

Indian Express News Analysis (IENA)

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ISRO rocket debris on Australian shore: rules governing space junk

[#SpaceDebris](#) [#RocketDebris](#) [#PSLV](#) [#ISRO](#) [#OuterSpaceTreaty](#)
[#ConventionOnInternationalLiabilityForDamageCausedBySpaceObjects](#) [#ScienceandTechnology](#)
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A large object found on the shores of **western Australia** a couple of weeks ago has been confirmed to be the debris of an **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** rocket, the Australian Space Agency said Monday. ISRO has agreed with the assessment, saying the debris could be from one of its **Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV)** rockets.

Are such incidents normal?

Junk from space objects falling to the earth are not unheard of. Most such incidents involve relatively small fragments from rockets that survive the friction of the atmosphere. These usually do not make big news. Also, **most of the times, the space junk falls into oceans, thus posing little danger to human populations.**

But there have been a few highly publicised falls as well. In recent times, a large chunk of a **25-tonne Chinese rocket fell into the Indian Ocean in May 2021.** The most famous such case remains that of the **Skylab space station**, a predecessor to the currently operational International Space Station, which **disintegrated in 1979.** Large chunks from this disintegration fell into the Indian Ocean, some of them falling on land in western Australia.

Isn't it dangerous?

The **threat to life and property from falling space junk is not negligible.** Even when falling into the oceans, which is more likely since 70 per cent of the earth's surface is ocean, large objects can be a threat to marine life, and a source of pollution.

However, there are no recorded incidents of these falling objects causing any appreciable damage anywhere on the earth. When they have dropped over land, so far, it has been over uninhabited areas.

What happens if these objects cause damage?

There are international regulations governing space debris, which include junk falling back on the earth. Most space-faring countries are signatories to the **Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects.** This convention is one of the several international agreements that complement the **Outer Space Treaty**, the **overarching framework guiding the behaviour of countries in space.** The **Liability Convention deals mainly with damage caused by space objects to other space assets, but it also applies to damage caused by falling objects on earth.**

The Convention makes the **launching country "absolutely liable" to pay compensation for any damage caused by its space object on the earth or to a flight in air.** The **country where the junk falls can stake a claim for compensation** if it has been damaged by the falling object.

In the current case, if the PSLV junk had caused any damage in Australia, India could have been liable to pay compensation, even if the object fell into the ocean and was then swept to the shores. The amount of compensation is to be decided “in accordance with international law and the principles of justice and equity”.

This provision of the **Convention has resulted in compensation payment only once so far** — when **Canada sought damages from the then Soviet Union**, for a satellite with radioactive substance that fell into an uninhabited region in its northern territory in **1978**. The **Soviet Union is reported to have paid 3 million Canadian dollars**.

The rise of Indian entrepreneurs: A reality check

[#IndianEntrepreneurs](#) [#Businessman](#) [#QualifiedSelfEmployedProfessionals](#) [#SelfEmployed](#)
[#Employment](#) [#Economy](#) [#GS3](#)

Atmanirbhar Bharat, or a self-reliant India, is among the most prominent stated goals of the incumbent government. Of course, the idea is that the country will achieve self-reliance in a whole host of economic activities. An associated idea, pushed forward by the government, has been to convince people that they should not look towards the government for an official job.

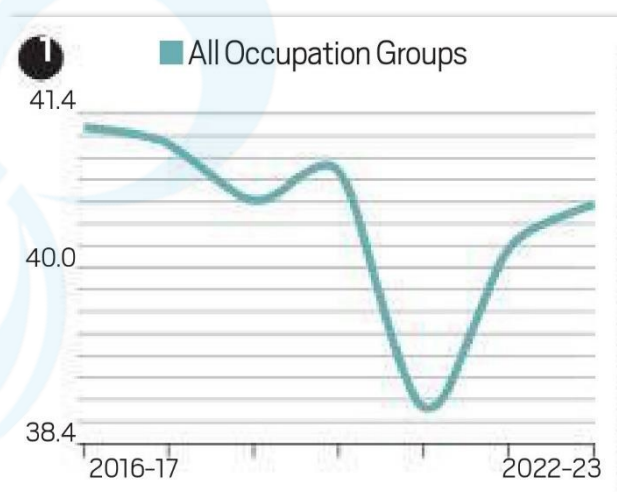
At the height of the debate around unemployment in 2018, then BJP president Amit Shah had said in his maiden speech in the Rajya Sabha: “It is better for a youth to earn a living selling pakodas instead of being unemployed”.

