

# Inclusive Employment For Sustainable Development In India: An Analysis

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## Abstract

Employment is a vital element of anyone's life, whether economically or socially. Employment does not only impact the economic situation of an individual's life but the entire economy. Economic activity is the most significant tool for the growth and development of any economy. For inclusive and sustainable development, every segment of society must be involved in the development process. It is critical to determine a group's or community's employment involvement in order to determine its economic state. To understand the economic situation of different Socio-Religious Groups (SRGs) it is necessary to know their employment participation rates. The present study is focused on the employment pattern and distribution of different SRG workers by using the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2019-20 by National Statistical Organization (NSO). This study suggests that Muslims are more vulnerable than other Socio-Religious Groups (SRGs) in India. Their participation in regular salaried jobs is very low and highest in self-employment work when compared with the other SRGs. It is discovered that Muslim workers' participation in quality jobs and regular salaried employment is low, and they are mostly engaged in low-quality work. As argued in the paper, the employment condition of Muslims in India is a major barrier to their participation in sustainable development. By improving the employment condition of Muslims, India can create a more equitable and just society that is better able to achieve sustainable development.

**Keywords:** Sustainable Development, Employment Pattern, Muslims, Socio-Religious Groups, Low-quality jobs, Labour Markets

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## I. Introduction

India is a diverse and culturally rich nation, hence the importance of inclusive employment for sustainable development cannot be undermined. Employment, when extended to all socio-religious groups, becomes a catalyst for sustainable development that transcends economic growth, touching upon social harmony, poverty eradication, and nation-building. With a history woven with multiple faiths and communities, India's journey towards sustainable development hinges on the equitable distribution of opportunities for all.

The benefits of growth and development can only be realized if the whole of society is involved in the process. Despite the rapid growth, some segments of Indian society are still lagging behind in terms of socioeconomics. Knowing a community's employment situation and involvement in the labour market is crucial when trying to ascertain its economic stability. Raising employment levels is essential for the development of any society or social group. Many socio-religious groups in India, such as Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs), have a long history of marginalization and discrimination as a result of their caste affiliation, as evidenced by numerous studies on the subject. However, the subject of marginalization among minorities, particularly Muslims, is a less researched area in India. The Sachar Committee Report, published by the Government of India in 2006, fascinated the interest of researchers and professionals. It opened a discussion about the vulnerable condition of Muslims in almost every socio-economic aspect. Low education levels, particularly in urban areas, poor performance of Urdu medium students, and a lack of involvement in higher education by Muslims in comparison to other Socio-Religious Groups (SRCs) are concerning. Their employment participation is highest in self-employment and lowest in regular salaried jobs is linked to their poor economic status. The poverty rates are high among Muslims slightly better than the SC/STs but far worse than the Hindus especially Upper caste Hindus (Sachar Committee, 2006). Muslims constitute around 14.2% of the second-largest religious community in India (Census, 2011), Yet, they are struggling with the issues of unemployment and poverty (Basant, 2006). On this ground, this paper tries to analyze, the labour force participation of Socio-Religious Groups and their importance for sustainable and inclusive development.

This paper consists of six sections. Section 2 discusses the data sources and methodology. Section 3 gives a detailed analysis of the employment pattern and distribution of different Socio-Religious Groups (SRGs) in India. Sections 4 and 5 look at the employment distribution of SRG workers by industry and occupation wise

respectively. Section 6 concludes the main finding with a discussion. Section 7 gives some possible policy suggestions.

## **II. Data Sources And Methodology**

The data source for the present study is the Periodic Labor Force Survey 2019-20 which has been used for the calculation of employment patterns and distribution of workers. NSS gives a heavy data set with many variables related to the socio-economic profile of the respondents and households. With the help of these data, this study provides the calculations of the employment status of workers. To analyze the distribution of workers by industry and occupation wise, there is the use of 1-digit level data of Industry and Occupational list. In all three datasets, industries are classified on the basis of the National Industrial Classification-2008 (NIC-2008) whereas the National Classification of Occupation-2004 (NCO-2004) has been used for the classification of the occupations in India. All the relevant data for the study is calculated for the Usual Principal Status for the age group of 15-59 years workers. The present study considers the major Socio-Religious Groups (SRGs)- social groups within the religion like Hindu-SC/ST, Hindu-Other Backward Classes (OBC), Hindu-Unreserved (UR), similarly for Muslims OBC and UR, Christians and Other Minorities (OM)- all other religious minorities, i.e., Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, Zoroastrians and others were taken into one group for the study.

