Understanding factors that structure young Indian women’s entry into non-traditionally female occupational training: “I wanted to become something, but didn’t know what to become”

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This dissertation is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Preface

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. It is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my dissertation has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. It does not exceed the prescribed word limit for the Sociology Degree Committee.
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Abstract

Informed by studies that emphasize that women’s entry into non-traditional jobs is the key to increasing India’s low and declining female labour force participation rate, this study examines the factors that structure entry into non-traditional job training for young women from low-income households in Delhi (India). The study is based on 72 semi-structured interviews, primarily with young women training in the non-traditional jobs of taxi driving, electrician and electronic mechanic, and in the traditional job of beauty (salons).

This study finds (in chapter 3) that contrary to several studies on occupational aspirations that argue that aspirations tend to lead to their achievement, participants’ entry into the non-traditional training was not a result of their occupational aspirations. Instead, entry into the training created aspirations for the jobs. The study argues that to understand entry into non-traditional training, it is essential to look beyond aspirations, at those factors that are embedded in their immediate contexts -- information and social networks (chapter 4), sources of perceived self-efficacy (chapter 5), and parental support (chapter 6). Chapter 4 highlights that participants tend to have narrow social-networks and they are unable to access information about non-traditional jobs. However, the study finds counter-intuitively, that where participants are able to learn about non-traditional jobs, the narrow networks mean that they are unencumbered by the constraining effects of networks in entering the training. Chapter 5 discusses the role of perceived self-efficacy. It finds that while trainees in the non-traditional training had access to sources which engendered a sense of perceived self-efficacy towards it, trainees in the traditional training did not. Chapter 6, emphasizes the criticality of parents, especially mothers, in occupational training outcomes of participants. It finds that parents are the primary source of social support for the young women and provide
all the four types of social support outlined by House (1981) – emotional, informational, instrumental, and appraisal – but in addition, they also provide moral support. The chapter thus suggests an additional category of social support crucial to entry of young women into non-traditional training.
Acknowledgements

It takes a village.

I have to first thank my supervisor, Professor Brendan Burchell. In most acknowledgements, thanks to the supervisor goes into the section of professional gratitude. I will have to depart from that convention for the deeply personal support that he extended too. The sensitivity, kindness, and prudence he demonstrated in both matters big and small, is an aspiration that will probably remain unfulfilled. A PhD can often be a test of resilience as much as an academic project. His continued support, warmth, patience and humour in large part helped me wade through that test.

Luke, my physiotherapist in Cambridge, who might never read this but who enabled my body into being in positions other than the horizontal after a back injury – thank you.

Thanks to my father. I was brought up to never thank my parents. I hope he will understand that I have to make an exception this time. He is not an academic, yet, his feedback on the rough drafts of the chapters was almost always on point. I sent my chapters to him knowing that he will read it and discuss it; he will read it twice if I ask him to. This indulgence, the dependability and thus the security this meant during what can be a vulnerable process is immeasurable.

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This thesis is because of, and for, my mother. She did her PhD when I was already in this world. As a child, I never quite understood why she was always bent over the desk, why going out to watch a movie or so as a family was such a negotiation, why she could not be like other “normal” mothers. The child had somewhere decided that she would never do what her mother did – a PhD. For those who believe in fate, and know her academic journey and mine, I was perhaps destined to follow in her footsteps – we went to the same school in Delhi; I went to the undergraduate college that she studied and then taught in; even when she moved from one university to another to teach and I moved cities for my masters, I only returned in a few months to go to the university she was in; she went to Oxford for a short period and I ended up going there for my MPhil. She passed away soon after my MPhil and never came to Cambridge, so perhaps fate, through a PhD, found another way to continue my journey on her footsteps. For the unbelieving part of me, she inspired me in my work as she does in every other aspect of my life. She worked on gender in her own work, as a “subaltern historian”, but perhaps it was just how she was in her daily life that had the most impact. Her work was very important to her and when most women in her generation in India would study but then not enter a job, or drop off the labour market after marriage, she stayed in Delhi for her job while my father as a civil servant moved for his different postings all over the country. Her non-traditional move in this sense, perhaps subconsciously, lead me to be curious about non-traditional choices and the women this study is about -- women who enter training for non-traditional jobs. As a child, when I did not understand her choices, she would say that, “someday, when you grow up, you’ll understand”. I might be beginning to understand now.
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List of Abbreviations

FLFP – Female labour force participation
ITI – Industrial Training Institute
LFP – Labour force participation
LFPR – Labour force participation rate
NGO – Non-government organization
NSS – National Sample Survey
PSE – Perceived self-efficacy
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Chapter 1. Introduction

“As women in much of the world are joining the labour pool, Indian women are leaving it.”
(“Indian women are rapidly leaving the workforce”, Hindustan Times, June 29, 2016)

“It’s just that I have to become something, that I have to do a job. It feels good to say in front of people too [that I am something]. [If I have a job] then my family too will say that their daughter is educated and has a job. And, then, in the future too [it can be good for you]. I feel like you should just keep working […] So, I just want to do a job even if I do not need the money.”
(Rukhtar, 24, study participant)

1. Motivation to the study

The ILO (2013a, 2013b) ranked India’s female labour force participation (FLFP) rate as 121 out of 131 countries, one of the lowest in the world. The latest National Sample Surveys (NSS) in India reveal that its FLFP is not only lower than the world average; it is also the second-lowest amongst all South Asian countries after Pakistan (Pande 2018; World Bank 2018). Further, while Pakistan exhibits a rising FLFP rate, several studies have shown that India’s FLFP displays a declining trend and its FLFP has fallen from 37% in 2004-05 to 29% in 2009-10 (ILO 2013; Chaudhary et al. 2014; Kapsos et al. 2014). This decline was not only in its FLFP rate, but the decline also meant a shrinkage of the total female labour force. (Andres et al. 2017). There were about 22.6 million fewer women in the labour force in 2010 than in 2005 (Kapsos, et. al., 2014), and only a minority of working-age women in India- 133 of 388 million-

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1 Parts of chapter 1, “Introduction”, and chapter 7, “Final thoughts, clarifications and policy implications”, have been accepted to be published in the forthcoming Encyclopedia of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, as a chapter entry, “Occupational Gender Segregation and Female Labour Force Participation in India”. 
were in the labour market in 2010 (Das et al. 2015). While female LFP averaged only 29%, male LFP averaged 96% (Klasen and Pieters, 2015, Andres et al. 2017). During the same period that FLFP was low, India witnessed economic growth, an increase in female education, a decline in fertility rates and increasing urbanisation, all of which are argued to support an increase in FLFP (Fletcher et al., 2017; Kapsos et al., 2014). Between 2005 and 2010, when FLFP declined, India witnessed a high average annual GDP growth of around 8 percent (World Bank, 2012; Kapsos et al., 2014). Taking a longer-term view, between 1990 and 2013, while FLFP remained low, stagnant and finally dropped, GDP growth averaged 6.4% (Fletcher et al. 2017). During the same period, the gender gap in education narrowed, and India succeeded in “fully closing its primary and secondary education enrolment gender gaps” in 2015, and, for “the first time (has) nearly closed its tertiary education gender gap”. (The World Economic Forum 2017, p. 22). Between 1994 and 2010, the proportion of women aged 15-24 “attending any educational institution more than doubled from 16.1% to 36%” (Fletcher et al 2017, p. 2). Further, fertility rates declined steadily to 2.6 in 2011 compared with 3.1 in 2000 and 3.9 in 1990 (Sudarshan 2014). Urbanisation increased from 26% to 32%, (Fletcher, et al. 2017).

Further, while the FLFP has been low and declining, like Rukhtar, whose quote opens this chapter, (as well as almost all the other participants in this study), many women outside of the labour force have reported that they want to be in a job. According to the recent NSS (National Sample Survey), more than 30% of the “women engaged primarily in domestic activities – and counted outside the labour force – would like to work (and thus constitute a potential addition to the labor force or latent labor supply)” (Fletcher, et al., 2017, pg. 8).

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2 The last large round of the NSS was conducted in 2011 by the NSSO, the body which has been responsible for carrying out national surveys throughout India’s independent history. However, comparable large sample surveys have not occurred in India since 2011 as the NSS Employment and Unemployment Survey was discontinued and the country is slated to transition to a new survey regime. Other recent sources of data, such as the World Bank, have revealed that FLFP in India has continued to fall and was 21 percent in 2019 (World Bank, 2020). For reasons of consistency and comparability, as other studies, the chapter largely relies on figures from the National Sample Survey (NSS), to demonstrate that FLFP in India has been low and declining.

3 Between 2007 and 2016, India’s economy more than doubled, growing by 112 percent. (ILO 2018).
The low rates of FLFP at a time of economic growth, fertility decline, increase in female education, urbanisation and the desire of women to be in a job, presents a puzzle. The decline in the FLFP has renewed attention to the low levels of women in jobs in India. Several explanations have been put forward for their low participation rates – (i) household incomes (Mammen and Paxson 2000); (ii) rise in female education (Bhalla et al., 2011; Chandrasekhar and Ghosh, 2013; Eckstein and Lifshitz, 2011); (iii) flaws in the measurement (Kapsos et al. 2014); and (iv) values (Fletcher et al. 2017). The first explanation is based on studies that observe that there is a U-shaped relationship between national income and FLFP over the long run (Mammen and Paxson, 2000; Kapsos, et al. 2014). The relationship posits that as the economy develops, and the household incomes rise, women’s FLFP first declines and then rises, thus resembling a U-shaped curve. The second explanation argues that the rise in female education implies that more women have entered educational institutions which has in turn meant that fewer women have become a part of the labour market. The third explanation is based on the finding that “the NSSO used more contract workers than usual and that interviewers failed to ask crucial follow-up questions when conducting the 2009-10 survey which lead to measurement errors of the female labour force participation rates.” (Kapsos et al. 2014). Since measurement of subsidiary work, which is largely done by women, was most compromised by the lack of follow-up questions, measurement error disproportionately affected women’s labour force participation estimates as opposed to men’s labour force participation. The last explanation for the low participation rate that studies emphasize are the (restrictive) cultural norms around women and work, which have contracted the supply of female labour (Fletcher, et al. 2017).

Other studies have pointed to the global financial crisis and the deficient monsoon rainfalls in 2009 as factors that could have depressed FLFP (Chowdhury, 2011). However, these one-off shocks, which may have disproportionately affected the 2009-10 survey data, need to be distinguished from persisting trends in labour supply in India (Kapsos, et. al. 2014) and hence are not considered by this study.

An associated debate around the measurement error is that discussed by Mondal et al. (2018) who point to another kind of measurement framing and error. They argue that the decline in female labour force participation reflects women going from paid to unpaid work. Since unpaid work is not counted in the GDP, women’s work is undercounted, making it appear as if fewer women are working when in fact that is not the case. Mondal et al. (2018, para 11.) state, “But once we include Codes 92 [attended to domestic duties only], 93 [attended to domestic duties and was also engaged in free collection of goods (vegetables, roots, firewood, cattle feed, etc.), sewing, tailoring, weaving, etc. for household use] and 97 [others including beggars, prostitutes, etc.] in the definition of work, then such a decline is no longer evident: rather it is simply that there is apparently a shift from paid to unpaid work.” While unpaid work is largely done by women and this study does consider it as work, the study explicitly concerned with employment, does not consider this factor here.
However, each of the above four explanations is able to explain only a small part of the low FLFP rates. While some studies have questioned the application of the U shaped curve globally, this stylised relationship between income and FLFP does not quite apply to India, and its FLFP rates are 22 points below their expected level on the curve (Gaddis and Klasen 2014). Chatterjee, et al. (2015) point to “other patriarchal societies [which] display a substantially higher female LFPR [labour force participation rate] than India, despite household incomes growing fast” such as Bangladesh. Further, FLFP has declined for all consumption-expenditure deciles apart from the richest (Ghose 2016). Second, while the number of young women entering education has increased in recent years, the labour force participation of non-student working-age women also shows a declining trend (Ghose 2016). Similarly, while measurement errors do explain the decline in FLFP, they do so only in part and primarily in the rural areas (Kapsos et al. 2014). Further, their explanatory power is restricted to the change in estimates between the surveys of 2005 and 2010, while the Indian FLFP was notably low even between 1995 and 2005 (ibid). Lastly, using data from the World Values Survey, Fletcher, et al. (2017, p. 4) find that: “while India’s FLFP looks most similar to Pakistan, its norms-related responses look more in line with countries that have a significantly higher FLFP, suggesting variation in these views on women and work cannot fully explain India’s lagging FLFP”. Moreover, these norms have not significantly altered over the period that the decline in FLFP has occurred (ibid).

What then might explain the low rates of FLFP rates? Occupational gender segregation could be an important reason for the low FLFP. Kapsos et al. (2014) show that “Over the period from 1994 to 2010, as well as in the sub-periods from 1994 to 2000 and 2000 to 2010, we find that while increased education and higher levels of per-capita household consumption have been important factors contributing to the decline in female participation rates in India, other factors such as occupational segregation have played an even greater role.” Using the 50th (1993-94), 55th (1999-
Kapsos et al. (2014) conducted a series of scenario exercises, and econometric analysis to evaluate the four prominent explanations of declining FLFP, namely: women’s increased attendance in educational institutions, increased household income, changes in the measurement methodology across survey rounds and insufficient jobs suitable for women. They found that between 2005 and 2010, the effects of increased education and higher levels of household consumption together accounted for around 18 percent, changes in measurement methodology between survey rounds accounted for 40 percent, but the highest proportion of the decline, at 42 percent, was due to a lack of suitable employment opportunities for women and other factors. Taking a longer-term view, between 1994 and 2010, they estimated that lack of suitable employment opportunities for women explained an even larger proportion of the decline in FLFP (at 62 percent), whilst increased education and household consumption levels accounted for the remaining 38 percent of the decline.

How did occupational gender segregation become key to the decline in FLFP?
Kapsos et al. (2014) show that occupations that tend to employ women did not show growth between 1994 and 2010. Further, the new jobs generated tended to employ men – “less than 19 percent of the new employment opportunities generated in India’s 10 fastest growing occupations were taken up by women” (ibid, p 23). Since the sectors which experienced high employment growth were non-traditional for women in India, even with jobs available, women’s employment remained curtailed.

Chatterjee et al. (2015), used the national sample surveys, to test the hypothesis that the change in job opportunities, especially along the rural-urban gradation, explains the decline in the Indian FLFP rate. They found that the most important factor in the decline has been that, “in recent years suitable job opportunities for women have declined precipitously in large villages and small towns.” (Chatterjee et al. 2015, p. 13), especially in agriculture, which have “not been offset by a commensurate emergence of other employment opportunities considered suitable for women” (Chatterjee et al. 2015, p. 35, emphasis mine). They explain their finding as, "In a traditional society, where women's work is acceptable only if it takes place in environments perceived as safe”, FLFP depends on the availability of suitable jobs such as in farming “which are mainly at home” (Chatterjee et al. 2015, p. 13). They
argued that since “in India, there is a "valley" of suitable job opportunities along the rural-urban gradation.” (Chatterjee et al. 2015, p. 13), the FLFP has declined.

Chakraborty (2016), analysing occupational gender segregation in India based mainly on NSSO data from 2007-08 to 2011-12, shows that although there are sectoral and regional variations, women are more likely to join jobs that the society assumes to be “female” and suitable for women. Fletcher et al. (2017) provide descriptive analysis of NSS 2011-2012, supplementing it with data from the nationally representative data set National Family Health Survey and use the World Values Survey to find that, “women experience greater difficulty matching to jobs that suit them than men” (emphasis mine; p. 9).

Thomas (2011), arguing somewhat differently still reaches the same conclusion as others here, that it is the lack of “appropriate” jobs in urban centres that is impeding the participation of women in the labour force. Thomas (2011) draws attention to the fact that even though 50 percent of the urban female population between 1999–2000 and 2004–05 had at least secondary school education, 44 percent stayed out of the labour force. Since social constraints are likely to be weaker for urban educated women, he suggests that it is most likely that there is a lack of suitable employment opportunities that leads women to withdraw from the labour force in urban areas.

If occupational gender segregation could be reduced, then many more women could be in jobs. Through a stylised scenario Kapsos et al. (2014, p. 31) estimate the effect of occupational segregation on women’s employment opportunities, and find that, “female employment in India could have grown by an additional 20.7 million between 1994 and 2010 in the absence of occupational segregation, far exceeding the actual female employment growth of 8.7 million”. Fletcher et al. (2017) put it differently, arguing that if all the women who stated they would take jobs, if suitable jobs were available, actually did so, there would be a 78 percent rise in the FLFP rate, from 27 percent to 48 percent, which is substantial given the low rates of overall participation.

There are several reasons why it is important to understand how to reduce occupational gender segregation. First, India could “boost its growth by 1.5 percentage points to 9 percent per year if around 50% of women could join the workforce.” (World Bank 2018, para 5). Currently, the measured economic
contribution of Indian women is 17 percent which is less than half of the world average and compares unfavourably with other developing countries such as China at 40 percent. Lawson (2008) estimates that if India’s gender gap in LFP was halved, the per capita income could be 10 percent higher by 2020 than in the baseline scenario. Slicing the data another way, Esteve-Volart (2004) shows that a 10 percent increase in the female-to-male ratio of workers would increase per capita total output by 8 percent.

Second, for women, wage work delays the age of marriage and the age of first childbirth (Sivasankaran 2014; Fletcher et al. 2017; Heath and Mobarak 2014; Jensen 2012) as well as increases their decision-making power within the household (Kabeer 1997). Relatedly, studies have found that women with greater control over assets (such as land) report greater mobility (Swaminathan et al., 2012), and are at a lower risk to experience violence (Panda and Aggarwal 2005).

Lastly, women in jobs have positive spillovers. Sisters of women with longer work tenures marry at a later age and their brothers drop out less from schools (Sivasankaran, 2014). Women’s control over resources is associated with increases in child schooling (Qian 2008), and with better nutritional outcomes (Swaminathan et al., 2012). Kalsi (2017) found that villages in India that have women in the job of local leaders report lower rates of sex selection.

On the other hand, not knowing how to reduce occupational gender segregation and increase FLFP could inflict significant costs on youth employment, on gender wage gaps, and largely on gender equality goals. The recent decline in the share of youth in the working-age labour force in India has also been driven by the decline in the labour force participation (LFP) of young women (Ghose 2016). Since India has the world’s largest youth population, surpassing even that of China (UNFPA 2014), drawing young women into the labour force will be the difference between a
Demographic curse or dividend for India: Not being able to do so would practically put the fifth sustainable development goal (SDG) of gender equality and the eighth SDG to ‘promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all’ beyond reach of not only India, but also that of the world.

It is acknowledged globally, that occupational gender segregation is related to gender wage inequality (World Bank 2011). In India, Fletcher et al. (2017) have shown that the “unexplained component of the wage gap tends to be larger for sectors in which females represent a larger proportion of all employed in that sector” (p. 11). Stated differently, “the sectors in which females tend to fare relatively better in terms of wage gaps are often those in which they are least represented” (p. 11). For example, while domestic work is the biggest employer of women in urban India, and saw the biggest rise in employment between 2006 and 2011, “the minimum wages for domestic workers is even lower than that of the cleaning workers, who are the lowest paid” (ILO 2016).

