# THE CASE FOR WOMEN IN NON-TRADITIONAL LIVELIHOODS: A SOCIOLOGICAL INQUIRY

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THE CASE FOR WOMEN IN NON-TRADITIONAL LIVELIHOODS: A SOCIOLOGICAL INQUIRY

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For Inayat and Armaan

May you challenge the social structures that limit you, and those around you.

May you always be 'disruptive.'

Certificate

This is to certify that the thesis entitled "**The Case for Women in Non-Traditional Livelihoods: A Sociological Inquiry"** being submitted by **Ms. Nisha Dhawan** to the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi for the award of **Doctor of Philosophy** in department of Humanities and Social Sciences is a record of the bona fide research work carried out by her under my supervision and guidance. She has fulfilled the requirements for the submission of this thesis, which to the best of my knowledge has reached the requisite standard.

The material contained in the thesis has not been submitted in part or full to any other university or institute for the award of any other degree or diploma.

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Abstract

This work aims to answer the following question: What is the impact upon women and their surroundings, when women engage in non-traditional livelihoods, and to what extent does their negotiation with and the disruption of patriarchal structures constitute a transformation in these structures? In this thesis, I focus on women from resource-poor urban communities who are engaging in non-traditional careers such as car driving, careers that have been traditionally reserved for men in the Indian context. This research aims to understand what the issues facing these women are as they engage in non-traditional work and what strategies they have employed to negotiate with or disrupt systemic gender norms through their engagement with a livelihood that historically has been performed by men. In order to do so effectively, I explore how work is defined as male work and female work in relation to social structures and gender regimes. This thesis aims to take a holistic view of these women's lives and their agency to understand how or if they have negotiated or challenged systemic constructions of gender, work, femininity and mobility as a consequence of their chosen livelihood. This thesis is explicitly feminist and locates itself within the gender studies discourse around work, but also in relation to feminist inquiries in relation to social norms, marriage and the body.

The narratives reveal a transformation on an individual level as illustrated by the ability that my respondents have had to negotiate with and challenge their habitus. They are using their agency, which they have derived from their career in driving in order to drive change within their own lives and they are serving as role models to others. Additionally, they are, through their actions and resistance, breaking down the binaries that organise society. In conclusion, it has been revealed that in order to disrupt social

structures it is imperative that the tools used in this disruption are not merely manifestations of existing social structures, the tools in and of themselves, must be disruptive in order to effectuate transformative change.

गैर पारम्परिक आजीविकाओं में महिलाओं के लिए हिमायत : एक समाजशात्रीय जांच

सार

इस अध्ययन का उद्देश्य है निम्नलिखित प्रश्नों का उत्तर देना: जब औरतें गैर-पारंपरिक आजीविकाओं में संलग्न/शामिल होती हैं, तो उन पर और उनके परिवेश पर क्या असर होता है? पितृसत्तात्मक संरचनाओं के साथ परक्रामण और उन संरचनाओं का सकारात्मक व्यवधान किस हद तक इन संरचनाओं में परिवर्तन लाने का कारण बनते हैं?

इस थीसिस में, मैं कम संसाधन वाले शहरी समुदायों की महिलाओं पर ध्यान केंद्रित करती हूँ, जो गैर-पारंपरिक आजीविकाओं - जैसे की गाड़ी चलाना - में शामिल हो रही हैं, जो अक्सर भारतीय संदर्भ में परंपरागत रूप से पुरुषों के लिए आरक्षित किया गया है।

इस संशोधन का उद्देश्य है यह समझना कि गैर-पारंपरिक आजीविकाओं में शामिल होने की वजह से महिलाओं को किन चुनौतिओं का सामना करना पड़ता है और प्रणालीगत लिंग भेदभाव से जुड़े मानदंड को भंग करने के लिए या उनसे परक्रामण करने के लिए उन्होंने कौनसी रणनीतियों को अपनाया है, एक ऐसी आजीविका में शामिल होने के लिए जिसे ऐतिहासिक रूप से पुरुषों ने किया है। प्रभावी रूप से ऐसा करने के लिए, मैं

अन्वेषण करती हूँ कि सामाजिक संरचनाओं और लिंग भेद व्यवस्था के संबंध में काम को किस तरह पुरुषो का काम और महिलाओं का काम के रूप में परिभाषित किया गया है। इस थीसिस का उद्देश्य इन महिलाओं के जीवन और उनकी एजेंसी का समग्र दृष्टिकोण लेते हुए, यह समझना है कि कैसे या अगर उन्होंने अपनी चुनी हुई आजीविका के परिणामस्वरूप लिंग-भेद, काम, स्त्रीत्व और गतिशीलता के व्यवस्थित निर्माण को चुनौती दी है। यह थीसिस स्पष्ट रूप से नारीवादी है और काम के जुड़े लिंग-भेद अध्ययन संवाद के भीतर ही अपने आप को रेखांकित करती है । लेकिन इसके साथ ही यह थीसिस , सामाजिक मानदंडों, विवाह और शरीर के संबंध में नारीवादी पूछताछ के संबंध में भी अपने आप को रेखांकित करती है ।

आख्यानों में व्यक्तिगत स्तर पर एक परिवर्तन का पता चलता है, जो कि मेरे उत्तरदाताओं की हैबिटस को चुनौती देने और उससे परक्रामण करने की क्षमता से सचित्र है। वे अपनी एजेंसी का उपयोग कर रहे हैं, जिसे उन्होंने अपने जीवन में परिवर्तन लाने के लिए, ड्राइविंग में अपने कैरियर से प्राप्त किया है और वे दूसरों के लिए रोल मॉडल (प्रेरक) की भूमिका अदा कर रहे हैं । इसके अतिरिक्त, वे अपने कार्यों और प्रतिरोध के माध्यम से, समाज को संगठित करने वाले बायनेरिज़ को तोड़ रहे हैं।निष्कर्ष में, यह पता चला है कि सामाजिक संरचनाओं को भंग करने के लिए यह ज़रूरी है कि इस व्यवधान में इस्तेमाल किए गए उपकरण, केवल मौजूदा सामाजिक संरचनाओं की अभिव्यक्ति ना होते हुए, परिवर्तनशील बदलाव को प्रभावित करने के लिए उपकरण स्वयं विध्वंसकारी होने चाहिए।

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List of Abbreviations

APMED - Asia Pacific Meeting on Education Summit

CCTV- Closed circuit television

CRPF – Central Reserve Police Force

CR Park – Chittaranjan Park

DTC – Delhi Transport Commission

ECF – Equal Community Foundation

FLFP – Female Labour Force Participation

GBV – Gender Based Violence

IIPS - International Institute for Population Sciences

IMAGES – International Men and Gender Equality Survey

ILO – International Labour Organisation

ITI – Industrial Training Institute

JNU – Jawaharlal Nehru University

LFPR – Labour Force Participation Rate

LGBTQ - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (or Queer).

MLA – Member of the Legislative Assembly

NFHS – National Family Health Survey

NGO – Non Governmental Organisation

NTL – Non Traditional Livelihoods

PAN Card – Permanent Account Number, it is a 10 digit unique identifier that is issued by the income tax department of India

PAR – Participatory Action Research

PRIA – Participatory Action in Asia

RTO – Regional Transport Office

RWA – Residents Welfare Association

SRHR – Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights

SUV – Sport Utility Vehicle

UNICEF – United Nations Children's Fund

Glossary

Aadhar – 'Foundation' or 'Base'. Aadhar is a unique 12 digit identity number for all Indian citizens of residents. It is collected and administered by the Unique Identification Authority of India.

Aanganwadi - is a government sponsored child care centre. They were started by the Indian government in 1975 as part of the Integrated Child Development Services program to combat child hunger and malnutrition. Anganwadi means "courtyard shelter" in Indian languages.

Aatmavishwas – Faith in yourself

Asli Aadmi – Real Man

Asli Mard – Real Man

Atta – Durum Wheat Flour

Azad Kishori – 'Free Adolescent Girl', the name of Azad Foundations program that focusses on adolescent girls in the communities where they work

Azad Parinde – 'Free Birds' Azad Foundation's Quarterly newsletter

Badlav ka Safarnama – The Journey of Change. Azad Foundation's Tool to track and measure progress and change for their Women on Wheels Trainees.

Basti – Slum communities

Bechara – 'poor guy'

Betiyan parai hoti hai – Daughters are never yours

Bhaiyya - Brother

Bidi – Hand-rolled tobacco

Chacha – Father's younger brother

Chachi saas – Husband's Father's younger brother's wife

Chai - Tea

Chauraha - Crossroad

Chawal - Rice

Chhapri – Hooligan (male)

Dal - Lentils

Dalia – cracked wheat

Dhobis – washer man

Dupatta – Shawl like scarf worn by women

Durga Puja – Annual Hindu Festival which reveres and pays homage to Goddess Durga

Ek din toh apne hi ghar jaana hai – One day every girl has to go to her own home

Ghare – bhair - Home and outside (or inside outside)

Hijab – Veil worn by Muslim women to cover hair and chest

Hijras - Eunuchs

Holi – Hindu festival of colour and spring. Holi is celebrated by adorning friends and family with coloured powder.

Izzat – Honour or Respect

Jaisa desh vaisa bhes – whatever the country, so should be your attire. Akin to when in Rome, do as the Romans

Jeth – Husband's elder brother

Jhuggi – Shanty Town

Kaali Peeli – Black and yellow (refers to black and yellow taxis)

Lakshmi - The Hindu goddess of wealth, love, prosperity (both material and spiritual), fortune, and the embodiment of beauty.

Maama – Mother's brother

Majburi - Obligation

Mardangi - Masculinity

Maulvis – A learned teacher in Islam

Naam bhuj Jayega – Your lineage will be blown out (if you do not have sons)

Nanad – Husband's sister

Naqaab – Veil that covers the face in addition to the hair

Panchayat – Village Council

Papad - Popadum

Pardah – Social practice of female seclusion

Pati Parmeshwar Hai – Husband is God

Roti – Flatbread made of atta (durum wheat flour)

Safarnama - Journey

Salwaar kurtas – Long shirt with pants, traditional North Indian attire

Scooty – Scooter

Sirf baat chit karne ke liye – Only to chit-chat

Tapori - Hooligan, vagabond or rowdy in Hindi

Vadi – Deep fried snack

Introduction:
A Call to Action

"Non-traditional jobs can change her view of what she can do, as well as the perceptions of those around her (family, partner, children), including employers and clients. In this way, increasing the number of young women in non-traditional jobs also shapes norms about what is possible for females, leading to more role models and pathways for younger girls" (EMpower 2015, p.3).

"At Azad, we believe our role is to help women build a momentum to generate for them an 'escape velocity' that will take them into an orbit of life that was hitherto not in their reach. That this orbit will involve its own action and reaction is a given. But what is certain is that the orbit will be bigger and wider and will offer a larger range of choices and most importantly the women will be able to take control of their speed and direction as they whizz through this orbit." (Vadera, 2017, p. 171)

Savita, a 26 year old woman, clad in a green and magenta uniform waits outside her white sedan. She sips a cup of *chai*[1] while standing next to her car under the shade of a tree. While she is waiting, she scrolls through her WhatsApp messages on her smartphone. A few minutes later, her client arrives and she opens the back door to enable her client to sit in her taxi. She then assumes her (rightful) place in the driving seat, starts the ignition and drives off to her client's destination.

In this moment, Savita calls into question several binaries that have been imposed upon women. Her uniform and commercial taxi licence plate reveal that she is a woman who is driving for commercial reasons; with a phone in her hand she has access to and knowledge of technology which calls into question the disjuncture between women and technology; by sipping a cup of tea under a tree in a public place, Savita is calling into question the public-private split, which has long kept women inside the home and out of the public sphere. In this moment, Savita has also claimed her rightful place, as a woman, who is working (and earning

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[1] Tea

money for her work) in a public space. Her presence has the potential to disrupt many existing socially structured gender norms.

She is not the only one. Across the country we are seeing women like Yogita Raghuvanshi, the truck driver from Bhopal (Faruqui, 2019), or Suman Rani, the 27 year old tractor driver from Hisar in Haryana (Saini, 2015), or a group of women who are painters in Ahmedabad (Rana, 2019)[2], or the female firefighters at Mumbai's Byculla station (Nair, 2017) or Gandhingar train station which is an all women run station in Rajasthan (Hussain, 2018) or female e-rickshaw drivers in Jaipur[3]; all of whom are breaking the traditional definitions of women's work and women working in public places. Across Delhi, women are changing tires at a car service centre in Nehru Place, they are filling petrol at gas stations[4] across the city and they are delivering couriers to your home.[5]

However, Savita has also faced a backlash, from her family, from the community and from passers-by who question her for challenging the very binaries that organise society:

Woman – Man

Inside – Outside

Private - Public

Nature – Culture

Family - Work

Women's work – Men's Work

While these binaries are a powerful ideological construct, we must also recognise that they are aspirational insofar as they seek to preserve and re-inforce the status quo.

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[2] Saath Charitable Trust is a partner of EMpower – The Emerging Markets Foundation
[3] http://pinkcityrickshawcompany.com/
[4] Including but not limited to: Bharat Petroleum Petrol Pump in Green Park, Indian Oil Petrol Pump on the outer Ring Road
[5] http://www.evencargo.in/

In this thesis, I will focus on women from resource-poor urban communities who are engaging in non-traditional careers such as car driving, careers that have been traditionally reserved for men in the Indian context. This research aims to understand what the issues facing these women are as they engage in non-traditional work and what strategies they have employed to negotiate with or disrupt systemic gender norms through their engagement with a livelihood that historically has been performed by men. In order to do so effectively, this thesis will explore how work is defined as male work and female work in relation to social structures and gender regimes. Using this as a premise, my research focuses on how women are effecting change through their actions and entry into certain jobs. Recognising that social realities for women are different in urban and rural India, as well as in different regions within the country, each of which have their own cultural norms, this thesis will focus on women who are drivers[6] in the city of Delhi. It will aim to understand the extent of these women's success in negotiating with and challenging systemic gender norms in urban India. This thesis aims to take a holistic view of these women's lives and their agency[7] to understand how or if they have negotiated or challenged systemic constructions of gender, work, femininity and mobility as a consequence of their chosen livelihood. At the core of this work is an interrogation of the social structures that define these women's lives and the agency that they are building through their engagement in a non-traditional career.

The point of departure of this work is the recognition that women have always worked in the public sphere, as sweepers, labourers and as unskilled labour on construction sites, but none of these occupations have called organising binaries into question because these jobs have

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[6] I have consciously used the word 'driver' in this thesis because that is how the women who are central to this work refer to themselves, they have claimed the word 'driver' and use it with pride. It is important to recognise that both men and women who are in this profession refer to themselves as drivers. Sakha Consulting Wings uses the terms 'chauffeur' in order to professionalise the work that these women are doing. For that reason, where there are direct quotes from Sakha Consulting Wings or Azad Foundation materials, the word chauffeur is used.

[7] For my definition of agency please refer to the discussion of agency on page 38

been seen as an extension of 'naturalised' women's work, or in the case of domestic work, it has been invisibilised. Furthermore, this thesis recognises that there is nothing essential about male and female work, but rather, that the sex ordered division of labour and the definition of 'male work' and 'female work' are socially and historically constructed. However, due to the fact that the sex ordered division of labour is biologically justified, it is difficult to make this salient. "Although women who struggle for their emancipation have rejected biological determinism, they find it very difficult to establish that the unequal, hierarchical and exploitative relationship between men and women is caused by social, i.e. historical, factors. One of their main problems is that not only the analysis as such but also the tools of the analysis, the basic concepts and definitions, are affected or rather infected by biological determinism." (Mies, 1981) . The sex ordered division of labour is a product of the needs of the time, "Male-ness and female-ness are not biological givens, but rather the result of a long historical process. In each historic epoch male-ness and femaleness are differently defined, the definition depending on the principal mode of production in those epochs. This means that' the organic differences between women and men are differently interpreted and valued, according to the dominant form of appropriation of natural matter for the satisfaction of human needs" (1981, p. 12). Furthermore, it is vital to recognise that there is no common consensus for the demarcations created by the sex ordered division of labour. "What we do know suggests that there is a tension between the remarkable consistency of the general lines of the sexual division of labour and the degree of variation that prevents the establishment of 'universal' rules" (Porter, 1985, p. 105). Therefore, the sex ordered division of labour exists globally, but it manifests itself differently, because there is variation in both gender relations and the sexual division of labour in and of itself. Consequently, the assignment of jobs by sex can be remarkably variable (Dumais, 1993, p. 363) – regardless of variability of the job itself, they are rooted in, and justified through supposed biological determinants of what constitutes women's

work and men's work. McDowell (1999) argues that, professions have been sex-typed, or stereotyped and there is an urgent need to de-sex occupations so that they are defined by "the characteristics of work rather than the workers," (1999, p. 134) which is what this thesis hopes to put forward.

This thesis is explicitly feminist and locates itself within the gender studies discourse around work, but also in relation to feminist inquiries in relation to social norms, marriage and the body. According to Sharon Hays (1994), who states that culture and structure are mutually imbricated with each other, this thesis will examine whether a change from within, through women entering non-traditional livelihoods, results in transformative change in relation to their gender roles and expectations, not only for themselves but for the community that they live in.

While there is both breadth and depth of literature on the sexual division of labour and occupational sex segregation, there is very little literature on non-traditional livelihoods, some examples include Williams (1989), Spencer and Podmore (1987), Hall (1993), Porter (1985), Reskin and Roos (1990) and Baruah (2017) who undertook an analysis of Azad Foundation's Women on Wheels Program. Williams (1989) describes women and men in non-traditional occupations as workers who are engaged in an occupation that contravenes the sex ordered division of labour, for example, female marines and male nurses. In civil society, there are organisations who are working on skilling in non-traditional trades, but very little has been done on theorising non-traditional work. Azad Foundation in 2016 spearheaded a national network of organisations, practitioners and researchers working on non-traditional livelihoods[8]. Across the country, from carpenters trained by Archana Women's Centre in Kerala[9] to electricians trained by Saath Charitable Trust[10] in Gujarat, civil society is mobilising

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[8] I am a member of this network

[9] http://www.archanawomencentre.com/

[10] Saath Charitable Trust has been a grantee partner of EMpower – The Emerging Markets Foundation since 2014. EMpower funds their non-traditional livelihoods skilling program. See Saath's Women@Work Program for more details: https://saath.org/programs/livelihood/women-at-work/

to create a new normal in terms of skilling, livelihoods and vocational training that doesn't reproduce age old ideas about women's work, but rather critically engages with the issue of work and how it can serve to be a catalyst to not only increase women's financial independence but also build agency. Additionally, these organisations are looking at their skilling programs as a means to not only alter perceptions of gender roles in the workplace, but also to provide women with access to social security, entry into the formal workforce and better wages in careers that have been restricted to men. Therefore, it is a vital time to be undertaking academic research in this field, especially as the Indian government is turning its focus upon skilling India's youth, because non-traditional livelihoods also offer an opportunity to de-construct gender barriers. Nonetheless, it is vital to recognise, that while non-traditional livelihoods have the potential to disrupt how women are seen and heard, women engaged in such careers only represent a small (but growing) proportion of the female labour force.

Globally, women today are engaging with the formal workforce more than ever before, however "their chances to rise to positions of leadership are only 28% of those of men. Women continue to make up less of the labour force overall than men, and where they participate in the formal economy their earnings for similar work are lower" (World Economic Forum, 2016, p. 1). In addition to pay, women in the formal workforce do not have the same level of job security that men do. "Between 2015-2020, men will face nearly 4 million job losses and 1.4 million gains, approximately one new job created for every three jobs lost, whereas women will face 3 million job losses but only 0.55 million gains— more than five jobs lost for every job gained" (World Economic Forum, 2016, p. 6). This is a manifestation of age old perceptions of what constitutes women's work means that "Discrimination exists not only in terms of wages, but also in terms of access to employment. Often women are found concentrated in occupations where the wage rates, as well as working conditions are poor and substandard. Low levels of skill on entry, lack of access to on the job training, employment histories punctuated by time

spent bearing and raising children, time off to care for family members and the assumption that men are the primary earners all contribute to the implicit assumption that women should be paid less than men" (Jhabvala & Sinha, 2002, p. 2041).

India exists within polarities. On one hand, there is a greater need for skilled people in the workforce due to the growth of industry and commerce, while at the same time there is a large incidence of the educated poor who are unemployed, which is largely due to the fact that there is a gap within the skilled labour force to meet the demands of a modernizing country. The Indian workforce went through a major change with the liberalisation of the Indian economy in the 1990s, from state controlled occupations to an interface with the forces of a free market resulting in less job security and the increased informalisation of the labour market (Raju & Jatrana, 2016). Against this backdrop, women are surprisingly missing from the story - "despite this rapid economic growth, educational gains, and fertility decline, India's women are conspicuously absent from the labor force. Female labor force participation (FLFP)rates remain low and have even fallen in recent years…FLFP in India is well below its economic peers, and the mismatch between economic growth and FLFP presents a puzzle that researchers are only beginning to better understand" (Pande, Fletcher, & Moore, 2017, p. 2).

The data for formal labour force participation within the Indian context is alarming, in 2017 only 27% of the formal labour force was female[11], falling from over 36% in 2005 (The World Bank, 2018). "Indian women also tend to opt out of the labor market at marriage, losing high potential early career earnings and experience that may be important for their socioeconomic trajectories. Once in jobs, women are also often at a disadvantage: in fields where women enjoy higher relative representation, pay is less equitable across men and women" (Pande, Fletcher, & Moore, 2017, p. 19). This is in line with a global trend of female

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[11] Labour force participation rate, female (% of female population ages 15+) (modelled ILO estimate) Indicator Metadata. Labour force participation rate is the proportion of the population ages 15 and older that is economically active: all people who supply labour for the production of goods and services during a specified period.

labour force participation stagnating, "trends suggest that women's labour force participation (ages 15–64) worldwide over the last two decades has stagnated, declining from 57 to 55 percent globally" (The World Bank, 2013, p. 14). Nonetheless, India fares badly in comparison with the global average. "In India, much of the discussion on the falling trends has focused on four key explanations: 1) rising educational enrolment of young women; 2) lack of employment opportunities; 3) effect of household income on participation; and 4) measurement…India has made considerable progress in increasing access to education for girls... Nonetheless, the nature of economic growth in the country has meant that jobs were not created in large numbers in sectors that could readily absorb women" (ILO, 2014, p. 2). These figures are not likely to better themselves without coordinated and considered action, which is why there is a crisis in relation to young women being able to lead productive lives as <u>earners.</u>

If you look at the landscape of women's work in India today, you can see the extent to which it has been informed by ideas of women's roles within the home, and consequently their career opportunities are a reflection of what is permissible under patriarchal structures. "More than 80% of the Indian woman workforce is engaged in the informal sector. They work on unequal terms, discriminatory wages, in gender stereotyped professions and workspaces. Since women have restricted mobility they are trained in occupations that do not require them to move beyond their neighbourhoods. This severely restricts their earning potential and denies them equal working opportunities" (Azad Foundation, 2012, p. 6). There is a lack of effective measurement in terms of women in the informal labour force, "most women in India work and contribute to the economy in one form or another, much of their work is not documented or accounted for in official statistics, and thus women's work tends to be under-reported" (Klasen, 2017). In India, a substantially high proportion of females report their activity status as attending to domestic duties. In 2011-12, 35.3 per cent of all rural females and 46.1 per cent of all urban females in India were attending to domestic duties, whereas these rates were 29 per

cent and 42 per cent respectively in 1993-94. Therefore, mis-measurement may not only affect the level but also the trend in the participation rate" (ILO, 2014, p. 2). Kabeer and Deshpande (2019) point to the invisibility of women's work in official labour force participation figures. "Women who were not in conventional forms of labor force activity were not necessarily outside the labor force" (2019, p. 16), because they are engaged in work that does not make it into the official statistics, Deshpande (2019) refers to this as the 'grey zone', which is unpaid, invisible or fractured work. Cautioning us to recognise that just because women are not counted in official statistics, does not mean that they do not work, rather that they work but their work is invisibilised statistically. As Desai and Jain (1994) highlight, domestic work also means time away from childcare, which is often overlooked. "By consistently emphasising the negative association between time spent caring for children and time spent in market work, investigators have largely ignored the nature and relevance of women's participation in domestic activities. Somehow research and policy attention are consistently directed toward the matter of choice between caring for children and engaging in income-generating work." (1994, p. 131)

Pande, Fletcher, & Moore (2017) point to both supply and demand side pressures that limit effective female labour force participation. On the supply side, it is the valorisation of housework and childcare which means that women who can afford to, often opt out or are coerced to opt of out of the labour force. This is intimately linked to class, as social groups 'Sanskritise[12]' or emulate those who are in a position of power, we see an increased withdrawal from the workforce by women due to the fact that women who stay at home are a 'status good' (Eswaran, Ramaswami, & Wadhwa, 2013). In order to understand these supply side pressures, this thesis examines the sociological perspectives on work put forth by (Srinivas, 1977), (Kaur

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[12] Sanskritisation denotes the process by which castes or tribes placed lower in the caste hierarchy seek upward mobility by emulating the rituals and practices of the upper or dominant castes. This term was made popular by Indian sociologist M. N. Srinivas

R. , Bhalla, Agarwal, & Ramakrishnan, 2016), (Papanek, 1979), (Hartmann, 1976) amongst others.

"On the demand side, women face legal, normative, and economic constraints to work. Indian women are still subject to laws governing when (i.e. which shifts) and in which industries they can work" (Pande, Fletcher, & Moore, 2017, p. 3). Recognising, that 'norms' within the formal labour force are male created and male defined, and do not take into account the additional work that women "must" perform in the household (until there is a shift in perceptions about who performs home based work), it is more difficult for women to engage in the workplace defined by these social structures. "There has been some speculation that the low level of LFPR in India is due to discrimination against women in the workplace. They receive lower wages, and often do not get entry into "paid" jobs. There is additional discrimination against the economically backward communities like the scheduled caste and scheduled tribes who together account for a quarter of the population" (Kaur & Bhalla, 2011, p. 22). Additionally, unless there is a systemic change in relation to sharing household responsibilities or there is the option for flexible, part-time work, or provisions for adequate childcare, we will see a withdrawal of women from labour market participation.

On a macro level, female labour force participation is illustrated through a u-shaped curve (Pande, Fletcher, & Moore, 2017) (Klasen, 2017) (Sorsa, et al., 2015), which depicts that the link between household income and female labour force participation is often u-shaped. With high participation rates on either end of the spectrum and low participation rates in the middle. "Women reduce their labor market participation if household income (typically earned by males) rises, as the 'need' to work lessens" (Klasen, 2017, p. 16), and, "women from lower socio-economic groups…have a higher probability of engaging in economic activity than those from higher socio-economic groups…This can partly reflect economic imperatives of having to work to earn a living for the family among the poorest groups" (Sorsa, et al., 2015, p. 21).

On the higher end of the spectrum, there are reduced stigmas to women working and the income generated by women in professional jobs warrants their labour force participation. Ultimately, as Mehrotra & Sinha (2017)illustrate, "Female work participation in the Indian context is clearly seen as responsive to economic stimuli, better described as the "income effect."… the opportunity cost of domestic activities for women increases while that of paid labour of women decreases. Hence, they tend to withdraw from the labour force" (2017, p. 58). The u-shape relationship is also prevalent in education. "Among the least educated, that also tend to be poor, women are forced to work to survive and can combine farm work with domestic duties. Among the highly educated, high wages can attract women to work, and social stigmas against female employment may be lower" (Sorsa, et al., 2015, p. 22).

The u-shape curve can be explained by social stigmas associated with women working (Pande, Fletcher, & Moore, 2017) (Sorsa, et al., 2015) (Klasen, 2017) because they are calling the male breadwinner ideology into question. "As long as female employment is seen as a failure of male household heads to adequately provide for their family, and there are strong barriers to female employment in some sectors, it will be hard particularly for educated women, and women in more comfortable economic situations to seek employment" (Klasen, 2017, p. 22); and women only engaging in livelihoods that are deemed to be suitable and commiserate with social status, or where they are seen to be performing 'status work' (Papanek, 1979). Where work is not seen as a 'status good', women are withdrawn from work as part of "status building strategies" (Kaur, Bhalla, Agarwal, & Ramakrishnan, 2016, p. 19) and this is seen more starkly in the emergent middle class, which "as the newly prospering class spreads, it adopts attitudes and practices that help the upward mobility of families, but with negative consequences for women and girls" (Kaur, Bhalla, Agarwal, & Ramakrishnan, 2016, p. 20). This is further compounded by the gender wage gap. Wage differentials mean that it is not lucrative for women to engage in the workforce and "Large wage differentials with men can

reduce female labour force participation by increasing the relative value of women's home good production compared to market work" (Sorsa, et al., 2015, p. 25); and for these reasons, it is more unlikely for married women to work than unmarried women because there is a direct reflection on her husband's ability to earn.

Finally, there is a strong co-relation between urbanising and the 'withdrawal' of women from the workforce (Sorsa, et al., 2015); women in rural areas tend to combine unpaid work in the domestic sphere with formal agricultural based work; however given the structures and demands of work in urban areas (as well as the potentially increased household income of male breadwinners) there is an increased withdrawal of women from the workplace as families urbanise. "Historical perspectives on women's labor force participation in India note that a majority of female workers have been involved in agriculture …consequently, women's labor force participation has always been higher for rural then urban areas. Few women have been employed in the modern sector, where educational credentials are more important. India is one of the exceptional countries where the modern sector has experienced a fall in women's workforce participation despite women's rising education" (Chatterjee, Desai, & Vanneman, 2018, p. 859).

This all points to social and cultural factors as a central component to low female labour force participation in India (Klasen, 2017) (Mehrotra & Sinha, 2017) (Pande, Fletcher, & Moore, 2017) and women from low or middle income families only enter the labour force if their incomes are needed to make ends meet, or in times of crises "women's labor force participation rates appear to be strongly counter-cyclical and increase substantially in times of crises, receding in better economic times" (Klasen, 2017, p. 17), otherwise it is in a family's best interest for women to remain at home and engage in informal care work, domestic work and status work (Papanek, 1979). For this reason, it is vital to engage with the social and

cultural factors that limit women's effective labour force participation, which is what this work aims to do.

On one hand, traditional mechanisms of keeping women confined to the home are at play; however, at the same time people are beginning to recognise that their children must be educated if they want to become earners, which is vital to their productivity in the labour force. In many ways, earning livelihoods and generating an income are seen as a necessity. However, certain occupations are off limits for women; many livelihoods initiatives in India for women focus on occupations that are traditionally "women's work" such as beauty parlour training, stitching and embroidery, and primarily within the informal sector. As McDowell (1999) notes "Women are found in jobs in which the social expectations that they are nurturing, caring and supportive of others tend to be confirmed" (1999, p. 126). For the women and girls who are employed within the informal sector, or in home based work, access to higher salaries is also limited (International Centre for Research on Women, 2013, p. 2), because of the naturalisation of the work that they do.

Furthermore, "Poor women need money but increases in wages will not on their own make women either less poor or more powerful. Improvements in the conditions and returns to work must be coupled with expectations that the state will ensure that they achieve a minimum income; that they have access to affordable and high quality education, health and transport services; and that their environment is healthy and their lives are not blighted by community and domestic violence (Pearson, 2004, p. 118). Therefore, it is vital to assume a holistic approach when considering skilling for women in order to combat systemic intersectionalities that limit women's access to paid work and into certain occupations. The ILO (2014) recommends an all-inclusive approach when considering women's labour force participation in India. They state that, "policy makers in India and throughout the region should take a comprehensive approach to improving labour market outcomes for women through improving

access to and relevance of education and training programs, skills development, access to child care, maternity protection, and provision of safe and accessible transport, along with the promotion of a pattern of growth that creates job opportunities. Beyond standard labour force participation rates, policy-makers should be more concerned about whether women are able to access better jobs or start up a business, and take advantage of new labour market opportunities as a country grows. A policy framework encouraging and enabling women's participation should be constructed with active awareness of the "gender-specific" constraints that face most women. Gender responsive policies need to be contextually developed" (ILO, 2014, p. 2). While recognising that the government is focusing on skilling its youthful population, we must also recognise that women and men are expected to and are engaging in different parts of the workforce, which in most instances means that women's work is not being accounted for nor are women given adequate opportunities to engage in productive work outside of the home, or if they are, then it is limited to certain occupations and careers; occupations that enforce social norms of 'respectable work' in 'respectable spaces' during 'respectable hours'. This is why it is an opportune time to undertake an academic interrogation of how to make skilling programs more holistic, gender inclusive and mindful of the social norms that affect women's labour force participation.

The issues keeping women out of the labour force need to addressed, and that too imminently. Not only for the sake of economic growth, but also because not being able to participate economically has adverse effects on women. Firstly, it creates a paradigm where women are dependent upon men financially, which leads to a high level of exploitation and abuse, because they do not have to means to provide for themselves. Additionally, given that globally we are operating within a capitalistic framework, the value of an individual is increasingly being linked to their ability to earn. For many people in the Indian context, the birth of a daughter signifies future economic loss, because she will not be participating in the

workforce and because of the future cost of her marriage – thereby undermining her status within the home. Additionally, due to the cultural inevitability of marriage, even if parents invest in their daughters' education and she begins to work, there is wide recognition of the fact that her husband and in-law's will reap the economic benefit of her parents' investment. Conversely, the birth of a son is seen as future economic potential because of the belief that he will likely enter the labour force and provide for his family and especially his parents in their old age.

Defining non-traditional livelihoods

The lead in defining and setting up the domain of Non-Traditional Livelihoods (henceforth NTL) has been taken by civil society organisations that are active in the space of women's workforce participation and livelihoods. Thus, the point of departure to begin theorising non-traditional livelihoods are definitions that have been created within civil society. EMpower (2010) describes non-traditional livelihoods in three ways, the first is women entering fields of work that have traditionally been restricted to men, the second is women entering fields of work that have not yet been gendered such as solar energy and 'green' jobs, finally they argue that non-traditional livelihoods can also include entering fields of work that have been off-limits on the basis of caste, class, religion, race and sexual orientation. This work accepts EMpower's definition as the point of embarkation but also expands this definition within the Indian context to include women who are accessing markets directly which is also non-traditional insofar as most conduits to market or 'middlemen' are men – and they control pricing, transparency and in many cases make the greatest margins off products.

Azad Foundation's definition also adds that non-traditional livelihoods (NTL) enable women to break stereotypes; they define non-traditional livelihoods as, "livelihood practices that help women break stereotypes emerging from the intersections of gender, caste, class, religion, sexual orientation, disabilities and other marginalities and oppressive structures,

within a dynamic context of space and time. NTL increases the set of viable livelihood choices available to women and gives them access and control over skills, technology, market, mobility and resources. It creates economic stability along with psychological, social and political empowerment. Some examples of the same include training women to become drivers, masons, electricians etc." (Azad Foundation, 2018, p. 1). As the Azad Foundation definition highlights, non-traditional livelihoods is a dynamic term, what was considered revolutionary only 20 years ago, such as women in the army and in the police is relatively normal today (Azad Foundation, 2016), therefore the definition of non-traditional work evolves and shifts historically. Non-traditional is also contextual, what may be seen as non-traditional in one environment may be traditional in another, (ibid). Naila Kabeer (2008) terms this one aspect of the 'geography of gender'. She states, "the structures of constraint that prevail in different contexts will determine which kinds of choices are likely to have strategic consequences for women's lives. A woman who chooses to take up paid work or marry someone of her own choice is exercising a strategic form of agency in contexts where women have been denied the ability to make such choices. They have less strategic significance in contexts in which these choices are taken for granted" (Kabeer, 2008, p. 24). Commercial drivers who are female is considered non-traditional in the Indian context, however it may not be considered as disruptive within other contexts. This is because the definition of what constitutes 'men's work' and what constitutes 'women's work' is contextual and consequently embroiled with meaning based on social location.

Non-traditional livelihoods in the context of this thesis does not mean what Reskin and Roos (1990) refer to as the feminisation of certain occupations, which occurs through the "disproportionate recruitment and retention of women workers" (1990, p. 39) in certain industries. In the 1970s in the United States there was a trend for certain occupations to be feminised such as editing, bartending and pharmacy as consequence of "job growth raised

labour demand beyond the number of qualified men… [Or because] women constituted a greater share of the qualified labour pool… [or because] new opportunities had begun to beckon women" (1990, p. 39).

Non-traditional livelihoods in the context of this research means young women consciously entering occupations that they have been denied because of their gender, so that they can access increased job security, greater incomes and benefits within the formal workplace. Furthermore, their engagement in NTL has the ability to enable a disruption in relation to social norms, because the mechanism utilised is disruptive in and of itself. As Lorde (1984) states, "For we have, built into all of us, old blueprints of expectation and response, old structures of oppression, and these must be altered at the same time as we alter the living conditions which are a result of those structures. For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" (1984, p. 123).

This work proposes that the impact of engaging in non-traditional livelihoods can be profound for young women, "When females choose careers in non-traditional sectors and are given the skills and support they need to succeed, they not only gain financial independence, but bolster their self-worth and standing in their families and communities. The broader impact may include changed gender norms in communities, which in turn can foster further opportunities for girls and women not only in the workforce, but also in other spheres (such as decision making in their households or the community)" (EMpower , 2015, p. 12). For this reason, this work cautiously uses the word 'livelihoods' as opposed to 'work' 'jobs' or 'income generation' to illustrate the transformative potential that engaging in these careers has upon the holistic lives of these young women. Additionally, a cautious effort has been made to use the word 'careers' because the women who are central to this work are making livelihood changes that have led to an upward trajectory in relation to their career path.

Methodological Approach, Research Question and Structure

Through an exploration, against the backdrop of Delhi, of how gender and jobs form structures and cultures that define women's life trajectories, this work aims to understand the following question:

What is the impact upon women and their surroundings, when women engage in non-traditional livelihoods, and to what extent does their negotiation with and disruption of patriarchal structures constitute a transformation in these structures?

I attempt to answer this question through mapping two specific types of journeys.

The journey of organisations

Baruah (2017) notes that, "the development sector's engagement with poverty alleviation and gender equality has evolved considerably over the past 40 years. Significant efforts have been made to accommodate theoretical advancements in the broader field of gender and development. Programmes designed to empower women – and men in some settings – have evolved from the welfare, efficiency, and equity focused approaches of the 1970s and 1980s to the more recent empowerment, human rights, and capabilities-based approaches of the 1990s and the new millennium" (Baruah, 2017, pp. 181-2). Against this backdrop is the approach that civil society organisations are taking in relation to skilling, where they are playing a critical role in relation to employability and exposure and also in relation to gender equity. Furthermore, research suggests that there is an important role that civil society plays in increasing female labour force participation rates "women who have attended skills or vocational training, whether formal or informal, are more likely to be working. Women who have participated in skills (vocational) training have higher levels of FLFP, regardless of educational levels" (Pande, Fletcher, & Moore, 2017, p. 10). At the centre of this work are two

civil society organisations that occupy extremely different places to one another. One is an NGO responsible for conceiving and operationalizing training on the ground and the other is a Foundation, responsible for connecting credible local NGOs to funding, technical assistance and best practices. It is vital to recognise that civil society is not a monolithic category, because as we have seen "the literature on NGOs tends to focus on planned interventions within mainstream development programmes without taking account of the heterogeneity of the NGO sector" (Kabeer, 2008, p. 58). There are multiple NGOs within the Indian context focussing on livelihoods training for women, however, most of them uphold gender norms around livelihoods programming by focussing on traditional training options for women such as beauty parlour training, stitching, cooking and care services. According to a Directory of non-traditional livelihoods organisations created by Azad Foundation in 2014, there are 28 organisations working in this space in India (Azad Foundation, 2014). Additionally, very few actually focus on using livelihoods training to shift the narrative in relation to what is possible for girls and young women. Both organisations studied in this work have assumed a feminist lens to understand the 'transformative potential of women's paid work' (Kabeer, 2008, p. 18); in terms of the immediate access to incomes for women but also in how "paid work opens up access routes through which women can claim their rights as women, as workers and as citizens" (ibid). The site of this work, the examination of these two organisations, was selected because of their articulated endeavour of shifting the needle in relation to what is possible for girls and young women in terms of future occupations that not only earn them financial returns but also build the self-efficacy of the individual and contribute to changing perceptions of what women can and cannot do. This is illustrated in Azad Foundation's mission which, strives to "equip resource-poor women with knowledge and skills so that they excel as professionals and entrepreneurs, and earn a "livelihood with dignity" in jobs and markets that had traditionally been closed to them." They also recognise the transformative potential that this leads to; they

believe that "when women are socially and economically empowered, they become catalysts of change – not just in their own lives, but also in their families and communities." Their belief is that their interventions will enable women to "imagine new roles for themselves, get opportunities to work in safe and respectful environments, enhance not just their economic status but also their self-respect and dignity, build social capital as they transform their lives and lives of people around them" (Azad Foundation, 2019). Furthermore, both of these organisations are concerned with enhancing capabilities[13] (Nussbaum, 2011) as opposed to just ensuring that women become earners, they are looking at whether their life course has the transformative potential to take a happier and healthier trajectory.

Azad Foundation[14] and its sister organisation **Sakha Consulting Wings[15]**, formally began their journey in 2008, although the idea, which was unheard of at the time, had been gestating in the mind of their founder, Meenu Vadera, for quite some time before that. Azad Foundation, recruits and trains women from resource-poor communities to believe that driving is a career option for them and trains them to acquire the skills needed to excel in this career. Sakha Consulting Wings is the for-profit entity, which "remained camped in the marketplace" (Vadera, 2017, p. 156), that provides trained female drivers with employment options in each of their three wings: Private placements, where women are placed within people's homes as the family driver, Sakha Cabs for Women and Chauffeur on Call. Azad Foundation was formed with the basic understanding, that "it is well known that women who are… enabled, also become agents of change – not only in their own lives, but in the lives of their families and communities" (2017, p. 158); and the creation of Sakha Consulting Wings was borne out of the realisation that it simply isn't enough to train women, but their chances of success are

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[13] Marta Nussbaum defines the 10 capabilities as: 1) Life, 2) Bodily Health, 3) Bodily Integrity, 4) Senses, imagination and thought 5) Emotions, 6) Practical Reason, 7) Affiliation, 8) Other Species, 9) Play 10) Control over ones environment. See (Nussbaum M. , 2011, pp. 33-34)
[14] http://azadfoundation.com/
[15] http://sakhaconsultingwings.com/

greater if they have the opportunity to be effectively placed in employment that is safe, structured and dependable. Azad Foundation has 7 centres[16] and works with resource-poor women in urban areas in Delhi, Jaipur and Kolkata[17]; training a total of 1679 women to be drivers in their 11 year history[18]. Of their 2017-18 batches of 527 trainees from Delhi, Jaipur and Kolkata 90% were living below the poverty line prior to joining Azad Foundation, i.e. living on less than INR 3900 per month (Azad Foundation, 2018). This work traces the journey that Azad Foundation has taken in their path-breaking initiative to place women firmly in the driving seat.[19]

EMpower – The Emerging Markets Foundation[20], was established in 2000, and has offices in London, New York, Hong Kong and Delhi, with the aim of connecting resources to local partners working with at risk youth between the ages of 10-24. EMpower focuses on three portfolios - education, livelihoods and health and well-being; with non-traditional livelihoods being a central focus for the livelihoods portfolio since 2010. This work has aimed to understand the journey that EMpower, as a living breathing organisation has undertaken in order to arrive at the point where their focus on livelihoods has been determined by the need to fund organisations who are engaging in livelihoods that are disruptive to social norms around the work that women can do. For EMpower, this realisation has come from the fact that development efforts that focus on home-based work, or on work that is perceived to be 'women's work' does not guarantee stability, higher incomes or a chance to build agency for

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[16] North Delhi, East Delhi, West Delhi, South Delhi, North Kolkata, South Kolkata and Jaipur. They opened a centre in Gurgaon in 2012 which closed down in 2014

[17] Azad Foundation has several partnerships in Indian cities with local partners, such as Ahmedabad with JanVikas and Samaan in Indore

[18] Azad Foundation trains women in batches in each of their centres. In total, there have been 216 batches across all of Azad Foundation's locations. Each batch is comprised of between 10 and 12 trainees.

[19] Please see page 102 , where Azad Foundation's Program Model is discussed.

[20] www.empowerweb.org

women themselves, something that is corroborated by Mies' (1982) extensive work in Southern India.

The journeys of female drivers

Through ethnographies and detailed case studies of female drivers trained by Azad Foundation, this work has amplified the voices of a group of women who are working as professional drivers, in order to answer the primary research question. Ripu, Lalita, Shabnam, Sunita and Rabbunisha[21] are all resource poor women[22] who are engaging in the non-traditional livelihood of driving, both in private placements (as drivers in people's homes) and as commercial drivers (taxis on hire with female drivers). These women in particular, and several other women who I have met along the way, have lent their voice to inform, guide and inspire my personal journey in writing this work. I have aimed to gain a holistic understanding of their lives before encountering Azad Foundation, during their training and what their lives are like now that they are employed as commercial or private placement drivers. Most importantly, this work centres their voice, their opinions and their ideas about gender, work, the city and the future that they envision for themselves and for their family. In many ways, this work is merely a vessel that contains their unique thoughts and ideas, and hopes to be a microphone with their voices amplified front and centre. Using their voices, this work has attempted to provide a critical sociological analysis to their experiences.

Through tracing the journeys of these women and organisations, I have aimed to interrogate the impact of engaging in a non-traditional career. I have done this by examining

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[21] I have not anonymized the names of my primary respondents – at the request of the respondents themselves. While all respondents were asked if they wanted to anonymize their names in the thesis, they agreed that they wanted their names to be retained in the text. In Sunita's words, "if you are writing about us and our stories, then use our names. We are proud of our journey, why should we hide who we are." Where I have anonymized the names of respondents in this work, I have made a note of this in the footnotes.

[22] Azad Foundation defines 'resource poor women' - The resource poor are, marginalized and disadvantaged by one or several of the following axis of inequality: Sexual orientation and choices, Political exclusion, Gender, Habitat, social exclusion (based on caste, religion, ethnicity, race).

the cultural-social structures that these women have inherited and continue to live within. I have also assessed the trajectory they take in engaging with a non-traditional career from before they begin their training, to during training, as they begin their new career and years later when they have firmly grown into their roles as drivers. It is vital to recognise that their negotiation with the social structures they live within is ongoing and something that they have to engage with on a daily basis. Another salient aspect of this work is how and to what extent their chosen careers have affected their own perception of work, self and gender relations. This is not without its challenges, every step of the way the drivers have mentioned continual challenges within their own lives, however these challenges haven't become a hurdle for them, rather in all cases they have stepped up to negotiate, at the very least, or challenge these hurdles.

Ethnographic details

Fieldwork for this dissertation took place between 2014 and 2017[23] and in this time, I met with over 50 trainees and drivers from Azad Foundation, including a group of 24 trainees who were in batches 91-93 at Azad Foundation's North Delhi centre. I spent time with them in the North Delhi centre and accompanied them to their training sessions, including the '*Badlav ka Safarnama[24]*' session (see chapter 3), self-defence sessions and most importantly, during their downtime while they were awaiting their turn to practice driving. This dissertation relies on case studies of five women who were employed by Sakha Consulting Wings, Shabnam, Sunita, Ripu, Lalita and Rabbunisha;[25] with whom I shared a car, and spoke to consistently

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[23] This was the formal fieldwork time, however, I have continuous contact with Azad Foundation and Sakha Consulting wings, additionally Ripu is my personal driver so I meet with her on a daily basis. Finally, some of the ethnographic data was collected prior to 2014 and after 2018 because of my frequent contact with Azad Foundation staff, leadership and trainees as well as the Sakha drivers.
[24] Hindi: Journey of Change
[25] All 5 women were trained in Azad Foundation's South Delhi centre and are part of batches 3 to 28.

over three or four years, I met with their families, their friends and traversed through the city of Delhi with them.

My ethnographic study of Azad Foundation was completed through in-depth interviews with over 20 staff members at Azad Foundation[26]. Additionally, I spent time in the South Delhi Azad Foundation office, went on field visits and reviewed curricula, research, documentation and raw data that was shared with me by the organisation.

The most autoethnographic aspect of this thesis is the ethnography of EMpower – The Emerging Markets Foundation. As an employee of EMpower, I have been 'in the field' since 2012[27]. In addition to my personal experience and reflections, I have spoken to several members of the Programs Team at EMpower[28], EMpower senior leadership, Board members and I have used research and publications commissioned or created by EMpower[29]. Additionally, I spent time with the girl leaders from EMpower's Adolescent Girls Learning Community in Mumbai and with EMpower's Girls Advisory Council, both on the ground initiatives conceived and operationalized by EMpower. Finally, I conducted in depth interviews with several of EMpower's grantee partners about their own programs.

Delhi

MN Srinivas (1977) states that "An essential pre-condition of women's (or for that matter, men's) breaking out of the 'status trap' is the migration to urban areas, and the bigger and more cosmopolitan the urban area, the easier the transition." (Srinivas, 1977, p. 232).

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[26] While most of the formal interviews and time spent at Azad Foundation was between November 2016 and March 2017, I frequently visited Azad Foundation before and after this time period. Some of my reflections from these visits have informed the ethnographical data in addition to the 'formal' data collection period.

[27] I began working with EMpower in March 2012 as the Program Officer for India. In 2015 I was promoted to Senior Program Officer for India and Regional Advisor for Asia and in 2018 to the Director of Adolescent Girls and Gender Initiatives, a global role examining EMpower's adolescent girls work. In 2020 I assumed the role of Country Director for India.

[28] The Programs Team is responsible for all programmatic work at EMpower, including the negotiation of grants, provision of technical assistance, field strengthening initiatives and thought leadership in the civil society space.

[29] I am the co-author of some of these reports.

Urbanisation, then becomes a potential precondition to engaging in new patterns of behaviour. The urban backdrop of Delhi, becomes instrumental to this work insofar as it not only sets the scene for the female drivers that I will be examining but it also influences the decisions, the anxieties and the possibilities for these women. Given the importance of the urban backdrop, the geographical contours of this work are limited to the city of Delhi, with all of my ethnographic fieldwork taking place at Azad Foundation's North and South Delhi training centres. All of my respondents for my case studies were employed by Sakha Consulting Wings, headquartered in Kalkaji and were trained by the South Delhi training centre (between batches 3 and 28). They all live in one of two neighbourhoods, Badarpur or Madanpur Khadar both in South Delhi. Additionally, they (or their families) have all migrated to Delhi from Uttar Pradesh or Bihar. My respondents are both Hindu and Muslim. While the initial scope of this work was to examine a much boarder geographical footprint, I realised that geographical differences play a monumental role in defining one's habitus; and for that reason, I have limited the scope of my work to the urban backdrop of Delhi and to specific communities within Delhi. The situation for women and work in Delhi reveals that there is a gendered stereotyping of labour markets and that is a result of patriarchal notions of 'women's work' (Neetha, 2016).

Methodological Approach

Clifford and Marcus (1986) caution that "ethnographic work…enacts power relations" (1986, p. 9). At the outset, I recognise my positionality as a researcher. I am the Country Director for India at EMpower – The Emerging Markets Foundation. Additionally, Azad Foundation is a grantee partner of EMpower. Both Azad Foundation and EMpower are central sites for my research work. In order to mitigate potential conflicts of interest, I ensured that the correct MoUs were signed between myself and Azad Foundation and they were fully aware that I was acting in the capacity of a researcher and not in the capacity of their donor. I tried to

ensure that information that I obtain as a researcher will not, positively or negatively impact decisions in my professional capacity. I did this by consciously removing myself from grant proposal negotiations between EMpower and Azad Foundation from 2015 onwards, and whereby all formal grant related communications between EMpower and Azad Foundation went through other colleagues and I only offered a professional opinion upon strategic aspects of the relationship between EMpower and Azad Foundation. Additionally, there is another position that I occupy, which is that I have been a client of Sakha Consulting Wings since 2014. Shabnam was my driver from March 2014 – November 2016 and Ripu has been, and continues to be my personal driver from November 2016 onwards. Given these two positions that I occupy, both that create and perpetuate asymmetrical power relations, I recognise that I occupy a position of authority in relation to the civil society organisations with whom I am working and as an employer of the female drivers who have been central to the ethnographic enquiry of this work. For this reason, methodologically, this work lies at the crossroads of autoethnography and action research. Autoethnography is 'how' I obtained my information and Action Research is 'what' I hope to do with the outcomes of this work.

Autoethnographic Method

Ellis (2004) defines autoethnographies as "research, writing, story, and method that connect the autobiographical and personal to the cultural, social and political (Ellis, 2004, p. xix). It is the study of a culture of which one is part, integrated with one's rational and inward experiences. The author incorporates the 'I' into research and writing" (Ellingson & Ellis, 2008, p. 448). They see autoethnography as a method that rejects binary oppositions between the researcher and the researched, objectivity and subjectivity, process and product, self and others and the personal and the political.   Autoethnography, according to Adams, Holman Jones and Ellis (2015), is multidimensional insofar as it "combines techniques of doing

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ethnography and techniques of doing autobiography. As such, many autoethnographies include a mixture of fieldwork, observation, acknowledgment of extant research and theories, and cultural participation and analysis (ethnography), as well as personal experience, memory, and storytelling techniques (autobiography)" (2015, p. 352).

The autoethnographic method embraces the researcher's subjectivity rather than attempting to limit it. In the conception stages of this work, one of my biggest concerns was how and to what extent I would be able to limit my own subjectivities, my own interactions with the subject matter and my personal beliefs, as a client and as a development practitioner. I then realised, that these could be a potential asset in crafting this work; since I am a primary participant in what I am interrogating and my personal experiences over 4 years of writing this work have tremendous potential to enrich and add value to the subject matter that I am studying. Ellingson and Ellis (2008) also add that "whether we call a work an *autoethnography* or an *ethnography* depends as much on the claims made by authors as anything else" (2008, p. 449). In placing my personal subjectivities in the foreground methodologically speaking, I hope to embrace the fact that I am part of the field, I am part of the interrogation and have affected how the field that I am studying operates. Additionally, defining this work as autoethnographic also enables me to find a place for my personal passions for the subject to be part of the research and use this research not only to push the agenda surrounding women's work in India, but also in relation to being a better, well-researched practitioner in this space, as a consequence of conducting this research. In many ways, "autoethnography becomes a space in which an individual's passion can bridge individual and collective experience to enable richness of representation, complexity of understanding and inspiration for activism" (2008, p. 448). Finally, this method has enabled me to be honest and transparent by foregrounding my personal relationship with each of the individuals whose stories and lives form a central tenant of this work. "At its core, autoethnography invokes a person's relationships with others and with

society, even when the focus is not explicitly on these relationships" (Adams & Manning, 2015, p. 352). While, in most cases, I am writing about women engaged in non-traditional trades as opposed to writing about my personal experiences, I recognise that my access, exposure and the level of intimacy in some of the ethnographies are a consequence of my personal relationship with some of the participants. I recognise and I am mindful of how my personal biases about the subject matter have influenced this work and that my place within the field has also influenced outcomes in the lives of the women who I am so closely affiliated with.