## **III. Employment Status Of Workers Among Major Srgs In India**

The present section focuses on the employment status of workers across major SRGs by usual principal status. Table 1 shows the share of different SRGs by gender and sector in India. PLFS 2019-20-unit level data by NSS is used for the calculations.

In the rural sector, Muslim male workers are highest in self-employment but very few in regular salaried jobs. Around 54% of Muslim males both UR and OBC are engaged as self-employed, whereas only 14.7% and 12.9% are working as regular salaried workers respectively. M-OBCs are doing worse than the unreserved so-called higher castes among Muslims. The participation of Hindu upper caste workers (H-UR) is highest around 22% in regular salaried jobs. Even the H-SC/STs are slightly better than the M-OBCs when it comes to rural male workers in regular salaried jobs. Christian male workers are around 18% in regular salaried jobs which is higher than the average national level. Even the other minorities are in a better place in the case of regular salaried jobs as compared to Muslim workers. The share of H-UR males as casual labour is only 14% which is much lower than the M-OBC and M-UR. It shows the better performance of H-UR in every aspect as compared to M-OBC and M-UR groups. The same is true in the case of comparison with the Christian workers and other minorities with the Muslim workers.

In the case of rural female workers, Muslim women are facing the same issues as Muslim male workers. The participation of Muslim females in regular salaried jobs is lower than among every socio-religious community. Muslim female OBCs are nearly 10% in regular salaried jobs even lower than the H-SC/ST female, though slightly better than the H-OBC female workers. Muslims OBCs and UR females constitute 65% and 60% of self-employed workers respectively. Christian and other minority female workers are doing better than the Muslim female workers in regular salaried jobs; their participation is higher in regular salaried jobs and lower in self-employment.

In urban sector, data shows, share of Muslim male workers in regular salaried jobs are nearly 40% and 37% among UR and OBCs respectively, whereas H-OBC and H-UR constitutes around 46% and 57% in this category respectively. It shows the share of Muslims in regular salaried jobs in much lower than the Hindu in both the social groups. Christian workers in regular salaried jobs constitute around 55% higher than Muslims. Even other minorities are doing better than the Muslims in case of regular salaried jobs. In self-employed works, Muslim male workers are higher as comparison to other SRGs. They are leading in self-employment even higher than the national average.

It seems that Muslim female workers in urban sector are doing better in regular salaried jobs as compare to the Muslim male workers in both the social groups. Though, their participation is lower than the other SRGs in urban sector in regular salaried jobs. The share of M-OBC female in regular salaried jobs is only 33.77% whereas female among H-OBC as well as H-UR are participating 53.8% and 67.68% respectively, shows the M-OBC female are worst performing in regular salaried jobs. When we compare the shares of Muslim workers with the other minorities, Christian and OM group workers are performing better than the Muslim female workers in regular salaried jobs. In case of self-employment, share of Muslim OBC and UR female is 52.98% and 42.63% respectively, much higher than the other SRGs. It shows their dominance in the self-employed works in urban sector.

**Table 1 Employment status of Major Socio-Religious Groups by Usual Principal Status in India, 2019-20 (in %)**

		<i>H-SC/ST</i>	<i>H-OBC</i>	<i>H-UR</i>	<i>M-OBC</i>	<i>M-UR</i>	<i>Christians</i>	<i>OM</i>	<i>All</i>
Rural Male	SE	45.06	62.55	64.16	54.65	54.7	53.51	45.02	55.79
	RS	13.05	14.11	21.79	<b>12.9</b>	14.74	18.3	19.67	15.2
	CL	41.89	23.34	14.05	32.45	30.56	28.19	35.31	29.01
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Rural Female	SE	52.24	64.65	68.55	64.66	59.92	53.19	42.55	59.52
	RS	10.87	9.19	15.28	<b>9.99</b>	14.39	22.81	21.43	11.49
	CL	36.9	26.16	16.17	25.35	25.69	24	36.02	28.99
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Urban Male	SE	26.04	38.38	37.93	41.37	43	28.18	43.45	36.68
	RS	49.28	47.37	56.64	<b>36.86</b>	<b>39.28</b>	54.67	44.57	49.3
	CL	24.68	14.26	5.43	21.77	17.72	17.15	11.98	14.02
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Urban Female	SE	22.21	33.93	29.63	<b>52.98</b>	42.63	24.71	29.43	31.08
	RS	58.83	53.8	67.68	<b>33.77</b>	<b>47.74</b>	71.16	61.31	58.73
	CL	18.96	12.28	2.7	13.25	9.63	4.13	9.27	10.19
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