Recognising the very real consequences of occupational gender segregation, several academic papers and policy documents have emphasised the need to understand the ways to reduce occupational gender segregation. Kapsos et al. (2014, p 32) in an ILO publication conclude that there are “large potential benefits from policies aimed at reducing occupational segregation in India” and argue that “Further analytical work in this area is clearly needed”. Fletcher et al. (2017, p. 16) identify access to suitable jobs as a “High-potential Research Area”. Sudarshan (2014, p. 4) in an ILO publication argues that “The larger policy question remains one of understanding in what ways women could be enabled and encouraged to access work in growing sectors and/or what policies could stimulate the demand for products of traditional

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‘Demographic dividend refers to the economic growth potential arising from a change in a country’s population age structure, specifically, when the share of the working age population (those who are between 15 and 64 years) becomes larger than the non-working age population (those who are 14 and younger, and 65 and older). Such a shift in the demographic is often a result of a decline in fertility and mortality rates. The ‘dividend’ is expected to follow from there being a greater number of working age individuals, who earn, save and invest, and a lower number of non-working age individuals who have to be supported. As such, it is described as a window of opportunity, where growth acceleration can occur due to increased savings and investment rates, which in turn, is related to a declining dependency ratio, with a larger working age population than a non-working age, dependent, population (UNFPA 2016). ’
occupations where women workers are concentrated.” Many newspapers and news agencies, nationally and internationally, have covered women in male-dominated jobs in India, and highlighted the gender segregation in occupations and its potential effects.

2. Research question and its scope

In spite of women in non-traditional jobs being recognised as an important issue across different fora, systematic analytical studies on how they enter non-traditionally female jobs in India are largely missing. Building on the quantitative studies that find occupational gender segregation to be the primary explainer of the low and declining FLFP in India, this study, asks:

What are the factors that structure entry into non-traditional job training for young women?

The study examines the question for young women from low-income households in Delhi. In doing so, it informs the following questions:

♦ Do aspirations for non-traditional jobs shape young women’s entry into these jobs? If so, how?
♦ Do social-networks structure young women’s entry into non-traditional jobs? If so, how?
♦ Do internal or psychological factors structure entry into non-traditional jobs? If so, how?
♦ Does the family structure the entry of young women into non-traditional jobs? If so, how?

In asking the overall research question that guides this study, it is important to clarify the meaning and significance of the terms included. How does the study

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8 See for example BBC 2017; Das 2019; Hussain 2018; Kamat 2017; Nair 2017
9 This study uses the broad term low-income households to denote the participants throughout as a signifier of their relative disadvantage. The participants’ and their households’ characteristics are detailed in Chapter 2 (under “Sampling the participants”) which help locate them more specifically in the structures of the Indian society.
understand “non-traditional” and “traditional”? Why does this study choose to look at women in an urban area? Why does it focus on young women?

Non-traditional female jobs, in the simplest sense, are those where the proportion of women employed is a minuscule minority. For this study, any job where women comprise 1 percent or less in India is a non-traditional female job, and a job where women account for more than 10 percent of the workforce is traditionally female. In particular, this study focusses on women training to become taxi drivers and personal chauffeurs, electricians and electronics mechanics as examples of non-traditional jobs, and women training to enter beauty parlours as an example of a traditional job.

This study focusses on young women workers -- those who are between the ages of 15 and 24, following the definition of ‘youth’ by the United Nations (UNESCO, 2017) – for several reasons. First, approximately 53 percent of the 19.16 million drop in employment, between 1993-94 and 2011-12, has occurred solely within the age group of 15 to 24 years old (Andres et al. 2017). Second, the young are important because of the juncture that India is at -- India has the largest youth population in the world, (UNFPA 2014), and as pointed out earlier in the chapter, their inclusion or exclusion from the labour market could mean the difference between a demographic dividend or curse. Lastly, while less than half of India’s youth enters the workforce, amongst those who do not enter, the majority of them are women. Further, the young women not in employment are also often not in education or training – while the share of

Studies, such as Matsui (1989), speak of using thresholds of 70 percent to identify male and female-dominated occupations. While this threshold was found impracticable even in their study in Japan, with women’s FLFP at 27 percent in urban India, this study applies a more extreme threshold to identify occupations as clearly non-traditional (at less than 1 percent), and a lower threshold than other studies to identify traditionally female ones (at greater than 10 percent). The resulting occupations correlate with quantitative studies, such as that of Rustagi (2010), who identifies traditional occupations in which women tend to be employed in in India, as well as with the common perception of the occupations as female or male in India.

How various occupations have come to be regarded as non-traditional and others as traditional for women, and their shifting nature, in India would be an interesting sociological question for future research, but is beyond the scope of this study. Relatedly, future studies could problematise what is meant by an “appropriate” job for women in the urban Indian context and might find reading Dickey’s (2010), “Anjali’s Alliance: Class mobility in urban India” and Clark’s (2016), Valued Daughters: First-Generation Career Women, useful for that project.
young women not in employment, education or training (NEET) was 49.3 percent in 2012, it was only 8 percent for young men (ILO 2018).

The study selected participants who came from low-income families – they resided in Tier III colonies and by training for "blue-collar" occupations, in NGOs and institutes that explicitly served disadvantaged communities, self-selected into the criteria. The study focusses on low income participants as the lower strata of the consumption decile saw a more pronounced drop in the FLFP between 2006 and 2011 (Andres et al. 2017).

The study is located in urban India for several reasons. First, the gap between male and female LFP is wider in urban than in rural areas, averaging some 60 as opposed to 45 percentage points in rural areas (Das et al. 2015). Second, as India develops, increasing urbanisation is both a fact and a goal of economic transformation (Ahluwalia 2016), making it essential to understand the dynamics at play in urban areas. Third, occupational gender segregation is greater in urban areas than in rural India (Sudarshan 2014). There is greater dissimilarity among male and female distributions in urban areas, as measured by the usual Duncan's Index of Dissimilarity, which indicates the percentage of people who need to change occupations to make the male–female distributions equal -- with D=16.85 percent in rural, and 28.75 percent in urban areas in 2004–05 (Sudarshan 2014). Lastly, since urban areas tend to have a wider range of occupations than rural areas (Sudarshan 2014), women can be in non-traditional jobs.

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1 The Dharmarajan Committee in 2011 (Govt. of National Capital Territory of Delhi, 2011) classified 2025 colonies falling within the jurisdiction of Municipal Corporation of Delhi between Categories A to G for the Unit Area System of Assessment of Property Tax. The Committee followed a 9-point criteria matrix to classify the colonies, which included the level of social infrastructure, physical infrastructure, size of plots, general socio-economic conditions of the area, inter alia. On this basis, of the 2025 Colonies, the Committee classified 28 colonies as Category A; 51 as Category B; 51 as Category C; and 244 colonies as Category D. The Committee categorised the remaining 1651 colonies as E, F and G. The report termed the 79 colonies falling in Categories A and B as "Tier-I" colonies; the 295 colonies falling in Categories C & D as "Tier-II" Colonies; and the remaining 1651 colonies which ranked the lowest on the 9-point criteria and falling in Class E, F and G as "Tier-III" colonies.

13 "Colony" is widely used as a term for residential area in India. It technically means “an area of land divided or proposed to be divided into plots or flats for residential, commercial or industrial purpose” and “does not exceed one thousand square meters” (Government of India, Ministry of Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation, 2009).
Specifically, the study examines the research question in Delhi. Even within major Indian cities, Delhi has the lowest proportion of working women, and the FLFP rate in Delhi is 40% lower than for urban India as a whole (Govt. of National Capital Territory of Delhi 2013). Further, women are concentrated in a few sectors in Delhi: a majority of female employment is in the public administration, education and health sectors which also saw the largest decline in employment share over the ten years from 1999-2000 to 2009-10 (Govt. of National Capital Territory of Delhi 2013), making it an appropriate case study for occupational gender segregation. At the same time, non-traditional job opportunities exist in Delhi that women are beginning to take up, making the examination of the research question possible in the city.

The study considers women in occupational training. There is evidence that occupational training can reduce gender segregation. The analysis of National Sample Surveys in India found that conditional on reporting they were willing to accept a job, women who have attended skills or vocational training, were more likely to be in a job which could not be explained by their education levels (Fletcher et al. 2017). As such entry into vocational training is an important juncture for FLFP and therefore an important decision to assess.

In considering the overall research question in this way, the study informs theoretical and analytical concepts such as occupational aspirations; social networks; information poverty; mobility; autonomy; perceived self-efficacy; role models; family; social support; emotion work; inter alia.

It is also important to point out what this study is not about. While factors on the demand side of labour such as gender discrimination in employer practices could also affect women’s entry into (non-traditional) jobs as has been noted in other studies (Lansky et al. 2017; Chowdhury et al. 2018, ILO 2018; Das et al. 2019), this is beyond the scope of the study. Further, the study does not look at occupational entry and continuance, but entry into occupational training. Several studies have (Pradhan, Singh, and Mitra 2015; Sudarshan 2014; Sudarshan and Bhattacharya

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Several newspaper articles have highlighted non-traditional opportunities emerging in India in metropolitan cities like Delhi (Khan, 2016; Livemint, 2020; Nair 2017; Ramaswamy, 2015; Duttagupta, 2018). The NGO Azad that trains women as taxi drivers and personal chauffeurs (and their training site serves as a case for the non-traditional training in this study, discussed in detail in Chapter 2), too started its operations in Delhi and is now spreading to other cities.
already pointed out that marriage and childbirth constrain the entry and continuance of women in occupations, and as such are important transition points for women’s FLFP in India. It instead concerns itself with what is less studied -- entry into occupational training, which increases the likelihood of entry into a job, for women who want a job, across education levels (Fletcher, et al., 2017).

3. Choice of method: taking the field further

One of the ways this study contributes to the understanding of FLFP is through its choice of method. Almost all the studies on FLFP and occupational gender segregation (See for example, Fletcher et al. 2017; Kapsos et al. 2014; Klasen and Pieters 2012, 2015; Agrawal 2016; Mitra 2008; Mondal et al. 2018; Rustagi 2010) have been quantitative. In the absence of qualitative data, some studies have explicitly tried to construct women’s decisions through quantitative data. For example, Lansky et al. (2017, p. 284) while still relying only on primary quantitative data and secondary literature, state that, “Since the available data provide no information on women’s labour market decisions per se, I have attempted to construe them (…) ”. This study examines the question qualitatively, making it possible to go beyond the “what”, and examine the “why” and “how” of women’s entry into occupational training directly. While it is informed by quantitative studies on FLFP that identify occupational gender segregation as the primary contributor to low FLFP, by employing different methodological means, it builds on them and follows a design that enables it to take the state of research further.

With a lack of qualitative studies on FLFP in general and occupational gender segregation in particular, in India, the method needed to be open and participant-led which qualitative methods allow. The study, as such, is primarily informed by 72 semi-structured interviews (56 with trainees and 26 with trainers, mobilizers, and teachers) and some limited participant observation (elaborated upon in Chapter 2, Research Design and Methodology). As mentioned, the trainees, the focus of this study were young women, between the ages of 15-24 who lived in tier 3 colonies and were from families where their fathers worked as rickshaw pullers, construction labourers etc., and their mothers tended to not be in employment (discussed in chapter 2). The participants were accessed at the training centres – training to work
as taxi drivers and personal chauffeurs at the NGO called *Azad*, electrician and electronic mechanics trainees at the government Industrial Training Institute (ITI); and the beauty trainees at the NGO called *Prayas*.

The study followed a multiple or comparative case study design, for its advantages for theory building and generating causal mechanisms (Bryman 2015). The study compared *across* non-traditional training programs (driving, and electrician and electronic mechanic training), and the traditional training program (beauty training) which helped identify the factors responsible for the differences in the occupational paths. The comparison *within* the non-traditional training programs aided triangulation, and the differences in responses between the two non-traditional training programs (driving at Azad vs electrician and electronic mechanic at the ITI) helped nuance the findings. The case of driving was chosen purposively, whilst the other two cases were identified through snowballing and purposive sampling (where driver trainees at Azad helped identify beauty training at Prayas, and the trainees and teachers at Prayas helped identify the ITI). Chapter 2 discusses the research design and methodology followed for this study in greater detail.

4. Study Findings

The study finds that entry into non-traditional training is not a result of aspirations for the jobs. Instead, to understand the entry of young women into non-traditional job training it is essential to examine factors other than aspirations, those that are embedded in their immediate contexts. The study finds that these factors include information and social networks (chapter 4), sources of perceived self-efficacy (chapter 5), and parental support (chapter 6).

Chapters 3 to 6 discuss these findings. Following much of the literature on aspirations that argues that achievement follows aspirations, Chapter 3 examines the effects of occupational aspirations for non-traditional jobs on participants' entry into the non-traditional training. It finds that while participants desired to "be something", they did not have specific occupational goals. In doing so, the chapter demonstrates that the features that characterise many studies on occupational aspirations – that aspirations are goals, that develop over time, becoming concrete and realistic after 14 years of age – do not quite apply to this study. The chapter
argues that entry into non-traditional training was not driven by their aspirations for the training. Instead of aspirations determining entry, it was the entry that determined occupational aspirations for the participants. The participants aspired to become drivers, electricians and electronic mechanics after other factors led them to enter the training. The finding thus pivots the study and prompts an analysis of other factors that explain entry into non-traditional jobs. The next three chapters discuss three factors that emerged critical to entering (and not entering) non-traditional job training.

Chapter 4 addresses the question, how do social-networks influence young women’s entry into non-traditionally female jobs? In doing so, it examines two aspects - information access and information use. It finds that participants both in traditional and non-traditional training reported a paucity of job-related advice and information. Since participants did not have many friends and no spaces to ‘hang out’ with them, they tended to have narrow networks, in which they had limited embeddedness with few ties outside the family. Along with parents being unable to advise, lacking career counselling at school, and limited internet use, narrow networks meant curtailed information access. However, the limited embeddedness in these narrow networks allowed for autonomy from peer and neighbourhood network disapproval. This autonomy enabled information use for those who were able to access the information about non-traditional jobs, easing entry into non-traditional training programs. The chapter, in sum, answers the question it started with in the following way -- entry into non-traditional training was a result of the two opposing effects of their social networks. On the one hand, narrow networks lowered information access to non-traditional occupations. On the other hand, narrow networks, with few and often weak ties outside the family, enabled the use of information about non-traditional occupations. This points to a counterintuitive finding: having narrow networks and few ties outside the family, where participants only care about parental support and approval might have a positive effect for entry into non-traditional training – in such contexts, individuals are unencumbered by peer and neighbourhood disapproval in making unusual, non-traditional decisions.

Since information use might also be curtailed by beliefs about one’s own capability, chapter 5 moves focus away from information-network structures towards internal structures and focusses on perceived self-efficacy. The chapter shows that “vicarious
experience” and “verbal persuasion” by the parents was the primary mode of perceived self-efficacy information for participants in non-traditional training. Those in the beauty training, felt capable to do that training but often expressed that they were incapable of doing other jobs that they would have otherwise liked to do. Based on these findings, the study argues that the presence of sources of perceived self-efficacy towards non-traditional (and traditional) training eased entry into the training.

Chapter 6 explicitly locates the individual participants in their families. It identifies parents to be fundamental to what might seem as participants’ occupational decisions. Trainees’ entry, continuation and possible exit were contingent on parents’ support across training programs. The chapter argues that the family is the primary source of social support for the participants. The parents provide all the four categories of social support as identified by House (1981) – emotional, informational, instrumental and appraisal – but in addition they also provide ‘moral support’. In doing so, the chapter identifies an additional category of social support. The chapter then goes onto examine the differential role of mothers and fathers, identifying the key role that mothers play in the occupational outcomes of the daughters. Mothers nudged trainees, convinced fathers, hid the training from the fathers, if necessary, and provided encouragement that also prepared the grounds for entry into the non-traditional training programs. Further, it finds that the mother-daughter dyad was crucial for the participants at this stage, who often had narrow networks with ties outside the family (as demonstrated in chapter 4) -- mothers were participants’ confidants, often their closest relationship, who they tended to spend the most time with. It demonstrates the ‘emotion work’ that mothers did with daughters, through talk work and relationship mediation and management work. The chapter argues that this emotion work likely became the basis of the mothers’ influence over their daughters’ occupational decisions.

Chapter 7 concludes with a discussion of the contributions of this study, clarifications to the arguments it makes, the limitations of the research, and its implications for policy that aim at easing entry into non-traditional job training for young women.
5. Theoretical approach: Sociology as an interdisciplinary understanding of the participants’ lives.

The lives of these young women are complex and intricate. The study tries to retain and represent that, using diverse concepts relevant to their lived experiences rather than shoehorning it into any one theoretical framework. As such the four empirical chapters engage with varied factors that emerge significant to women’s entry into traditional and non-traditional training programs – occupational aspirations, social networks, perceived self-efficacy, social support and emotion work. Consequently, the empirical chapters also employ diverse theoretical and analytical concepts. The attempt was to employ theories and analytical concepts that are most relevant to and best help understand the disparate factors.

The first empirical chapter on occupational aspirations uses, inter alia, Appadurai (2004) to understand the navigational capacities of the poor, Vijayakumar (2013) to understand occupational aspirations as gendered, Mullainathan and Shafir (2013) to understand cognitive bandwidths and how poverty impacts forethought and Ray (2006) to understand the “aspiration window”. The second chapter on social networks brings together narrow networks, factors contributing to informative poverty, homophily and autonomy. It therefore refers to literature on social networks such as Lin and Ao (2008) Warr (2006), Homans (1958), Granovetter, (1983) and on autonomy such as Alkire, (2005), Chirkov et al., (2003) and Munshi and Rosenzweig, (2006) to bring the two together. The third chapter engages with internal structures and uses perceived self-efficacy as the dominant theoretical lens. The chapter primarily relies on Bandura (1977) and Correll (2001). The last empirical chapter uses House’s (1981) concept of social support to understand why parents were so important to participants. It draws on Devault (1999), Seery and Crowley (2000), Duncombe and Marsden (1995), Hoschschild (2012), amongst others to understand the concept of emotion work, in particular that done by mothers.

The study understands Sociology as a study of society, a subject that provides scope for informing sociological questions through different theoretical frameworks, indeed even concepts from different disciplines. For example, the concept of internal structures such as perceived self-efficacy emerged out of Social Psychology. But studies such as Correll (2001) have used “task self-assessment”, a closely related
term in their work published in leading Sociological journals. This study follows in such a tradition and understands Sociology to provide scope for an interdisciplinary understanding of society. Such an approach could potentially be criticized for understanding Sociology as all-encompassing and there being no delimiting “its province of investigation” (Giddens 1987, p. 1). Giddens (1987, p. 1) responding to the criticism and defining Sociology, states, “There is surely very little indeed in this view. Sociology is concerned with the comparative study of social institutions, giving particular emphasis to those forms of society brought into being by the advent of modern institutions”. This study follows such an understanding of Sociology, and attempts to provide an understanding of factors that structure young women’s entry into non-traditional training in contemporary Delhi.
Chapter 2. Research Design and Methods

1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the ‘what’, ‘who’, ‘how’ and ‘why’ of the research design. Section 2 answering the question what was the research design of the study, discusses what it involved -- the multiple comparative case study approach, the cases it involved, and the three training sites through which I accessed the four cases. In the next Section, I discuss who the participants were and the sampling criteria followed to select them. Section 4 explains why of the research design – why were semi-structured interviews employed to collect the data to the study? Why was an ethnography not done? Why was participant observation possible in one training site but not in the others? Section 4 discusses the analytical approach to the study -- how the data so collected was organised and synthesized. The last section puts forward reflections on the research process -- the challenges I faced, the choices I made, and the questions that this research, done in part of the global south, raised for me.

