

VULNERABILITY OF WOMEN WORKING IN NON-TRADITIONAL OCCUPATIONS: CASE STUDIES

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Abstract

The difficulties that women working in NTO encounter are described and discussed in this paper. Community norms, unwritten stereotypical views heard and learned through socialisation, family and parental values all pass on socio-cultural taboos to subsequent generations. These taboos may lead to the rejection of decision-making, or they may shoulder the burden of these taboos while employed by NTO. This paper presents the respondent's viewpoint on societal taboos, the expectations they have for society's treatment of them, and strategies for breaking down these barriers. Additionally, the idealised, conventional, and conventionally modern images of women that are created by social media could become taboo in certain circles.

Keywords: Social taboos, cultural taboos, decision making, challenge, women, Non- Traditional Occupation.



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Introduction

Encyclopaedia of Britannica defines Taboo as, "prohibition of an action based on the belief that such behaviour sacred and consecrated or too dangerous and accursed for ordinary individuals to undertake. It followed for higher or lower status; it is associated to religion, caste, society and community norms." For example to wear trousers and shirt in job is banned to women, fields of men are not for women due to lack of physical strength. There are many types of taboos here, socio-cultural taboos are considered.

What is traditional occupation and Non-traditional occupation (NTO)?

Here for this research traditional occupation is different. Women were working as agriculture and construction labour since many years. When she is earning on salary basis and want to earn by domestic business then many issues arise. It is labelled that pickle, papadmaking,

mehendi, beauty parlour and jobs like teacher, nurse are only of women and heavy work or engineers is only for men. This is said as traditional for men and women.

Now this situation is changed. Female Police officers, Journalist, IT / software engineer in women is common, which were supposed of men. What this proves? **This labelling gives limitations of opportunities to both women and men.** Now classical males dancers are coming .There was shame and labelling on this occupation. Classical Dancer art and occupation are only for women; rarely men dancers were adopting this profession. Now attitude is changed or changing because percentage is less. Society / people show surprise or appreciate or keep name to female petrol fillers, conductors some feel this is not for educated women and having lower status. Case studies of conductor, petrol filler, technician, and operator are in this study.

Socio-cultural taboos are developed and instilled beginning in childhood. How a man, a son, or a woman or girl should act in the family, in society, and in the future. What kind of attitude and image are socially acceptable? This is claimed to be "tradition" and "culture." Instead of the constitution having any power, these taboos rule and attempt to manage society. Controversies exist. The Constitution puts equality in the spotlight, and taboos provide information about inequality. Despite what we see now, there is a long history of women working in fields that are dominated by men. Numerous social reformers fought for women's rights.

Expectations from women and image in 19th century: Social taboos and expectations are created by patriarchal culture. In 19th century women were having lower status and considered in weaker section of society. Their image was created according to her physical strength and beauty (External Factors).

The socially acceptable image of a woman was one of devotion to her husband, caring for the family, performing various household duties, and treating the elderly as God. The conflict lasted a century, not years. (Vismrutichitre, ArunaDhere 2001).

The bigger concern right now is whether or not that image is the same. Are non-traditional occupations now more difficult to work in because of this?

In 20th Century ,Women's schools and colleges began as a result of the persistent efforts of social reformers, both male and female. However, their perception and expectations underwent some minor shifts. In some ranks and castes, they initially continued their education until marriage. However, lower-class women have long worked in agriculture and

construction. According to some scientists, the foundation of teamwork and group projects in the Stone Age was equality. Inequality in the workplace began when humans settled after discovering agriculture. Since many years ago, women have worked in household labour, agriculture, childcare, senior care, and child rearing. This job could not be converted into money. No money means no respect. They therefore got to work outside. (PradnyaShidore, 2021). Women's strengths will be identified as good tolerance, a gentle disposition, politeness, and good patience. If we compare men and women in various professions or businesses. It is assumed that she is a capable cook and carer. From an early age, she has been repeatedly reminded that it is her responsibility to keep her family happy. If she says she wants to go on a hiking trip or pursue another task, job, or career route, she will face pushback. 'Why do you have such a wrong road? I will bring earrings,' is the advice given if she requests technological instruments. She has limitations if she participates in the student organisation. Be neat and attractive; avoid going out late at night; and avoid reading too much since you'll get glasses and be turned down for marriage, according to advice for girls. (Dr. Leela Patil, 1999)

Now in 21st century, this paper investigates are these social taboos are part of socio-cultural problems or issues of women working in NTO.