*Note: SE-Self-Employed workers, RS-Regular Salaried Workers, CL- Casual Labour workers, codes used from the NSS.*

*Source: Author's calculation from Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)-2019-20-unit level data by Usual Principal Status (UPS)*

Four significant points emerge from the preceding analysis. One essential element to note is that the participation of Muslim workers in self-employment is higher in both sectors when compared to other SRGs, whether male or female. Another significant point is that the proportion of Muslim workers in regular salaried jobs is substantially lower in comparison to other SRGs in both sectors. The third crucial fact is that M-OBCs are more vulnerable than M-URs among Muslims. The fourth and last crucial factor is related to gender; Muslim female workers do better in regular salaried positions in the urban sector than Muslim male workers, but their participation in regular salaried jobs in the rural sector is lower than male workers. when compared with the female workers from other SRGs, the condition of Muslim female workers is worse than that of Muslim male workers.

Higher participation of Muslim workers in self-employment work can be traced to their religious background or faith. In Muslims, there is importance of trade and commerce because the Holy Prophet Muhammad was himself a merchant and he laid down many basic rules and regulations in trade and commerce. Islam not only encourages people to do business but also instils universal principles that will lead them to success in this life and the hereafter.

The other possible reason for the Higher participation of Muslim workers in self-employment and low participation in regular salaried jobs can be the presence of discrimination in the labor markets. Many studies (Papola, 2012; Das, 2010; Borooah, 2010; Thorat and Attewell, 2007; Thorat and Deshpande, 1999) suggest the presence the labor market discrimination and this could be one of the reasons for the lower presentation of Muslim workers in good quality regular salaried jobs. Sachar Committee (2006) also highlighted this problem. Many Muslims are denied good positions jobs due to the stereotype and prejudice that work against them. There aren't many studies that can evaluate the severity of the situation and the amount of prejudice based on systematic data and field experiments. The breadth of the research is greater in this situation and needs to be looked into more.

From the above analysis, it shows that OBC Muslims are more susceptible than UR Muslims. OBC Muslims are the castes considered inferior to Muslims, whereas unreserved Muslims are superior castes. Many parts of India, and most Muslims, are organized into hierarchical caste systems. Inequity is the foundation of Indian society. Individuals, families, and castes all have different values. This concept of inequality can be expressed in numerous ways. Based on these rough sketches of Muslim stratification, it appears that the Muslim system is structurally comparable to the Hindu system (Mines, 1972). As a result, the caste system has drawbacks as well, but it is not as rigorous among Muslims as it is among Hindus.

The engagement of Muslim women in the workforce is far lower than that of Muslim men, which is another crucial factor. The cultural and customary barriers that prevent women from being encouraged to work in the upper middle class may be one cause. Their involvement mostly in self-employment can be explained by the potential for poverty, which compels them to enter the labour markets. The preconception and prejudice towards Muslim female employees that pervades the labour markets may be another cause for the low participation in regular salaried positions.

Following an analysis of SRG workers' job status throughout various economic activities, it is important to understand their proportion and distribution of employment by industry list.

#### IV. Employment Distribution Of Major STGs By Industry List

From the above discussion and analysis, it is evident that the participation of Muslim workers is higher in self-employment and they constitute less in regular salaried jobs. Now it is pertinent to know their participation in the types of industries so that we can have a clearer depiction of their employment status in the economy. According to NIC-2008 1-digit codes, Table 2 displays the employment distribution of male workers in various industries for the rural sector. It depicts, that Muslims are majorly in manufacturing, construction, wholesale and retail trade, and transportation and storage industries while their share in education, administrative and support services, public administration, defence activities, and financial and insurance activities are less. Rural M-OBC male workers are participating around 21% in construction activities higher than other SRGs but slightly lower than the H-SC/STs. The share of Muslim workers is higher in trade activities as compared to other SRGs. H-UR male workers are mostly high in finance-related activities, public administration, and professional activities, as compared to Muslims. Christians also outperform Muslims in financial, scientific, and technical activities, administrative activities, and public administration. The participation of Muslim workers in construction and manufacturing industries shows their poor socio-economic condition as they are mostly in low-quality work.