2. Choice of the Research design

The overall research question of the study is: What are the factors that structure entry into non-traditional job training for young women? This research question is investigated by asking the following subsidiary questions for young women from low income households in Delhi:

- Do aspirations for non-traditional jobs shape young women’s entry into these jobs? If so, how?
- Do social-networks structure young women’s entry into non-traditional jobs? If so, how?
- Do internal or psychological factors structure entry into non-traditional jobs? If so, how?
- Does the family structure the entry of young women into non-traditional jobs? If so, how?
As discussed in chapter 1, I carried out this study through qualitative methods, to have a research process that is open, participant-led, and flexible (Bryman 2015). The study was a multiple or a comparative case-study between the cases of non-traditional occupational training and traditional occupational training. While case studies “enhance the researcher’s sensitivity to the factors that lie behind the operation of observed patterns within a specific context”, the multiple-case study “offers an even greater opportunity because the researcher will be in a position to examine the operation of generative causal mechanisms in contrasting or similar contexts” (Bryman 2016, p. 60, emphasis mine). The comparative design then seemed especially appropriate to this study which is concerned with factors and mechanisms that shape entry into non-traditional occupations for young women.

Further, the comparative approach in a multiple case study lends itself to improved theory building (Bryman, 2015). The comparison between cases aids identification of conditions under which the theory will or will not hold. Additionally, the comparison also may "suggest concepts relevant to an emerging theory" (ibid, p 60), especially useful for this study which aims to understand what themes account for entry into non-traditional occupational training in a context where there are few other qualitative studies on the subject.

Since the study followed a multiple case design, I carried out sampling at two levels – to select the cases and to select the participants within the cases [Section 7 discusses the sampling of participants]. Cases in a comparative design can be selected due to their similarities or their differences. While selecting cases for their differences helps “uncover the factors responsible for differences that are observed” (Bryman, 2016, p 61), comparing similar cases helps triangulate and bolsters findings. Since both considerations were important, four cases were chosen for their similarities and differences. Driver training and electrician and electronic mechanic training were chosen because they are all non-traditional occupations. The beauty parlour training, on the other hand, served as an example of a traditionally female occupation and was chosen for its difference from the three non-traditional cases.

I first selected driver training purposively as a case of non-traditional occupation. While conducting interviews with driver trainees, it emerged that the training that
girls typically go into in their residential area is that of the beauty parlour. Through snowball and purposive sampling, beauty parlour training was selected as a case which was different and represented traditional training. The third case, of electrician and electronic mechanic training, too was a result of snowball and purposive sampling. It empirically represented another non-traditional occupation, and the ITI, where these training were imparted, was mentioned by teachers at the beauty training centre. I had also considered police trainees for the third case and had gained access to the training centre, but ultimately rejected the choice as it seemed police would not be a case similar to driver training -- the occupation itself would not be a part of blue-collar work; and women might come from a slightly different class, education, and micro-culture. Although including the case of police trainees would add variation to the study by enabling analysis of factors that influence entry into a non-traditional job in a different socio-economic status, choosing it instead of the electrician and the electronic mechanics would mean that the study would not be able to triangulate its findings. I decided to choose the credibility of the study over increasing the scope of it. Such theoretical sampling, rather than focussing on being representative, was aimed to develop the theory and bestow this study with analytic power, extending and refining key categories and themes to make 'the categories more precise, explanatory and predictive' (Charmaz 2002, p. 689).

The following section describes the field sites through which these cases were accessed.

2.1. Field Sites

Within Delhi, my field sites comprised of three training centres — for driving, beauticians, and electricians and electronic mechanics. All three training centres were in and around Jahangirpuri, a tier-III colony in north west Delhi.
2.1.1. Field site 1: A training centre for driving

To understand entry into a non-traditionally female job, I first chose to interview women who are training to become drivers – taxi and personal drivers at the NGO Azad. While women in driving as an occupation has begun to spread across the cities of India\(^6\), driving for women remains a niche and nascent occupation. According to

\(^6\)The travel-distance between the driving training centre (Azad) and beauty training centre (Prayas) was 4.8 kms (2.9 miles); between the beauty training centre (Prayas) and the electrician and electronic mechanic centre (ITI) was 950 metres (0.6 miles); and between the driving training centre (Azad), and electrician and electronic mechanic training centre (ITI) was 4.6 kms (2.8 miles).

\(^7\)This map was created with the support of Geo Spatial Delhi Limited (GSDL), a company of the Govt. of NCT of Delhi.

\(^8\)Examples of taxi services that employ women in India include Veera Cabs, and Priyadarshini taxi services in Mumbai; Meru Eve, Koala Kabs, Sakha Consulting Wings and G- cabs in Delhi; Ola pink and Angel city cabs in Bangalore; She taxis in Trivandrum, Cochin and Kozhikode in Kerala.
the NSS 2011, only 0.20% of drivers in India are female. In Delhi none of the drivers sampled were female (the details are provided in Appendix A).

Driving as an occupation for women, however, does show an increasing trend. Figure 2 shows the growth in women’s commercial licenses in Delhi from 53 in 2008 to 118 in 2017. Figure 3 shows the growth in women who get a driving license through Azad. Between 2008 and 2016, women who enrolled for training at Azad increased from 165 to 422; those who got learner’s license increased from 134 to 302; those who got a permanent license increased from 98 to 234; and those who were “Sakha Pass” increased from 37 to 140.

Figure 2. Male vs Female Commercial Licenses for Taxis in Delhi: Although female drivers are a minuscule minority, read off the right-hand side scale which is 1000 times smaller than the left hand scale for men, women in this occupation in Delhi are growing.

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* The figures for India and Delhi here and throughout the chapter unless otherwise specified are based on workers between the age of 15-64 years. Figures for 15-24 years are also provided in the appendix. The NSS data, on which these calculations are based, was accessed with the support of Institute of Human Development, India.

* “Sakha” is the commercial wing of Azad, which employs women as taxi drivers and places them as personal chauffeurs. To be “Sakha Pass” the trainee goes through internal tests which is in addition to the test to get the license.

* These numbers are based on the data that Azad shared with me on my request.
While several companies employ women drivers, there is only one organisation that trains women in driving in Delhi. *Azad* which literally means free, self-identifies as a feminist organisation and trains women to become taxi drivers and personal chauffeurs through ‘The Women on Wheels’ or WoW program.

The stated aim of the WoW programme is to empower women to become professional drivers to enable them to gain remunerative “‘livelihoods with dignity’ in jobs and markets that had traditionally been closed to them” ([Azad Foundation, 2015](#), p.2). WoW aims to make women more aware of their rights and become ‘independent and confident individuals in charge of their lives’ (["Women on Wheels programme-Azad Foundation India," n.d.](#)).

The Women on Wheels programme started in 2008 in Delhi. WoW works with young women, mostly aged 18-35, who are ‘resource poor’ – they live in slums and resettlement colonies in cities and have little economic and social capital (["Women on Wheels programme-Azad Foundation India," n.d.](#)). The training tends to take between six to eight months depending on the individual pace of a trainee. Women on Wheels programme provides technical, self-empowerment, and self-development training to enable women to become ‘professional drivers’ (["Women on Wheels programme-Azad Foundation India," n.d.](#)).
include: ‘Learner’s Module’, ‘Maruti Driving School’, ‘Permanent License’, ‘On Road Practice’, ‘Self-drive’, ‘Map reading’. The Self Development Modules consist of: English communication, first aid, work readiness, and the empowerment modules are on self-defence, gender and legal rights, sexual and reproductive health. Once qualified, the drivers are linked to Azad’s partner organisation Sakha Consulting Wings Pvt Ltd. that provides employment opportunities as private chauffeurs and at Sakha Cabs which is a ‘for Women by Women’ taxi service.

I visited their Model Town Centre in North-west Delhi which drew women primarily from Jahangirpuri and then Burari, with a few trainees being from other similar tier III localities.

2.1.2. Field Site 2: A training centre for beauty and wellness

To contrast my findings from the interviews with participants training for the non-traditional occupation of driving, I wanted to interview similar women – in age, socio-economic background, locality they stayed in -- who are training for a traditionally female occupation. With 14% of beauty workers in India as female, salons are seen as a traditional occupation for women. In Delhi, 57% of beauty workers are female.

Prayas was established in 1988 in response to a fire in Jahangirpuri, one of the largest resettlement slums in Delhi, and aimed primarily at rebuilding the lives of the children affected by it (Prayas, n.d.). Prayas Juvenile JAC Society was set up with the collaboration of Delhi School of Social Work, Delhi Police and Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India (ibid).

Prayas Institute of Economic Empowerment developed programs aimed at livelihood alternatives for youth and women from marginalized and vulnerable backgrounds and offered a range of courses -- computers; cutting and tailoring; English speaking; beauty culture; typing and shorthand courses; inter alia. Its involvement in rebuilding the lives in the community and the large physical structure of the training centre meant that Prayas was a well-known entity in Jahangirpuri.
The beauty and wellness course comprised of the basic and the advanced course where the basic course was of 3 months and ran from 10 AM to 12 PM six days a week, and the advanced course was for six months and ran from 12-2 PM. In practice, however, the lines between the basic and advanced classes were extremely porous and the classes did not adhere to class timings but lasted through the day.

2.1.3. Field Site 3: A training centre for electricians and electronic mechanics

While the responses of trainees at the beauty and wellness training centre served to compare their responses to those at the driving training centre, I wondered if the findings from my first field site, Azad’s Women on Wheels program, could be limited to women who enter the non-traditional occupational training of driving. This concern led me to my third site, a Govt. Industrial Training Institute (ITI) in Jahangirpuri where I conducted interviews with young women training for the non-traditional jobs of electricians and electronic mechanics. In India 0.8% of the electrical and electronic equipment mechanics and fitters are female, and in Delhi 11% of the electrical and electronic mechanics and fitters are female.

The Govt of India had set up Industrial Training Institutes or ITIs under the Directorate General of Employment & Training (DGET), Ministry of Labour, to impart vocational training to the youth in the country. Skills training has got a further impetus with the launch of ‘Skill India’, an initiative launched by the current Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) govt on 15 July 2015. The vision of the initiative is to “empower the youth of the country with skill sets which make them more employable and more productive in their work environment” towards reaping the demographic advantage of 65% of India’s youth being in the working age (Govt. of India, para 1).

The ITI in Jahangirpuri is one of the 1396 ITIs under the DGET, run under Public Private Partnership. It was set up in January 1985 to impart technical training in various engineering & non-engineering trades (both for boys and girls) to provide technical training to the ‘backward and weaker sections of the society’ (Govt. of NCT

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*The numbers of fitters could not be separated from the electrical and electronic mechanics at the three-digit level at which the data was accessed from the National Sample Survey for the four occupations studied.*
of Delhi 2019, para 1). The period of training for the different trades varies from one year to two years, and the entry qualification required ranges from class 8<sup>th</sup> pass to 12<sup>th</sup> pass (ibid). The ITI I visited at Jahangirpuri offered training in a variety of ‘trades’ including: turner, machinist, welder, fitter, sewing, plumber, computer operator & programming assistant, stenography, draughtsperson, inter alia.

3. **Sampling the participants**

The primary criteria to select the participants was that the women should be of age 15 to 24, following the definition of ‘youth’ by the United Nations (UNESCO 2017). By interviewing women during late adolescence and early adulthood I captured them at a critical juncture in their occupational development, during processes of identity consolidation (Jodl et al, 2001) and when they are beginning to make occupation related decisions (Marini, 1978), transitioning from what Pallas, (2003) calls ‘dependence to independence’.

*Figure 4. An image of one of the lanes of Jahangirpuri.*
Empirically, most of the participants were between the narrower age range of 16 and 21. Specifically, 77 percent of the beauty-worker trainees, 77 percent of the driver trainees*, 83 percent of electricians and 80 percent of electronic mechanics fell in this range. As it happened, all the participants were single.

The second condition I followed in selecting participants was that they should live in and around Jahangirpuri, or in similar colonies categorised as tier III by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (The picture of a gully where one of the participants lived in Jahangirpuri is shown in Figure 6 below).

While more than half of my participants at Azad’s centre (12 out of 22) and Prayas’s centre (19 out of 24) came from Jahangirpuri, the participants at the ITI came from different colonies, only one coming from Jahangirpuri. However, these other colonies too belonged to the tier III category of colonies (and boring deeper, belonged to the same classification of G category) as Jahangirpuri (See Appendix B, Table 5 for a detailed analysis of the colonies that the participants lived in). Since the interviews at the ITI were conducted last, this colony variation allowed me to consider external validity checking whether my hypotheses built on participants who come primarily from Jahangirpuri apply to girls of the same age from other tier III colonies.

These tier III localities, which resemble slums, generally had lower level of assets as compared to the average levels in Delhi. For example, six percent of the households in Jahangirpuri had none of the assets such as radio, television, computer/laptop, telephone/mobile phone, bicycle, two-wheeler, car as opposed to three percent for Delhi. Less than two percent of Jahangirpuri had a computer or laptop with internet as opposed to 18 percent for Delhi. Assets for mobility -- cycle, or two-wheelers or cars -- was lower for Jahangirpuri: 24 vs 30 percent; 19 vs 39 percent; 3 vs 21 percent respectively.

Although all the participants lived in tier III colonies, the (interquartile) income range of their families, self-reported by most participants, was still wide, from about

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*At Azad, the minimum age of a participant was 18, following the legal requirement to be able to drive in India.
INR 6000 to INR 15500 (66.7 – 177.8 GBP) per month as shown in table 1. The median income at Azad was INR 10,000 (GBP 111.1); at Prayas was INR 8,000 (GBP 89.9); and at the ITI was INR <17,000 (GBP 188.9).23,24

The participants’ fathers tended to work as auto drivers, labourers, masons, vegetable vendors, factory workers, electrical mechanics, and a majority of them worked in the informal sector25. The mothers tended to not be in employment and where they were, worked as domestic workers or were in informal work where they made items such as bags from home (See Appendix C for details of the jobs that fathers and mothers of participants worked in as well other details about the participants – their family size, biographical details, social category, inter alia).26

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23 Conversions from Indian National Rupee to Great British Pound are made at the exchange rate 90 INR to a GBP throughout the study.
24 INR 17000 was used as a threshold to calculate the income comparisons as the ITI did not have further information on household incomes of the families of its trainees.
25 The informal sector constitutes the majority of the Indian economy. Maiti and Sen (2010, p. 6) defining the formal sector as the exception state that, “Firms in India that hire more than 10 workers with power and 20 workers without power need to be registered under the Factory Act of 1948 and are considered to belong to the formal sector. The remaining firms are considered part of the unorganised or informal sector”.
26 The participants according to stipulations of some studies such as Kaur et al. (2016) could be classified as belonging to the ‘emerging middle class’ or ‘neo-middle class’. However other studies such as Donner (2012) have argued that ‘middle class’ is used variously, and that its meaning is not only unclear but intensely debated. Further, Donner (2012), argues that middle classness is a moral claim. I therefore desist from using the term that could be interpreted differently and would unlikely aid in identifying the specificities of the participants. I have instead described their specific conditions – their localities, the conditions therein, the livelihoods of their parents, the incomes of their families, interalia – that I hope aids a more specific understanding of who these participants are.
Table 1. *Monthly Income distribution of participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training type</th>
<th>Median income, INR (GBP)</th>
<th>Income quartile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Q1, INR (GBP)</td>
<td>Q3, INR (GBP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azad</td>
<td>10,000 (GBP 111.1)</td>
<td>8,000 (GBP 89.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prayas(^a)</td>
<td>8,000 (GBP 89.9)</td>
<td>6,000 (GBP 66.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITI(^a)</td>
<td>Electronic Mechanic</td>
<td>&lt;17,000 (GBP 188.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Electrician</td>
<td>&lt;17,000 (GBP 188.9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants’ education was enquired about and analysed, but the selection was not made on its basis. Few clear conclusions could be drawn from the educational background of the participants, perhaps because participants were still studying (through correspondence) alongside the training. Tentatively, those from the ITI tended to have a higher minimum education; each participant had at least passed 10\(^{th}\) standard. Overall, the median education at Azad was 12\(^{th}\) standard passed; at Prayas was 10\(^{th}\) standard passed; at the ITI for both electricians and electronic mechanics was 12\(^{th}\) standard passed.

Two criteria informed my judgement on how many interviews to conduct. First was of theoretical saturation. I conducted interviews until responses kept getting repeated and it seemed like I had approached theoretical saturation, i.e. I had enough to conceptually build the themes identified through the literature and through the interviews (as opposed to data saturation which is an assertion of no new findings emerging at all). The second criteria related to the scope and constraints of a PhD study. Stopping the collection of data, admittedly, did feel like a leap of faith and I do not claim that spending more time in the field would not have added anything to my research. However, given the (time) constraints of a PhD, and the repetition in the responses and the development of the theoretical categories, it appeared that I could close my fieldwork after nine months and 72 interviews.

\(^a\) Data for one participant at Prayas was not available.

\(^a\) As mentioned earlier, details of income of the participants was not available at the ITI, as they only collected income as below and above INR 17,000 (GBP 188.9).
The 72 interviews comprised of 56 interviews with the primary participants (21 driver trainees at Azad; 23 beauty trainees at Prays; 6 electrician trainees and 6 electronic mechanic trainees at the ITI), and 16 interviews with teachers, principals and mobilizers across the three field sites. While the young women trainees formed the primary participants and are the focus of my study, interviews with teachers, principals and mobilizers across the three field sites helped triangulate my findings, and gather contextual data regarding the training.

To maintain continuity in the recall period of 6 months or less at Azad and Prayas, I interviewed only those in the first year of the training at the ITI (the issue of retrospective responses is discussed further in Section 6.2). Although higher number of women electrician and electronic mechanic trainees would have been better for theoretical saturation for the category of electrician and electronic mechanic training, I had interviewed all the girls in the age of 15-24 in their first year in the two courses, and the interviews added to the theoretical saturation of the category of non-traditional training.

4. Choice of Method

Within a qualitative comparative design, semi-structured interviews seemed the most appropriate method to collect data. First, I was beginning the research with a fairly clear focus. Semi-structured interviews allowed me to focus on the specific issue of entry and non-traditional occupational decisions (Bryman, 2016). While keeping the interviews focussed, semi-structured interviews still allowed for flexibility and openness which was essential to this study. To understand occupational gender segregation in a country context where there are hardly any other qualitative studies to be informed by, I also wanted to have the room to be led by the participants. Thus, while asking questions, I was guided by the “sensitizing concepts” (Charmaz, 2003, p.85) in the literature on non-traditional occupational entry, primarily based on other countries, but I also stimulated ‘the interviewee's interpretive capacities’ (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995, p.39) through open questions such as “Why do you want to do a job?”, “How did you think of entering this job training?”, “Why not another job?” (See Appendix D for the interview guide). The interviews thus evolved as the research progressed, ‘with new interesting themes
emerging from first interviews included in the later interviews’ (Bryman, 2016, p. 371). Third, since women’s work decisions are often embedded in the cultural context it was important to understand social structures, norms, and constraints of a culture which interviews give access to (Elliott 2005). Fourth, Hedström, & Swedberg, (1998, p. 7) argue that interviews are most meaningful in providing accounts ‘of how an input and outcome are linked to each other’. Interviews thus seemed appropriate for this study explicitly interested in understanding processes and social mechanisms that underlie entry into non-traditional occupational training.