Action Research

"Research that produces nothing but books will not suffice" (Lewin, 1946, p. 35). Denscombe (2010) defines action research's purpose to solve a particular problem and to produce guidelines for best practices as a consequence of conducting research. He states that "action research, from the start, was involved with practical issues – the kind of issues and problems, concerns and needs that arose as a routine part of activity 'in the real world'. This specifically practical orientation has remained a defining characteristic of action research" (2010, p. 125). He adds that, "Action research was also seen as research specifically geared to changing matters… The thinking here is that research should not only be used to gain a better understanding of the problems which arise in everyday practice, but actually set out to alter things – to do so as part and parcel of the research process rather than tag it on as an afterthought which follows the conclusion of the research. This, in fact, points towards a third defining characteristic of action research: its commitment to a process of research in which the application of findings and an evaluation of their impact on practice become part of a cycle of research" (Denscombe, 2010, p. 126). This work is action research because it hopes to contribute towards the creation of best practices around the issue of non-traditional livelihoods. Through this work, I am also striving to improve the way I personally address this particular

subject matter. Further, I recognise that this work in and of itself, has, in the course of the past four years affected and influenced the manner in which I perform professionally and has influenced my understanding of livelihoods which I have continually implemented in my day to day role. The hope is that this work will push the boundaries of our understanding of non-traditional livelihoods and the theoretical and practical conclusions of this work could potentially be used by not only EMpower, but other organisations engaging in this field to further their own work in this space through program design, strategy, practices and knowledge of the field.

This work is grounded in a strong theoretical approach and is explicitly a feminist inquiry, and it employs an approach informed by gender studies and sociology. It accepts the inroads made by feminist literature in understanding oppression and inequality, and hopes to take a step further to illustrate the mechanisms utilised by the women being studied to navigate through existing gender norms within their *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1990), or the context within which they live. Feminist theory demonstrates how oppression is reproduced and deepened over time; this work goes further to uncover how individual agents are negotiating with and challenging these processes. In addition to academic literature, I rely on other secondary sources such as discourse journalism, social media and annual reports, toolkits and materials generated by civil society organisations on the topic of non-traditional livelihoods in particular and women and work in general.

Scope and Structure of this work

This work is an examination of a group of women who have successfully made their careers in driving, however it is vital to recognise that there are many women who do not make it through the program because social structures are so overbearing and pervasive. In 2017-18, of the 693 women enrolled in Delhi, Kolkata and Jaipur, 397 completed the training program

(Azad Foundation 2018). The 60% success rate can most easily be explained by the multiple pressures upon the lives defined by pre-existing social structures that are so pervasive that women are not able to move past them. In 2017, Azad conducted a study upon a group of 100 women who walked out of the Azad training program. They found that the biggest reason for walking out was "the resistance from the family which the women faced in coming for training or while working outside the house" (Azad Foundation 2018).

This work does not examine women who have walked out, but rather recognises the importance of examining the decisions of women who are now working as drivers despite the barriers that they have faced within their own lives in order to unravel the conditions of their successes.

Further, this work recognises the importance of ecosystem building in the pursuit of 'normalising' non-traditional work. In the field work process I collected data on the extent to which pockets of ecosystems were being created, through Sakha clients, through women in non-traditional spaces in services that are ancillary to driving such as tyre repair and gas stations and the extent to which there was an element of concentration of female drivers in certain neighbourhoods, that when potential clients saw their peers employing female drivers, they too decided to recruit a female driver from Sakha. Finally, data was collected on the relationship formed between clients and their drivers, and the extent to which having a female driver changed dynamics between the client and the driver. However, in order to refine the focus of this work, the ecosystem that drivers have built are outside of the scope of this work.

After this introduction, this work is divided into six further chapters, or sites for interrogation, each nuancing a particular aspect of the journeys described above.

Chapter 1 examines the social structures and power dynamics that affect women and work within the context of Delhi - the social structures that they have inherited, or as Bourdieu

(1990) asks, what is their 'habitus'. In this chapter I have aimed to outline how gender regimes affect which work women do and how women work. Additionally, it nuances the meaning of non-traditional livelihoods and how and why non-traditional livelihoods have been conceptualised as a unique category. I argue that women's work has come to be 'invented' by male powerbrokers in order to uphold the male breadwinner ideology and plays a vital role in the global subordination of women to men. I then turn to an interrogation of why non-traditional livelihoods is an important and transformative disruption to perceptions about the work that women can and cannot do. Finally, I argue that change is only possible when those in positions of power take a stand to be disruptive, by tracing the journey of Azad Foundation and EMpower – The Emerging Markets Foundation. I argue that the institutional ideology is often led by individuals, and in the aforementioned institutions; by two women in positions of power, Meenu Vadera, the founder of Azad Foundation and Sakha Consulting Wings and Cynthia Steele, The President and CEO at EMpower.

Chapter 2 examines the barriers that female drivers contend with as a consequence of the social institutions that they live within. This chapter aims to uncover what these limits are and how they have affected the lives of the women who are central to this work. In order to do so, I begin by tracing the lives of a group of women before they joined Azad Foundation through an analysis of the self-reported structures that they contend[ed] with, such as gender, class, caste, region and religion as mentioned in their own narratives.

In Chapter 3 I argue that in order for women to succeed as drivers, a large investment needs to be made in life skills in addition to technical driving training. These skills are instrumental to the trainees' transformation and result in them having the agency to question the social structures that they live within. In order to illustrate this process, I use EMpower's Girl Path ™ (2015) to depict the journey that these women took to arrive at the training centre to be trained by Azad Foundation. Using another roadmap, Azad Foundation's *Badlav ka*

Safarnama (Journey of Change), I examine the journey that these women took within the training centre up until the point that they graduated from Azad Foundation. This chapter examines the strategies that were employed to ensure the success of these women. I argue that it is through employing these key strategies that there were two major consequences, the first is that a sisterhood was built amongst the drivers during the training process and this sisterhood was instrumental in ensuring that they were able to complete the driving program and become licenced drivers. This sisterhood is an informal collective of women who have trained at Azad Foundations and have socially relied on each other over time, from calling each other to ask for directions, to lending and borrowing amongst each other, to having a camaraderie to collectively challenge social norms. This sisterhood is essentially a pathway for collectivising and for transformative change (Kabeer, 2008), because there is a galvanisation that occurs within Azad, through the building of the sisterhood and therefore these women recognise that they are part of something bigger and more profound. The second, is that Azad Foundation in many ways became a 'brave space' for these women to gain the self-efficacy and agency to battle the structures that limited them in the first place.

Chapter 4 shifts focus slightly to examine one of the most important backdrops in the lives of these women, namely the city that they are now engaging with on a daily basis in their role as professional drivers. It examines how the city has been solidified as a men's only space; where women have the right of passage under specific circumstances and with specific purpose. It will then nuance the fundamental differences between the discourse of safety and how that results tangibly in restrictions being placed upon women and girls and what the consequences are of the curtailment of women's mobility in public places. Finally, it illustrates how, and to what extent Sakha drivers are using positive interventions to disrupt the understanding of women's spaces within the city. The chapter concludes by asking whether creating women's only spaces so that they can navigate through the city is artificially creating a private space

within the public realm, thereby perpetuating the notion that women should remain in the private realm.

Chapter 5 examines a social category outside of the women who are the primary focus of this work. The chapter interrogates the manifestations of masculinity that women engaging in non-traditional livelihoods encounter in their day to day lives. Given that 'men' is not a monolithic category, the chapter aims to break down men who have been at important junctures in the journeys that these women have undertaken. I have examined three categories of men, inhibiting men – who actively provide resistance to female drivers, cautious or intrigued men – who are in principle supportive of the idea of female drivers but are limited in their support because they are bound by existing social norms about what women should and should not be, and the type of work that women should do. The predominant part of this chapter focuses on enabling men – men who are active supporters of women to become drivers. They serve as catalysts in the lives of these women; so that they can make informed decisions about their lives. Finally, it will examine avenues for change in terms of questioning the status quo to enable more men to be enablers of women who are negotiating with existing social structures. I argue that while there is a process of transformation that female drivers undergo as subjects, they are also strong contributors in changing the mind-sets of the men that they interact with. For the men, there is a transformation of their subjectivities, as men, through their praxis of working with female drivers.

The Conclusion, weaves together the voices, realisations and changes in the lives of these women at various levels, for themselves, for their home and their community and finally in relation to society as a whole. In many ways, the choices that they have made have resulted in shifting perceptions of self, specifically in relation to gender roles within society and how they see the world around them. This has undoubtedly had an impact upon the ecosystem of their home and their immediate community. In essence, their agency works at various junctures

with the social structures within which they live and nuances the extent to which their agency changes in relation to the fields in which they operate. However, these women, their transgressions and their disruptions have also had an effect upon the larger ecosystem. Their work has, at some level enabled perceptions to change about women and girls and their capabilities. At some level, they are responsible for shifting the needle in relation to women's careers choices and have contributed to the shifting perceptions around women's work; and are contributing to creating a 'new normal' for working women.

Theoretical Frameworks - Power, Structures and Agency

In order to understand structures and agency, which are the central frameworks for analysis of this thesis, we must first deconstruct how power is viewed by Foucault (1990) who argues that power is not acquired or held, but rather that it is exercised. To Foucault, power is not external to relationships of gender, economics or sex but rather, power determines the internal structure of these relationships. Power doesn't always come from above, but rather from all levels of society independent of who the ruling forces are. The individual is at the core of Foucault's analysis of power. However, there isn't one individual exercising power, but rather a logic and rationality behind power relationships, which he calls 'double conditioning' - individuals rely on local centres of power, but the micro level does not emulate the macro level. His conceptualisation of resistance is similar to his conceptualisation of power insofar as resistance is not external to power, and pockets of resistance manifest themselves in various places and move as the dynamics of power are altered, which Foucault refers to as 'continual variation'. On one hand, Foucault is open to the idea of change, because he believes that power is fleeting and can change forms, however since he argues that power is not consolidated, he is sceptical of the ability for there to be global change.

This work, by placing individual women engaging in non-traditional livelihoods at the centre, will assume Foucault's conceptualisation of power to understand the resistance these women create through the enactment of their agency. Foucault argues, that agency is created through the triangle of power, discourse and knowledge and this research illustrates that the dynamics of power are altered through the control of discourse about who can engage in which livelihoods, and the knowledge that these women have about their right to engage in alternate livelihoods in the first place.

This thesis relies strongly on Hays (1994), Giddens (1979), Bourdieu (1990), Connell (2009) and Kabeer (2008) to conceptualise structures, agency and the dispositions which renew and uphold social structures. In order to nuance the lives and actions of women engaging in non-traditional livelihoods, it also enables the examination of their disruptions of existing conceptions of structure and agency. In other words, it assesses how and to what extent these women upset existing social norms and have the potential to form new social norms.

Sharon Hays (1994) argues that structures and agency are not opposites, they have an antagonistic but a mutually dependent relationship. She states that structures make human agency possible. She argues that culture must be viewed as a social structure as well, culture is not only material but it is also the ideal form of social relations. Hays argues that "culture can be understood as a social structure… social structure consists of two central interconnected elements: systems of social relations and systems of meaning. Systems of social relations consist of patterns of roles and relationships, and forms of domination according to which one might place any given person at a point on a complex grid that specifies a set of characteristics… systems of meaning is what is often known as culture, including not only the beliefs and values of social groups but also their language, forms of knowledge and common sense" (1994, p. 65). There is also a prevalent social structure, informed by patriarchy, which governs society.

Giddens has an optimistic view of the ability for an individual to affect change and argues that even the smallest social actions can contribute to the alteration of social systems. He argues that to be human is to be an agent (1979, p. 43), and that agents have the ability to affect the structural properties of society. Giddens positions the agent in a duality, both as the medium and as the outcome (1979, p. 60). Giddens engages centrally with the idea of order; he argues that the repetition of an agent's action, leads to a routine which is responsible for the reproduction of social structures; structures when they exist across space and time become systems (1979, p. 52). Structures are rules and resources that are embedded in 'memory traces' that agents use to perform social actions. However Giddens also believes that actors monitor themselves and occasionally, either through this monitoring of practice and conscious change, or through unintended consequences are able to transform a certain practice; this is what he refers to as structuration. The idea of structuration is imperative in this work because it enables the creation of a conceptual framework within which to view the agency of the women engaging in non-traditional livelihoods.

Bourdieu (1990) argues that to exist socially is to exist in relation to others. Society, according to Bourdieu is made up of multiple fields. Fields have rules, which he terms *doxa* and those are forged by power relations by agents within those fields. When multiple fields come together, that is society. There are agents who want to preserve the status quo and agents who want to alter the status quo. It is power relations within and between fields that cause human behaviour and therein also lies the potential for agents to have agency to alter the *doxa* of a particular field. However, some agents have more power than others because, according to Bourdieu, human behaviour is a consequence of an individual's habitus, which is an agent's symbolic capital as they enter the field. According to Bourdieu, resources and capital are both possessed by agents as illustrated by their habitus. The notion of the habitus is central to this work, because according to Bourdieu, one's symbolic capital is a consequence of the social,

economic and culture capital and resources that are possessed by an individual. Bourdieu argues, that "it can be said without contradiction both that social realities are social fictions with no other basis than social construction, and that they really exist insomuch as they are collectively recognised" (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 66). This collective recognition of patriarchal structures that keep women within the confines of the home leads to women internalising their subordination because of the discourse surrounding their bodies and its function. The ethnographies will be able to assess the women's habitus based on the world that she has inherited in relation to her economic, cultural and social upbringing within a resource poor family in the patriarchal context. This work, aims to deconstruct their habitus prior to engaging in non-traditional livelihoods, and the consequences upon her habitus after she has engaged in a non-traditional livelihood.

Connell (2009) speaks about how gender relations in society are a consequence of certain structures "in contemporary industrial, post-industrial and global society" (2009, p. 76). These structures are created and are influenced by a gender order of society. She outlines this process by considering gender regimes, which are patterns of gender arrangements in institutions. When several gender regimes come together, they form the gender order of society. Both are a set of relationships, "ways that people, groups and organisations are connected and divided" (2009, p. 73). On one hand, Connell states that "gender relations are always being made and re-made in everyday life. If we don't bring it into being, gender does not exist" (2009, p. 73), denoting that an individual has the agency to affect the gender order of society. However, she goes on to say that "we make our own gender, but we are not free to make it however we like" (2009, p. 74). The reason for this is because "our gender practice is powerfully shaped by the gender order in which we find ourselves" (2009, p. 74); and the gender order of society is an "enduring or extensive pattern among social relations that social theory calls structure" (2009, p. 74). When "religious, political and conversational practices

place men in authority over women, we speak of a patriarchal structure of gender relations" (2009, p. 74). These social structures are also sources of power, which Connell says is exercised through the "possibilities and consequences [of certain] action[s]" (2009, p. 74). Using Connell's ideas of the gender regime of society enables this work to understand, specifically, how gender affects social structures and agency.

Kabeer (2008) states that "Agency operationalizes the concept of choice. It refers to the capacity to define one's goals and to act on them. It goes beyond observable behaviour to encompass the meanings, motivations, skills and purpose that people bring to their actions, their 'sense of agency'. Agency is thus closely bound up with human capability" (2008, p. 20). To echo her, this work is interested in interrogating "women's ability to make strategic choices in relation to their own lives and to exercise voice and influence in the relationships that matter to them" (2008, p. 22). This work critically engages with agency, as opposed to empowerment in order to understand the sites for resistance and the disruption that these women's careers have enabled. By centring my interrogation in the lives of female drivers, I am able to illustrate how they have built agency within their own lives - through their praxis, they have enabled transformation of subjectivities that create structures, and through their work as drivers they have not only learned how to drive and to navigate through the city, but they have also learned how to interface with and question existing structures, in a self-reflexive manner that is simultaneously altering how they perceive the world. There are ways to offer resistance while simultaneously abiding by existing rules, one manifestation of which, is what Kandiyoti (1991) describes in the patriarchal context as the patriarchal bargain, which is a tactic employed by some of my respondents in order to negotiate with structures. Ultimately, binaries are not strict categories, nor are social structures and the dismantling of them. As the narratives in this work reveal: acceptance, negotiation and disruption can all co-exist simultaneously.

Review of previous studies on the theme

This literature review has been structured thematically to theoretically consider the key issues that female drivers encounter, not only in their day to day journeys but also in relation to the personal journeys that they have undertaken with regards to their engagement in a non-traditional career.

Gender and Occupations

Marx and Engels believed that "the growth of capitalism would undermine the basis of the patriarchal family… working class women were being forced to enter the labour force, and would therefore lose their economic dependence upon men and assume a new role" (Folbre, 1998, p. 130). They were correct to assume that capitalism meant that workers were no longer tied to feudal lords or the land and that all workers became 'free' including women and children. However, they did not take into account the pre-existing patriarchal structures that informed and were further concretised by capitalism. Hartmann (1976) argues that Marx and Engels believed that all workers would be able to earn a wage and become independent earners, but did not consider that the implications of women becoming wage earners "threatened to…destroy the family and the basis of power of men over women (i.e. the control of their labour power in the family" (1976, p. 139).

According to Papanek (1979), "The most explicit statement of the social and cultural norms shaping women's work inside and outside the home can be found in the structure of the labour market in any given nation. The nature of the occupational segregation by gender ("women's jobs" and "men's jobs") and the extent of women's participation in specific occupations by class should be seen as a concrete expression of that society's value system about the allocation of labour between women and men" (1979, p. 780), there is nothing essential about this distinction. As Mies (1981) illustrates, the fact that the sex ordered division

of labour is justified biologically means that it is tied to essential or biological traits – however, we must recognise that biological determinism is not the reason, but rather the justification for the sex ordered division of labour. The impact of the sexual division of labour has major consequences for women, "often it is credited with sustaining, if not causing the wage gap…women earn less than men in every country, largely because they are concentrated in 'female' jobs that pay less than 'male' jobs. Female jobs also tend to be less prestigious and autonomous than male jobs" (Williams, 1993, p. 1). As a consequence, men do not want to 'cross-over' and work in female jobs, because they face both a wage loss and a 'fall' in prestige for working in jobs associated with women (England & Herbert, 1993), because of the "cultural devaluation of women – and the overvaluation of men" (Williams, 1993, p. 5).

According to Acker (1991), gender is deeply embedded within organisations – it is in the 'blue-print' of how organisations are structured. Within organisations in the formal workplace, there is no such thing as gender neutrality because the neutral subject is defined by the male benchmark, who were the creators of formal workplace structures in the first place. Women's work in the formal workplace has been limited to unskilled (or lesser skilled) work, which also ensures the preservation of male privilege in the workplace. "The introduction of new technology in a number of industries was accompanied by a reorganisation, but not abolition of the gendered division of labour that left the technology in men's control and maintained the definition of skilled work as men's work and unskilled work as women's work" (1991, p. 167). This meant that over time women had less access to education and to skill development resources that would enable them to effectively compete in the workforce. McDowell (1999) argues that the definition of work as waged work has been based "on the masculine ideal of work" (1999, p. 125), and even when women are in the workplace they are vertically and horizontally segregated into feminised occupations so as to uphold the sexual division of labour, because "gendered identities are created and recreated at work" (1999, p.

134). This is cemented through the manifestation of "Male power [which] is implicitly reinforced in everyday interactions and in many of the micro scale interactions in organisations," such as in workplace culture (1999, p. 136).

Data suggests this trend is a global one, whereby the sexual division of labour informs the school system and the availability of skilling programs to young women is limited to certain fields. "Young women and men often follow different educational streams and develop differences in aspirations and skills that underlie occupational segregations later in life. A wider account of productive inputs shows women are disadvantaged in areas such as access to financial services, technology, training, information, and social networks" (The World Bank, 2013, p. 14). Ultimately, the gendering of jobs and relegating women to only certain occupations is centrally tied to the need to preserve the status quo, by the powerful, to ensure that those in power retain that power. Therefore, all acceptable occupations for women are those that have lesser status than those that are considered to be men's work; and in order to ensure the preservation of the status quo there is an implicit collusion of institutions to ensure that women who do enter the formal labour force do so in certain pre-determined occupations.

The public-private split also has consequences upon women's work, Papanek (1979) states that due to the naturalisation of women's work, in essence women are always working in what she terms 'status production work'. Unfortunately, we tend to view work and not work as being economically active and economically inactive, which essentially means that women's work within the home or women's unpaid work is invisibilised. "In general, the idea of the 'economically inactive' woman is particularly inappropriate in nations where the distinctions between home and workplace are not clear-cut but where women's work tends not to be very visible" (1979, p. 780). Consequentially, a 'statistical pardah' is drawn on all work done by women in the home. Female labour force participation figures do not account for the home-based work that women do, GDP figures do not account for the background work conducted

by women. For instance, in agriculture, women do a lion's share of the weeding and sowing work – but only the revenue from the final product contributes towards income earned – which in most cases is earned and controlled by men who take the produce to market.

Through an illustration of the sexual division of labour, this work illustrates how notions of women's work and men's work are actually 'invented' using Hobsbawn's (1983) concept of invented traditions. In many ways, non-traditional livelihoods offer an avenue for women to potentially engage with and challenge the status quo and the capitalist framework on a level that is less exploitative because they are accessing jobs with higher wages and increased stability. Unfortunately, due to the pervasive structures that have informed and are perpetuated in relation to gender roles at work, engaging in non-traditional livelihoods alone is not the answer. In her assessment of female marines and male nurses in the US, Williams (1989) saw that gender differences are maintained by men and women in non-traditional livelihoods through internal stratification, etiquette rules and differential evaluation. Her ethnography highlights an important inroad for interrogation, to what extent do men work to preserve the social structures that best serve them? These illustrations of women's work serve as a strong foundation upon which I have built my interrogation. Non-traditional livelihoods is making a case for an alternative trajectory for women's livelihoods and skilling that not only provides women with an income but also questions existing modalities of work opportunities for women by questioning the status quo.

Gender and Life course in India

Ortner (1974) contends that because women's physiology appears to be closer to nature (childbirth/ menstruation) and through her social roles (as a mother / caregiver), she is placed

closer to nature. She argues that this "pan-cultural second class status could be accounted for, quite simply by postulating that women are being identified or symbolically associated with nature, as opposed to men who are identified with culture. Since it is always culture's project to subsume and transcend nature, if women were considered part of nature, then culture would find it 'natural' to subordinate… them" (1974, p. 74). Leela Dube (1988) analyses rituals surrounding puberty and marriage to illustrate how 'culture' reproduces systems of meaning of what it is to be a girl in India, which is primarily informed by patriarchal ideas of the need to control women's sexuality to safeguard future lineages. Marriage is a structuring structure (Bourdieu 1990) which structures social relations. Kaur and Palriwala (2014) argue that marriage makes a private affair public and serves to institutionalise a private affair. The State then, according to Mody (2008) takes the point of view of the powerful and therefore the community colonizes the individual; which is inherently a patriarchal structure. The family too, is a structuring structure, and through conforming to the rules, according to Bourdieu (1998), one enjoys the symbolic profit of being within a family. The family is not a site for equality between the genders (Beck, 1992) (Ortner, 1974), it is rather a space where the state and patriarchy are perpetuated (Das, 1976). It is vital to recognise that the structures governing a woman's life change throughout her life course. MN Srinivas (1976) cautions us that the role and position of women in society is complicated and is the result of several inter-linkages, therefore it is not wise to make sweeping generalisations about women as a monolithic whole, or about women based on the evidence or experience of a few. For example, as a woman gets older "as a young wife matures into a mother and mother-in-law the relationship between husband and wife becomes increasingly egalitarian" (Srinivas, 1977, p. 230).

Central to understanding a woman's life course is to interrogate the public - private split. Sangari and Vaid (1989) argue that the "formation of the public and private spheres is a differential process which takes place on several levels, the discursive, the linguistic, the

political and the economic, and usually in relation to other classes" (Sangari & Vaid, 1989, p. 10). The public-private split is defined by the powerful in order to further the cause of the powerful. They argue that the construction and the upholding of the public - private split was central to the definition of the 'ideal Indian woman' in the Indian nationalist movement, who was created by drawing on literature, tradition and religion. The nationalist movement played a vital role in 'recasting' women within the family unit as benevolent wives and upholders of their familial duties, with an invaluable role in the nationalist project.

This 'recasting' of an ideal woman was one who was middle class, therefore her role, the rules that governed her and her relegation to the private realm was, in many ways viewed as aspirational. The private sphere was tied to status. As MN Srinivas (1977) notes, when social groups Sanskritise, women lose mobility (1977, p. 228). "The women, in particular, find high status inconsistent with extra-mural movement, with the result that their upward mobility leads to their 'immurement'" (Srinivas, 1977, p. 226). Therefore, in many ways, confinement to the private sphere is seen as an aspiration by many lower class women who work out of necessity, this is also why we are seeing an increased withdrawal from the workforce by middle class woman, who have 'arrived' economically, and therefore do not need to work, because their male counterparts charged with the responsibility of being the breadwinner are in a position to take care of their female counterparts; and women can then engage more centrally with 'status work' (Papanek 1979).

At this juncture it is vital to recognise that 'India' is not a monolithic whole and the real lived experiences of women are a consequence of the structures within which they live. As Dyson and Moore (1983) highlight, regional differences play an important role in the trajectories of women's lives. "The main states of India can be broadly grouped into two basic demographic regimes. In contrast to the north, states in the south and east are characterized by the following: relatively low overall fertility; lower marital fertility; later age at first marriage;

lower infant and child mortality; comparatively low ratios of female to male infant and child mortality, and, largely as a consequence, relatively low sex ratios" (1983, p. 42), whereas the reverse is true in the North. Additionally, the exogamic marriage rules of the North have deep cultural consequences. "The "wife-givers" are socially and ritually inferior to the "wife-takers," and dowry is the main marriage transaction; at the extreme, marriage transactions may resemble trafficking in females. The fact that the in-marrying female comes from another group means that in some ways she is viewed as a threat: her behaviour must be closely watched; she must be resocialized so that she comes to identify her own interests with those of her husband's kin; senior family wives tend to dominate young in-marrying wives. Because women are out-marriers, parents can expect little help from their daughters after marriage, whereas sons will remain at home" (1983, p. 44).

Dyson and Moore, illustrate how the kinship patterns of North and South India contribute to creating a culture of autonomy for women. "the division between the areas of northern (unfavourable) and southern (favourable) demographic regimes broadly coincides with the division between areas of northern kinship/low female autonomy and southern kinship/high female autonomy" (1983, p. 47). Srinivas (1976) states that confinement to the private sphere is also determined by geography; "Immurement is further compounded in the region north of the Vindhyas, thanks to the institution of the purdah" (1976, p.229). The reason for this lack of mobility is because of the deep safeguarding of female sexuality and lack of autonomy. This geographical division, corresponds with what Mandelbaum (1988) terms the 'pardah[30] regions', where the practice of pardah is most commonly observed; the pardah, or the "practice of physical covering and spatial enclosure" (Mandelbaum, 1988, p. 12) is geographically defined and not linked to religion, with Hindu, Muslims and Sikhs practicing pardah. (Mandelbaum 1988). While the North-South divide helps to explain visible patterns

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[30] social practice of female seclusion

of kinship and mobility, as Grover (2011) highlights, the North-South Divide must be nuanced, because definitive categories "fail to engage with women's real life experiences of kinship and different marriage forms" (2011, p. 9).

In order to understand the structures imposed upon women we must critically engage with patriarchy. When men are placed above women we speak of a patriarchal structure of gender relations (Connell 2009). Essentially, patriarchy enables the control of women by men and maintains the gender order of society. Patriarchy, according to Connell stems from the male breadwinner ideology which positions men as the ones who bring in and control assets within the family unit. When cooking is done within the household context it is primarily considered to be women's work, however when cooking becomes monetised and outside of the house in the form of a chef at a restaurant, it is considered to be a male profession. In the Indian context, washing clothes is unequivocally a woman's job, but as soon as washing is commercialised, and becomes a means to access income, it becomes a male domain, and that is why most '*dhobis*[31]' are men. The monetisation of work outside the home is a consequence of the male breadwinner ideology which is maintained through the gender pay gap. Boserup (1990) argues, that even when women enter the paid workforce, they are not paid to be breadwinners, which is in the interest of men who want to retain their breadwinner status. There is symbolic power (Ortner, 1974) associated with being in public sphere and being a breadwinner, a form of power that men do not want to share, hence it is codified within the formal labour market.

This control over resources leads to the reproduction of patriarchy through power inequalities between men and women; and can manifest itself as hegemonic masculinity. Hegemony is a term which Gramsci uses to understand "the dynamics of structural change involving the mobilisation and demobilisation of whole classes" (Connell & Messerschmidt,

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[31] washermen

2005, p. 831). Hegemonic masculinity is the mobilisation of men that leads to their dominance over women. According to Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) hegemonic masculinity embodies the "most honoured way of being a man… and it ideologically legitimised the global subordination of women to men" (2005, p. 832). Hegemonic masculinity operates to produce male power over women, and can be "understood as the pattern of practice (i.e. things done, not just a set of role expectations of an identity) that allowed men's dominance over women to continue" (2005, p. 832). They state that, hegemonic masculinity is an ideal, it is the consensus around an idealised form of masculinity, of which the most prominent features are the superiority of men to women and the assurance of continuing male privilege. Men's roles as providers ensure women's dependence upon them since women are dependent on male wage earners. This hegemony was ensured and reproduced through the creation of organisations and social practices within the public realm that only men had access to. Hegemonic "masculinity represents not a certain type of man, but, rather, a way that men position themselves through discursive practices" (2005, p. 841), or by perpetuating a dominant ideology about masculinity within society.

Another important categorisation to consider is that of *Izzat. Izzat* is the Hindi/Punjabi/Urdu word for honour. Since, as Honig (1999) states, "culture is a living breathing system for the distribution and enactment of agency, power and privilege amongst its members and beyond" (Honig, 1999, p. 39), *izzat* is one of the ways in which power and privilege is preserved by those who hold power. "Honour is one of the most valued ideals in the subcontinent patriarchies, whether Hindu, Sikh or Muslim – with most communities seeking to gain and maintain 'honour.' In general *izzat* is measured by the degree of respect shown by others… actions that are appropriate or in accordance with normative codes, maintain the 'purity' and 'honour' of the family, lineage or caste, whereas actions that are inappropriate defile 'honour' of the caste, family and lineage" (Chakravarti, 2005, p. 310). Mandelbaum

(1988) illustrates how *izzat* "always refers to how a person carries out the group's values, how he or she realises them in actual behaviour" (1988, p. 20), *izzat* is disproportionately expected to be maintained by women.

Women's lives need to be addressed intersectionally. John (2015) states that the concept of intersectionality has a place within the Indian context because "it certainly represents an advance over the more generic use of multiple axes of oppression, double and triple burdens, and so on, and is a corrective to the commonly deployed notion of multiple identities" (John, 2015, p. 73). For a girl from a resource poor community, she is not only subject to issues of gender and patriarchy, but also issues surrounding caste, religion, access to resources, (lack of) education and restrictions upon mobility. "A single axis, whether of capitalism, gender, caste, sexuality, and so on, tells us nothing about how a particular axis is being conceptualised. Any particular axis itself is the product of different levels of analysis involving structures, subjects produced by these structures and the discourses that advance them, which, depending on the moment and the context, may yield categories that are both fixed and fluid" (John, 2015, p. 75).

As Foucault (1990) argues, where there is power there is also resistance. There are ways to offer resistance while simultaneously abiding to existing rules, one manifestation of which, is what Kandiyoti (1991) describes in the patriarchal context as the patriarchal bargain. Agency in this context also has the potential to upset existing structures and their maintenance justifies the existence of rules. Kandiyoti (1991) argues that this is why, it can be understood that women collude in their own oppression by patriarchy, because "women like men, learn to accept their life circumstances by means of the norms and expectations of the group to which they belong" (Papanek, 1990, p. 181). Another illustration of the patriarchal bargain is status work, "Women as members of families and households, produce many goods and services that benefit other family members, whether their work is paid or unpaid" (Papanek, 1979, p. 775) some of these

forms of work are what Papanek calls "family status production" (1979, p. 775). While they are not economically active, they do benefit from status work insofar as they "share the benefits of status both for itself and for what it makes accessible" (1979, p. 776) and how it facilitates the position of the family as a whole.

This work aims to take the concept of resistance further, by illustrating how these women haven't accepted social norms but are actively countering them through their work and the lessons that they have learned as a consequence of this work. "Where there are no job opportunities for women, families would be less likely to educate their daughters than in situations where there is high female labour force participation. Where there is low female labour force participation, female children are less likely to be preserved" (Papanek 1990, p. 165). The women who are engaging in non-traditional livelihoods are negotiating their relationship with their mandated roles in society by doing things differently.

Gender and Bodies

According to Foucault's (1990) repressive hypothesis there is an anxiety around sex, sexuality and bodies. Sex over time became controlled and examined and there was pleasure and power in the examination of the body. Foucault illustrates how bodies and power are irrevocably interconnected and de Beauvoir (1997) goes on to say that our physical bodies as women must be overcome if we are to achieve equality with men, because of the power asserted over the female body. Women and men are both tied to the materiality and reality of their bodies within the social contexts where they live. Specifically in relation to working bodies, Connell (2009) argues that the ways in which bodies labour and the labour that bodies do, affects not only the body but also how it is perceived.

Connell (2009) states that bodies cannot be viewed as social objects alone, they are affecting and they are affected bodies at the same time, therefore there is something larger at

play than the physicality of the body. Kirby (1996) cautions that Western feminism believes that the same analytical framework can be applied across places and is dangerous, because as Mohanty's discourse theory asserts "the location of the subject [is] within systems that exceed the individual" (Kirby 1996, p. 20). Therefore it is vital to take into account the cultural subjectivity to nuance how the body is being affected. Gatens (2000) speaks about how bodies are affected because "culture marks bodies and creates specific conditions where they live and recreate themselves" (2000, p. 231). Culture is also a source of power, Gatens uses Foucault's conceptual framework to state that power does shape bodies but not from above, as power is exercised as opposed to being possessed. This exercised power, informed by 'cultural structures' defines how female bodies are to act. "Power is not then reducible to what is imposed, from above, on naturally differentiated male and female bodies, but it is also constitutive of those bodies, in so far as they are constituted male or female" (2000, p. 230). Women's behaviour is controlled as a means to assert regulation over the female body and her sexuality for the purpose of her future fertility. In the Indian context, when she gets married, these 'systems of social relations' enable her fertility, and her honour to be in the purview of her husband and members of her marital home. Folbre (1998) adds, however distinctive women's biological capacities might be, it is the social and historical context of child bearing and child rearing that largely determines their structure and meaning (Folbre, 1998, p. 121). Therefore, at various stages of a girls' life, her body and actions are being moulded by power relations in society to ensure that those very power relations which create and reproduce existing social structures are maintained.

A woman's social role, as a mother and as the reproducer of the home and family, means that she becomes restricted to the home, which leads to her confinement to the domestic family context. Bourdieu (1998) argues that the family structure serves to protect the social order. "The family plays a decisive role in the maintenance of the social order, through social

as well as biological reproduction, that is, reproduction of the structure of the social space and social relations" (Bourdieu 1998, p. 69). He adds that the family is "an objective social category (a structuring structure) [and] is the basis of the family as a subjective social category, a mental category which is the matrix of countless representations and actions such as marriages) which help to reproduce the objective social category" (1998, p. 67). Therefore, a woman's role in society is to reproduce the family structure, which is precisely what contains her. Kirby adds to this by saying that as subjects, we are subjected to the spaces that we occupy, because "the subject came into being at the same moment as it becomes subjected" (1996, p.15). She states that our bodies have a physical and a mental space and because of the inferiority of the female body, our bodies are more 'at risk' than male bodily consciousness; and due to that our bodies 'take their place' (Kirby 1996).

Nussbaum (1998) argues that "all of us, with the exception of the independently wealthy and the unemployed, take money for the use of our body" (1998, p. 693). There is an explicit anxiety around women leaving the domain of the home and entering the public sphere, especially to earn an income, but there is also a "more general anxiety about the body, especially the female body, that has been a large part of the history of quite a few cultures" (1998, p. 699). This "boils down to the view that women are essentially immoral and dangerous and will be kept in control by men only if men carefully engineer things so that they do not get out of bounds" (1998, p. 709). Over time, the labouring body has become gendered, in her analysis of the service industry, McDowell (2009) illustrates how workers are 'embodied' and their bodies affect not only the perception but also the type of work that bodies do. She illustrates how, for that reason, female bodies have been associated with the service industry. There are jobs that are solidified as being women's work and jobs that have been solidified as being men's work, as Bourdieu (1990) states, the body was used as the justification for the construction of patriarchy which in turn informed and upheld the patriarchal social system; "all

the symbolic manipulations of body experience, starting with displacements within a symbolically structured space tend to impose the integration of body space with cosmic space and social space, by applying the same categories…to the relationship between man and the natural world as to the complementary and opposed states and actions of the two sexes in the division of sexual labour and the sexual division of labour, and therefore the labour of biological and social reproduction" (Bourdieu 1990, p. 77).

Kirby (1996), however, provides an optimistic avenue for change insofar as she states that defining certain spaces may be able to create room to discuss the flexibility of how the body is viewed; she states that "defining space for the purposes of discussing the subject might instead tend to demonstrate just how flexible space can be" (1996, p. 16). Further, Kirby articulates the need for "a responsive and responsible model of the subject, one that neither abandons political realities, nor arrests possibilities for change" (1996, p. 36).

Challenging these social structures is one of the biggest negotiations that women entering non-traditional livelihoods have to contend with, the fact that 'culturally' women are limited by certain priorities in their life (marriage, childbirth and responsibility of the home) and their bodies are 'constructed' through systems of power to be essentially 'male' or essentially 'female'. Women engaging in non-traditional livelihoods are challenging what it means to be essentially male and essentially female, in relation to work.

Gender and Technology

There is an almost universal anxiety around women in relation to machines and technology. A World Bank report finds that 19 countries around the world restrict women from working in the transport sector in the same way as men. These countries include, Belize, Domincan Republic, Russia and Belarus, where it is actually against the law to train to be a truck or bus driver (Schulznato & Kurshitashvili, 2018).

Wajcman (2009) argues that the "taken-for-granted association of men and machines is the result of the historical and cultural construction of gender" (2009, p. 2). This is the consequence of the close symbolic link between technology and culture; which is man created and the bastion of men. Oldenziel (2003) illustrates how the link between men and machines is formed in early socialisation with 'technological' toys, such as cars and trains being geared towards boys to increase their affinity to technology and prepare them for their future role as workers. These links are made explicit culturally from a very young age, insofar as trains, cars and technology is in the domain, almost exclusively, of boys. Despite the socially constructed disjuncture between women and technology, women have been responsible for several technological innovations but McGaw (2003) argues that feminine technologies, created by women, are seen as 'private' innovations and "because the public/private dichotomy in our society is pervasive and emotionally charged, and because technology is culturally associated with public, masculine endeavour, it takes an extra effort to identify as technological those artefacts associated with the private, feminine aspects of culture" (2003, p. 32). This is due to the naturalisation process that takes place, which leads to an undervaluation of that specific form of technology as opposed to machines, arms etc. associated with the masculinities in the public realm.

Faulkner (2000) argues that 'technology is where the power is" (2000, p. 5), and that "technology is – both materially and symbolically – a huge, often critical, element of hegemonic masculinity" (2000, p. 15). Further, "both modern technology and hegemonic masculinity are historically associated with industrial capitalism, they are linked symbolically by themes of control and domination" (ibid. p. 6). She argues that this is because the primary actors in the design of technology have been men, this in turn leads to strong gender divisions of labour relating to technology because of the irrevocable link between "masculinity and technical skill" (ibid. p. 14) and this leads to technology as being an important element of male

identity formation. Since technology is closely linked to culture; and to power, men want to retain their exclusivity over technology to preserve their revered social status. Patel and Parmentier (2005) illustrate that this divide extends to the IT industry within India. They argue that the IT industry is also largely informed by the public-private split. "In spite of attaining some of the highest levels of education in Indian society, such women are still associated with traits that include being secondary, invisible, reproductive (i.e., children), and unpaid; in general, they are assumed to take the role of a follower…In contrast, men continue to be associated with traits that include being primary, visible, productive (i.e., goods and services) and they are assumed to be leaders" (Patel & Parmentier, 2005, p. 43).

In the same way that Marxist theory is not gender blind, Wajcman (2000) argues that the application and use of technology within the labour market is also not gender blind. For example, the introduction of mechanisation in factories has very different real consequences for the male and female labour force. "Women are most affected by changes due to mechanisation. The employment of manual workers is reduced and is displaced by workers who run the machines. In these cases the total number of jobs is reduced drastically. Moreover, women are generally replaced by men, although the income earned may actually increase" (Jhabvala & Sinha, 2002, p. 2038). We see this in history with the introduction of the cotton ginny, when introduced in the industrial revolution, it cost female factory workers their employment. Similarly, in farming women in India have been largely responsible for weeding and sowing work, however, when technological advancements relating to weeding and sowing were introduced the responsibility to operate these technologies fell into the hands of men. "Therefore, the introduction of tractors, harvesters, insecticides, weedicides, hormone accelerators, high yielding variety seeds and mechanical cotton pickers has meant that tasks traditionally performed by women and on which many women depend for their livelihood have been appropriated" (ibid.). This trend is observed by Jhabvala and Sinha in food processing,

screen printing and the constructions industry as well. Additionally, there is an explicit anxiety around women using and having control over technology. In an ethnography of mobile phone use in Varanasi, Doron (2012), argues that the mobile phone becomes a "focal point for the struggle over power and domination," (2012, p. 416) and as such the use of a phone by a woman has become an issue of contention in North India because it embodies connectivity, individual agency and the access to and control over technology this is in conflict with social norms that place women in the private realm.

This highlights how the use of technology is not gender blind, technology has real gendered implications in relation to how it is socialised. "Increasingly, we now work from the basis that neither masculinity, femininity nor technology are fixed, unitary categories, but that they contain multiple possibilities and are constructed in relation to each other" (Wajcman, 2000, p. 460). However, the socialisation of technology offers avenues for optimism insofar as "both technology and gender [should] be understood as socially shaped and so potentially reshapeable" (Faulkner, 2000, p. 3). She makes a call to 'democratise technology' (2000, p. 16), which in many ways, female drivers are doing through laying claim to a machine, the car; through communicating with their clients over the phone and in being trained to maintain their vehicles, change tires and pop open the hood of their car to conduct the maintenance that they are trained in.

Gender and the City

It is critical for this work to engage centrally with the issue of public space and mobility as the women engaging in non-traditional livelihoods all live in urban areas and their engagement with non-traditional work has enabled a marked change in the manner in which they traverse through and (re)claim public space by calling their limitations into question. McDowell (1999) argues that gender is constructed and maintained through "discourse and

everyday actions" (1999, p. 22) and that the relationship between gender, sexuality and space is a fluid relationship. It is the normalisation of small everyday actions that serve to preserve larger social structures that are governed by patriarchy. It will be crucial to interrogate the extent to which, the young women in non-traditional careers are able to negotiate or disrupt existing notions of public space within the city. Tara (2011) argues that the city reproduces existing inequalities between the genders because the city symbolises social structures that are inherently male and therefore there is an anxiety about women in public spaces. Dube (1988) argues that this need for control first manifests itself when a girl reaches puberty because she is able to bear children, therefore until she is married, her sexuality is most vulnerable.

In order to ensure that the *doxa* (Bourdieu, 1990) of public place is preserved, female bodies are conditioned to follow the rules and if she disobeys or transgresses these rules there are serious consequences. McDowell (1999) states that women who do not adhere to the rules are seen as being 'wicked or fallen'. Knoblock (2008) says that non adherence to these rules becomes a justification for gender based violence because the female body was not in a sanctioned place at the sanctioned time.

Mobility of young women is thus controlled for the 'greater good' and this is how, according to Ranade (2007) women in the city are expected to maintain the boundaries that have been created for them or else run the risk of being called into question for their behaviour. Girls' behaviour is monitored and the "performance of gender… is strictly regulated…[because] hegemonic notions of masculinity and femininity have to be relentlessly performed by male and female bodies and *any body* that attempts to transgress the boundaries of appropriateness threatens the social order" (Ranade, 2007, p. 1525). The social order is maintained through the manufacturing of purpose when accessing public space, women, when accessing space, must do so, only and only to fulfil a particular function, "women can access public space legitimately only when she can manufacture a sense of purpose for being there"

(ibid. p. 1521). This social order is maintained through the fear of her potential unsafety if she was to enter the public space without purpose and the risk of ruining her reputation if she was to be caught in a public space without purpose. Therefore, a female driver emulating the use of space by men are, consequently transgressing the rules about engaging with public space as defined by their gender.

Shilpa Phadke (2007) argues that, "what women need in order to access public space as citizens is not so much the provision of safety as the right to take risks" (2007, p. 1510). She argues that it isn't actual safety concerns that keep girls out of public space but rather the implications upon perceptions of their character that deters girls from entering the public sphere. The biggest concern revolves around a girl's sexual safety, which would then undermine their own respectability and also the honour of their families. Therefore, the "perception of risk has little to do with the actual possibility of danger" (2007, p. 1515), but the effect that a potential incident may have or the consequences of the community seeing a girl access public space without reason. "The production of … safety is linked to the manufacture of both purpose and respectability in order to legitimise women's presence in public space" (2007, p. 1511). One of the direct consequences for women engaging in non-traditional livelihoods is the fact that they are in visible, public occupations that were previously not a place for women at all. Therefore, the act of working in such a livelihood means that they have to negotiate with the rules that hindered them from occupying public space in the first place.

Conclusion

Returning to Savita standing underneath a tree waiting for her client, her occupation and claim to that space means that she, in that moment, has the potential to shift boundaries,

not only for herself but for other women because "Different groups inhabiting the same spaces can create and shift boundaries by subtle means" (Okely, 1996, p. 3). She has the potential to call into question the binaries that have long defined her and has the ability to effect transformational change in relation to the sex ordered division of labour.

By focusing on women from resource poor communities in urban environments this research aims to make inroads into understanding whether these women's choices in their careers can result in transformative structural change. It has done so by understanding the current structures that determine and regulate women's work. This work takes a holistic view of these women's lives and how they have challenged systemic understandings of gender, work, femininity and mobility as a consequence of their chosen livelihood. While the number of women engaging in non-traditional livelihoods is statistically insignificant, it is nonetheless symbolically of great importance in the urban landscape and a detailed understanding of the consequences of engaging in non-traditional careers enables us to unveil the gendered nature of work, bodies and a social structures in a sharper fashion.

By engaging centrally with, and negotiating with, structures, and potentially even structural change, this work aims to understand how women in non-traditional careers challenge (at best) or at the very least negotiate with existing social structures that are determinant of each step their lives, such as their education, livelihood, marriage choices, access and control over income and their citizenship within an urban environment. Ultimately, this work hopes to assess shifts in perception and action in the lives of these women.

Chapter 1:

Mapping the Contours of Non-Traditional Work:

"People like me can show the world that other jobs are possible for women" – Lalita

"I always say that we are a disruptive social enterprise, we have broken a lot of things around us, conceptions of what women can do, the kind of work they are skilled in, but at some level, I have also broken something within me. I realised and I learned, that when you address your fears and are disruptive, you kind of enter a free-fall gravity less zone, because then you do not have any limits. Fear had been deciding my actions and decisions, but if the fear goes; there is a sense of freedom. Then you can do anything!"

- *Meenu Vadera Founder of Azad Foundation and Sakha Consulting Wings*

Within the Indian context, "Women's labour force participation and access to decent work are important and necessary elements of an inclusive and sustainable development process. Women continue to face many barriers to enter the labour market and to access decent work and disproportionately face a range of challenges relating to access to employment, choice of work, working conditions, employment security, wage parity, discrimination, and balancing the competing burdens of work and family responsibilities" (ILO, 2014, p. 2). This chapter defines the contours of what constitutes traditional work for women, and how it has come to be 'invented' (Hobsbawm, 1983) by patriarchal societies in order to uphold the male breadwinner ideology and the global subordination of women to men. One of the mechanisms of how the male breadwinner ideology is upheld is through the public-private split. I then turn to an interrogation of why non-traditional livelihoods is an important and transformative disruption to perceptions about the work that women can and cannot do, especially within the Indian context where merely working outside the home and being visible in public is disruptive in and of itself. Finally, I argue that change is only possible when those in positions of power take a stand to be disruptive, by tracing the journey of two institutions, Azad Foundation and

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EMpower – The Emerging Markets Foundation. I echo Williams (1989) to argue that non-traditional livelihoods can take hold when individuals in positions of power champion the idea, because the institutional ideology is often led by individuals, and in the aforementioned institutions by two women in positions of power, Meenu Vadera, the founder of Azad Foundation and Sakha Consulting Wings and Cynthia Steele, the President and CEO at EMpower. Finally, it encapsulates the learnings that Azad Foundation and EMpower have had from traversing through the realm of non-traditional livelihoods; specifically in relation to the fact that the program participants that Azad Foundation and EMpower work with are not merely recipients of a program, but rather, in many ways, the architects of these very programs. Sen (2003) states that "human beings are the agents, beneficiaries and adjudicators of progress, but they also happen to be directly or indirectly–the primary means of all production. This dual role of human beings provides a rich ground for confusion of ends and means in planning and policy-making. Indeed, it can–and frequently does–take the form of focusing on production and prosperity as the essence of progress, treating people as the means through which that productive progress is brought about (rather than seeing the lives of people as the ultimate concern and treating production and prosperity merely as means to those lives)" (2003, p. 41). Both Azad Foundation and EMpower provide for active feedback loops and brave spaces to consider the voices of program participants, so that they are not merely 'beneficiaries' and so that their organisations are not merely concerned with the outputs of their program but rather they endeavour to consider holistic transformative change of the whole person. This happens at two different levels, for Azad Foundation, through the direct training of program participants and for EMpower, through strategic decision making with regards to funding and the thematic focus of that funding.

In order to understand what non-traditional work is, we must first map the contours of what is meant by traditional work for women. I argue that traditional work for women is work that

upholds the status quo, or existing structures, that in many ways aim to serve those who are in a position of power. In the context of this thesis, it predominantly means work for women that legitimises or upholds existing patriarchal structures within society; recognising that the body of what is constituted as 'traditional' could also be affected by caste, class, socio-economic status and religion. Traditional work is often in the 'private' realm and is thus categorised by being flexible and informal. Mazumdar and Sharma (1990) argue that the study of women and work went through a significant shift in the 1970s, prior to which women's status in the economy was regarded to be a consequence of "manifestations of local cultures and religious teachings" (1990, p. 190). The shift occurred, when it was recognised that local cultures are not a static concept and in fact, can be used by those in power to justify the dominant role of (male) powerbrokers in society, especially during a time of change, when dominant social groups "try to reassert its strength through patriarchal controls" (ibid). They say that "culture becomes reinterpreted according to the economic interests of the emerging political elite" (ibid. p. 197). At this juncture it is also vital to recognise that lower class women have always worked to make ends meet, but there is a tendency to invisibilise or conceal women's work in economic data, this is largely because socially, women's work is interpreted as an extension of domestic work and family responsibilities.

Using Hobsbawm's (1983) concept of invented traditions, I argue that traditional work for women was created and upheld by male powerbrokers in society, to preserve not only the family unit but also their haloed role as the 'male breadwinner'. "Invented tradition' is taken to mean a set of practices normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviours by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past" (1983, p. 1). Similarly, according to Giddens (1977) theory of structuration, repetition of practice is essential to ensuring that traditions, once invented, are cemented over time and regarded in public memory

as being age old. "Inventing traditions…is essentially a process of formalization and ritualization, characterised by reference to the past, if only by imposing repetition" (Hobsbawm, 1983, p. 4). This work accepts Hobsbawm's premise, that while 'traditions' allude to the past and use the past as a justification, they are inherently 'invented' to uphold social structures that preserve the authority of the powerful. The first part of this chapter will examine traditional work for women and how that came to be defined. The second part of this chapter elaborates on the optimism offered by Hobsbawm (1983), Giddens (1977) and Connell (1990); which is that if systems have come into being they also have the potential to change. I argue that non-traditional work is in fact, a disruption of the pre-existing structures that have been created in the context of women and work. Non-traditional work, then comes to represent the body of transgressions made by women and organisations to alter existing practices and perceptions around what work women can and should do.

Traditional Work

As we have seen from the literature review, there is nothing essential about the sex ordered division of labour. Both the household and the market are gender regimes upheld by patriarchy. "In India, an integral part of the gender division of labour is an ideology of appropriate female behaviour that emphasizes modesty, obedience, self-sacrifice, and attachment to the home" (Derne, 1994, p. 205), all of which is constructed to uphold institutions that benefit those in power. The division of labour is used as a mechanism to uphold these institutions, whether it be within the family unit, within the public sphere or limiting women to specific occupations that do not upset the 'naturalised' order of things. Therefore, "there are clear and minute rules governing the division of labour between the sexes" (Srinivas, 1977, p. 225). Patrilineal kinship patterns also contribute to 'acceptable' forms of work. "Groups of patrilineally related males would have their honour, reputation, and consequently their power undermined should the chastity of their females - so crucial to the formation of alliances and

the production of heirs - be subverted. Thus, the sexuality of females is very rigidly controlled. Restriction on female personal movements and "protection" from other males may take the form of seclusion (i.e. *pardah*)…And socially approved female formal employment involves interaction only with other women-for example, as a teacher in a girls' school or a nurse in a female ward" (Dyson & Moore, 1983, p. 44).

Furthermore, the concept of labour has been defined and limited to men, in their male breadwinner role. "The concept of labour is usually reserved for men's productive work under capitalist conditions, i.e. work for the production of surplus value. Although women also perform such surplus-value generating labour, 'under capitalism the concept of labour is generally used with a male bias because women are typically defined as housewives, 'i.e. as non-workers" (Mies, 1981, p. 5), therefore, any work that does not produce surplus value is not considered work, which is why home-based work, informal or care work is undervalued even statistically today. The sex ordered division of labour is characterised by "those who control the production process and the products are 'themselves not producers but appropriators. Their so-called productivity presupposes the existence and the subjection of other, and in the last analysis, female producers" (Mies, 1981, p. 41). Therefore, it is the proximity to the market by women that causes anxiety as opposed to the fact that women are working in the first place. Let us consider a female driver, who is driving her kids to school, her action of driving a car will not cause the level of anxiety that a female commercial driver does. The reason for this, has little to do with a female driver actually driving a car, but rather that she is doing it for money and for the creation of economic surpluses within the capitalist framework.

At the root of the sex ordered division of labour is the control by men over the market and the same binaries that seek to control women by men, whether it is nature being controlled by culture, or the relegation and limitation of women to the private sphere or the bifurcation of women from the market and statistical invisibility of the work that they perform. "This

extractive, non-reciprocal exploitative, objective relationship to nature, first established between men and women, and men and nature, has remained the model for all other male modes of production, including capitalism, which has developed it to its most sophisticated and most generalised form (ibid, p. 14). Marx and Engels were correct to assume that the beginnings of capitalism meant that workers were no longer tied to feudal lords or to the land, they did not take into account the pre-existing patriarchal structures that were concretised through the new capitalist order. "Engels clearly neglected the possibility that patriarchal interests might be reflected in policies set by employers, trade unions, and the state which would define the terms of women's participation in the labour force" (Folbre 1998, p. 130 quoting Hartmann 1979).

Marx and Engels believed that all workers would be able to earn a wage and become independent earners, but they did not consider that if women became wage earners it "threatened to bring all women and children into the labour force and hence to destroy the family and the basis of power of men over women (i.e. the control of their labour power in the family)" (Hartmann, 1976, p. 139), which would disrupt the patriarchal structure of society. Therefore, in order to preserve the authority of men not only within the household, but outside of it, the 'tradition' of the public–private split and the male breadwinner ideology were invented. Invented traditions fall into three overlapping categories "a) those establishing or symbolizing social cohesion or the membership of groups, real or artificial communities, b) those establishing or legitimizing institutions, status or relations of authority, and c) those whose main purpose was socialisation, the inculcation of beliefs, value systems and conventions of behaviour" (Hobsbawm, 1983, p. 9). Ensuring men's dominant position within society spans all three of these categories and traditions invented around the subject of women's work all serve, in the end to preserve women's global subordination.

