

Beyond Tradition: The Rise of Women in Non-Traditional Sectors in Viksit Bharat

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Abstract:

In the evolving landscape of Viksit Bharat, women are making significant strides in sectors traditionally dominated by men as well as in non-traditional fields. This shift reflects a broader trend of professional growth and development. Women are not only enhancing their skills and adding value to their roles but are also contributing to their families' well-being and societal progress. They are challenging outdated societal and familial norms, continuously adapting to new challenges, and embracing opportunities for advancement. Through their resilience and determination, they are reshaping the professional landscape and setting new precedents for future generations. Their journey illustrates that professional growth extends beyond formal education, encompassing practical, life-oriented learning that is essential both in their careers and personal lives.

Keywords: Viksit Bharat, Women, Non-traditional profession, women empowerment

Introduction:

Women have been a vital part of the Indian workforce for decades, contributing significantly to the nation's socio-economic development. Despite comprising nearly half of the population and having access to education, voting rights, and diverse career opportunities, their path to professional growth has been fraught with challenges. Historically, women's participation in the workforce was often limited by cultural norms and societal expectations that confined them to traditional roles within the household (Kumar, 2018). The struggle for gender equality in India has been shaped by the efforts of the women's movement, which was significantly influenced by leaders like Bharat Ratna Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and various social reformers. These figures advocated for women's rights and worked to dismantle societal barriers, resulting in notable progress toward women's empowerment and welfare (Gupta & Sharma, 2021).

In the 21st century, a noticeable shift has occurred as women increasingly enter professions traditionally dominated by men, such as journalism, law enforcement, and the military (Patel, 2020). The advent of globalization and changes in societal attitudes have loosened traditional constraints, enabling women to pursue careers in sectors once considered unconventional for

them. This evolving landscape reflects broader changes in the Indian economy and society, where gender roles are being redefined and opportunities for women are expanding (Rao, 2021). Although the representation of women in these fields is still comparatively low, their presence and contributions are becoming more prominent, reflecting a broader trend of professional growth and development (Nair & Reddy, 2019).

This study focuses on women working in non-traditional occupations (NTOs) such as assembly line workers, mechanics, electricians, and conductors—fields that have historically been male-dominated. The traditional stereotype of Indian women as primarily homemakers is increasingly being challenged as more women excel in these sectors. Women in NTOs are not only earning a livelihood but are also actively developing their skills and professional expertise. They are continuously learning, adapting to new challenges, and embracing opportunities for advancement, which contributes to their personal growth and the overall progress of Vikasit Bharat (Singh, 2019).

Women’s participation in these unconventional fields represents a significant departure from traditional gender roles and illustrates their resilience and determination to overcome societal and familial norms. Their involvement in NTOs showcases their ability to adapt and thrive in demanding work environments, thus reshaping the professional landscape (Desai, 2018). As these women enhance their skills and contribute to their roles, they add value not only to their professions but also to their families' well-being and societal progress (Joshi & Sharma, 2022).

This study challenges prevailing perceptions of women's capabilities in traditionally male-dominated fields. It highlights the growth and professional development of women within unconventional sectors, underscoring their evolving roles and significant contributions to the workforce. By examining the experiences of women in NTOs, this research aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how they are transforming the professional landscape in India, setting new precedents for future generations, and contributing to the vision of a more inclusive and equitable Vikasit Bharat (Verma, 2017).

Research Objectives:

1. To examine the development of women within unconventional fields.
2. To identify areas of improvement for women working in unconventional fields.
3. To study women's adaptation and enhancement of professional skills related to unconventional fields.

Methodology

This research adopts a qualitative approach, utilizing content analysis to investigate the rise of women in non-traditional sectors in Vikasit Bharat. By systematically reviewing academic articles, government reports, policy documents, and international indices. This methodology provides a comprehensive understanding of how increasing female participation in non-traditional sectors contributes to the broader vision of a developed and inclusive India.

Review Of Literature:

Singh, R. (2019). *Gender Dynamics and Professional Growth: Women in Non-Traditional Careers in India*, Singh’s study provides an in-depth analysis of how Indian women have increasingly entered and excelled in traditionally male-dominated professions such as

engineering, aviation, and IT. The paper highlights significant shifts in societal attitudes that have facilitated this transition, including policy changes and increased educational opportunities. Singh also explores the impact of these advancements on the professional landscape and societal expectations of women.