Interviews were thus chosen for reasons of focussed investigation, flexibility, insight into the cultural context and mechanisms that structure entry into non-traditional job training. In addition, interviews offered another emancipatory advantage. Interviewing which gives the researcher access to people’s ideas, thoughts and memories in their own words, can be particularly important for the study of women ‘because in this way learning from women is an antidote to centuries of ignoring women’s ideas altogether or having men speak for women’ (Reinharz 1992:19). Reinharz (1992) emphasises the ‘self-revealing and consciousness-raising potential of woman-to-woman talk’ (ibid, p23). She may discover ‘her thoughts, learn who she is, and "find her voice" ‘(Reinharz & Chase, 2002, p. 225). Indeed, the participants at Azad were keen to speak, to share their stories. Individuals who I had not interviewed yet, came up to me and enquired when I would interview them, some even getting me to promise that I will do so. I had to reassure them, ‘sab ka number aayega’ ['everyone’s turn will come']. At times at the ITI and Prayas, I interviewed women who were over the age threshold of 24 and would not form my sample just to accommodate their keenness to be listened to.

Considering alternatives to semi-structured interviews, although unstructured narrative interviews and life histories could have provided more unfragmented accounts, they would not have been amenable to focus on entry into non-traditional job training, the subject of this research. Further, a multiple case design requires comparison across responses. As such, some degree of structure where similar questions are asked across cases is required which unstructured interviews would not have provided (Bryman, 2016). Life histories while would have provided a more comprehensive picture of major life events of participants, the young participants
would had hardly gone through many such stages; and the information collected could have been unfocussed, when the study needed responses around a specific stage. An ethnography could have provided a fuller understanding of their experiences. However, since women at entry cannot be easily observed – I did not know which women are considering entry – and the factors that shape their entry are not necessarily observable (such as perceived self-efficacy discussed in a following chapter), a full-blown ethnography that relies heavily on participant observation would have been impractical and likely be inadequate in gaining useful information. Retrospective interviews of those who have entered, asking them about how they decided to enter and probing their responses, seemed a more practical and helpful way of informing the research question.

While participant observation does not form the main source of my data, I did carry out participant observation where it was practicable and could inform my research question. Participant observation acted as an ice-breaker at Azad’s non-technical training classes. ‘Hanging out’ (Geertz 1998, p. 69) through attending meetings with participants such as the ‘badlaav ka safarnama’ ['journey of change'], or playing musical chairs and being part of the class in celebrating birthdays, helped bridge the distance and create trust. Here, my participation was passive, for example, at the ‘badlaav ka safarnama’ ['journey of change'], while I was a part of the group, sitting amongst the participants on the ground, I had no stories to share, not having gone through the processes of change that participants recounted after coming for training to Azad; and moderate, when I participated in games.

My participation was more active when I accompanied the Azad mobilizers on their mobilisation activities. These activities included an information booth at the Monday bazaar in Jahangirpuri, and home visits where we met with those who had expressed interest in Azad’s training programs during their visit to the Monday bazaar. First, manning the information booth in the Monday bazaar and accompanying the mobilizers on the mobilisation rounds almost necessitated my participation. Interested individuals at the Monday Bazaar took me to be a part of the informants at the booth and asked me questions. Turning them away or to another informant would have been odd but also did not seem useful or necessary. Second, participant observation here allowed me to interact with potential trainees at entry, engaging directly with their concerns and the factors that support or
undermine their entry into training. Finally, this was another way for me to create a reciprocal non-exploitative research process. For the house visits, the mobilizers paired up to cover different residential areas. Jyoti and I, paired up to visit houses in blocks of Jahangirpuri which provided me an avenue to observe hesitations, considerations and questions of potential trainees, build rapport with mobilizers, a key informant, but also halved the work of the mobilizers on the day.

While I did participate in Azad’s activities, similar opportunities for passive to moderate participant observation were not on offer at Prayas or the ITI. While Azad held non-technical modules and meetings that served as the space for participant observation, Prayas and the ITI only had technical modules relating to the training they offered. Further, Prayas and the ITI did not carry out mobilisation activities to induce entry and thus did not offer a similar opportunity for relevant participant observation. Being a part of the class would not have been possible at the ITI and Prayas – requiring me to take an entrance exam at the ITI and in both cases take up a seat from a limited and fixed number of places in the class. At the ITI and at Prayas, sitting in the technical modules as a student would have raised questions and created more distrust and distance, as I lacked the characteristics to accomplish complete participation believably.

However, the similarities between the interview responses and the more informal interactions at Azad reassured me that I could rely on the interview findings. Further, to check for consistency of responses, I examined the same themes of interest through multiple questions which were variably worded. Lastly, interviews with instructors, principals, and mobilizers who have had a much longer interaction with the participants were a vital source to triangulate my findings.

5. Data Analysis

As the first step towards analysis, the interviews which were conducted in Hindi were translated and transcribed in English. While some texture of the language is inevitably lost (van Nes et al. 2010), since I was both the interviewer as well as the translator, I was in the privileged position of being able to retain the context in the translation. Where an English word did not capture the entire meaning of the Hindi term used, I have used a few English words separated by “/” to try and capture and
communicate the full meaning of the word. For example, a participant reported that she did not have any samajh in Class 12th of what she should do for a job. The word samajh was translated to “sense/awareness” since neither captured the meaning completely on its own. In such cases I have also transliterated the Hindi words for those readers who know the language. Further, to keep intact their words as far as possible, wherever they included English words in the interviews (for example “mentality”, “knowledge”, “choice”, etc.) I have retained them marked with “” in the transcript. While translating enlarges the imprint of the researcher on the interviews, first, since interviews are constructivist it does not undermine the approach of the interviews where the interviewer is a part of the knowledge created (Elliott, 2005); and second, it was unavoidable, and perhaps superior to alternatives where a translator does the translating instead of the researcher.

To analyse the data, I followed an inductive thematic analysis approach. Boyatzis (1998) in Transforming Qualitative Information: Thematic analysis and Code Development, defines thematic analysis as “a process of encoding qualitative information” where ‘the encoding requires an explicit “code”’ (Boyatzis 1998, p. 161). An inductive approach is “content driven” and more appropriate to exploratory studies as opposed to “confirmatory”, hypotheses driven studies (Guest et al. 2012). The inductive approach automatically seemed the appropriate choice for the study, as interviews had quickly revealed that factors such as aspirations, while found important in the literature, (as is discussed in detail chapter 3), had little to do with participants’ entry. As such, the necessity of an inductive approach became clear early on in the research process. Following an inductive approach meant that the study could be authentic to the realities of the context of the study instead of being led by literature which was often based on other countries.

In the first step in analysing the data, I read and re-read the transcripts to understand and internalise the raw information. Even though transcribing all the interviews consumed substantial time, it was critical to this step, as “written material is easier to review than audiotaped material” (Boyatzis 1998, p. 43). If I had instead chosen to transcribe only selected moments from the interviews, it might have meant excluding relevant information too early on in the process of analysis and arriving at misinformed findings.
In the second step, I tried to sense and articulate potential themes across each participant on the transcripts in Microsoft word. A theme is a “pattern found in the information that at minimum describes and organises the possible observations and at maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon” (Boyatzis 1998, p. 4). At this stage, the themes were close to the data, descriptive (for eg. “No one to go to for information”) and many. As such the unit of coding, “the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon” (Boyatzis 1998, p. 63), was each participant. An examination of the units of coding ultimately informed the unit of analysis, “the entity on which the interpretation of the study will focus”, (Boyatzis 1998, p. 62), which were the groups, non-traditional training and traditional training.

In the next step, I attempted to compare and relate themes across units of coding and units of analysis to identify patterns in themes. I switched to using to a computer assisted qualitative analysis software, MaxQDA with the objective to manage and systematically organise the large amount of information and themes. One of the problems with coding using qualitative data software is that of fragmentation of data so that the narrative flow of the interview is punctured (Coffey and Atkinson 1996). I admit that some fragmentation was necessitated in data analysis where reporting the entirety of interviews is neither possible nor desirable. However, since I conducted semi-structured interviews instead of life histories or narratives, the responses of the participants mostly related to the theme of the question. As such, the data was more amenable to being fragmented, and I have tried to retain the full response to the question as far as possible. A related issue is that pulling bits of data out into themes might lead to losing the context. Reading the interview transcripts multiple times as well as erring on the side of inclusion during analysis where I retained sentences before and after the “codable moment”, helped guard against losing information that might bear upon the data presented.

In step four, themes that emerged as important, judged through their frequency and intensity were synthesized into a code. A code is “a way of relating our data to our idea about the data” (Coffey and Atkinson 1996, p. 27), and may be “a list of themes; a complex model with themes, indicators and qualifications that are causally related; or something in between these two forms.” (Boyatzis 1998, p. 161). For example, the themes of ‘parents unable to advise’, ‘restricted access to the internet’, ‘no career
counselling at schools’ were organised under the code “information poverty”. In so doing, some themes were excluded, for example, the theme of ‘clothing’ which appeared sporadically did not form a code. Comparing responses across and within units of analysis was important in this process and helped identify the emergent codes. The codes thus identified were applied to all the transcripts or units of coding.

In the last step, informed by reading of relevant literature, the codes were interpreted and developed into a schema of conceptual and theoretical categories that formed the analytical framework as depicted in the following diagram.
Figure 5. Analytical Strategy

Step 2: Identifying potential themes (Examples)
Family employment, educational background, no goals, no thinking about jobs, no advice from parents, few friends, parental encouragement important, seeing others in the same job important.

Step 3: Identifying patterns and relating themes (Examples)
- Having no counselling at school, no advice from parents is related to each other, and relates to participants’ response that they did not have anyone to go to for job related advice.
- No thinking about jobs is related to not having occupational goals.

Step 4: Developing coding categories (Examples)
- Information poverty
- Sources of information and advice
- Unset occupational aspirations
- Persistence of entry into a training

Step 5: Developing the analytical framework by interpreting codes and integrating them with the literature (Examples)
- Entry not a result of aspirations but leads to them.
- In a situation of information poverty, heterophily connections important for information about non-traditional training.

Comparison and repetition

Three cases of non-traditional job training

A case of traditional job

Taxi driver and personal Chauffeur
Electrician
Electronic Mechanic
Beauty Parlour
6. Challenges, limitations, and ethics: a discussion of my research experience

6.1. Researching in your home city and different forms of insider-outsider

Throughout the research process, I was repeatedly conscious of my positionality as both an insider and an outsider. Being from Delhi is what I shared common with my participants. My identity as a single woman, understanding the local language and the participants’ perception of a rough similarity in age, proved to be a significant advantage for earning the trust of the participants and building a rapport. These factors made the interviews more like conversations and enabled the respondents to feel comfortable with me. Gestures such as sitting on the ground with them, ordering what they would eat from the neighbourhood street cart and eating with them, helped to bridge distance, create comfort, and what Reinharz & Chase (2002) call, create ‘sisterly bonds’.

However, questions about where my home was and other such identifiable markers of class made being from Delhi a potential source of distance rather than closeness and I had to be careful to navigate them honestly but without revealing too much. Yet, my outsider-ness was manifest in my behaviour, use of language, possessions, manifestations of morality and discomfort in ‘foreign’ surroundings that my participants lived in. While interviewing one of the instructors at the ITI, he said: ‘women need to have some gumption to accomplish something. See, like you are sitting in a room with a shut door with a man alone. You are sitting with him for an hour.’ I laughed. He carried on, ‘One man leaves and another comes and then the door is shut again.’ I was unsure if the insinuation was that this was unusual behaviour for a woman or a more extreme comparison with sex-work. I continued to laugh and said I understand. But the thought about how this could be perceived had not even crossed my mind that could not have been missed by someone who belonged.

I conducted my interviews in Hindi, the local language spoken in Delhi (and many of the northern and central Indian states) which illustrated other subtle aspects of my outsider-ness. While asking questions, I fumbled. Neetu asked, ‘Aap ko Hindi nahin aati na?’ [you don’t know Hindi right?]. In spite of having been taught in the language until class 5, my Hindi betrayed the social class I had become a part of.
where people spoke in ‘Hinglish’ and sentences and phrases in Hindi interspersed a
collection that was led in English. I explained, ‘when I go to study abroad, I
fumble in English in the beginning. And when I come back home, I fumble in Hindi
in the beginning’.

At Prayas, my outsider-ness was embodied. Seeing what to me was an old torn bag
with frayed handles (that had cost me about INR 2700 or thirty pounds four years
ago), the instructor of the beauty and wellness course had remarked, ‘nice bag’. I
then began to notice that women in the neighbourhood did not tend to carry large
bags – girls carried school bags, and older women stuffed their cash into their
blouses, or carried tiny pouch-like bags. The compliment to me was indicative of the
material distance where a bag that I was looking to replace constituted the teacher's
desire but also a characteristic of the embodied social gap between me and women
from low income families.

In a conversation with the mother of a participant, the differences in morality were
striking. That women should cover their chest [with for example a dupatta, a stole,
over and above the clothing] occupied most of the conversation: ‘chhati ko na dhakna
gunah hai. Adab se jiyo. Upar waale se milna hai. Nahin to jhahanum naseeb hogi.’ [Not
covering your chest is a crime. Live with respect. One has to meet god. Otherwise
women will all go to hell]. While I was thankful that I had wrapped a shawl, it was
sheer chance, an attempt to warm myself on a cold day and covering your chest as a
moral decision had never really struck me.

6.2. Challenges and Limitations

Interviewing women who are already in training raises questions relating to
retrospective response. While their responses were retrospective, interviewing while
they were still training as opposed to employed meant that the time over which they
were reflecting was relatively short. In the case of both Azad and Prayas, the course
lengths were roughly six months and thus the maximum period between the time of
interview and decision to join the respective training could not exceed six months. In
practice, however, the recall period was even shorter, sometimes even a few days.
Although course lengths and therefore recall periods were comparable for those at
Azad and Prayas, the course length for electricians and electronic mechanic at the ITI
is two years. To maintain continuity in the recall period, I interviewed only those in the first year of the training, who because of the timing of the interview in January (and since admissions are in August every year) had just finished six months at the ITI.

I had intended to include photo elicitation methods in my interviews, learning from studies that have used visual and verbal cues to capture aspects of identity, motives to avoid success, and notions of femininity. Horner (1972) for example, uses verbal leads to measure individual differences in the ‘Motive to Avoid Success’ (p 159) between the two sexes. Females and males in the sample are asked to write a story in response to the verbal or written lead: ‘After first term finals, Anne (John) finds herself (himself) at the top of her medical school class’. Prosser & Bagnoli, (2009) use multiple visual methods (photo elicitation techniques, projective technique in the forms of a self-portrait, timeline, and a ‘relational map’) in a qualitative longitudinal study to understand how young people construct their personal relationships and identities. I had thought that employing techniques such as photo elicitation, drawing self-portraits, timelines of aspirations and relational maps will not only enlarge the possibilities of information gathered through conventional methods, but capture a different kind of information by prodding latent memory (Harper 2002) as well as capture, ‘emotions which may be more removed from verbal articulation’ (Reavey & Johnson, 2011, p. 6). Further, the method was to serve as ‘ice-breakers’ in interviews with the young participants since the young can be reticent and un-participative, but also since being interviewed by someone older, with a different positionality, may encompass inescapable differences in status and power (Bagnoli 2009; Prosser and Bagnoli 2009).

However, in practice visual and verbal cues accomplished quite the opposite during the interviews. While speaking was perceived as being natural, showing pictures punctured the flow of the interview, created distance, and made the participant conscious of the fact that they were being researched. While studies such as Horner (1972), Prosser & Bagnoli, (2009) use visual and verbal cues as their primary tools to collect data, in my study I needed to combine interview questions, which was my primary tool, with visual methods. Further, in the initial stages where I did show pictures of women and men in different occupations, and learning from Horner (1972) asked the participant to tell me a story, the participants seemed somewhat
flummoxed, put on the spot and keen to finish the exercise. The stories themselves also seemed arbitrary. For example, one participant said for all the pictures of women in traditional and non-traditional jobs: ‘achhi hain. Mehnat se kaam karti hain’ [She is good. She works hard]. I, therefore, had to quickly give up on visual methods and they did not form a part of my data collection tools.

Similarly, questions that asked participants to rate statements punctured the flow of the interview and impeded the comfort that had disarmed them, bringing focus to the interaction being of research. Thus, questions that had been adapted from other studies such as, "Rate, from 1 to 5, how autonomous you feel in making your work decisions?” (from Alkire 2005) or "Rate your sense of confidence in doing these different (female dominated and male-dominated) jobs where 1 is completely unsure, and 10 is completely sure" (from Alkire 2005) had to be given up.

Relatively, there were also limits to open, ‘constructivist,’ questions that successfully and meaningfully activated ‘narrative production’ (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995, p.39). Some of the broader questions that I asked the participant to think about such as "What does a job represent to you?" or, “What is a good job?”, elicited responses that were unrevealing (for e.g. “a good job is something that I like” or did not elicit a response at all. More specific questions such as "Does the approval of peers matter to you in deciding what job to train in", "why do you think it does not matter to you?" elicited more meaningful responses.

It helped to pilot the interview guide with women friends in Delhi which gave me a sense that such questions and cues may not work. I was therefore alert to the possibility of excluding them and paid special attention to the responses to such prompts early on in the interviews.

I did not ask the participants their caste. Studies have shown that priming caste leads to different responses than when they are not for those who belong to the unprivileged castes. Hoff & Pandey (2006) for example, following an experimental design in the villages of Uttar Pradesh, India, found that boys from the privileged castes solved seven percent more mazes than those from the unprivileged caste when the caste of the unprivileged was not mentioned, but solved 34 percent more mazes when the caste was stated. I did not want to affect responses and make
salient a part of their identity, leaving it up to them to mention where they thought it relevant. Similarly, I did not ask them which religion they belonged to. Having said that, I did collect the data on their caste and religion from the NGO/institute, which have significant overlaps with socio-economic status in India, and could provide contextual information*.

Although the participants at Azad and Prayas came from both General and SC-OBC categories, participants to the ITI all belonged to the General Category (See Appendix B, table 7, for detailed analysis). *

While I had planned to carry out multi-person interviews – interviewing parents of the participants, for example, that intention had to be discarded. First, interviewing parents could raise ethical challenges. While taking the consent of the participant, I had assured confidentiality and anonymity as conditions under which the interview was taking place. If my questions to the parents belied what I had heard from their daughter, I would be transgressing that confidentiality. Secondly, it had emerged through the interviews that entering into training to become drivers or beauticians or electricians or electronics mechanics were not thought out plans constructed over a period of time. By using constructivist interviews with the parents, there was a potential danger of making them reflect on their decisions to send their daughter to train in non-traditionally female job and question their unusual decision. Thirdly, interviewing parents would have required a much longer period in the field – to find a time where both the participant would be free to take me home, and the parents would be available would involve substantial waiting. In cases, it was the mother who had supported the daughter’s training, and the fact was hidden from the father.

* Even though I did not ask the participants for their caste and religious affiliation, measures were taken to ensure that I had their consent to collect the information for the project. The informed consent form included the stipulation “I agree to be a part of the project” which the participants ticked and signed or gave recorded consent to, giving me the permission to collect information relevant for the study. Additionally, the NGOs were conscious of data confidentiality of their trainees and I was required to send a formal email sharing the informed consent form and delineating precisely what the data would be used for. I also shared the signed informed consent forms with Azad on their request. It was only after these measures that the NGOs released the data to me.