Women's global subordination

Mazumdar and Sharma (1990) highlight how the "sexual division of labour has been considered a key variable in the analysis of women's subordination" (1990, p. 185), however the conceptual link between the two has been a source of contention for many scholars. They ask "are the roots of the sexual division of labour and the subordination of women located in the sphere or production, in religious and cultural institutions, or in familial structures and the unequal distribution of household labour" (1990, p. 185)? This work accepts the strong link between the three and attributes it to "the emergence of social differentiation and patriarchy caused by shifts in the models of production" (1990, p. 185); which was justified and upheld by using 'invented tradition' as evidence of women's subordinated roles within the family unit and within the public sphere. Mazumdar and Sharma trace how matrilineal traditions were subdued through offering "alternative male principles emanating from patriarchal traditions" (1990, p. 196) such as, the withdrawal of women from labour by attributing all labour to one caste and then withdrawing women from education. Additionally, the "absence of mental cultivation was offered as a rationale to justify keeping women under the control" of men (ibid), which was also seen as a status symbol, whereby there was "pressure to withdraw women from active, visible economic roles as families increase[d] their prosperity" (ibid.).

Furthermore, as Kapadia (1993) illustrates the dynamics of men earning incomes in professional environments is diminishing the importance of matrilineal kinship patterns in Tamil Nadu. "When higher education and salaried employment recently became available to young men these options remained closed to young women" (1993, p. 49). Due to this, increased earning potential of the husband and 'urban sophistication' – traditional bride price is being replaced by a dowry. In this regard, 'traditional' norms are being minimised in favour of modern ideals, where men and their families are benefitting. Resulting in the perception "of daughters as a financial liability" (ibid, p. 50), because they are increasingly withdrawing from

work for money and also do not have access to 'modern' forms of employment. Even in the Indian state of Kerala, which has higher socio economic indicators for women than the national average and where women enjoy greater access to education and employment, there is a "generalised social commitment to female domesticity" (Kodoth & Eapen, 2005).

Heidi Hartmann (1976) states that the "roots of women's present social status lie in [the] sex ordered division of labour" (1976, p. 137). She argues that before the origination of capitalism, a system was produced whereby men controlled "the labour of women and children in the family and in doing so men learned the techniques of hierarchal organisation and control" (ibid, p. 138). The subordination of women to men within the family, and therefore the patriarchal control of the family, existed prior to industrial society. Therefore, in order to understand women's role in the family unit, it is essential to understand why women are subordinated to men in almost every society.

"I would flatly assert that we find women subordinated to men in every known society" (Ortner, 1974, p. 70). Ortner (1974) contends that because women's physiology appears to be closer to nature (due to menstruation and childbirth) and because of her social role as a mother, she is placed closer to nature. She argues that because of this, women's "pan-cultural second-class status could be accounted for, quite simply, by postulating that women are being identified or symbolically associated with nature, as opposed to men, who are identified with culture. Since it is always culture's project to subsume and transcend nature, if women were considered part of nature, then culture would find it "natural" to subordinate, not to say oppress, them" (ibid, p. 73). She goes on to say that because of their bodies, women are doomed "to the mere reproduction of life" (ibid, p. 75), and men are able to assert their creativity "artificially, through the medium of technology and symbols. In doing so he creates relatively lasting, eternal transcendent objects, while the woman creates only perishables – human beings" (ibid).

This definition of women's roles and position occurs through a "social re-use of biological properties" (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 79).

Ultimately, because women are more closely tied to their bodies than men are, they are subject to being viewed as one with nature. "We may thus broadly equate culture with the notion of human consciousness, or with the products of human consciousness (i.e., systems of thought and technology), by means of which humanity attempts to assert control over nature" (Ortner, 1974, p. 72). The link forged between women's bodies, nature and the home in relation to men's bodies, culture and the outside world, serve as a justification for women's subordination to men, and the perpetuation of patriarchal ideals. Ortner (1974) articulates that there are biological differences, but those biological differences would render meaningless if it was not for social structures, "this is to say, not that biological facts are irrelevant but that these facts and differences only take on significance of superior/inferior within the framework of culturally defined value systems" (1974, p. 71). Bourdieu (1998) argues, that "It can be said without contradiction both that social realities are social fictions with no other basis than social construction, and that they really exist insomuch as they are collectively recognised" (1998, p. 66). This collective recognition of patriarchal structures that keep women within the confines of the home leads to women internalising their subordination because of the discourse surrounding her body and its function. This results in "woman's consciousness – her membership, as it were in culture – is evidenced in part by the very fact that she accepts her own devaluation and takes culture's point of view" (Ortner, 1974, p. 76). This is further amplified through technology, wholly created and preserved in the cultural domain, which as Faulkner (2000) argues enables the enactment of social relations by ensuring that access to and use of technology is out of the hands of women.

The role of the family unit

A woman's social role, as a mother, as the reproducer of the home and the family means that she becomes further restricted to the home, Ortner (1974) states that "women's physiological functions have tended universally to limit her social movement, and to confine her universally to certain social contexts which in turn are seen as closer to nature" (1974, p. 77), which then leads to her confinement to the domestic family context. Bourdieu (1998) argues that the family structure serves to protect the social order, "The family plays a decisive role in the maintenance of the social order, through social as well as biological reproduction that is, reproduction of the structure of the social space and social relations" (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 69). These social structures operate across contexts and across age, one of my respondents, Shabnam says "when a girl turns 5 she is given a broom and a mop and is expected to know what to do with it, but when a boy turns 5 he is given a bat and a ball and is expected to know what to do with it." These social rules within the family then lead to the socialisation of children which leads to the perpetuation of gender inequalities.

Bourdieu (1998) states that the "family [becoming an] objective social category (a structuring structure) is the basis of the family as a subjective social category (a structured structure), a mental category which is the matrix of countless representations and actions (such as marriages) which help to reproduce the objective social category" (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 67). Women's role within society is to reproduce the family structure, which is precisely what contains her. Since domestic units do not exist in a bubble, "domestic units are allied with one another through the enactment of rules that are logically at a higher level than the units themselves; this creates an emergent unit – society – that is logically at a higher level than the domestic units of which it is composed… since women are associated with, and indeed are more or less confined to, the domestic context, they are identified with this lower order of social / cultural organization" (Ortner, 1974, p. 79).

"Parallel to the emergence of industrial society in the nineteenth century, the *modern feudal gender order was constructed*" (Beck, 1992, p. 108). Beck argues that the gendered division of labour is a necessary condition to the efficient functioning of industrial society. "The antagonisms between the sexes *neither* bow to the pattern of modern class antagonisms nor are a mere relic of tradition. They are a third entity. Just as much as the antagonisms between labour and capital, they are the *product* and *foundation* of the industrial system, the sense that wage labour *presupposes* housework, and that the spheres and forms of production and the family are separated and *created* in the nineteenth century" (1992, p.106). Industrial society, according to Beck, assumes the global subordination of women, rooted in women's bodies and builds upon them for the efficient functioning of capitalism. "The ascription of the gender characters is the basis of the industrial society, and not some traditional relic that could easily be dispensed with. Without the separation of male and female roles there would be no traditional nuclear family," (ibid, p.104) and without the nuclear family there would not be an efficient functioning of capitalism. Bourdieu (1998) states "the family is indeed a fiction, a social artefact, an illusion in the most ordinary sense of the word, but a well-founded illusion because, being produced and reproduced with the guarantee of the State, it receives from the State at every moment the means to exist and persist" (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 73).

Capitalism relies on the creation of surpluses and profit. Beck (1992) argues that men were the wage labour in industrial society, but without women doing the housework, male workers would be unable to effectively perform as wage labour in the public sphere, the cost of their care is not factored into the cost of production. "On the one hand, wage labour presupposes housework; production mediated through the market presumes the forms and ascribed roles of the nuclear family. In that respect, industrial society is dependent upon the unequal positions of men and women" (Beck, 1992, p. 104). These positions remain unequal because women work within the home without a wage, whereas men work in the labour market

for a wage, and in a society defined by wage and capital, women's work in the home is seen as less important because she is not remunerated, therefore her work is not only unpaid, but also unaccounted for. Due to the fact that her labour is not 'paid labour', it enables the capitalist system to generate a surplus. "The universalism of the market fails to recognise even its own, self-delineated taboo zones and weakens the ties of women to their industrially produced 'status fate' of compulsory housework and [financial] support by a husband" (ibid).

"The distribution of these jobs- and here lies the feudal foundation of industrial society – remains outside of decision. They are *ascribed* by birth and gender. In principle, one's *fate is already present in the cradle even in industrial society*: lifelong housework or making a living in conformity with the labour market" (Beck, 1992, p. 107). But why is it that women's fate is tied to housework and men's is to earn a living? We have already seen that women's bodies and their function serve to be a justification for their role within the home and the family. "However distinctive women's biological capacities may be, it is the social and historical context of child-bearing and child rearing that largely determines their structure and meaning" (Folbre, 1998, p. 121), but also enables the stability and the reproduction of the family as a social unit. Over time, this role re-enforces itself and has been naturalized through a "materialised system of classification [which] inculcates and constantly reinforces the principles of the classification which constitutes the arbitrariness of a culture" (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 76). This naturalisation of motherhood and childbearing serves to maintain the gendered division of labour, and is justifiable through the "definitions of the family [which] are seen as having in common the fact that they assume the family exists as a separate social universe, engaged in an effort to perpetuate its frontiers and oriented toward idealization of the interior as sacred, sanctum (as opposed to the exterior)" (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 65). The idealisation of the family is how there is a value ascribed to women's work, she is charged with the protection

of the private social universe of the family, despite not being compensated financially for her work.

There are consequences upon women because of this, "Those who take it on – and we know who they are – run a household with 'second-hand' money and remain dependant on marriage as a link to self-support" (Beck, 1992, p. 107). This in turn affects women's bargaining power, their ability to make decisions and their exposure to the outside world, because they have become relegated to the private sphere through the powers of patriarchy.

Ensuring the perpetuation of the family unit, also benefits institutions in the public sphere. Natasha and Parasuraman (2017) argue that "It is evident that the institution of the family does not work independently of other institutions in the public sphere. Addressing intra-family distributions would require, in part, addressing extra-family distributions. While a number of institutions are periodically set up to address gender injustice— even if only as a subsidiary aim—evaluating their usefulness would require an evaluation of how their effects feed back into the family" (Natasha & Parasuraman, 2017, p. 74). Therefore, while the family is often theorised to be the locus of the public-private split, it is one of several public and private institutions that uphold the binary in the first place. Public institutions seek to uphold the very binaries that are required for the perpetuation of the traditional family unit. Recognising this, any initiatives that address the sexual division of labour, must take into account the interdependence of the public and private in order to be effective.

The Public-Private Split

"The need to retain and exercise control over women and girls in the families defies all logic and is so omnipresent and seamless that it gets easily not seen" (Azad Foundation, 2012, p. 8). The gender division of labour concretized the public-private split which was also strengthened by the ideology of hegemonic masculinity. Hegemony is a term which Gramsci

uses to understand "the dynamics of structural change involving the mobilisation and demobilisation of whole classes" (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 831). Hegemonic masculinity is the mobilisation of men that leads to their dominance over women. According to Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), hegemonic masculinity embodies the "most honoured way of being a man… and it ideologically legitimised the global subordination of women to men" (2005, p. 832). Hegemonic masculinity operates to produce male power over women, and can be "understood as the pattern of practice (i.e. things done, not just a set of role expectations of an identity) that allowed men's dominance over women to continue (ibid). It is the consensus around an idealised form of masculinity, of which the most prominent features are the superiority of men to women and the assurance of continuing male privilege. Hegemonic masculinity is perpetuated by the very structures created by hegemonic masculinity, so "dominant groups remain privileged because they write the rules and the rules they write, enable them to continue to write the rules" (Reskin, 1991, p. 142). Men positioned themselves as wage earners and providers to women, and even if women entered the workforce, the ideal male as fashioned by hegemonic masculinity was seen to be the main breadwinner, to continue to keep women subordinated. One manner of doing this was to ensure that the public sphere, and certain jobs within it, remained an exclusively male domain. It is vital to note that even when men aren't working, they are still seen to be the head of the household because of the cemented ideas of the man being the 'provider' to the family. As my respondent Ripu notes, "if you look around my neighbourhood, so many men are drunks, they barely make it to their jobs and when they do, they keep on getting thrown out because they are drinking – so the women do things to make ends meet. I know I did. I used to embroider pearls on baby clothes. I used to get 2 or 4 rupees a piece depending on what the work was. In the end I would make about 600 rupees which would feed us. My husband just sat at home. [Despite this], the men are the ones who are seen as the providers. The work that women do in the house just doesn't

matter." Grover (2011) highlights that, "On the whole, a woman's entry into waged work signifies a dramatic shortfall in family income. The necessity of working (*majburi*) can sometimes occur several years into marriage" (2011, p. 44), but even when it is necessary to work, as in Ripu's case, it still doesn't call the male breadwinner ideology into question.

The public sphere, where the "state apparatus and economic systems [are] based on wider exchange and larger production units" (Hartmann, 1976, p. 138) was a male space while the private sphere, where work did not result in wages, became a woman's space. Therefore, "job segregation by sex… is the primary mechanism in capitalist society that maintains the superiority of men over women" (ibid, p. 139), and this is maintained by the labour market, social institutions and organisations themselves. "Thus, in the capitalistic organisation of industry, in removing work from the home, served to increase the subordination of women, since it served to increase the relative importance of the area of men's domination" (ibid, p. 152). Since men brought in the money, they had control over the family resources, which meant that they were more entitled to the resources of the home and of the family. This dependence on wages and that wages entered the house through the male breadwinner meant that patriarchal ideals of men not only being superior to women, but also more entitled to the family resources solidified. How a family "distributes available resources among members reflects not only power and authority relations but also the moral basis of the group, its consensus about distributive justice, and its implicit priorities" (Papanek, 1990, p. 163).

The public-private split is upheld and enacted through social structures, and visibilised through several means, including technology. Doron (2012), states that the mobile phone, then becomes an actor in the enactment and the upholding of these social norms because "the mobile phone is implicated in the life-cycle and attachment to the material and social world" (2012, p. 417). Most low income households never had a phone within the home, in the time of landlines, they had to travel to their local community phone booth to connect to others. Therefore, with

the advent of mobile technologies, all of a sudden there is the prospect for increased connectivity for a greater number of people; and there is an anxiety around how to maintain social norms in the face of this new connective technology, this is why the mobile phone and its use became subject to the same '*doxa*' of the habitus within which it is used.

Doron (2012) argues that the "mobile phone is often seen as a threat to the integrity of the household because it has the potential to undermine authority and destabilise entrenched social roles and cultural categories…[because of] the mobile phone's capacity to unsettle the distinctions between the 'inside' and the 'outside' world and expose a range of concerns about gendered spaces and practices" (ibid p. 418). The mobile, then becomes a vehicle to transgress the boundaries created through the public-private split by offering the means to be connected to the outside world. At the same time, however, it also enables the public-private split to be maintained. Through an illustration of an incident where a woman's husband was hospitalised, she was denied entry into the public sphere to go visit him by her mother-in-law, because she could inquire about his well-being over the cell phone. Therefore, the mobile phone simultaneously has the power to disrupt and to uphold the public-private split and for that reason, women's control over and access to a mobile must be guarded. The mobiles that women have access to, are often 'hand-me-downs' by the men in the family who require a mobile for 'official' purposes. "For men, the mobile phone was a tool for work, communication with friends and relatives, and for entertainment, while for the women the mobile was viewed as a tool for 'basic conversations' (*sirf baatchiit karne ke liye*)" (ibid, p. 422). And these conversations are public affairs under the close supervision of a woman's in-laws or husband.

This is especially important for married women, because of the potential that the mobile has to upset the public-private split, it is viewed "as an object of distrust, unless it is monitored by the husband and family. This distrust arises because of the flow of 'inside' information to the outside world" (ibid. p. 425) and for that reason, women who do not use a cell phone after

they are married becomes a sign of her obedience to her husband and family in upholding the public / private split. Furthermore, marriage signifies a decoupling of a woman with her natal home, and the mobile phone offers a permanent link or connection to her natal family; so when a woman foregoes connections to the outside world and abides by the rules governing technology use, as determined by social norms, she is seen as upholding the very norms that limit her access to increased connectivity.

There is an active role that men play in upholding the public - private split. As Derne (1994) states, "A full understanding of the reproduction of male dominance in north India must include a focus on men's perceptions of their own interests, as men" (1994, p. 203). Derne, argues that men recognise their favoured position, and consciously act to preserve their dominance. In addition, ascribing to retaining their valued position within the family unit means that they are also upholding the very social institutions that enable them to remain in a valued position. "Ideology-restrictions on women's movements outside the home, and limitations on their interactions with powerful men within the home-both of which contribute to women's subordinate position in India today" (ibid, p. 205). If women do not speak with men, then their thoughts will not upset the balance of the joint family, since women are married into joint families they are perceived as the greatest threat to the existing family unit. In order to preserve the family unit, it is important to limit women's interaction within (with their own husbands) and outside the home. Therefore, "Two main principals underlie the structure of authority in most households, those of seniority and of gender" (Sharma, 1993, p. 342).

Izzat[32]

The ideals of the family unit, as manifested in the public-private split, are enacted through *izzat.* Gayle Rubin (1975) states that the sex-gender system has collapsed into one

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[32] Honour

another and these categories have been naturalized, serving as justifications of asymmetrical power relations in society. *Izzat* uses this collapsed categorization as a means to control and regulate. Charkravarti (2005) describes, a girl's *izzat* belongs to her family, or 'natural' guardians, until it becomes her husband's. Cultural norms, including the public- private split are essentially occupied with the preservation of a girl's honour. The socialisation of *izzat* extends beyond the household and community to the State and this is why *izzat* is also manifest in the Indian criminal justice system, where *izzat* and the violation of, is taken extremely seriously (2005, p. 316-24). This is because a "conflict emanates from the contradiction between constitutionally guaranteed freedoms and certain penal clauses routinely used by families seeking to regain control of their 'errant' daughters" (ibid, p. 326). *Izzat* has become a naturalized concept that has been perpetuated and maintained through the penal code in India. Choice, mobility and agency are implicitly criminalized by the judiciary due to the implicit expectations of compromise for 'the greater common good' of a collectivist society.

We see this being operationalized in different ways, in history and in present day. Chatterjee (1993) illustrates how, women's sexuality was reimagined during the Indian nationalist movement to facilitate the project for independence. Puri (1999) illustrates how the ideal of women's sexuality and honour is maintained through everyday discourse such as representing pre-determined gender roles between men and women in sex education literature in school books. Ultimately, *izzat* is "vested in male (family and/or conjugal) control over women and specifically women's sexual conduct: actual, suspected or potential" (Welchman & Hossain, 2005, p. 5). This is because one's gender is constructed by and placed into the hands of powerful and then, women have no choice but to adhere to socially configured gender norms. To this end, *izzat* is not a static term, but rather the means through which those in power mould its meaning to preserve their power; one of the most powerful manifestations of this

enactment is the public -private split; whereby women are rendered into the private realm and men are free to use and navigate through the public.

"Codes of honour serve to construct not only what it means to be a woman but also what it means to be a man" (Sen, 2005, p. 48), because the act of sex, or acting upon ones sexuality bears meaning – and this meaning is controlled by social perceptions of accepted sexuality. If there is a challenge to these codified expectations then one allegiance to the collective is called into question because sexual transgression is seen an act of betrayal. As a result, tolerance and sacrifice become glorified concepts in upholding *izzat,* making *izzat* a means to control expressions of identity and sexuality. Women serve to uphold *izzat* even if they are in a position to challenge expectations placed upon their sexuality. "This somewhat benign notion of *izzat*, coupled with women's own interest (and therefore their complicity) in upholding such notions and the material and social power of their communities, maintains the normative codes of their families and communities" (Chakravarti, 2005, p. 310). *Izzat* is rooted in cultural distinctions and that is why culturally sensitive approaches need to be taken in order to dismantle its multiple meanings. To this end, it is important to recognize that the maintenance of *izzat* takes on several forms that do not include honour killing, violence and abusive patriarchy. Ultimately *izzat* is a definitive conceptualization of the respect for boundaries and the preservation of communities' codified norms of sexuality. *Izzat* is a gendered category; ideals of *izzat* are different for men and for women but in both cases, *izzat* is the justification behind behavioural codes and the creation and maintenance of social norms. Hence, *izzat* serves to control female behavioural patterns for the continuation of social structures.

Masculine and Feminine Occupations

"Women in my family never used to work [in the village]; but when they came here, they had to, because we had to have enough money in the house… but they always did work

that it was okay for girls to do" (Shabnam). We cannot ignore that women from lower income households, where a single wage would not support the family, have always been part of the workforce. Nonetheless, women entered the workforce out of necessity, until what Folbre (1991) describes as a disjuncture when women began entering the workforce, because there were diminishing returns in having an increased number of children, as children's contributions to their parents in their old age began lessening over time. This meant that women began having fewer children, thus freeing up their obligations within the household and also their time so they began entering the workforce. "If it remains true that motherhood is still the strongest ties to the traditional female role, it is difficult to overestimate the importance of contraceptive and family planning measures, as well as the legal possibility of terminating pregnancies in removing women from the traditional demands" (Beck, 1992, p. 110), because with contraceptive measures, women had the power to assert an element of control over their bodies. Yet, when women did enter the workforce – it had already been defined as a male space, with certain occupations being virtually 'off-limits' for women – this was maintained because there was a need for capitalist structures to reproduce male dominance over women in the workplace to ensure the perpetuation of invented patriarchal structures.

As Acker (1991) highlights, "Organisations are one arena in which widely disseminated cultural images of gender are invented and reproduced" (1991, p. 163). Since men created the workplace, they wrote the rules that governed what was and wasn't possible within the social organisation of that space. "Men in organisations take their behaviour and perspectives to represent the human, organisational structures and processes are theorised as gender neutral" (ibid). So over time, what stood to be seen as gender neutral in the workplace was in fact a male creation that benefitted men. Reskin and Hartmann (1986) use women working at AT&T to highlight this point. "Women in outdoor jobs had higher accident rates than men until lighter weight and more mobile equipment was introduced" (1986, p. 53) because equipment was

initially designed keeping male bodies in mind. Meenu Vadera highlights a similar issue for drivers employed by Sakha Consulting Wings. "The DTC [Delhi Transport Commission] has been saying that Sakha is going to be our partner [and the DTC will hire female bus drivers], after 2 years of trying to find women who comply with the height restrictions to drive buses, we actually did a little research. The average height of an Indian woman is five feet, and when you are working with women from resource poor communities who are often stunted because of their environments, we asked, why can't the DTC change their technology to suit the real heights of women, since the buses were designed with the thinking that only men were going to drive them." Dumais et al. (1993) found that physical attributes of women were just as important as 'organisational and cultural barriers' in maintaining the sex ordered division of labour, therefore the fact that the workplace is defined in relation to the male physical standard plays a role in maintaining gender divisions in occupations.

Similarly, for jobs within corporations, "the 'typical' behaviour of women in organisations that have been assumed to reflect either biologically based or physiological attributes or characteristics developed through a long socialisation to a 'female sex role' [which] turn out to reflect very reasonable – and very universal – responses to current organisational situations" (Kanter, 1977, p. 9). Therefore, conceptions of a 'typical' female worker was created. The work that women were expected to do, and the manner in which they were meant to 'perform' was all in relation to the male standard, despite the supposed gender neutrality of the organisation. "The gender-neutral status of a job and of the organisational theories of which it is part depend on the assumption that the worker is abstract, disembodied, although in actuality both the concept of "a job" and real workers are deeply gendered and bodied" (Acker, 1991, p. 171).

Nussbaum (1998) argues that "all of us, with the exception of the independently wealthy and the unemployed, take money for the use of our body" (1998, p. 693). There is an

explicit anxiety around women leaving the domain of the home and entering the public sphere, especially to earn an income, but there is also a "more general anxiety about the body, especially the female body, that has been a large part of the history of quite a few cultures" (ibid, p. 699). This "boils down to the view that women are essentially immoral and dangerous and will be kept in control by men only if men carefully engineer things so that they do not get out of bounds" (ibid, p. 709). Invented concepts of women and work thus, worked to ensure that women's work was limited to unskilled (or lesser skilled) work in the public sphere, which would ensure the preservation of male privilege in the workplace.

Consequently, a disjuncture was created between women and machines (later women and technology) resulting in women being alienated from wage work during rapid mechanisation during the industrial revolution. "The introduction of new technology in a number of industries was accompanied by a reorganisation, but not abolition of the gendered division of labour that left the technology in men's control and maintained the definition of skilled work as men's work and unskilled work as women's work" (Acker, 1991, p. 167).This meant that over time women had less access to education and to skills development resources that would enable them to effectively compete in the workforce, to maintain male superiority within the workplace and ensure that the gender division of labour was perpetuated. In her examination of the medical industry Witz (1992) argues that "men and women had unequal access to the various resources which were necessary to stake a successful claim to 'professional status'" (1992, p. 192). Not only was their access to the formal workplace called into question but their ability to access the training needed was also doubted. My respondent, Shabnam says that she was only trained as a driver because of Azad Foundation which enabled her to learn how to drive but "there aren't enough organisations that support these types of things, there are lots of places where girls can learn how to be beauticians and that sort of thing; but very few places where girls can learn how to be drivers."

McDowell (1999) states that, "Since the middle of the twentieth century, women's participation in waged employment has expanded by their concentration in feminised professions has remained a dominant feature of their employment pattern" (1999, p. 124). She categorises this pattern by three features:

1) "Women are concentrated into certain sectors and occupations" – which is horizontal segregation

2) "They tend to be in positions at the bottom end of the occupational hierarchy" – which is vertical segregation

3) "Women earn less than men as a group." – which is the wage gap (ibid, p. 126)

Masculinity, she argues is socially constructed in the workplace (ibid, p. 124) by ensuring that women are segregated along lines that uphold power relations in the workplace. This is vital for men because "emphasising the masculinity of industrial labour has been both the means of survival in exploitative class relations, and a means of asserting superiority over women" (Connell, 1995, p. 55).

Ultimately, the workplace had been solidified as a man's space, with women only having access to certain jobs that fulfilled the requirements of perpetuating the patriarchal structures that created them, therefore, as Bourdieu (1990) states, the body was used as the justification for the construction of patriarchy which in turn informed and upheld the patriarchal social system; "all the symbolic manipulations of body experience, starting with displacements within a symbolically structured space tend to impose the integration of body space with cosmic space and social space, by applying the same categories…to the relationship between man and the natural world as to the complementary and opposed states and actions of the two sexes in the division of sexual labour and the sexual division of labour, and therefore the labour of biological and social reproduction" (1990, p. 77).

Why does non-traditional income generation matter?

Invented traditions are "important symptoms and therefore indicators of problems which might not otherwise be recognised, and developments which are otherwise difficult to identify and to date. They are evidence" (Hobsbawm, 1983, p. 12). The aforementioned section provides an illustration of the evidence of deep-rooted social biases in relation to women's work that have been invented. To take this further, if you look at the landscape of women's work today, in terms of the jobs that women are doing, the training and skilling programs that are open to them and most importantly, the jobs that they are prohibited from doing; you can see the extent to which it has been informed by ideas of women's roles within the home. Consequently their career opportunities are a reflection of what is permissible under patriarchal structures. These structures cannot be changed if women continue to do the work that is prescribed to them by these very structures. Therefore, trades like food production, home based work and stitching, despite enabling women to earn an income, are at the same time perpetuating social norms that are limiting women.

Mies (1982) in her analysis of home-based work, argues that the disjuncture of women and markets serves to keep women in home-based work in a subordinated place, by labelling women as 'housewives' and secluding them. She terms this 'housewifization' which is "a process by which women are socially defined as housewives, dependant for their sustenance on the income of a husband, irrespective of whether they are de facto housewives or not. The social definition of housewives is the counterpart of the social definition of men as breadwinners, irrespective of their actual contribution to their family's subsistence" (1982, p. 200). She illustrates how home-based work means that women have limited access to markets, work through middle men who keep a lion's share of the profits, and also that women do not gain from the positive externalities of working outside of the home such as gaining confidence or building a network. Finally, their work is 'naturalised' as women's work and therefore they

do not receive comparable remuneration for the work that they do. Women working within the home, just perpetuates existing social structures and leads to women being at the backend of an extremely long value chain, with a lack of knowledge about the market, increased alienation, and the lack of ability to organise themselves. In many ways, this type of work serves to uphold and not actually transform existing social structures, largely because home-based work is perceived to be "something that they did in their spare time" (Kabeer, 2008, p. 36), resulting in a very limited shift in the balance of power within the family. Home-based work "hardly leaves any scope for bargaining, transparency, social security benefits or even job security" (Mehrotra & Sinha, 2017, p. 60).

Within civil society, there has been a recognition around how women earning an income is instrumental to breaking down the public-private split. As Shabnam says "if you keep a girl in the house, then you can assert your right on her, but if she leaves the house to work then you can no longer assert that dominance because women will turn around and say that we make money too," ultimately, girls who earn an income would potentially destabilise the patriarchal order within and outside the household. Home-based entrepreneurship, while it has been seen as the answer to livelihoods opportunities for women, doesn't necessarily provide the environment to build women's agency. Cynthia Steele states, "If you ask young people, they don't necessarily put their hands up and say what I really want to do is open my own business, they do it as a self-employment strategy when there is nothing else, and would prefer a steady job instead." Meenu Vadera echoes this by saying, "I feel very confident about saying this loudly, that when working with resource poor women, they are not looking to be entrepreneurs. They want jobs, they want social security. They want stability in their lives on the basis of which they can plan; this is something I don't think our policy makers understand because they want to make everybody an entrepreneur, without understanding the caste, gender and all those other dynamics and intersectionality of all those forces. We have seen

microfinance and microbusinesses fall over in our professional lifetimes. We have to bring back the discourse of making jobs good, and making good jobs available. Decent jobs with decent wages. Ultimately, once you are trained, there are so many things that you can do, and the most effective way to do that is through a paid job."

Cynthia also addresses a major gap in entrepreneurship skilling programs for women. "There has been a lack of market sensitivity [in thinking about entrepreneurship]; the ability to look at the services and products, [in terms of] where is the saturation and where are the gaps? Not many skilling organisations think about market scanning, so people are sadly set up to fail, because they're doing what their neighbour's doing and their other neighbour's doing. So in the end, they all end up competing for the same business. Also, people need to be encouraged to creatively think about the different products or services that they could offer. I saw this in Ghana: we had trained young women to be mobile phone repairers. They had these little kiosks, often right next to each other, so they were taking each other's business. Instead of everyone opening up the exact same business, the conversation should have been about how they can work together or complement one another instead of undercutting each other's business."

Kabeer, Mahmud and Tasneem (2011) argue that paid, formal work outside of the home provides a pathway to women's empowerment. Recognising that, transformative potential is dependent on how empowerment is understood, variations in the acceptability of paid work and the nature of available work opportunities; they conclude that work that offers regularity and an independent income for women has the greatest transformative potential in the lives of women. They state the greatest transformation occurs when younger women enter the formal workforce outside of the home, because these criteria are more likely to be met. Additionally, if women leave the home for work, then they are more likely to leave for other things such as healthcare and that through entering the formal workforce, they build a network with others and a sense of self reliance upon themselves. "They are more likely to promote women's voices

in the domestic domain and their capacity to negotiate the terms of their relationships with husbands and other dominant members within their families. They are also more likely to give rise to new kinds of identities for women beyond those ascribed on the basis of their gender, a greater sense of their own agency and, in many cases, a greater awareness of their own individuality" (Kabeer, 2008, p. 51).

What is important to recognise, is that the rules and regulations which govern women's work are in fact invented; and if they are invented then they have the potential to be changed. Connell (1990), Giddens (1977) and Hobsbawm (1983) all offer a level of optimism in their work – by offering a space where invented traditions or social structures have the potential for change. By arguing that social structures are invented, I acknowledge that social structures can thus be changed and one of the means of doing that is through non-traditional livelihoods, because it offers a transformative approach to perceptions around the work that women can do. Cynthia Steele states that, Non-traditional work "is tricky to define. Essentially, the criteria for me of identifying something as non-traditional is doing something that is unexpected or non-customary for women to be doing, because at the end of the day that's the only way that you break down perceptions about what women can do – is if they're seen as doing something that is uncommon for them…[while] there is much more left to do in this space, we can learn from others and therefore sharpen our guidance to other groups. Traditional livelihoods just closes off a lot of doors for women and there is an actual difference in economic opportunities, incomes and job security. But it's also about how truncated women are in the skilling / livelihoods space – when they are only offered four or five things that they can do, as opposed to the rainbow of things that they could be. These limitations are intolerable."

Rigidity of Social Structures

What is vital to recognise is that just offering non-traditional trade opportunities to women will not change gender hierarchies within the workplace, nor will it address deep-rooted conceptions of what women can do, because of how entrenched ideas around women and work are. Beck (1992) states "What remains central is that the equalisation of men and women cannot be created in the institutional structures that presuppose their inequality" (1992, p. 109), the family unit is one such structure. "One issue that emerges clearly is the need to recognise inequalities, possibly substantial, within the household" (Sen, 1993, p. 463). Since women are viewed as the primary carers of the home, even as women choose to enter the workforce, they have to uphold their responsibilities "with respect to [their] indispensable – indeed 'priceless' – work in household maintenance and home production" (Papanek, 1990, p. 167). This responsibility is something that women struggle to give up and are therefore subject to the double burden of housework and earning an income. So, if women did want to enter the workforce, they do not *instead of* their responsibilities within the home, but rather *in addition* to them. As Folbre (1991) notes, women give up "leisure time rather than work time to care for their children [and] are imposing costs primarily on themselves rather than on the family as a whole" (1991, p. 126).

For similar reasons, the deep entrenchment of social norms and the rules that govern women and work, non-traditional livelihoods also have the potential to maintain gender hierarchies. Reskin and Roos (1990), in their analysis of women's inroads into male occupations highlight how there has been a desegregation between women and men in the workforce, but they do not view this trend optimistically. They argue that most employers preferred to hire men, but "when the supply of men was inadequate – either because rapid job growth exhausted the supply or because men spurned jobs as inferior to accessible alternatives – employers turned to women" (Reskin & Roos, 1990, p. 64). Additionally, when a

desegregation within the formal workforce occurred, "women's progress relative to men, both occupationally and economically, was disappointing" (ibid, p. 87). This highlights not only that men still possess the right to first refusal within the job market, it illustrates another mechanism employed to keep women at a subordinated position is differential pay for men and women for the same job, ensuring that the male breadwinner ideology is upheld, because on a family unit basis, even if both men and women are working, men are more likely to be placed in higher ranking jobs and bring in higher incomes.

Even when, as history shows us that there have been times that women were actively needed in the workforce, whether it be during the second world war in Europe when women served as the primary factory workers in arms and ammunition factories, or during the Asian 'miracle' when women's 'nimble fingers' were actively sought out to work in technology factories or the current 'fast fashion' industry where women are the lion's share of garment workers who are creating clothing for consumption in the Global North; they are seen as workers for a finite time and/or purpose, which is deemed less valuable that the work of men. Despite the fact that in World War II there was "an exponential growth of female jobs, from 10.5% of total engineering employment in 1939 to 35.2% by 1943" (Hart, 2005, p. 2), these women were classified as temporarily doing men's work – and "from the outset, it was intended as a temporary employment measure since employers and unions made clear their intentions of reinstating men to their former positions at the war's end" (ibid, p. 4). Due to the fact that men's work was more valued, women retreated to the private realm once the war had ended and men could return to work. In the case of women working in the garment industry, women are consequently paid less because their work isn't as highly valued as men's work because the work they do is seen as an extension of their 'natural' or 'feminine' capabilities. Ramamurthy (2004), in her feminist commodity change analysis of the garment industry, argues that the

entire commodity chain is gendered and is a manifestation of the social structures that the commodity chain is part of in order to (re) produce femininities and masculinities.

Additionally, gender differences are not actually being broken down. In her assessment of female marines and male nurses in the US, Williams (1989) saw that gender differences are maintained by men and women in non-traditional livelihoods through three functions:

1) **Internal stratification**, whereby men are channelled into more prestigious positions and "men and women in the same occupation often perform different tasks and functions" (1989, p 3);

2) **Etiquette rules**, through the maintenance of their gender identity. An example of this that she highlights is how the female marines and the male nurses cautiously kept their femininities and masculinities intact – for example, female marines highlighted the importance of retaining bodily femininity through simple actions such as painting their nails and distancing themselves from emulating the 'male marine body'; they were relegated to certain units within the marines;

3) **Differential evaluation**; whereby men and women were treated differently in the same job role but also evaluated differently. Male nurses utilised existing social structures to preserve their hierarchal position in relation to their female colleagues. Williams found that the departments in the hospital where there were male nurses had greater social status, and higher wages, reproducing the male breadwinner ideology. In fact, some female nurses stated that they wanted to be in a team where there were male nurses so that they could also avail some of the positive benefits such as higher wages and more visibility than nurses in other departments.

Ultimately, Williams concludes that women and men entering non-traditional careers doesn't in fact change the hierarchies or the structures that govern workplace relations because

existing hierarchies are maintained. "A daughter who enters a 'man's job' has increased her status; a son who does 'women's work'- hairdressing, school teaching, or nursing, for example – suffers a decline in status" (1989, p. 133). Women in non-traditional careers, through 'etiquette rules' are also 'performing' femininity (Skeggs, 2002), and in doing so are upholding gender norms. This is illustrated by Hall (1993) in her examinations of male and female waitresses, who concludes that women perform gender, which leads to the further concretisation of men's roles and women's roles even within the same occupation. 'Etiquette rules' are upheld through differentiated uniforms, additionally there is internal stratification within table serving, whereby men's work is defined by serving in higher end restaurants, whereas pouring coffee is considered women's work. Despite the fact that they are essentially doing the same work, a hierarchy between men and women is maintained (Hall, 1993).

Spencer and Podmore (1987) argue that when women engage in male dominated professions, they "encounter considerable difficulties in their careers as a result of their deviant gender status" (1987, p. 1), consequently, they are systematically professionally marginalised within these careers. Marginalisation includes, stereotyping about professions, the lack of role models and peers, the lack of informal relationships, little consideration for breaks and hiatuses relating to childbirth. These all contribute to additional relegation even when women have established themselves in non-traditional careers. They argue, that once a career is stereotyped as masculine, then there is "little accommodation being made for women who work in it… women are, in fact, simply expected to conform to these masculine norms in pursuit of their careers" (ibid, p. 3). Furthermore, as Legge (1987) argues women are measured in relation to the male norm, this leads to women's subordination simply due to the fact that men are being used as the standard by which to judge them. One major consideration is the role that childbirth plays for women in non-traditional careers, career gaps are frowned upon and as Spencer and Podmore (1987)reveal in their discussion of female lawyers and barristers in the UK, argue

that maternity leave sets up the expectation in professional environments that women will 'always' leave for childbirth, and therefore cannot be relied on as much as men can be relied on.

As highlighted by Williams (1989), in non-traditional work, there are a number of things that still happen in traditional ways. Such as the gender pay gap. As Cynthia recounts "we are working with women and men in Ghana to support bicycle repairs and sewing machine repairs, which is non-traditional work. In this case, women work alongside men and when we asked about wages, my anecdotal impression was that the men were making more money and feel more empowered to negotiate [than women]." The gender pay gap does not discriminate between blue collar and white collar. Nor does it discriminate between wealthier more educated women and the poor. It is a systemic issue that is the consequence of preserving the male breadwinner ideology. Prior to joining Azad Foundation, Sunita worked as a line worker in a factory that only employed unmarried women, "I began working in a factory that made pens and sketch pens. They had a policy not to hire married women, because married women came with a lot of baggage. Sometimes it's their children who would fall sick, or their husbands or their mother-in-law, or sometimes they would have issues at home. My salary used to be INR 2,220 per month for an 8 hour shift, I also used to be paid for overtime. But this was the work that was available for women…" As Cynthia states, "there's such discouraging information from the industrialised countries that as soon as you have more women entering the sector, wages go down. It's so disparaging, but there are a lot of things that we need to tackle… while there is increasing awareness of the gender pay gap and corporations and governments are beginning to address the situation, there is a long way to go. One step is to have women in occupations that are traditionally considered 'men's work' so as to breakdown perceptions of which sorts of work is more valuable. However, that being said, as we have seen when men entered 'feminised' work wages actually begin going up." In essence, the gender pay gap isn't

upheld because certain jobs are less valued, but rather that women working are less valued than men working.

Additionally, "women are working a 'double day' or a 'second shift' [and this] is among the least controversial findings in studies on women's work in different parts of the world" (Kabeer, 2008, p. 48). O'Neill (2003) finds that "Even though women's home responsibilities have fallen dramatically over the past 50 years, they are nonetheless, still significant" (O'Neill, 2003, p. 309). The division of labour in the family, which skews the burden of work upon women, has the potential to result in productivity differences while at work and "many women make different choices than men regarding the extent of career attachment" (ibid, p. 310). The division of labour within the home is most profound amongst women with young children. Consequently, with the lion's share of unpaid care work on women's shoulders, many women withdraw from formal work. "The expectation of withdrawals from the labor force and the need to work fewer hours during the week are likely to influence the type of occupations that women train for and ultimately pursue" (ibid). O'Neill concludes, that "it is unlikely that the wage rates of women and men would be equal" and that the gender pay gap is "unlikely to change radically in the near future unless the roles of women and men in the home become more nearly identical." (ibid. p. 314). Finally, the wage gap upholds women's chores within the home, as McDowell (1999) argues, the wage gap concretises time use within the home, because the opportunity cost of a man doing housework (in lieu of waged work) is greater than the opportunity cost of a woman doing waged work – resulting in an economic argument supporting women to do housework and not men (1999, p. 130).

This is something that comes from the clients as well. "Some Sakha clients expect to pay less than they would normally pay for a male driver, because they are hiring a woman." (Meenu) The male breadwinner ideology is deeply embedded in the market as well and even embedded in the minds of potential Sakha clients who are interested in Sakha because of their

relative level of open-mindedness. "There is a wage gap because of the gender based issues that we are fighting for. However, knowing that women at Sakha are in fact being paid less than men with the same experience is a market decision for us. We need to diminish the pay gap by pushing the envelope…[but] we already have more women drivers than we have jobs" (Meenu). Many of their clients aren't prepared to pay these rates because of the perception that they are getting less of a driver in a woman, who would have to go home earlier, take additional leave and have home-based commitments that may interfere with her job role.

Transformational structural change will not happen until there is an inherent structural change that stems from the top. Williams (1989) suggests that women entering non-traditional careers need to be supplemented with women in leadership positions who have the power to dismantle existing social structures; therefore it is necessary to evaluate what the necessary conditions are for these women to succeed against social structures that are working hard to maintain the status quo. The next section offers an alternative, of two institutions who are in a position of power, with two women who are at the helm of decision making in relation to non-traditional livelihoods.

The importance of institutions

Institutions in positions of power have the ability to change social norms and challenge existing social structures. For EMpower, that position of power stems primarily from the fact that it is a donor organisation, and provides grants to organisations working with youth in the livelihoods space, which is why EMpower staff are in the position to set the agenda in relation to programming that they will and will not support, in a manner that can lead to structural change within livelihoods programming for girls and young women. Specifically, this means funding opportunities where women and girls are not repeatedly being trained in and slotted into 'acceptable' career options. For Azad Foundation, that power comes from the unique

position that they derive from being the provider of non-traditional training to women. This section will illustrate how institutions have a thought process, objectives and are dynamic actors in and of themselves in relation to challenging existing social norms. Power, for both organisations also comes from actively taking part in the curation and creation of knowledge in this space, through reviews of literature, commissioning research, creating toolkits and training others. Both organisations are looking to shift the needle in relation to what constitutes women's work, they are looking for their efforts to result in challenging the existing habitus as opposed to merely working within it. I argue, that both EMpower and Azad Foundation are structuring structures, because of their position of power and their concern with the larger project of transformation both organisations are using the work that they do to disrupt existing social structures in a conscious and methodological manner. One aspect of operationalizing this disruption is through making a concerted effort in programming to enable program participants to think through and question the very social norms that have defined them up to that point, they encourage the 'operationalisation of choice' (Kabeer, 2008) amongst the people that they work with and are continually conscious of the larger project of shifting the needle in relation to gender norms.

The agenda of the institution is often set by one or a few individuals. In the case of EMpower it is Cynthia Steele, the President and CEO of EMpower – The Emerging Markets Foundation[33] and in the case of Azad Foundation, it is Meenu Vadera the Founder and Executive Director. This section maps the trajectory that both EMpower and Azad Foundation undertook when deciding to focus on non-traditional livelihoods. What is interesting to note, is that both organisations' objectives were driven by strong women and both women came to similar conclusions after undertaking very different journeys.

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[33] Cynthia began at EMpower in 2005 as the Executive Vice President and Global Head of Programs. In 2019, she assumed the role of President and CEO from Marta Cabrera who founded EMpower in 2000.

EMpower's journey in Non-traditional livelihoods

Naila Kabeer (1999) states that there is "a role for individual agency in challenging gender inequality but they also point to the importance of larger structural change. In a context where cultural values constrain women's ability to make strategic life choices, structural inequalities cannot be addressed by individuals alone… the project of women's empowerment is dependent on collective solidarity in the public arena as well as individual assertiveness in private" (1999, p. 457). Recognising the need to address structural change has been central to EMpower's journey, particularly in relation to their livelihoods portfolio. Cynthia Steele has defined the trajectory that the livelihoods portfolio at EMpower has taken. Cynthia began at EMpower in 2005 as the Executive Vice President and the Global Head of Programs, and shortly thereafter began a personal and professional interrogation in relation to non-traditional livelihoods. "For me, I think it was a sequential realisation. After going to grantee partner after grantee partner, and also seeing prospective groups who we were considering [to be EMpower grantee partners] I just got tired of seeing, that irrespective of the country Ghana, South Africa, India, Peru… girls were being slotted in to the same kinds of jobs. We had a partner in Vietnam that worked with street children, and the only option for girls' vocational training was stitching and embroidery, it wasn't isolated to one region or one partner, it was everywhere, in every country that EMpower worked in. There were certain threads throughout, tailoring, hair dressing and beautician training, soap making… a lot of girls were also being trained in careers that were handicrafts oriented. And it just started to bother me, and I began to think: have some imagination, people! I mean, aren't there other possibilities for these girls? Look around! Could there not be some more jobs they could be doing? Over time, I became more assertive [about this] with our partners. I was just like this can't be it, there has got to be other stuff out there." For Cynthia, it was also the recognition that if EMpower were to continue funding programming that perpetuates gender norms, they were doing little to address the structures

that confine women to certain occupations and therefore would be complicity accepting women's positions in society.

This was somewhere around 2007/08, when we were starting to have a livelihoods focus in our work through funding from the Nike Foundation, at that time, we were doing more on young women's entrepreneurship and trying to understand more about women's relationship to income generation. In that exploration, I came to think there have got to be other things we should be considering, so we really wanted to understand what else is out there. The livelihoods field in general is really thin on evidence about what works and what doesn't work so there aren't a lot of places to turn to; so [in the livelihoods space] there's much more experimentation going on, and much less that you get your arms around, so it makes it harder to tell if you're investing in things wisely – not until a few years in.

It was at that time that I commissioned a review of what possibilities already existed, what was out there that could shift the needle on the sorts of jobs women were being trained to do. We conducted a mapping exercise, by scouring the earth to see what the possibilities were by looking outwards and seeing examples of girls worldwide, who had other opportunities for skilling that were off the beaten track. We needed to understand what was out there, what were best practices as we could understand them from practitioners that were already doing this. We thought no matter where something is happening, even if its Global North or industrialised countries, there might be things that we could learn. We wanted to understand what we could share with our traditional livelihoods partners that might open their eyes about what they could be doing differently.

We recognised quickly, that because of the lack of opportunity in the formal sector, which persists in many countries; that a lot of groups were trying to help young women start their own businesses. Which is why, the first step we took was actually in the entrepreneurship

space. In 2010, EMpower actually held our first livelihoods workshop on entrepreneurship where we brought together Asian and African partners in Ahmedabad… and then the one in Lima, Peru was for Latin American grantees. One of the key take-aways from that was that entrepreneurship is really complicated and it's not for everybody. This led to the realisation that we needed to do a deeper dive into skilling and jobs in particular." Maria Mies (1982) cautions that home based work, which is often what entrepreneurship looks like for women, often serves to perpetuate ideologies around women's work – especially when micro entrepreneurship options are in 'naturalised' trades such as sewing and cooking. She also cautions that home-based work means that women are several steps removed from the marketplace, which results in not being aware of the fair market price or a fair share in profits.

"Soon after [in 2012], we started doing what we call spark grants, [which are small grants given to EMpower partners to try out or test a new idea] to encourage grantee partners to try something new]. And if we were getting proposals to work on something traditional, we questioned whether there were other things that young women could explore. There was a lot more experimentation [on our part]; and also frankly, we were closing the door on funding the traditional stuff, because there came a point things that we funded back in 2007/08 like soap making in Nigeria, that we would no longer fund in 2012; because it wasn't a strategic investment for EMpower to be doing that." Ultimately, at this juncture, EMpower was strategically using their positionality to move the needle in relation to structural change in relation to livelihoods skilling programs for young women, by clearly stating through their funding guidelines that they were less willing to fund skilling opportunities that perpetuated gender norms. However, it was a difficult journey, as Carmen Morcos, Senior Program Officer for Latin America says, "conceptually all of our partners [in Latin America] got on board, but implementation was complicated – getting girls, communities and parents on board. Recruitment was an issue for many of our partners" due to the fact that it was so different to

what people in the community had known or were used to. "What made it easier [for buy-in from our grantee partners] was the spark grants, because they could try exploring non-traditional livelihoods and if they were successful, they could integrate it into their main program." Carmen says, that EMpower's foray into non-traditional livelihoods "attracted grantee partners who were entrepreneurial and open to new, different and risky ideas…[because] you need the mind-set, buy-in, culture within the organisation to even consider non-traditional livelihoods, otherwise it won't sustain in the organisation long term."

Since this was a new journey for EMpower as well, Cynthia says, "We took on an intentional learning agenda as an organisation. EMpower held their first workshop specifically on non-traditional livelihoods [in 2014 in Delhi]; because India has had the most examples of non-traditional income generation [within EMpower's grantmaking portfolio], so it felt like it would be an interesting crucible of trying to have the groups here share their work with one another; with the idea to extract from that, lessons and questions that could be more generalizable and take that to a global setting." The EMpower team consciously made the decision to include girls who were being trained in non-traditional livelihoods in this workshop, because "girls were the protagonists of the programs…so the feeling was really to hear form the girls themselves rather than assume that we know what their experience has been; we see them as being experts on that." Methodologically, EMpower began another important journey, as Kabeer (1999) points out, the people who stand to gain the most out of empowerment initiatives are often left out of the conversation, EMpower aims to change this by centring young women in the conversations about programming that could potentially affect their lives.

The learnings from the 2014 workshop formed the basis for a global workshop in 2015 in New York, which brought together nine of EMpower's grantee partners from five countries. For Cynthia, "there were so many universal things about the kind of work that we do, although that might seem contradictory, because culture matters and context matters; it's important to

understand at the same time, there are many universalities. These groups had a variety of different strategies, so they could learn and share with each other." All of these learnings and strategies were then combined into a resource kit on non-traditional livelihoods that EMpower still continues to share with all its partners in the livelihoods space, with the aim of broadening their horizons in terms of the skilling and exposure that they offer to young women within their own communities.

EMpower's primary donor base is individuals from the financial services community. EMpower was founded in 2000 by Marta Cabrera, she was an emerging markets finance professional, who wanted to give back to the markets that she was working in. "Working in emerging market finance, and travelling as a banker, despite going from limousine to four star hotel, you can't help seeing what these countries are really like. Among my colleagues and me, there grew a real understanding that we had to give back. That was the seed of the idea and it still applies" (Alliance, 2015). In 2003, she started to manage EMpower full time until 2019. At which point, Cynthia assumed the role of President and CEO.

Cynthia states that EMpower's experiences and the lived realities of the women that EMpower works with also has parallels to EMpower's donor base, recognising that shifting perceptions and shattering stereotypes is something that transcends geography and socio-economic status. "Retrospectively, what is interesting is that we are surrounded by women at EMpower who have broken barriers in their own careers. Finance is a traditionally male industry, and yet there are so many women, our donors, our Board, our Founder and a lot of our staff who come from that industry. They have all faced prejudices and resistance and all of the things that are limiting to the women that we work with. So while it had little to no bearing on our interest in the space, there are several parallels that we do draw to make both our donors understand the importance of working in this space and also the girls we work with, to illustrate to them that this happens at all levels and globally."

"The consequences of choice can be further evaluated in terms of their *transformatory* significance, the extent to which the choices made have the potential for challenging and destabilising social inequalities and the extent to which they merely express and reproduce those inequalities" (Kabeer, 1999, p. 461). Ultimately, for EMpower their role has been to use their position to affect transformative change in relation to programming at a microcosmic level. While EMpower is a relatively small player in the development space, their decision to not fund organisations that reproduce social structures has been a significant one in relation to messaging about the need for girls and women to explore and exercise their choice in relation to their future opportunities as earners. Furthermore, through encouraging conversation between organisations who are working in the space of non-traditional livelihoods, both through spark grants and learning exchanges that brought partners together, EMpower has created space for participation and dialogue so that collective action could be taken to dismantle existing ideas about programming in the livelihoods space.

Azad Foundation's Journey

Azad Foundation was created by Meenu Vadera and today is at the forefront of non-traditional livelihoods skilling. In Meenu's words, "There were several triggers that led to the conception of Azad Foundation. One is, in 2001, the census came out and brought into the public domain what the women's movement was already talking about, the whole issue of 'missing women' and the skewed sex ratio. The census said that the red states were Delhi, Punjab and Haryana. Though I knew it, I still remember getting very shocked, at the idea that Delhi was amongst the red states. And I think for a lot of us, the whole difference between growth and development could not have been better underlined by the census results. I was in Uganda at the time, and I thought to myself 'what the hell am I doing?' Another trigger for me

was a trip to London where I experienced the Pink Ladies Taxi Service[34] for women and I remember feeling very safe during taxi trips at night. I came back to India in 2003 and partially because of liberalisation, partially because the news was now 24x7 and there was a need to find things to report on, I remember how I was struck by how much more reporting there was on crimes against women. In addition, my daughter was three and a half years old at the time. On one hand, I wanted her to grow up around family, so I wanted to do something in Delhi and on the other, there was a fear about her safety. These were all triggers for me.

When I got back, I wanted to do some work on women's leadership, at that point I got drawn into 'The Hunger Project[35]' which was working with female *Panchayat[36]* leaders, and I helped them set up 'Schools of Leadership for Women Elected Leaders in Local Governments'. While I was working with these women, there was a personal shift from me. I moved from being a development worker to being an active citizen. As a development worker, you are basically addressing poverty and inequality issues out *there* in *that* society, which is how I have led most of my development [work] life, and we were taught that you have to go as far as possible in the remotest of village in the most difficult of circumstances. But as an active citizen, you're looking at where you are and what you are doing. I was so inspired by the women I worked with that I even became a part of my RWA[37]. This got me thinking about the here and now in my life. What can I do within Delhi to make a difference – and how do all of the triggers, violence against women, mobility, the census, my move back here contribute to what I want to do?