Five years later, data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy suggests that Indians are increasingly doing just that — engaging in **self-employment**.

Where and how Indians work?

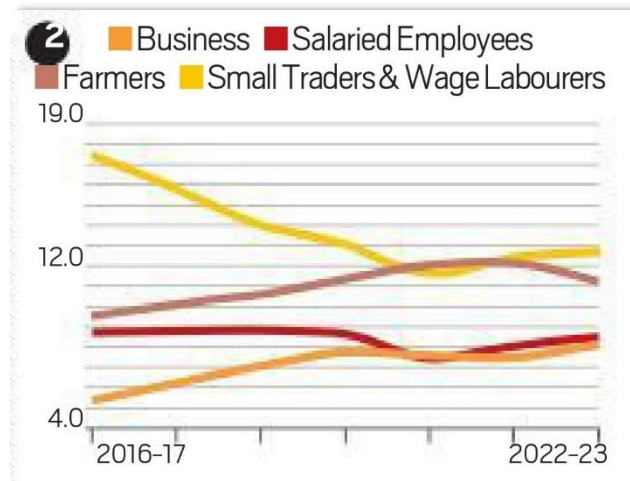
Chart 1 maps the total number of employed people in India.

According to CMIE, the **total employment in India in January-April 2023 stood at 412.9 million**. This is 8.6 million more than what it was before the pandemic (that is, during January-April 2019).



The total employed people can be further categorised into several other categories. However, there are **four main categories**. **Chart 2** maps the trajectories of those four sub-categories.

These are: **business; salaried; small traders & wage labourers; and farmers**.



If one notices carefully, at least two things will stand out.

First is the order of how Indians are employed. The **bulk of Indians work either as farmers or as wage labourers or small traders.** The **third biggest category is the salaried class.** The **fourth-biggest category is the so-called “business” class or “entrepreneurs”.**

The second thing to note is that there is **only one category that has actually recovered** to the pre-pandemic level. That is **those employed in “business”** of some kind. All other types of employment are still below the pre-pandemic number. The number of people categorised under “business” grew by 8.4 million between the last four years.

Rise of entrepreneurship?

At one level, the fact that employment is soaring within the “business” category can be seen as heartening news. It can give a sense that India’s economy is creating the right kind of incentives for the private sector to come out and reach for their dreams — that India is the new land of opportunities for entrepreneurs.

But a detailed examination of the data within the “business” category throws up a very different picture.

There are three sub-categories for those within the “business” class.

Businessmen: This includes those people who set up large businesses that leverage capital and humans to run them. They manage some fixed premises such as an office, shop, workshop, factory, etc.

Qualified self-employed professionals: The bit about being “qualified” and being “professional” is crucial here. This category includes people who run their own professional enterprises and leverage their own expertise, such as **doctors, lawyers, consultants, professional chartered accountants,** and so on.

Self-employed: This category refers to those “entrepreneurs” who run their own business enterprises but these enterprises do not leverage much financial capital, human capital or even professional skills. Think of **taxi drivers, barbers, beauticians, estate agents, brokers, insurance agents, models, astrologers, etc.**