*SC refers to Scheduled Caste and ST refers to the Scheduled Tribes. The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have been defined under Article 366 (24) and (25) of the Indian Constitution respectively and refer to those parts of the Hindu society that have been historically depressed or disadvantaged. ‘Other Backward Castes’ or ‘OBC means those castes which are educationally or socially disadvantaged. Article 338, clause 10, stipulates that the President of India may specify the backward classes, based on the report from a Commission, appointed under Article 340, that investigates educational and social backwardness of classes. General’ refers to those who do not belong to SC, ST or OBC.
To find a time where the mother was available but the father was not present added another layer of complexity.

What reassured me was that I was interested in the individual’s perception of parental effect on their entry decisions which meant that I needed to probe the participant’s perception rather than the parents. What the parents could have perhaps provided is contextual data of concerns and trade-offs that families in the community consider in supporting their daughter into going into training for non-traditional jobs. I got a glimpse into the process when I accompanied the mobilizers at Azad on their mobilisation activities, and interacted with potential trainees and their families (generally mothers and sisters) during home visits.

Before going into the field, I had thought that conducting a second round of interviews would be beneficial. However, I had a second round of interviews with only a few at Azad where it seemed like I had not asked them enough on themes that emerged clearly later. As the fieldwork progressed interviewing participants for a second time seemed neither feasible nor, sometimes, desirable. First, by the end of the nine months in the field, I had conducted interviews with 56 primary participants and conducting another 56 interviews seemed unrealistic during the scope of PhD research. Second, my interviews had included multiple questions, differently worded, and spaced through the interview, enquiring about the same theme. I was thus able to triangulate the responses and check for consistency as successive interviews try to do. In fact, I learnt early on in the interviews that if anything I was guilty of over triangulating through the interview when Mitu remarked ‘aapne pehle bhi to yahi poochha tha na?’ [‘Hadn’t you asked this earlier too?’] The question also impressed upon me that a second round of interviews should only be done if I have enough additional questions to ask. Doing so without it can make the participants feel that their lived experience is not important, that I am not paying attention to or remember what they have shared with me. Third, I also carried out interviews with principals, teachers, instructors, mobilizers who have interacted with the trainees over extensive periods of time which helped contextualise and build further confidence in the understanding that I had gained. For example, the discussions with the mobilizers at Azad unambiguously lent support to the tentative findings and reassured me. Further, since my interviews were conducted over nine months, some participants had graduated from being a trainee to going into
employment during the period. The second round of interview then would have been more extractive -- the participants no longer coming to the training centre, I would have had to insert myself in their work-day or go to their house at night or demand time on the one day of leave that they might have in a week. For me, the restricted availability meant that conducting a second round of interviews would take even longer than the first, more than doubling the time for fieldwork. Lastly, with interviews which were in-depth, often extending to over an hour, I tried to gather thick description, which is more consequential to framing an understanding of participant lives than the number of rounds of interviews.

Written informed consent and voice recording were not uniformly successful and had to be adapted to the situation. At Azad, participants were accustomed to interacting with individuals from outside of the NGO – even in my first few days at Azad, two individuals from a funding organisation visited the centre and interacted briefly with the women -- and asking for written consent did not create unbridgeable distance. In contrast, at Prayas and the ITI, individuals from outside the organisation were not routine and I sensed apprehension and curiosity about my research when I started which I had to allay, reassuring them that I am only a student. Seeking written consent created suspicion and fear in Praya and the ITI, leading respondents to become weary, on guard and almost unwilling to participate. Verbal consent on record, on the other hand, did not generate the same response. I discussed this with a Professor of Sociology in Delhi, in response to which he made a distinction between researching in the global south and the north, ‘Many times they [ethics boards of research ethics] ask for written consent. Here if you were to ask for that, for them to sign a paper, they would wonder if one is carrying out a police verification!’ It was informed recorded verbal consent that I relied on for my interviews at Prayas and the following interviews at the ITI. Interestingly, while female primary participants ‘from below’ were comfortable being recorded, and taking any notes during the interviews created distance and brought into focus that they were being researched, men and women from ‘above’ – instructors, officials in organizations, principals -- were often reticent to be recorded and written notes proved to be the only option at times.
6.3. Ethics

6.3.1. Giving back and building non-exploitative relationships

Conscious of my positionality and acknowledging the power imbalance in the interview process, I tried to be reflexive in my interviewing. At the beginning and the end of each interview, I thus always asked the participant if they had any questions for me, about the research but also about my background, life experiences and aspirations, impressing upon them that they could come back to me later too. Kalpana was one of the participants who made use of the offer. She asked me, ‘I want to speak to you about studying further.’ She was curious about studies abroad. After speaking about application processes for universities abroad, we then discussed more accessible local options. I told her I studied at Jawaharlal Nehru University and gave her details about where the university is, when the application form comes out, that there is a hostel, that the fees were less than 300 INR (3.33 GBP) per year when I was there, and that there were scholarships for those who could not afford it.

As at the ITI, interviews at Azad and Prayas, almost always ended with ‘Aap se baat kar ke bahut achha laga [I really liked talking to you]’. Their expression of happiness and eagerness to speak helped partially reassure the gnawing feeling, that asked what were you doing for them in return and the asymmetry in the value of the interview to me and them. Despite such experiences, interactions were of more use to me than to them. Explaining the purpose of the research and one’s role in it helped clarify expectations.

6.3.2. Researching in the Global South and ethics of anonymity

Several research ethics codes (for e.g. American Sociological Association’s Code of Ethics, 1999; the Social Research Association’s Ethical Guidelines, 2003) have normalised anonymity as a desirable standard that qualitative research should meet (Tilley and Woodthorpe 2011). Indeed, the consent form exemplified in the ‘Ethical Approval and Risk Assessment Form for Sociological Research’ included the stipulation ‘I understand that my responses will be anonymised and only used for academic research’ as part of the example informed consent form which this study followed.
Adopting such guidelines without contextualising it to interviews of women from low income households in the global south, raised challenging questions for me. While anonymity can empower and allow participants to share their lived experiences freely, it can also subvert their right to be recognised for their lives’ stories. In feminist research anonymisation in research on women “has been seen as a form of delegitimisation or silencing” (Allen and Wiles 2016, p. 151) which disregards that ‘The act of naming is an act of power’ (Guenther, 2009, p. 412). The “‘protection’ of participant identities has been characterised as a type of ‘paternalism’” (Allen and Wiles 2016, p. 151).

In my research, while some participants only said that they do not care to be anonymised, others actively expressed the desire to not be anonymised, for their names to be used, for their stories to be attributed to them. While following a feminist research perspective, my research should have privileged the interests of the participant (and not that of the researcher), I had promised anonymity instead of enquiring whether that is something the participant desired. Having an incomplete sense of how many and which participants favoured being named, using names of some raises difficulties in “breaching confidentiality for some individuals and not for others” for me (Wiles et al., 2008, p. 425). By following western ethical standards, I had ended up inadvertently compromising on the agency of the participants who did not belong to the context in which these guidelines were framed. Following such unsituated standards was further complicated by my positionality – I was an Indian researcher, collecting data in Delhi, and yet I was still following western models of research ethics.

For this study one way forward was to reach out to my participants again and enquire if they would like to be anonymised. More practically though, I have anonymised all participants except the few who actively asked me not to. Looking beyond my study, however, there is a need perhaps for situated ethics to inform decisions of anonymisation in research at the outset, especially in the studies based in the global south, so that research can better serve those being researched.
Chapter 3. Going against the flow: chance entry determines aspirations, not follows them

“The greater failure is not the child who doesn’t reach the stars, but the child who has no stars that they feel they are reaching for.”

- Gordon Brown during a speech at University of Greenwich on 31st October 2007

1. Introduction

Several empirical studies have found occupational aspirations to be amongst the most significant predictors of vocational attainment and outcomes (Ashby and Schoon 2010; Schoon and Polek 2011; Burke & Hoelter, 1988; Marini, 1978; Otto & Haller, 1979; Porter, 1954; Sewell et al., 1969). Following the literature on occupational aspirations, this study expected that the entry of young women into occupational training would, at least in part, be explained by their aspiration for the occupation. That three of the four training programs were in non-traditional occupations, an atypical choice, only underscored the expectation that women who would have entered these training programs, would have done so on the basis of a strong felt aspiration rather than following societal norms. As such, the study started out by trying to understand how aspirations for (non-traditional) occupations are formed for young women who entered them. However, when I asked the participants across the four training programs what they wanted to be, they invariably reported that they "now" wanted to be what they were training in -- a taxi driver, an electrician, an electronic mechanic and a beautician. Probing their emphasis on "now" revealed that not only had they not aspired for the training they were in but in fact, had had no specific occupational aspirations at all before they entered the training.

For those training at the ITI, the courses they entered were not filled as their first or sometimes even amongst their first five choices on the application form for admission. The rank at which they opted for the training can be read from the table below.
Table 2. Preference number indicated for the non-traditional training in the application form at the ITI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Name of Trainee</th>
<th>Choice Number</th>
<th>Name of Trainee</th>
<th>Choice Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ujwala</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Karishma</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bhavya</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Rekha</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Lubhawna</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Anchal</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Patanjali</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sanyukta</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Anubha</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Kriti</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Esha</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For 5/11 of electrician and electronic mechanic trainees at the ITI, the course did not figure in their first five choices. For even those where it did appear within the first five choices, they had not had the aspiration of becoming an electrician or an electronic mechanic and it was because of other factors that they found themselves undergoing the training. For example, Esha’s grandfather persuaded her to fill in electrician as her first choice even when she was resistant to becoming an electrician until she joined the training. In exceptional cases participants did not know they had opted for the atypical training. Anchal, an electronics trainee, related how she came to the ITI with a female friend but did not know if she had filled in the choice for electronics or not. She explained,

My friend filled in my form. I had asked her to fill in my form. She didn’t tell me what she had filled in, so I don’t know if electronics was filled in as the first choice […] There were many choices. We must have filled in the "choice" for many things. I don't quite know. She didn't tell me and I never asked her. But she goes there a lot, so her "knowledge" is better than mine. So, I told her to fill in my form too.

Kalpana, a driver trainee’s response demonstrated a similar chance entry into the training. Kalpana, as with all the others on the course, had not only not aspired to enter the training, but in fact, had not thought about it at all:

G: What did you think at the time you were joining taxi driving training?
K: At that time, I did not think about anything. One of my friends told me about it and helped me get admission there.
G: So, while getting admission, did you not think why you were getting admitted here?
K: No, I did not think anything. She did not tell me in detail about it. She just told me that this is an institute, an NGO, where they train you in driving; you should learn to drive. She only told me this. I thought it’s okay; I should learn it. Then I came here, where they told me that they also provide jobs. I thought this is the best chance; I was okay with it. She never told me that I would get a job or anything else. I mean, I was ready to pursue any vocational course. I never thought this is not for me.

This chapter examines the role of occupational aspirations in participants’ entry into the training programs. Section 2 discusses what aspirations are and what they are not. Section 3 demonstrates that the participants did not have specific occupational goals before they entered the training. While several participants expressed that they had no occupational goals before entering the training, for others, they were unset – fleeting, flexible and amorphous – and always unthought out. The section thus shows that aspirations as specific goals (Bernard et al. 2014; Bernard, Dercon, and Taffesse 2011; Haller and Miller 1963; Locke and Latham 2002); that individuals invest in (Bernard et al. 2011); and which develop to become realistic (Cook et al. 1996a; Gottfredson 1981), is inapplicable to the context of the study. In such a situation of an occupational aspirational void, section 3 finds that childhood dreams (such as to be a model or a teacher) and parents’ uncritical wishes (such as for their daughter to become a doctor or a lawyer) were expressed as their occupational desires. Section 4 tries to understand their “incapacity to aspire” (Appadurai 2004). Discussing their accounts, the section finds that their poverty could have formed “mental models” and relatedly, “outcome in-expectancies”, creating beliefs that their circumstances would be determinative of their outcomes, and the futility of their aspiring. Second, in so far as the poor have limited experiences of pathways to go from wants to achievable goals, their “navigational” capacity (Appadurai, 2004) was compromised. Third, in so far as some participants were crucial contributors to the survival of the household, and were overwhelmed by concerns of the day to day, a “cognitive tax” limited their capacity to plan for the future. In this context of poverty and navigational incapacity, there was no pathway to achieve these occupational
desires and no resources to set realistic goals. Further, the section suggests that
gendered constraints in the form of uncertain futures post marriage of these single
young women contributed to their undetermined occupational aspirations.

Section 5 demonstrates that with initial desires beyond reach and an incapacity to
develop specific occupational aspirations, entry forged occupational aspirations
rather than the other way around. Section 6 highlights that the concept of
occupational aspirations may not apply in the same way across contexts. When
people feel outcome in expectancy and gendered constraints, they do not form
specific occupational aspirations, while still harbouring a desire to “become
something”. In such cases, opportunities, the chance to become something, create
aspirations instead. As such, the chapter concludes that its findings pivot this study
away from trying to understand aspiration formation for non-traditional job training
to what is more appropriate to the context -- a study that examines the factors that
explain the entry of young women into non-traditional and traditional training.

2. Aspirations: what they are and why they matter

Studies on aspirations suggest at least three characterising features. First, what is
common to the understanding of aspirations across disciplines is its fundamental
association with having a goal. Locke & Latham (2002) define aspirations as forward-
looking goals or targets. Further, Haller & Miller (1963) argue that, ‘At perhaps the
most fundamental level, the term indicates that one or more persons are oriented
toward a goal’ (p. 6, emphasis mine). Hart (2016), who argues for multi-dimensional
aspirations, still contends that aspirations are, ‘indicative of an individual or group’s
commitment towards a particular trajectory or endpoint’ (Hart 2016, p. 326). Even
the Oxford dictionary defines aspirations as, ‘A hope or ambition of achieving

As such, a vital characteristic of aspirations is that they act as motivators: they are
goals in which individuals are, ‘willing, in principle, to invest time, effort, or money
to attain’ (Bernard et al., 2011, p. 6). Bernard et al. (2011) argue that even though the
willingness to invest may be conditional or potential, it distinguishes aspirations
from idle daydreams and wishes. To invest, implies a thinking, a planning to know
which steps to invest in. Albert and Luzzo (1999, p. 432) argue that setting goals
involves forethought, which helps individuals guide their behaviour towards a specific future outcome. In sum, aspirations are specific targets or goals, for the future, that have involved some thinking on the investments these would involve, and a pathway to achieve them, that motivate the individual to take steps towards realising them.

Conversely, the absence of aspirations (having set goals), could be understood as aimlessness (the absence of set goals). Bernard et al. (2011) argue that a lack of aspirations can be viewed as fatalism, which implicitly implies an absence of goals. Fatalism denotes a ‘helplessness that a person may feel with regard to proactively modifying his or her future’ and is equivalent to ‘not making the necessary investments to better one's well-being’ (ibid, p. 2). Since aspirations are inherently forward-looking and imply a willingness to invest, a weak capacity to aspire can be understood as fatalism (ibid). Further, Ray (2006) posits that frustration of aspirations might lead to fatalism. Hart (2016, p. 328) similarly argues that, “Someone may think it is impossible to change their social class and so does not aspire to do so”. In other words, an “acquiescent contentment” could also indicate the frustration of aspirations (Hart, 2016).

Second, theories on occupational aspirations predict that they develop over time. For example, the Gottfredson’s (1981) study on aspiration development identified the age of 14 to be a critical age at which aspirations start becoming realistic and concrete. Gottfredson (1981, p. 545) describes the “progressive and usually permanent circumscription of occupational preferences according to one’s developing self-concepts” as an individual grows up. Gottfredson (1981, pg. 545) proposes four stages of development of self-concept and occupational preferences: “orientation to size and power (ages 3–5 yrs), orientation to sex roles (ages 6–8 yrs), orientation to social valuation (ages 9–13 yrs), and orientation to the internal, unique self (age 14 yrs)”. Aligned with this insight, various studies such as Cook et al., 1996; Gutman & Akerman, 2008; Helwig, 1998; Hitlin, 2006; Schoon & Polek, 2011; Wei-Cheng & Bikos, 2000, inter alia, focus on late adolescents and early adults in their studies. Cook et al., (1996, p. 3369), provide an intuitive basis and argue that high school student’s aspirations are realistic as they “are close to making career choices that have serious personal consequences.” Since individuals begin to make decisions regarding their future at this age, it is contended that aspirations tend to lose their
abstraction and become concrete. As aspirations are a summary or a combination of the ‘preferences held, the expectations formed, and the constraints acknowledged by an individual with respect to the future’ (Bernard et al., 2008, p.6), it is reasoned that individuals are able to take their preferences and constraints into account to form thought-out, concrete, occupational goals. Okamoto and England (1999,) find that the sex composition of the occupations to which youths aspire is predictive of the sex composition of their actual jobs 14 years later. Other studies such as Helwig (1998) find that occupational aspirations develop and start becoming concrete even earlier than 14. Using a longitudinal approach, Helwig (1998) examines occupational aspirations and expectations of children in the US at three points in time (in grades second, fourth and sixth) and finds that expectations were the same as aspirations for forty-four percent of second graders but this increased to 55 and 57 percent for fourth and sixth graders, respectively. Since expectations take constraints into account, their study showed that aspirations started becoming realistic even earlier than the age of 14.

Third, several studies, as mentioned have shown that occupational aspirations are consequential for their achievement (Ashby and Schoon 2010; Schoon and Polek 2011; Burke & Hoelter, 1988; Marini, 1978; Otto & Haller, 1979; Porter, 1954; Sewell et al., 1969). This is especially so for adolescents and young adults For example, in a study based on white high-school boys in the US, Porter (1954) found that 80% of the boys surveyed had vocational attainment that was consistent with their vocational aspiration measured at the end of high school. While the specific definition of occupational category, type of sample, and the age at which respondents were initially studied has resulted in varying degrees of ‘congruence’, “all studies indicate that the occupational aspirations and expectations of high school students play at least a directional role with respect to subsequent occupational attainment” (Marini, 1978, p. 725). Marini, (1978), on the basis of several studies, including Kohout & Rothney, (1964), Kuvlesky & Bealer, (1967), and Portes, et al. (1968), argues that even in studies which find a relatively low degree of congruence...
between aspirations and attainment, the highest proportion of individuals in a given occupational category “are those who initially desired to enter it” (ibid).

Additionally, longitudinal studies of adult women such as that of Astin & Myint, (1971) and Mulvey, (1963) indicate that, while post-high school characteristics such as marital status are the most accurate predictors of career outcomes for women, educational and occupational aspirations in high school are the most closely related to actual career choice (Marini, 1978). More recently, several studies such as Schoon & Polek, (2011) show that occupational aspirations at 16 are a critical predictor of attaining higher social status and earnings in the mid 30s even after controlling for indicators of educational achievement, general cognitive ability and family socioeconomic background. Based on two large, representative, samples of the British population born in 1958 and in 1970 of individuals in mid-adulthood, they further demonstrated that those with aspirations for a professional job were “more likely to participate in further education, and are more likely to achieve a professional career in their adult years” (ibid, p. 215) compared to their less ambitious peers. Conversely, studies such as Yates et al., (2011) show that the absence of occupational achievement, approximated by NEET (not in employment, education or training) status, is associated with the lack of concrete, certain, and aligned goals. Using longitudinal data from the British Youth Cohort Study (BCS70), a nationally representative dataset, they examine whether young people who hold uncertain or misaligned aspirations, i.e. aspirations that exceed likely educational attainment at age 16 are considerably more likely to become NEET by age 18 than the control groups.