Subconsciously, I love driving so maybe that contributed to my decision to work with female drivers. However, the focus on drivers came from the fact that I was very clear, after

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[34] http://www.womenstaxi.org/london.html
[35] https://www.thp.org/
[36] Village Council
[37] Residents Welfare Association

having worked in the sector for many years that I wasn't going to focus on traditional work. There wasn't enough money, opportunities or scope for change and it's often more and more of the same thing that doesn't contribute to long lasting change for women. I wanted to do something that was more than just about money and was about helping to make a significant change in the lives of women. I knew that it had to be a non-traditional activity, it had to be rights-based and focus on empowerment. I was very clear that traditional livelihoods just don't work. All the *papad*[38] and *vadi*[39] making, cooking, tailoring, those kinds of things, women just don't get remunerated well. I also knew that the skill had to be transferable and finally, once this idea catches on, women will not have dearth of work, because women offer safety, reliability and efficiency, given the kind of society we live in.

Either way, when I first started talking about it, it was almost a half-joke. I would tell people that I would get myself a car and park myself at the airport with a good book, some music and food. Funnily, the idea really germinated during a farewell party for a friend, they made a PowerPoint of what we would all be doing in 10 years, and they had this very funny picture of me with blonde hair, [and I was] a tycoon with a hundred taxis. And then, the more one thought about it, the more one said - why not!? The idea took time though, almost five years until we registered in 2008.

When we started, we already had a revolution in the public transport sector happening by the coming in of the radio taxi culture. The *kaali-pili*[40] cabs were getting replaced by radio-taxis; the next revolution would logically be to bring in women drivers, because the more you have women traveling, there is this need to make public transport safer. I'm not saying that this

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[38] papadom
[39] Deep fried snack
[40] Black and Yellow Taxis

is the only way you can make public transport safer, but there is a need to make it more receptive, welcoming and accessible to women."

Azad Foundation's Program Model

At the core of what Azad Foundation does is the 'Women on Wheels' Program, which is the driving training program, however, early on Azad realised that it was not enough to merely train women, they needed to ensure that women had opportunities for work at the end of their training, which is why, Sakha Consulting Wings was also established in 2008.
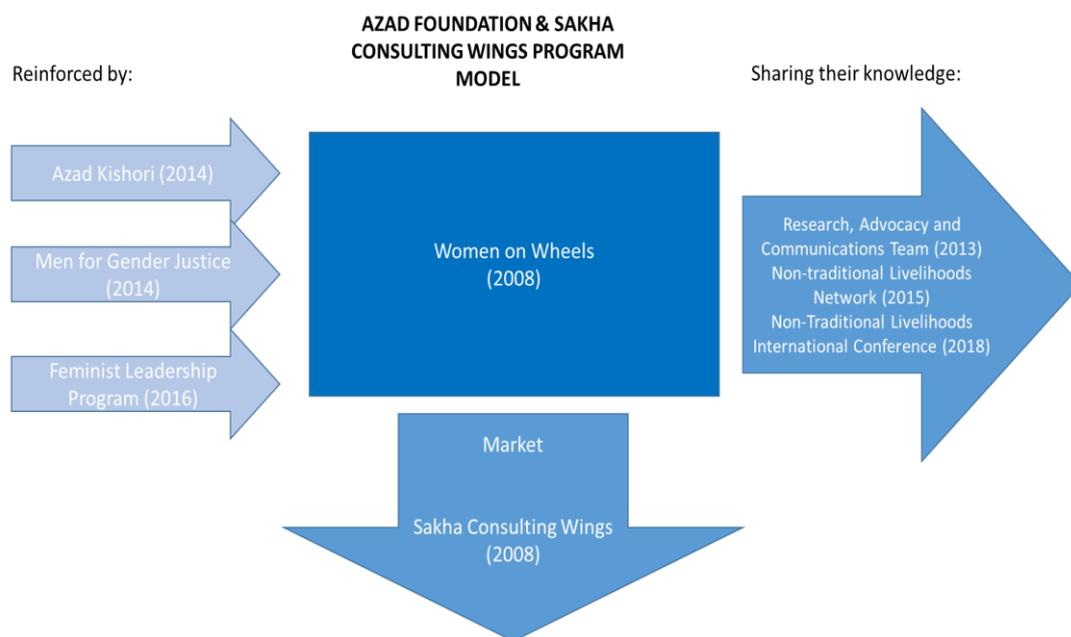
Figure 1: Azad Foundation and Sakha Consulting Wings Program Model

As this thesis illustrates, the social structures that trainees and drivers are contending with are extremely pervasive, especially for a program that is attempting to disrupt these very social structures; Azad Foundation came to this realisation in 2014 and began to expand its program model to include a community engagement component. Their community engagement work includes programs that reinforce the Women on Wheels program by working in the community with important stakeholders. *Azad Kishori*, their program focussing on adolescent

girls began in 2014[41], Men for Gender Justice[42], their program focussing on men in the communities where the trainees reside began in 2016 as did their Feminist Leadership Program – a program that "creates a cadre of young women community leaders who provide information and support to enable women to claim their rights in all spheres of life…[so these] young women can become community leaders and catalyst[s] for local change."[43] Through these community initiatives, Azad Foundation has been able to reach out to over 500,000 people (Azad Foundation, 2016).

They also recognised the role that they had to play in relation to influencing the ecosystem and to this end, in 2013 they formed their Research, Advocacy and Communications arm. This team is responsible for convening the Pan-India non-traditional livelihoods network, they have organised an International conference on Non-Traditional Livelihoods and they are continuously engaged in publishing communications and research with the express purpose of

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[41] The Azad Kishori programme was piloted in Delhi in 2014, following which Jaipur began in 2015. Driven by the aim of creating awareness and perspectives on gender, patriarchy, sexual and reproductive health and livelihood choices, workshops were conducted with adolescent girls aged 14-17 in community based, private and government schools present in resource poor communities. (Azad Website)

[42] The Men for Gender Justice programmes increases the knowledge and capacity of young men to act against violence against women and enhance their understanding on gender, patriarchy and masculinities. Through training sessions and other activities, the participants are provided with the information and training they need for co-creating spaces in their communities that promote gender equality and support women to live without violence and work in non-traditional livelihoods. We have formed groups of men around themes of sports, theatre and other creative activities in Delhi and Jaipur. Men taking part in these groups attend various workshops and awareness and educational activities designed to question gender-based injustice and traditional concepts of masculinity. The programme also includes film screenings, street plays and informal discussions through which gender myths can be busted and men themselves start questioning hegemonic and oppressive masculinities that restrict both women and men from attaining fulfilling lives. They are encouraged to engage with other men in their families and communities to change harmful attitudes and behaviours towards women. (Azad Website)

[43] The feminist leaders undertake a year-long training, combining four phases of residential training and on ground inter-phase work with Azad outreach and mobilization teams. The training and practicum programme aims to:1) Equip the women with an understanding of women's rights and entitlements 2) Enhance their analytical and soft skill (communication, personality, self, behaviour etc.) 3) Give them a conceptual clarity on non-traditional livelihoods, related social issues and supporting women to opt for non-traditional livelihoods, with a focus on driving (Azad's Women on Wheels programme).

Each leader builds a core team of 10 other women around her – 'sahelis' (friends). With the Parvaz fellows leading the group activities, these women together reach more women with information and support, and work towards recruitment for Women On Wheels. Like a cascade effect, each fellow ultimately reaches at least 1000 women in this way. The leaders are also guided to implement their own community project, based on the needs of their community they identify. (Azad website)

strengthening the field in relation to non-traditional livelihoods. Additionally, they create literature to contribute to the limited body of knowledge on non-traditional livelihoods.

Avenues for change

Both Meenu and Cynthia, through their respective organisations are offering solutions to alter perceptions about women in the workplace, by addressing deeply entrenched social norms that serve to uphold the status quo in relation to women and work. As Sen (1993) states, "In answering policy questions, we may decide to take a radical line or a conservative one. But we have to face these deep seated problems. They are there, and cannot be wished away" (Sen, 1993, p. 463). There is recognition of the fact that due to pervasive structures that have informed and are perpetuated in relation to gender roles at work, engaging in non-traditional livelihoods alone is not the answer. In addition to technical skills training it is vital to engage in several other aspects of building the resilience of the women who are being trained. Some of these programmatic aspects include, beginning early, aiming for holistic training, providing placements and building movements.

Beginning Early

Srinivasan (2014) states, "Without undermining the benefits of such efforts, an important shortcoming is that the focus on women's empowerment misses out on girls, while in children/young people and development, children are often conceptualized in gender neutral terms thereby missing out on the specific challenges that girls (or boys) face." This has material consequences for girls. Therefore, in order to centre girls in a more meaningful way, in 2018 EMpower formed the Girls Advisory Council; a council of adolescent girls who would be EMpower's lead strategists and advisors to help frame EMpower's grantmaking strategy within India and provide insights to EMpower's grantmaking globally. Through deliberation, the girls

came up with 12 key themes (EMpower, 2018) that grant-makers and foundations should consider when working with adolescent girls. One of the issues that they came out most strongly about in the livelihoods space, was the need to begin exposure to livelihoods earlier. Savita[44], who is an employee of Sakha Consulting Wings is Azad Foundation's representative on the Girls Advisory Council. At the beginning of the Girls Advisory Council convening, all 16 girls were asked to set a personal goal for themselves, Savita said that she wanted to take on a leadership role within her organisation, and today she is a team leader for a group of Sakha drivers.

When I asked Savita about the key themes developed by the Girls Advisory Council she said, the most important message according to her is that "[livelihoods] programs often begin too late, when young people's minds have already been conditioned to the status quo… it is vital to begin engagement early so that young people's mind-sets can be broadened before they have taken decisions about their education/careers." She said that the Advisory Council, believes that this is particularly important for girls so they can choose their careers "in what they are interested in as opposed to what they are expected to do." From their perspective, social norms dictate that "girls should only consider a few trades… Therefore, if at an early age, you work on changing girls' mind-sets to non-stereotypical professions then girls can choose a trade that they are genuinely interested in as opposed to what they are expected to do. If this is not done at an early age then girls are conditioned to only like / be interested in trades like cooking, stitching etc." Finally, the Advisory Council cautions, that by not engaging with girls from an early age, to be exposed to the full gamut of opportunities, it comes across that "traditional [work] is not as good as non-traditional. In many ways, we are perpetuating the

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[44] Savita is the oldest member of the Girls Advisory Council, with most members being between the ages of 10-19, which is the definition of the age range for adolescent girls. Given that Azad trainees must be at least 18 when they begin their training and a nomination to the Girls Advisory Council can only occur after being part of an EMpower supported program for at least one year, Savita joined the Girls Advisory Council at the age of 22. However, she still identifies as being a 'girl'.

stereotype that boys work is better than girls' work. We should position non-traditional work by saying that girls can engage in these alternative trades if they are interested, not because they are better than the trades that girls traditionally engage in."

For similar reasons, Azad Foundation began the *Azad Kishori*[45] program in 2014 in Delhi in order to engage with girls in the community at an early age so that they would consider driving as a potential career. "Driven by the aim of creating awareness and perspectives on gender, patriarchy, sexual and reproductive health and livelihood choices, workshops were conducted with adolescent women aged 14-17 in community based, private and government schools present in resource poor communities…The workshops facilitated awareness of issues related to gender, patriarchy, legal rights for women, sexuality and reproductive health. They also included life skills training (filling forms, using banking system and ATM cards, primary first aid, basics of self-defence) as well as exposure to non- traditional livelihood related skills such as electrical work" (Azad Foundation, 2019). In 2017-18, *Azad Kishori* enabled 1350 adolescent girls to "become aware of non-traditional livelihood options that they can adopt" (Azad Foundation, 2018).

Aiming for holistic training

For Meenu, at the onset of her journey she was very clear that the purpose of Azad Foundation wasn't to provide technical training alone. She states, "I have to look at the whole person, I wanted to understand what was happening to the real lives of real people, and how the technical skill needed to be supported by a whole host of other skills. Otherwise, Azad would have been no different to a driving school. So from the very first batch itself, we started self-defence, gender, first aid, sexuality, English. All of those things were at the core of the

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[45] 'Free' Adolescent Girl

curriculum. That is why we take several months, to complete the training. But for me, these are non-negotiable" because without all of these skills, the likelihood that women will succeed diminishes, because they haven't built the agency to address the fact that they are in a space that is unchartered territory in so many ways. The need for holistic training is echoed by Cynthia, who says, "all of the work that we do is intertwined into the *real body* of a person. If they don't have incomes from livelihoods then they cannot access the health services that they need. If they cannot go to school, then their job opportunities are limited. At the heart of it, if women have the ability to generate and save income, and have control over their assets, including their own bodies, then livelihoods become hugely important in terms of autonomy and the decisions that you are able to make. Without which, you're beholden to other people who exert power over you in a very important way." EMpower drives this point home, through how they measure the success of their programs through what is called the core youth development indicators – which examine social capital, self-efficacy, confidence and goal setting as central parameters to all their grants in addition to the technical skills being imparted in an actual program[46].

Providing placements

With the creation of Azad Foundation, Meenu founded Sakha Consulting Wings, which enabled drivers from Azad to be placed as drivers, either in people's home or through Sakha's commercial taxis. "It was clear to me that with Azad, we had to launch Sakha as a platform for women to have steady employment once they were trained. The gendered nature of a society is such that the gender dynamics are as strongly present in the communities as they are present in the market. So, it's going to be very difficult for women to step out of their homes to take on non-traditional livelihood trainings, and it is also going to be very difficult for them to go

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[46] From EMpower's Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

out into the market themselves." This is a unique differentiator for Azad Foundation, as Shantiji who is a Program Coordinator states, it was a motivator for her to join Azad, "I really liked this project. I have worked in this field for decades and so many people work on livelihoods programs, but I've never seen an organisation that gives you a commitment about job placements. Training is everywhere, but not jobs. So, first point where I was impressed was that women will be taught how to drive. Secondly, I was impressed because they'll get jobs! This touched my heart". The potential for job security is a major driver for many women to sign up for the training. Dolon Sen, who is a Program Manager at Azad Foundation says that "the motivation for [women to] come here is very interesting to me. First of all, they get a regular income. While many of the trainees are cooking, cleaning or doing domestic work, their incomes aren't steady and they are also confined to the four walls of the house. However, when they come here, they find it fulfilling when they get secure jobs at the end of the training process."

Today Sakha has carved out a niche for itself, "initially, our first set of clients were friends and family of Azad, who believed in the idea and wanted to support what we were doing…over time our client base has grown. The last time we profiled our clients, 50% of them were parents with children, who wanted the car to be a safe space for their kids… the second group of clients were female professionals. We also have a small percentage of clients who have special needs. Now we have a growing segment of corporates who are hiring Sakha for their female staff and a big big big segment now is travellers, tourists…women tourists." (Meenu). Sakha, in many ways provides clients with a safe space to navigate through the city. As Pooja Mehra who is a Program Officer at Azad Foundation states, "I think a woman passenger can rely more on a woman driver and be more comfortable with her and we have heard a lot of cases happening of child abuse and male drivers, so parents can send their

children with a woman driver and feel more comfortable than sending their children with a male driver."

Unfortunately, marketing Sakha's services has been an uphill battle for the Sakha team, because the market in and of itself is gendered, in fact Sakha did not turn its first profit until 2018. Meenu says, "if we were running a maids' placement agency, trust you me, we wouldn't be running around looking for placements. The reason we are running around looking for placements is because we have women drivers. If we had male drivers, we wouldn't have had the same problem. So, the gender dynamics are equally strong on both ends and therefore it is important not just to train them, because if we were just to train them then I am a hundred per cent sure that majority of them would have gone back home. They wouldn't be able to find jobs on their own… This is because the workplace is very biased against women. It is political. On one hand, there is this discourse saying that you should come and work as if there is a level playing field. But the playing field is never level – and this is more exacerbated when you are talking about resource poor women, because they do not have a safety net to fall back on…this is why it is vital for us through Sakha to be in the marketplace, so that we can place women into lucrative jobs, and demonstrate how these women can not only do it, but they can flourish as drivers." At any given time, there are an average of 60 drivers who are 'on the bench' that is, they have completed all of their exams and are qualified drivers, but they are unable to secure a job.[47]

One of the biggest issues that Sakha struggles with is to provide placements for all the trainees who have been trained. Women who engage in non-traditional careers are not only subject to the patriarchal structures that limit womens' involvement in the workforce but additionally, they are called into question for engaging in income generation activities in spaces

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[47] Azad Foundation, Research Advocacy and Communications team figures.

that are traditionally deemed to be male only. Therefore, if women were trained and not placed into lucrative jobs, then it would almost serve as a justification to male powerbrokers that women do not belong in careers such as driving. The post-training / pre-placement time, according to Meenu is "the most tricky, challenging and delicate period in their lives; because now they have gone through this training, they are more empowered and they think that they are ready to change the world and their lives, but they are not getting that opportunity… that is the time that we lose a lot of them, because they are on the bench for a long time awaiting placements, this is risky, because it perpetuates the idea that women shouldn't be drivers."

Conclusion: Building a Movement

For Cynthia, building a movement around non-traditional livelihoods, or altering perceptions, stems from creating more and more examples of women who are doing things differently. "I think change happens incrementally and like anything else, you can create a movement around a particular subject. My hope is that by having more and more examples you start to have a ripple effect. So rather than, back in 2009 or 10, when there were very few examples that we could find globally of non-traditional work, over time we have seen the idea grow and more organisations looking at livelihoods in this way. And that's how you create real change, by having many more examples and that creates more encouragement for other groups to not feel so lonely in this space and to try something new because they can look around and hop on the bandwagon; that is what creates a catalytic effect." For Meenu, what was vital to her was "the understanding, that at the end of the day, it's not about individual women, it's about building a survival network, which the poor often lack but particularly the resource poor women. And building that kind of a social capital that is going to sustain them through thick and thin and just like how we have built our lives and continue to build our lives based on the friendships that we have because families, by and large are still very patriarchal, so very often we find our friends who help us to question things back at home. So similarly, the women we

are working with, also need that kind of a structure and I am so very glad that it actually happened so much faster than I thought it would. I believe in the <u>critical</u> need for that kind of social capital and a network. We actually built and designed the curriculum in such a way that there were lots of spaces for women to build that solidarity with each other across batches and different geographies. Then we see them having fun together, once in a while you catch something on Facebook, or get news from somewhere or the other. So now we know there is a thick web of friendships which has been established in which we don't have an entry, and I love it, because it's independent of us." In both Meenu and Cynthia's case, they are connecting themselves and their organisations to something larger and consequently, program participants are influenced by the rules that they are attempting to re-write, while Meenu's work is on the ground and Cynthia's is through strategic investments into organisations such as Azad Foundation who are doing the actual work on the ground, their feminist, disruptive ideology plays out as being a structuring structure in the field of livelihoods programming.

According to the ILO (2014), "policy makers in India and throughout the region should take a comprehensive approach to improving labour market outcomes for women through improving access to and relevance of education and training programs, skills development, access to child care, maternity protection, and provision of safe and accessible transport, along with the promotion of a pattern of growth that creates job opportunities. Beyond standard labour force participation rates, policy-makers should be more concerned about whether women are able to access better jobs or start up a business, and take advantage of new labour market opportunities as a country grows. A policy framework encouraging and enabling women's participation should be constructed with active awareness of the "gender-specific" constraints that face most women. Gender responsive policies need to be contextually developed. Ultimately, the goal is not merely to increase female labour force participation, but to provide opportunities for decent work that will, in turn, contribute to the economic

empowerment of women" (ILO, 2014, p. 2). However, it is an uphill battle given how resilient the sex ordered division of labour is; "static cultural expectations for men's and women's behaviour in and out of the workplace, for example, still counter the efforts made by feminist political leaders and trade unionists" (Dumais, 1993, p. 364).

Nonetheless, there are avenues for change, because "Gender identities of both jobs and workers are negotiable and contestable at work" (McDowell, 1999, p. 135). Strongly contributing to this end are the organisations, the women at the helm and the women whom they are working with who are all challenging social norms and contributing to nuancing the 'invented' nature of the social structures that contain women in the workplace. Despite the fact that the gender division of labour remains resistant to change, we must acknowledge that countless women who are engaging in non-traditional livelihoods are living (and thriving) within the frameworks that have limited them in the past, while simultaneously breaking down the rigid structures of the sex ordered division of labour brick by brick.

Chapter 2:

The Structures that define us

"Imagine that patriarchy is a sleeping pill that you drop into a well; everyone in the community drinks from that well; which means they all consume the sleeping pill and will feel the effects of its intoxication."
- Shantiji

The aim of this thesis is to interrogate the extent to which women have used their agency, as derived from their career in driving, to negotiate with existing social structures. However, before undertaking an interrogation of agency, we must understand the structures that define the habitus (Bourdieu 1990) of these women and have a direct impact on their lives. There are "very real limits that people's situations place on the wider circles that they are trying to open up around themselves. Both these situational limits and acts of resistance to them are important to think about in our examination of gender roles" (Clark, 2016, p. 11). This chapter hopes to uncover what these limits are and how they have affected the lives of the women who are central to this work. In order to do so, I begin by tracing the lives of a group of women before they joined Azad Foundation.

Nussbaum (2007) asks to "begin with the human being: with the capacities and needs that join all humans, across barriers of gender and class and race and nation. To a person concerned with the equality and dignity of women, this advice should appear in one way promising. For it instructs us to focus on what all human beings share, rather than on the privileges and achievements of a dominant group, and on needs and basic functions, rather than on power or status. Women have rarely been kings, or nobles, or courtiers, or rich. They have, on the other hand, frequently been poor and sick and dead" (2007, pp. 61-2). Therefore, the point of departure for this chapter is to <u>begin with human beings</u>, what is relevant

methodologically, is that I have consciously ensured that their personal journeys are reflected in this chapter in their own words and retained as such; which is why the first part of this chapter is these women's stories in their own words, to honour their personal journeys and narratives, echoing Visweswaran (1994), these women are not subjects for interrogation, rather they are living breathing agents of change and for that reason, I begin with them at the centre. These narratives are grounded in their experiences, while it is vital to link their experiences to theory, we cannot lose the nuances, personal struggles and granularity of their unique lives. Once their journeys and stories have been illustrated, this chapter also conducts a deeper analysis of the structures that they have mentioned within their own narratives.

This chapter aims to illustrate how innocent cultural statements like '*betiyan parahi hoti hai'* (daughters are never yours) can have a massive impact on how girls are raised, their perceptions of self and the decisions that they make in their lives – which leads to negative consequences as a result of their social conditioning due to the structures that govern their lives. This results in systemic violence, a culture of silence and an acceptability of their subordinated place within society. "The low female-male ratio in the Indian population and the lower life expectancy of women in India are matched by evidence of serious extra deprivation of women in terms of other basic capabilities" (Sen, 1993, p. 459). Another vital issue to recognise, as illustrated in Shantiji's quote above is the fact that the upholding of existing social structures comes from everywhere, from parents, to brothers to mothers-in-law to husbands. It is not the case that social norms that impede women are delivered and perpetuated by men alone; because women and men are all part of the same habitus and are subject to the same social rules.

The stories of these women highlight how on one hand, they are the ones who are bestowed with the responsibility of upholding social structures, but it is in fact those very social structures that limit them the most. One prime example of this is the family, which is one of the most regressive sites for women. "The family is also a site of exploitation and violence; of

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men over women; of in-laws over brides; of adults over children; even the young over the elderly" (Uberoi, 1993, p. 36). However, there is a belief that due to the communal nature of Indian culture, the support structures of the family will in fact be beneficial to women. "People have good reason to value their support structures. One's compliance with what is arranged by others is carried out, believing that this will ensure one's own comfort and safety, whether it turns out do so or not. Bitterly, it often does not" (Clark, 2016, p. 27). Both Sunita and Ripu's stories illustrate the lack of support from their in-laws, but, as we will see with Sunita, her maternal family has been supportive, however, with Ripu – this has not been the case.

It is vital to realise, as exemplified by Shantiji's statement, that the family unit itself is embedded in patriarchy, when means that the members of the family, have drunk from the proverbial 'well'. The family unit, as Beck (1992) and Bourdieu (1998) highlight, serves to uphold the market through upholding traditional gender roles to create male workers, whose care-taking responsibilities are executed by the women of the house cheaply; therefore its continuation is central to the perpetuation of the capitalist framework and all members of the family, male/female, young/old, born/married in serve to uphold, safeguard and protect the perpetuation of the family unit. Ultimately, the aim of this chapter is to recognise that there is value in the family, but the *doxa* that govern the habitus within which they live (Bourdieu, 1998) needs to be altered in order for women to flourish, both within their maternal family and their family post-marriage. So that they can "give to one another without sacrificing themselves to one another. This is what tomorrow, in our so-called civilised world, classes and nations and individuals also, must learn" (Mauss, 1990, p. 82).

In her words, introducing the female drivers.

During the course of the fieldwork, I spent time with several trainees and drivers who were working for Sakha Consulting Wings, for work I have relied upon in depth case studies

from additional field work with a smaller group of women, Ripu, Shabnam, Sunita, Rabbunisha and Lalita. This section introduces them in more detail, because not only have I learned from them but their voices are at the centre of this work. This chapter focusses on what their lives were like before Azad Foundation, in order to illustrate the structures that they lived within prior to them joining Azad Foundation. At this juncture, I have made a very important distinction: Shabnam, Lalita and Rabbunisha were all unmarried at the time that they joined Azad Foundation as trainees, therefore the structures that they inherited are different to Sunita and Ripu who were both married at the time that they joined Azad Foundation, insofar as they experienced relative freedoms in relation to Ripu and Sunita. Even though their journeys prior to Azad Foundation were different, there are parallels in the social structures that defined who they were and that limited what they were able to do. All of my respondents live in *basti*[48] environments in South Delhi. It is important to recognise that these are all resource poor women, so they live within a social structure that was influenced by urban poverty. An analysis of which is outside the scope of this work.

A woman's social role, as a daughter, as a mother, as the reproducer of the home and the family means that she becomes restricted by social structures, her habitus is a product of her gender. Bourdieu (1998) argues that the family structure serves to protect the social order, "The family plays a decisive role in the maintenance of the social order, through social as well as biological reproduction that is, reproduction of the structure of the social space and social relations" (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 69). These social structures operate across contexts and across age, whether she is married or unmarried, whether she is Hindu or Muslim and as Rabbunisha alludes, when she says "it's not just people like us, its people in your society too" – it is also not limited by class. How a woman is raised, and consequently how she perceives herself are a manifestation of the social structures that she inherits because of her gender and this is

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[48] Slum communities

reproduced within the family context. This section examines structures that emerge as salient themes from the ethnographies; these structures, when viewed in totality represent the myriad of restrictions that these women faced prior to engaging with Azad Foundation where they gained the skills to negotiate with, and even challenge these structures.

After a brief ethnographic introduction, this chapter will turn to a focus on marriage, through the narratives of Ripu and Sunita. Finally, using the ethnographic narratives, I will interrogate the meaning and impact of popular cultural colloquialisms that uphold and perpetuate existing social structures.

Shabnam

Shabnam[49], was 22 when I first met her. Her family migrated to Delhi from Bihar before she was born and they all live in Delhi with the exception of her eldest brother who lives in Bihar. Shabnam is from a Muslim family and practiced veiling until she was employed by Sakha Consulting Wings, when she made the decision to remove her *hijab[50]*. For many years, Shabnam was the primary custodian of all domestic work in the family, while her brothers and mother were working. Shabnam lives in a home, owned by the family near Sangam Vihar, they rent out one room in their house to tenants, and they use the rental income to pay for utilities. Shabnam is a private placement driver.

"I was born in Delhi, but when I was very young, I was sent back to Bihar to live with my paternal grandmother. I went to school there, you know I was actually pretty good at school." When Shabnam completed 8th grade she returned to live in Delhi with her family, because the family agreed that was enough education for her. "Honestly, I think it's one of

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[49] Shabnam was my personal driver from 2014-2016 so her field interviews were extensive and took place over two years. Additionally, her narratives are deeply personal because of the relationship that we shared and the amount of time that we spent with one another.

[50] Veil worn by Muslim women to cover their hair and chest

those rules, that girls should study until the 8th standard, otherwise it will be hard to find a man who is as educated to marry or even if the family does find a man who is educated enough, then they will ask for a lot of dowry."

"There are five of us in total. My eldest brother lives in Bihar with his family and he is a painter. Then comes my sister, who got married in Delhi and then got divorced, she now lives at home with us, with her son. Then comes my brother who works in a medicine manufacturing factory. Then it is me and then it is my youngest sister. She is the local 'Delhi-ite' she went to college and studied hotel management. My mother works as a medical attendant, not a nurse but the person who stays with sick people in the home to take care of them. My father used to be a watchman, but because of his drinking hasn't really kept a job for long in many years. When I moved here, I spent most of my time doing the housework and taking care of the home [because] my mother, father and brother were working, my sister still lived with her husband at the time and my younger sister was still in school. Besides she was just a kid. After a while though, mostly because we needed the money and for no other reason, my mother realised that I also needed to do some work. In their minds, I could do certain types of work that was acceptable for girls to do. So I got enrolled in a beautician course. And let me tell you, I HATED it! It's funny isn't it? All us girls are meant to like things like that, but I hated it."

Rabbunisha

Rabbunisha, was 23 when I first met her, she is from a Muslim family and migrated to Delhi from Uttar Pradesh when she was an infant. "My family consists of my mother, father, two brothers, one sister and me. I am the second eldest, first it's my brother, then me, then another brother and one sister. We all live together in Delhi. My brother got married to a girl of his choice, it was a love marriage, but then my father drove him away so he didn't live with us for some time. We are a family of drivers, my father, both brothers and now I – we all drive.

My younger sister is in college, she is studying at Jamia[51], I am not sure what course because I am not that educated... She is different to all of us, she is just like a foreigner! She is fair and pretty and smart, not like the rest of us. My mother, like most Muslim women after marriage, doesn't work. I was born in Lucknow. My whole family moved here when I was just a baby. My father used to work here, so when my parents got married, then my mother joined him. She was 12 when she got married. Then we were born, so we came here too.

I got pulled out of school in the 7th grade. After that I spent a year in my village learning how to cook and run a house and then I returned to Delhi. I was always at home, we wouldn't leave home without the *naqaab*[52]. Not just a *hijab*, but the full *naqaab*. My mother sister and I all used to wear the *naqaab*. I always did all the household chores, even when I was studying. Stepping out of the house just wasn't allowed in my home." Rabbunisha lives in a home that is owned by the family (and largely financed through her income as a driver) in Madanpur Khadar. Rabbunisha is a private placement driver.

Lalita

Lalita, who when I was speaking with her for the first time in 2016, had just written her final exams for her BA at the age of 23, she re-enrolled in school when she became a driver at Sakha Consulting Wings and has completed both secondary school and her college degree through open schools and universities. She was born in Delhi into a Hindu family, her family is originally from Uttar Pradesh. Indicative of son preference, Lalita's parents had several children until her brother was born, "first it is my oldest sister, then me, then two sisters and then my brother. My mother is a housewife and my father's job is to grind tiles and polish floors. When I was 10 I began stitching and sewing with a couple of other girls in the colony.

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[51] Jamia Millia Islamia is a public central university, located in New Delhi
[52] Veil that covers the face in addition to the hair

I also went to an institute where I learned these things." Lalita continued on in school and was doing well, but when she finished 8ᵗʰ grade, her home in RK Puram was demolished. "You see, it was an illegal colony, so the government decided to get rid of it." Lalita left school and she moved along with her family to Madanpur Khadar. "People who migrate from the village to the city in search of livelihoods are forced to live in the constricted spaces of slums are generally considered hindrances in the path of so-called development. Urban planners and governments are only too ready to push them further into the margins. Something like this happened with Lalita's family" (Rao, 2017, p. 145). Once they moved to Madanpur Khadar, Lalita did not re-enrol in school, but shouldered the domestic and care work alongside her mother. In order to build space for the family to live, Lalita's father then took out a loan to build a small room in the resettlement colony where they now lived. Her younger siblings remained in school. When I met her, Lalita was a commercial driver and during the course of my fieldwork, was hired by Azad Foundation as a trainer.

Ripu

Ripu[53] was born in 1985, she was a twin but her twin brother died at birth; "my mother used to always say that it was a bad omen that I survived and he died, especially since I only have one brother and we are four sisters in total; because of that they never celebrated my birthday – because I was born on the day that her son died." Her father was in the army, so she lived in Danapur Cantt in Bihar, and studied until grade 10. Ripu has three sisters and one brother "even though the eldest of us is a man, I think my parents kept on hoping to have more boys, which is why we are so many siblings." She lives in Delhi in Madanpur Khadar, in rented accommodation, at the time that I commenced my field work, she lived with her husband and

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[53] Ripu has been my personal driver since 2016 so her field interviews were extensive and took place over three years. Additionally, her narratives are deeply personal because of the relationship that we shared and the amount of time that we spent with one another.

two children and her husband's younger brother and his family lived in a rented room next door. Ripu is Hindu from Bihar and migrated to Delhi after she got married. Ripu is a private placement driver.

Sunita

Sunita is from Uttar Pradesh and was 42 years old when I first met her. She is Hindu. She is the eldest of four sisters. Her father worked in Delhi when she was born and her mother remained in the village. She moved to Delhi when she was five years old. "I was born in Khurja, in a village called Baner Nagariya. My mother's children would rarely live – so after birth my grandmother took me away from my mother immediately and returned me to her when I was six months old. I came to Delhi when I was five years old. My head had insects and boils, a cure for which wasn't available in the village, so my mother brought me to Delhi; my father used to work as a labourer in Delhi. When my mother came here, she worked in big people's homes and got me cured; only after we moved here and I got better did I have sisters… we are four sisters in total. My three younger sisters were born in Delhi. The one who was immediately younger to me passed away, the one younger to her got married and recently gave birth to a boy; my youngest sister lives at home and performs odd jobs. My parents face a lot of ridicule from the community because we are only girls. But I think that over time, we have shown them! My sister who passed away had one daughter, who lives with me now, because her husband remarried after my sister died. So in total, I have three daughters. Sunita walked out of an abusive marriage and now lives in a home owned by the family, with her parents and her sister in Badarpur. Her three daughters (two biological and one adopted from her sister) are all living and studying in a Catholic boarding school (the precise location of this school was consciously not revealed to me by Sunita.) Sunita is a commercial driver.

The 'common' habitus

There are a couple of features that cut across the prevailing social structures of all of my case studies, regardless of religion or background. They are violence, alcoholism, son preference and in the case of Shabnam and Rabbunisha, my two Muslim respondents, the active choice to remove their hijab.

Alcoholism

Alcoholism is widespread amongst the urban poor in Delhi, as corroborated by Grover (2011). As Jackson (1999) cautions this must be interrogated in relation to the male breadwinner ideology, when men are unable to provide, or live up to the hegemonic masculine ideas (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), they use alcoholism as an escape. For all of my respondents, men in their families (fathers / brothers / husbands) are frequent consumers of alcohol, even Rabbunisha and Shabnam's fathers drink frequently, despite it being prohibited in Islam. This illustrates on one hand, that the habitus informs the need to drink when men are unable to provide for their families. As Lalita says 'my father really only started to drink when everything that he worked for got demolished in RK Puram. It was like he had failed." However, it is also because of the normalisation of drinking in the community, Ripu adds, "how can we tell our husbands that drinking is a problem, if literally every man he sees is lying on the floor totally drunk. How can we say that this is not what we deserve, when every day at 10pm all you hear from every house is the sound of drunk men beating up their wives and children?" Ripu speaks of the normalisation of alcoholism, and this is internalised by everyone in the community. Ripu goes on to say, "then to make matters worse, it's the [elder] women [in the community] who say, this is normal, we have all been through it, this is what a marriage is." Sunita says, "It's almost as if it's the right that men have to drink, and what do we inherit?? All of the consequences."

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Violence

Violence is another theme that cuts across all the case studies, perpetuated by the male members of the family. Violence data from the National Family Health Survey, NFHS-4[54] depicts that nationally, 33% of women who have ever been married experience domestic violence, however in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, the states where my respondents hail from, these percentages are higher than the mean for India at 38% and 45% respectively. However it is vital to nuance these figures, because of the normalisation of violence within the habitus, and due to the preservation of family honour, it is very likely that these numbers greatly underrepresent the actual picture on the ground. Even in the cases where violence is reported, only a small fraction of these women have gone on to ask for help. "Of all women in India who have ever experienced any type of physical or sexual violence, only 14 percent have sought help to stop the violence and 77 percent have never sought help nor told anyone about the violence they experienced ... The percentage of women who have experienced violence who have sought help has declined since NFHS-3, when it was 24 percent" (International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) and ICF, 2017, p. 572). This indicates, how normalised violence is, that not only is it not reported, but even when it is reported, women are unlikely to seek recourse. As Sunita shares in her narrative, even when she went out to ask for help from the local '*panchayat*', her husband initially agreed to stop hitting her, but the very moment that they were in private, he threatened her and said, who will come and help you now?" Given that intimate partner violence occurs in the private sphere, the reach of the public sphere does not

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[54] NFHS 4 defines violence as "**Physical spousal violence:** push you, shake you, or throw something at you; slap you; twist your arm or pull your hair; punch you with his fist or with something that could hurt you; kick you, drag you, or beat you up; try to choke you or burn you on purpose; or threaten or attack you with a knife, gun, or any other weapon **Sexual spousal violence**: physically force you to have sexual intercourse with him even when you did not want to; physically force you to perform any other sexual acts you did not want to; force you with threats or in any other way to perform sexual acts you did not want to **Emotional spousal violence:** say or do something to humiliate you in front of others; threaten to hurt or harm you or someone close to you; insult you or make you feel bad about yourself"

extend past the threshold between public and private. This is the biggest irony, while we have seen the extent to which the public sphere and social institutions influence the private sphere, when it comes to domestic violence, there is a conscious separation of the institutions and the community, who are reluctant to intervene in this particular 'private matter.' Sunita says "who in their right mind will stick up for married woman? In fact, when I tried to ask for help, people told my husband, that it was a short-falling on his part because he could not control his wife. You can only imagine how angry that made him." Sunita's husband's ability to act like a real man, as defined by the social structures governed by patriarchy, were called into question, with Sunita bearing the brunt of the repercussions. She says, "this is the problem, you keep on telling men to act like a man, again and again. Then they are treated badly by other people, their family, their employers, their friends…. So the only way they can 'act like a man' is by coming home and beating up their wives."

Son Preference

As we have seen, one of the central definers of a woman's life course in India is the unwavering preference for sons. "Son preference is found in certain types of cultures, that is, patrilineal cultures, which commonly manifest some discrimination against daughters. And we know that the more rigidly patrilineal the culture the greater the discrimination against daughters. In such settings, daughters are formally transferred on marriage to their husband's family and can no longer contribute to their natal family. This drastically lowers the value of daughters relative to sons, reducing parents' willingness to invest in raising girls" (Das Gupta, 2009, p. 2). Dasgupta (2009) also highlights the close association between patrilineal societies and masculine sex ratios. She says, "Child sex ratios are by far the most masculine in these rigidly patrilineal settings, given their effectiveness at marginalizing daughters and reducing parents' incentives to invest their resources in raising girls. This underlies the widely documented practices in these settings of ante-natal sex selection, female infanticide, and

greater alacrity at seeking medical services for sons than for daughters" (ibid, p. 6). As Kaur (2016)highlights, "India's two-child norm, combined with son-preference and the advent of sex determination technologies, has contributed to the birth of fewer girls" (Kaur, 2016, p. 1), and this can have "far reaching social consequences and widespread concern is already being voiced over the likely consequences of highly masculine populations" (ibid). Son preference is a gender regime that is socially constructed, "Boys in societies with strong son preference are entitled to preferential treatment as objects of affection, as crucial resources for the perpetuation and strengthening of kinship ties, and for old age security, while girls' values are largely determined by the roles they are expected to play as wives and mothers" (Srinivasan, 2014). We can observe how son preference has profoundly impacted their own life course, in the driver's narratives. Srinivasan (2014) also states that "daughter elimination is hegemonic, normalised as the most acceptable and obvious outcome but this does not preclude women, men or girls from acting otherwise and for change to occur over generations. But for counter-hegemony of daughter preference and survival, changes are required in the larger unequal and oppressive structures that (re) create and sustain daughter aversion" (ibid). Ultimately, intentional interventions resulting in structural change must occur so that the "parents (and sometimes the extended family) who ultimately take the decision to keep or abort a girl child, the value of daughters to parents must shift, become visible, and be consciously recognized and acknowledged, for them to desire daughters" (Kaur & Kapoor, 2020, p. 2).

Veiling

Shabnam and Rabbunisha, consciously removed their veil once they began driving, as Rabbunisha says, "It has nothing to do with me not being religious, but it has to do with me freeing myself from the expectations put on me by society. I took off my *naqaab* when I was no longer limited by remaining in the four walls of my house." The *naqaab* has symbolic power (Bourdieu, 1979) and is the operationalization of the public-private split upon a woman's body,

so that even when a woman is in public, she is confined to the private, through the *pardah.*
Additionally, the *pardah*, as Mandelbaum (1988) illustrates, is tied to the *izzat* of the family
and spans all religious affiliations in North India. As Rabbunisha articulates, her decision to
remove her *naqaab*, was not a religious one, but her challenging the structures that confined
her. She built her agency through her occupation as a driver, and in her mind, "my uniform
does not include a *naqaab*." It is important to nuance Rabbunisha's statement, in *her particular
case*, the removal of the naqaab meant that she was breaking away from the confines of the
home, but the veil can be used to assert agency (Mahmood, 2012), and that there are many
drivers and trainees who continue wearing a *hijab* even when they become drivers. For
Shabnam, the decision was even more practical, "I just felt like my *hijab* got in the way,
honestly… its not like I was rebelling or anything – it was just uncomfortable for me to wear
in the car…my mom understood that this is not something that I could wear while driving, so
no one really made a big deal out of it." However, what Shabnam does not articulate (or
potentially realise), is that she possessed the agency to make that decision because she was now
driving, whereas she might not have been able to make that decision a couple of years prior.
Both Rabbunisha and Shabnam were not worried about the consequences or ridicule from the
community either, Shabnam says "honestly, at this point, who was going to say anything to
me?" - a clear sign of their agency in relation to existing social structures, and their ability to
create disruptions.

However, it is important to recognise, that while both Shabnam and Rabbunisha
challenged existing social structures, there are times when they too comply with the
expectations of the community. "When religious leaders come from the community, I just wear
it, the point is, they aren't here every day – so why get into an argument with them and why
should I put my parents into that position?" (Shabnam). Here we can see that challenging and
negotiating with social structures go hand in hand and can happen in parallel. Shabnam's

decision to comply with covering her head is well thought out, that there is limited value in challenging social norms in environments where there will be limited impact on her day to day life. This is something that transcends the religion of my respondents. Ripu says, "I don't wear a sari anymore, but when I go to Bihar, I wear my sari and cover my head in front of my in laws…honestly, how is a couple of days of doing that going to make a difference?" This anecdote is the manifestation of the patriarchal bargain (Kandiyoti, 1991).

Ripu and Sunita's Marriages

Ripu

"My parents wanted to get all us sisters married, I guess because there were so many of us girls; my sisters married well; one of their husbands is in the CRPF[55], one is a farmer and one is a driver". Ripu got married in 2002 and moved to her in-laws house in Nasratpur village in Ara district. She and her family were told by her in-laws, that her husband lived in Delhi and had a government job. In order to solidify the match a dowry of over INR 50,000 in cash, kitchen utensils, jewellery and clothing was expected and paid by Ripu's family to her husband's family. Her father was told that her husband had a house in Delhi. He was shown acres of land in the village, stating that it all belonged to the family. They later discovered, that none of the land was actually theirs, nor did they own a house in Delhi.

About a month and a half after her marriage, her husband said that he didn't like his wife and said that he wanted to leave her, because it just wouldn't work. Ripu was sent back to her parents' home and her husband returned to Delhi. Ripu was pregnant at the time; when she called her husband to tell him that she was pregnant, he said "I do not want this child or you, you should have an abortion". Ripu delivered her daughter Neha at her parents' home and continued to live there as she had been sent back by her husband and her in-laws didn't want

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[55] Central Reserve Police Force

to keep her in their home anymore either. However, in 2003, when Ripu's husband's brother was getting married; "I was called back to my in-laws place for 15 days for the actual marriage ceremony; as soon as the marriage was over I was dispatched back to my parents place." In 2004, when Ripu's father passed away, her husband came to the death rituals and at that point decided that Ripu and their daughter Neha should accompany him to Delhi. Due to Neha's health, Ripu went back and forth from her parents' house in Bihar to her husband's home in Delhi and in 2005 their son Pawan was also born.

Ripu's husband had told her that he was working a 24-hour job in someone's home. Then his story changed and he said that we was working in an office on a night shift. All Ripu knew was that he would come home once a week or so and spend the night; often bringing home about INR 5000 or 6000; totalling almost INR 20,000 per month. "Basically, since we got married, we never really lived together. I used to ask him where he was going and he used to tell me, 'are you working? Is your father giving me money to support you? No – well then keep your mouth shut."

It was only in 2007, when her husband made a plan to take his children out to CR Park[56] to celebrate *Durga Puja*[57], did the truth unfold. "I was so scared, my husband told me to come in an auto with both the children, I still remember, Pawan was in my lap and Neha was so young; today the 30 minute trip to CR Park is nothing, but that day, I was so scared because I was alone and I didn't know where I was going. Even after getting to CR Park, I couldn't find my husband anywhere, we roamed around looking for him and after calling him several times, I finally met him and he had his arms around two women. Honestly, by the end I got used to seeing this [seeing him with other women] but in the beginning when I saw this, I stayed strong but I was crying from the inside, that he was acting that way in front of the children. Those

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[56] Chittaranjan Park, a locality in South Delhi
[57] Annual Hindu Festival which reveres and pays homage to Goddess Durga

girls and him came to us and made small talk, they said hi to my kids. He told me that this was his office Madam [boss at the office].

While we were all there, he was talking to his *Chacha*[58] about nightly rates and they were negotiating some sort of price. I didn't understand what was going on; so I asked my *Chachi Saas*[59]. She explained that her husband and my husband were in the business of connecting wealthy men to women from locations such as Russia, Nepal, the North East and other places for transactional sex. Everyone in the family was in this business, my husband, his younger brother and his two *Chachas*. She told me everything when I asked. She said that rich people contact them – and they arrange for viewings, either at their 'office' or sometimes on the street, they arrange for the girls to be standing at a particular spot, so that rich men can drive up to select the girl that they want to have sex with for the night. Then the rich people negotiate a rate for the night and my husband's family keeps half the money and the girls get half the money. My *chachi saas* told me to look at my husband's phone – I was so naïve, when I saw all these photos of girls, I told her, that these are the people that he works with. She then exclaimed that I was crazy. My *chachi saas* knows everything and doesn't have a problem with any of this because she is getting richer and richer and her husband's [sexual] desires are getting fulfilled with these women, so she doesn't really care.

So slowly, whenever he did come home to us, once a week or so, I would ask him and slowly he told me everything. Like it was totally normal, what he did. I started wondering, if they are arranging these relations for other rich people, then he must also be sleeping with these women? He said of course, it's not like we send them out to other men every night. So casually he told me that he was routinely sleeping with other women. When I questioned him he told

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[58] Father's Younger Brother
[59] Husband's father's younger brother's wife

me 'that I am keeping you in the house and feeding you aren't I?' Through all this I was compelled to stay with him. I wasn't working, I didn't have money.

In 2011, I basically lost any respect for him. It was *Holi*[60] and his uncle and uncle's friend came over. They were all pressuring me to play *Holi* with them and I refused. Everyone was totally drunk and misbehaving, so I told my husband that I am going to give them food, but then you have to make them leave. Eventually, they took a *dupatta*[61] and covered my face, then one of them grabbed my hands and pulled them behind my back. You know what, I was still thinking that they were going to put colour on my face that is why they are pulling my hands back. They then started touching me everywhere. Very inappropriately. My husband just sat there and watched, almost as if he enjoyed watching it. After that, I was done with him, but I could not escape my situation, I couldn't leave him. What would I do? I thought about killing myself. So I bought some poison, you know the kind that you use to kill cockroaches? I was about to take it, when a neighbour walked in and snatched the bottle out of my hands. He told me 'you have two children, have you ever thought of what will happen to them if you kill yourself. He said that there are many men who are like this, your husband isn't the only one' – and so I stayed, I stayed in the marriage for my children.

In 2012, my husband showed up at the house, almost naked. He had no shoes, no shirt nothing. He was literally in his underpants. It was 230 in the morning. He was always impressively dressed up; never left home without getting dressed up. He told me that there had been a raid; he actually jumped out of a building from the third story to prevent being caught. After that, he came to the realisation that this is dangerous work and he left his job. He had saved a lot of money, so for the next few years he sat at home and worked his way through all of the money that he had saved. We got to the point where we had no money, so my children

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[60] Hindu Festival of Colour and Spring. Holi is celebrated by adorning friends and family with coloured powder.
[61] Shawl like scarf worn by women

would actually go to the *aanganwadi*[62] and fill tubs with *dalia*[63] and bring it home and that is how all of us would eat. Towards the end of 2012, my sister moved to Delhi and that is how my children and I ate. My sister would feed me – and my husband would even storm into her house and eat all her food and wouldn't be grateful. Like it was an expectation. My mother would also send us money, my other sister's husband would send us *atta*[64], *chawal*[65] and *dal*[66].

At this point I had made the decision to begin working. I told my husband that I would begin working in someone's house, cooking or cleaning or something like that. Or I would join a company. My husband told me that he would not allow either, when I asked him why he said 'because women are used [sexually] in those environments'. I remember getting angry with him and saying, just because you do it doesn't mean that everyone else also thinks like you. He then told me 'all women are like this, no woman is decent or has morals.'

Sunita

I got married when I was 14 years old. I didn't want to get married; my parents were facing pressure from the family, as I was the eldest so I had to get married first, only after which the others could get in line to get married. My paternal grandparents were old-fashioned and got after my parents' lives to get me married, they said that after me, they would have to worry about three more girls. As soon as I was married, I became a victim of domestic violence. I was married here in Lajpat Nagar and my husband runs a dry-cleaning business. I used to be tortured a lot, as a result of which I lost a son – at that time he was my only child. I had a five month old son and I was actually pregnant with my older daughter at the time. My husband

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[62] Aanganwadi is a government sponsored child care centre. They were started by the Indian government in 1975 as part of the Integrated Child Development Services program to combat child hunger and malnutrition. Anganwadi means "courtyard shelter" in Indian languages.
[63] Cracked Wheat
[64] Durum Wheat Flour
[65] Rice
[66] Lentils

was very upset one day so he got drunk and was taking out his frustration at home. He found a stone pestle in the kitchen and attempted to throw it at me. While I dodged it, it hit my son in the spine. He was in ICU for 3 days, but the doctors couldn't save him so he died.

There were many reasons for the violence, like my husband's drinking. He would start drinking at 4 in the afternoon and go on till 4 the next morning. He used to work drunk, he did everything under influence. But one of the other reasons is that my husband, my *jeth*[67] and *nanad*[68] all had the same business. Before marriage, my husband was only interested in his food and other necessary expenditures for himself. Since I entered his life, his expenses increased and he started asking for more money that were due to him from his share of the profits. He eventually said that he was going to separate from the family business and that would mean a loss to the business and my sister-in-law really didn't want that. She thought all of his ideas were coming from me, so she used to torture me. That wasn't really the problem though – the problem was that she would say things to him and then he would get frustrated and hit me [as a consequence].

My husband and I eventually started living separately from the rest of the family, but my sister-in-law didn't let my husband leave the business. So he would go to work, get frustrated and then take it out on me. My husband would hit me, beat me up until I couldn't move, then he would strip me naked and throw me out of the house. My elder daughter, would give me my sari through the window when my husband would fall asleep – then I would clothe myself and sit outside all night; until he opened the door in the morning. He had the key so my daughter couldn't even let me in. Sometimes, he would strip me naked and leave me at the railway tracks near the Ashram flyover. Absolutely naked. I would sit there all night and many times dogs and the police would get after me. I would find things to cover myself with, like

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[67] Husband's elder brother
[68] Husband's sister

newspaper and then walk home so that I could be let back into the house. This went on for almost three years. A couple of times he even slit my wrists, I would bear everything so as not to burden anyone. Even though I didn't tell my parents, a couple of times I did go to the local *panchayat*[69] 40-50 people would turn up and when I told them what was happening they would fold their hands and tell me to go back to my husband. I used to think that I cannot leave my husband because I would be a barrier to my other sisters' marriages. That man would apologise to me in public and promise to be better, and you know what, I actually believed him. Then after promising that he won't repeat his mistakes, the second we would reach home he would strip me naked, punch me with his fists and ask 'now tell me, who from the *panchayat* will come and save you now'.

When my elder daughter was four and a half years old and my younger daughter was three months old, in the year 2000; my husband came home very drunk, just when he entered my elder daughter wanted to go to the bathroom. I took her to the bathroom, and in the meantime, my husband wrapped my younger daughter in a bed-sheet and left her outside in the rain. Then he latched the front door to our house from inside. We banged on the doors, but the entire night passed, even our landlord tried to get him to open the door but he didn't. That man kept on sleeping inside while I was standing outside in the rain with my children. I couldn't even go anywhere, because he would put allegations on me, like 'you went to someone else's house, this must mean that you have relations with other men. You know he never even let me speak to another man because he would accuse me of doing wrong things with others even if I spoke to them. I spent the whole night sitting there in wet clothes, my kids were also in wet clothes – none of us even had shoes. Upon waking up, that man put a lock on the gate and told me that the lock shouldn't break, in fact he threatened me saying he would kill all three of us if he found the lock broken. Then he left. After locking us out, he went to my house and he

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[69] Village Council

threatened my mother by saying that she should make me understand how to treat her husband. He said that I was the one who was fighting with him and I hadn't given him home cooked food in over a week. But tell me, how am I meant to cook food if there was nothing at home? I was hungry, my children were hungry – in fact it was the neighbours who were feeding our daughters.

When he left my mother's house, she came to our place. As soon as she saw the condition that we were all in, she got the lock broken, got our clothes out, we wore our clothes and from that day onwards, I have lived with my parents. When my husband came home, the landlord told him to call me. He showed up at my parents place after a few days and exclaimed that he was there to take us all back. I told him that I wasn't coming back unless he became normal and wrote down on a piece of stamp paper that he will never ever hit me or my children again. In that moment, he turned around and walked out. At the same time my mother was returning home and he started swearing at her then throwing stones at her. Initially we sat inside thinking that he would make a scene and then go away. My mother then told him, that 'my daughter is in my house, and you should go back to your own house. We are not taking anything from you and we will keep her nicely in our own house even if it is tough...' she then went on to say 'imagine if someone treated your sister like this..?' she just needed to utter the words 'your sister' and that was it. He held my mother's hair and dragged her into the street. As soon as my sister and I saw this we picked up sticks and both jumped into the street. We then started hitting him. I remember thinking, today I am going to kill him and I am not leaving him alive. I didn't want to leave him [alive], but our neighbours intervened. At this point he fainted, so I got up to go and call the police. As soon as I went to make the call, that man got up and ran away.

After this I began working at Luxor company, they are the people that make Parker pens. He found out after about three months that I was working there. So he showed up at the

factory gates one day and commanded that I return home with him. I told him, that I didn't know who he was, by then a crowd gathered and he ran away. He was very upset so a few days later he found me outside the factory, he didn't say a word but he hit me with his car and went away. I got a fracture in my leg. After that I was adamant to never even communicate with him again. He kept on showing up at the company which led me to lie to the company officials. I told them that the man is my sister's husband, and he actually killed my sister by beating her and that I was taking care of my sister's children now; which is why this man is after my life to marry him now. Thus, he troubles me and tells everyone that I am his wife. I couldn't tell them the truth because they have a policy of not hiring married women. The company was very understanding and agreed to transfer me to another branch.