Women's ultimate goal in life has been centred on men for thousands of years. She needs to get married, have kids, be a good cook, and be a decent carer. Women are made to comply with all of these rules. Men always oversee government, religion, and commercial operations. Therefore, women are under pressure to perform household chores, care for children, and perform other duties. (Karuna Gokhale, 2010) That's why social taboos are created by men, and there is no question about the right of women to make decisions regarding their education and careers. According to Dr. Ambedkar, Women are the gateway to the caste system. Therefore, women perform all religious tasks. Indirectly, women become its "victims" as a result of caste system development and perpetuation. (Sachin Mali, 2007) It is advised that people participate in these religious celebrations and activities despite their employment. Nowadays, many religious holidays and celebrations are held in public, even at work, which puts additional responsibility on women. Types of socio-cultural taboos for women working in NTO are about education, cloths, job, security, marital status, caste, religious activities at workplace. These taboos can change according caste, religion, and locality. (They are strictly followed in rural area and severity is less in urban areas) Case studies are illustrating the

nature of taboos in field. There are four case studies of respondents who were working as electrician / operator in MSED and on Petrol pump as petrol filler.

Case study I: This case study is regarding rejection from In-laws.

Background of female petrol filler:

One woman, 38 years old and a 10th pass, Home town is in Satara, which is semi-urban area. She has been fuel filler for ten years and is married. She decided to work as petrol filler in 2012 with the backing of her husband. There was a rare instance of a female petrol station attendant in 2012. According to the data, only 14 Petrol fillers were with more than ten years of experience. It demonstrates that she started in 2012 and that it is a new job for her. When she started, the dress code was a shirt and a pair of trousers. She enjoys interacting with people at work. She belongs to the committee on human rights.

With the encouragement of her husband, she accepted this position. She is willing to do any job that will generate income for her family. She wasn't ashamed of her work.

Mother-in-law's Rejection: Regarding her employment and dress standards, the mother-in-law always took offence. This is not women's work, according to the mother-in-law. She was against the requirement to wear a shirt and trousers. 'I was the only female employee at this petrol station, so wearing a female uniform was strange', the respondent said as she shared her information in an open manner. 'I am pleased that new petrol filler has joined, and we will both be wearing female uniforms.' She was now relieved. This demonstrates that she was fighting against her mother in law's rejection since ten years.

She discussed the rejection in an open manner. She expressed her own wishes, preferences, and experiences. Her job suits her well. Some clients, she claimed, preferred to fill up on gasoline from her. She overcame opposition and continued working pleasantly.

The number of rejections has decreased; according to the data Very few respondents openly discussed rejection. It is due to time constraints and a lack of willingness to divulge extensive personal information. Other relatives experienced rejection. However, it is absent from the scene. Women who work in NTOs have difficulties because of this.

Case Study II: Petrol filler, opposition by parents and demotivation from customer.

This case study deals with rejection from the parent and rejection from customers (a combined 50%) **Background of Petrol filler**

One woman, a 12th grade graduate, married, 23 years old, a Buddhist, and a fuel dispenser for the past two years, she comes from an agricultural family and hails from Latur. She is

residing in the slum of JanataVasahat, which is close to where she works. Parental education is lacking. The respondent has two brothers and three sisters married. One sister committed suicide; one is a housewife, and the other is a teacher at an anganwadi. The brothers are 12th grade, graduates and employed by a company in Ranjangaon. She faced no objections from her spouse or in-laws. She encountered resistance from her father, who thinks women shouldn't work.

She has been employed for two years and plans to eventually join the police force, given her background. It manifests as a temporary position and refers to her residence. She received training from the NGO CYDA before joining this pump. She enjoys working and desires independence. She likes to read, write, and draw. She discovered that she could operate as fuel filler after receiving instructions from CYDA.

Customers refusing

Because of her hard work, honesty, small age, she is respected by the staff. She did, however, hear depressing remarks from clients. She was trained by CYDA on "gender," so she ignores or responds to it..She notes that sometimes ladies (neighbours, relatives) also make depressing remarks. She emphasised her desire to join the police force and her lack of fear of men. Additionally, she believes that there are myths regarding male-female relationships that need to be dispelled.She is vivacious, active, and eager to accomplish more in the future. Despite facing rejection from her father and some members of society, she remains resilient. She is, therefore, working confidently. The CYDA provided her with pre-training. She is motivated by this as well.She is managing rejection and demotivation. Some are from clients, some are from women, but her motivation is always the same. She has her husband's support, advice, and NGO's teaching. Her network of allies is strong.

Case Study III: Petrol Filler: Rejection by Mother in law, social rejection and taboos.

Background of petrol filler:

A 32-year-old Muslim respondent who has been working as petrol filler at a petrol pump for two years is currently going through a divorce. Her hometown is Barshi, and she currently lives in a slum in Pune with her extended family. He resides with his parents, brother, who is married, and kids. At the young age of 15, she got married, and she and her husband are currently living apart. Making papads was her line of work. She is currently employed as a Petrol filler. A little cutlery shop provides the parents' income. She desired independence and a means of providing for her young offspring.

