



IMPACT OF NON- TRADITIONAL CAREERS ON WOMEN AND THEIR LIVES – MOTIVATION & CHALLENGES

** Ms. Deepika Kotian*

** Lecturer, Shri M.D. Shah Mahila College of Arts & Commerce*

Abstract

A woman is seen as an epitome of care. She is graceful, beautiful, sincere, delicate, innocent and naive. This connotation about woman has been prevalent in the society from decades and not much has changed since then. Today, women have broken the barriers of fragility and become fierce, have become the epitome of hard work which captures the beauty and grandeur of the work they perform. Even though women have achieved far and above from the expectations bestowed upon them, the uncertainty and lack of support from the society has only added to the many challenges that they have faced and continue to face today.

Keywords: *Non- Traditional Workers, Women Empowerment, Pay- Scale, Society*

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Introduction: The encouraging periods of high economic growth since the early 1990s, distinguished by the “New Economic Policy” that liberalized the businesses, allowed India to effectively take a leap which brought significant changes to the lives of the Indian workforce. However, this growth can be termed “biased” “preferred gender”. Be it the crystallized glass ceilings, the unexplainable pay gaps, unconscious biases, or lack of basic amenities like separate toilets, India is still a long way from realizing its much hyped demographic dividend. But the strong-willed women have gone far above this.

Women have increasingly become more involved in the workforce. Paid employment of women has shifted from primarily traditional female- oriented jobs to more non-traditional, and previously male-oriented careers. (Jones & Domenico), 2006.

Among the ways in which women try to raise their standard of living has been majorly through female oriented jobs but the shift is apparent by entering non-traditional occupations, jobs from which they have long

been excluded or sidelined for reasons of culture, discrimination, contract, or law. They have been attracted to these jobs in part because male-dominated employment not only pays better than female-dominated jobs but also nurtures self - efficacy.

In recent years, women have made significant progress in breaking down gender barriers and pursuing non-traditional careers. Non-traditional careers are those that have traditionally been dominated by men and are often associated with higher salaries, greater professional opportunities, and a sense of fulfilment. Despite this progress, women in non-traditional careers continue to face a range of challenges that can impact their lives and careers. This paper will explore the impact of non-traditional careers on women, including their motivations for pursuing these careers and the challenges they face.

Review of Literature: Only 18.6% of working-age women in India participate in the labour force, three times lower than men, says the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2020. According to the World Bank,



Indian women's participation in the formal economy is among the lowest in the world—only parts of the Arab world fare worse.

The Economic Survey 2018 shows that Indian women typically earn low wages working in highly insecure jobs. India had the largest gender gap in median earnings of full-time employees in 2015. About 88% of women employed in industries and 71% in services are informal (International Labour Organization 2018). Researchers have also consistently found that women also do not rise up the ranks, despite being better supervisors and workers.

Motivations for Pursuing Non-Traditional Careers:

1. **Passion for the Field:** Women who pursue non-traditional careers may be motivated by a deep passion for the field or industry. They may have a strong interest in the work and find it fulfilling and rewarding.
2. **Financial Stability:** Non-traditional careers can offer higher earning potential than traditional female-dominated careers. This can be a motivating factor for women who want to achieve greater financial stability and independence.
3. **Professional Growth:** Pursuing non-traditional careers can provide women with greater professional opportunities, including leadership roles and opportunities for advancement.
4. **Breaking Gender Stereotypes:** Some women may be motivated to pursue non-traditional careers to break down gender stereotypes and pave the way for future generations of women.

Challenges Faced By Women in Non-Traditional Careers:

1. **Bias and discrimination:** Women in non-traditional careers may face bias and discrimination from colleagues, managers, and clients. This can manifest in a variety of ways, such as being excluded from important meetings or opportunities,

receiving lower pay than male colleagues, or being passed over for promotions.

2. **Lack of Support and Mentorship:** Women in non-traditional careers may have difficulty finding mentors and role models who can offer guidance and support. This can make it difficult for women to navigate the challenges they face and to advance in their careers.
3. **Work-Life Balance:** Non-traditional careers may require long hours, travel, and irregular schedules, which can make it challenging for women to balance work and family responsibilities.
4. **Physical Demands:** Some non-traditional careers, such as construction or firefighting, may require physical strength and endurance that women may not possess to the same extent as men.
5. **Stereotypes and Societal Expectations:** Women who pursue non-traditional careers may face stereotypes and societal expectations that they are not well-suited for or interested in these types of roles. This can create additional pressure and barriers for women to overcome.

Government Aid Provided to Women:

Mahila E-Haat: Mahila E-Haat is an initiative launched by the Ministry of Women and Child Development. It is one of the women empowerment schemes in India which provides an opportunity for women entrepreneurs for using technology and presents their products (made/manufactured/sold) on an online platform.

With only mobile and internet connections, women entrepreneurs can showcase their products along with descriptions and photographs. Here, buyers can also reach sellers telephonically, physically, through email or any other medium. The list of products may include clothing, fashion accessories, pottery, boxes, home décor, toys and many other things. This initiative supports the 'Make in India' program through an online



platform.

Mahila Police Volunteers: The Ministry of Women and Child Development, along with Home Affairs, launched the Mahila Police Volunteers scheme in all States and Union Territories. This central government-sponsored scheme aims to create a link between police authorities and local communities to ensure police outreach on crime cases. This scheme works to create a safe woman-friendly environment and encourages women to join the police force.

STEP (Support to Training and Employment Program for Women): One of the most effective women empowerment schemes in India is STEP (Support to Training and Employment Program for Women). It was introduced to provide training in skill development and to assure employment to women. This government-backed scheme offers grants to institutions and organisations to conduct the training programme.

Mahila Shakti Kendras (MSK): Another popular women empowerment scheme in India is Mahila Shakti Kendra. It aims to provide one-stop convergent support services to women to develop skills, generate employment opportunities, and increase digital literacy. This scheme is operational at multiple levels, such as national level, state level, and district level. The Government intends to cover the 115 most backward districts by establishing 920 Mahila Shakti Kendras.

Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme:

The Government has introduced National Creche Scheme for the children of a working mother. This scheme provides daycare facilities to the children and guarantees to improve the health and nutrition status of

children. Further, this women empowerment yojana promotes physical, social, and holistic development of children and educates parents to enhance childcare methods or techniques.

Conclusions: The study discusses the multiple threads of enablers and barriers that women encounter with respect to participation in the workforce across three key pillars of social organization — households, markets and the state. It finds that the world of work for women is complex and fluid, and highly determined by existing gender norms that are reflected across these three arenas. All of the barriers observed are enhanced when women try to move into the domains of non-traditional work. Thus, provisioning an enabling environment for women to work requires proactive investments across all three domains.

Based on the findings, the analysis proposes a new, gender-transformative framework to lay out the problem statement of gender segregation in the economy, and achieve a world of gender transformative work. It makes several recommendations related to the future of research, policy and practice.

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