**Table 2 Employment Distribution of Rural Male Workers by Industry list in India, 2019-20 (in %)**

<i>Industry List (NIC-2008)</i>	<i>H-SC/ST</i>	<i>H-OBC</i>	<i>H-UR</i>	<i>M-OBC</i>	<i>M-UR</i>	<i>Christians</i>	<i>OM</i>	<i>All</i>
Agriculture	52.21	55.84	53.63	36.65	37.65	50.24	47.17	52.13
Mining	0.33	0.35	0.23	<b>0.4</b>	0.07	0.48	0.09	0.31
Manufacturing	6.17	8.02	8.04	<b>11.71</b>	11.46	5.56	9.36	7.78
Electricity	0.23	0.36	0.34	0.04	0.54	0.24	0.64	0.31
Water	0.25	0.11	0.28	0.06	0.28	0.26	0.18	0.19
Construction	23.07	13.33	7.33	<b>20.72</b>	19.93	15.7	14.53	16.23
Trade	5.72	8.53	10.84	13.01	<b>13.57</b>	7.04	6.72	8.38
Transport	5.03	5.03	5.81	<b>8.31</b>	7.42	6.15	10.96	5.65
Accommodation	1	1.44	1.52	0.72	1.87	1.08	0.74	1.26
Communication	0.23	0.29	0.51	0.1	0.27	0.53	0.15	0.29
Finance	0.31	0.58	<b>1.11</b>	0.28	0.18	0.8	0.7	0.55
Real estate	0.02	0.11	0	0.06	0.02	0	0.04	0.05
Professional	0.2	0.31	0.87	<b>0.3</b>	<b>0.02</b>	0.42	0.56	0.36
Administrative	0.53	0.75	1.48	<b>0.63</b>	0.69	1.04	1.42	0.82
Public Administration	1.2	0.77	1.66	0.97	1.08	2.46	1.61	1.13
Education	1.65	1.9	3.94	<b>1.77</b>	2.59	4.51	1.35	2.2
Health	0.42	0.3	0.43	0.52	0.29	0.83	0.76	0.4
Entertainment	0.31	0.16	0.29	0.35	0.1	0.81	0.66	0.26
Others	1.15	1.81	1.68	3.39	1.96	1.85	2.37	1.69
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

*Source: Author's calculation by using unit level data from PLFS-2019-20 by NSS, 1digit NIC-2008 code is used for industry list*

Table 3 illustrates the proportion of rural female workers in each of India's major SRGs. Muslim female workers, like male labourers, are largely employed in agriculture and manufacturing. Their involvement in the electrical, water, transportation, and real estate industries is insignificant. It is vital to mention that Muslim females perform better in public administration and education than their male counterparts in the rural sector. However, M-OBCs females are participating only 1.49% in public administration and 3.44% in education-related works which is far lower than the other socio-religious groups of female workers. Their participation in recreational activities is also nil.

**Table 3 Employment Distribution of Rural Female Workers by Industry list in India, 2019-20 (in %)**

<i>Industry List</i>	<i>H-SC/ST</i>	<i>H-OBC</i>	<i>H-UR</i>	<i>M-OBC</i>	<i>M-UR</i>	<i>Christians</i>	<i>OM</i>	<i>All</i>
Agriculture	75.71	77.56	73.47	63.76	46.8	58.27	64.88	74.36
Mining	0.06	0.01	0.01	0	0	0.31	0.09	0.04
Manufacturing	5.97	7.71	7.1	19.48	<b>29.68</b>	8.18	8.43	7.84
Electricity	0.02	0.01	0.09	0	0	0.03	0	0.03
Water	0.22	0.02	0.06	0	0	0.29	0.21	0.11
Construction	7.01	3.86	1.41	3.19	0.88	7.63	4.67	4.74
Trade	2.87	3.18	4.43	<b>6.26</b>	<b>5.88</b>	4.47	2.39	3.4
Transport	0.14	0.1	0.2	0.02	0	0.12	0.11	0.12
Accommodation	0.39	0.76	0.53	0.26	0.78	1.17	0.14	0.57
Communication	0.09	0.08	0.04	0.03	0	0.79	0.2	0.1
Finance	0.12	0.38	0.39	0.42	0.09	0.18	6.76	0.47
Real estate	0	0.01	0	0	0	0	0	0
Professional	0.02	0.04	0.11	0.21	0.01	0.4	0.01	0.06
Administrative	0.21	0.07	0.2	0.03	0.12	0.75	0.4	0.17
Public Administration	0.89	0.52	1.04	<b>1.49</b>	1.44	2.11	0.77	0.82