The next section suggests that occupational aspirations so understood -- as a specific goal that an individual has planned for and invested in, which develops over time, becoming concrete and set after 14 -- did not quite apply to the participants of this study.

3. “Aspirations”: an inapplicable term

3.1. Unset, flexible, fleeting, "aspirations".

Participants’ responses revealed a lack of occupational goals and an occupational aimlessness. I asked Mitu, a driver trainee: What did you want to do before you heard about this NGO?
M: Before finding out about here, I had no idea what I’d do. Seriously, I was completely aimless before I came here because I really did not know what to do, but now that I have got some “knowledge” about this field, I only want to become a “professional” taxi driver.

I probed further, "Did you have any particular aspiration regarding your career while studying, say in class 12th?"

M: No, I hadn’t thought of anything by class 12. I only thought I would get admission to a college and after college, I’d have to stay at home.

I tried asking the question in another way, “While studying in your 12th standard, did you ever think about what you should do in the future, or did you have a conversation with anyone about what you should do further?"

M: No, the only thing on my mind was that I should go to college, because everyone goes to college after passing 12th grade. I never thought about what I wanted to become. I thought only about finishing 12th grade and then going to college and then getting some decent job [if I don’t have to stay at home]. The question about which job never came to my mind.

I asked Sejal, a beauty trainee, the same question. Her response indicated that she had no specific occupational goals, but just wanted to “become something”:

G: Did you always want to do these things - a parlour course and then dressing and doing the make-up of models?

S: No, it’s not that. Actually, I hadn’t planned or thought of anything. I had always thought of studying and completing my 12th grade. After the 12th, I thought I would join a regular college or an Open University*, and finally get some job. I failed my 10th grade exams and was sent back to the ninth. Thereafter, I entered the parlour course and thought that I might as well complete the parlour course, and then, I should do a parlour job. I have paid so much money ... Rs.500 [GBP 5.6] per month. Might as well do it; maybe I’ll become something."

Sejal explained that, “During school days, it was only about getting to school, having fun, and then leaving. Even our teacher would say what’s the point of studying ("padh likh ke kya ban na hai"). She had not thought about what she wanted to become.

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* Open University refers to studying through correspondence.
Anubha, an electrician trainee, enjoyed singing as a child. I asked her:

G: Did you think of anything else except singing?
A: No, I just thought that I would do a job after completing my graduation.
G: But had you thought about which job you would do?
A: Like a computer job, like an office type of job. A job, which would make me feel like it was a decent job. It could be anything. It could also be a teaching job. But I don’t like a teaching job much.

Anubha desired an “office type” job, a “decent job”, but did not have a specific job as her goal.

Mariam, a beauty trainee’s response demonstrated the fleeting nature of occupational desires. Mariam told me that when her father suggested that she should do a nursing course, she wanted to do it at that moment, but that passed her by soon after:

One day my father had said to me, that if you’d listen to me, then you should do a nursing course. It has so much scope. I said okay, papa, I’ll do it. But then he became ill, and this thought was forgotten. Such things normally happen – jobs enter my mind and then they leave.

Razia, a beauty trainee, similarly described her changing occupational dreams:

Yes, I had seen on TV and facebook-vacebook etc…. that how they are… their dress etc. They used to look pretty. The way they spoke… I used to like that a lot… Girls who are in malls… who tell you about shopping etc…. I used to like that, but then I started liking the calling job too. My sister was doing that. For some days she wasn’t well, so she used to speak from home. So, when I saw her talk, I got interested… that how does she talk. I used to think of many jobs. You know how the brain goes everywhere? That I’ll do this too and that too… but then I had left school and I came to the parlour so I’ll work only in this now.

Tuheena, a beauty trainee, like most others, wanted to become “something” but had not thought about what this was. I asked her, “Have you ever thought what you want to do in the future?”

T: No, I haven't thought anything really. If I become something, then that will be good. It’s just that I want to do something in my life. I don't know what I want to do, but do something for sure. I am doing this beautician's course, after which I
shall continue my studies and make my decisions as and when I meet people around me. But I won’t stop; I won’t sit idle. People have a certain aim in their lives, that they want to become that, which I don’t have because my studies were not "high-fight" [fancy]. That’s why I haven’t thought of some specific goal. So, I just know that I don’t want to sit idle; I just want to keep doing something. The interaction with the participants repeatedly revealed that they had not thought about even the occupations they had mentioned, albeit often uncertainly, they wanted to enter. Kirti, a beauty trainee, was 17. When I asked her: Did you ever make plans for the future like if you want to do this, then you need to collect this information and if you want to do that then you need to that etc.? She replied simply, "No, never (giggles)"

Rukhtar, a beauty trainee, had wanted to be a teacher but she had not thought about it. She explained to me that neither her mother nor her father had studied, but she had. I asked her how she had come to think about becoming a teacher:

Someone in the family should do something right? When I am studying, then I should at least go into this line; at least for a teacher's job. And it is good too in a way, and you get a name too. If I’m studying so much, then I should become something. And the teaching line is the best, so that’s why the teaching line. I tried to probe why teaching specifically:

After completing education, you can go into many fields. But then why teaching? Do you remember why you felt in the 10th grade that you had to become a teacher?

R: I haven’t thought much about this. It’s just that if I have to go into the teaching line, then I have to go into that. (she laughs) I hadn’t thought about it.

G: I am trying to understand how you thought of being a teacher?

R: (Laughs). I didn't think about it. It was just that my mother had wanted me to go into the teaching line, so I just thought that I’ll go into the teaching line. And the rest depends on destiny as to whether I would have been able to become [a teacher] or not. Because you have to work very hard and even then you’re not able to achieve success.

While the participants did desire to “become something”, they did not express occupational targets. Some clearly stated that they had no goals (like Mitu); others expressed they had not thought about what they wanted to become while wanting
to become something (like Tuheena); some expressed multiple job interests but had not taken steps towards fulfilling these (like Razia), failing to transform their interests into concrete targets. With not having set their occupational goals, their “aspirations” were amorphous, uncertain, fleeting, unthought-out and liable to change.

3.2. Model, singer, actress: Unlikely dreams fill the aspirational void

In the absence of set goals, dreams from childhood sustained even after 14 years of age for many and were expressed as their occupational "aspirations". They wanted to be models, actresses, singers, famous chefs etc. Some others had fleetingly seen the police as children and still expressed a desire to enter the police. Many had become fond of their teachers as young children and expressed that they wanted to be a teacher. For yet others, their parents' unlikely dreams became their own, and they wished to become doctors and lawyers.

Kirti, a beauty trainee, had wanted to be a singer even though she felt her voice was not melodious and hoarse. Yet, she had not thought about any other jobs.

G: Did you always want to be a beautician, or did you think about any other jobs?
K: I wanted to become a singer, but my voice is like this right, so I wasn't able to.
G: When did you want to become a singer?
K: For a long time. I wanted to become a singer, but due to my hoarse voice, I could not become a singer, and then, I entered this parlour training too.
G: Did you think about any other options except becoming a singer?
K: No, I had never thought about any other field.

Aparna, a beauty trainee, was 16 and had wanted to be a chef since she was about 7. She had seen a show on the TV, a show called, “love and food”. She explained that she had really wanted to be a chef:

A: You know how sometimes your mind can get stuck on something… like a madness… like you can “doob jaana” [literally to drown, means to be consumed by that] … so I had gotten consumed by that.
G: What did you like about it so much?
A: Nothing, it was just a thought that I have to become this. I thought that I could get ahead with this.
At 16, Aparna still had a desire to be a famous chef who comes on TV.

Several participants wanted to be a teacher. Ambika, a beauty trainee, reported that while she had not planned on or collected information on how to become anything specific, she had wanted to be a teacher:

A: I thought of becoming a teacher.
G: When did you think of becoming a teacher?
A: It was when I was a child, when I thought of becoming a Hindi teacher. I don’t have much knowledge of English and hence, Hindi.
G: How did you think of being a teacher?
A: In my childhood… you know when you are a child… you see teachers teaching you in school… you think we will also teach…just that.

Esha’s, “aspirations” had not developed to become concrete and realistic by the age of 14. Esha, an electrician trainee, reported that even in class 12th grade at the age of 18, she had not thought of becoming anything specific:

G: What did you want to become at that time [i.e. in 11th and 12th grade]?
E: At that time, I wanted to become everything. (laughs)
G: Students often think about it in 11th and 12th?
E: We were confused, and the confusion never went away.
G: What were the choices that you were confused between at that time?
E: I thought of doing teacher training. As regards a police job, every kid wants to do such a job. So, this was also one of them. As regards teaching, I wanted to become a primary school teacher. I liked the idea of teaching small children in some primary school after doing JBT [Junior Basic Training]
G: What made you think of becoming a teacher?
E: I liked it/felt good seeing my teachers, their “personality”, their way of teaching. All of it attracted me. All the teachers sitting together in a hall and discussing. Since I had been watching teachers since my childhood, I thought that the teacher’s job is the best.

Ujwala, an electrician trainee, had not thought of becoming anything until she was in class 12. When she did, her aspiration was to be a model which was still what she dreamed of being along with becoming an electrician. She recalled that she had been
asked by her father to wait until she had matured and could handle the challenges of modelling:

G: How did you decide to be a model?
U: I like having a good "personality"; I keep everything "perfect". Whatever I wear, be it a suit, dress, or if I wear earrings or do makeup, I do it "perfectly". Like in terms of what matches; I really like that. And my friends used to also say that I look nice. That my height, age etc. are all right [for it]. I keep myself "maintained" in every way, that's why. I also watch actresses on TV-shows. They look nice.
Watching them makes me want to do this even more. In my family, I am the only one who is so fond of all these things.

Bani, a driver trainee, wanted to enter the police after being introduced to them through an NGO as a child:

Once I went somewhere through World Vision. There was a woman police-officer there; I liked her very much. She told us that a police job is a good option. You know, whatever you do, wherever you are, you feel like that's the better thing to do. For example, if someone was to ask me is India better or Pakistan, I would say India because I live here. I don't know what living in Pakistan would be like. So, that policewoman said that we should become policewomen. She told me that I had a good height and an impressive voice for a police job. I liked her very much and thought I would also be a policewoman. I was very young at that time. My age must have been 12-13 years.

G: Did you ever sit down and plan as to what you wanted to do in the future or how you would become a police officer?
B: No, I didn't do any kind of planning.

Mohini, a driver trainee, reported that she wanted to enter the police as she had a "craze" for it:

G: When did you start aspiring to work in the Police?
M: I have had a "craze" for police jobs since I was very young. I think I was studying in 6th grade. Everything I did was in sports. I didn’t pay attention to studies really, but I loved sports.
She added:
I haven't seen anyone working in the police, but a "craze" has always been there. The movies like *Mardaani* created a "craze" in me to be in the police force.

G: How did you develop such a "craze" about the police? How did all this start? What do you like about this profession?
M: First of all, the uniform impresses me a lot. It creates a feeling of being “high profile” and being in an impressive profession. The other thing is that I want to make my parents proud.

G: You were inspired by the movies which show policemen and women, to join the police force. But, have you ever sat back and thought over what you want to do in life?
M: Well, I like the police force. Apart from it, I’ve thought of dancing.

G: Did you ever plan for a future? That, what would you do after your studies? That, if I study this, then I can become that?
M: Well, I stay away from studies! (laughs). No, I didn’t plan or think about it, but if I think of a police job now, it will have two of my strong points, i.e. sports and a police job. I will be able to perform both if I get a police job. Now my third passion, i.e. dance, is remaining.

Mohini explained that she would take leave and be a part of a dance show as well, and fulfill her passion for dance. I asked her

G: Had you thought about any other options that you pondered over, but left aside afterwards? Like I thought about some jobs like finance and eliminated them for myself.
M: No, there was no such other option for me. I didn’t think about anything.

I asked Ardra, a driver trainee, if she had thought about what she wanted to do, or planned for a career?
A: I don’t think I am worthy of achieving it, but I have been dreaming of becoming a film actress since my childhood. I know such a dream will never be fulfilled, but that dream stays with me even today. But, one of my uncles is a Bhojpuri [Bhojpuri is a language spoken in Bihar, an Indian state] singer. His name is Kishore Kumar Azad. I also requested him to do something for me, but he said no, saying that it was not a good job to do. But I want to do something on my own, and I have some hope to do it.

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*Mardaani* is a Bollywood movie that is centered around a female police officer.
Tina, a beauty trainee, had wanted to be a lawyer following her father’s wishes, but could not pursue it:

G: How did the idea of becoming a lawyer come to your mind?
T: Just like that. I liked it. Papa used to say that I’ll make you a lawyer. I’ll make at least one of my daughters a lawyer. So, I thought that at least I could become one, but then I couldn’t complete my studies so then I left this idea.

As such, for some, what they wanted to be as a child sustained and it is that what they wanted to be at 18 (such as Aparna who wanted to be a chef). For others what they wanted to be as a child fell away, but nothing specific replaced it (such as for Esha). For still others, whatever they saw around became their dream. These dreams had important differences from aspirations – they were usually not thought out but reflected, for example, a “craze” after seeing a movie (such as for Bani); involved little to no planning or reflection on a pathway to achieve the dream; and no investments were made or steps taken towards them.

There were a few exceptions amongst the participants. Hamida, a driver trainee, was in the third year of her undergraduate education in Political Science at Delhi University. She wanted to join the Police. She was one of the few who had thought about her occupational future, found out about her goal and tried to work towards it. Her father, who had passed away, had encouraged her to play sports and had wanted her to achieve something in the field. She felt that becoming a police officer would make use of her sports skills while also get her the security and respect of a government job.

H: [I wanted to be in the police since] I was in the 10th grade. One begins to think about a career when one is in the 10th grade. The pressure is on you to figure out your future. What subject will you take? What do you want to do after 12th? I thought let’s study this and then take the Delhi police exam. I had seen policewomen in ladies’ coaches. “Lady police” used to remove men from the ladies’ coach. I had seen them.

G. How did it get into your head in the 10th grade?

H: Before 10th, we just thought about playing. I used to play Kho-Kho games etc. It was only in class 10th that I started thinking about the future.
Hamida, had taken the exam to enter the Police but was unsure if she would be successful. She had entered driver training as an alternative to her aspiration of becoming a police officer. I asked her what she saw herself doing at 30:

Nine years later I will be doing my best, whatever it might be, be it driving or government job. If I do driving then that is a good option too and if I take SSC exams [for the police] and get selected for a government job/police, then that will be very good for me. It’s important to have two options but the first choice is the police and then driving. One has to move ahead with two options.

Patanjali, an electrician trainee, was the only participant in the non-traditional training programs who had aimed to be where she was. She had wanted to be in the police as a child which evolved to wanting to become an electrician. When she was in 9th or 10th grade, her brothers had explained to her that is what she should aim to become.

P: No, I started thinking about it [becoming an electrician in class 9th and 10th]. You know, how at home people ask what you want to do in the future. My brothers had also applied for polytechnic, but they chose their lines after having completed their 12th class. They made me understand that it was okay to study 11th and 12th class if you had wanted to take the science "side" and then become a doctor. Or if you wanted to take commerce and then do a B. Com. If you want to do a BA, then you have to do 11th-12th in any case. But in my household, B.A. is not given much importance. Then they made me understand all about professional diplomas given by ITIs, polytechnics etc. When I was very young, I think it was 2010, my brother had got a job on the basis of the ITI diploma he had obtained. Actually, my brothers are 10 and nine years older than me. So, you see, both of them are much older to me. So, they explained to me these "lines" etc. Then I understood that this is what I had to do. I must have been studying in eighth or ninth grade at that time. Hence, my mentality became this in the ninth and 10th grade.

G: Before you started thinking or made up your mind for the engineering field, as per your brothers’ advice, did you have any other dream for yourself, such as to become a designer or any other professions that some girls tend to have?  
P: No, there was nothing like this with me. As a child, I wanted to go into the police. But I don’t stay very fit physically. I fall sick a lot. So, I stopped thinking about that “line”.
G: Why did you want to join the police force? How did you get inspired?
P: I just found it nice. In Delhi too, Kiran Bedi [the first woman Indian Police Service officer] has served and so, I had heard about her in my family. I just liked it. Even today, when I see a female police officer, I like it very much.

Patanjali thus acknowledged her constraints, her aspiration evolved (from police to electrician), she had thought about what was and what was not required to achieve it (class 10th and 12th grade studies), and she was oriented towards it (“my mentality became this [to become an electrician] in the 9th and tenth grade”).

This section has shown that, predominantly, the participants’ desires did not appear to be occupational “aspirations”. A fundamental characteristic of aspirations is that they act as motivators: as mentioned earlier, they are goals in which individuals are “willing, in principle, to invest time, effort, or money to attain” and even though the willingness to invest may be conditional or potential, this characteristic distinguishes aspirations from idle daydreams and wishes (Bernard et al., 2011, p. 6). Since their responses tended to indicate that their desires were unthought out; had not stimulated action; and no steps were taken towards fulfilling the desires, it becomes difficult to classify their stated wishes as aspirations. In contrast to Gottfredson’s theory of development of aspirations that posits 14 as a critical age for aspiration development, and the empirical studies discussed in section 2 that find the age range to be critical to understanding aspirations, the participants in this study had not developed "preferences" into concrete goals even by the age of 18 or even later.

4. Participants’ accounts of why they felt they could not aspire

The question of why participants did not think of occupational goals often did not meet with a response, while a couple of participants responded, “just like that” [aise hi]. However, some participants explained their lack of goals and their sense of fatalism in terms of their poverty and “family circumstances”, presented in this section.

Anchal, an electronic mechanic trainee, had wanted to be a fashion designer. I asked her if she had not thought of assisting in a boutique instead of training in electronic
mechanics. Whilst she recognised that thinking about occupational aspirations could have significantly affected her occupational outcome, she sourced her not thinking about ways to become a fashion designer to her material poverty:

(laughs) There is a lot of difference between thinking [about doing something / wanting to do something] and doing it. There are a lot of expenses involved, which my parents can’t afford. We can’t even think about that. We can think only according to our family’s conditions, not more than that.

I asked her if she had thought about her career, and had tried to gather information about what career-options she had:

No, I didn't do anything like that. Had I [done that] then a lot would have happened in life / I would have achieved much more in life.

Preeti’s, a beauty trainee, emphasised that it was “time and circumstances” that would shape what she does, indicating a certain fatalism.

G: What will you do after graduation?
P: I shall open my own beauty parlour, what else? (giggles).
G: Do you need to study so much to open a beauty parlour?
P: Yes, I know we don't need to study that much for a parlour, but after all, we must have enough knowledge and experience of studies. Everybody has a fondness for higher studies. Finally, the time and circumstances will decide what I get to do. It's easy for us to speak as to what we want to do, but it's the circumstances that will prevail.

Farhana, a driver trainee, explained that the material conditions in her house did not create an “atmosphere” to be able to think about what she wanted to become.

Farhana was one of six siblings. Her father had passed away and her mother, she said, had no skills and had to keep “wandering throughout the city with all the kids. There was nobody to support her.” Her mother remarried, but her step-father was not supportive of the children and took no interest in their lives. Farhana felt that she was on her own and had to support her mother and the household. I asked her: Did you think of any other option for your career before this?