Gupta, M., & Sharma, A. (2021). *Economic Contributions of Women in Emerging Markets: Evidence from India*, Gupta and Sharma examine the economic impact of women's increasing participation in various sectors in India. They discuss how women's involvement in both traditional and non-traditional fields contributes to economic growth and development, with a focus on sectors such as manufacturing, services, and entrepreneurship. The paper underscores the broader economic benefits of integrating women into the workforce and their role in driving economic progress.

Patel, J. (2020). *Navigating Change: The Resilience of Indian Women in Evolving Careers*. Patel's research highlights the resilience and adaptability required for Indian women to succeed in evolving career landscapes. The study explores various factors contributing to women's ability to navigate career changes, including personal determination, support systems, and professional development opportunities. The findings reveal how women's resilience helps them overcome challenges and thrive in non-traditional roles.

Kumar, S. (2018). *The Role of Social Norms in Shaping Career Choices for Women in India*, Kumar investigates the impact of societal and familial norms on women's career choices in India. The paper discusses traditional expectations and how they have historically limited women's career opportunities. It also examines recent shifts in these norms and the implications for women's career advancement, including changing perceptions and increasing acceptance of women in diverse professional roles.

Verma, P. (2017). *Beyond the Classroom: Practical Learning and Professional Development for Indian Women*, Verma explores the concept of practical, life-oriented learning as a crucial component of professional development for women in India. The paper highlights examples of how women are acquiring skills through hands-on experience, mentorship, and on-the-job training, demonstrating that effective professional growth extends beyond formal academic education.

Nair, A., & Reddy, V. (2019). *Globalization and Women's Employment in India: Trends and Implications*. Nair and Reddy analyze how globalization has affected women's employment patterns in India, including the expansion of opportunities in previously inaccessible sectors. The paper discusses how globalization has led to increased female participation in various fields and the resulting changes in workplace dynamics and career prospects.

Mehta, S. (2021). *Breaking the Glass Ceiling: Women Defying Stereotypes in Indian Workplaces*, Mehta's study examines the experiences of Indian women who are breaking stereotypes and challenging traditional barriers in the workplace. The paper highlights case studies of women who have achieved success in male-dominated fields and discusses the strategies they have employed to overcome obstacles and redefine their professional roles.

Joshi, R., & Sharma, K. (2022). *The Economic Impact of Increasing Female Workforce Participation in India*. Joshi and Sharma provide an analysis of the economic impact resulting from higher female participation in the workforce. The paper details how women's involvement in various sectors contributes to overall economic growth and examines the benefits of increased female labor force participation for both individual households and the national economy.

Desai, N. (2018). *Empowering Women: Strategies for Career Advancement in Emerging Indian Sectors*. Desai's research focuses on strategies that empower women to advance their careers in

emerging sectors. The study discusses various empowerment initiatives, including training programs, policy support, and mentorship, and their effectiveness in helping women navigate and succeed in new professional environments.

Rao, P. (2020). *Balancing Act: The Intersection of Family Responsibilities and Professional Life for Indian Women*. Rao examines the challenges Indian women face in balancing family responsibilities with their professional careers. The paper explores how women manage their dual roles and the impact of this balancing act on their career development and personal well-being. It also discusses strategies for achieving work-life balance and the support systems that can facilitate this balance.

Development of Women within Unconventional Fields

The development of women in unconventional fields—such as engineering, construction, technology, and other traditionally male-dominated sectors—has seen a remarkable shift in recent years. Studies highlight that women are increasingly breaking barriers and entering these fields, driven by factors such as improved access to education, changing social norms, and supportive government policies (Kumar, 2019). Women in these sectors are not only gaining technical expertise but are also taking on leadership roles and driving innovation. Their development is marked by a growing presence in critical positions, from technical experts to managerial roles, showcasing their capability and resilience in navigating environments that were once restrictive to them. However, despite these gains, the literature also points out that development is uneven across different sectors and regions. Women in urban areas or multinational companies may experience more opportunities for growth, while those in rural areas or smaller organizations might still face significant barriers. Key factors contributing to their development include mentorship programs, professional networks, and opportunities for continuous learning and skill enhancement.