Education	3.79	3.63	7.98	<b>3.44</b>	<b>9.63</b>	8.95	6.09	4.6
Health	1.96	1.14	1.67	0.82	1.41	4.67	1.73	1.62
Entertainment	0.05	0.04	0.04	0	0	0	0.18	0.04
Others	0.48	0.88	1.23	0.6	3.27	1.68	2.93	0.9
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

*Source: Same as Table 2*

As indicated in Table 4, the result for urban Muslim male workers is nearly identical to that of the rural sector. M-OBCs account for 23% of manufacturing operations, while M-URs account for roughly 26%, the most among all SRGs and even higher than the national average in the urban sector. In comparison to other SRGs, their engagement in construction, trade, and transport-related activities is high but low in public administration and administrative operations. Once again, compared to other socio-religious groups, Muslim OBCs have much worse conditions. In comparison, the participation rates for H-SC/ST, H-OBC, H-UR, and Christians were 4.58%, 2.87%, 3.66%, and 5.08%, respectively. Any socioreligious group must participate in public administration and other services if they want to have a voice at the highest level. The fact that Muslim OBCs are extremely underrepresented in India's higher-level and more secure employment, however, clearly illustrates their hardship.

**Table 4 Employment Distribution of Urban Male Workers by Industry list in India, 2019-20 (in %)**

Industry List	H-SC/ST	H-OBC	H-UR	M-OBC	M-UR	Christians	OM	All
Agriculture	4.22	6.15	2.77	3.13	2.53	5.62	4.05	4.23
Mining	0.74	0.85	0.43	0.21	0.21	0.35	0.04	0.57
Manufacturing	17.58	21.58	20.34	<b>23.42</b>	<b>25.73</b>	12.91	16.46	20.58
Electricity	0.88	1.01	0.81	0.22	0.27	0.99	0.86	0.81
Water	0.98	0.73	0.42	0.55	0.58	0.92	1.12	0.66
Construction	20.05	11.71	7.43	14.51	13.74	14.68	11.5	12.14
Trade	19.61	23.7	26.7	27.87	29.48	16.51	27.86	24.64
Transport	10.87	9.18	7.9	14.91	11.24	10.97	6.76	9.63
Accommodation	3.49	4.45	3.57	3.17	2.34	3.72	3.06	3.72
Communication	1.39	2.71	4.68	1.09	1.82	5.32	3.33	3
Finance	1.89	2.45	3.87	0.42	0.95	3.48	5.03	2.65
Real estate	0.36	0.56	0.84	0.38	0.16	0.34	0.55	0.57
Professional	1.58	1.8	3.42	0.72	1.11	2.5	3.39	2.2
Administrative	2.95	2.01	2.91	1.24	1.54	5.21	1.91	2.43
Public Administration	4.58	2.87	3.66	0.69	1.82	5.08	4.43	3.25
Education	3.29	3.14	4.4	1.65	2.02	5.51	3.75	3.44
Health	1.56	1.48	1.71	0.78	1.04	2.15	2.54	1.53
Entertainment	0.88	0.49	0.53	0.42	0.7	0.28	1.02	0.58
Others	3.09	3.11	3.62	4.64	2.74	3.47	2.35	3.36
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

*Source: Same as Table 2*

Table 5 illustrates the proportion of urban female workers in the major SRGs. In contrast to rural female workers, urban female Muslim's participation in administrative and public administration is less. In comparison to H-URs, their share of public administration is substantially lower. In fact, historically disadvantaged groups of H-SC/STs are outperforming all other major SRGs. Muslim female workers are mostly in manufacturing, construction, and trade activities. Distribution of OBC female in the manufacturing activities is highest around 42% in urban areas as compared to the other socio-religious groups. Christian female is only 9.78% in the manufacturing activities, though their participation in public administration and education related activities is quite high as compared to the Muslim women workers.

