cultivation	0.696	0.750	Transport, Storage etc.	0.477	0.699
Forestry	0.645	0.614	Real Estate, Financial Intermediation etc.	0.355	0.689
Plantation	0.715	0.626	Public Administration etc.	0.688	0.535
Animal Husbandry	0.774	0.922	Non-Agriculture	0.620	0.583
Fisheries	0.453	0.667	All	0.584	0.582
Other Agricultural Activities	0.728				
Manual Work (07-12) in Other Agricultural Activities	0.727	0.667			
Manual Work in Non-Agricultural Activities	0.639				
Non-Manual Work in Cultivation	1.265	0.841			
Non-Manual Work in Other than Cultivation : Agri. & Non-Agri. Activities	0.553	0.740			
Total (14 & 15) Non Manual Work	0.581	0.768			
All in Agriculture excl. Manual Work in Non-Agricultural Activities	0.694	0.745			
Mining of Metal Ores	0.641	0.701			
Manufacture of Food Products and Beverages	0.685	0.682			
Total Mining and Manufacture	0.653	0.695			
All (01-99)	0.635	0.679			

Note: * It shows female to male casual labour wage ratio

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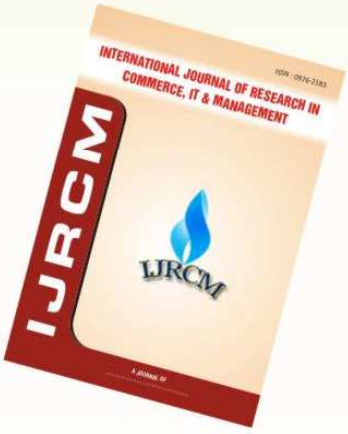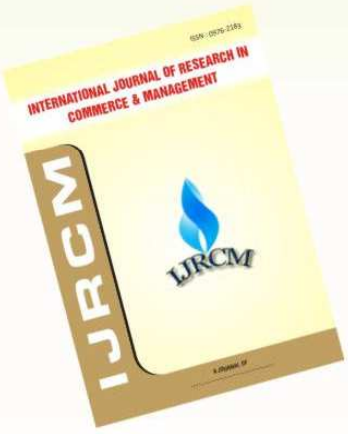
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