She has been getting money doing household labour like cooking papads for the past 12 years without ever leaving the house. Her first position is as petrolfiller. She came to the realisation that, despite her desire to learn, **her early marriage and obligations prevented her from doing so.** She received training from the CYDA for the girl count project. This programme offers training in a field that is primarily male. Despite this being her first job, she is confident, performing well, and riding a two-wheeler. Customers made both kinds of remarks to her. Women were supportive of her when she first learned to fill the air. She is admired by women, who are delighted.

When filling up with petrol, male customers often rudely mentions that there are women here as well, which demotivates her. She is self-assured. Instead of training, she values experience. She wants to show other girls that we are capable of doing any job if we just accept it. Maintain integrity while working. She claims that we have power over how we behave. By observing, we can learn. She gains knowledge by observing clients.

Muslim women should behave; they work and strive for freedom. She is not experiencing any strain. She can put up with negative comments since she enjoys her profession. Her body language conveys more information than words. She was the first witness interrogated in the response. She had been open at the first meeting. In the petrol station, she is the first woman.

Case Study IV: Respondent is Operator, who works at middle position in MCED. This job is in government sector. In this case study, prejudice, Taboos against female college students, employees, and members of society is discussed. The respondent studied ITI with courage and commitment, and she speaks out when women are treated unfairly.

Background of Operator

The respondent is a 32-year-old unmarried, operator in a senior position at MCED. She has nine years of experience in MCED. At Cummins, Pune, and TCL, Phalatan, the respondent was completing his apprenticeship. She started off as an assistant technician in Wai, Satara.

Small village close to Satara is the respondent's hometown. Her family is involved in agriculture. Hails from a poor family. Parents are farmers, and the younger of the two brothers. The brothers are both educated; one has a diploma and the other has an ITI. She was given permission by her family to choose an electrical ITI and career. There was a batch of nine girls in the electrical department at the Satara ITI Institution.

Discrimination in college, workplace, behaviour of relatives:

As was already said, a group of female students attended ITI College. At first, they did not understand. As a result, they received advice from friends and family members to choose a study in beauty salons instead of electrical. Respondent, however, stuck to her resolve and diligently studied. She was the first student hired following a campus interview. The respondent's college friends had the same issue. Why do you keep grabbing our seats? (And stealing our employment; your education and learning in ITI are useless.)

ITI Sir wasn't prepared to take female students to the machine shop either. But the group of respondents was determined and made the decision to learn with interest and work. Upon promotion and transfer to the Jaamb section office It is a village where all electrical inspection points are handled. **Her coworker annoyed her by advising her to "cut grass" and dominating the respondent. He told her that since you work the day shift and not the night shift, you should write our report.** The respondent accepted the challenge and stated that she would also work the night shift. By not relieving her and making her perform two tasks at once, he bothered her. He was altering some connections, putting the respondent in danger. The respondent complained to the zone office. Finally, he was transferred. Respondent asserts that if she is paid equally, she will perform the same job and does not require any concessions because she is female. She therefore responded to the question of sacrifice by saying that it is actually our obligation.

Respondents are self-assured. She is intelligent and equipped to deal with any challenge that comes her way. Success, in her eyes, is "respect." She is content because she is receiving adequate recognition for her work. Cash is not everything.

Some cultural practises are out dated and exclude women from opportunities. Due to the prevalent traditional culture in all locations, the respondent experienced discrimination. But she demonstrated that "she can."

Respondent's Viewpoints towards socio-cultural taboos

According to the respondents, they are battling societal taboos. During the interview, one respondent mentioned that she deals with it every day; another noted that this is not "women's work," and another frequently used phrase among responders is "you are taking our jobs." They face limitations from family and society even when they have demonstrated their ability. Therefore, they appeal to society for freedom and support. Their expectations from society and from co-staff at working place are also noticeable. Their response to expectation from society is they want equality, respect (instead of money, they expect respect) ,safety,

support, encouragement. These are expectations, all may not get fulfilled. They have to prove themselves when they work in different path or male dominated field.

There is natural physical-psychological difference in men and women. But this difference has become rigid and more strengthened by our culture (Sunil Sukhthankar, 1997).

Liberal men were responsible for the wellbeing of women. Today, women command and participate in battle. They are no longer hostile towards equality because they have grown up. The fight for equality, however, confronts many challenges due to men's passivity. Actually, there shouldn't be a battle between men and women. If men can discover their masculinity and women can find their femininity, and if they attempt to connect with one another for the benefit of both, (Sunil Sukhthankar, 1997).

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Abbreviations

NTO – Non Traditional occupations

MSEDL – Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company Limited.

CYDA – Centre for Youth Development and Activities

ITI – Industrial Training Institute

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