F: No, I didn’t really think. I just thought that I was working in a company and that I will become something through it. Actually, the atmosphere at home was never so good that I could sit and plan for my life and career.
Some participants attributed their lack of goals to their limited education, but then too they often attributed that to their poverty. I asked, Rekha, a beauty trainee:

G: What did you want to become when you were in school?
R: Yes, I had thought a lot, but my family’s condition didn’t let any of those dreams come true.
G: What did you have in mind?
R: I had thought of going to a good college, be well-educated, become successful, become something important, so that I could do something for myself as well as my family. But then I had to leave education in the middle so I couldn’t do anything.
G: Did you have any particular job in mind?
R: There was nothing like that in my mind, that I have to become something. Because seeing the conditions at home, I just felt a bit behind.

Smriti, a driver trainee, described her family circumstances which had gotten in the way of her being able to dream:

S: When I hadn’t gone to the village, I was very good at studies, but everything went upside down after my brother’s death. Apart from that, my father’s work suffered; that was a big blow. Had he been doing well, he would have made me study in good schools. But in the present circumstances, I cannot even dream because of my father’s poverty and my sister’s condition. I can’t afford to dream. I know every girl has some dreams, but when the dreams are broken, the girls are shattered.

G: You said you had also wanted to become a police officer or a teacher. When you were younger, did you ever plan as to what you want to pursue in your life?
S: I wanted to do whatever my parents would have liked me to do. But eventually, you get what is destined for you. My father was a bit angry for some time, but he realised that he couldn’t afford to get his daughter to study in well regarded, fancy schools or colleges. When I was very young, I dreamt of studying while staying in a hostel so that I could get a good job after getting a quality education. In fact, I have an aunt (my mother’s sister) in Bareilly who is married to Dharmender Kumar. He is very rich. Everyone knows him. Their eldest daughter was a teacher. Their second daughter was an air hostess, while the youngest one was a doctor. I always wished to God that I should get any of these jobs. But I
have seen that they studied hard and worked hard, so they could reach such heights. I didn't have the resources sufficient to accomplish this, and hence, I quit. You can dream only when you have money; otherwise, you have to look after many things. While Smriti gave credit to her cousins for their “hard work”, she distinguished her lack of success from their success on the basis of differences in material resources.

Mamta, a driver trainee, in contrast to the others, was the only one who explained her lack of goals in terms of being able to afford to do so:

G: Have you ever thought what would you do after completing your college education?
M: I have only thought of studying further after completing college.
G: Did you not think of getting a job after the studies? Didn't you think that you’d study and after that get a job?
M: No, I have not thought anything like that. I don't have that much time for it. In fact, I haven't faced any difficulty, which would make me think about all this. In fact, I faced difficulty only when I was very young, and my elder sister was married.
G: But then, one can take up a job even when there are no hardships in life, isn’t that so?
M: Yes, but I haven’t faced any financial problems, because whenever I need money, sometimes my brother gives it to me, or some other times, my mother gives it to me. So, I don’t feel the need to earn. If I didn’t have money, I think then it would be necessary to earn.

4.1. Understanding the “incapacity to aspire”

How might one understand participants’ lack of set occupational goals and the absence of thinking and planning that it revealed? This section suggests that first, poverty could have led to “mental models” and created “outcome in expectancies”, frames and belief systems, which thwarted occupational aspirations from forming. Participants on account of their “mental models” and “outcome in expectancies”, believed that their circumstances would be determinative of their outcomes. Second, in so far as the poor have limited experiences of pathways to go from wants to achievable goals, their “navigational” capacity (Appadurai, 2004) is compromised.
Third, in so far as some participants were crucial contributors to the survival of the household, a “cognitive tax” limited their capacity to plan for the future. Further, as young single women, their post marriage futures were uncertain, which could have prevented them from forming concrete aspirations that they would invest in. In such a situation of an aspirational void, unlikely dreams from childhood persisted. Yet, these could not develop into aspirations that served as motivators, as the “aspiration gap” was too wide (Ray 2006), the aspired state too far from their current position.

First, several studies have argued that poverty is multidimensional and further, that it has hidden internal dimensions. Recent empirical studies have found an association between poverty and low aspirations. Guyon and Huillery (2016) show that poor students in France have lower academic and employment aspirations than students with higher SES even when they exhibit the same degree of academic achievement. In another example, data from the World Values Surveys shows that “lower-income - both within and across countries - is associated with a higher tendency to report that life is meaningless, to agree that it is better to live day-to-day because of the uncertainty of the future, and to reject adventure and risk” (World Bank, 2015, p. 84).

The participants’ poverty could have created a lack of set aspirations in at least three related ways. First, poverty creates “frames” and “mental models”. World Bank (2015) has argued that poverty creates an internal frame or a way of interpreting the world and the state of being poor, that can make the poor feel incompetent, and

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*The participants also seemed to link education (for example failing in high school) to not being able to form occupational aspirations. However, the causal link from limited education to the “incapacity” to form occupational aspirations is far from clear. For one, it is not automatically evident why failing in a class would mean no occupational goals, rather than recalibrated goals that align with the educational attainment. For another, it is possible that an “omitted variable”, such as poverty could be driving both educational failure (reflected in low educational achievements) and aspirational failure (reflected in the “inability to aspire”). Similarly, in so far as aspirations act as motivators, it is possible that lack of occupational aspirations might also be contributing to low educational achievements. Examining the causal link from low educational achievement to lack of aspiration formation would require an empirical and theoretical examination of the participants’ educational development which is beyond the scope of the thesis and an important area for future research.

* Oxford Poverty Human Development Initiative (OPHI), for example, refers to these hidden dimensions of poverty as the “missing dimensions of poverty” and identifies at least five dimensions – quality of work; agency and empowerment; physical safety; social connectedness; and psychological well-being (See https://ophi.org.uk/research/missing-dimensions/ for further details).
blunt the capacity to aspire. Smriti’s statement that, “You can dream only when you have money”, was indicative of her mental model. Mental models here refer to “schemes of meaning [which] function like tools for enabling and guiding action”, drawn from the culture in which the individual is embedded in (World Bank, 2015, p. 12). Relatedly, Bandura’s concept of outcome expectation is illuminating. An outcome expectation is an estimate that a given action will lead to a certain outcome (Bandura 1977). Beliefs about one’s environment, such that an individual believes that one’s actions will not lead to the aimed outcomes, can lead to feelings of futility and perceptions of a social system as unresponsive to one's actions. Smriti’s statement that, “I know every girl has some dreams, but when the dreams are broken, the girls are shattered”, indicated that the presumption was that the dream would somehow be “shattered”. Gecas (1989) argues that outcome expectancy might more accurately be called "system responsiveness”. When Preeti said that, “Finally, the time and circumstances will decide what I get to do. It’s easy for us to speak as to what we want to do, but it’s the circumstances that will prevail”, revealed their sense of futility, outcome in-expectancy and their belief that the outcomes would be determined by their social system and not necessarily their own actions.

Formalising the internal effects of poverty that lead to an aspirations failure, Dalton, et al. (2016) developed a theoretical framework, wherein they define poverty-aspirations failure as, "the failure to aspire to one's potential". In the framework, the rich and the poor "share the same preferences and same behavioural bias in setting aspirations" (ibid, p. 1). However, they show, that poverty "can exacerbate the effects of this behavioural bias leading to aspirations failure and hence, a behavioural poverty trap" (ibid, p.1). As such, aspirations failure "is a consequence of poverty, rather than a cause." (ibid, p. 1). When participants such as Anchal reported that “We can think only according to our family’s conditions, not more than that”, it seemed to reflect their sense of futility based on their material poverty.

Second, Appadurai argues that the ‘capacity to aspire’ is a ‘navigation capacity’ (Appadurai 2004, p. 69). Appadurai, explains that the map of aspirations: “is seen to consist of a dense combination of nodes and pathways, relative poverty means a smaller number of aspirational nodes and a thinner, weaker sense of the pathways from concrete wants to intermediate contexts to general
norms and back again. (…) the capacity to aspire, like any complex cultural capacity, thrives and survives on practice, repetition, exploration, conjecture, and refutation. Where the opportunities for such conjecture and refutation in regard to the future are limited (…), it follows that the capacity itself remains relatively less developed.” (p 69).

Further, to the extent that women’s occupational choices have been more limited than men’s, relatively poor women’s capacity to aspire could be doubly limited by a lack of experiences of “practice, repetition, exploration, conjecture, and refutation” (Appadurai 2004, p. 69), because of their gender and socio-economic location.

Similarly, Bourdieu (1984 p. 65 in Vijayakumar, 2013) argues that aspirations are fundamentally shaped by a class habitus; it is a “realistic relation to what is possible, founded on and therefore limited by power.” Preeti’s statement that, “the time and circumstances will decide what I get to do. It’s easy for us to speak as to what we want to do, but it’s the circumstances that will prevail”, suggests that participants felt that their social location would determine their outcome rather than their individual action through navigational maps of social mobility. Drawing on Bourdieu, McNay (2003) argues that people’s behaviour is based on an anticipation of the future within a social field. The less mobility individuals have in the social field, the more resignation they experience, so that “the most oppressed groups in society oscillate between fantasy and surrender” (ibid, p. 146). Many participants’ resigned, fatalist views, where they felt dreaming was futile and “time and circumstances” would determine their outcomes could be understood through this lens.

In both these cases – having mental models and outcome in expectancy, and lacking navigational capacity – seeing others similar to themselves form and achieve aspirations could have helped remove constraints to their aspiration formation. Bernard et al. (2014), studying low aspirations through an experimental design in rural Ethiopia, found watching documentaries about people from similar

*I was unfortunately unable to check a few primary texts due to the relocation and disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. In the few places that this is the case, the reference is marked in the secondary text in the thesis.

* Relating Bourdieu’s several works on habitus and capital, such as *Distinction : A social critique of the judgment* (Richard Nice, trans.) (1984); and *Forms of Capital* (1986), to the study, especially relating it to the participants’ “incapacity to aspire”, could be an informative and a promising area for future research but it is beyond the scope of this study.
communities, who had succeeded in agriculture or small business, affected mental models and raised aspirations of the treatment group. This, in turn, had real behavioural effects and affected future-oriented behaviour in terms of savings, credit behaviour, and investment in education. Similarly, seeing others succeed could provide a navigational map.

However, widespread unemployment in India thwarts the possibility of seeing many others like them succeed. Several newspaper reports have recently highlighted that the unemployment rate in India in 2017-18 was at a 45-year high at 6.1% (The Wire 2019; Press Trust of India 2019; Thampi and Anand 2019; The Pioneer 2019). The State of Working India Report 2019 (Centre for Sustainable Employment 2019), based on the nationally representative survey of the Centre for Monitoring the Indian Economy, found that the unemployment rate has steadily risen since 2011 and at around 6 percent it is double of what it was in the decade before, in 2000-2011. The situation of the urban women was the worst. While the unemployment rate among the “urban male youth ranged between 7.5 to 8.8 percent between 2004-05 and 2011-12 which rose to 18.7 percent in 2017-18”, that for “urban female youth ranged between 13.1 percent to 14.9 percent during 2004-05 and 2011-12, which rose to 27.2 percent during 2017-18” (National Statistics Office 2019, p 85). For urban women, education did not represent a way to improve their employment prospects. While for every category of persons of age 15 years and above, the unemployment rates among the educated had increased in 2017-18 as compared to that of 2004-05, urban women bore the biggest brunt. “For educated males in urban areas, the unemployment rate ranged from 3.6 to 5.1 percent between 2004-05 and 2011-12 which rose to 9.2 percent during 2017-18”, whereas “among the educated females in urban areas, the unemployment rate ranged between 10.3 percent to 15.6 percent which rose to 19.8 percent in 2017-18” (p 84). Such a context of widespread and rising unemployment, especially for young urban women, could create conditions to reinforce rather than blunt outcome in expectancy and make navigational maps all the more unclear.

Third, in cases such as Farhana’s, where she was essential to the survival of the household, a ‘cognitive tax’ might make planning for the future difficult.

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*This report defines youth as those between 15-29 years.*
Mullainathan and Shafir (2013) in their book *Scarcity: Why having too little means so much*, explicate how material scarcity can have cognitive effects with real impacts on decision making. World Bank (2015), drawing on Mullainathan and Shafir (2013), argues that poverty involves constant day to day choices, which in effect, tax an individual’s bandwidth or mental resources. By making individuals’ focus on the present, poverty can undermine thinking and planning for the future. While everyone has limited “cognitive budgets”, which makes decisions costly, living in poverty makes these budgets even tighter (World Bank 2015). In this context, poverty does not strictly mean those that live below the threshold of $1.25 or $2.00 per day. Instead, it implies a situation of scarcity and includes "much of the ‘middle class’ in low-income countries living on $2 to $6 a day", who are "likely to face a number of tradeoffs that can trigger a feeling of scarcity" (World Bank 2015, p. 82).

On the basis of empirical tests of decision making in situations of scarcity and outside it (for example, Mani et al. (2013) did a study on farmers’ decision making pre-harvest income and post-harvest income), Mani et al. (2013) conclude that “poverty itself reduces cognitive capacity” because “poverty-related concerns consume mental resources, leaving less for other tasks” (p. 976). The participants such as Farhana might have suffered from a cognitive tax, on account of the “atmosphere at home”, which manifested itself in them having to think about immediate needs to support her mother and herself, not being able to think about and plan for their occupational goals.

In addition to poverty, gendered constraints might partly explain the lack of set goals. While all participants wanted to work after marriage, even if their households were financially comfortable, they also responded that they would do so only if they had the permission of their in-laws and parents. I asked, Rekha, an electronic mechanic trainee:

Suppose in the future you are married to a person who's earning very well. Would you still want to work?

R: Yes, I would like to, but it would depend on whether they would allow me to work or not. If they allow me, I’ll work for sure.

G: Why? After all, there will be no dearth of money?

R: Now, when I have learnt a skill, I must use it, otherwise it would be the same thing, that you have learnt something and then you are just sitting at home, just
cleaning and cooking. But it's not like that; We also have a life! We also want to go out and do something and show what we have learnt.

Fatima, a driver trainee, wanted to work as a taxi driver, but was unsure if she would be in a job at 30, which she put down to the unpredictabilities associated with marriage.

G: What do you think Fatima will be doing at 30?
F: I am not sure. Maybe I will be at my in-laws house having got married!
G: Will you try to convince your in-laws as well, to let you work, just as you’ve convinced your parents?
F: Yes, I will try. I wish that they will be good people and will agree to let me work.

Although the participants themselves did not explicitly link the uncertainties of marriage to their incapacity to aspire, studies such as Vijayakumar (2013) argue that “flexible aspirations” for women are a result of the fact that their realities after marriage are unknown to them. Based primarily on 40 in-depth interviews conducted in 2010-11 with men and women who worked in a rural BPO in a small town in India, she argues that women’s aspirations “draw both on individualistic and domestically embedded ideological frameworks and anticipate future changes after marriage, and stand in contrast to young men’s more strategic aspirations that respond to their immediate social circumstances” (ibid, p. 792). In these flexible aspirations, "individualistic future goals hold intrinsic value as a classed marker of modernity, while an insistence on embeddedness in the family distance them from Westernized impurity," (ibid, p.792). These young women "remain open to unpredictable constraints in the future, while using accounts of flexible aspiration—sometimes unrealistic—to enact gendered class distinction and feminine adaptability in the present” (ibid, p. 792). She defines flexible aspirations “to encompass both the aspiration to be flexible and aspirations that are themselves flexible” (ibid, p 794). As such, young women's aspirations not only stand in contrast to men, but also, to those of married, richer women. She argued that "articulations of aspiration appeared most clearly at the social extremes of my sample: Poor, married women were most likely to avoid discussing their own aspirations and focus on their children’s well-being, while wealthier single women emphasized their parents’ wishes and privileges over their own" (ibid, p. 786). As such, she showed that non-elite young
women's aspirations lie in between and must be understood “as produced within a setting of rapid generational change, and of a social structure that leaves the future after marriage more unknown than for young men, limiting the possibilities for future plans” (ibid, p. 792).

In sum, the participants’ fleeting, flexible, “aspirations” might be understood as shaped by the intersecting location they occupy as young, single, women from low income households in an urban setting. Unable to form concrete aspirations, to which the participants could imagine a navigational path, dreams from childhood persisted even at 18 and after. Why could initial dreams not develop into aspirations that participants invested in? Ray (2006), in his seminal work, models the investment into an aspiration through the “aspiration gap”. He argues that, if the aspiration gap -- the difference between the aspired and the current state – is too wide, then the individual’s investment will be minimal and the gap will not close. Effectively, when the aspiration gap is too wide, aspirations are too high or unrealistic. He conceptualises the point until which an individual would invest or the point until which aspirations are realistic as the point that minimizes the sum of the gap and investment cost. Hence, the aspiration will be unrealistic when the cost of investing is too high. Desires that were thought of as a child or were dreams of their parents were too far from their current status, making the aspiration gap too wide. These distant dreams were not aspirations – they did not motivate effort, involved no planning and no pathways were thought about in terms of how to fulfill these dreams – yet, they did reflect their desire to “become something”.

The next section shows that, in such a context, where the participants wanted to “become something”, but had no occupational aspirations they could invest in, entry into an occupational training shaped their aspiration, rather than the other way around.

5. Entry became aspiration

In spite of not aspiring to the occupational training participants were in, and in fact having no set concrete occupational aspirations at all initially, after entry, their goal was to become a successful electrician, electronic mechanic, driver or beautician. Electrician trainee, Ujwala did not want to consider the option of any other job now.
I asked her about taxi driving, teaching or any other job. She explained how her aspirations had become "set now":

I don't want to consider anything else] because now my goal is "set" as to what I have to do after this. If I do something else now, then it will bother me that I have done this and now I'm not using it and doing something else.

Mamta, a driver trainee, had wanted to be a doctor as a child.

G: At first, you wanted to be a doctor. When did you start wanting to train as a driver?
M: I was very young when I used to think of being a doctor, but as I was getting older, I could see my family's troubled circumstances. Being in that poor environment, I had to stop dreaming that way. Then, there was a didi named Kalpana close to where I live, who had joined this institute. I thought of coming here along with her. I couldn't be a doctor, but at least I could succeed in this line and support my family. Hence, I am here.

G: Had you made any plans as to what course you should undertake, which would help you in getting a particular job?
M: No, I didn't plan anything. I never thought about what I'd do in the future. But now that I have joined this field, I have started thinking that I can do something in my life and make my life better.

Mamta, had emphasized that she wants to do a job, as many others.

G: You would like to work, but is it also important for you as to which particular job you do? Waitress, police, taxi driving, are you ready to do any of these jobs?
M: No, I don't want to do any other kind of work. My only aim is to become successful in taxi driving.

Driver trainee, Anmol explained why she only wanted to be a driver now:

G: You started going to a tailoring class and then discontinued it. Do you now have no interest in fashion designing?
A: Yeah, I still have some craving for that, but since the time I have joined this NGO, I'm only focussed on this field. I now want to be successful here, and want to show my father that I can also do something. I want to show him, that whether he supported me or not, I still want to make him proud and make a good name for my family by having a successful job. Not a single girl from my family has ever pursued a job. No girl has lived a modern lifestyle. They have not even gone
out of their homes. I am the first girl from my family to go out and who is trying to succeed.