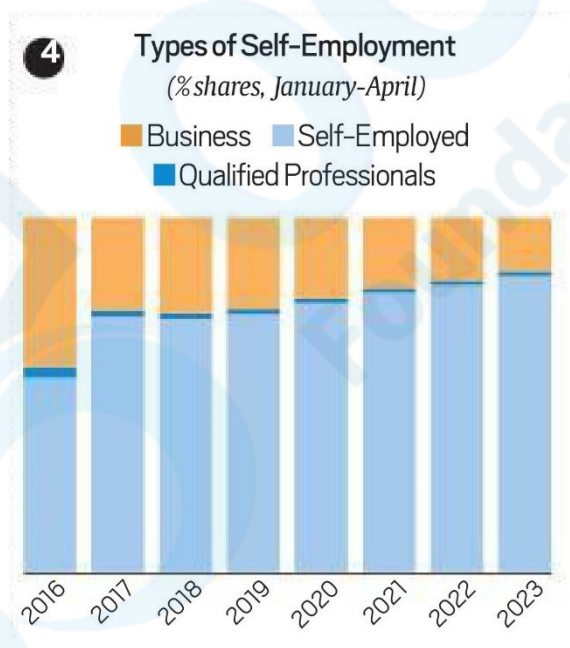
Now look at **Chart 3**, which maps the quite distinct trajectory of these three sub-categories over the past few years. As the chart bears out, **self-employed entrepreneurs accounted for the largest share, at around 70-80 per cent of all the entrepreneurs in India.**

The **second largest share was that of businessmen**, comprising around **15-20 per cent** of the total business persons in the country.



Qualified self-employed professionals accounted for a mere 1-2 per cent.

According to CMIE, this composition has changed considerably since 2016, from when CMIE started releasing its employment data. The share of businessmen fell substantially and was offset by an equal rise in the share of self-employed entrepreneurs (see **Chart 4**).



What is the upshot?

The key takeaway from these charts and data is to understand the nature of employment that Indians are increasingly engaged in.

Data shows that at the macro level, what is often considered to be the **business class — the well-to-do entrepreneur — is seeing a secular decline**. In other words, there are fewer and fewer Indians belonging to that category despite a rise in population. This means a decline in both absolute numbers as well as a proportion.

More importantly, the **actual rise of Indian entrepreneurs is happening in the self-employment category, which reflects poorly on the economic conditions**.

“It is likely that this shift in the composition of employment in India does not indicate an increase in real entrepreneurship but is merely a reflection of poor employment opportunities in the economy,” according to a research note by CMIE.

Who are the Paharis and Paddaris, proposed for ST status in J&K?

[#PahadisEthnicGroup](#) [#Paddari](#) [#TribesofJammuAndKashmir](#) [#ScheduledTribes](#) [#Article342](#)
[#Polity](#) [#GS2](#)

The government has brought a Bill to include four communities in the list of Scheduled Tribes (STs) in Jammu and Kashmir: **“Gadda Brahmin”, “Koli”, “Paddari Tribe”, and “Pahari Ethnic Group”**.

The Constitution (Jammu and Kashmir) Scheduled Tribes Order (Amendment) Bill, 2023 is one of the four Bills relating to the Union Territory that were introduced in Lok Sabha on July 26.

ST communities now

The dominant ST communities in J&K are the **Gujjars and Bakerwals**, who mainly live in the districts of Rajouri, Poonch, Reasi, Kishtwar, Anantnag, Bandipora, Ganderbal, and Kupwara. Most of them, especially the **Bakerwals, are nomadic — they migrate with their livestock to the higher reaches in the summer, and return before the onset of winter.**

With a population of almost 18 lakh, the **Gujjar-Bakerwal are the third largest group after Kashmiris and Dogras in J&K**. They were given ST status in 1991, along with the two smaller groups of Gaddis and Sippis. This entitled these four communities to 10% reservation in government jobs and admission to educational institutions; in 2019, they were empowered politically after the Centre announced a 10% quota for them in Lok Sabha and Assembly seats in J&K.

The proposed expansion of the ST list has triggered unrest among the Gujjar-Bakerwal, who apprehend a shrinking of their share of the quota benefits pie. The Bill says the amendment “may entail additional expenditure on account of benefits to be provided to persons belonging to the said [four] communities”.

Gujjar-Bakerwal leaders are especially agitated with the proposed ST status for Paharis and Paddaris. Gadda Brahmins and Kolis are very small communities; also, according to the protesters, **Gadda Brahmins are a branch of the Gaddis while Kolis are a sub-caste of Sippis** — both these communities are already in the ST list.