**Table 5 Employment Distribution of Urban Female Workers by Industry list in India, 2019-20 (in %)**

Industry List	H-SC/ST	H-OBC	H-UR	M-OBC	M-UR	Christians	OM	All
Agriculture	8.29	10.16	2.11	7.46	3.2	5.62	7.49	6.73
Mining	0.1	0.17	0.12	0	0.02	0.1	0	0.12
Manufacturing	17.11	25.57	17.43	<b>42.31</b>	<b>37.08</b>	9.78	19.81	21.88
Electricity	0.07	0.17	0.16	0	0	0.2	0.54	0.15
Water	1.37	0.41	0.2	0.81	0.5	0.8	0.12	0.56
Construction	10.3	4.18	1.95	<b>3.55</b>	2.53	1.46	2.79	4.43
Trade	22.03	18.7	18.28	<b>18.4</b>	<b>21.19</b>	16.11	13.09	19
Transport	0.81	0.72	1	0.51	1.58	1.21	0.95	0.87
Accommodation	2.14	3.49	1.81	3	1.75	3.86	3.63	2.66
Communication	1.4	1.82	5.85	1.02	1.52	4.94	5.63	3.15
Finance	1.83	2.3	4.56	0.65	1.25	4.8	3.69	2.92
Real estate	0.32	0.17	0.2	0.2	0	0.13	0	0.19
Professional	0.8	1.31	3.81	<b>0.61</b>	<b>0.76</b>	1.53	0.55	1.89
Administrative	1.42	1.18	2.11	<b>0.44</b>	<b>1.47</b>	3.41	1.06	1.57

Public Administration	5.22	2.41	3.21	<b>0.81</b>	<b>1.24</b>	3.05	2.03	3.09
Education	9.36	14.95	21.45	11.3	14.24	24.5	21.89	16.25
Health	5.25	4.35	5.48	3.24	4.59	12.14	6.56	5.21
Entertainment	0	0.14	0.4	0	0.74	0.1	0	0.2
Others	12.16	7.81	9.87	5.69	6.35	6.26	10.17	9.12

Source: Same as Table 2

From the above analysis it is quite evident that the Muslims are in general participating mostly in the manufacturing, construction and trade related activities and their participation in public administration and education related activities is dismal. Further within the manufacturing activities it is important to know the kind of works they are involved in? Muslim men are more concentrated in the production of goods made of leather, textiles, and other materials for clothing in both rural and urban areas, according to Mansoor (2021), whereas Muslim women are more concentrated in the manufacturing of tobacco products in addition to these three industries. In contrast to Hindus, Muslims are primarily concentrated in unorganized, low-tech sectors. The bad working conditions in these low-tech businesses, with or without social security benefits, are undoubtedly the cause of Muslims' dismal economic status.

Now that we are aware of how Muslims participate in various sectors; it is crucial to comprehend how they are distributed across various professions so that we can have a better understanding of their job status in various businesses. High level jobs and services are typically correlated with educational achievement and abilities. Understanding how different socio-religious groups are represented in various professions and services that call for education and expertise is significant.

### V. Occupation-Wise Employment Share Of Major SRGs In India

In this section, I discuss the occupation-wise distribution of workers across all major socio-religious groups in India as specified in the study. Sector-wise and gender-wise distributions are calculated and compared. The occupation list NCO-2004 is used for the coding. 1 digit code is used for the analysis.

Table 6 depicts the proportion of rural male and female workers in major SRGs. Muslim males account for around 9% of legislators and 11% of service personnel; their participation in skilled agricultural services is high, although lower than that of other SRGs. It is worth noting that in terms of artisan work, Muslims outweigh all other SRGs. They are ranked second in this category after their participation in skilled agricultural services. Muslim female workers are mainly employed in crafts and related jobs, and their share is significantly larger than that of the other SRGs. It indicates their dominance in crafts and allied services, this dominance can be traced by the traditional and historical background of their involvement in these occupations. With the exception of H-SC/STs, OBC Muslim females have a larger presence in the elementary occupation (28%), compared to other SRGs among females. A few examples of basic occupations are street vendors, shoe cleaners, domestic helpers, doorkeepers, garbage collectors, agricultural and fishing laborers, and laborers in the manufacturing, mining, and transportation industries. These jobs typically lack social security and offer subpar working conditions. The presence of historically underrepresented Hindu SC/STs and Muslim OBCs demonstrates their terrible socioeconomic situations, which further entrench them in poverty. It's also vital to mention that there aren't many Muslim OBC women working as professionals, clerks, or technicians. This may be a result of Muslim women's low educational attainment and lack of the necessary skills for the services in rural locations.