That man would also show up at my daughter's school. One day the school called me up and they told me 'your husband is here to pick up your daughter and she is refusing to leave the school. She is crying and shaking and has even urinated in her clothes.' I became so scared because what if the school hadn't called or he forcibly picked her up? After that I made the decision to get my elder daughter admitted in a boarding school. I did not share the school address with anybody, not even my own relatives, in case he put pressure on them. I felt that my younger daughter was too young to go to boarding school, so I admitted her into a different school in Delhi. One day my younger daughter was playing at school and that man just picked her up and was trying to take her home. Luckily I caught them because I was on the way to pick her up. I confronted him and he told me 'I am taking her to get her photograph clicked because I have no photographs of her.' As soon as he saw me, he folded his hands and touched my feet and said 'I will stay where you tell me to, I will stay as you please, I will take on all the expenses, I won't ever fight with you.' After that I admitted my younger daughter in boarding school as well. Now all I needed to do was earn enough money to take care of them.

You know what, he never remarried, in the hope that one day I would return to him. But who will return to such a monster, especially after what he did to my mother."

Structures that we inherit

All of the ethnographies illustrate the centrality of marriage, for Lalita, Rabbunisha and Shabnam, they reveal the non-negotiable expectation of their compulsory marriage and for Ripu and Sunita, the realities of their marriages. Borneman (1996) concludes that "marriage was foundational to the organization of social life, with questions about economics, politics, religion, and even kinship most often added to contextualize the study of marriage" (1996, p. 218). Within the South Asian context, the institution of marriage is compulsory and inevitable. The institution of marriage also concretises binaries: "And with marriage as the stable point of reference, they also claimed universality for the violent hierarchies…male/female, civilized/primitive, birth/death, heterosexual/homosexual, normal/deviant" (ibid, p. 219). Due to the central role that marriage has in preserving the status quo of social norms, "marriage obtains its exact and privileged place in the replication of our present order only by means of foreclosures and erasures of relations that resist facile, heteronormative symbolization. These foreclosures and exclusions do not stop after the initial exchange of rings but are reiterated each time that ring is displayed in the public sphere, where it is always a marker of belonging" (ibid, p. 231).

One day, every girl has to go to her 'own' home (*Ek din toh apne ghar hi jaana hai)*

One of the key beliefs around marriage for women is that it is compulsory and it is inevitable. "Marriage continues to be universally regarded as essential for a girl, in India, irrespective of class, caste, religion and ethnicity, as control of her sexuality and its safe transference into the hands of the husband are given prime importance" (Karlekar, 2008, p. 244). As Rabbunisha says, "My father just wanted to marry us off and relieve himself of his

responsibility. Honestly, this is part of the mentality of most parents with daughters, and you know it's not just the poor, it's the rich who think like this too. Though with us, the economically weaker section of society, for girls, marriage is considered the ultimate milestone. There is no space for a girl's education or talent. It is only about getting married." Additionally, there is a finality associated with marriage, that once a daughter leaves her father's home for her 'own home', then it is forever. Her father's home is viewed as her temporary home, a placeholder, until she leaves and settles in her husband's home. "On marriage, women are exported to her husband's lineage: her (temporary) "slot" in the household ceases to exist, and a new (permanent) "slot" is created for incoming brides" (Das Gupta, 2009, p. 5). Daughters are effectively lost to their parents when they marry.

The concept behind dowry is that "the bride is given movable property for her dowry as her share of her parents' estate" (Sharma, 1993, p. 351); so in closing the transaction of dowry, a girl's claim to her parents' home and assets, as a safe space is largely diminished. Ironically, as Sharma notes, "the bride herself will have very little say in what happens to her dowry once it leaves her parents' home" (ibid, p. 344). When Sunita left her husband, one of the things that she pointed out to me, was that all the gold that her parents gave to her is still sitting with her mother-in-law. "[My parents] probably spent years putting all of that together; and when I left, I couldn't even rely on that saving that my parents made, supposedly in my name. That's the thing – women never actually see their own dowry. It just gets locked up by her mother-in-law [laughs]." This idea of one's husband's home being a girl's real home is internalised. Ripu says "before marriage, my parents' house was my house. But when I got married, I was told I had to manage in my own home now. I was told by my family that if I came to my parents' home, I would get *roti* to eat and an article of clothing to wear; but I was a guest now and I needed to remember that." This thought process was further concretised by the community around Ripu. When her husband sent her back to live with her parents; "people

in the community would always tell me, you must have done something wrong, otherwise who doesn't come back to pick up their wife and take her home. How long can you continue staying as a guest in your parents' house?"

A daughter's time, agency and role in the home where she is born is borrowed and within that borrowed space and time, a concerted effort is made to prepare for her marriage – both in terms of amassing a dowry but also in terms of grooming daughters so that they are able to find the best possible match. Rabbunisha continues by saying, "when I got my first period, I was in class 7 at the time, I didn't tell anyone. Our mathematics teacher, Sabita Ma'am had once told us about periods using examples of staining white clothes and all these other weird metaphors about flowers and buds or some other such nonsense; so I knew what was happening. When my mother found out, she gave me two *salwaar kurtas*[70], and just like that my days of wearing jeans and dresses were over. She also told me that I shouldn't tell anyone about my period; she said 'such things are not spoken about. People can do black magic!' You know I even asked her, how can anyone do black magic on this, pointing to the rag that I used at that time instead of a sanitary napkin. She told me 'you'll get to know once you are married and not conceiving a child. They tie knots[71] and then when you are childless you will know. Then what will you do?' With the *salwaar kurta*, came the decision that I was to be pulled out of school as well.

My parents then sent me to the village to prepare for marriage [laughs] I am not even joking. They said 'don't go to school, go to the village, and learn how to light the stove so you can cook!' My mother sent me to her family's house and I couldn't do anything. I didn't know how to make mud to make the walls, or collect wood or light a stove. My *Maama*[72] would beat

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[70] Long Shirt and Pants, traditional North Indian attire
[71] It is believed that Black Magic can be done on a 'victim' by tying knots on their belongings with their name written on it.
[72] Mother's Brother

me with a whip, you know, what they hit horses with. My hands got so swollen. I called my mother up to tell her this, I told her that your brother hits me, where have you sent me? You need to come and take a look at my hands. My mother said, 'stay there, and don't argue too much. Whether they beat you or cut you, stay there.' I spent a year there, can you imagine? I slowly learned everything. I was ready to be married off [laughs]. When I went, I reached there as a child, but when I returned, I was much stronger, older. Either way, as soon as a girl begins menstruating, everything stops – her whole life. And then all that happens is that her parents prepare her for marriage."

Daughters are viewed as a burden, the lack of joy or celebration when a daughter is born is intimately tied to the costs not only at the time of her marriage, but also throughout a daughter's life, like the birth of her children, and marriages in her husband's home. The significance of constantly giving to the daughter and her husband's family is enduring. "Whatever the dowry consists of, these gifts are given as a part of a series of presentations made by the family of the bride to that of the groom… when they arrange a marriage of a son, parents do not just look forward to the dowry that they will receive at the wedding. They look to the bride's family's general capacity to give" (Sharma, 1993, p. 343). Due to this, there are very real considerations that parents take into account when raising their daughters. Shabnam and Ripu, despite excelling at school, were both pulled out of school because their families were concerned that they wouldn't be able to afford their dowries if they would have to find a man who is more educated than their daughter. The potential cost of their future dowry was the primary reason that their education was stopped. Rabbunisha echoes this by saying "It's like school was a placeholder until we got our period and then we could begin the real job of getting prepared for marriage." Ripu says, "our personality, who we are, what we like, nothing actually mattered – what mattered was the dowry we brought with us." This is because "What a bride is worth is measured more and more by the amount of material goods and cash her family can

provide rather than by the reputation and prestige with which they can endow her, the skills they have ensured that she has acquired. In consequence, the provision of dowry involves a great strain on the household and this encourages daughters to see themselves as burdens rather than blessings" (Sharma, 1993, p. 353).

Your lineage will get blown out if you do not have sons (*Naam bhuj jayega*)

"It's very simple, people just don't want daughters, if one of us twins had to die, it should have been me so that my brother could live. I know that this is what my parents have thought my whole life. I was never celebrated; because my life was my brother's death… and this cycle isn't going to end anytime soon. My brother has two daughters, and I know that they have aborted at least eight female foetuses. It's clear, no one wants girls (Ripu)." Ripu's experience is symptomatic of son preference.

All of the women had, in some way internalised that they were a burden, as Shabnam says, "Because people think that girls belong to another house, once they are married you are rid of your hassles in life". For Ripu, the fact that they are four sisters and only one brother meant that her family was under pressure to get them all married off and ensure that they collected enough assets to transfer with their daughter at the time of marriage. "Honestly, I don't think my parents even looked properly for a match for me. Sometimes I get very angry. They saw over ten boys for my sister, but they got me married in the first place that they looked. They needed me to be married off so I could 'clear the line' for the others. They were also concerned that I wasn't good looking, therefore I wouldn't find a good match. So they got me married in the first place they looked where the family accepted me as a match. Can you believe that my father didn't even meet my husband? Some man from the community told my father that 'he is a good guy' and on that basis they got me married. He is almost 10 years older than

me, I was born in 1985 and he was born in 1977, you'd think that they would have considered that at least?"

Similarly, for Sunita her decisions about whether to leave her marriage or even tell her parents for that matter were intimately tied to the adverse effects that her decisions could potentially have upon her sisters' future marriages. For Lalita, withdrawing from school to help out within the home was a consequence of her easing the burden by helping out within the home. As Rabbunisha states, "Girls are always suffering. Right from their birth – people do not want a girl. When she grows up a little bit, then the family starts to worry about their marriage. Education of girls becomes such a big deal – because no one wants to let them be educated and instead parents just want them to master household chores for their family. Then a girl eventually gets married, and her husband and in-laws torture her. Basically, this is how a woman leads her life, and no one cares for her. There is no consideration for her feelings, her pain or anything else that she is going through – she just shuts her mouth and puts up with it all. I guess that was what I was meant to learn about marriage when my uncle kept on beating me up in the village".

Rabbunisha also highlights another point. The fact that women consider themselves burdens in both their parents' home and in their husband's home, there is a culture of silence or of 'adjustment' (Grover, 2011) that permeates through how a woman is to behave and act. They are taught to remain silent, and 'adjust' to their new environs. "Compromise or 'adjustment' … are the key to marital happiness" (Tyagi-Singh & Uberoi, 2008, p. 435). Sunita embodied this culture of silence and continued to 'adjust' for years, until her husband actually told her parents about the abuse, they had no knowledge of how bad things were. "Despite everything, I hadn't told anyone in my own home what all was happening with me and my children, because I didn't want to cause any tension or trouble. I always say if there are a lot of utensils in the kitchen [a lot of members of the family] living together, then there is bound to

be noise. I used to always think that, if not today, my husband would understand tomorrow. What is funny, is that he was the one who eventually told my parents… in my mind [I didn't tell them because] until when would I trouble my mother, I was supposed to be in my own home now; their job was done."

All of the girls spoke about an inadequacy felt by them, or by their parents due to the lack of brothers. Sunita has no brothers and when describing the day when her husband hit her mother she said "Honestly, if I had caught him again that day, I would have finished him. How could he raise his hand upon my mother? I bore the brunt, my children bore the brunt but I couldn't stand it when he disrespected my parents. Just because we don't have a brother, it doesn't mean that we will allow our parents to be beaten up. I live and die for my parents." Sunita alludes to the 'missing' element of her family, the male heir, someone who would protect her parents. Ironically, Sunita sees herself as her parents' protector, but at the same time she suffered in silence for years because she had internalised the fact that she was a burden upon them. Unfortunately, viewing girls as a burden is not something that has ended with this generation. Sunita recognises what it means to have two daughters, and has already put safeguards in place to ensure that the burden that she bears of her daughters is not transferred to anyone else. "I submitted a written application to the school stating that if anything were to happen to me, then my daughter should be made a nun, so that she would not be a burden to anyone else." Ultimately, these women illustrate how "the interplay of culture, state, and political processes shaped gender roles and the relative value of boys and girls to their parents, underpinning a rigidly patrilineal kinship system" (Das Gupta, 2009, p. 20).

Husband is God *(Pati Parmeshwar Hai)*

In all of their personal journeys, the women highlighted how the men in their lives, their fathers, brothers and husbands had failings. Despite which, they did not raise their voice nor

did they initially try to alter the situation. This is because the men in their lives were in fact what Blackwood (2008) deems to be the Patriarchal Man "classic kinship theory constructs heterosexuality and masculine domination as normative while supressing other meanings. Heterosexuality and masculine domination come together in the trope of the Patriarchal Man" (Blackwood, 2008, p. 14). In the case of Shabnam, her mother has been the principal breadwinner in the family for years (and subsequently Shabnam and her siblings began contributing to running the household financially) but her father is still regarded, and almost revered as the principal decision maker within the family despite not being an economic contributor. Shabnam, Lalita and Rabbunisha all mention the alcohol abuse on the part of their fathers, they also all allude to accepting it as a given, almost as if 'boys will be boys' and it is their right to drink and be violent. Rabbunisha says, "My father drank a lot, in fact he still drinks a lot. He has no control over his actions and doesn't know how to make decisions. He is so old and he still drinks, and I am not judging that – but he is abusing our mother, and there are four children who are now grown up and understand everything. He doesn't see that he is not the only one who can get angry, we all can; but I guess that is something that he can do and we cannot." She goes on to speak about the lack of options that women have "what was my mother to do, should she have walked out on him? For violence? For his drinking? That is something that almost every woman around us faces. You just accept it and ignore it. What else can anyone do?"

In the case of Ripu and Sunita, it was an expectation from the family and the community to stand by their husbands against all odds. As Srinivas (1976) states "The husband was not only the wife's master but her deity. In his service was her salvation. He might be a wife-beater, drunkard, gambler and womaniser but her duty was to serve and obey him" (Srinivas, 1977, p. 230). Ripu's father was diagnosed with cancer in 2004, while she was living with her parents because her husband had 'sent her back'. During that time, her husband came to visit her and

"he told me, that 'if you get a girl for the night [a sex worker] at your parents place, so that I can enjoy myself, then no questions asked; I will bring you back to Delhi with me.' I told him that I would not do that and he said 'in that case, continue rotting in your parents' house' and he left the next day. Eventually, when I got to know what he did for a living, I told my mother, as my father had already passed away by then, and she told me that it is what it is. As long as you are being taken care of, then what is the problem? She also said, that if anyone ever found out, then they will blame you. That there is some inadequacy with you which is why he has to go elsewhere for sex."

For Sunita, despite having gone through what she did, and despite making the decision to leave her husband. In reflecting upon her marriage, she states, "but you know what, he used to love me a lot though, he would take me for outings in the city too, even to eat food outside; when he'd find me quiet or upset, he'd think I am missing my parents and would even take me to meet them." This alludes to the fact that the expectation for men's actions and respect for the women in their lives is so low, that any positive aspect, any small gesture is viewed as being much bigger than it actually is. In some ways, there is an element of being apologetic on behalf of the men in their lives as opposed to holding men accountable to be better people. Ironically, the expectations upon woman in both her parental home and her husband's home is exceptionally high. Her actions are scrutinised, his are not. Her intentions are questioned, his are not. Suspicions are raised on her character, his transgressions are ignored. His mistakes are forgiven and forgotten; hers are not.

This acceptability of men's actions, regardless of what they might be permeates through the whole family. When Sunita left her husband, despite her mother-in-law knowing what her son had done; Sunita was the ultimate culprit of the dissolution of their marriage. As a consequence, not only did she sever ties with Sunita, which was expected, but she also severed ties with her own grandchildren. "I did reach out to his mother once, my younger daughter

spilled hot water on herself and suffered some major burns. So I called up my mother-in-law and she said 'she has gotten burned, she hasn't died… in fact don't even call me if she dies. I do not care."

We pray to Lakshmi to pay for dowries

There is a structure related to physically owning the body of a woman after marriage that leads to spousal abuse. "Here the notion of property in marriage acquires another meaning: … the in-marrying girl viewed as the property of her husband if not of the conjugal family" (Karlekar, 2008, p. 244). Because she is the property of her husband and his family, there is a right to her bodily integrity. This right is what was forced upon Ripu's body when her husband's uncles molested her and her husband watched. This right was what was extended upon Sunita and her children when her husband wanted to vent out his frustrations. Violence in so many ways becomes justifiable because women are viewed as being the property of their husbands. When women are commoditized their value decreases. They are no more than an object that is transacted through marriage; leading to the unequal status of women. In many ways "the body - and indeed the self – is vulnerable to violation" (2008, p. 241). Thus violence becomes an avenue for men to assert their power over women. In Sunita's case, she points to a direct link between the violence perpetuated upon her and the fact that her husband would be verbally abused by his sister in the workplace. Since he felt emasculated at work, in order to maintain the social order and his place within it, he would be increasingly violent with his wife and daughters.

Sunita highlights a certain irony in her own story; "After my son died, I got pregnant again and gave birth to a daughter. That man was so happy. He said that 'Goddess Lakshmi[73]

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[73] Lakshmi is the Hindu goddess of wealth, love, prosperity (both material and spiritual), fortune, and the embodiment of beauty.

has entered our lives. The river of gold has come.' After a couple of years I gave birth to a second daughter and he was even happier. He would say 'I have two rivers, one of silver and one of gold.' When my second daughter was born, the *hijras*[74] came to our building and asked the landlord if a girl or a boy was born. The landlord told them that even the second child was a girl, so the *hijras* promptly left. When my husband found out about this, he actually hired an auto and went to their colony to search for them. He brought them home, we cooked a meal, gave them money and clothes and he kept on telling them that he was happy about a second girl because Goddess Lakshmi was in his home in abundance. Can you imagine, he gave them INR 5000 and suits worth INR 3000 that he bought from Lajpat Nagar Central Market. And can you imagine, after all this, when my younger daughter was maybe two months old, he returned home drunk – picked her up from the bed and threw her against the wall. She would have also died if she didn't fall onto the bed below her."

Palriwala (1989) argues that the practice of dowry is central to any female's claim over property, diminishing her agency because she will always be dependent upon others. "The continuation of dowry acts as a justification for the daughter's exclusion from her father's property, leave alone devaluing her and her economic contribution to her family. Being attached to dowry and excluded from property she can never be a full member of any family, where no family wants the complete responsibility for her or can give her a share in their unity, their property (Palriwala, 1989, p. 944). On one hand, we celebrate women, we pray to women and yet on the other, we view them as nothing more than transactional commodities. Ripu says "this is our problem, we pray to Lakshmi for money, to pay for our daughter's dowries."

Conclusion

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[74] eunuchs

This chapter highlights, how and to what extent women are subject to a certain habitus, one that works intersectionally to perpetuate the subordination of women. This is furthered by the institution of marriage, which increasingly robs women of their own personal agency, and acts to preserve the existing *doxa* of the habitus. "Marriage integrates a person into their community and their interests as self-agent and as agent-of –the-group are identical, (or at least mutually reinforcing), so that when they act, they do so as self-agent and agent-of-the community simultaneously" (Mody, 2008, p. 279).

However, as we have seen through the lives of journeys of the women in this chapter, the subordination of women is not something that is limited to the confines of marriage alone, nor is it limited to only the men in the family. It begins from birth and is solidified through social actions over time by several different actors, because as Shantiji warns, everyone has drunk from the well that has been laced with the sleeping pill of patriarchy. What resonates amongst the journeys of these women and literature that has come before this, is the fact that the family is indeed a regressive site *for* women while at the same time, one of the greatest securities *to* women. And as we shall see in subsequent chapters, it is also one of the biggest inhibitors to women engaging in the workforce, because the Indian family is embedded in, and upheld by a gender regime informed by patriarchy (Connell, 2009).

So what is the solution? If "the family is indeed the major obstacle to the further advance of equality, what conclusions for policy can we then draw? Nothing is easier than to get Government and Opposition together in Parliament to denounce the caste system and ask for its abolition. Who will denounce the Indian family, and ask for that to be abolished" (Beteille, 1993, pp. 450-1). The solution lies in challenging the structures that make the family a regressive place for women, through creating small internal transgressions, that may have unintended consequences, a change in practice can be achieved (Giddens 1977). Ultimately, the family unit is not going to be abolished, therefore the project is to build a space for the

voices of women within the family, to craft new meanings of women's roles within the family unit and to finally, finally hold men accountable for their transgressions. But the first step is to question the impact of cultural colloquiums like *'betiyan parahi hai'* (our daughters aren't ever ours) that exist in all our vocabularies.

Chapter 3:

The Journey at Azad Foundation

***When you walk through the doors of the training centre, it's like you have entered a new world that is full of possibilities
– Savita***

"We are trying to polish the gem. The brilliance of that gem may not shine brightly if we were to just focus on driving. A learning space, a safe space, a leadership space where you are also discovering a lot about yourself will make the gem shine bright. The more you hear, the more you talk, the more you participate in various activities, that is how you become confident and you really shine" – Dolon Sen".

This chapter critically engages with the existing social structures that women coming to Azad have to contend with and how Azad Foundation addresses these social barriers by building the agency of all their drivers through their comprehensive driving program, which not only relies on building the technical skills of their drivers, but also enables drivers to gain what Azad Foundation terms 'Skills ++ to build their own agency. Through her analysis of Azad Foundation and the Women on Wheels program, Baruah (2017) echoes this point by saying, "The depth of the impact upon people's lives must also be considered a critical factor in promoting gender equality. Gender equality and poverty alleviation outcomes can be significant and valuable even when achieved at a relatively small scale. Quantity is not always more important than quality. Further, this research underlines the importance of addressing multiple barriers to women's employment and empowerment simultaneously in order to optimise outcomes" (Baruah, 2017, p. 182). I argue that in order for women to succeed as drivers, a large investment needs to be made in life skills in addition to technical driving training. These additional skills are instrumental in the trainees' transformation and result in them having the agency to question the social structures that they live within. In order to illustrate this process, I will use EMpower's Girl Path™ (2015) to depict the journey that these

women took to arrive at the training centre with the conviction to be trained by Azad Foundation. Using another roadmap, Azad Foundation's *Badlav ka Safarnama*, I will examine the journey that these women took within the training centre up until the point that they graduated from Azad Foundation. This chapter examines the key strategies that are employed to ensure the success of these women. I argue that employing these key strategies has two major consequences, the first is that Azad Foundation is a 'brave space' for these women to gain the self-efficacy and agency to battle the structures that limited them in the first place. The second, is that a sisterhood is built amongst the drivers during the training process and this sisterhood is instrumental in ensuring that the women are able to complete the driving program and become licenced drivers.

From Safe spaces to brave spaces

Arao and Clemens (2013) refer to a safe space in academic environments as "a learning environment that allows students to engage with one another over controversial issues with honesty, sensitivity and respect" (2013, p. 135). However, safe spaces mean tolerance, no room for controversy and at some level, could lead to a stiffening of dialogue in order for the space itself to remain amicable. Therefore, Arao and Clemens propose that "it became increasingly clear to us that our approach to initiating social justice dialogues should not be to convince participants that we can remove risk from the equation, for this is simply impossible. Rather, we propose re-visiting our language, shifting away from the concept of safety and emphasizing the importance of bravery instead, to help students better understand-and rise to- the challenges of genuine dialogue on diversity and social justice issues" (ibid, p. 136). They go onto say that "authentic learning about social justice often requires the very qualities of risk, difficulty and controversy that are defined as incompatible with safety" (ibid, p. 139).

Women arriving at Azad Foundation are not merely attending the training program to learn how to drive, rather at a very fundamental level they are unlearning the rules and regulations of the social structures that have defined their lives up until that point. Their decision to learn how to drive and join Azad is a disruption to social norms and they have the potential, to become active agents in negotiating change. Therefore, by no means is Azad's training centre a safe space, because it necessitates women to question their whole lives, the rules that they live by and will continue to live within – depending on the extent to which they choose to challenge existing structures. As Boostrom (1998) states, this is not an easy process because "learning necessarily involves not merely risk, but the pain of giving up a former condition in favour of a new way of seeing things" (1998, p. 339). This is vital to recognise, because the training centre becomes a site for unlearning, dismantling and then rebuilding one's self, as an active agent in relation to the status quo or existing social structures.

The brave space created within Azad Foundation arms women to claim space for themselves in the public realm as Cornwall (2002) says, encouraging participation within spaces enables the creation of spaces "where there were previously none, about making room for different opinions to be heard where previously they were very limited opportunities for public involvement, and about enabling people to occupy spaces that were previously denied to them" (Cornwall, 2002, p. 2). The brave space created in Azad becomes vital against the backdrop of these drivers interfacing with the public realm. The brave space enables them to gain the self-efficacy and strength to make their own space while they are driving in public space. The brave spaces created become "sites of radical possibility" (ibid, p. 21), for drivers to recognise who they are, their inner strength and capabilities and also their ability to claim space when they step outside of the physicality of the brave space at Azad Foundation.

An important aspect of creating these spaces in Azad Foundation is to ensure that all of the trainees are seen and heard. As Cornwall (2002) argues, a space for real, and non-tokenistic

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participation is required for participation to truly be meaningful. She says, "Tactics are needed to transform the very nature or discourse within spaces for participation if the concerns animating the backstage whispers of the powerless are to be voiced and heard" (Cornwall, 2002, p. 27). The brave space at Azad is carefully created so that it can be occupied and used as a point of reflection, composure and resistance for the women who claim it. As Savita says, "we spent our whole lives being told that we must follow others, that there are other people in the family who will make decisions for us, but what Azad gives us is a place where we can form our own opinions, chat with others and most of all recognise that we have a voice."

A journey to map journeys - The Girl Path

EMpower's The Girl Path ™ methodology was conceived by Cynthia Steele and Andrea Lynch in 2010 in planning an international workshop in Brazil on "Levelling the Playing Field for Adolescent Girls: Sports, Gender and Empowerment". Through meeting with girls and staff in different settings in Latin America, they realised that girls faced many barriers that prevented them from engaging fully in programs offered by civil society organisations. These issues ranged from the girls' internal voices and beliefs that held them back ("I can't do this", "I am not good enough" etc.); to barriers within their home (household responsibilities, parents or brothers' beliefs that girls should not play sports etc.); to barriers while travelling to the training centres (sexual harassment, disapproval etc.) and finally, even once they had reached the training centre (trainers who showed bias against girls in sports, or girls from particular communities etc.). Cynthia and Andrea then thought of a way to surface inhibitors or barriers to girls' participation in programs and importantly to then enable girls, organisations and EMpower to think through productive solutions to mitigate and reduce these barriers. What was born out of this was "The Girl Path™". The purpose of "The Girl Path™" is to enable girls and girl-serving organisations to identify obstacles that prevent girls from fully participating in youth programs, and then to brainstorm ways that programs can remove,

reduce, or otherwise address those barriers. Program participants (girls and or staff) brainstorm together and think of the main obstacles that girls commonly face during each step of their journey to participate in a program intended for them. Namely,
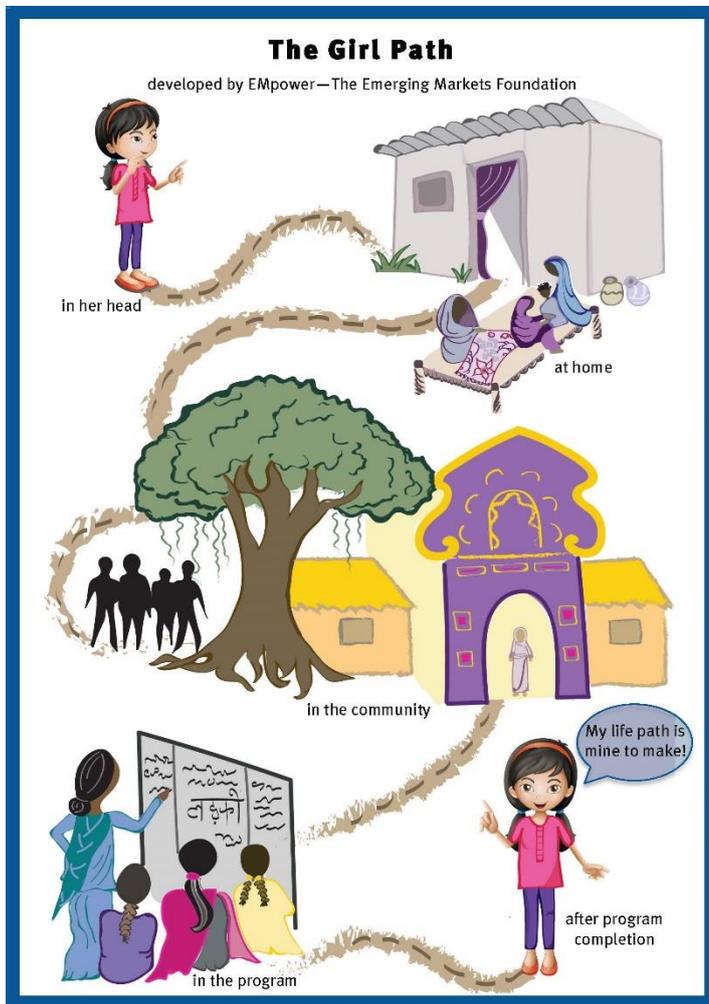
Figure 2: EMpower's Girl Path

"1. In her head: What self-doubts, fears, or self-perceptions keep her from participating? What are the voices inside her head saying?

2. At home: What does she need to do before she can even walk out the door to participate? Whose permission does she need? What responsibilities/chores must she take care of?

3. In the community: How does she get to the program site? Who and what might she meet on her way (is she safe)? How might members of her community react to her participation?...

4. In the program: Does she feel welcome? Do the hours and location enable her to attend? Is the curriculum designed with her in mind—is she getting something valuable from her time/effort? Are the trainers/staff members inclusive and supportive?

5. After program completion: What support does she need once she leaves the program to actualize all she learned? What are strategies for keeping in touch to monitor her progress and to offer her support if and when it is needed?" (EMpower, 2015)

After the barriers have been identified, the group brainstorms on solutions to the main barriers that were identified. This is a collective process of self-realisation; insofar as the group comes together to identify ideas and strategies that they have used to negotiate with the structures that limit or inhibit them and in turn discuss and strategize collectively on how they can build agency for themselves within their own social contexts. The collective group can learn from one another; for example, if one girl has successfully negotiated with her mother to reduce or alter timings of household chores, then other girls could use a similar strategy. Through this process, a sisterhood is built within the collective because all of the girls are bound by the fact that they are altering the status quo in order to engage with a program which they might not have done earlier. This methodology, of barriers and solutions operationalizes, in the civil society context, the sociological understanding of structures and agency. The barriers are created in the lives of women due to existing and persistent social structures, and the solutions are derived through building the collective and individual agency of girls in programs. The methodology also enables a feedback loop in relation to program design, so that organisations can make changes to their program to encourage retention. Tanvi Mishra, Communications and Operations Specialist at EMpower in India says "it is important to understand the lived realities of participants. Being cognizant of these barriers can make programming needs-based and effective in terms of design… [additionally] working with or engaging stakeholders, with respect to the areas where girls may face barriers helps create a receptive ecosystem for girls, and in turn increases the chances of success for the program...and program success means success for the girls!!"

The methodology also enables girls to recognise that they are part of something bigger and reflect on solutions to problems that they collectively face. As Cynthia Steele says, "This methodology was designed to prompt and capture understandings of the reasons why girls may not join or continue in programs intended for them, especially since many programs

experienced significant dropout. …Girls sharing of these with staff validates the girls' wisdom, including on how best to address barriers. The methodology, when used by staff and girls separately, has also proven to be an interesting way to explore differences in perceptions – girls may highlight hurdles that staff were unaware of and staff may think that some barriers are important that the girls do not. All of this helps the organisations implement practical solutions that can better engage and serve girls, based on a true knowledge of what holds girls back. What we didn't anticipate but now see is that this approach has turned out to have a solidarity effect – when girls identify problems that they face they see that they are not alone in their self-doubt, household restrictions or experience of program shortfalls. This validates their perceptions and sense of the world they experience. By coming up with solutions together, they tighten these bonds of sisterhood. Similarly, we have seen that organisations too, feel connected by this exercise. When we first piloted The Girl Path ™ in Brazil, and as reinforced by experiences in numerous countries since, organisations from different settings (e.g. from Mumbai to Cape Town to Rio de Janeiro) find that many obstacles girls and programs face are similar, they connect around the universality of oppressions that girls living in poverty can face and can learn from solutions that far-flung organisations have tried to change that reality for girls."

Barriers to entry

Some trainees have supportive families, or like Sunita, already possess the agency to be able to make the decision to pursue driving on their own accord, many of the women who come to Azad experience a series of hurdles in relation to their own self-confidence, their home environment and community pressures.

For Rabbunisha, even though she wanted to make something of herself and pursue driving, the male members of her family were the greatest obstacle. "After dropping out of

school, I used to stay at home all day, without any exposure to the outside world. I saw my parents' misery, I used to be so scared and I never thought I would ever be able to leave the house. Sometimes I would even feel that death was a more peaceful option than the life I was living. I knew I would just get married off, and with that I would get abused, tortured and beaten like all other married women. But then I thought, we all have to die one day that is no big deal, so why not live a fulfilled life. That is what convinced me to join Azad Foundation, which I had learned about from a mobilisation drive in [Madanpur] Khadar where I live. But when I was exposed to the world, I realised that it is better to 'live' instead of 'exist'.

I enrolled at Azad and went for training for about 10 days, then my family found out what I was doing so I got beaten up very badly – first by my elder brother and then by my father. My elder brother beat me black and blue, he used an iron rod to beat me. My father said this is not the right field and that people judge women who work, because they are degenerates. That is why he never thought I should work at all. My brother told me that if I ever go out again, he would hang himself, my mother got so emotional. Because of all this, I became very scared and I dropped out of Azad Foundation. Sometime later, I realised that that is something that I wanted to do. Also, we had no money, so I thought that this was the way that I could make some money for the home. I went back to Azad and filled up the form again. They questioned whether I would stick with the program this time and I assured them that I would. In order to pay for my conveyance and some of the fees, I sold my silver anklets. Then I began training again.

My mother knew what I was doing, but when I used to go for training, I had told my father and brothers that I was going for computer classes. Actually, I had told my mother to judge the person and feed him/her the appropriate lie. Either sewing, or computer coaching, or English classes. Basically to keep it all hushed up so that there are no hassles in my training. During training, I would be out of the house from 8 in the morning to at least 5 in the evening.

Since both my brothers and my father are drivers, they would never be at home during that time, they used to leave at 4 in the morning and return only at 10-11 in the night; sometimes they didn't come back at all. When my father found out that I was going for training, he abused my mother. I told my mother that this is momentary – I told her that he has made you cry from the day you married him, so what is the big deal now?

It got much worse when I got my job, my mother suggested that I change into my uniform at my workplace instead of at home. At the same time, I made the decision to remove my *naqaab*, for two reasons: first is that it is very inconvenient in the car and second because why should I remain trapped in clothes if today I am freer than I have ever been? Its only when you liberate your thought process about life, can you do something that is not conservative, like driving. My father shamed my mother again, and said that she was responsible for allowing me to dance naked. In a fit of rage he left the house and didn't return for two months. I think he slept in his car or something. I eventually explained to him that people walk in front during a marriage procession as opposed to a death procession when people walk behind the dead body. I said, that society and the community will be there during all the happy times, but they will run away to the back for all the sad times. Therefore, it's essential to live only for yourself."

Similarly, for Lalita, most of the barriers she faced came from within the home, fuelled by the fear of what the community would think. "My father had a very different mentality. He was always thinking about driving in a negative way." Before joining Azad, Lalita used to be involved with an NGO, Jagori[75], in her community. She was working there part-time. "One day, I happened to come across a poster that was hung up in the Jagori office and that is how I got to know about Azad Foundation. When I asked about it, I was told by the teachers at Jagori to visit Azad and join the program, and not go anywhere else, because it was such an amazing

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[75] http://www.jagori.org/

opportunity. They even told me, that if I was interested, then I should just focus on learning how to drive and that they would pay for my fees. When I told my parents that this is what I wanted to do, they didn't like it at all. In fact, my father was so angry at the thought of me driving that he immediately said no and stopped talking to me. I was so adamant, it was like a fire had been lit – so I began going to Azad without my parents' permission. When my parents found out that this is what I was doing, my father said I can do what I want, but that he would not support me in any way. Over time, my mom supported me – that is because I took her to the office along with me and the ma'ams talked to her and told her that I am learning well and that I can be a good driver. My father did not support me at all, and would get angry at me all the time." Clark (2016) speaks about mother's support of their daughters' occupations as building self-dependence (as opposed to independence) in their daughters, in the case that they have to rely on themselves to make ends meet.

For most women, engaging in an occupation outside the home presents several challenges. This was the case for Shabnam, she says "I had decided that I want to drive, I thought that if everyone else can do it then why can't I? It was very difficult though, the training centre was very far away. My family said it was a waste and they didn't want to give me money to take the bus to the training centre. On some days, I walked from my home to the training centre just so I could practice driving a car; the journey was 12 kilometres by foot one way." Shabnam faced several difficulties during her training, "everyone in the community told my mother that there were many risks in driving, but their biggest concern was me leaving the house. Once during training, a group of *Maulvis*[76] came to Delhi from our village, even though they were staying in the local mosque, they would come to our house for meals. I had to shift my schedule so that I would be home whenever they came, because I knew that if the *Maulvis* found out what I was doing, not only would I be shamed, but my whole family would be shamed

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[76] A learned teacher in Islam

as well. Honestly, at some point, you just have to lie instead of trying to fight people like them." Shabnam's lie is an example of her patriarchal bargain (Kandiyoti 1991).

The roadmap at Azad Foundation

The first step for Azad Foundation is to mobilise women to register for the training program. Azad Foundation has a four pronged approach. They mobilise within the community, they create community leaders through their Parvaz Feminist Leadership Program, they engage with men in the community to be enablers through their Men for Gender Justice Program and finally, they work with adolescent girls through their *Azad Kishori* program to build an "ecosystem in the community through community outreach and mobilisation" (Azad Foundation, 2018). Shabnam, Ripu, Sunita and Rabbunisha all found out about the Azad training program though a community mobilisation drive in their community. Azad visits communities where they have a presence or where other partner NGOs have a presence, and often piggy-back off of organised events such as *Aadhar*[77] camps or festivals. It wasn't an easy task for Shabnam 'I knew I wanted to drive, I missed the community drive, but while I was going to the market, I saw a pamphlet on the ground, it was wet and Azad's number had been rubbed off. I inquired about the training program from everywhere, but to no avail. It was only many months later when I went to get my *Aadhar* card made, and Azad Foundation had set up a stall, that I jumped on the opportunity and enrolled myself." Bidya Soibam, who is a Program Officer at Azad's North Delhi centre says "the biggest challenge is when we go into a new community, people have no knowledge about Azad, so we feel like strangers to them. The women also make fun of one another and taunt each other about driving." Shantiji, who is a Program Coordinator at Azad Foundation adds, "there have been instances where we see that the family is in deep poverty and debt, but they still do not allow their daughters to join Azad.

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[77] Aadhar - 'Foundation' or 'Base'. Aadhar is a unique 12 digit identity number for all Indian citizens of residents. It is collected and administered by the Unique Identification Authority of India

It makes no sense." Families do not want their daughters to join Azad because of the social structures that define their lives.
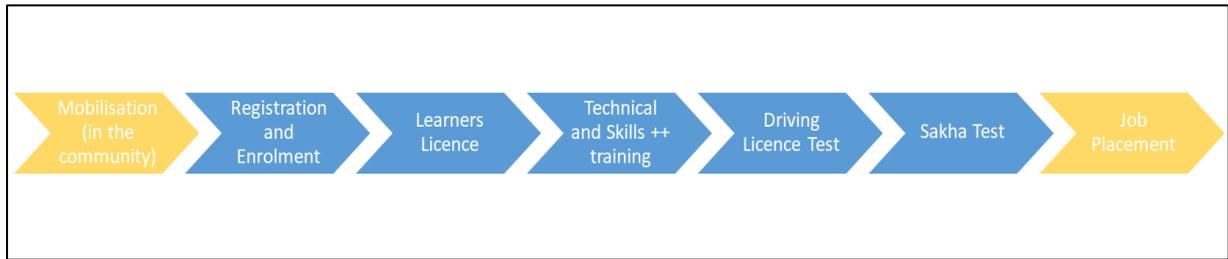
Figure 3: The Journey for Trainees

Once women are mobilised and registered at Azad Foundation and begin induction. Pooja Mehra, who is a Program Officer at Azad Foundation's South Delhi centre says, "my job begins with induction, for the first few days, we tell the girls about the program, but we also take the time to learn about what motivated them to come to Azad in the first place. We immediately begin with the learners licence module; the first step to the driving licence. Until now, a lot of them have seen traffic lights and road signs but they actually don't know what they mean. The learners test is done on a computer, since many of these women have never used a computer before, we need to also teach them how to use a mouse properly, because it is a time based test. Once they receive their learner's licence, we send them to Maruti driving school. It's great because they have demo cars, so they learn about the car and what it feels like to drive it before they actually sit in a real car. The training at Maruti lasts about one hour a day and takes a little under a month to complete. Once completed, we have trainers in house that work with the women to ensure that they have enough practice. We have different trainers for different classes, one trainer looks after the permanent licence – he is the one who gets them into the car and confident. We have another trainer for road practice and one more for parking and self-driving."

Another important component of the training process is to train women in the maintenance and repair of their vehicle. Through the brave space created by Azad Foundation,

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the trainees are also forging a new relationship with technology, or the car as a machine, which was previously denied to them because it was a male bastion. Savita says "even rich women, who have their own cars, will run and ask for help when they have a flat tyre or if a light goes on, on their dashboard. At Azad, we are taught not to run away, but rather to address these technical things head on. So during the training, we learn about what the warning lights are on the dashboard, we learn how to fix a flat tyre and the most important thing is all of the Sakha cars have the tools that we need to take care of these minor issues ourselves. That is self-reliance [laughs and makes a thumbs up sign.]" Wajcman (2009) argues that the "taken-for-granted association of men and machines is the result of the historical and cultural construction of gender" (2009, p. 2). This is the consequence of the close symbolic link between technology and culture; which is man-created and the bastion of men. Faulkner (2000) argues that 'technology is where the power is" (2000, p. 5), and that "technology is – both materially and symbolically – a huge, often critical, element of hegemonic masculinity" (Faulkner, 2000, p. 15). In the same way that Marxist theory is not gender blind, Wajcman (2000) argues that the application and use of technology within the labour market is also not gender blind. For example, the introduction of mechanisation in factories has very different real consequences for the male and female labour force. However, this offers avenues for optimism insofar as "both technology and gender [should] be understood as socially shaped and so potentially reshapeable" (Faulkner, 2000, p. 3). The brave space created at Azad Foundation enables trainees to re-define their relationship with a car as a machine, they are not only drivers, but can change tyres, fix faults and conduct simple repairs, resulting in re-working their relationship with technology.

However, the technical training isn't the only aspect of the training program at Azad. According to Dolon Sen, who is a Program Manager in the South Delhi office, "the full program takes about six to eight months, we expect them to spend from 0930-1730 at the Azad

centre. There is a reason for this, so they get used to the idea of working hours. One of the biggest struggles that they face within the training centre is the routine… it's like going back to school, this is a struggle for them. While they are at the office, they complete their non-technical modules, their driving training and we also provide time for them to just have their own space, to speak to each other, write, and think." Ultimately, the technical training of actually learning how to drive a car is a minute part of the skilling that Azad Foundation is providing.

Skills ++

The term Skills ++ was coined by Meenu to illustrate the full gamut of skills that all trainees receive. These comprehensive trainings include gender training, self-defence, map reading, first aid, sexual and reproductive health classes, English speaking and grooming. As Naila[78], a trainee, says, "we could have learnt driving from anywhere, but the things that we have learnt over here, we couldn't have learnt at other places. Like changing tyres, or first aid… but more than that, it's all the other classes, like gender and the law, we now know what to do when we come across a problem." There is broad consensus amongst senior leadership, staff and trainees, that these trainings are vital to the future success of the trainees as drivers. According to Dolon "If we were to just teach them driving, then what we were doing wouldn't be holistic. Every module that these women do [has to do with] how that individual is learning and changing her own life, her own situation for her family, her situation in her own community, until and unless we combine core driving with various other modules, then change will not happen, and I doubt we will be as successful. If Azad decided to concentrate on core driving and nothing else, then Azad would have been able to train women in three months. But

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[78] Name has been anonymized at the request of the interviewee

this is a learning and leadership program as well. They need to gain the ability to introspect and express their realisations about their own potential."

These trainings are Azad Foundation's unique differentiator, in fact more time is spent on these trainings than on the technical training – the reason for which can be easily understood by the fact that the trainees, once they become drivers, will have to navigate through existing social norms and for that they need a suite of tools within their own personal toolkit in order to navigate through these issues. Meenu came to this realisation with the very first batch of Azad Foundation trainees. She thought we could "just send them to Maruti, and they will come back trained as drivers. In the first batch, every day, one by one, they all took turns to drive me to the office. So one day, one of the trainees picked me up, and the distance was not even a 5 minute drive, from Nehru Apartments to Kalkaji. We came to a cross road and she just froze, not because she didn't have the technical skills but because all her insecurities came to the fore. She lost control of the car and we hit another car. I thought, what the hell am I going to do, I was banking on them coming back from Maruti as fully trained drivers. Around that time, we had received some [general support] money, I thought that I could hire a private trainer, because obviously the driving school wasn't enough, but if the whole point of Azad Foundation was to just make these women drivers, then I may as well pack up. It was a personal commitment that I had made to ensure that these women succeed. And they weren't going to succeed as drivers with technical training alone." There is a huge focus on each driver's personal journey, at the beginning of their training, they are given a personal journal, which is their *safarnama*[79], "they are encouraged to write, use it to think and really focus on themselves through this journal" (Dolon).

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[79] Personal journey

This idea is best illustrated through the Global Fund for Children's 'not so humble backpack'. Created by Victoria Dunning (2013), to illustrate how a backpack can be a metaphor for the skills that girls should possess to be able to navigate through life. "For adolescent girls in the poorest parts of the world, the journey from age 12 to age 18 is fraught with challenge…But what if we could equip girls with the tools to navigate this path successfully and emerge as young adults ready to become great contributors and leaders in their community, their nation and the globe? What if the metaphor of the backpack — a symbol of learning, mobility and independence — and its contents could help girls control, and indeed transform, their own destinies?" The contents of the backpack include:

- "An ID card. It starts with her identity … This simple card provides her with access to health services and school and gives her critical documentation…

- A book, a notebook and a pen. She is learning and informed. Education is the great equalizer, the path out of poverty and a route to success…

- Some money of her own…

- A cell phone… For girls, a cell phone can also be a lifeline. Too many girls and young women are victims of sexual and physical abuse; a telephone connects them to help…

- A map and a whistle…these items provide a sense of direction and a sense of security, both of which serve girls well in finding their way.

- A copy of The Girl Declaration. This plan…incorporates adolescent girls' voices in the UN's post-2015 development agenda…The document is a reminder that girls have power, value, and the desire and ability to shape their own futures.

- A sanitary pad or tampon…

- A condom…

- A bottle of clean drinking water." (Dunning, 2013)

All trainees at Azad build their own backpack, or *personal toolkit* during the training process. As Meenu says, while the whole suite of modules is offered to the trainees, "for different people, different modules click. For somebody it's the gender module, for others it's training about the law." The toolkit that Azad Foundation facilitates them to assemble includes:

- **A form of identification -** In an article in The Guardian, Meenu states, "When the women arrive at Azad, most of them have no real documents…one of the women on our first course said to me, 'If I'd died on the road in an accident they wouldn't have known who I was'. With a driving licence they are becoming visible citizens of their country" (Chaudary, 2010). Meenu says, "I remember the first time we went to the RTO[80] and we thought that everyone would pass their learners exam, and everyone but one girl flunked, not because of their aptitude, but because she was the only one who possessed the right set of documents. That is when it hit me that these women had no 'citizenship' and that was something that we needed to account for in our work."

- **A map -** through map reading classes and an understanding of their city. All drivers now learn how to use google maps so that they have a tool to navigate through the city. Pooja states, that "If a trainee is from Sangam Vihar, they would only know Sangam Vihar, or nearby places like Nehru Place. She wouldn't know the airports, railway stations, central places of Delhi, [and even if she has ever visited] these places, somebody would have accompanied them. Learning this takes the most time, most of them haven't ever seen a map. So map reading classes are vital for them."

- **A recognition and awareness of their rights** - in relation to their bodies, their sexuality, the law and the community around them.

- **Self-defence and first aid** – so that they can safeguard not only their physical safety but also the safety of their clients.

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[80] Regional Transport office, where driving licenses are issued

- **A chequebook -** The driving training program ensures that they not only have money of their own, but they are trained in financial literacy and it is mandatory for all trainees to open up a bank account before they graduate from Azad.

- **A cell phone –** all qualified drivers receive a smart phone from Azad, not only as a tool to communicate with Azad, Sakha and clients but also as a tool to be able to reach out to one another, keep in touch with one another and reach out for help if needed.

- **English and communication classes –** which enable them to gain confidence and to reach out to the world around them as they begin their careers as drivers.[81]

An additional benefit of the skills training is that they are all conducted by outsourced experts within their training centres in different parts of the city. So as this group of women builds her own toolkit by travelling through Delhi, she is also learning more about the city itself and gaining confidence about navigating through the city. Using external trainers means "bringing a different perspective in a different voice, it enables the girls to build their network, so they are learning about other organisations and broadening their own support base" (Dolon Sen).

However, it is not enough to merely create a toolkit for the trainees, what is vital is building agency so that they know when to reach into the toolkit under certain circumstances. At the centre of the process is enabling these women to have confidence within themselves; and this is sometimes the hardest part. As Pooja says "sometimes we think 'Argh! If only there was a pill you could take to build some confidence (laughs)'. That is the most challenging part of the job and the journey for these women." She goes on to say that "the additional training they receive [enables them to] make decisions about their life. Their thinking power also increases, [they ask themselves] why I'm doing this, what could be beneficial from this training. Will I be

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[81] I have proposed the idea of a personal toolkit, however all of the modules listed are from Azad Foundation's existing curricula

economically better off, and what other things would I be able to do with my life. So I think these modules really help them… [I think] the most important thing for us to teach and the trainees to gain is confidence…when they're able to express themselves and not suppress their feelings, to be outspoken so that the other person hears their opinion, so that they are able to negotiate."

On one hand the modules provide the tools to build confidence, but the other central component is about using those tools to become an agent of change. Meenu states, "It's a journey full of so many ups and downs, but for them to finally reach a point when they are able to get in touch with their confidence in themselves… if you want to think about it metaphorically, you have all these building blocks, the modules – sometimes you build it one way, sometimes another. Sometimes you can build it very high and sometimes it comes crashing down… with the building and breaking, you will reach a point one day where you take the next leap." The process of this self-realisation and actualisation of their progress at Azad Foundation is done monthly, through the *Badlav ka Safarnama* sessions.

Badlav ka Safarnama – the journey within the training centre: learning not to be scared

In 2015, after initial discussions with EMpower and seeing The Girl Path™ exercise in practice, Azad Foundation undertook the journey of crafting a new 'journey' that would suit their needs. It took over a year of collective brainstorming amongst several team members to include and illustrate aspects of Azad's program, and what emerged was the *'Badlav ka Safarnama'* or Journey of Change.
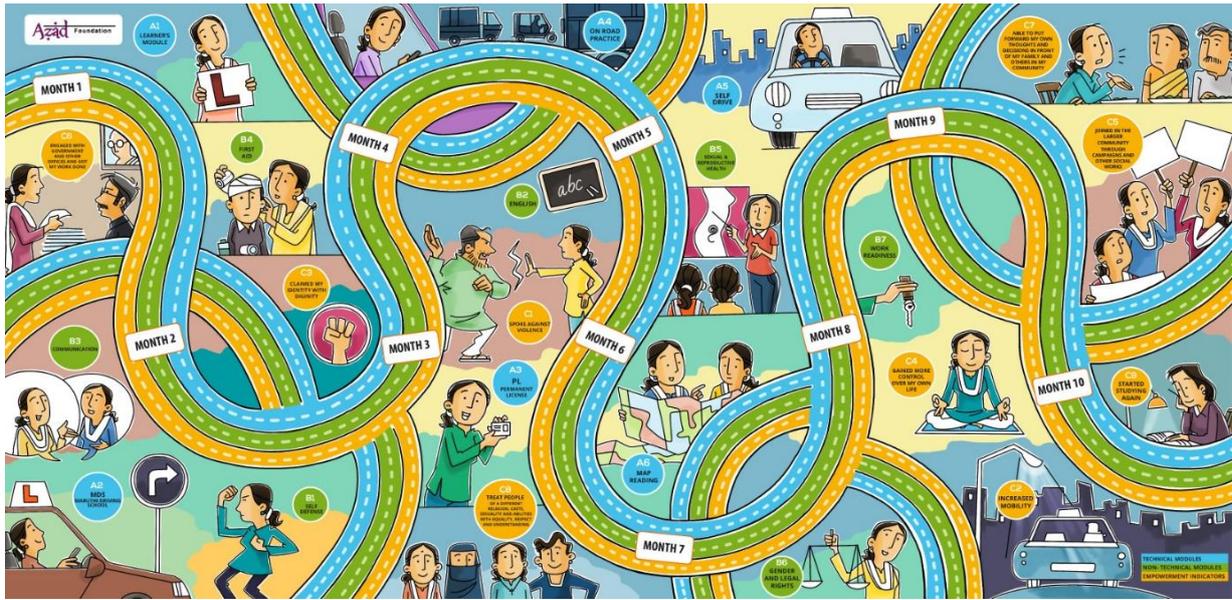
Figure 4: Baldav Ka Safarnama

Every month, all of the trainees in each of the centres, share how and to what extent they have made achievements in relation to the three aspects represented in the journey: technical skills, non-technical skills and how they have used their agency in their own environs, which Azad calls 'experiences of empowerment'. In January 2017, while spending time at Azad Foundation's North Delhi centre, I joined the monthly session, where all the trainees came together for about two hours to discuss their progress. The session began with moving their own personal ID card to the next milestone, which was the number of months in program; and then they all had the opportunity to discuss and share their achievements. This process of sharing enabled the trainees to recognise their sense of agency. By making this a collective and self-reflective process the women in the program can not only share their stories of change, but can also be inspired by others; and in some cases they may gain a recognition of their growing agency about a particular topic, when they hear other women speaking about it. For example, Leena[82] says, "this [process] has been great, because there were things that I had done, that I hadn't even realised meant that I was changing, but when people talk about it, I thought, wait

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[82] Name has been anonymized at the request of the interviewee

a minute, I have done that too!" She says, "I initially used to be nervous and scared to go out alone. In order to go anywhere, I had to tell my father or husband. But after coming here, I go around alone, and even when I had work in government offices, I used to be scared about going there and talking to those government officials but after coming here, I became confident enough to go to such offices. Also, now, I can even travel in buses and metro on my own, because I don't get nervous anymore. We go to different places for classes. I feel so much change and confidence within me. Like when we had classes in Guruji Nagar, I was so scared to even board the Model town metro, but now everything is so uncomplicated. Also because of our English classes, we understand a lot now. We have also been exploring the city. We walk to places (laughs) just to see what it is. I didn't notice this major change in me until someone else shared a story about how she is travelling through the city for the first time." Leena decided to share her story. Purnima[83] heard Leena and said "I was scared all the time too. After coming here, and attending classes of gender and communication I have learnt so much. I travel alone and I don't get scared even if I get late. I even got my brother's documents made because he was scared and we learned how to do it at Azad. I went with him. I even travelled to Allahabad alone too for my brother's marriage. Now I am not scared."