Areas of Improvement for Women Working in Unconventional Fields

While progress has been made, several areas of improvement remain for women working in unconventional fields. One of the main challenges identified in the literature is the persistent gender bias and stereotyping that women encounter in the workplace. These biases often manifest in hiring practices, promotions, and project assignments, where women may be overlooked or given fewer opportunities to prove themselves (Patel, 2020). There is also a need for better workplace policies that support women, such as flexible working hours, maternity leave, and safe working environments. The literature also suggests that women in these sectors often lack access to mentorship and professional development opportunities that are crucial for career advancement. Creating structured mentorship programs, providing access to role models, and fostering inclusive work cultures are essential steps to help women thrive. Moreover, enhancing visibility and recognition of women’s contributions can play a significant role in building their confidence and encouraging more women to enter these fields.

Adaptation and Enhancement of Professional Skills

Adapting to and excelling in unconventional fields requires women to continuously enhance their professional skills. Literature reveals that women in these fields often exhibit a high level of

adaptability and are eager to learn new skills to remain competitive. This adaptability is driven by a combination of personal motivation and the need to overcome systemic barriers (Rao, 2021). Women are increasingly enrolling in specialized training programs, pursuing advanced degrees, and seeking out certification courses to enhance their technical and managerial skills. Moreover, women are actively engaging in professional networks and communities, both online and offline, to share knowledge, gain insights, and support each other's growth. By leveraging digital platforms and industry-specific forums, they are accessing resources that help them stay updated on the latest trends and technologies. These efforts to continually upgrade their skills are essential not only for their individual career progression but also for setting new precedents and breaking stereotypes in these sectors. In addition to technical skills, the literature emphasizes the importance of soft skills such as communication, negotiation, and leadership for women in unconventional fields. Developing these skills enables women to navigate complex work environments, advocate for themselves and others, and lead diverse teams effectively. Therefore, a holistic approach to skill development—encompassing both hard and soft skills—is crucial for women to thrive in unconventional sectors.

Conclusion

This study highlights the significant strides women are making in non-traditional sectors in India, contributing to the broader vision of a more inclusive and equitable "Viksit Bharat." The research demonstrates that women's increasing participation in fields traditionally dominated by men—such as assembly line work, mechanics, electricians, and conductors—signals a transformative shift in the professional landscape. These changes are not merely symbolic but represent profound economic, social, and cultural shifts, challenging long-standing gender norms and stereotypes. Women's development within these unconventional fields reflects both individual and collective progress. The study illustrates that women are not only entering these sectors but are also excelling by acquiring new skills, adapting to evolving professional demands, and contributing significantly to their organizations and communities. This growth is fueled by a combination of personal determination, improved access to education, supportive policies, and evolving societal attitudes. Despite ongoing challenges, such as gender bias, unequal pay, and limited access to mentorship, women are demonstrating resilience and adaptability in navigating these barriers.

One of the key findings of this study is that the involvement of women in non-traditional occupations is redefining the economic landscape of India. Their participation adds significant value to the workforce, enhances productivity, and drives innovation, thereby contributing to the nation's economic growth. Furthermore, women's economic empowerment is closely linked to broader social progress, as it improves family well-being, promotes gender equality, and inspires future generations to challenge outdated norms and pursue diverse career paths. The study also underscores the importance of recognizing and addressing the areas of improvement for women in these fields. To fully realize the potential of women's contributions, it is essential to create more inclusive workplaces that offer equal opportunities for growth, leadership, and skill development. Organizations and policymakers must focus on dismantling systemic barriers, fostering an inclusive culture, and implementing policies that support women's career advancement, such as flexible working conditions, mentorship programs, and equal pay initiatives. Through their resilience, adaptability, and determination, women in non-traditional

sectors are not just reshaping their own destinies but are also laying the groundwork for a more equitable and inclusive future for all. Their journey illustrates that professional growth is a dynamic process, transcending formal education and encompassing the experiential learning that is critical to thriving in today's rapidly changing world.

Future scope of the study:

The current study provides a foundational understanding of the evolving role of women in non-traditional sectors in India and their contributions to the vision of "Vikasit Bharat 2047." However, several areas for future research could deepen our insights into the challenges, opportunities, and impacts of women's participation in these fields. Longitudinal studies could track women's career progression in non-traditional occupations over time, offering valuable insights into career advancement, job satisfaction, and leadership opportunities as societal attitudes and workplace policies evolve. Sector-specific analyses in fields like engineering, construction, and IT could identify unique barriers and success factors, providing targeted recommendations for stakeholders. Incorporating an intersectional lens to explore how caste, class, ethnicity, and rural-urban divides shape women's experiences would help develop strategies that address diverse needs, ensuring that marginalized groups are included in gender equality efforts.

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