**Table 6 Occupation-wise employment share of Rural sector workers among major SRGs in India, 2019-20 (in %)**

Occupation list	Rural Male					Rural Female		
	H-SC/ST	H-OBC	H-UR	M-OBC	M-UR	Christians	OM	All
Legislators, Senior Officials	3.88	6.68	8.73	9.03	8.59	8.45	3.91	6.28
Professionals	1.57	1.85	3.71	1.73	1.74	3.88	2.74	2.11
Technicians	1.42	2.26	3.51	2.15	2.52	3.52	2.24	2.22
Clerks	0.97	1.14	2.3	0.8	0.99	2.01	0.59	1.24
Service workers	4.95	7.17	8.94	10.71	10.65	7.38	5.64	7.05
Skilled Agricultural	33.28	44.28	44.26	23.13	26.41	36.79	28.52	38.24
Crafts and Related	12.71	11.03	7.78	14.84	16.32	11.72	11.58	11.52
Plant and Machine	5.37	5.76	7.21	6.86	7.43	5.44	10.11	6.13
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	<i>Rural Female</i>							
Legislators, Senior Officials	3.15	3.81	5.68	8.56	6.84	6.1	8.12	4.23
Professionals	1.59	1.58	3.15	1.01	3.08	5.96	2.97	1.97
Technicians	3.46	2.51	6.09	2.13	8.77	7.22	3.5	3.6
Clerks	0.41	0.62	1.05	0.71	0.32	2.65	0.53	0.66
Service workers	3.44	3.75	5.09	5	4.12	5.63	5.22	3.96
Skilled Agricultural	45.83	53.99	55.02	39.09	23.06	40.91	31.48	48.99
Crafts and Related	5.35	6.22	5.18	14.95	25.22	7.4	7.74	6.51

Plant and Machine	0.63	0.78	0.67	0.52	2.15	0.52	0.59	0.72
Elementary Occupations	36.13	26.73	18.06	28.04	26.43	23.62	39.84	29.37
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

**Source:** Author's calculation by using unit level data from PLFS-2019-20 by NSS, 1 digit NCO-2004 code is used for Occupation list

Table 7 illustrates the proportion of male and female urban workers in major SRGs. It demonstrates that the majority of Muslim male workers are employed in craft and related occupations. M-OBCs account for around 18% of service workers, the highest among the major SRGs. Except for H-SC/STs, their participation as legislators is smaller than that of the other SRGs. In comparison to the rural sector, Muslims in metropolitan regions have fewer positions as legislators and senior officials. As professionals, they have a lower share than others. On the other hand, Muslim female workers have a higher position in terms of legislators and senior official services; however, their share of professionals is lower when compared to other SRGs. H-UR females make up about 24% of the workforce, while M-UR females make up barely 9%. The proportion of Muslim OBC females in crafts and related services is highest at roughly 32%, while the proportion of H-UR females in these sectors is only 9.2%. Muslim women workers are in poor economic situations as a result of the lack of social security benefits and the bad working circumstances, which are prevalent in the unorganized sector.

**Table 7 Occupation-wise employment share of Urban sector workers among major SRGs in India, 2019-20 (in %)**

Occupation list	H-SC/ST	H-OBC	H-UR	Urban Male		Christians	OM	All
				M-OBC	M-UR			
Legislators, Senior Officials	10.5	17.34	21.28	16.15	14.66	17.69	21.01	17.33
Professionals	5.15	7.26	13.7	3.77	7.27	10.9	11.71	8.86
Technicians	5.18	6.12	8.23	3.41	3.18	8.01	8.38	6.34
Clerks	3.95	4.5	5.71	1.42	2.33	5.61	5.03	4.44
Service workers	14.42	16.25	16.53	18.01	13.95	14.47	15.57	15.99
Skilled agricultural	2.54	4.74	2.52	2.76	5.3	3.27	3.28	3.48
Crafts and Related	21.47	19.05	11.75	<b>23.82</b>	<b>26.84</b>	17.16	12.69	17.79
Plant and Machine	11.98	11.88	10.29	13.53	11.51	9.27	9.81	11.39
Elementary Occupations	24.82	12.85	9.98	17.11	14.96	13.61	12.53	14.39
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
				Urban Female				
Legislators, Senior Officials	6.41	11.18	12.79	15.52	14.9	11.49	9.61	11.05
Professionals	7.27	10.98	24.32	9.73	9.34	20.61	20.13	14.85
Technicians	7.95	12.66	15.75	5.29	8.95	21.26	17.57	12.73
Clerks	4.12	4.62	7.1	0.83	2.22	6.62	6.05	5.13
Service workers	18.33	16.06	14.46	18.33	18.65	15.4	12.98	16.09
Skilled agricultural	3.07	6.08	1.64	4.11	0.23	3.78	1.97	3.64
Crafts and Related	12.37	13.79	9.2	<b>31.66</b>	<b>24.39</b>	6.57	10.8	12.95
Plant and Machine	2.48	2.97	1.77	2.8	2.12	2.36	1.53	2.4
Elementary Occupations	38.01	21.66	12.98	11.73	19.21	11.89	19.36	21.16
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