During the session, several of the girls shared how they had experienced change in their life, and the agency that they recognised within their own self. Using the framework of The Girl Path™, I will illustrate how they have found a sense of agency at the levels of the Head (or self), within the home and in the community.

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[83] Name has been anonymised at the request of the interviewee

Head

Interviewee 7[84] – I had always been nervous and scared as a girl. Before coming here, I never even spoke out. But now I am so carefree and confidant. I say whatever I want to and I am not at all apologetic about it. I have seen a huge change in myself after coming here.

Interviewee 6 – I have begun speaking up and have the courage to speak against something that is wrong. I would never have been confident enough to do that before. I even got my PAN[85] card made on my own, before a shopkeeper in my colony was asking for so much money, just to fill out the forms and get the card made. I think it was the communications classes that helped me, because I [not only] got my PAN card made, but everyone else in the family. It's funny, because some of the neighbours even asked me to help them.

Interviewee 18 – I don't get nervous and speak a lot now. I never used to talk at all. But now I am like a chatter box (laughs). I attended communication classes and I felt much more confident.

Interviewee 9 – I had to drop out of school after class 10. But now I have enrolled in open school and I am going to finish secondary school, and maybe even my B.A. I was so nervous at first, because it was very difficult for me to study. After coming here, I have learnt so much and it is because I came here that I started studying again. My friends here have helped me, especially Lakshmi.

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[84] All names have been anonymized where ethnographic field data was collected from group sessions.
[85] Permanent Account Number

Home

Interviewee 17 – Even though I am still training, I am speaking with my father, I never used to even speak to him earlier. Before, my younger brother used to be everyone's pride in the family. Now, I am.

Interviewee 12 – When I completed my 12th, I was doing a data entry course, and my family did not allow me to go out alone, so I had to drop out of the class. I had lost all hope. After joining Azad, my father now gives me money and tells me to go to market on my own, I am so happy about this. Last month, my family had to go to the village for a wedding, but I had training, so I stayed here all by myself for 5 days. Now my father believes in me.

Interviewee 5 –My mother married me off to a bad person and he and his family used to torture me a lot. When I attended gender classes here, I realized that I also have rights and the things that my in-laws are doing are worth protesting [against]. I have gained a lot of confidence and have become stronger. I never used to tell others about the wrongs that were done to me, but now I speak up about it. The gender classes and the communication class also helped me a lot.

Community

Interviewee 1 – We share a house with another family who lives on the floor above us. One day, their elder son, while completely drunk, ate something poisonous and become unconscious, his brother came running and asked for my husband. When I told him that he isn't there, I asked what had happened. I immediately dragged the boy out of his house by his legs and called the police who took him to Vinayak Hospital. When we reached the hospital, the doctor told me that I needed to file a police complaint, which I did all by myself. The police told the doctors to admit the boy and begin treatment. When he came to his senses the next day, he thanked me for saving his life. Everybody in the colony told me how much they have noticed that I have changed, because I never used to even talk to anybody and now I have changed so

much. Everybody saw how much courage I showed and it's all because of the classes I have been attending over here. Now whenever anything happens in my colony, I am the one who is called to sort out the issue. Everybody praises me and knows me now. When I joined here, people initially taunted me but now everybody supports me and appreciates me."

Ultimately, the status quo gender system instils fear of the outside, fear of everything new, of technology, the lack of confidence in one's abilities, largely because women are denied the right to interact with the world outside the home and for that reason, girls do not develop the skills that boys do. Therefore, one of the first steps to developing agency is to enable women to rid themselves of the deep seated fear of the 'outside' world. As we can see from the narratives, fear is a constant theme in the narratives, as is conquering that fear through their training and their increased exposure to the world around them.

My Body, My Sexuality

The *Badlav ka safarnama,* in many ways illustrates the metamorphosis of the individual in relation to the structures that they live within. One of the things that got mentioned over and over again during my field work was the metamorphosis in relation to the women's physical appearance. For Ripu it meant wearing a *salwaar kurta* instead of a sari for the first time since she got married. For Lalita, she spoke about how she spends her disposable income on buying things for herself like earrings and make up. In many ways, these physical manifestations are a result of their growing confidence; the result is embracing and performing their femininity through 'glamour', Skeggs (2002) argues that women 'perform' femininity and "glamour' is one of the areas, one of the styles of the flesh, in which pleasure can be gained" (2002, p. 320). As Meenu says, "part of getting empowered, is also embracing your femininity for those who feel feminine inside. It's thinking about it by saying, yes I am a woman, a beautiful woman and proud to be a woman!" Therefore, growing confidence in oneself, is also centrally about

embracing your sexuality whether male or female. Meenu goes onto say that "we have seen both. And I'm thrilled to see both. The training centre also provides a brave space for women to explore their sexuality, which has happened in several instances over the past 10 years. Not only because Azad has connected women to organisations working in the LGBTQ[86] space, but also because women, through their increased confidence are gaining the courage to transition, come out and [finally] be comfortable in their own skin. Non-traditional livelihoods, then also becomes an avenue for women to embrace masculine aspects of their own personality. "It normalises cutting your hair short, wearing jeans and getting under the hood of a car…that gives women the confidence, I feel like the discussions that we have at Azad are so progressive – I cannot think of having those discussions with my own extended family. They would be shocked! And say what are you talking about??... I think in our case, it's about feeling empowered enough to embrace your sexuality, whatever it might be." Shantiji agrees that Azad Foundation creates an environment for women to embrace who they are. "Our girls in here are taught everything about sexuality and everything related to it. They are told that they have every right over their body parts because it's their body! They have started loving their body and even tell their husbands about their mood, if they don't want to have sex. And if they do! They learn about consent. We have also had girls here, a couple. They were lesbians and after coming here, they got registered and also got married! They now live together and are running a business. It is always so good to have experienced such students who have gained enough confidence to open up in the world without any hesitation."

Important Strategies for success

Azad Foundation has employed several key strategies to ensure that the greatest number of women graduate from the program and are placed as drivers. All of these strategies relate to

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[86] Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (or Queer).

the inherent understanding that the inhibitors for success are the barriers that these women have to contend with in their day to day lives.

Parental Engagement

The most salient barrier is the home and family. They, in many ways are the greatest inhibitor to their daughters', wives', and daughters-in-laws' progress at the centre. One of the ways that Azad Foundation mitigates this is through continuous parental engagement during training. Pooja speaks about the importance of family faculty meets "There are many family members who have never even come to the office. It's an opportunity for us to meet their family members and to tell them about the progress of the trainees. We have report cards, in which there is information about when [trainees] joined Azad, when they got learner's license, permanent license and this also has an attendance record. There are little remarks at the back also. And this we hand over to their family members. It is important for them to see the office, so they understand where the trainees are going. It's also important to show them more about progress and attendance, so they also get assurance that when she leaves home, she is actually going to the training centre."

Another mechanism that Azad uses, is to invite families to events. For Lalita's family an event at the Habitat Centre was the manner in which she convinced her father to finally support her. "After about six months of training, we had an event at the India Habitat Centre. Sheila Dixit[87] was the Chief Guest and it was a huge program. All the parents were called too and so I took my parents as well. Parents were given certificates and honoured too, and when my parents experienced all of this and saw the program, they realised that my work was good! My father realised how wrong he was. After that, my father slowly started talking to me." Clark (2016) illustrates how fathers play a positive role in supporting their daughters, it can be argued

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[87] Shiela Dixit was the Chief Minister of Delhi from 1998-2013

that since they are the main powerbrokers within the family, if they explicitly support their daughters, then girls are less likely to face discrimination from the greater community. Whereas this is not the case with mothers, in part due to the fact that their mothers are women. Therefore, it is vital that such events includes fathers as well.

Dropping out

In some cases, existing social structures are so pervasive, that despite all of the training and confidence building, women drop out of the training program. As Bidya says "When we see girls join, we know how much they struggle to come here, and the problems that they face at home and in their surroundings. Those are the main reasons that they drop out… after learning so much, they drop out and leave…. Even though they learn a lot and become empowered to think independently, the family pressure is just too much. For every thirty girls we enrol, after about three months, only twenty remain in the training program. For Shantiji, the high incidence of dropouts are a consequence of social structures within their lives. She says "since childhood, they have been dominated. So, to overcome this dominance, and to move above all these troubles, is a struggle." She goes onto say, that at the end of the day, "there is always a limit, a line up to where we can work to help them, against the issue that they are facing in their lives, like violence, ill treatment, issues about their mobility and so many other things… These are not issues that we can categorize this into rich or poor, literate or illiterate. These are issues because they are women living in this society." Dolon also brings up the fact that if there is turmoil at home, it falls upon the women of the family to step in "if someone is sick, then women have to step in and look after the sick person. If childcare is a problem, then NO ONE will help out. In the face of that, how will she continue her training with so many pressures?"

Shantiji highlights how social structures are so pervasive, that even after going through training, many of the women are not able to challenge the structures that they live within. "See, something that has been going on for the last 100 years will take time to reduce, like treating women badly. Over time, I do believe that change will happen, but it is very tough. Even when I look at the trainees, many of these girls will not differentiate between their sons and daughters, and also treat their own daughter-in-laws properly. But on the other hand, this bias is so deep rooted, that if they really believe their mind-set, it will stay with them. See, there are women, even rich women, who have worked for a very long time, like 40 years… but still haven't understood that there is no difference between boys and girls… she probably even asks for...no… demands a dowry at her sons marriage; but on the other hand, there are women who might have worked for 10 months, but they get it, the meaning and the message, so those women won't ask for a dowry when their son gets married… though I do feel that many of the women who have trained at Azad understand this, but many haven't."

Padmakshi Bodoni, who is a Program Manager at Azad Foundation says, "For a lot of the women, but especially women who are married, they come here after having broken a huge barrier, but at the same time, they must complete all of their household duties before coming. So before, they would wake up at 7 and do all of the housework, now because they are trainees, they are waking up at 5, finishing all of their work and then coming here. We also need to realise, that for example, if a woman's mother-in-law is sick and she needs to take leave, we ask them if, isn't there anybody else to care for your mother-in-law? But then we also understand the implications if we don't let her go, then everybody in her house is going to tell her that 'You are just out training, and you don't want to do anything for the house and you are not a part of this family'. So it's also a continuous negotiation for us. This is a safe space, so if we do not support women when they are torn between training and familial obligations, then we are creating an environment that isn't supportive just like their own home… at the end of

the day there will be marriages, there will be illnesses, there are going to be all sorts of pressures that are put on women; so its finding the right balance, because expectations upon women just aren't going to go away. Not when they are training, not when they are driving, never. These are things that working men do not have to worry about. If they are working, they are working, no questions asked."

In order to mitigate this, one of the strategies that Azad Foundation uses is their concept of 'walk in – walk out' which essentially means that if trainees drop out of the program in the middle of their training due to familial or societal pressures; if they ever come back to Azad, they are welcomed back into the program, no questions asked. Rabbunisha walked out and then walked back in again several months later. In the case of Kajal, a trainee in the South Delhi centre, she initially enrolled with Azad Foundation and was part of the 8th batch of girls, but after several months of training, she dropped out. She returned to Azad and joined the 55th batch of trainees.

From April to September 2018 a total of 86 women who were enrolled one of Azad Foundation's locations 'walked out'. The primary reasons provided for the walk outs have been "family pressure, family and child care and poor health". Of the women who dropped out, the major factors for families opposing their training included 23% said that driving was not for women, 16% did not want the trainee working outside of the home and 16% were uncomfortable with the possibility of odd work timings.[88]

Nonetheless, of the women who walked out, 80%[89] confirmed that they had seen a change in themselves despite not being able to complete the training program, they reported that they had increased mobility, that they were more vocal in their families and that they had

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[88] Data from Azad Foundation's Research and Documentation Team
[89] ibid

built a social network of peers from the training program. They also reported a greater awareness of their rights.

Building a sisterhood

Kabeer (2008) argues that organising is central to moving beyond individual change towards transformative change. This is evident at Azad Foundation, where the all the drivers shared with me that they recognise that they are part of something bigger. The biggest strength or support that the trainees spoke about was their reliance on one another. The fact that they were in this together and that there was a certain importance, not only of strength in numbers, but also in relation to challenging social norms together. As Dolon says, "The down time that the girls have is one of the most important parts of the training. They are able to interact with staff, write, meet with one another, for many of them it's a space to relieve stress… it's like a college canteen [laughs]. These discussions are important because they speak about problems that they may be having… in this process they are building a support network that will stay with them long after they graduate." The result of incorporating down time to build personal relationships, has an immediate effect in building a support network during the training itself. As Meenu says "In the beginning we are the main point of contact for the trainees if anything goes wrong, like if they have a problem at home. But during the training an important shift happens… we start hearing about things after two or three days. The trainees begin helping each other out, we are totally external to it. When this happens I am secretly very thrilled about it, because they have built their network." This form of social capital that the trainees build can be felt for many years after trainees graduate. "Jyoti, who's now left Sakha and is working with Meru cabs, was driving one day and she saw a girl in a Sakha uniform stranded on the road; she immediately stopped the car and helped the other driver…it's like a graduating school. If they have graduated out of this, they continue to have those bonds of support for each other regardless of where they are working or what they are doing" (Meenu). Baruah (2017)

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attributes this to the high quality of programming, and the relatively small quantity of drivers placed "Put simply, there are so few female commercial drivers that they must out of necessity present a unified front to gain visibility and status even though they may actually be a very diverse group in terms of their ideas, opinions, and preferences. Programme staff at Azad Foundation and Sakha Cabs emphasised on several occasions that they often do not hear about major problems in the lives of trainees and drivers until after the crises have been addressed, because the women have built such a strong social support system. Accounts of drivers helping out other drivers and trainees with money, emotional support, shelter and childcare, for example, may certainly be explained by the logic that such solidarity is essentially a means to broader gains for a marginalised group. Whether or not such solidarity will endure as the group gets bigger remains to be seen" (Baruah, 2017, p. 188). Kaajal says, "whenever anything happens in my life now, problems at home or with the family, I now have a new family at Azad that I can turn to. All these women have been through so much in their lives, instead of repeating the same mistakes, we should learn from each other and rely on each other…so many of them have battled against so much, I look up to them and I know that they can guide me in my own life."

An important point of inquiry is the extent to which the women themselves believe that they are part of a larger sisterhood or whether their engagement with non-traditional livelihoods is a consequence of their strategic interests or their practical needs. According to Molyneux (1985), "strategic objectives [are those which aim] to overcome women's sub-ordination, such as the abolition of the sexual division of labour, the alleviation of the burden of domestic labour and childcare, the removal of institutionalized forms of discrimination, the attainment of political equality, the establishment of freedom of choice over childbearing, and the adoption of adequate measures against male violence and control over women. These constitute what might be called strategic gender interests, and they are the ones most frequently considered by

feminists to be women's "real" interests" (Molyneux, 1985, p. 235). For many of the women who were interviewed in this work, they view their engagement in non-traditional careers as being part of a greater struggle against pervasive social structures and their career is a manifestation of their agency against these structures. This is something that is articulated by Kajal who says, "I finally have a place for myself and my ideas – and there are other people like me here; which is something I never had in my previous job [working as a medical attendant]". Ripu, whose son accompanied her to Azad Foundation's tenth anniversary celebration says, "it was amazing for Pawan to see what I am part of, how all of this is so much bigger than his mother driving. All of a sudden he realised that there are so many women like his mother – who are making a big difference in changing ideas about what women can do."

Lalita, who travelled from Delhi to Bangkok to attend the Asia Pacific Meeting on Education Summit 2030 (APMED 2030), as the Youth Representative from India, in 2015 says "I got a chance to go to Bangkok to attend a conference where I had to tell the story of my whole journey. It was an NGO meeting and there were many people over there to whom I had to tell my story. I was the youngest one there and I travelled there alone. There was a Sir from another NGO who received me from the airport, but other than that I did it alone. It made me realise that I had an important story to tell, otherwise, why would so many people be interested in listening to what I had to say? I realised that this work that we do is part of something much bigger than just us and the girls that we meet with every day. We are doing something different and what we are doing means that other people realise that women are capable of anything, you know we really can change society [laughs]". Lalita also attended EMpower's Learning Exchange on Non-traditional livelihoods in 2014, Savita is a member of EMpower's Girls Advisory Council and has spoken on panels, and made decisions on EMpower's grant-

making[90] as a result of being part of the Girls Advisory Council and these are just a few illustrations of the very public spaces occupied by these women where their voices are amplified so that they can share their journeys and successes. These women are role models to others or as what Atluri refers to as being "vanguards for gender justice" (Atluri, 2013, p. 362).

On the other hand, their career choice could be a consequence of their practical needs. Molyneux (1985) states that "Practical interests are usually a response to an immediate perceived need, and they do not generally entail a strategic goal such as women's emancipation or gender equality… moreover, these practical interests do not in themselves challenge the prevailing forms of gender subordination, even though they arise directly out of them" (1985, p. 233). Shabnam says, "You guys go on and on about gender, women and the women's movement and non-traditional livelihoods, but it isn't any of that. The fact is I am making INR 12,000 per month and I am giving back to my family, and I have a role within my family because of the money that I bring in." She is alluding to practical needs as opposed to strategic interests, she argues that she has a voice within the home only and only because of her income, and not because of some larger gender project "sure I know more things now, I have stood up against violence in the community and I have more self-confidence but at the end of the day, it's the money that I bring into the house that is most respected; and why my point of view is listened to." However, Meenu argues, that her understanding of strategic needs is now so inherent that she doesn't even realise it. In other words, her transformation has been so great, that it has become integral to who she is, her personality and her view of the world. Therefore, even though she doesn't recognise the extent to which she is part of a much larger project, she is imbibing it. Meenu goes onto say, "there are women who earn lakhs a month and still go

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[90] Savita, along with all 16 members of the Girls Advisory Council made binding decisions about which of EMpower's grantee partners would receive a grant to operationalize the Girls Advisory Council's suggestions in June 2018. All of the Girls in the council rated their top 4 applications and their scores were aggregated to make the final decision about which organisations would be recipients of funding.

home and get beaten. So we need to ask ourselves, what is different? The strength that is now inbuilt is something that Shabnam takes for granted, and she isn't even aware of it." Ultimately, paid work leads to a greater say in decision making within the household. Kabeer (2008) states, that "Returns to women's work are likely to have a bearing on its transformative potential for a number of reasons. Earnings influence the extent to which women are seen as having value in the family, by themselves and by other family members, and can enhance their ability to exercise voice in family matters" (Kabeer, 2008, p. 31). However, what Meenu is alluding to, is that there is something more at play in the lives of the drivers trained by Azad, not only is it the fact that they are earning, but that they are collecting several skills along the way, through their training and their exposure. Therefore, "It is not simply access to an income of their own that makes the difference: exposure to new ideas, experiences and relationships also plays a role." (ibid, p. 46)

Conclusion: The impact of the training program

Meenu's point above is supported by the fact that the impact of Shabnam's work upon her life goes beyond earning a stable income. "One of the best things from the training program was that I learned about the law. It was great to know what your rights are. I didn't know it before…. Our neighbour hits his wife, one day I got so angry that I told the man that he cannot hit his wife and it was against the law. Once the husband left, I spoke to the wife and told her that she should not tend to his needs by cooking and cleaning for him after he has hit her. I told her to starve him one day and he will behave better. Women need to learn more about their rights, I think." While Shabnam's career choice initially caused a lot of issues within her home, things changed when she started contributing to the household. "First my mother used to say, why is this training taking so long? If they were going to get you a job, then you would have gotten one by now. When I got my first salary that is when everything changed." Her career choices have led to changing power dynamics within the family as well "now my family listens

to my opinions, if they ever need to go anywhere they ask me how to get there… now we make decisions together, we do more things together now, now they ask me what I would like to eat too." Her income and exposure are leading to a difference in the way that her family views her but also how her community views her. "One day while I was still learning how to drive, the water tanker was delivering water, but someone had left his taxi in the way and had left the house, so they came to me and asked me to move the car so the water tanker could get into the community. After that lots of people came to me and asked me where I learned how to drive a car." For many people in the community, Shabnam is a role model within the community and an agent of change in how society views women's work. "Before, many girls did not venture out of the house, now they are leaving the house more – a lot of women ask me questions and two girls from my community are now training to become drivers as well, people are beginning to view what girls can do differently now. Earlier no one would ask us anything and now everyone comes to me for advice." So, "I am a person whose point of view matters." An important strategic shift occurs.

Rabbunisha is the primary decision maker of her family. She says, "Things have changed now, I used to shiver with fear in front of my father now I am not scared to put my point across. I am now strong enough to rebel against inappropriate behaviour, before we used to listen to him and tolerate him. Now I am capable of feeding myself and my mother. Since we are not [financially] unstable anymore, I do not tolerate any abuse [from him.] Even if he walks out on us again, I have no problems with that. I participated in a chit fund[91], to save some money. I withdrew INR 1,20,000, with that I bought a house, my own house with four storeys. I did this within a year of working that is when I realised that there is no difference between my father, brothers and me. The only difference is I put my family first and they do not. I

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[91] A chit fund is a type of rotating savings and credit association system. Chit fund schemes may be organized by financial institutions, or informally among friends, relatives, or neighbours.

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believe in concrete! Thing like cars and TVs and all of those things are not real assets. With this house, I have security. I can also provide security to my mother, to stop my father hitting her. I keep her with me, my father stays upstairs. If he is willing to behave himself, then he is allowed close to my mother, but if he is going to be drinking and misbehaving, I make him stay in his room upstairs where he can create all the ruckus he wants. This is my home, however, because of society, even though I paid for the whole house, it is still registered in my father's name. Sometimes it makes me angry, [my brothers and father] have no clue of what is going on. They barely even know if the kitchen is stocked with groceries. Right from grocery, gas cylinders to electricity bills – I take care of everything."

She goes onto say, "I was responsible for getting my brother engaged. The norm is that the brother protects the sister and gets her married. I also wanted to try and see for myself if I could do the same as men. It was totally my responsibility, they had no clue what was going on. I went and met the girl's family, did all the customary giving and taking and now he is about to marry this girl – the only difference is that I refused to take any dowry. I said, we are giving you our son, you give us your daughter, end of topic! How long is dowry going to last anyways? It is the relationship which will last forever, we will compromise a little bit and so will she. Everything that is material is transitory, so I sternly refused to take any dowry."

Similarly, Lalita managed, through her earning potential, to get her whole family out of debt. "When I came to Azad, I made a savings account, with the State Bank of India. My father had put our house papers as collateral to get a loan of INR 25,000. It had been almost 10 years and my father hadn't paid back the loan, which added up to be INR 3,15,000 by now. I told them that I cannot pay that much but if they reduce the amount to INR 1,00,000 then I can attempt to repay them. It took me two years to complete the payment, but eventually, I got our house papers back. I also reconstructed the house and it is now three storeys high. My parents

told me that I have done a job that no son could do. They are so proud of me. My neighbours started praising me and tell their kids to be like me."

Lalita has also internalised the need to shift perceptions of what women can and cannot do and consequently, what men can and cannot do. She says "Society has set down rules for women, that they should be bound to the kitchen and cook for their family, husband, children etc. They shouldn't go out to work. This thinking is so wrong. Men and women are equal. I think if women are given a chance, they can even work better than men. But society thinks only men can do things. I think men should work at home too. They should help in house chores because there are many women who work outside and also at home, so why don't men do the same? It's not something they should be embarrassed of. In my family, when my sisters don't cook, my father cooks. He never used to do all this. He has quit drinking too now. I convinced him to stop it and got angry too. I have refused to allow him inside the house when he was drunk. So he realised what he has been doing wrong. One morning he woke up and said sorry to me and told me that he will quit drinking completely. He also always asks me for my advice before doing any work. Also, whenever there are money matters, he asks for my help. Be it giving loans to someone, or changing something in the house. I have broken barriers and [people's] thinking about girls. Now I have an identity. Everybody knows me by my name. I am an independent individual with an identity now."

Through her job at Azad Foundation, Sunita has educated both of her daughters and is the primary breadwinner within her home, she says "my father was a labourer and had an accident, so he cannot work because he sees and hears less. My mother has had two heart attacks as well. So for that reason, I do not let either of them work and I take care of the home and the family… I take care of the whole household, three of my daughters, my mother, father and one younger sister."

Ripu has, made the decision to leave her husband, largely in part due to a sexual abuse allegation against him. He is currently in prison. "I knew that this was the right thing to do, but I know that if it wasn't for what I learned about gender and the law, I would not have been able to take the step [to leave him] and ensure my children's safety. This is huge. Imagine all of the women who are suffering in silence because they don't even know what their rights are… and even if they do, they do not have a job to support themselves. So they just bear everything." Ripu is the primary breadwinner in the family; and is taking care of both of her children. Ripu was able to take this step because of the " returns to women's work [which] have implications for their 'exit' option: women who earn well and reasonably regularly can more credibly threaten to opt out of abusive relationships within the family than those who continue to be largely dependent on the earnings of dominant family members" (Kabeer, 2008, p. 31), but more importantly, through the training program and the skills that she gained, Ripu had the willpower and confidence to do so in the face of societal pressure. Sen (1987) argues that a persons agency is derived from their 'fallback' position, which not only determines a woman's bargaining power but also her ability to leave a violent or oppressive situation. Ripu says, "sometimes I think, if I was working in someone's home, or in a factory – I wouldn't have learned all of the other things that Azad Foundation taught me… the driving is important because it gave me the skill to earn money, but all the other classes we had was what gave me power and strength to live my life." As we can see, in the narratives, training with Azad and being employed with Sakha enabled them to solidify their fall-back position.

"Empowerment was, in spatial terms, about expansion: about moving out of constrained places and isolated spaces, widening the scope for action and multiplying potential sites for engagement, and about growing in an organic, self-realising, way – in confidence, in capacity, in wellbeing" (Cornwall, 2002, p. 2). The trajectories that several of the women at Azad Foundation have taken are evidence that their model works. Through the creation of a

brave space, women are able to internalise what they have learned from Azad and build their reliance and strength from the sisterhood within Azad Foundation, so that they can be active agents of change within their own community. The space that Azad Foundation creates is central to this transformation in the lives of the trainees, so that they can take their place in society, which in many ways is to serve as role models to other women.

Additionally, in order to create long term and transformative change in the lives of women, an investment, not only in their technical training but also in building their toolbox of skills so that they are able to navigate through life, has to be made. Alifya Loharchalwala, Senior Program Officer for India at EMpower says "non-technical skills are important to equip girls and young women to deal with their day to day realities of restrictions and to navigate social injustice." This is even more important when the nature of the skilling program is, in and of itself disruptive of social norms. If the non-technical skills are not focussed on or lifted up, then it is less likely that the program will be successful. This is why Skills ++ is not only innovative, but vital, with the skills and tools that they have gained at Azad, many of the women have been able to challenge existing social structures, they have been able to assert themselves and have enabled transformative change within their own lives. Baruah (2017) argues, that that these non-technical skills mean that civil society programs and the funders of these programs must look beyond the numbers game, i.e the total number of women trained, and instead examine the depth of programming that is delivered. As we have seen in this chapter, Skills ++ is the central reason for transformative change in the lives of the women as described in their own narratives; and that these skills are ever more important when women are engaged in disruptive careers. The toolbox that they possess are the 'keys' to opening up new possibilities in their lives.

Chapter 4:

Drivers engaging with the City

Before, my basti (locality) was my whole world, now I know I have so much more of the world to see."
– Shabnam

"A driver is one who leads, and in a patriarchal society, it is the man who is considered capable of this, and indeed 'driving' the lives of those around him. Women and children are meant to follow. Driving is thus 'natural' to men. Both mobility and technical knowledge – two things that are integral to driving – have also been the domain of men. They are free to move about anywhere almost as a birthright. Women however, face hundreds of restrictions 'don't go out after dark', 'don't go alone', 'make sure you are properly dressed.' Any breaking of rules is met with criticism and often even punishment." (Shrivastava, 2017, p. 2)

In 2008 when Sakha Consulting Wings was first launched, a decision was made by management that the female drivers would only drive for female clients. This decision was made to not only safeguard the drivers but also to provide a safe alternative for women passengers to navigate through the city. This decision was a consequence of the effects of disrupting social norms that place women firmly in the private realm and enable men to claim not only the physical space of the public realm but also the authority to do with it what they please. The city becomes a vital backdrop and a site of engagement and interrogation when examining the disruptions caused by female drivers claiming their right to work and traverse through public space. The city, in and of itself, is gendered (McDowell, 1999) (Raju, 2011) and defined by the very binaries that organise society, so that that the city, which is 'public' is a gendered space for men and women traversing through this space becomes problematic. For the Azad drivers, not only are they engaging in a trade that is disruptive, but they are disrupting the organisation of space within the city by not only traversing through it, but through their pauses: between shifts when they sit under a tree in a market, through waiting for their clients in parking lots and grabbing a quick bite to eat from the local roadside vendor, they are actually

laying claim to the public spaces and claiming their place within it. At the same time, it is vital to recognise that, in the face of violent crimes directed towards women in Delhi, we need to recognise that spaces for women to feel truly safe are diminishing because of the gender regimes informed by patriarchy, which curtails women further and forces them to "take their place" (Kirby, 1996). Ultimately, the justifications created to uphold social structures through binaries are fictional because, for women both inside and outside, home and city, private and public are not truly safe spaces for women – and this is not the consequence of women upsetting binaries, but rather because the entirety of their habitus (Bourdieu, 1990), is a creation that is based on the subordination and devaluation of women.

This chapter will focus on how and why the city has been constructed as and solidified as men's only space, where women have the right of passage under specific circumstances and with specific purpose. Through an interrogation of EMpower's Adolescent Girls Learning Community in Mumbai, it will then nuance the fundamental differences between the issue of safety and the issue of restrictions. After which, it will assess the consequences of the curtailment of mobility upon women. Finally, it will interrogate how and to what extent not only the women employed by Sakha, are using positive interventions to disrupt the understanding of women's' spaces within the city, and what the results of these disruptions are. This chapter concludes with a question raised through the interrogation, which is whether creating women's only spaces so that they can navigate through the city is artificially creating a private space within the public realm, thereby perpetuating the notion that women should continue to be cloistered in the private realm.

Women's Bodies, Control and the City

Social structures force girls and women to remain indoors and the discourse about safety and girls' place within the home stems from the need to control and protect girls' sexuality and fertility thereby restricting girls' mobility as soon as they reach puberty.

However, even once she is married restrictions around mobility continue for a variety of reasons; "Control over their movements is critical to upholding the patriarchal structure, as it binds women to the house and to the men of the house in a fundamental way including fear, self-deprecation and dependence on men" (Shrivastava, 2017, p. 2). Gendered spaces are thus created through the control of female sexuality, with the justification of safeguarding women and girls, within the greater project of upholding and perpetuating patriarchy. Ultimately, there is a solidification of the belief that women belong indoors, within the private realm and that public spaces – and the city in particular is the domain of men.

This ideology is ingrained from an early age, there is a culture of seclusion, or rather of limitation that is placed upon girls. As Hays (1994) suggests, culture is a social structure and is borne of "two central interconnected elements: systems of social relations and systems of meaning. Systems of social relations consist of patterns of roles and relationships, and forms of domination according to which one might place any given person at a point on a complex grid that specifies a set of characteristics running from class, gender, race education and relation… Systems of meaning is what is often known as culture, including not only the beliefs and values of social groups, but also their language, forms of knowledge, and common sense" (Hays, 1994, p. 65). A culture of cloistering women and limiting them from accessing the city is created, the ultimate result is that women do not access the city as freely or without fear as their male counterparts at any age.

Leela Dube (1988) argues that patriarchal ideas of the need to control women's sexuality to safeguard future lineages is the biggest reason that girls' mobility is curtailed at the time of puberty. Dube argues that post pubescent girls are socialised in relation to their inevitable marriage and transfer from her parents' home to her husband's home. It is this inevitability of her marriage that defines how she is raised. "The construction of femininity, is a continuous, complex, and occasionally contradictory process. The differential value of sons

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and daughters and the unshakable association between marriage and the departure from the natal home is complemented by the notion of the intrinsic purity of prepubertal girls" (Dube, 1988, p. 13). This is a learned process, and throughout her childhood, a girl is aware of the inevitability of her departure to her husband's home. "Many girls vividly remember the first experience of the wedding of a girl in the family/kin group. This is not surprising since the message of the inescapability of marriage and of separation from the parents as a necessary consequence of marriage" (ibid). When a girl begins menstruating, this is a sign that she has now "crossed the threshold of childhood and entered the most critical stage of life when her body has acquired a capacity to reproduce but she has no authority to do so. During the period between puberty and marriage a woman's vulnerability is at its peak. The post-pubertal phase then is characterised by restrictions on movements and on interaction with males and by the imposition of special safeguards" (ibid, p. 14).

Moira Gatens (2000) speaks about how "culture marks bodies and creates specific conditions in which they live and recreate themselves" (Gatens, 2000, p. 231). These systems of culture, which we have discussed earlier that also serve to define the post-pubescent female body as one that needs to be safeguarded which solidifies the split between the private (female) and the public (male). These social structures are also sources of power, which as Foucault (1990) argues is exercised rather than possessed. This exercised power defines how male bodies and female bodies are to act. "Power is not then reducible to what is imposed, from above, on naturally differentiated male and female bodies, but is also constitutive of those bodies, in so far as they are constituted as male and female" (Gatens, 2000, p. 230). Adolescent girls, their bodies, and their actions are thus moulded to ensure that the dynamics of power, which create and reproduce existing social structures, are maintained. This control over behaviour is a means to assert regulation over the female body and the preservation of her

sexuality for the purpose of her future fertility. Sanctioned female behaviour is therefore what is permissible for her body to ensure that her fertility is safeguarded.

In order to ensure that a girl's body is maintained most effectively, her life and movement becomes limited as an adolescent. It is at this time that her relationship with space and time is reconfigured and her sexuality has to be restrained and controlled by limiting how and when she accesses public space. Her sexuality needs to be managed and safeguarded because of its importance in the maintenance of family honour and future family lineage. "The management of a girl's sexuality is tied to her future as a wife and mother. Motherhood is the highest achievement in a woman's life. Marriage is the gateway to motherhood. Everything else is secondary to these two goals" (Dube, 1988, p. 14). The perception of unsafety is a mechanism used to retain control on female sexuality, her body is now capable of bearing children, and if uncontrolled, it would be detrimental to existing patriarchal social structures; therefore she is relegated to the confines of the home. The use of public space or the ability for a girl to engage in the public is thus denied, because if she is seen as being in public without a purpose, then her character is called into question.

This segregation continues into womanhood. "The system of gender stratification… not only constrains men and women to act in certain ways, it also gives them both a sense of identity and a secure position in the world (whether we like it or not)" (Hays, 1994, p. 61). The confinement of girls indoors once they reach puberty is an illustration of how gender has been constructed in relation to safety by social structures embroiled with meaning, however, this safety is both perceived and actual and has been normalised by social structures and culture and people have normalised these structures through the justification of culture. "Sexuality, physical vulnerability and [the] reproductive role of women have been typically held responsible for legitimising their confinement within private space since time immemorial" (Paul, 2011, p. 250). Therefore, over time, the distinction between outside and inside, public

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and private, boy and girl are normalised in bodies that have been taught to act in certain ways. "The division *of ghare-bhaire- ghare*[92]*,* the inner world of tradition and continuity, which was the sanctum to be guarded by women, and *bhaire*,[93] the hurly burly of everyday life which was seen as somehow impure and rough and had to be dealt with by men – was thus normalised" (Phadke, Ranade, & Khan, 2011, p. 25), by these systems of gender stratification which render the home as the safest and most ideal place for both women and girls.

"Gender is constructed and maintained through discourse and everyday actions" (McDowell, 1999, p. 22). It is the normalisation of small everyday actions that serve to preserve larger social structures that are governed by patriarchy. Ranade (2007) states that, "the control of women's movement has been central to the maintenance of a gender regime informed by patriarchy" (Ranade, 2007, p. 1525). Girls must maintain the boundaries that have been created for them or else run the risk of being called into question for their behaviour. "The phenomenon of boundary maintenance is a crucial element in the definition of the cultural apprehension of the vulnerability of young girls and the emphasis on their purity and restraint in behaviour. This is expressed in the construction of legitimate' and 'proper' modes of speech, demeanour and behaviour for young girls and in the organisation of their space and time" (Dube, 1988, p. 15). Girls' behaviour is monitored and the "performance of gender… is strictly regulated…[because] hegemonic notions of masculinity and femininity have to be relentlessly performed by male and female bodies and *any body* that attempts to transgress the boundaries of appropriateness threatens the social order" (Ranade, 2007, p. 1525). The social order is maintained through the manufacturing of purpose when accessing public space, a girl, when accessing space, must do so, only and only to fulfil a particular function, such as going to school, buying groceries or visiting a family member. Her passage through space is a mere

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[92] Home and outside (or inside outside)
[93] outside

consequence of her need to fulfil a particular purpose, "women can access public space legitimately only when she can manufacture a sense of purpose for being there" (ibid, p 1521). Thereby, limiting the ability for a girl to access space as and when she wants to. This social order is maintained through the fear of her potential unsafety if she was to enter the public space without purpose and the risk of ruining her reputation if she was to be caught in a public space without purpose. Ironically, "A[n] argument that's used to stop women from accessing the public space as drivers is the safety issue. Roads are unsafe, these are bad times, keep women indoors. Rather than reprimanding, and punishing roaming Romeos or teaching men to become better human beings, we punish women by curtailing their freedom. But actually, as experience and statistics from across the world show, the home is a much more unsafe place for women than the street, with more violence being perpetrated against them inside than outside" (Shrivastava, 2017, p. 4).

Meenu argues, that while being one the biggest methods to control women, the idea of the home being safe is actually entirely fabricated. "One of the biggest lies which have been dished out to women, is that our houses are safe, so you should stay within [the] 4 walls [of the house] because the roads are very dangerous for women, and I argue that there isn't a bigger lie than this because houses are one of the most dangerous places for women. They have had the maximum number of crimes against them; and not just crimes against them, they have not been able to deal with it because to be able to go and call a police against your husband, brother or father, even I would have to think 20 times. Even if you had a dispute at home, no matter how empowered you are, I don't know whether we will be so willing to call the police against them. But we are on the road, and something happens against us, some stranger does it, no one thinks twice about calling the 100-number. It's true for everybody." The maintenance of the public-private split necessitates that women must remain inside, in the private realm, so the discourse of safety, albeit sometimes incorrect, is used to maintain and safeguard these binaries

that organise society. The 'inside' is constructed as a safe space (even when it isn't), and 'outside' is constructed as a dangerous place, this construction allows women to be confined and regulated through the social structures that are defined by clear binaries. Therefore, in order to deconstruct these binaries, the perceived safety of 'inside' and the danger of 'outside' needs to be interrogated.

Safety vs. Restrictions

In early 2013, against the backdrop of the outrage expressed by civil society at the gang rape of Jyoti Singh Panday, EMpower decided to consolidate its grant-making in the Health and Wellbeing space around the issue of 'public safety and mobility' for girls. This decision came about due to the call to action by several of EMpower's grantee partners that something needed to change. This focus area was cemented into EMpower's grant making strategy for India which ran from 2013-16 and continued on in EMpower's grant making strategy for India from 2016-19.

This sentiment was echoed by the girls who comprised the adolescent girls Learning Community in Mumbai. "EMpower formed the Learning Community in 2012 to empower adolescent girls to lead change in their local communities" (EMpower, Summary of the Learning Community Survey, 2017, p. 2). The Learning Community enables adolescent girls to receive training and support, so that they can "lead interventions and seek solutions to problems that affect girls…with 2 major objectives: to build the leadership capacities of adolescent girls to effectuate change within their own communities and to build the professional capacity of junior staff within the member organizations. In 2012, four member organizations – Vacha[94], Akshara[95], Aangan[96] and Vidhayak Sansad[97] worked together to form

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[94] http://www.vacha.org.in/
[95] https://www.aksharacentre.org/
[96] http://aanganindia.org/
[97] https://empowerweb.org/global-reach/country/india/vidhayak-sansad

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this community, which was coordinated by Vacha Trust. In 2013, three more organizations joined to scale up the impact: CORO[98], Dosti and Stree Mukti Sanghatana[99]. In 2015, Young Women Christian Association (YWCA) of Bombay joined the Learning Community and in 2018 Bright Future[100] joined the Learning Community" (ibid).

As part of the one year cycle that the Learning Community runs, each NGO recruits a group of adolescent girls and mentors. The girls are responsible for choosing a priority issue that affect their lives. Resoundingly, they have, in 5 cycles of the learning community in Mumbai, chosen to work on the issue of 'restrictions, public safety and mobility.' The girls are responsible for developing their own work plan and over the course of a year, "the girls implement their plans, with monitoring and guidance from the mentors through frequent meetings. At the end of the year, the learning community holds two joint events: one for all member organizations to come together and plan a collaborative initiative; and another public meeting where they invite external stakeholders such as senior staff from their organizations, elected officials, individuals from civil society and the media so that they can showcase their achievements" (ibid).

"What binds these girls together is that they all live in *bastis* (urban slum neighborhoods) or, in the case of girls from Vidhyak Sansad, in peri-urban localities around Mumbai; are in school…they are not part of the normative (middle class, Hindu, upper caste, male) mould of citizenship" (ibid, p. 5). They do not have the same 'right to the city as their wealthier female counterparts, nor do they have the same right to the city as their male counterparts. In many ways, these girls are 'citizens without a city' (Appadurai, 2001, p. 27). They are also invisible, or consciously invisibilised by policy makers and city planners. They

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[98] http://coroindia.org/
[99] https://streemuktisanghatana.org/
[100] https://brightfutureindia.org/

are not part of the Mumbai which is a "city of places that are not part of the current set of fantasies that rule the minds of urban planners." (Parthasarathy, 2011, p. 54).

Ironically, it is their families that make the urban metropolis of Mumbai function. They are workers in people's homes, responsible for moving the citizens of Mumbai in their taxis and autorickshaws, responsible for selling produce and food to the middle class; essentially these families are integral to ensuring that the city of Mumbai effectively functions daily. Their families are vital to the economy of the city, they are "integrally linked to capitalist processes, to urban practices of place-making, and to urbanism itself" (Parthasarathy, 2011, p. 55). In many ways, through the Learning Community and this survey, the girls are challenging "the normative perceptions of citizenship to claim their rightful place within the city" (EMpower, Summary of the Learning Community Survey, 2017, p. 5).

The impact of curtailing the movement of girls once they reach adolescence is echoed very strongly by the girls of the Learning Community. One of the biggest things that the girls asserted through their interventions, is that the discourse about engaging in public life often comes in the forms of safety, that public places are not safe areas for women and girls. However, little is said about the restrictions that are bestowed upon girls when they reach adolescence. The girls "realized that the discourse usually is about women's safety in the city and not about 'restrictions' that adolescent girls face, such as not being able to travel alone, play outdoors or go to school freely, which are the first tangible experiences of becoming an adolescent girl in an urban environment. The girls believed that if they had data about the extent of the restrictions placed upon them, they would be able to do something about them; and for that reason, they decided to conceive, design and collect data focused on the topic of restrictions as opposed to safety, which has been done before. Their ultimate goal is to foster a community environment that lessens harmful restrictions on them and increases their safety, thus expanding their choices and mobility" (Shrivastava, 2017, p. 3). Specifically, they wanted data

to understand how girls experience restrictions in relation to the city when they reach adolescence, and what implications these restrictions have upon their lives.

In 2016, the girls decided to implement a survey, which focussed on the issues which the girls felt were missing from the discourse of safety and unsafety – by focusing entirely on the restrictions that they face in adolescence. "The 80 LC girls took leadership in designing the survey questions…thus putting into practice a basic principle of the Learning Community -that supporting girls to take on a leadership role and make decisions to design their own community interventions is an effective path to girls' empowerment" (EMpower, 2017, p. 3).

The girls followed a participatory action research approach (PAR). "Rather than more traditional constructs of research, which typically rely on investigation undertaken by 'objective' outside parties, PAR is focused on participation and action. And it usually directly involves those who understand and are most affected by the topic under inquiry, who shape the research and act upon the findings... that girls generated and led the study is uncommon in any context but particularly in their communities, where their ability to act independently and to lead – as the survey results show! – is hobbled continuously" (ibid, p. 4).

"The process of reaching out to apply the surveys, analysing the findings, and the possibility of disseminating the findings to community stakeholders gave the girls unprecedented access to key adults in their local communities – parents, teachers, local leaders, police – with messages that carried the legitimacy of opinions and experiences of a wide range of young people and adults. The surveys jump-started the girls' potential for community leadership, had favourable impact on community opinions, and started a process of dialogue that is planned to continue, now that they have tangible data from several wards in Mumbai. The girls and the Learning Community organizations believe that this data is a springboard for future, strategic interventions on the part of the Learning Community…" (ibid, p. 12) to

tangibly reduce restrictions imposed upon adolescent girls and lead to their more active citizenship within the community and within the city of Mumbai.

The survey interrogated the physical locations where girls' felt most restricted, and "shows that 70-91% of girls pointed to relatively easy access to school, shops, toilet, market, road and temple" (ibid, p. 6). However, we need to recognise that all of these girls were members of some form of NGO or community group, which means that they are more cognisant of their rights and have a greater sense of self efficacy that their peers who have not gained exposure through NGOs or community groups. "The ease of access to education for more than 90% in this sample is remarkable, revealing excellent community support for girls' education…another broader pattern is that restrictions tend to be relaxed for areas related to necessities (toilet, domestic responsibilities (shops & market) and religious activities, and more restricted for all activities related to recreation and cultural life." (ibid, p. 7). These are all areas that are "viewed as unsafe, such as 'crowded places'" (ibid, p. 13)[101] .

Why are girls restricted?

The girls designed the multiple choice questions relating to what they believed were the reasons why girls were restricted. "The reasons for restrictions [are] clustered around two major issues: gender discrimination and safety" (ibid, p. 13).

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[101] Findings on places where "girls have "never been" are harder to interpret, because the reasons are not necessarily gender-related restrictions. The lack of access could be influenced by distances in their neighbourhood, cost, or social exclusion due to caste/class (e.g. for malls or cinema). There are many possible reasons why some girls have never been to a police station or bank, including the fact that they might not know what services they could avail, not have the need or have misconceptions about accessing services." (2017:6)

Why are girls restricted?	
To control us	"So that we don't develop bad habits"; "don't talk to boys"; "so that we don't ruin their name"
For our safety	"Rape"; "family is scared"; "they don't want anything bad to happen to us"
Tradition	"So that parents can maintain their respect in society"
Because people do not like girls	"They are considered a burden"; "being born a girl is wrong"; "have to pay for a girls wedding"
Because we are different / lesser caste/religion/language/money	"Because we are Muslims and we have to stay inside home – covered"

Table 1 : Responses from the Learning Community Girls (EMpower, 2017 p. 8)

What is interesting about how the questions were phrased, is the extent to which they "reveal their experiences of both gender and caste/religious discrimination, as well as their recognition of legitimate concerns for their safety in their neighbourhoods…The phrasing is remarkably different from surveys designed by professional adults, and reveals the benefits of having young people participate actively in survey design, because the survey also serves to amplify their thought processes. In addition, it is worth noting that the girls who designed the surveys, through their exposure to issues of gender, were more conscious of concepts such as being controlled by men or adults" (EMpower 2017, p. 8). When asked what boys can do that girls cannot, most responses captured "girls' perceptions of boys' lack of restrictions and freedom as compared to theirs. The most frequent observation is that boys 'can go out at night' or 'stay out until late.' Other frequent themes include boys' ability to go anywhere, to bicycle, to wear what they want (especially jeans), and to get a job" (ibid).

Who imposes restrictions upon girls?

Resoundingly, most of the restrictions imposed upon girls come from family members, with over 1000 respondents pointing to members within their family as the source of restrictions that are imposed upon them. When asked how restrictions affect girls, the responses strongly reveal that the restrictions affect their "personality." Around 25% mentioned that their skills and knowledge are compromised. These findings underscore the importance of Learning Community goals to raise girls' voices – encouraging them to speak out in a group and in public – as a key element in girls' empowerment" (EMpower 2017, p. 10).

The consequences of the curtailment of mobility

Unfortunately, the consequence of curtailing women's movements are severe. It increases dependence upon the men in her life, who can interact with the world and move about freely. Her lack of ability to build networks, gain exposure and reach out to the world around her, which may in many cases limit her to accept and live with systemic verbal, physical and economic abuse. Ultimately, by curtailing women to the confines of the home, the patriarchal order is maintained through exhibiting that preconceived notions of a woman's rightful place and her need to be dependent upon her male family members are ultimately upheld. The denial of access to public spaces for girls is limiting and serves to reproduce existing thought processes that deem women to be of less value than men. The "exclusion of women from public places, therefore, has far-reaching consequences. It manifests itself in unequal status, loss of access to empowering information, incompetence in making informed decisions and choices. Expansion of space, therefore, emerges as a key issue in women's empowerment" (Paul, 2011, p. 249). Without equitable access to space and the ability to engage freely with others in public, girls are unable to be active agents in the world that they live in. Phadke, Khan and Ranade (2011) argue that the act of using public space, without reason or purpose, is "central to

citizenship…the celebration of loitering envisages an inclusive city where people have a right to city public places, creating the possibility for all to stake a claim…undifferentiated rights to public space" (2011, p. 187).

Maps, thought-processes, cities

Veda Shastri is a documentary filmmaker and producer of video news stories for the New York Times. She has produced documentaries for PBS frontline and also worked as news producer for the Delhi based CNN-IBN. In 2016 she directed the documentary 'Ladies Only' (Shastri, 2016), focusing on the personal journey of trainees at Azad Foundation as well as clients of Sakha Consulting Wings. While in Delhi, she employed a Sakha driver and one of the most salient observations that she made was their lack of knowledge of the city as being a consequence of the fact that they are inhibited from leaving the private sphere after reaching adolescence.

She states[102] that her Sakha driver "had been driving for a while. She was very adept in terms of her driving skills – but even though I didn't actually go to that many places, I had a few regular spots [that I used to go to]. And I noticed after two weeks that even going to these few places she was getting really stressed…and confused. [In the past I had] male drivers, who were able to get in the car and then get to the general vicinity of the neighbourhood, even if they didn't know the exact place." In the case of her female driver, she would get confused, and not necessarily verbalise what the issue was "then I started to realise that perhaps she didn't have a sense of direction? I wondered, how does she not know, especially since she had been doing this for a year or two; and it became a real challenge. So my solution was that I would just tell her, or map it and we would figure it out together, initially I thought it was a unique situation, but as I got to meet more drivers and spend more time in the training and I saw that

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[102] I interviewed Veda in 2017

they had a map class; I realised that this is not a unique situation because actually –my expectations were misplaced because the women who were driving me around had spent their whole life in one neighbourhood. And [my driver] didn't know how to get around because her family didn't encourage her go out by herself."

Conversely, young men are allowed, and even encouraged to become increasingly mobile when they reach adolescence; a time that generally means greater freedoms for them. Therefore you see "young men roaming around, loitering around and hanging out all over Delhi. That is what made me realise [the effect] of restricting movement. It was not something that I had thought about before – a light got switched on [for me]… I wouldn't think twice about asking people for directions all the time, because I learned that skill at a young age. But when I thought about it, all the people you're communicating with, and interacting with, within those kind of spaces are men, and these are the people who know how to actually navigate the city because they have been doing it for ages. The women who were learning how to drive, basically needed to learn the routes at an older age. If you have always been sequestered in your home; going only with your family to a few relatives places - and maybe [to] school. You would not have developed that sense of direction. It's beyond knowing the route, but it's also learning how to think about how to get around. It's a skill which needs to be developed over time." Shastri realised that she needed to be "a lot more sensitive about this. It was something that I understood and I wanted to be sensitive about, but it was also stressful because I wasn't in a position where I knew the city; it was almost like the blind leading the blind [laughs]…. the core issue [is, having] the ability and confidence to be able to find your own way."

Sunita affirms this reality, she says that for most, if not all of the women in the training program "the route to and from their homes to the training centre is sometimes too much for them to navigate. In the beginning this lack of knowledge affects all of the trainees… I will tell you my experience. I was always scared, especially if I had to go somewhere far. All these

thoughts enter your mind. Like how will I get there, how will I figure out where I have to go? It took me a really long time to understand the city and the routes. It also took me even longer to become comfortable asking others in case I didn't know." Women's shortcomings in relation to traversing the city are measured with a different yardstick to men's. If a male taxi driver does not know the route, he will be asked about his length of service and whether he is new to Delhi. If a woman does not know the route, her fundamental abilities as a driver are called into question.

Toilets, Bodies, Cities

As commercial drivers, Lalita and Sunita have new clients every day and are visiting different parts of the city. Unlike the private placement drivers whose employers are contractually mandated to provide their drivers access to a safe and clean toilet, Lalita and Sunita do not know where they will be from one day to the next.

Lalita describes, "sometimes when I need to use the toilet, it becomes a very big problem. Some clients help us out and take us to the right place, but there are also clients who decline to help. We have learned to look for public toilets, however sometimes there are no women's toilets or they are in very bad shape. I guess that is because there aren't women who are out and about like us; and those that are can go to fancy places like restaurants or cafés to use the toilet. It's especially tough on the days when I have my period. Clients often think that if they had a male driver then they wouldn't have to worry about things like this, it's because they can just go to the loo anywhere, even on a busy street and no one cares. One client even told me that was the only reason he didn't keep a female driver, because there was no washroom facility. Imagine not being offered work because there is no facility in public places for women to pee!"

For Sunita, one of the only things that she dislikes about her job is "sometimes I don't have access to a washroom, which is what I find the worst! It's even more tough when you

have your period, I always carry a pad with me even on the days that I am not expecting my period, but those days are definitely harder ... there have been times that I have been in such a tough situation that I park on the side, open both doors of the car and use the loo between the two doors. But it is awful [laughs]; I guess I make my own washroom now. I am more comfortable now, but when I began this job, I remember getting sick and having such a swollen stomach because I used to hold everything in. I wouldn't go for 12 straight hours, imagine… I wouldn't go as long as I was on duty… some clients are nice and they would think about these things, but others just don't. I guess either they aren't used to thinking about these things because you wouldn't have to with a male driver or maybe they just want nothing to do with us… there are different kinds of clients, but if we create problems about things like this, then we will never be able to work. There is a saying ' *jaisa desh vaisa bhes*[103] ' – so I guess we have to mould ourselves, [laughs] and our toilet habits, based on the type of client that we get. But this making your own bathroom idea, its great right? I thought it was the best!"

Both Lalita and Sunita have found work arounds in their day to day jobs, even though these work arounds sometimes have the potential of increased health risk through the control and manipulation of their own bodies. However, it is important to recognise that issues such as these are not even on the radars of male drivers and employers of male drivers because the city has made accommodations for men, either through the provision of urinals in public spaces or through the acceptability for men to urinate in public without others even questioning it.

Cities: Boys only spaces

The city and active engagement with the city means operating within boy's only space and the drivers I spoke to have to navigate through this at all times. They come face to face with this while they are driving: as Lalita says, "whenever we are on the road, and I mean this

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[103] Akin to – When in Rome, do as the Romans

happens ALL the time, we are cut off, we are pushed around by male drivers. People will say that we do not know what we are doing because we are female drivers and this is not a place for us. They want to show us, again and again that women cannot do anything." They witness this while they are waiting for their clients: as Ripu says, "every time we are somewhere where they are not used to seeing us, like a market or in a parking lot, there will always be a male driver who comes up to us and tells us that this profession isn't for you. When you go to any of the markets, all the male drivers sit around and talk in the park or in the drivers waiting rooms at malls, it's something that I never do – because I know that they will gossip or say something unpleasant about me. Can you imagine how awkward it would be sitting around with a group of male drivers in one of those drivers' rooms? Even though all the markets in Delhi have a space for male drivers to sit, like GK2 market has a nice park, I never ever go and sit with the other drivers. Unfortunately, that isn't a space for us, because the other drivers in the park won't let that happen."

