

Rural women lost 9.1m jobs in 2 yrs, urban gained 3.5m

Well-Paying, Longer-Term Work Lost

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Women's employment has taken an alarming dip in rural areas in the past two years, a government survey has revealed. In jobs that are done for 'the major part of the year', a stagger-

► Reasons for decline, P 17

ing 9.1 million jobs were lost by rural women. In urban areas, the situation was quite the reverse, with over 3.5 million women added to the workforce.

This emerges from comparing employment data of two consecutive surveys conducted by the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO)

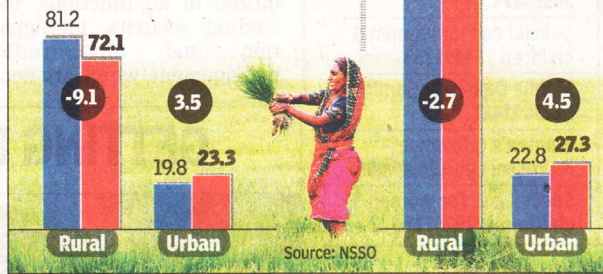
LIVELIHOOD LOST, LIVES HIT?

No. of women working (in million)

SUBSIDIARY JOBS

● 2009-10 ● 2011-12 ● Change

PRINCIPAL JOBS



in 2009-10 and 2011-12. Key results of the later survey were released last month. Both rounds had a large sample size of nearly 4.5 lakh people.

"The survey shows that in the continuing employment crunch in rural areas, the most vulnerable sections—like women—are getting elim-

inated," says Amitabh Kundu, professor of economics, Jawaharlal Nehru University.

If subsidiary work, that is short term, supplementary work, is also counted, women's employment numbers improve, but they still show a huge decline of 2.7 million in two years. This is a reflection

of the fact that women are no longer getting longer term and better paying jobs, and so are forced to take up short term transient work.

Declining women's employment in rural areas is a long term trend despite high economic "growth", says Neetha N of the Centre for Women's Development Studies.

"Three decades ago, in 1983, about 34% of women in rural areas were working. This has steadily declined and now stands at just short of 25%. But the decline in the past two years is shocking—it is the most drastic decline we have ever seen," she says.

Many argue that decline in women's work is taking place because more women are now either studying or staying home because men of the family are earning enough. However, this is not supported by the data, according to Neetha.