*Source:* Same as Table 6

## VI. Conclusions

The present study precisely focuses on the employment condition of Socio-Religious Groups in India because it is imperative for the inclusive and sustainable development, every section of the society should be participating the process of growth and development. From the above discussion it is found that there are some weaker sections of the society which are lagging from others. It is an important aspect to look at the broader picture of the socio-economic condition of the SRGs. In the process of economic development where they stand, could be analyzed with their employment participation in the economy. Muslims, constituting a significant religious minority in the country, have faced historical marginalization and have often encountered challenges in accessing quality employment.

The results, show the participation of Muslim workers mainly in self-employment and very less in regular salaried jobs can be traced to the reasons the religious faith, lack of education and skills due to the unavailability of the institutions nearby, discriminatory practices at the time of entry into the formal labour markets and the vicious circle of poverty and lastly the perception of the community to face discrimination and differential treatments due to many personal and past experiences of the others. In the case of Muslim women workers, the problem of discrimination and exclusion is compounded by the fact that both being Muslim and being a woman work against the spirit of Muslim working women's involvement in labour markets. Additionally, the load is increased and it is harder for Muslim women to find employment if they are from the OBCs group.

The analysis based on Industry wise distribution of Muslim workers it depicts, that Muslims are majorly in manufacturing, construction, wholesale and retail trade, and transportation and storage industries while their share in education, administrative and support services, public administration, defense activities, and financial and insurance activities are less. The participation of Muslim workers in construction and manufacturing industries shows their poor socio-economic condition as they are mostly in low-quality work.

Muslim men are more concentrated in the production of goods made of leather, textiles, and other materials for clothing in both rural and urban areas, according to Mansoor (2021), whereas Muslim women are more concentrated in the manufacturing of tobacco products in addition to these three industries. In contrast to Hindus, Muslims are primarily concentrated in unorganized, low-tech sectors. The bad working conditions in these low-tech businesses, with or without social security benefits, are undoubtedly the cause of Muslims' dismal economic status.

It is worth noting that in terms of artisan work, Muslims outweigh all other SRGs. They are ranked second in this category after their participation in skilled agricultural services. Muslim female workers are mainly employed in crafts and related jobs, and their share is significantly larger than that of the other SRGs. It indicates their dominance in crafts and allied services, this dominance can be traced by the traditional and historical background of their involvement in these occupations. With the exception of H-SC/STs, OBC Muslim females have a larger presence in the elementary occupation (28%), compared to other SRGs among females. Muslims are mainly in the crafts and related works and also in the elementary occupations but very less participation in the professional, technicians and other important high-quality jobs. Even at the Class IV level or in Grade D employment, where strong educational qualifications are not necessary, discriminatory behaviours, particularly at the time of the interview, were identified as causes for the low representation of Muslims (Sachar, 2006). Education is also a key factor in the underrepresentation of Muslim workers in higher positions in both public and commercial institutions. With all the discussion and analysis, it is important to note that the participation of Muslim workers in employment is not up to the mark as compared to other SRGs, which can be a hindrance to the sustainable development of the country.

Inclusive employment for socio-religious groups is not just an ethical imperative but a strategic move for sustainable development in India. The country's diversity is its greatest asset, and by harnessing the skills, talents, and perspectives of all its citizens, India can accelerate economic growth, reduce inequality, and foster a more harmonious society. As the nation moves forward, prioritizing inclusive employment practices should be an integral part of its development strategy, steering India towards a more prosperous and equitable future.

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