A self-fulfilling prophecy

Phadke (2007) argues that there are four possible risks to women in public space, these risks are similar for adolescent girls, because as noted, when a girl hits puberty, she transforms from being a girl to being viewed by society as a woman. The first form of risk is "the risk of potential physical assault" (Phadke, 2007, p. 1511), the second is the "risk to reputation of accessing public space against a normative order that defines women's proper place as being in the private spaces of the home" (ibid). The third is "the risk of being blamed in public space … if a woman is assaulted" (ibid). Finally, is the risk of "loss of opportunity to engage in city spaces and the loss of experience of public spaces" (ibid). The first three, as Phadke states have to do with what happens when a woman accesses space and the fourth has to do with the consequences of her not entering public space. These physical limitations become believable and internalised, both on the part of the women themselves, but also through the hard truth that

the city of Delhi is becoming increasingly unsafe for women who are seen in public without a specific purpose or seen in public at certain times of the day. There is no denying that safety is an issue for these women, which contributes to them being further restricted in their mobility and as we have seen, this is because girls who do not obey the normative rules around mobility are seen to be "women who did not conform or keep to their place were constructed as wicked or fallen, subjected to abuse or vulnerable to physical danger" (McDowell, 1999, p. 149); because these girls have broken the rules by being in the wrong place at the wrong time, they are therefore subject to the male gaze (or more). Further, their presence in public is destabilising therefore, the best way to counter for boys is to perpetuate theories of unsafety through their actions. "Gender based violence… occurs because of some of the basic ideologies we hold about men and women, and the structures used to enforce these ideas" (Knoblock, 2008, p. 92). As Knoblock argues, it is a consequence of gender ideologies that legitimise the act of gender based violence and these are pervasive systemic issues.

The contract between Sakha drivers and their employers must account for this reality; despite recognising that women are often unsafe within their home and are subject to violence and abuse, they also recognise that the backdrop of the city, as a consequence of social realities can be the site for violent encounters for women as they navigate to and from work after a certain time. Therefore, Sakha has incorporated certain clauses into their 'Driver Employment Agreement' which states:

> "5 (b) The exact reporting time and duty reporting place of the Chauffeur pursuant to the Services will be reasonably determined on the basis of mutual discussions between the client and the chauffeur and requirements of the Client, from time to time, provided that the reporting time shall be within the range of 930AM to 730PM.

> And

6 (b) In the event the work hours of the Chauffeur pursuant to the Services exceed 800PM IST, the chauffeur shall be paid the higher of INR 50/- (Indian Rupees Fifty only) or the actual auto conveyance fare reasonably incurred by the Chauffeur, from the duty reporting address of the Client to the residence of the Chauffeur…"[104]

In her documentary, Veda speaks about how she and her driver were collectively worried about one another. When I spoke to her, she shared that the reality of the city means that there are differences in hiring a male driver versus a female driver. "In many cases, women in Delhi are getting a driver so they are able to do whatever they want to do, whether it be work or socialising; that is the general goal of having your personal driver and not having to rely on public transport. With male driver you can be like, its 10'o clock, thank you for staying out late…BYE, and they will just find their way home; and they will take public transport and it's not an issue for them. With female drivers I had to be conscious of the time that I would relieve her, and would always be thinking of how would she be able to get home? So, she was doing her job, trying to keep me safe while she was working, but at the same time, I was thinking of her, and trying to keep her safe, when she wasn't working –I gave her fare so that she could take an auto rickshaw, or a different cab. I would always put her in a cab after certain hours, or I would be re-jigging my schedule so she was generally released by a certain time; so she would feel comfortable taking the metro back. Once or twice, when it was late and one day she was talking about how her family said "you can do the job, but not night shifts, or don't work late" it comes from concern, but it's also coming from what the norms are. They're concerned about their safety, and also flak that she might receive from others if she is out late. So essentially both of us were looking out for each other. And even if she's not working late at night, she's at risk of being harassed on the road, if she was stopping for me to do an errand on the road, or

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[104] Contract that all Sakha Clients sign. There are two contracts. One between the client and Sakha and the other between the client and the driver.

if we were in a residential place; [I would always be thinking about] where would she sit? Is she going to sit in the car, in the garden? If I was going to a friend's home then I would make it clear that she could come up if she was uncomfortable or if she needed to use the bathroom. But otherwise - if I was at the market, and leaving for a few hours; I would always wonder, is there a public restroom that she can use, what would she do if I was away for long while she was parked in public parking. Even though she had her methods of staying safe, that didn't stop me from checking up on her. And so these are all things that you absolutely don't think about, with a male driver."

Disruptions

Shilpa Phadke (2007) argues that, "what women need in order to access public space as citizens is not so much the provision of safety as the right to take risks" (2007, p. 1510). She argues that it isn't actual safety concerns that keep girls out of public space but rather the implications upon perceptions of their character that deters girls from entering the public sphere. The biggest concern revolves around a girls sexual safety, to safeguard her future fertility "the concern is not that women will be killed or even run over by vehicles but that they will be sexually assaulted" (ibid, p. 1512), which would then undermine their own respectability but also the honour of their families. Therefore, the "perception of risk has little to do with the actual possibility of danger" (ibid, p. 1515), but the effect that a potential incident may have or the consequences of the community seeing a girl access public space without reason. "The production of … safety is linked to the manufacture of both purpose and respectability in order to legitimise women's presence in public space" (ibid, p. 1511). However, what is vital to recognise is that, "the real story is that all these falsehoods are presented as truth because of the underlying fear among men and women that if women are allowed access to the public space, they will become free. Much better then to keep control over their minds and mobility, keep them away from wheels and the steering wheel. When

women become car drivers, they contribute to exploding many myths" (Shrivastava, 2017, p. 5). What binds the girls from the Learning Community with the women who are drivers at Sakha is how they are disrupting these very perceptions of their supposed right to the city. They are using their roles, as girl leaders within the community and as drivers within the city in order to challenge perceptions of women's roles within the city and are making an effort to publically visibilise women.

Ultimately, "safety… is linked directly to the level of claim that one feels to a space" (Phadke, 2007, p. 1511). In many ways, the women and girls of Sakha and of the Learning Community are furthering their claim to their city, so that they would feel more confident when engaging with their city. Through their actions, they are recognising "their legitimate right to public space as citizens [who have] the capacity to transform women's relationship to public space" (ibid). By being within the public sphere, they are challenging the very structures that were keeping them within the home. Raju (2011) states that, "the organisation and meaning of space is a product of social transformation and experience" (Raju, 2011, p. 5). Ultimately, these are sites of social transformation, which have the ability to alter the meaning of space in the city as inclusive, welcoming and safe. In many ways, these transgressions are declarations for a right to the city and "a transformed and renewed right to urban life" (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 158).

Sharon Hays (1994) argues that human "social life is fundamentally structured [and] the choices made by agents usually tend to reproduce those structures" (Hays, 1994, p. 65). She states that there are ways, through agency that these structures can be altered because social structures and agents are in a symbiotic relationship; "people, in other words, produce certain forms of social structures at the same time social structures produce certain types of people" (ibid, p. 61). A person's capacity to affect social structures "varies with the accessibility, power, and durability of the structure in question" (ibid, p 62). The social structures that contain women are defined by the powerful (male) members of society because of their greater access

and power. Nonetheless, for these women, their newfound roles in public life are providing them with the means to challenge the systems that they operate within so that they can challenge the reproduction of the social systems that they have been raised in that denies girls the ability to venture out of the house. "The reproduction process, however, is never fully stable or absolute and, under particular circumstances, the structured choices that agents make can have a more or less transformative impact on the nature of structures themselves" (ibid, p. 65). Occupying public space, can be seen as small transgressions to destabilize the rigidity of the social structures that do not enable them to engage with the public. These small injunctions, thus, are acts of rebellion *within* and *against* the existing social structure that inhibits girls from entering and engaging with public space.

Dasgupta et al. (2003) claim that small changes by individuals have the ability to create long lasting systemic change, they also argue that the backdrop of the urban environment is an enabling place for women who are contesting age old social norms. (Dasgupta, et al., 2003, p. 24) They state, in relation to women's meetings that they observed during their fieldwork that "Persistent efforts to bring young women out of their homes to participate in these meetings bore fruit in the face of resistance, and helped transform women's lives simply by allowing them to function as part of a large group" (ibid, p. 27).

The methodology employed by the Learning Community is to enable these young women to understand their rights so that they are able to challenge any infringements upon them with awareness about themselves and their entitlements to citizenship and their relationship with their city. Phadke (2007) states that "a feminist demand for public space located in an understanding of rights would clearly distinguish it from a more paternalistic claim to safety (therefore protection) in public space" (2007, p. 1516). In their survey, the girls came up with solutions that would make their passage through public space easier, what is interesting about the results, is that they allude to public action, as opposed to action within the

family as a means to reduce restrictions, despite the fact that the survey results suggest that the primary enforcers of restrictions are in fact family members. "The overwhelming majority of responses focused on the major themes promoted in Learning Community projects: public safety and mobility, with the main emphasis in responses on increased policing and other security measures such as CCTV (EMpower, 2017, p. 10), again denoting that addressing or questioning the sanctity of the family unit is not only a daunting task, but a challenge that most are unwilling to take on.

For Azad Foundation, the project is to shift the narrative around space being a men's domain. Meenu argues, "as a consequence of this big myth dished out to women that they're safe within the home and that they can be pushed inside these 4 walls, means that women consider the home to be their entire world. As a result, they do not know about the outside world at all, and they disenfranchise their own selves from the larger world. So their world shrinks into the inside of this one house and all places outside of it, be it bus stops, bus stands, stations, hospitals, police stations, coffee shops, restaurants, hotels, all of these become man's – in this whole story." Therefore, one of the first steps that Azad needs to take at the very beginning of driving training is for women themselves to lay claim to public space that in many ways is the first step to disrupt existing thought processes. Meenu says, "I actually tell the women, that: the roads are not as dangerous as they are shown to be, that actually you know how to handle danger because you've lived in danger from the time before you were born, the fact that you were born and lived, means that you have overcome a lot of risks. Finally, by leaving the house my contention is that you can make homes safer for yourselves."

The drivers at Sakha Consulting Wings are challenging the very notions of how a woman is to perform within a public space. Not only are they traversing through public space in a role that has been traditionally restricted to men while they are driving, but also through

acts of waiting for their clients, conversing with people on the road, engaging with others as they navigate the city. They are creating a niche for themselves and for the women around them, including their clients, future trainees and building an ecosystem around them that is amenable to and often supportive of female drivers. This can take several forms, from normalising the fact that there is a female driver working within the neighbourhood, to others actively wanting to have a female driver as well. Shabnam worked within an apartment building for almost 2 years, and during that time, two other residents of the apartment building, upon seeing her and interacting with her made the decision to also hire female drivers from Sakha Consulting Wings.

Employing strategies by creating heterotopias

Both the Learning Community and the physical car can be seen as heterotopic spaces (Foucault, 1986). The Learning Community comes together with the aim of creating a space for girls to voice their concerns, speak openly about issues that concern them and of course enable them to make the changes that they want to see in society. The materiality and physically enclosed nature of the car becomes a heterotopic space that enables women to navigate through the city. Foucault goes on to say that heterotopic spaces are capable "of juxtaposing in a single real space several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible" (1986, p. 25). As Dolon highlights, "When you are talking to the commercial drivers they would say that the car is by far their best friend, they will always say car is much safer, I mean, on the road it is much safer and it is better than staying at home. For trainees, the car is the space for adventure, thrill, a lot of feeling good about oneself and it also becomes a small classroom, five of them are together with the trainer…I think they prize it a lot, they value it, I think falling in love with your car, considering it to be your close ally happens when you start working, because then only you have a little bit of ownership of the car. During training, it's like a small classroom, adventure, a thrill…" It is a "temporal heterotopia" (1986, p. 26), which is a "fleeting [and]

transitory" (ibid) moment in time and in space; because the moment that the drivers leave their car, or if their car engages with the real world through which it is traversing, that fleeting moment is over and their drivers' gender and vulnerabilities come to the forefront.

The importance of the materiality of the car is accentuated by the fact that finally these women have access to and control over a machine, which is historically denied to women. However, this aspect of control is not limited to a car alone. "This would be there even if it was an auto or two wheeler. Even if we were training the women we work with on an auto or two-wheeler, it is out of the purview or domain of women. So, I think they would have felt the same sense of power and mobility that comes with it. The car, from that aspect is not very different from other forms of transport." Meenu goes onto say, that there is something unique about the car that other modes of transport don't provide because "when you are in the car and the doors are locked, it creates a safe space. We rely on that, we tell all the trainees, if they are threatened, you have to be inside the car, lock the car, roll up the windows and call us or the police, depending on the situation. Because let somebody break the window, let somebody break the screen, that requires some effort."

Every driver that I spoke to, told me about an incident where she has had to withstand unnecessary advances from men or unsafe situations during her commute to and from work and how they used the safety of their own vehicle to navigate through an unsafe situation. For Lalita, one night she was returning home from an airport pick up and drop in a Sakha cab at 2am and a man dressed in a uniform actually stopped her car. "I initially thought it was a police officer because he was wearing similar clothing to the police… when I pulled down my window, I could smell alcohol and I thought that it was strange that he would be drinking while he was at work. I quickly realised that something was wrong when he didn't tell me why he pulled me over, nor did he ask me for my licence right away. Instead, he started telling me about how it wasn't my role to be driving around, not only late at night, but driving around at

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all… he told me that I was dishonouring my family by being out at night. I was very scared because I couldn't even get away because of where he had placed his bike. Eventually, I reversed and drove away. I am so glad that I didn't give him my licence and papers immediately, else he would have known my address. I realised later that he was a security guard, returning home from work, which was the exact same thing I was doing. But for some reason, society says its ok for him to be wandering around drunk at night and bothering women and not ok for me to be driving home at night minding my own business" (Lalita).

Sakha has to account for these incidences and have safeguards in place. They have a number that all drivers can call at any time of day or night in case they need help, "once or twice my car broke down at night, I called the Sakha number and they made sure that I got home safely" (Lalita). Additionally, drivers are trained about what to do in situations where they are being followed or harassed. In another incident, Lalita was driving home at night and she was being followed by 2 motorcycles with 2 men on each bike. "They kept on following me for a very long time. They went on the same route as I did. When I reached the Sarita Vihar turn, which is a small road that nobody really takes, I took a left turn and they did too. Then after a while, they started riding their bikes side by side to my car. They started banging on the bonnet of the car as I was driving and told me to stop, because they wanted to talk to me. I kept on driving and even tried to note down their number plate with a pen in one hand but it was a little tough, as they started riding zig zag in front of my car. Then I acted like I was on a call with someone. They saw me and thought I might be calling someone to come there, so they got scared and ran off. This incident did scare me a little, but not so much because I knew that I am in my area and that there were policemen ahead. As soon as I got to the police post, I told those policemen about the incident and what the men looked like, to which they replied that they would try their best to catch them but it's a little tough because we didn't know the number plate. But that's how I handled this situation. Sometimes our brain stops working in situations

like these but I tried my best to handle this situation well." Ultimately, Lalita felt safe in the heterotopic space that was created through the tangibility and materiality of her car; where she was enclosed in a physical space that others could not penetrate.

Paying it forward, teaching the next generation

Sunita is ensuring that her own two daughters are not limited by perceived fears of engaging with the city around them. She states, that a big part of changing the social dynamics that limit women's engagement in the public realm can be reversed if parents teach their daughters how to engage with the city. She says, "If we raise our girls differently, we can [make a difference], like how I make my girls step out of the house already, they go to college, go elsewhere as well, do all the work, including banking, I tell them everything [that I have learned], so they go into the public. If I also keep them captured at home, then they will get to know nothing about the world around them. So see, one has to trust their children a little bit, we need to believe that this is our child and will not take the wrong path. And till the time you won't entrust faith in them and encourage them to step out of the house, then tomorrow….. Look, if it's a girl, then tomorrow she will also have kids. If she is not going to be aware herself, then what will she teach her kids? She'll keep being dependent on others, and so will her kids. One, education is very important, secondly, information/knowledge about the outside world is very important. But it's not like you should give them full liberty, provide them with limited freedom, but definitely also provide a sense of freedom. Until and unless you do not give her some liberty, she will not be able to prove to you whether she is right or wrong. They say, that if you capture air, it will still keep whirling inside its enclosed space, and as soon as it would find a small hole, she [air used as metaphor for girls] will expand everywhere without thinking. Similarly, with a girl, if she is captured and kept at one place, then as soon as she would find an opportunity, she will not know the difference between right and wrong, and wrong deeds

are always more attractive. OK? So until you give her liberty, you will also not get to know whether your child is on the right path or not.

Boys are given all the freedom, so they get intoxicated [addicted to substance abuse], OK? Nowadays small-small kids are getting intoxicated because they are not kept under any control. What do you think the consequence will be if you keep girls captured within the home and at the same time, give full liberty to boys. Parents have to question their sons, they have to at least ask them 'where did you go, what were you up to, with whom were you?' If you are questioning your daughters, and giving them limited freedom only, then [you have to] keep boys also under control, right? This is vital, because tomorrow those boys will get married, and treat their wives badly. You know, [when] they are given so much freedom that they hit their own parents, abuse them. If you keep them under control from the beginning itself, like 'son, you have to there, but for what purpose, to meet whom?', at least keep (a check on) the boys also, right? Firstly, you're giving him all the freedom? After that he is misbehaving with / abusing you, hitting you and then you complain that he has become spoilt, that he is not under control anymore. Honestly, I see so many mothers complain about their sons, but if he is not in control, then it is your fault, right? You gave him so much freedom from the beginning itself. Today he is returning home intoxicated and if tomorrow he wouldn't have money for his intoxicants, then he will steal it from you and go. When his wife and children come into the picture, he will hit them as well. So where is this violence increasing from? From here itself, right?"

Is for Women by Women the solution?

Sakha Consulting Wings employs a 'For Women, by Women strategy'. Their website states that "Sakha Consulting Wings Pvt. Ltd. is a unique social enterprise, launched to provide safe transport solutions for women by women in selected cities of India." Their goal is to be

able to provide an effective solution for female clients to feel safe on the road and for their drivers to not be put into compromising situations by their male passengers while simultaneously creating a women's only space within the city. Meenu says, that "we have been questioned on [our decision] to no end, by people telling us that we are making our own market smaller. But, I know, that if we had not made this decision then a lot of women would not have gotten permission to drive…It's easy to say, for a lot of people that you can just get women drivers and they can drive anyone. But that is not true. The whole context that we work in makes the situation very complex and one of the biggest reasons that these women come to Sakha is because we are able to address their safety; and one of the ways that we do this is by having female clients."

This is similar to the 'ladies only' compartment in the Delhi metro (and the ladies only payment and security lines that precede one's entry into the metro; a safe haven is created that is devoid of any men, as Tara 2011, notes, "when women are travelling in the metro, their physical interaction with men is almost absent" (2011, p. 72). Through the demarcation of a ladies only compartment a safe space is created, where women do not have to conform to the social norms of manufacturing respectability in public and they also have a voice in maintaining the boundaries between men and women as women have "a sense of authority among women passengers. Many women confirmed that they feel a sense of belongingness with the ladies coach and protect the purpose of the same by not allowing men to travel in it" (ibid, p. 73); the coach not only allows them to travel safely, but "also accords them an unprecedented authority to protest" (ibid). In many ways, the ladies only compartment becomes the means to assert women's' place within the public realm. "The separate ladies coach is symbolic capital for women, which helps them to recognise themselves as a group and to look upon men in this public space as the other group" (ibid, p.74).

However, in many ways segregating women and men may not necessarily be the most effective solution due to the fact that segregating genders places them in a bubble which means that they are still not fully integrated with the men nor are they fully integrated into public life. As Agrawal and Sharma (2015) state, "In a context where the domestic or private domain is often considered the most desirable place for women, the reservation of a coach for women in the Delhi Metro can be seen as efficacious primarily because, it is in some senses, a re-creation of a private space albeit in a public context (2015, p. 423)."

Additionally, even if a safe 'ladies only' space is created, entering and exiting that space is an issue. Tara (2011), when speaking about DTC buses (Delhi Transport Commission), states, that while there are some seats reserved for female travellers, getting to and from these seats often results in women experiencing harassment both on the bus itself and while waiting for buses. This raises the question, that through Sakha offering services to only female clientele, or by having ladies only compartments are we not making the problem worse through cementing the segregation between the sexes? According to Veda Shastri, "it's a very tough and complicated situation which requires different kinds of action [and] thinking about different paradigms – the ladies' compartment in the metro, a game-changer, is life-changing for people. I know women who are only allowed and supported to take the metro because there is women's compartment, and they know, we can go in that, and if they do then they are not going to get groped. People need that security." For many women, ladies only spaces are a safe haven within an otherwise unsafe city that questions the need for women to be in public" (Tara, 2011, p. 73). Shastri asserts that this is merely "a stop gap measure until the future when it is hopefully safer, but when the situation is as dire as it is in a city like Delhi, [ladies only compartments] are needed and they help. At the same time we have to be focusing on intergenerational change in men. A lot of amazing work has gone into women's empowerment in India and we are seeing the results of that – but we need to also think about how society is

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going to respond to the empowerment of women; and how we can educate boys and men at different age levels on what women's roles actually can be."

"To me, that is the big missing part. This is a global problem. We now have women who are getting more educated than men, they are taking on new roles, they want to and are coming out of the domestic space; they want to and are entering the public domain – but men don't know what that means. They still have the same regressive, patriarchal, misogynistic attitude. Addressing that would be the solution. It will be very sad if we continue to be gender segregated, or even more gender segregated because that defeats the point; and we are not going to reach equality that way. So these are all temporary stop gap solutions; but we need to continue to examine the larger long term effect that these will have. To me [the fact that], women and men have to be segregated in order for them to be safe, and go about their lives, is not striving for more equal society. That is aiming for being separate but equal; and we all know that doesn't lead to equality. Men and women have to learn how to be in spaces together; work together, have relationships, have friendships – we need to learn how to co-exist, the goal should never be to be segregated." This is echoed by Ripu, who uses the metro every day. She says things are fine when she travels in the ladies compartment, "but on the days when the ladies compartment is full, or when I am running to make the metro and I enter the general compartment, I get scared every time I enter the male compartment. I get touched every single time and you know what, their touch is wrong, they push their body parts into us." In many ways, it goes back to argument that if a woman is in a certain space that she shouldn't be, it is permissible, and in fact important that men assert their dominance to preserve the status quo. Agrawal and Sharma (2015) also caution that women's only spaces means that there is a reduction in "women's potential for assertion of their right to public spaces, particularly those which are unreserved. This is further exacerbated by the hostility that may be directed at women travelling in general coaches and seeking seating in such compartments (2015, p. 433)."

Essentially, the woman's only bubble that has been created is perpetuating the rules around public passage for women which too, serves to uphold the binaries that have been created in order to organise society. This chapter illustrates how there is a lineage of the binaries that organise society, as manifested by the city, which seek to uphold the patriarchal construction of gender roles and identities. The city then, is both a creation of and a tool to perpetuate social structures informed by patriarchy. The female drivers that traverse through and claim their space within the patriarchal social structure of the city, are thus, being disruptive through their presence.

Chapter 5:

Supportive, Intrigued and Inhibiting men

"Mark my Words, one day this woman will kill you!"
– A Male Passer-by

On the evening before Diwali 2015, the streets of Delhi were brimming with last minute shoppers and people on their evening commute, itching to get home to celebrate Diwali with their loved ones. Shabnam and I had left Aurobindo market after some last minute shopping and were standing in the extreme right hand lane of a busy road waiting to make a right turn. All of a sudden, a man driving a large SUV hoping to turn right decided to make his way into the right lane at a high speed, hoping to get ahead of the evening traffic. The result was a collision between Shabnam's small i10 and the male driver's large SUV, causing the SUV's bumper to fall to the ground in the middle of a busy road. The mistake was not Shabnam's; it was the male driver who attempted to cut the line and edge into the right hand lane at a high speed.

All of a sudden, the passenger in the SUV jumped out of the backseat of the car along with his bodyguard. It turned out that the passenger was a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) from Bihar who was visiting Delhi. At this point, the bodyguard opened the driver's seat door and attempted to pull Shabnam out of the car. I told Shabnam to shut and lock the doors. This angered the bodyguard and he began swearing at Shabnam by calling her a whore, and a blind bitch who cannot see. At which point the MLA came to me and asked me to roll down the window. He said "why don't you hire a male driver? Can't you see that this woman does not know how to drive?" I responded by saying that the mistake was his driver's and not Shabnam's. To which he responded that I had also lost my mind hiring a blind woman to drive and after a few minutes of loud exclamations, he demanded that I pay him for the damage done

to his car to the tune of INR 10,000. I refused and he proceeded to flag down the traffic police while saying "let's just see what the police have to say about this situation, and the fact that you have hired an incompetent driver."

The police came to the scene of the accident – we were still in the middle of the road. They asked us to move to the side of the road as we had caused an even bigger traffic jam by standing where we were. The MLA exclaimed to the traffic police "don't let that bitch drive to the side, she will surely drive away – you know you just cannot trust these people!" The traffic police assured him that wouldn't be the case and both drivers parked their respective cars on the side of the road. At which point, the MLA told the traffic police that Shabnam edged into his car while his driver was patiently waiting to turn right. *He said that these are the problems that occur when women are hired to do men's jobs.*

Women make mistakes. Women cause accidents.

The traffic police said that could not have been the case because of where the cars were located when he came to the scene of the accident. The traffic police suggested that everyone just drive home to enjoy Diwali celebrations with the family. This infuriated the MLA and he looked at Shabnam and screamed "this is all your fault and you will suffer for what you did" he then turned to me and said "Mark my words, one day this woman will kill you!"

He then turned to the traffic police to ask who will compensate him for the damages done (by Shabnam) to his car. The traffic police exclaimed that there was no need to go down that route – but the MLA refused to leave until he was adequately compensated. He said, "Just because she is a woman, you are letting her go free. She should be accountable for her mistakes." He began screaming at the traffic cop for not doing his job properly.

At which point, the traffic cop turned to me and said, "Why don't you just pay him something small so he gets on his way and everyone can get home." Realising that we had been

there for almost an hour and Shabnam was literally shaking with fear by this point, I agreed with the traffic police and took INR 500 out of my wallet and handed it to the police officer, who then handed it over to the MLA – who triumphantly walked back to his car with his INR 500 note flanked by his male driver and his bodyguard.

The MLA's driver, who was absent this whole time, remained in his 'rightful' spot in the driver's seat and sheepishly drove away.

The questions raised by this event are:

- Would the conversation have been any different if it was a male driver driving the car instead of Shabnam? Would the bodyguard and the MLA even have gotten out of the car?
- Would things have been different if Shabnam was driving around a male passenger instead of me?
- Why was the traffic police insistent on me paying the MLA to diffuse the situation?

Ultimately, the primary issue that the MLA had wasn't the fact that his car was damaged (as a consequence of his own driver's actions), but rather that he had an accident with a female driver. The insults directed towards Shabnam, and his cautioning of my untimely death, stemmed from the fact that Shabnam was a female driver and had very little to do with the situation at hand. What also played a role, was the fact that I was female and the MLA felt that he did not have someone of his (male) calibre to discuss the situation with. Finally, while the traffic police was objective about the nature of the accident, their suggestion for resolving the issue was a misogynistic one; let the male driver and the man in power have his way, and through the act of paying them some money for damages – he was complicit in the resolution of the situation being one where the women admitted defeat to the men. Ultimately, the traffic

police was bound by patriarchy and wary of the position of power that the MLA occupied – a hegemonic male, who can control others, whether on the street, in politics or in his home.

This chapter will interrogate the manifestations of masculinity that women engaging in non-traditional livelihoods encounter in their day to day lives. Recognising that men is not a monolithic category, this chapter aims to break down men who have been at important junctures in women's lives as they train and then work as female drivers. I will examine three categories of men:

- **inhibiting men –** who actively provide resistance to female drivers,
- **cautious or intrigued men –** who are in principle supportive of the idea of female drivers but are limited in their support because they are bound by existing social norms about what women should and should not be, and the type of work that women should do.
- **enabling men –** men who are active supporters of women to become drivers.

The predominant part of this chapter will focus of enabling men. These are men who serve as catalysts in the lives of these women. Finally, it will examine avenues for change in terms of changing the status quo to enable more and more men to be supporters and enablers of women who are negotiating with or changing existing social structures. I argue, through an ethnography of three enabling men, that while there is a process of transformation that female drivers undergo as subjects, they are also strong contributors in changing the mind-sets of the men that they interact with. For the men, there is a transformation of their subjectivities, as men, which are being transformed through their praxis of working with female drivers. Their subjectivities are re-shaped as they play an instrumental role in transforming the manner in which women view themselves and the world around them.

The category of Men

In interrogating men and masculinity in this chapter, I am conscious that "Men is an odd category – impregnable, defended, solid, even a true class" (Hearn, 2015, p. x), which needs to be nuanced through a "differentiated, pluralised approach to gender" (ibid, p. 6). The need to breakdown the category of men, especially in light of research stating that Indian men's attitudes leave a lot to be desired, is that there are men whose thoughts and opinions illustrate a multiplicity of voices and ideas. This is extremely salient in my ethnographies, where there is a wide spectrum of interactions that women in non-traditional livelihoods have with men and masculinity. However, this spectrum needs to be nuanced, as varying reactions to female drivers stems from a lot more than gender alone, but it is consequence of socio economic circumstances, power, exposure, religion and so much more. "Men is a social category, yet men as individuals, groups or categories have typically not been problematized" (Hearn, 2015, p. 8). I am also conscious that masculinity is not in a static state, it is constantly being reformed. "Being a man or a woman, then, is not a pre-determined state. It is a becoming, a condition actively under construction" (Connell, 2009, p. 5). For the purposes of this chapter it means two very important things, the first is that there are always avenues for change in relation to pre-determined mind-sets and social rules about what it means to be a man. Secondly, social context plays a pivotal role in how masculinity is performed. One may be what I term an enabling man in one context, but a cautious or even an inhibiting man in another context.

Recognising the spectrum of men

In the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) conducted by the International Centre for Research on women and Instituto Promundo[105] in 2011; where 2037 men and 313 women were surveyed in Delhi and 497 men and 208 women in Vijaywada, in

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[105] https://promundoglobal.org/

addition to men and women in Brazil, Chile, Croatia, Mexico and Rwanda, it was found that Indian men were among the least supportive of equitable relationships between men and women. (Barker, et al., 2011). The survey found that even though many Indian men support policies that promote equal opportunities for women, they also feel that they lose out if women are afforded more rights. This can be attributed to the "sharp demarcation of Indian gender roles, and the double standard of sexual behaviour, [which is] exacerbated by the tendency within male socialisation patterns to include an element of 'ownership and control' or females" (Verma & Mahendra, 2004, p. 74).

Additionally, "Nearly half of men in all the sites say they play an equal or greater role in one or more household duties – with the exception of India, where only 16 percent of men reported that they played an equal or greater role in household duties. These household or domestic duties included washing clothes, repairing the house, buying food, cleaning the house, cleaning the bathroom or toilet, preparing food and paying the bills. The tasks that men said they play an equal or greater role in are those traditionally associated with men – namely repairing the house, paying bills and buying groceries." The division of gendered roles is felt in relation to childcare as well, when reading the statement, "changing diapers, giving kids a bath and feeding kids are the mother's responsibility," …more than 80 percent in India agreed with the statement" (Barker, et al., 2011, p. 7). These gender inequitable attitudes also translate into violence, where 65% in India agreed, that "There are times when a woman deserves to be beaten" (ibid, p. 57). This thought process is also prevalent amongst male youth, according to UNICEF's Global Report Card on Adolescents (2012), where "57% of adolescent boys 15–19 years old who think that a husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife under certain circumstances" (UNICEF, 2012, p. 32).

However, there is another side to the story, the scant protections provided to children through labour laws (that prohibit hazardous and dangerous work) and enabling the child's

right to education are withdrawn when children turn 14. At the age of 14, due to financial pressures, a large percentage of boys are made to go to work. Young boys are at risk of exploitation and harm when they go out to work at a very young age, and are expected to be contributing adults long before they are ready to be. Pressures to earn have other consequences including turning to petty crime, substance abuse and violence against women and girls. 62% of the men surveyed in the IMAGES study reported "feeling stress or depression because of not having enough income or enough work" (Barker, et al., 2011, p. 18). It is, therefore vital to recognise that men's privileged role as workers and providers does not always benefit men. Jackson (1999) argues, "Male domination is relational and comes at a price. In gender divisions of labour it is possible that the felt responsibility of 'provider', common to many ideas of manliness amongst the working poor in parts of India, entails both possibilities for domination as well as risks of bodily self-exploitation, high mortality and morbidity risks. Is it possible that masculinity, or manliness, is less comprehensively advantageous to men than might be assumed, in the sphere of work, and carries with it specific well-being threats" (1999, p. 104)?

There are potential avenues for change, men are seeing that there are alternative ways to be a man. As Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) state, there is the possibility that gender equality may become the hegemonic ideal for men, because gender has come into being, so the structures as we know them, can also change. The last section of this chapter looks at these avenues for change – and how civil society organisations are working with men to create agency to challenge socially acceptable ways of being a man. Giddens (1977) says that because agents have the ability to affect structural properties, even the smallest social actions can contribute to changing social systems, and the small social actions illustrated in this section in many ways mark inroads, through structuration, to be able to transform structures that define men and masculinity. Ultimately, "when the conditions of patriarchy change, masculinity too changes. Hegemonic masculinity is therefore not a set pattern but mobile, changing with the

social situation and norms. It is this flexibility that offers an opportunity for intervention, allowing adoption of alternatives to the current hegemonic form through processes including reflection and role modelling" (Equal Community Foundation, 2013, p. 9).

Inhibiting men

My first lens for interrogation is inhibiting men. Men who actively inhibit and curtail women from actively engaging in non-traditional livelihoods. Men who feel that women who are on the roads are threatening to them and to their masculinity. The MLA at the beginning of this chapter is an inhibiting man whose notions of what is right and wrong for a woman to do are defined and upheld by the notion of hegemonic masculinity. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) define hegemonic masculinity as the "most honoured way of being a man… and it ideologically legitimised the global subordination of women to men" (2005, p. 832), and all other masculinities are constructed in relation to the normative model of what it means to be a man. This definition of manhood contributes to perpetuating gender inequalities because the idea of hegemonic masculinity celebrates men's dominance over women and also serves to enable men to keep their dominant social positions. A pecking order masculinity is thus created, all in relation to the definition of hegemonic masculinity; and it is in the best interest of men to preserve this social order, this is known as the "patriarchal dividend [which is the] advantage to men as a group for maintaining an unequal gender order" (Connell, 2009, p. 142). Therefore, any transgressions seen by men who are in a position of power are contested strongly by men, so as to maintain the social order whereby they are gaining from their position in power.

The maintenance of masculinity comes from the repetition of social actions in conformity with what the rules of society dictate, because gender is constructed and maintained through "discourse and everyday actions" (McDowell, 1999, p. 22). It is the normalisation of small everyday actions that serve to preserve larger social structures that are governed by

patriarchy. Within the Indian context, "Masculinity is an overwhelming construct in the minds of young men providing a framework to determine their self-concept and also the cultural rules relating to their actions. The construct has a language and expression that are used liberally to describe gender attitudes and sexual actions, as well as terms like '*asli admi*' or '*asli mard*' (Real man) to characterise *mardangi* (masculinity)… According to these constructs, 'a real man should be daring, courageous, confident and command respect', 'should be responsible towards family' and a 'real man should be able to prove his manliness or masculinity'. Description of violent behaviours was an integral component of describing a 'real man' and manliness" (Verma & Mahendra, 2004, p. 73). This is not something that men want to ever change, as Shabnam states, when she is parked at a market in the city "male drivers come up to me every day, there isn't a single time when I go to the market that men don't ask me about what I am doing. But they don't ask me because they are interested, they usually ask me about my job because they do not like that I am doing it. Many of the drivers say that this is a horrible life, and girls do not need to be doing it. Others say, that if this goes on then soon all the girls will be taking our jobs – and they do not like it." Shabnam's experience highlights how male privilege is tightly guarded by men at all costs.

In many ways, women being on the road directly challenges this notion of masculinity and therefore, must be contained. This happens in a variety of ways. From outright explicit anger, in the case of the MLA at the beginning of this chapter to more subversive practices. For Rabbunisha, her fellow male drivers in the upscale locality of Nizamuddin East did not approve of her being in their space. They did not approve of the fact that she was infringing upon a job role that was so closely tied to their masculine identity. Their identity as breadwinners, their right to occupy public space, and their role of gatekeepers to a profession that was male only. "Initially, the driver downstairs appreciated me and said that he loved to see the progress [in society]. He said a whole lot of nice things and then he started to tell me

about himself. He said that his maternal grandfather is a judge in court, and other family members are also doing really well for themselves and what not. I was wondering what I am going to do with this information. I used to call him *bhaiyya*[106], which he asked me to stop calling him, because he wanted to befriend me…I think it agitated him when I wasn't willing to be friends with him. He realised that I am a girl who will not give in, so he found other ways to irritate me. Once he locked the bathroom door, I got blamed for the door being locked and I was told that I must take the key from this man if I ever wanted to use the washroom. Can you imagine? I also decided to show him, so I decided that I would not use the washroom and would never ask him for the key.

After that, my tyre started getting punctured, every few days. This is when I was done tolerating him and I told my client. My client went and told his employer and that is when this driver swore upon his wife and children that he had done nothing of the sort, and actually blamed the whole thing on me. That is when I raised my voice, I am not someone who is going to stay silent and not speak for herself… and then you know what, his employer, who was a woman, actually defended him!

He did it for two reasons, the first was because I was a lady driver. The other was, because I was in his space, he just assumed that he could befriend me and that I wouldn't say no." The driver's approach was to repeatedly slash her client's car tyres over the course of several months; in the hope that Rabbunisha would either be fired, or that she would grow tired of constantly have to change the car tires and quit her job on her own accord. The male driver was trying to preserve the binaries that organised his perceptions of the world, man-woman, public-private, outside-inside – which Rabbunisha's presence was calling into question.

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[106] brother

Additionally, the male driver's employer had no interest or inclination to play a role in dismantling the binaries that Rabbunisha's presence were attempting to disrupt.

Cautious or intrigued men

There is another category of men, who are influenced by the social structure that they live within, while at the same time are not dismissing the possibility of women in NTL altogether. These men are bound by ideas perpetuated in society about women and men's roles but are not actively dismissing the idea that changing the norm is possible. This group of men includes drivers like Salim, who upon seeing a female driving in his community said:

"It is good that she is driving, but will she actually be able to see over the steering wheel, you know you need to be tall to be able to see the road properly. Men are drivers because men can do this kind of work. It is very hard for women, who are more fragile, to wait in the sun, repair the car and carry heavy loads. How will she be able to change a tyre? She will have to call someone. Women should work, but there are so many other jobs that they could be doing. This might not be the right choice for a girl".

Similarly, one husband of a potential Sakha client asked me; "it seems like such a great idea, but is it actually safe for my wife." I recognised that he was posing this question on two levels. The first was the age old perception that women aren't as good at driving as men are, therefore he believed that his wife could be placed into unsafe situation on the roads because it was a woman who was her driver. What is interesting to note, the question didn't stem from the fact that the female driver may have fewer years of experience or less training than her male counterpart; but rather his concern came from a place that was completely fuelled by the gender of his wife's potential driver. The second reason that he posed this question was that Delhi is an unsafe city and drivers are often perceived to be protectors or at the very least chaperones to their female passengers as they are navigating through an unsafe city. There is a belief that

if something was to happen, i.e. if the car was attacked at a traffic light by a mob or if there was a car accident, then the male driver also fulfils an alternative role of acting as a protector to his female passengers in such a situation. Ultimately, in the case of this particular couple, they came to the decision to not hire a female driver because of the perceived risks that they outlined above. However, in principal, they did believe that the idea of having a female driver was a good one. Perhaps he would have made a different decision had his wife hired a driver for a few days, perhaps in principle he agreed with the idea of breaking down the sex order division of labour in driving, but did not recognise that he too was a product of a patriarchal society? Perhaps, the manifestation of the gender regime informed by patriarchy as exhibited through Delhi's crime rates was an inhibiting factor.

Supportive and Enabling Men

Radhika Chopra (2007) crafted the term supportive men, who are supportive of women's empowerment. Empowerment must be thought of as relational "to be a sustained process of change, women's empowerment has to – and in fact does – orient itself toward 'critical others' who can support and help sustain that empowerment" (Chopra, 2006, p. 2).

This support comes in several forms, such as Pawan, Ripu's 11 year old son, who is proud of his mother for being the primary breadwinner, he says "I love telling people that my mother drives, I sat in a car with her once and I was so proud of her. Everyone is so proud of her. I am proud of her for leaving the house." For Lalita, the support comes from her father who eventually encouraged her when the rest of the community told her that she should not be working as a driver "he used to wait for me at the entrance of the neighbourhood when I came home late at night, he is always there for me and gives answers to people who say that this is not a job for women. Today, I park my car [Sakha cab] at the entrance of the neighbourhood,

in the same place he would stand to pick me up after training. So much has changed, and that is because he believed in me."

For many of these women, support sometimes comes from the unlikeliest of places. One day, while Sangeeta[107] was standing at the apartment building where she worked, she was asked by a local resident about Sakha and how she could go about getting a driver. Overhearing this, a male driver in the apartment complex started screaming "if women do this job, then what will happen to all the men" he continued screaming until the (male) building sweeper, came up to the male driver and said, "we should be proud that women are coming into these fields, this is great and we must all support this. We should make this building a comfortable place for as many female drivers who will choose to come work here. Then, we will be a community with a difference, because we have given women this chance."

In this section, I am interrogating three men who have been catalysts in training female drivers at Azad Foundation. Pramod Kumar and Jugal Kishore are driving instructors at Azad Foundation and Shrinivas Rao who is the COO of Azad Foundation and who has been part of Azad since its inception in 2008. They are supportive men insofar as they are "partners in women's empowerment" (Chopra, 2006, p. 4). I would like to push this definition further, by saying these three men are in fact enabling men. They are enablers for these women, they are not protectors, or advisors but they are they are enabling because they have been pillars of support to the women at Azad Foundation; so that the women can work on themselves to be successful. Their role in the lives of trainees goes beyond being supportive, rather they are creating enabling environments for the trainees to thrive.

There are three parallel processes that their ethnographies reveal. First, as highlighted in Shrinivas' personal journey, these men have used lessons from their own personal lives to

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[107] Name has been anonymized at the request of the interviewee

arrive at a juncture where they see meaning in their work and their role at Azad Foundation. "Men need to understand their own personal life in order to make it political" (Bandhyopadhyay, 2006, p. 100), in many ways, there has been a process of reflection for Shrinivas by looking at his own personal journey, and the lessons that he has learned, that factors into and informs the work that he is doing at Azad Foundation. Second, is that the men themselves, as a consequence of their work at Azad Foundation, have gone through a process of self-transformation in learning, observing and being empathetic to the cohort of women with whom they are working. Finally, for the women, these men serve as illustrations to them about the multiple meanings of what it mean to be a man. For the women, there is a recognition that there are alternative masculinities; that men can behave differently to what they have seen and come to accept within their homes, communities and fields within which they live.

Making the personal political – Shrinivas Rao

Shrinivas Rao, COO of Azad Foundation, refers to himself as a 'non-resident Andhraite[108]' was born in Chhattisgarh where his father was posted as a bureaucrat. In sharing his personal journey, he feels a deep connection with Chhattisgarh (then Madhya Pradesh). "My mother would narrate stories about the deep forests and beautiful jungles… I would love telling people that I was born in a jungle." He moved around the state, but his early childhood education was completed in villages and small towns. "By the time we moved to Bhopal I was already in class 7. That was the first time I lived in a big city." As a consequence of his father's job, who was a District Magistrate, Shrinivas saw many things happening at the "ground level." He says, "My father would take me to the villages where he worked – and I got to see a lot of things happening, community meetings, and people coming together [and] I understood, very early of the power of such things. There is something in the depth of mind that changes, when

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[108] Colloquial, for someone from Andra Pradesh

you are exposed to certain things at a young age." Through meetings around land distribution, canal constructions and farmers collectivising; Shrinivas was exposed to a different way of thinking and seeing the world around him.

When he moved to Bhopal he began realising how different things were in a big city. "Bhopal was where I finally got a little bit competitive about my studies, I realised that I had to work harder and do better, because I started seeing the competition within my class. At that time, I wanted to be a doctor because one of my uncle's is a cardiac surgeon and the other one is a plastic surgeon… and that is why I prepared for my premedical examination."

However, after preparing, "I failed the first time and I also failed the second time [i.e. not in merit]. That was a shock to me [and led to] a lot of self-doubt. All of a sudden I was a "*Bechara*[109]… your friends, relatives and acquaintances suddenly look upon you as if they didn't know what would happen to me. As a result, I locked myself in a room. At that point a lot of people came to me and said that they would help me out, but I didn't want to take anyone's favours."

One day, the discourse changed, when his father's friend came to him and said "I really need your help. For the first time, I heard someone asking me for help, instead of giving me unsolicited advice. He wanted me to help him set up a [sari] shop and he needed someone who he trusted… and going to work for him was the first time I left home in a year and a half [after not clearing his medical exams]". Slowly, he began taking an interest in the business.

"Just when I was getting back on track… my mother passed away…I was in complete shock. I can tell you now, that they were the defining years of my existence. [The loss of] my mother, failing at an objective and coming out of it again by doing something totally different and of course, getting someone else to take a chance on you…In many ways these experiences

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[109] Poor guy

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set [me] up for what I am doing today at Azad. It all made me sensitive about myself, sensitive about what I think is happening around me in terms of my relationships with others more [pause]… empathetic towards others and the world around me."

Shrinivas continued working at the shop for three and a half years and developed a keen interest in history and economics, "I realised that there was something else that I was interested in beyond biology and medicine. Though at that time, most of my friends went to IIT's or medical colleges, that was what success was defined as, I realised that I was the odd man out, this is what I wanted to pursue." Shrinivas began his higher education and "in the first year, I topped the university… I was confident and I was fascinated about what I was doing… during that time [I also realised], how a little success, motivation and a pause can change your outlook and your chances at life." After that Shrinivas began his Masters at Jawarharlal Nehru University (JNU). "After completing my Masters I got selected for a job. I applied for the job as an assistant professor of economics in Madhya Pradesh… I was going home." After working for some time, he returned to JNU to begin his PhD in economics.

"I was examining the role of technology on output. I was doing very well and my supervisor was very happy with the work I was doing and I was also enjoying [myself]. At that time a friend of mine introduced me to someone in the ILO and I began working with them for one year on a project on unorganised labourers… That was really my first step into the world of development… I was given three states, Madhya Pradesh because it was my home state, Bihar and Odisha because they were close by to my home state… for the first time I visited a lot of factories. Though I had exposure as a child; that was my first brush with the reality of work [in this country]. I saw labourers in such a pathetic condition, making INR 250 per day at best and that shook me to my core, because I had no idea that things like this were happening. On one hand, we were looking at labour legislation, welfare schemes and a lot of other things but on the other, the conditions there made me feel so helpless. I was so unhappy with what I

had seen on the ground that I needed to do something about it [instead of] writing about economics, I needed to DO economics."

Soon after, he began working on a study about labour in Chattisgarh. In lieu of completing his PhD. "It was a six month study on *bidi*[110] workers, mostly female Dalit *bidi* workers. I realised that their work is a chain of exploitation. While it was action research; my concern was whether they would be able to sustain the change for these women. The study was an eye opener. I got to speak with these women – I began meeting local collectives, such as the Ravidas Samaj, which is basically a Dalit group and the Rajnandgaon Kapda Mazdoor Sangh. Both organisations were working with women workers, mill workers and *bidi* workers to be precise, the whole industry was facing job losses and women had to shoulder the burden of these job loses.

It was such a powerful experience for me to work with these street fighters. The women that I worked with had such enormous energy, intelligence and belief in themselves, I realised that I was nothing compared to the kind of hopes they had for themselves, but also [the] perseverance [they had]. However, I also saw so much exploitation in this sector. There is something called the *Bidi* and Cigar Act, in those days, they should have received INR 40 for every 1000 *bidis*. But they were getting INR 19 per 1000 *bidis*; less than 50% of what was stipulated. It was easy for me to collect data to do an analysis. The action part was difficult, through a lot of work we were able to organise women from 4 different areas. We agitated and were able to get wages up to INR 32 per 1000 *bidis*. I was very satisfied with what we did for these women. Something wonderful was happening and I was fortunate to be part of it."

At that time, Chattisgarh "was just born." After Shrinivas' report was published he was offered a job as the State Head of PRIA (Participatory Research in Asia). He took the job and

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[110] Hand-rolled tobacco

though "I initially went for 6 months, I ended up staying for 5 years." He went on to do a lot of work in governance reform. However, he also realised "that despite all these discussion papers, thought papers, or whatever you call them, I did not see much of a change at the ground level [as I had seen in my] action research project with the bidi workers. The activist in me was agitating because nothing was happening."

In 2005, Shrinivas met Meenu and they continued to keep in touch. Then in 2007, he approached Meenu and joined Aaghaz Foundation[111], an academy for female elected representatives. "Soon after I joined, Meenu left the organisation to begin working on her dream… she used to always talk about female taxi drivers, but it was never serious. It was always a joke… but then she began taking her idea seriously. One day, she called me up and said 'Shrinivas, I am finally doing it' – she told me that she had no money but at that point, we both agreed that I would give it a shot, even without a salary, for one year and see what happens. We had a little bit of funding from Shell, I think 8 lakh rupees, with that we began training our first batch of 9 women. Soon after we applied for another local grant, and that is how we began with our second batch of 10 women. In April 2009, the second batch came and after that, well there was no turning back."

For Shrinivas, his journey through changing his career path, exposure to working with women in the livelihoods space and the need to see a tangible difference on the ground brought him to the juncture of coming to Azad Foundation and instrumentally helping to build it from the ground to where it is today. He took experiences from his personal life, made them lessons and used that to fuel his passion to work with resource poor women at Azad Foundation. "I think my journey can be defined by thinking that there wasn't much I could do. I was angry and frustrated, until Azad. Here, you can see that difference [is being made]. Every three

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[111] http://www.aaghazfoundation.com/

months you see things changing, you see how life is changing for these women. I look at my experience of working with the government for all those years – and you didn't see such [fast-paced] change. Things change here because we look at the details, and our reference point is completely different. When you look at the macro perspective, it is very difficult to figure things out sometimes. But when you look at the micro perspective, then you see the departures from the norm, the small departures – but then you can take them forward. And that makes all the difference. The whole program is action research, continuous[ly] and forever. That is why I think it is such an amazing thing. Here you do things and you see things happening. Everything is unfolding in front of you and… we are learning from that. This is what motivates me every single day."

Shrinivas' life experiences also have a direct influence on how he perceives the female trainees but more importantly has enabled him to laterally think about the training program itself. "When I look back, what I have learned is that nobody is worthless, because the capacities of the human being are immense. This is one of Azad's values that nobody fails. People struggle, but they do not fail, I have experienced that in my own personal journey and I see if in the lives of the women we work with. These women are strong and need to come out of the struggle within their lives. That is why we say at Azad, no one fails. What fails are efforts. Some efforts fail, but the individual doesn't fail. In my own life, I went through a dark period, and I am not shy about it. It is something that I proudly speak about because I think it has given me the perspective to succeed at Azad. To never give up, and to never let others give up either."

Process of self-transformation

Shrinivas says, "It was my experience in Chattisgarh that made me realise the importance of working with women. That experience was an amazing one for me, because it

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enabled me to push my boundaries as a person. And here too, you come across these amazing stories, amazing stories of transformation. The kind of departures that these women are making in their own lives, which is what pushes you, motivates you and also provides you with intellectual doors [to open]. You are able to look through various lenses and put on various lenses which you could not or would not have otherwise. That is the amazing part of Azad. It changes you too."

For Pramod, Jugal and Shrinivas, working at Azad Foundation has opened their eyes to alternative ways of seeing things. The result of seeing things differently, is that they are acting differently in their own lives. Shrinivas states, "The male drivers have changed. They need to have an openness to change their own mind-set, when you do there is a large transformation in the lives of the men themselves. If you look at Pramod for example, when he joined, he was so different. He used to shout and was not empathetic. Now you see him, it's a big change. I have seen it. Pramod – who is illiterate in real terms, but the kind of wisdom he has, the way he understands the women that he works with… even now, the women who aren't in Sakha anymore are in touch with him. They call him Pramod Sir. He knows so much about their lives and offers advice and support. He has his own way of nurturing them. He has managed to touch their lives in some way and you can see he is valued because so many of them continue to be in touch with him. In Jugal too, I can see a lot of things happened in his own life also, in his relationships and violence that he has himself, perpetuated. Now he looks back and says, 'why was I doing that? This job has affected my personal life. I have become a lot more sensitive in my personal relations'. If you are sensitive about yourself, then it is more likely that you will be sensitive about your partner. I still remember when I first began at Azad, we had a small toddler and I wasn't earning any money. My wife used to ask what kind of experimentation have you gone into? Which is a major issue that the women trainees face, while they are training and not earning money – they face the exact same issue as I did. My experience of working

with these women has made me more conscious of [my wife's] emotions. Ultimately, if you do not acknowledge each other's reality you are denying something to yourself. Thinking about it like this has enabled me to look at my personal life from a very different angle and to become more compassionate about a lot of things. My personal and professional world is so mixed, what I learn at Azad contributes to my own understanding of myself. My own understanding about how to remain compassionate and sensitive about someone else's struggle. One of the other things that I have learned, is that we can never come from a higher ground – or put oneself on a pedestal. Even as Azad is growing, we need to ask how we can remain grounded. How can we remain equal? This is also something that I apply in my personal life. If I look at my relationship with my son, even though I am a provider to him, I am also getting so much joy [from him] in return. So while I am a provider, he is a provider in a much bigger way. Even though I haven't spoken to him about gender –gender per say. He does ask why things the way that they are. One day he asked me:

> Son: Why are boys and girls different?

> Srinivas: Why do you think they are different?

> Son: Because they wear different clothes.

> Srinivas: What exactly does that determine? You think about it…

Then you know, he figured out that there are bodies, and what IS different is some organs, but other than that, nothing is different between boys and girls."

Pramod joined Azad in 2009, very soon after Azad Foundation began operations in 2008. He has worked in several Azad officers including South Delhi and Gurgaon. For the past 2 years he has been working at Azad's North Delhi office. He travels over 2 hours to reach work from his home in Dakshinpuri – he walks, takes the bus and metro to arrive at his destination. "My name is Pramod Kumar, I moved to Delhi in 1972. I worked at many places,

including hotels. Earlier I was the head of a parking area in Delhi. It was a rough life. After an argument and an incident, I decided to take up driving and I made a licence with all the documents needed. I started driving with a proper licence in 1993. I was a driver at many places after that. I drove expensive cars even though I had a low salary, but I did earn well over time. I went back to my village for a few years because of my ill health but I came back to Delhi in 2004 where I worked in a home in Saket until 2009. That is when I joined Azad Foundation. When I came to Azad, I wondered, why I hadn't been doing this job earlier. I was finally where I was meant to be."

Before coming to Azad he states that, "I had seen women driving but I never thought that women can take this up as a profession. This never occurred to me. The place I used to work before [as a driver], over there, even ma'am used to drive, so I had seen women driving around but never thought that there could be women drivers too! This was something that I thought only men did, to drive for money".