Pahari Ethnic Group

The **Paharis are Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs, and include people of Kashmiri origin who settled in the districts of Rajouri and Poonch over a period of time**. There are upper caste Hindus among the Paharis; also people who were displaced from Pakistan Occupied Kashmir.

The Paharis finally got 4% reservation in jobs and educational institutions in 2019, when Satya Pal Malik was Governor. Also in 2019, the Justice (retd) G D Sharma Commission was appointed to identify groups that were socially, educationally, and economically backward. The Commission in its report recommended ST status for Gadda Brahmins, Kolis, Paddari Tribe, and Pahari Ethnic Group. The report was sent to the Tribal Affairs Ministry, and the Registrar General approved it in 2022.

Paddari Tribe

They live in the remote Paddar area of the hilly Kishtwar district. Spread over two tehsils, **the Paddari homeland borders Zanskar (Ladakh) in the north and the east, Pangri in Himachal Pradesh in the south, and the rest of J&K in the west.**

The 2011 census recorded the Paddari population at 21,548, comprising 83.6% Hindus, 9.5% Buddhists, and 6.8% Muslims. The people of the area, including those who have come from elsewhere to settle there, speak the Paddari language.

Like in the case of the Paharis, the Gujjar-Bakerwal opposition to the proposed inclusion of the Paddari Tribe in the ST list is based on the argument that they do not constitute a single ethnic group, but are a mix of individuals from different castes and religions who speak a particular language.

Scheduled Tribes have been defined in **clause (25) of article 366** of the Constitution as such tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under article 342 to be Scheduled Tribes for the purposes of the Constitution.

Article 342 of the Constitution provides as under:—

"342. Scheduled Tribes.—(1) The **President** may with respect to any State or Union territory, and where it is a State, **after consultation with the Governor** thereof, by public notification, **specify the tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within tribes or tribal communities** which shall for the purposes of this Constitution be deemed to be Scheduled Tribes in relation to that State or Union territory, as the case may be.

(2) **Parliament may by law include in or exclude from the list of Scheduled Tribes specified in a notification issued under clause (1)** any tribe or tribal community or part of or group within any tribe or tribal community, but save as aforesaid a notification issued under the said clause shall not be varied by any subsequent notification."

In accordance with the said Constitutional provisions, the first list of Scheduled Tribes in respect of the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir was notified vide the **Constitution (Jammu and Kashmir) Scheduled Tribes Order, 1989**. The said list of Scheduled Tribes was amended vide the **Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Amendment) Act, 1991**. By virtue of the provisions of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, the said list of Scheduled Tribes, presently applies to both the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir and the Union territory of Ladakh.

The Administration of the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir has requested to include the communities of "Gadda Brahmin", "Koli", "Paddari Tribe" and "Pahari Ethnic Group" in the list of Scheduled Tribes in respect of the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir. On the basis of the recommendation of the Administration of the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir and after consultation with the Registrar General of India and the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes, it is proposed to amend the Constitution (Jammu and Kashmir) Scheduled Tribes Order, 1989.

Accordingly, the **Constitution (Jammu and Kashmir) Scheduled Tribes Order (Amendment) Bill, 2023** proposes to amend the Constitution (Jammu and Kashmir) Scheduled Tribes Order, 1989, to include the communities of "Gadda Brahmin", "Koli", "Paddari Tribe" and "Pahari Ethnic Group" in the list of Scheduled Tribes in respect of the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

How is a community added or removed from SC, ST lists?

A State government may choose to recommend certain communities for addition or subtraction from the list of SCs/STs based on its discretion. This recommendation may come from studies or commissions.

Following this, the proposal to include or remove any community from the Scheduled List is sent to the **Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs** from the concerned State government. After this, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, through its own deliberations, examines the proposal, and sends it to the **Registrar General of India (RGI)**. Once approved by the RGI, the proposal is sent to the **National Commission for Scheduled Castes or National Commission for Scheduled Tribes**, following which the proposal

is sent back to the Union government, which after inter-ministerial deliberations, introduces it in the Cabinet for final approval.

After this, the bill is introduced in both the houses of the Parliament and after getting passed by both the houses and receiving President's assent, it becomes an act.

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