Through his network, he knew someone who was working at Azad as a trainer, who encouraged him to also apply for a job. "He told me, Pramod, there is this organization called Azad Foundation, would you like to work as a driver there? I said okay, but I didn't know that I had to teach ladies. So I went over there and saw 7-8 ladies, I was told that they all are drivers. I was a bit surprised, because until that point I didn't think that it was possible for women to be drivers. Meenu ma'am took my interview, and she told me to show her how I drive, [which] I did. They then told me that I had to teach everyone, and asked me how I would do that. I said, 'Okay let's see'. After the interview, I was told that I'll be informed if I was chosen, and after 10 days I got a call and told that I have to join. It took a while for me to get the hang of it, initially I was hesitant about teaching girls, but now I can't imagine working anywhere else. I really like this job. I don't want to change my job now, I feel like I have a talent and I am able to share it with so many other people – then my talent is getting distributed, then why should I

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stop? If I came to your house to work as a driver, then my talent would stay within me – and that is not what I want. When someone gives us talent, then we are obligated to pass it on to others".

Jugal Kishor is a driving instructor at Azad Foundation's East Delhi branch, he began working in Azad' North Delhi location and was transferred to the East Delhi location about 3 years ago. He joined Azad Foundation in 2013. He is from Delhi but for the past 8 years, he has been living in Ghaziabad and commuting over 2.5 hours to work as a trainer in Azad Foundation. "My name is Jugal Kishore, I am 34 years old and I stay in Ghaziabad. I have been driving for 13 years. After completing class 12 in 1998 my family's financial status wasn't so good, so I couldn't study further and had to begin working immediately. I worked a lot of different jobs here and there and after saving some money, I bought a Maruti van and used to drive that, but honestly it wasn't respectable work. I worked there until 2013 and since August of that year I have been at Azad. I began working in an office in Gurgaon for a few years, my whole family lives in Gurgaon and my niece was actually a trainee at Azad Foundation in Gurgaon when there used to be an office there. Anita ma'am was the Director there – she wanted a good consistent trainer but no driver continued on with them, I think it is because so many people think it is odd for ladies to be drivers. One day, my niece told Anita ma'am about me and said that I'm a good driver. So Anita ma'am took my number and called me up.

She talked to me for only a short while, I was so impressed by the way she talked to me. I also really liked it when she told me about women's empowerment and what all they're doing for ladies that just impressed me so much that I told her that I will join right away. I was impressed because my thinking about women and how they should be, changed after that day. Before that day, my thinking was really different than what it is today. I used to have this attitude of a guy who wouldn't let his sisters out, I wouldn't even let my sister stand even at the door of the house, or allow her to talk to other boys. But when I heard what ma'am said, I

thought to myself, if financially backward ladies can be helped by us like this, then job is not at all bad. I thought this job is made for me only. That one conversation of 2-3 minutes changed my perspective towards women and their welfare. So the next day, I went [to Azad Foundation] and Anita ma'am talked to me for about 2 hours telling me what all had to be done in this job. I really thought that this is the work that I am meant to be doing and that I am made for this work, God made me for this work only. But you know what, I had to work shoulder to shoulder with women and that is something that took me some time to get used to. I had to take all of this in, and gradually become how I am today and think the way that I do now".

For both Jugal and Pramod, working at Azad has enabled them to call into question, negotiate with and indeed, break down patriarchal structures that they too imbibed within their own lives. Their career has brought with it a mind-set change in relation to what women can do. Consequently, they have made a sea change in their own homes and in relation to their own families.

Pramod says "My family lives in the village. I have one daughter who is married and has 3 daughters. I have a son, who has his own business. They both live in the village. My wife and I, we live in Delhi alone. We are happy here. I have experienced so many changes in myself. I had a very different impression of my wife ['s role] before coming to Azad. I used to abuse her, not talk straight and I was rowdy. Now I have stopped doing all that. It's only office and home for me now. There has been such a change in my life. My wife is also very happy with this change. I have begun to appreciate her. She used to live in the village with my children. But, I realised that my children are grown up and she needs to rest. So I brought her to Delhi so that she can enjoy and rest. I have 3 granddaughters, one is 5, one is 4 and the youngest is 2. We will see if they become drivers when they grow up [laughs]. My daughter isn't working a job but she works in the fields. But she has studied. I made sure of that. She is

literate. For me, men and women are very much equal. In fact, I have more females than males in my family.

We never told our daughter that we need a grandson, but that was the expectation from her in-laws, who treated her very badly after she had 3 daughters. People used to also say things to me. One day I told her in-laws that they shouldn't have a problem. Her girls can achieve anything that boys can. We had serious arguments, my daughters father-in-law, husband and I – after that I brought my daughter and granddaughters back home to live with me. So many people asked me, how will they grow up, who will support them and pay for their marriages. I told all these people, if they are sent on earth, they will grow up and take care of themselves. After 1.5 years, my son-in-law and his mother came to our house and pleaded to take my daughter back with them. Now she is there and living with her husband and his family and she is happy. My other daughter is studying and my son is unmarried but working. When my family sees my work, they become very happy. My friends and family are so surprised to see my transformation and change. I have told them that this is my nature now. This is who I am".

Jugal says "My wife and I have been married for 9 years. Earlier I was so patriarchal, I always discouraged my sisters from talking to boys, actually to anyone. I did not like it when they went out, or applied make up. I used to even taunt my wife so much. Now I realise what I had been doing. Because of Azad, I got that realisation in myself. Both my sisters are working, one as a beautician and the other in a computer job. My wife is a housewife, I want her to work but it is very tough because of how far away our village is and because our son is still very young. She has done her graduation in teacher training, so she can easily get a job. Maybe soon. I do not discriminate between my son and daughter, I want my daughter to be a perfect driver, and she may not do the job if she doesn't want to; but I want her to learn this skill. Right now, she is in grade 1. So she has many years to go before she learn how to drive".

Jugal and Pramod have also embodied a discourse of empowerment, to both of them it is far more than just a job. They seem themselves as part the process in building the agency of these women to be able to deliver change within their own lives through driving. They do this in a variety of ways, from attending all the gender classes, which Jugal says has "opened my eyes to so many things." They have also assumed the language with which to talk about gender, such as using words like patriarchy, empowerment, speaking candidly about violence and the necessity for women to change their own personal circumstances, thus, self-efficacy. Additionally, they believe in Azad Foundation's theory of change: that these women earning a livelihood is a pathway to their empowerment. They also believe that they play a role in ensuring that barriers that they face within the home are addressed.

Pramod says "Today when something happens within their family setting, we try and talk to the girls. For counselling – we do it in a way that the trainee doesn't feel any pressure from our side. We do our best to help the girls, we also have a pool of funds, from which we lend money to the girls in case they need it. We do our best to help them from the various economic, financial and domestic crises that take place in their lives."

And that sense of empowerment is not limited to the girls who they are training. They themselves are gaining a sense of agency and confidence as a consequence of their jobs. Jugal says, "Now we are helping others to empower themselves, but we are also getting empowered in the process. I have so much confidence now, if someone tells me to be blindfolded and then train these girls, be it in busy markets, or highways or anywhere – I know I will no longer say, I can't do this, but [rather] I will say start the car and let's go!"

They recognise the disruptive nature of their job - that they are putting women onto the road and into driving seats, which will cause backlash from others. Preparedness for this, they feel, is central to their role as trainers. Jugal says, "I think that women are safer drivers than

men, because men as drivers are very short tempered and spontaneous. Especially when they see a girl on the road – they will try their best to make a comment, overtake them or edge them off the road. We have to train these women to prepare them for how people will react to seeing them on the road. We never teach them to overtake and take cuts unnecessarily. When a girl first comes for training, she is very shy but as she goes through the modules. She slowly learns to open up and become more confident, not only on the road, but in life."

There are personal victories for them, they become champions of the women whom they train and their successes are shared and celebrated by Jugal and Pramod. Jugal says in "my first batch in Model Town, there were two sisters. One was 26 and the other was 30. The elder one was a divorcee. She had a head injury from violence in the home. They came from Jahangirpuri and lived in *jhuggis*[112]. After getting to know them and learning their stories, it became very important for me to see them successfully become drivers. To date, they are my best trainees, the younger sister is the best driver of Azad that I have trained until now. Both of them are now working, they are providing for their families and they are doing so well. It feels so good, because it shows that our hard work has paid off."

Pramod shares, "There was a girl called Poonam, she was determined to learn how to drive. So I thought to myself that even I should have the determination to teach her. She finally got a job 55km away from home. Can you imagine she used to travel from Tuglakabad to Noida! Her duty timing was 0830 in the morning and she used to travel for 2 hours from home to be there on time. She struggled so much but she was so successful. She was such an inspiration for me."

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[112] Shanty Town

Alternative Ways to be a Man

For many of the female trainees and drivers, meeting men who are affiliated to Azad Foundation and Sakha has enabled them to realise, for the first time, that there are different ways to be a man, men who are countering violence, men who are standing up to patriarchal social structures and men who are enablers in women's self-determined altered life trajectories. This is very important because it is vital for "women to know that there are men who actively counter violence against women in their everyday lives. These stories have an 'effect' on what men and women think about each other" (Chopra, 2006, p. 13). Lalita speaks about her interactions with Pramod, who helped her gain confidence to drive. "The first time I put my hands on the steering wheel, I got so scared, I told Pramod sir that I won't drive. He told me to never be scared and never think of anything as impossible. He encouraged me a lot and finally I agreed to drive. I used to tell sir that I cannot be as perfect as him and I wouldn't be that good a driver, and he scolded me a lot [laughs]. He told me never to repeat these words again, and told me to say that we girls would become even better drivers than him. He always taught us to have a positive attitude." Kajal also attributes a lot of the confidence that she has to Pramod, she says "he held my hand and helped me walk. I sat in the car for the first time with him and I will always remember that. I guess, once you can walk, then you can also run. So those first steps in the car with Pramod Sir were the most important." The result of the women coming to this recognition about the men who they meet during their training, is a very interesting outcome that is sometimes felt by the men at Azad. Srinivas states, "[As one of the few men at Azad Foundation], you always have to be conscious. Being a man does put you into certain situations. All humans have emotions… and there are certain attractions which happen. You have to realise when this is happening and then tell that person. A lot of women are fascinated by a man in a caring role. I always take the help of my colleagues. I appreciate where they are

coming from but there are boundaries that must be maintained. I guess it is because… they have a feeling that I am different man, compared to what they have seen in their lives."

A slow change for the men to challenge existing structures

However, despite the transformational changes that Jugal and Pramod have experienced, they are still bound by existing social structures within their homes and the community. Jugal and his wife, despite being satisfied with having one child, a daughter, were taunted for not having a son. And instead of standing up and speaking out against the community – they found it easier to give in and try for a second child in the hope that it was a son. Jugal says, "My family is comprised of my father, two sisters, two brothers. My brother is married and has one daughter. I have one daughter and one son. Both of my sisters are also married. My father, brother and I [and our families] live in one house. In my village people prefer sons over daughters, coming under pressure we also had another child in the hope of having a son. First, we decided that we were happy with one daughter, but, people used to taunt my wife so much that she was the one who said that we should try for a son. My wife was actually worried for her safety".

Upon a re-examination of their personal stories, one can raise several situations where both Jugal and Pramod, despite their exposure, newfound belief systems and thought processes, have conformed to social norms. A similar sentiment is echoed in Pramod's earlier account about his family. Why is it that both Pramod and Jugal's wives do not work or that Pramod's daughter is not working? Why is it that when asked how his granddaughters will fend for themselves, Pramod relied on God as a justification instead of saying with conviction that his granddaughters will earn a living for themselves and have the potential to be as self-reliant as any man? These situations illustrate how, even for men it is tough to challenge existing social

structures outright and they too, similar to the women who have shared their narratives are subject to social barriers that limit their agency within the field of the home; despite the fact that they are able to transcend the rules or *doxa* (Bourdieu 1990) within the realm of their work – where they play a pivotal and instrumental role in the success of these female drivers.

Additionally, when speaking about the importance of women learning how to drive, Pramod states "A man can do any job, but this is a new line for women – and it is vital that we train them for this. They don't earn much respect in doing jobs such as being a home maid – but this is a respectable profession. Most people refer to drivers as something that is respectable but to maids as something that is not. That is the biggest difference." One cannot help but question whether they are gaining additional respectability because they are doing a man's job. Why isn't working in traditional 'feminised occupations' as respectable as working in traditionally male occupations?

Becoming a driving instructor at Azad Foundation has enabled Pramod and Jugal to gain increased status within their homes and communities. Pramod states, "Earlier, [when I worked as driver in people's homes], I was the one opening doors for others and saying good morning Sir. But now these girls refer to me as Sir. I really feel this change." Similarly, Jugal shares the importance of his new status "In my family, they see how I have transformed from being a roadside driver to an elite driver, and also an educated one with good body language. Along with empowering women, we are getting empowered ourselves. Everyone needs money and a salary – but along with that, we are gaining so much respect and in a good environment, by doing good deeds for others."

Jugal and Pramod have gained a sense of respectability because they are trainers. However, a gendered hierarchy still exists. In Jugal's words, he is now an 'elite' driver as opposed to being a regular driver working in people's homes, which is precisely what they are

training the women drivers to be. This hierarchy between male trainers and female students is something that Azad has attempted to rectify since 2018 – when Khushii, Omkari and Lalita [batches 3, 8 and 11 respectively] assumed new job roles as trainers within Azad Foundation's South Delhi branch.

Engaging with Men, the journey ahead

It is becoming more and more salient that it is vital to engage with men centrally in order to effectuate change for women because, "While certain aspects of masculinity are perhaps more fundamental and deep rooted, it is reasonable to assume that a large part of the attitudinal and behavioural constellation constituting masculinity is acquired and perpetuated by constantly, albeit slowly changing social, cultural and contextual factors (including media stereotypes) and that these influences are amenable to changes and manipulations" (Verma & Mahendra, 2004, p. 76). However, this engagement still has to place women's voices in central focus.

The MenEngage[113] alliance, which is a "global alliance made up of dozens of country networks spread across many regions of the world, hundreds of non-governmental organisations, as well as UN partners" operates with three values in mind, the first is that "men and boys need to be part of the solution as allies to women's rights and other social justice movements. Equality is only possible [by] work[ing] together." Secondly, they believe approaches must be "grounded firmly in feminist, human rights-based principles and build on the work of women's rights organisations and movements". Finally, they "advocate for approaches that critically challenge and transform patriarchal gender norms and power inequalities across all levels of society" (MenEngage Alliance, 2017). It is not enough to merely include men in the conversation, because "evidence suggests that programs that include

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[113] MenEngage website: http://menengage.org/

explicit and deliberate discussions of manhood and masculinities and make clear efforts to transform associated norms through reflections, critical thinking and constructive confrontations are more effective than programs that merely acknowledge them or mention violence prevention and gender equality. Men and boys need to be viewed as partners and not as obstacles and should be made to see what they stand to gain in the process of change that emphasizes equality, non-violence, respect, intimacy and acceptance of diversified forms of masculinities going beyond simple power analysis" (Equal Community Foundation, 2013). Ultimately, it means taking a stand against the notion that 'boys will be boys' and that it is acceptable for them to abuse and be violent because that is what boys do.

EMpower

Since 2016, working with men and boys has been a central focus for EMpower within India, because "in-depth research on gender, power and masculinity and various programmatic efforts to engage men have made it abundantly clear that men and boys must be an integral part of efforts to promote gender equal attitudes and reduce Gender Based Violence" (EMpower, 2016). Jayanthi Pushkaran, EMpower's Program Officer for India says "in order to create real change for women at the household level, we need to work with men...I have seen this work in our programs, there has been positive impact; not only for the women, but the men too, have realised that they have been victims of toxic masculinity. One of the most important things that we can do, is to begin working with boys early." Recognising that, "engaging men in gender equality requires being empathetic with men's lived experiences – the unspoken depression, suicidal thoughts, high levels of childhood experiences of violence, and their high levels of work-related stress. But being empathetic toward the structural conditions of men's lives is not to make excuses for the violent and oppressive practices of some men. It is, instead, an affirmation of the need to move beyond a superficial understanding of gender equality toward addressing the structural – but changeable – factors that underpin it" (Barker, et al., 2011, p.

61). Therefore, a concerted effort has been made to engage with programs that attempt to work with boys and men to shift the needle in relation to their knowledge, attitudes and behaviours in relation to gender equity. This is particularly relevant against the current backdrop within India, where "there are 230 million boys in India under the age of 18. "If nothing changes, then as adults, 114 million (50%) might be violent: 79 million (34%) might commit sexual violence, including rape" (Trans World Features, 2017).

In April 2018, with the launch of EMpower's Girls Advisory Council, a group of 16 adolescent girls were asked for feedback on a variety of issues including working with boys and men. All of the girls came up with a list of sessions that they believe are vital to working with boys. Their suggestions stressed the importance of boys needing to step into girls' shoes to understand the impact that boys actions have upon girls' lives. They also stressed that deconstructing masculinity and what it means to be a man is a necessary part of effective training for boys. They affirmed, that girls do not want sympathy but rather, they want to see a visible change in the behaviours and mind sets of boys. Finally, it is necessary that boys' parents understand the impact that their sons behaviour has upon girls.

They articulated the importance of co-ed sessions, and they asserted that "Patriarchy / masculinity needs to be redefined. This should be at the centre of all programs working with boys because boys do not realise their privilege... through this boys will be able to understand how girls are discriminated against." They asserted "that boys should not give girls sympathy for their situation (in society) but boys should change their behaviour to treat girls as they deserve to be treated." Interestingly, they also stated that it was important for boys to gain Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights knowledge about girls', particularly "menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth as well as about their own bodies and bodily changes." They cautioned development practitioners to think about the discourse that boys are fed, even in civil society organisations. The girls suggested that "boys should not be taught to protect girls but rather

they should take active measures to make the community safer. This can be done through co-ed safety mapping, petitioning for more lighting, removing bikes and groups of boys loitering on the road… boys are not punished, but girls are. Boys need to understand the consequences of their actions upon the lives of girls, such as being pulled out of school, being beaten and their honour being called into question" (EMpower, 2018).

Aangan Trust

As with any journey for a funder, there has to be a starting point to critically engage with new subject matter, this journey for EMpower began in India with Aangan Trust's[114] *Chauraha* program in 2010, with the recognition that boys need to be brought into the conversation. The aim of the *Chauraha* program at that time was to enable boys to create life plans for themselves and be positive role models by taking up social actions within the community. Over time, Aangan Trust's *Chauraha* program has evolved into a structured and measurable program that has reached over 3,500 boys who have made concrete life plans for themselves and recognised their role within the community. What is interesting about Aangan's journey is that there has been a fundamental shift in their approach of working with boys where they first used to look at boys' centred work as being 'rehabilitating' and boys as subjects were seen to be at risk of antisocial behaviour in their homes and the community – to one where boys are agents who are capable of being empowered to make better more informed life choices for themselves. Aangan's role has become to help them visualise and take concrete actions to actualise their realistic aspirations for themselves, in the hope that their realisation of life plans will lead to less antisocial behaviour such as violence and sexual harassment. Aangan Trust consciously addresses the issue of gender and masculinity by speaking about issues around girls' safety and gender equality and the role that each individual boy in the community plays

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[114] http://aanganindia.org/

to ensure this. Finally, they have come to the realisation that boys programming cannot be seen in isolation, if one wants to effectuate systemic change. Boys programming must be a part of community, parent and girls programming.[115]

Equal Community Foundation

In 2016 EMpower partnered with Equal Community Foundation (ECF) in Pune. ECF, states that "Violence is not simply a biological or physical act. It is located within a specific social and cultural context. We can change that particular context" (Trans World Features, 2017). Through a report authored by ECF in 2013, they came to the realisation that "One of the first things we learned was that age is critical. We must influence boys at the earliest time possible, by identifying the key actors interacting with boys at this development stage. These are parents and teachers, with media playing a supporting role" (Equal Community Foundation, 2013, p. 21). They run the Action to Equality program aiming to systemically alter the ways in which communities raise boys aged 14-17. They do this by working with positive male role models within the community at the individual level to shift the knowledge of boys around Gender Based Violence (GBV), and then a change in their attitudes and eventually behaviours. In their programming ECF has realised that it is easier to increase knowledge around the issue of GBV, but shifting attitudes and behaviours takes a much longer time.

ECF has identified three forms of barriers as to why attitudinal and behavioural change takes time, and is often less successful that knowledge acquisition: accountability barriers, awareness barriers and privilege barriers.

"Accountability Barriers: Boys do not see violence against women as personal issues for them. The most common way these barriers are articulated is through statements

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[115] These are reflections from grants programming between Aangan Trust and EMpower – The Emerging Markets Foundation between 2010-2018

like "I do not beat girls, go talk to those guys who do" or "I only beat her when she refuses to go out or speak to me "…ECF learnt that boys need to understand that these violent attitudes and actions are encoded in boys' everyday language and expectations about females in the community that naturally perpetuate violence.

Awareness barriers: Boys need to be made more aware of the conditions and experiences around violence that are daily parts of girls and women's lives. ECF has decided to shed light on this matter through workshops to help boys to draw personal connections to the issues with GBV through clear and fair representation of issues of violence against girls and women in community.

Privilege barriers: It is a difficult thing for boys to examine their privilege in a patriarchal society…A deeper examination of GBV makes them uncomfortable and they choose to maintain a silence due to their self-interest – "what is in it for us?" ECF addressed this by letting boys engage with the questions of how stereotypical notions of masculinity affect boys, particularly its health costs (shorter lives, addiction, alcoholism), emotional costs (alienation, depression, forced conformity into negative stereotype) and societal costs (fear, crime, violence, distrust)"[116]

Ultimately, there is scope for change: for Shivraj, being part of ECF has changed his perspective tremendously. "Like many others in India, I live in a community where street sexual harassment, domestic violence and child marriages are not just social evils but everyday realities. I was known as a '*Chhapri*' or '*Tapori*' (hooligan) who stands in the *chowk*. It was normal for me to use at least one swear word in every sentence. Unfortunately, even the way I looked at girls wasn't nice. When a girl passed by, my friends and I would whistle. She would bow her head and keep walking, not reacting. Her silence encouraged us further. I was clueless

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[116] Equal Community Foundation, Organisational Strategy

about how much this troubled them… When I teased women, I didn't realise it was sexual harassment. For us, it was simply 'fun'…When I teased girls, they would complain to their parents and instead of scolding us, their parents discontinued their education and made them sit at home. While I went to school and college, girls my age were denied their right to education. I felt horrible that they had to leave school because of us sexually harassing them. So, from then on, I've stopped teasing girls" (Equal Community Foundation, 2017).

Azad Foundation

Azad Foundation has been systematically engaging with boys and men to make their core program, Women on Wheels more robust. In 2014 a small pilot was launched in order to cultivate male advocates for women who wanted to learn how to drive, through their Men for Gender Justice Program Since then, this has evolved into the #BeASakha program. Sakha means ally in Hindi and has gained a lot of traction in the community.

The aim of the program is to create leadership and planning skills of male program participants to address three important strategic goals: 1) Improve their attitudes and behaviour at individual, household and community level to challenge forms of masculinity that limit girls' and women's right to access or continue their education and jobs opportunities; 2) Enable male advocates to create an enabling environment for girls and young women to enter non-traditional livelihood streams; and 3) Improve the enrolment and retention rates of female trainees in Azad Women on Wheels program.[117]

Shrinivas says, "People know that violence isn't good, but what they pick up from society is what they do. Which is why, the first question should always be [to men] why are you doing what you are doing and secondly, how do you think it is making the women feel? You have to ask them, if subconsciously you know it is wrong, then why are you doing it?

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[117] From Azad Foundation's Research, Advocacy and Communications Team

When you look at our program. It happens at two levels. First is personal change – then it is community change. A lot of the program has to do with personal transformation. If I see that society is unsafe for women, then what should I do to make it safe for them? You can never change someone's mindset by forcing it."

The program aims to shift the perception of the role of men and masculinity which is traditionally viewed as being dominant and superior to women, to making their expression of masculinity as one where they are friends and therefore equal partners to women who want to pursue careers in non-traditional livelihoods. The program has been successful, whereby men in 12 communities have wanted to learn more about how they can also 'Be a Sakha'. In the 2017 graduation ceremony of female drivers in Delhi and Jaipur, male community members expressed their solidarity to the program by wearing t-shirts with the slogan #BeASakha. According to Vikrant, a participant in the program "I had this view that women and men are very different, and women can never be equal to men. Women are meant to be beaten. But my first change after joining Azad was a change in mind-set. I understood that society has imposed these thoughts upon us, and has taken away the ability to think freely" (Azad Foundation, 2018).

Conclusion

This chapter illustrated the multiple manifestations of masculinity that women engaging in non-traditional livelihoods encounter in their day to day lives. It highlighted that while female drivers are undergoing a process of transformation themselves, they are also responsible for changing the mind-sets of those around them, by transforming men's pre-existing subjectivities through their actions as lady drivers and presence in public / in the city. Enabling Men, along the journey of the trainees have been an important factor in their success, which raises the questions, that is their elevated status as men a contributor the value and importance of their support? Is a father's support more valuable than a mother's because of this social

capital? Even support is gendered and constructed out of the gender regimes that organise society. Ultimately, the process of transformation is a two way street. The project of working with men has come up as a salient issue in civil society. The need to engage men to question the status quo is being seen as a central contributor to success in achieving gender equity. As the last part of this chapter illustrates, this is an active need of the day and addressing gender hierarchies necessitates working with men.

In Lieu of a Conclusion

The Roadmap Ahead

दरिया की कसम मौजों की कसम
यह ताना बना बदलेगा
तू खुद को बदल तू खुद को बदल
तब ही तो जमाना बदलेगा....

I promise and it is my conviction,
That change will occur
If you change yourself
Then only will the world change

- From the Indian Women's Movement[118]

This work aimed to answer the following question. What is the impact upon women and their surroundings, when women engage in non-traditional livelihoods, and to what extent does their negotiation with and disruption of patriarchal structures constitute a transformation in these structures? This work reveals that engaging in a non-traditional livelihood is not a silver bullet, in none of the narratives in this work has driving been a clear cut solution to enabling the systemic transformation of social structures. One of the other major revelations, is that it is not enough to focus on the individual alone, in the case of challenging social structures, interventions have to include the entirety of the driver's ecosystem; which mean engagement with men, the community and the family. Finally, there is a huge importance that the backdrop of intervention plays as well, in this case, the city of Delhi – which is a gendered in and of itself. Addressing the gendered nature of the city, and ensuring that drivers have the tools to address the implications of the city'

The narratives reveal a transformation on an individual level as illustrated by the ability that my respondents have had to negotiate with and challenge their habitus. They are using

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[118] This is a famous anthem from the Women's movement in India. Also quoted in Azad Foundation's *safarnama*, which is the personal journal that each driver uses to map her own journey.

their agency, which they have derived from their career in driving in order to drive change within their own lives and they are serving as role models to others, they have found, and are using their voice. Additionally, they are, through their actions and resistance, breaking down the binaries that organise society.

Breaking Down Binaries

तू चुप रहकर जो सहती रही तो
क्या यह जमाना बदलेगा ....
तू बोलेगी मुंह खोलेगी
तब ही तो जमाना बदलेगा

If you remain quiet,
If you accept everything,
Then how will the world change?
If you speak up, if you raise your voice
Then only will the world change

"There is something special about what we do – if I wasn't a driver, I can't imagine how my life would have turned out, I would be dead. And if I wasn't dead, I would be a corpse going through my life. But I am *alive* now." Ripu, a single mom, has enrolled both of her children in private school, she has bought a small plot of land and is in the process of building herself a home with two rooms and a bathroom. Her husband is in prison for a sexual abuse allegation. She has limited support from her own family and her in-laws refuse to speak with her. The community often says that her husband's transgressions are her fault. But she perseveres. She says, "Now I have *aatmavishwas[119]*, I know that what people say doesn't matter and I know, that I have to rely on no-one but myself to make a life for me and my children. Even though I don't have support from my family, I have built a community around myself, which is something I never had until I joined Azad Foundation and became a driver." Ripu highlights how she has built self-efficacy in the face of lack of support from her habitus, she

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[119] Belief or faith in myself

articulates the importance of self-dependence (Clark, 2016) and she is challenging the male breadwinner ideology. Ripu is breaking down binaries through her actions.

Lalita is now a trainer at Azad Foundation's South Delhi Centre, she is training cohorts of women like her to become drivers one day. "It is really hard, and the women in the program face a lot of struggles, but I tell them that there is another life waiting for you around the corner." She goes onto say, that "before, when I was a trainee, we only had male trainers, but now even that has changed! See, we need to stop thinking that there are limits for us [as women]. If we can put our mind to it, then we can do anything; but in order to do that, we have to stop being scared… I think that is the biggest problem. Fear." Lalita, by becoming a trainer has broken down the hierarchy of men teaching women a 'male trade', she is being disruptive by training others in a trade that just happens to be driving. There is a normalisation occurring, that is making driving less 'non-traditional' but instead, a realistic job opportunity for women to pursue, as McDowell (1999) suggests, Lalita is looking beyond the workers, to the actual work itself. Work is not inherently gendered, because there is nothing essential about male work and female work. She is breaking down the binary between men's work and women's work as well as enabling access to other women to be trained in trades that they might not have been able to access earlier.

Shabnam has left Sakha Consulting Wings and is now working for a French expat family in Chanakyapuri. She says "Of course they hired me because I am a woman, I am responsible for picking up the children from school, [she shows me her gate pass from a prestigious Delhi International school], obviously, they aren't going to send a man to do school pick-ups, it isn't safe!" Shabnam is re-writing what it means to be a driver – and is claiming the occupation as her own. In many ways, there is no question in Shabnam's mind that she is 'unsuited' to the occupation. She is breaking down the binary of inside /outside because she is taking her place in a very embodied manner.

Shabnam has also gotten married, after her marriage she went to live with her in-laws in Bihar for a few months before returning to Delhi. She now lives within a two minute walk of her parents' home and continues to work as a driver. "Things were different, I got to meet my husband before we married, which was unheard of in my community. I also told him clearly, that I will be a driver after marriage, and I wouldn't marry him unless he was ok with that. We paid a dowry, but much, much less than what was paid for my sister...the point is. I had the courage to stand up for my rights."

Shabnam is working, has a close and continuous link to her natal home and is the primary breadwinner of her home, her husband has studied in an ITI[120] and works in air-conditioning repair, "so he has very little work for a few months of the year." When I asked her about how things are at home, "look it's very simple, not a big deal, if I am working for many hours in the day, my husband does the preparing, like cutting vegetables and then I come home and cook for the two of us." There is a complete transformation in her habitus, she is breaking down binaries between men's work and women's work, and she is challenging the social norms around marriage. She says, "the best part, is that before he used to get so upset, but now he doesn't mind sitting behind me on my scooty[121]."

Rabbunisha is working in a private placement job and says "I am saving money now, it's been a couple of years, I think it is time to renovate the house!" Rabbunisha illustrates how her proximity to the market is enabling her to assert her decision making capability on her finances. One of the biggest anxieties, as we have seen is women's proximity to the market – because of the value of the market within capitalist social structures. Rabbunisha, through her occupation as active market participant, is claiming her right to decision making with regards to her income; which is being invested into bettering living conditions for her family.

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[120] Industrial Training Institute
[121] scooter

Rabbunisha is breaking down the binary between home and the market. She is also disrupting the idea that sons take care of the family and daughters do not.

Sunita has left Sakha Consulting Wings and is now working as a valet at a 5 star hotel in Delhi. She shared "you know, the first time they gave me the keys to an Audi I FREAKED out – now I say, sure, give me your BMW, give me your Mercedes, I have the confidence to park them all!" She shares, that "not only am I making a very good salary, I also have benefits that all hotel staff get, like insurance." Sunita is breaking down the binary between women and technology, she is driving luxury vehicles in a prestigious environment.

All of their journeys have illustrated true transformative change in their lives, in the perception that their families have of them and they have become role models within their community. As Lalita says, "I really believe it, people like me can show the world that other jobs are possible for women… instead of the three jobs that you are told that you can do – that is, if you are allowed to work in the first place!" The extent to which they view this transformation as a strategic interest or a practical need (Molyneux, 1985), varies between the women. For Ripu and Lalita, they see themselves as effectuating change in relation to how gender, work and public space are constructed. For Shabnam, she is more inclined to viewing the changes in her life as accessing her practical needs.

However, all of their journeys highlight an internalisation by the women that gender is socially constructed. There is, amongst these women, a recognition of the gender order of society, comprised of several gender regimes. These women are, remaking gender in their everyday lives (Connell, 2009, p. 74); because they do not silently conform with social structures (though in some cases they might choose to conform), they have the ability to change their own life course. They have re-articulated their positions within their family, within their

community and within the public sphere – a result of the transformation of their subjectivities, which have been influenced through the praxis of driving.

My respondents are also contributing to building an ecosystem of change. Shabnam's younger sister, Sanjida, who completed her B.A in Hotel Management has recently gotten a job in Dubai to work in a restaurant, Sanjida shares with me that "there is no way my parents would have let me go, had it not been for my sister. She paved the path for me and I am walking down the path now." Rabbunisha's younger sister is also completing her Bachelors degree at Jamia Millia Islamia University, Rabbunisha says "I know for sure that she would not have gotten this opportunity if I didn't show my parents what daughters are capable of." All of the drivers shared how other people in their community view them as role models, Lalita says "people listen to me now, people want their daughters to be more like me." Sunita says, [when we are on the road] we get inquiries from people all the time, about how their family members can also be drivers, sometimes [potential] clients stop us to ask for our number because they are interested in using Sakha services. Their claiming of public space has made people stop and listen, and these people, also want to be part of the change.

As we have seen from their narratives, there are times when existing social structures are pervasive in the lives of these women as well. There are negotiations that take place in their day to day lives, so that they can navigate through their habitus, at times, they too simply comply with the *doxa* of their habitus. As we have illustrated, the family, the market, occupations, the sex ordered division of labour are all social structures that are gender regimes informed by patriarchy and these social structures are not going to disappear because a group of women have taken up driving; it will take a critical mass of women and men in order to dismantle these social structures and re-write the rules. Nonetheless, as Giddens (1979) highlights, these women are contributing to a process of structuration through their smaller

conscious actions, or actions that have unintended consequences – which have the ability to affect the structural properties of the society that they live within.

However, what is vital to recognise is their agency has given them the ability to operationalize choice in their lives (Kabeer, 2008, p. 20), their sense of agency is derived from their ability to make decisions about their life course in a manner that they might not have been able to prior to becoming drivers. Their ability to operationalize choice, is also enabling them to exercise their power at the micro level (Foucault 1990) which they have derived through their life choices; what remains to be seen is the extent to which they can effectuate <u>systemic</u> change as a result of their actions.

Azad Foundation

दस्तूर पुराने सदियों के
वे आये कहाँ से क्यों आये...
कुछ तो सोचो
कुछ तो समझो
यह क्यों तुमने अपनाएं हैं

How did old societal norms come about?
From where did they come?
And why did they come?
Think about it
Try to understand
Why did you accept them and follow them?

By conducting an ethnography of Azad Foundation, I have been able to ascertain the extent and the value of these women in having organisational support; by feeling like they are part of a larger organisation, many of these women feel safer in challenging social norms through an alternative career on their own. They have their peers, trainers and mentors to rely on not only during but also once they finish their formal training. Training is central to these women's success, so I interrogated the training process to see how they equip the women to engage in non-traditional livelihoods, both in terms of increasing their technical aptitude for the work that they are doing, but also building their resilience in relation to challenging social

norms through the work that they are doing. Central to transformation of my respondents has been the Skills ++ training program at Azad Foundation. This set of trainings have enabled this group of women to build resilience and provided them with the tools to interface with social structures to challenge them, there has been a complete re-fashioning of these women's subjectivities. Ultimately, this work has been a study of the transformations in their lives and these women's ability to claim their space and their active citizenship; and we have uncovered Azad's pivotal role in catalysing the drivers' ability to assert their agency. Had these women engaged in driving without organisational support, or the trainings received through the Skills ++ module, their success would have been less likely.

Women employ negotiation tactics in order to navigate through their life course in the face of social structures. In some instances, like 40% of all trainees enrolled at Azad Foundation, social structures are so solidified that that they were unable to challenge or negotiate with these structures, so they continue living within them in their pre-determined roles. However, that does not mean that the program has failed, nor does it mean that there hasn't been an incremental change in the lives of women who walked out of the program. Nonetheless, there is value in recognising failure as learning; and to recognise the multiple forms that resistance may take. As Hays (1994) illustrates, structures and agency have a mutually dependant relationship and on one hand, it may be a matter of time before these women 'walk in' to Azad again – or they may not. What Hays highlights is that culture, a social structure, is a complex web of interconnections, informed by patriarchy, therefore challenging this complex web is not always successful. There are limits to disruption.

The larger project of citizenship

आवाज़ उठा कदमो को मिला
रफ़्तार जरा कुछ और बढ़ा...

Raise your voice
March forward
March together
Gain inner strength and momentum

Kabeer (2008) asks us to consider the larger project for transformational change. As illustrated by this work, EMpower and Azad Foundation recognise the role that they have to play in strengthening the field and contributing to knowledge. Both organisations are using their positionality to assert influence on the ecosystem in relation to non-traditional livelihoods, specifically in relation to dismantling ideas around appropriate skilling for women, they are operationalizing the fact that methodologies of disruption need to be disruptive in and of themselves. For Azad, it is through their position as a thought leader in the non-traditional livelihoods space, whereby they are encouraging groups focussing on livelihoods to consider non-traditional trades. They are contributing to a body of literature on non-traditional livelihoods, and in many cases, this literature is in Hindi and accessible to their program participants. Examples include: *Azad Parinde*[122], their quarterly newsletter and a series of comic books[123] that highlight not only the success stories of particular trainees, but also how the overcame barriers to get complete their training. As Padmakshi Bodoni says "their purpose is for trainees to pick them up and learn from them, so that they can also go home and employ similar strategies, the issues that our trainees face are often very similar, so these strategies can be shared and used by many." For EMpower, they are cross-fertilising learnings and best practices in the skilling and livelihoods space to their grantee partners in the 15 countries that

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[122] Azad Parinde means 'free birds' – each newsletter is focussed on a different theme, they have had an issue on working with men, one where the trainees shared their artwork and poetry, one that focussed on the life stories of the trainees etc.

[123] Each comic book, in Hindi focusses on the journey of one driver. One of the comic books features Shabnam.

they work in. Additionally, they are lifting up the successes of their partners within the funding landscape so that organisations like Azad Foundation can grow and thrive. Finally, both organisations are contributing to the limited body of knowledge in this space through best practices, toolkits and research.

Contributions to the field

I begin this section with humility, as I am standing on the shoulders of giants, whose worked I have used to weave together my theoretical framework, my arguments and my analysis. It is my hope that my findings can contribute to the field in a small but meaningful way.

This journey began to build a case that non-traditional livelihoods has the potential to unsettle or disrupt existing social structures. As the learnings from this journey unravelled it was made amply clear that socially constructed binaries very centrally organise social structures and are at the root of not only the structures themselves but also the rules that govern them. Ultimately, at its root is the need for men to control women. The argument then, is that women who are trained in and are engaged in non-traditional livelihoods have the potential to disrupt these social structures because they are embodying a different way of being that unsettles these very binaries and social structures. Furthermore, this level of disruption is less likely to occur, or will be less effective, if women are engaged in more traditional occupations because they are merely perpetuating the binaries that organise society if they are in work that is home-based, in the private realm and are performing work that is 'naturally' women's work. Therefore, in order to disrupt social structures it imperative that the tools used in this disruption are not merely manifestations of the social structures, the tools in and of themselves, must be disruptive in order to effectuate transformative change.

Additionally, while the project is to dismantle binaries, there are times that binaries have been used as tools or justifications. For example, there is a 'naturalisation' of care-giving in Sakha Consulting Wings pitch to potential clients, the 'safety' of a female driver for school runs and the additional care of female drivers towards elderly clients. This is echoed by Shabnam, who says that driving children to school is more suited to a female driver as opposed to a male driver. By building a case for non-traditional livelihoods and greater access to markets and waged work, we must be cautious that the implicit result of this places non-traditional, public, paid, 'male work' in a higher status position as compared to traditional, home-based, unpaid, 'female' work. The purpose of this thesis is not to create a hierarchy but rather to call into question the entire need for binaries in the first place. All forms of work should be seen in and of themselves and not relationally. Central to breaking down these binaries is to cultivate choice that is not determined based on gender, but rather determined by interest and aspiration instead.

The point of departure for this work has been to understand the negotiations with and challenging of existing social structures by centring my work on the case studies of a few women. The methodology was consciously assumed so that deep and detailed ethnographies could illustrate the lived realities of negotiation and disruption of social structures. On one hand it may be argued that this could lead to the potential of a few women speaking for many women. But I argue, that the women who I focussed on, despite having spent time with many drivers at Sakha Consulting Wings and Azad Foundation; are examples of women who have successfully negotiated with their immediate surroundings and their lives serve as examples of strategies and methodologies that we can learn from. For that reason, I propose using ethnography as a tool to learn from the lived realities of women, in their own words and through the negotiations and strategies they have employed in their own lives.

The 'Action' in Action Research

The methodology for this work was grounded in autoethnography and action research. I asserted that the autoethnography was the 'how' I conducted my fieldwork and the 'action research' was what I hoped to do with this work. Therefore, my theoretical contribution extends to the practitioner space, in the concerted hope that the findings from this work can be used in policy, programming and curricula for livelihoods programming. Some of my key findings are:

Stakeholder engagement

One of the most salient learnings from this work is the recognition of the salient role that existing social structures play in civil society programming. For that reason, an important strategy for success is stakeholder engagement. This includes working very centrally with important stakeholders who are complicit in upholding social norms such as family members and men. "Further research on women's empowerment will need to factor men into the story – both to note the implications of their resistance to change but also to document the factors which transform them into allies in struggles for gender justice" (Kabeer, 2008, p. 95). As we have seen from the chapter 5, the role of 'enabling men' to catalyse change need to be lifted up and advocated in programming. Furthermore, continuous engagement with the family unit, parents, in-laws and support networks are an important aspect to increasing chances for success in programming.

The Provision of Holistic Training

When speaking with the female drivers, universally, they declared that Azad Foundation's Skills++ aspect of the curricula has been the most important and influential aspect of their training. Therefore, it is vital for civil society practitioners to create program curricula

that include non-technical skills and focus on building the self-efficacy and core life skills of their trainees. This will mean that training programs will be longer in duration and will need a high touch approach. The learning for programmers and funders is that this high touch approach will also cost more money per program participant, and for that reason, to echo Baruah (2017),it is vital to move beyond measuring the success of program by the number of program participants alone.

A Journey back into the program

Given the pervasiveness of social structures, especially for women who are training in non-traditional trades, chances for success will be lower for trainees in non-traditional trades, because the issues that the trainees will be faced with, will be a result of resistance to challenging social structures. For this reason, practitioners should create recourse for trainees who have dropped out, to be welcomed back into the training program should they choose to. Additionally, for the funding ecosystem, which is often focussed on success rates and impact measurement, any program that is challenging severe social inequalities by calling social structures into question will be less successful than programs which perpetuate or live within social structures. For this reason, it is important to recognise that success rates will be lower for these programs.

Creating and sensitizing the market

Markets are also gendered and are informed by patriarchal gender regimes, as this work has illustrated. In order to ensure that trained women have access to jobs, there is a role that civil society has to play in transformative change in the markets themselves. One of the strategies to do this is through sensitization of potential clients and employers so that their market decision is not made on the basis of the gender of the worker, but rather their potential

to work in the job role; additionally, as Azad Foundation has done through the creation of Sakha Consulting Wings, it is important to create a roadmap from skilling to job placement.

Building a sisterhood

One of the most salient learnings from this work has been the importance for trainees to recognise that they are not alone and that they have a support network to facilitate, support and sustain their journey of change. This begins in the training centre by creating spaces that are brave as opposed to being safe so that they are able to question and unlearn the impact of social structures upon their own lives. This continues post-placement by ensuring that alumni have the ability to remain engaged and connected; and that they have access to counselling, support and financial assistance when needed.

Beginning Early

Since the project of non-traditional livelihoods is concerned with dismantling structures that define a women's life course, a key learning has been to begin programming early, so that alternative ways of viewing the world can be introduced prior to the cementing of rules that govern a girl's life course. Additionally, in the livelihoods space, it is important to engage early so that girls have exposure to occupational pathways at a younger age and are not limited by societal expectations of the limited occupations that girls can do.

Post-training support

Very often, civil society programming ends once trainees graduate from the formal training program. However, if programming is disruptive in nature, and poses a challenge to existing social structures, then post training support is vital. All of my respondents spoke about how the journey does not end post placement, because as Sunita says "the rules of our society are not going to disappear into thin air" – negotiating with and challenging structures takes an

emotional energy and a fearlessness that cannot be underestimated. Therefore, support structures need to remain in place, long after the training program has ended.

Creating a body of knowledge

Azad Foundation has created a body of knowledge on non-traditional livelihoods that is open source so that other organisations can learn from their successes and failures. Additionally, they have several materials, whose primary audience is the trainees themselves, they are accessible and enable the trainees to not only learn from them, share them with their families but also feel like they are part of something bigger. This body of knowledge is a key contributor to strengthening the field and shifting the needle in relation to livelihoods programming in civil society.

Rejecting the term beneficiary

One of the biggest learnings illustrated by the journeys of Azad Foundation and EMpower is their recognition of the wisdom of program participants. There is an active role that program participants can play in making decisions about programming and in guiding the trajectory of programs. For this reason, the often over-used term in civil society 'beneficiary' should be called into question. Program participants are not merely recipients of programming, but they can and should inform programming in the first place. It is for this reason, that Azad Foundation has several feedback loops in the training and post training process. For EMpower, it is through the recognition of the wisdom of young people that the Girls Advisory Council has been formed, and the Girls Advisory Council has been given the authority to define EMpower's thematic priority areas within India from 2019-2022.

Future Avenues for Research

In attempting to answer one research question, several more questions have arisen, which can be potential future avenues for research to unravel 'knotty' issues that have emerged as a result of my work.

The consequence of drivers becoming 'middle class'

Many women engaged in non-traditional livelihoods view themselves as climbing social hierarchies and as part of the emergent, 'new middle class'. The middle classes in India is a problematic category, because most often it is defined by the social echelons below it and the social echelon above it, the space that the clients of these women occupy. Derne (2008) argues that 'Western academics use the term middle class to refer to the five percent of Indians who speak English well, or the six percent of households with the income to purchase a scooter" (2008, p. 97). However, the middle class is much larger than this, it is a cultural category, which is aspirational and defined by "their ability to follow certain valued practices" (Saavala, 2010, p. 12). The middle class, as illustrated by the u-shaped curve in female labour force participation, is also where women withdraw in greatest numbers from the workforce. It will be important to see whether drivers, as they accumulate wealth, perform 'being middle-class' or 'marry money' (Kapadia, 1993); actively withdraw from the workforce as a consequence or if their process of transformation enables them to contest the social norms that are encouraging women to withdraw from the workforce. Therefore, I propose an interrogation of women's thought process and decision making around remaining in paid work when they do not need to be in paid work for financial reasons.

An interrogation of the marketplace

We have also seen that the market is gendered, it will take a large exercise of normalising female drivers within the market in order to increase the demand for female drivers. This necessitates a gender transformative sensitization of the market itself. Until that occurs, drivers who have been trained by Azad Foundation who have not been able to find jobs are, unfortunately, perpetuating the stereotype that driving is male work and that is why the female drivers have been unable to find a placement. Furthermore, there have been several instances at Sakha Consulting Wings, where they have had to discontinue engaging with particular clients because they expected their female drivers to contribute to housework such as preparing food, or cleaning while they were not needed as drivers. In these cases, the clients believed that they could get a housekeeper and a driver in one person. This would not have been an expectation of a male driver. Future research could explore the nature of the market for women in non-traditional trades, including but not limited to driving and the strategies required to create a market for women in trades that they were previously not employed in.

Working with girls on non-traditional livelihoods

We have uncovered the importance of beginning early and working with adolescent girls and boys on the project of creating a more equitable gender order of society (Connell, 2009). We have also seen the importance of what I have termed a 'toolbox' of skills that Azad Foundation provides through their skills ++ training. Future research could explore the interventions and strategies required for adolescent girls (and boys) to engage in negotiating and challenging existing social structures. What are the strategies employed? What are the contents of the toolbox required and what role does non-traditional livelihoods training play in this process? Finally, what are the strategies and tools employed so that young people are at

the centre of decision making in programs that will affect their lives? What are the consequences of program participants in decision making positions? How do you ensure that their engagement is not tokenistic and how to you address dynamics of power?

Longitudinal study on the lives of drivers

The argument made in this work is that in order to be disruptive and have the ability to challenge social norms, then the tools used to challenge those norms must not serve to perpetuate those norms, therefore the tools used must be inherently disruptive to ensure transformational change. In order to prove the legitimacy of this claim, it will be important to understand the extent of the transformation in the life course of the drivers and their families in the long-term, given that Azad Foundation is a little over 11 years old. Were the able to sustain the change over time? Were they able to alter social structures for their children? Are they conforming to or challenging social structures in relation to their children's education, marriages and livelihoods?

A thought to end

उत्तर से उठो दक्षिण से उठो
पूरब से उठो पश्चिम से उठो
फिर सारा ज़माना बदलेगा

Rise from the North
Rise from the South
Rise from the East
Rise from the West
Then only will this the world change

This thesis began with a call to action in relation to dismantling the sexual division of labour by calling into question the social structures that have created binaries as the means to organise society. In many ways, this is the beginning of the journey for Azad Foundation, for

EMpower and for the project of challenging women's subordinated positions in society. What is strongly resonating from my fieldwork and analysis is the need for change and the need for that change to be inclusive and holistic. Holistic change will come about through processes for academics and programmers alike, to move beyond narrow definitions of female labour force participation, sex segregated divisions of labour and civil society programming that focusses on impact numbers, instead – holistic change means theorising the whole body and life experience of women, recognising the multiple barriers they face and the multiple hurdles that they have overcome in order to effectuate change in their lives and in their community.

Inclusiveness in academia, will emerge from centring the lived realities of women, it will necessitate self-reflexive ethnographies, colouring data with real experiences and recognising nuances in the lives of individuals so that they are no longer 'subjects' of study, but agents who have the ability to effectuate change. The idea of inclusivity is something that is on the minds of Azad Foundation and EMpower's leadership. For Meenu, she imagines a future where the Sakha Drivers are decision makers within the organisation. She says "We are not going to be around forever, so if we can actually build a community of drivers who will run Sakha… that is a personal dream of mine. So Sakha becomes a space that is directed by the women drivers, and the rest of us act like consultants [to them]." For EMpower, through initiatives such as the Girls Advisory Council, they are centring girls to be the primary decision makers in charting the strategic direction of the organisation. Young people have already contributed to EMpower's strategic planning process and it is the hope of senior leadership that young people will be decision makers in relation to funding decisions in the near future.

This work hopes to celebrate the successes of these women in relation to challenging how women and girls are perceived in their immediate environment, and how to a great extent they have become role models within their homes and communities. In addition, their entry into non-traditional livelihoods means that they are also changing perceptions of gender norms

and are creating a 'new normal' for women at work in urban environments. We are not at the point where female drivers have been normalised, but the best case scenario is that 'lady driver' and 'non-traditional' are omitted from our vocabulary, and instead we speak of drivers, who can navigate through their lives, public space and their homes with embodied agency. These women have answered the call to action posed by the song, *'tu khud ko badal, toh phir yeh zamaana badle ga'* – change yourself, then society too, will change.

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Education

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2006   MSc.
                Gender, Development and Globalisation
                London School of Economics and Political Science

2005   BA. Honours
                Political Science and Women's Studies
                McGill University, Montreal Canada

2009   Executive Diploma
                Capital Markets Compliance, Capital Markets Products & their Regulation
                FINRA & the Henley Business School, University of Reading

Publications

2020   A Window of Opportunity: Programming With and For Very Young
                Adolescent Girls

                EMpower – The Emerging Markets Foundation

                (contributor)

2018   The Art of Fundraising: A Practical Workbook of Tools and Strategies

                EMpower – The Emerging Markets Foundation

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2017   Summary of the Learning Community Survey

                EMpower – The Emerging Markets Foundation

                (contributor)

2016   A Toolkit for Monitoring and Evaluating Programs For Adolescent Girls

                EMpower – The Emerging Markets Foundation

                (contributor)

2015	Shattering Stereotypes: Non-traditional Job Paths for Young Women
	EMpower – The Emerging Markets Foundation
	(contributor)

Conferences, Workshops, Seminars (selected)

2019	Co-convener: Workshop on Non-Traditional Livelihoods
	EMpower – The Emerging Markets Foundation
	Accra, Ghana

2019	Moderator: Adolescent Girls and Entrepreneurship
	Sankalp Global Forum
	Mumbai, India

| 2019 | Plenary Speaker: Azad Foundation International Conference "Making Non-Traditional Livelihoods Work for the Marginalised" |
| | New Delhi, India |

2018-19	Co-convener: Girls Advisory Council
	EMpower – The Emerging Markets Foundation
	Delhi, India

| 2018 | Speaker: TedX talk "Hand over the Microphone" Adolescent Girls in Decision-making |
| | TedX Delhi NCR |

2018	Panellist: 'promoting participation of women and girls in workforce through non-traditional skilling and gender mainstreaming'
	Changing Gender Narratives by Promoting Non-Traditional Skills and Occupations for Women and Girls, organised by Girls Count
	New Delhi, India

2017	Co-convener: Mini- University on Girl Centred Programming
	EMpower – The Emerging Markets Foundation
	Delhi, India

2016	Paper Presentation: Driving Change: Female chauffeurs in India; breaking moulds, transforming selves
	"Modern Matters: Negotiating the Future in Everyday Life in South Asia"
	Lund University, Sweden

2016	Co-convener: Learning Exchange on Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights
	EMpower – The Emerging Markets Foundation
	Jakarta, Indonesia

2016	Co-convener: Learning Exchange on Fundraising
	EMpower – The Emerging Markets Foundation
	New Delhi, India

2015	Paper Presentation: Girls in the City: Structures and Control
	IIT Delhi Graduate Conference
	New Delhi, India

2015	Co-convener: Global Learning Exchange on Non-Traditional Income Generation
	EMpower – The Emerging Markets Foundation
	New York, United States of America

2015	Co-convener: Learning Exchange on Gender and Programming
	EMpower – The Emerging Markets Foundation

Guangzhou, China

2015   Co-convener: Learning Exchange on Lifeskills Curricula

EMpower- The Emerging Markets Foundation

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2014   Co-convener: Learning Exchange on Non-Traditional Income Generation

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2014   Co-convener: Learning Exchange on Communications

EMpower – The Emerging Markets Foundation

Mumbai, India

Academic Awards

2006   Distinction Awarded for MSc. Thesis
London School of Economics and Political Science

Professional

2020   Country Director

EMpower – The Emerging Markets Foundation

New Delhi, India

2019   Director, Adolescent Girls and Gender Initiatives

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2015-2018 Senior Program Officer, India & Regional Advisor Asia

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2012-2015   Program Officer, India

               EMpower – The Emerging Markets Foundation

               New Delhi, India

2011-2012   Specialist

               Abt Associates

               New Delhi, India

2010-2011   Assistant Vice President, Equities Compliance

               Barclays

               London, United Kingdom

2010   Associate, Equities Compliance

               Deutsche Bank

               London, United Kingdom

2007-2009   Analyst, Compliance

               Deutsche Bank

               London United Kingdom