Driver trainee, Ardra had not wanted to become a driver and had been compelled by Farhana, her partner to go for driver training, but now Ardra was committed to becoming a driver:

G: Now what do you want to do in future? Would you be a taxi driver, or run an orphanage or anything else?
A: First of all, I would like to be a “professional driver”. After that, if God permits, I may also run an orphanage.
G: What do you think you will be doing when you are 30?
A: I think I will be driving at that time too. But as regards earlier, I never sat down and planned my future, nor did I discuss with someone else about what I should do to get a particular job. When I needed money, I went for a nursing job at the old people's home. Now I want to become a very good driver. I don’t know if I’ll be able to do it or not, but I want that all the people who know me, should have my name on their lips and say that she is the girl who drives a taxi. I don’t want anything more than that. (...) Most of all I wish that everyone in my parents’ village, who thought of me as uneducated, they should think that she’s a great (achhi) girl; she has at least done something worthwhile in her life. I want respect from all of them. I want to do something so that they also feel that this girl has accomplished something. I keep telling myself that I am old enough to get married but I have said no to all the proposals for my marriage as of now. My family members did not support me in learning driving, but now when I tell them that I can drive a car, my mother is very happy. My sister-in-law also tells me that I have done a good job and now they will marry me to a boy who is suitable, equal to me so that both of us are comfortable in our lives. I feel very good when I hear them say so.

Ambika entered beauty training because a friend suggested that both of them could do the training together. She had not thought about a job or planned on entering the beauty profession.

G: So, before coming here, you didn’t have any idea what you wanted to do?
A: Yes, meaning earlier I didn't really know much but now after coming here, I have gotten interested, that yes, if I learn, then I’ll have a skill in my hands ("haath
I can use it at any time; I can use it for myself also or I can open my own parlour or use my skills on others.

G: How did you come here?

A: I have a friend in my lane, whose mother has her own little parlour… a small one… So, while my friends were talking, she said, "Chal yaar [Come friend], let’s go, we’ll go together". So, then I said, yes, I’ll also do the course. But at that time, it wasn’t about getting a job; I just thought I’m learning it for myself. But yes… now I have gotten interested. Yes, I’m going to do a job.

Mariam, a beauty trainee, had wanted to be a famous sports star but she happened to enter beauty training and now wanted to get a job in a beauty parlour.

G: During your school days, did you ever sit down and plan about what you wanted to do in future?

M: Initially, I wanted to be a sports star, but now that's gone from my hands. Now, I want to learn beautician’s skills perfectly and get a job in this very field so that I don't have to take anybody's obligation.

Mariam, explained further:

First, you have to enter a specific field and then you will get knowledge about it. You will learn more and more, and you will like it more.

Beauty trainee Razia’s sister Fatima was in driver training. Razia had wanted to enter driver training along with Fatima, but the family did not have the resources for the transport to have her undertake the training too. She explained how her other sister, Sonam, had dragged her into beauty training.

G: How did you get into parlour training?

R: Sonam had forced me to come here. She was alone, so she brought me too. But I was not interested in it at all, and I had also dropped out of school because of my ill health. Didi* said “just try it; you’ll like it”. I told her I found it boring, and I was not going, I saw one hairstyle… and then, you know how you keep seeing things and doing them and then over time you get interested? That's what happened with me. Over time my interest increased.

G: What is the fee charged for taxi training vs here [at the beauty training]?

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* Literally means elder sister but is a word used to denote an elder woman with respect.
R: They charge around five hundred rupees as registration and ask for some security deposit, which is refundable after completing the training. At that time, we were not in a position to give that amount, but now we are. Now that I am here, so how I can leave this and go there?
G: Now you have completed your basic parlour training, do you still want to do taxi driving training now?
R: No, now, I don’t feel like it. Now, I feel like parlour training only. I am not interested in taxi driving as I am already in a parlour training. Now I have done this. Now, this is right. I will only do this job. Now I have gotten interested in it. Earlier I was not interested in it, but now I am.

I had asked Razia, if she had thought which job she would like to enter before she saw her sister Fatima drive.

Jobs… well… my didi etc. used to go for a calling job [job at a call centre]. She used to talk. So, I used to like that, talking etc., on the phone. So, I thought that I would go out and do this and also, in malls. I really like the dress that they wear in malls so because of that… But now my heart is stuck on parlour work. Yes… now I only think about the parlour. This is what I’ll work in.

Razia’s multiple fleeting dreams gave way to the concrete aspiration of becoming a beautician after she entered the training for it.

Beauty trainee, Uma, explained why entry mattered to her:

Now, when I have learnt the skill, then I’ll have to do something related to it. My parents have given me permission for it.

She added,

Now when I am learning something, and I am interested in it, then I should do something in it in the future too. How can I just learn it and then leave it? That’s why I want to open a parlour.

G: Have you ever sat down and thought about what you would want to do in the future?
U: As of now, I haven’t thought of anything except parlour work.

Beauty trainee, Preeti, explained why in spite of other professions feeling attractive, she wanted to stick to being in beauty.

G: Did you ever feel like doing it yourself?
P: Yes, sometimes, I feel like doing it [driving a taxi or an e-rickshaw]. When we see things, we feel like doing them. But eventually, our mind diverts from there and we think we should do what we are doing. It's sufficient if we just complete our studies and parlour course. We won't be able to handle so many things at a time.

Beauty trainee, Ragini, emphasised the importance of support in continuing to do what one was training in:

G: After completing your studies, say after graduation, will you still carry on with parlour work or will you do something else?
R: Still, I want to carry on with beauty training. There is a matter of interest, and I am very much interested in the job. The Ma'am here as well as sir, have supported me. They know all about my family situation. It's he who sent me to Tata Power. Then I told sir about my mother, who is alone at home and sick. Then, he told me that he would support me, if I wanted to open my own parlour. If all these people are with me, then I wouldn't like to do anything else.

Electronics mechanic trainee, Karishma, was engaged to Farzan and was going to move to Lucknow after getting married. She told me that she would only try for an electronics job in Lucknow and no other job. I asked her:

Would you try for a job only in electronics?
K: Yes, I shall apply for DMRC in Lucknow. There is a lot of scope in Lucknow for jobs, so I'll be able to get in easily. Plus, I will have the benefit of being from an ITI from Delhi; I'll have a certificate for it as well.

She continued,

Once my Bhabhi [sister in law] asked me, "Khusbhoo, if you don't get a government job, would you do a private one? I mean any other job?" I told her, "No, I won't do any other type of job, such as data entry or any other job for that matter. Because I would have learnt electronics for two full years. Had I not learnt it, I would have done any kind of job. But if I have learnt it, then I should do only that kind of job. So, I will only choose an electronics job.

Driver trainee, Farhana, self-described as a "tomboy" and felt that she did not have many other options because of her identity. She reported:

F: I want to only become a driver. I have no other option.
G: Why is it that you want to become only a driver, and nothing else?
F: To tell you the truth, I am a tomboy. I have a girlfriend. We want to live together, separate from our families. I have many friends like me, who have their girlfriends. They have also done the same, i.e. have married their girlfriends and are living separate from their families. All of them are drivers, so I think this is the best profession. If we did something else, like work in an office, then they would talk, they would say, “why does she dress like a man etc”. People there would say what strange type of people we are. So, this is the perfect job [for] If I am driving my own cab, there would be no such problem.

While Farhana felt she had few other options outside of driving as she was a “tomboy”, the responses of the other participants seemed to reveal the persistence of entry. Many participants stated that since they had learnt the training, they would only go for a job in that, signaling that they did not want to waste their investment in the training. Significantly, for almost all the participants the entry into a training presented the opportunity to “become something”. They had their parents support to train in the course, they were learning the skills involved and could see a path before them to doing the job. It was this promise to be something that was meaningful to them for varied reasons – to make their parents proud, to support their families, and to lead a modern lifestyle.

6. Conclusion

This chapter started out by outlining three features of aspirations. First, that they fundamentally are goals. Second, occupational aspirations develop over time, theoretically starting to become concrete at 14. Third, occupational aspirations matter for entry into the occupation. Put simply, having goals tends to lead to their achievement.

This chapter has shown that none of the three features quite applied to the study participants. Section 3 showed that almost all participants did not have occupational targets, and demonstrated that dreams from childhood did not develop to become concrete and realistic aspirations at 14 but sustained even at 18 years if age. Section 4 attempted to explain why this might be the case. Section 5 demonstrated that in such a situation of no occupational targets, alongside a desire to become something, it
was entry or achievement that determined aspirations, rather than the other way around.

The chapter began by noting that the “The greater failure is not the child who doesn't reach the stars, but the child who has no stars that they feel they are reaching for” (Brown 2007). The absence of aspirations is important to note. First, several studies have argued that aspirations (and the lack thereof) matter for achievement. Thinking about future-oriented “goals requires at least a basic level of capability in relation to being able to anticipate and imagine the future and exercise practical reason” (Hart 2016, p. 327). The “incapacity to aspire”, as an indication of a lack of these “basic capabilities” calls for concern and prompts attention.

Further, that young women from low-income backgrounds are unable to set goals even when they want a better life and want to be in a job, points to an additional hidden dimension of poverty and adds to the recently developing literature on poverty's non-pecuniary effects. From the perspective of policy, it underscores that the poor are unable to think about and form realistic goals not because the poor have deviant values or character failings from a "culture of poverty" (Lewis 1981) nor because they do not want to have jobs, but rather, because of outcome in expectancies, the lack of “navigational maps” and in some cases a cognitive tax. The finding also means that the value of anti-poverty programs that loosen the cognition budget might currently be being undervalued. Similarly, counselling programs might be especially important by prompting individuals in low-income households to think and plan for an occupational future that their taxed bandwidths do not automatically allow.

Theoretically, these findings raise questions about the concept of occupational aspirations and indicate that they may not apply in the same way across contexts. The findings suggest that when people feel outcome in expectancy and gendered constraints, they do not form specific occupational aspirations, while still harbouring a desire to “become something”. In such cases, opportunities, the chance to become something create aspirations instead.

While the scope of the study allows it to raise questions only about how traditional theories on aspirations, based on the Global North, don't exactly apply to the context
of the young women in low-income groups in India, it prompts future studies to assess if they apply to other groups in the Indian context – for example, young women in high-income groups, young men in low-income groups, young men in high-income groups. Could aspirations form differently in countries like India than what traditional theories on aspirations anticipate? This study inspire further examination of the question.

Further, the findings might be relevant to contexts beyond India. For example, a recent report by the National Careers Council for England argues for the need to “encourage ambition and meet the needs of an aspirational nation where opportunity is not blocked by self-doubt, ignorance or confusion” (National Careers Council 2013, p. 12). The report goes on to note the British youth’s aspirations and the labour market is misaligned, and that the “the ambitions of two in five young people were unrealistic, with young people from disadvantaged backgrounds being nearly twice as likely to suffer from such confusion as their more prosperous counterparts” (ibid, p. 8). However, in this report misalignment is framed as “confusion” rather than exploring whether the context of poverty makes realistic aspirations that act as motivators infeasible.

Even though there is a long-standing literature on aspirations in sociology and psychology and now burgeoning scholarship in economics, the application of the term “aspirations”, especially in the context of policy, has drawn some criticisms. For example, Unterhalter, et al., (2014, p. 140) have argued that in policy arenas, “the rhetoric of aspiration ultimately serves as a diversion from the reality of increasing social exclusion and inequality”. First, whilst the current study was initially interested in aspirations, it was redirected by the findings, such that subsequent chapters examine entry into non-traditional occupations. Second, and perhaps more importantly, this study by drawing focus to the “incapacity to aspire”, does exactly the opposite. It underscores the social exclusion and inequality manifest in their social location in terms of poverty, often low education, and gendered constraints. As Dalton, et al., (2016, p. 13) argue, “far from being an innate trait of poor people, low aspirations emerge as an equilibrium outcome as a consequence of their initial disadvantage.”
Relatively, ‘aspirations’ as indicative of what individuals’ value, have been critiqued for:

Aspirations in themselves tell us little about the histories, power dynamics and discourses, norms, values and cultures that have shaped, enhanced, diminished and adapted them. As Bourdieu reminds us our predispositions may be strongly influenced by habitus, cultural and other forms of capital, our interactions with others and the configuration of power relations in a given field or social context. (Hart 2016, p. 336).

While this chapter does not holistically examine the power structures that the individual is embedded in, by examining the participants’ narratives of incapacity to aspire, it does provide a sense of the social context that constrains the development of set, thought-out goals.

This chapter, by discussing initial aspirations as unrealistic, implicitly comments on feasibility. Although this study recognizes that “perceptions of feasibility are arguably subjective” (Hart 2016, p. 333), aspiring to be say a singer while having an admittedly hoarse voice could perhaps safely ascertained to be infeasible.

The emerging capabilities literature on aspirations (such as Hart, 2016) urges studies to look at aspirations multi-dimensionally. First, as a study on the occupational lives of the participants, an examination of aspirations in every domain is beyond the scope of this study. Second, all but one participant had wanted to be in a job post marriage even if they were financially comfortable. As such even from the perspective of the capabilities approach which privileges ”what people value and have reason to value”, focusing on aspirations in the domain of occupations is meaningful as the study examines what the participants valued and had reason to value. Hart’s (2016, p. 329) study for example argues that "It is not enough to look solely at the functioning of aspiring in order to understand an individual’s agency and freedom. It is also crucial to understand the degrees of freedom to aspire enjoyed by individuals, alongside the chances of transforming the aspiration into a capability”. This chapter tries to do just that.

While the chapter suggests reasons for why participants did not form occupational aspirations, further research focused on their “incapacity to aspire” would be useful.
Assessing the role of education in the formation of occupational aspirations would be especially informative and this research provides the basis for such studies.

This study, as was pointed out at the start of the chapter, had started out trying to understand the aspirations for non-traditionally female occupational training. However, this chapter has demonstrated that training for non-traditional and traditional occupations was not an outcome of aspirations for them but a chance entry. The women who were in non-traditional training did not aspire to a non-traditional job, and those in the traditional job did not aspire to a traditional job. The finding thus pivots the study to examining what are the factors that explain the entry of participants into divergent occupational paths. The next three chapters analyse these factors.
Chapter 4. Breaking out of traditional occupation traps: heterophily and the positive side of narrow networks

1. Introduction

The previous chapter found that occupational aspirations for the non-traditional and traditional training did not account for participants’ entry into them. It suggested that in contexts where individuals feel outcome in-expectancy and gendered uncertainties, they tend not to form specific occupational aspirations, while still harbouring a desire to “become something”. In such cases, entry into a training program offers the chance to “become something”, and creates aspirations instead. The chapter thus concluded that its findings pivot this study away from trying to understand aspiration formation to what is more appropriate to the context -- a study that examines the factors that structure the entry of young women into non-traditional and traditional training. This chapter focusses on job-related information and social networks as one critical factor for entry that some women had access to and others did not.

Section 2 presents experiences of job-related information poverty and demonstrates the paucity of advice and information that the participants in both traditional and non-traditional training reported. Parents were unable to advise; schools did not career-counsel; participants had restricted physical mobility; they tended to have few friends whom they did not get to 'hang-out' with; and internet use was limited and sometimes controlled. The section suggests that the information poverty may be understood in terms of constrained routine sociality, narrow social networks with few ties outside the family, and scarce social capital, on account of their intersecting positions of age, socioeconomic status, gender, urban location and single status.

In this context of information poverty, how did the participants learn about the training they did enter? Section 3 answers this question by outlining the sources of information for the traditional training on the one hand and non-traditional training on the other. It finds that while women in traditional training had learnt about the beauty training from other women – mothers, sisters and friends – those in
electrician and electronic mechanic training had generally learnt about the training from brothers or fathers, or in the case of driving, NGO workers. The section thus suggests that a gender homophily information trap might, in part, explain the pervasiveness of information about traditional training as opposed to non-traditional training. Female-dominated jobs such as beauty are widely known by women. Since individuals tend to have more gender homophily connections, -- women with women and men with men -- especially in such contexts where gender mixing is controlled, young girls speaking to women learn easily and more frequently about traditional training. In situations of information poverty, where information in itself can account for entry in large part, the homophily-information trap often leads to a homophily-information traditional occupation training trap.

However, information access may not automatically translate into use. For example, in spite of having information about training, peer and neighbourhood disapproval of (non-traditional) training could still discourage entry. Section 4 demonstrates that participants were most often autonomous of peer and neighbourhood disapproval and reported that they did not care about their opinion. At other times, participants did not tell their peers and neighbours of the training they were in. In either case, peer and neighbourhood disapproval did not prevent their entry into training. The section suggests that perversely, having narrow networks, with few and often weak ties outside the family, where participants only care about parental support and approval, might have a positive effect for entry into non-traditional training – individuals are unencumbered by peer and neighbourhood disapproval in making unusual, non-traditional decisions.

Section 5 concludes by summarising the findings, highlighting the importance of taking a social network approach in general and routine sociality in particular, and suggests future studies to strengthen the perverse finding of this study.

2. “No one to go to for job-advice”: Experiences of information poverty

Almost all participants of this study repeatedly reported how they had very little information about training or jobs and that they had no one whom they could go to for job-related advice. Tuheena, a beauty trainee, making light of her situation,
remarked: “No, I have no-one to advise me. I advise myself and follow it myself! (laughs).”

Mariam, a beauty trainee, felt that the absence of advice she experienced was attributable to her being the eldest child in the family:

As far as planning is concerned, I didn't have anyone with whom I could have discussed my career or got some "knowledge". If I had met you earlier then maybe I would have reached somewhere else (she laughs). I don't have any elder sister to guide me. I am the eldest. So, I really didn’t have anyone to advise me.

Rekha, an electronic mechanic trainee, found that not having a brother, and having a sister who resisted going out of the house, had meant that she had no one to advise her on jobs:

If I had had an elder brother, I would have had someone to guide me after I had passed class 12th ... like he would have advised me that you should now do this or do that. I didn't know what I should do after 12th class, nor did I have any sense/awareness ("samajh"). I had elder sisters but my eldest sister was married by that time and my other sister is such that she's satisfied with just doing class 12th. That was it for her. Now she only wants to do things that relate to the house. She will make the tastiest food, but she will only stay at home. You know, how one at least goes to the market, but she doesn't even do that. Like you know, you want to buy things according to your own choice but with her, she'll just wear whatever we bring her. So, I couldn't expect her to advise me [as to] what I should do or what I should not do. So, I just didn't know what to do and what not to do. I couldn't figure out anything.

Anubha, an electrician trainee, described how she had no one to advise her but she had managed to guide her younger sister.

My sister is doing her under graduation from a regular college [as opposed to correspondence or what was called in local parlance as “open education”]. She is in the second year at Laxmi Bai College. I didn't manage to do regular studies. There was nobody to guide me at that time. I didn’t know anything about these things. I was completely clueless after class 12th. My brother has also not studied much. So, he also doesn't have much "knowledge”. No one guided me. I wasn't given any kind of information [about jobs or how to work towards jobs] by
anyone at all. (...) I guided my sister. It was I who guided her. (...) Actually, a lot of my time has gotten wasted. I am in 3rd year of graduation. Before this, I had done only a six-months computer course. After that, I didn't do anything else. I didn’t know what to do. I was confused after 12th class. That’s why I told my sister that she should go for regular studies now that she had got good marks.

2.1. Parents unable to advise

Participants repeatedly expressed how they felt that their occupational progress was encumbered by their parents’ incapacity to advise. I asked, Tuheena, a beauty trainee whether her mother supported her occupational choices:

Yes, she is supportive of me. She doesn’t stop me from doing anything. But she doesn't also guide me to do anything. Of course, she is supportive, but she is not able to provide information on jobs.

I asked, Kalpana, a driver trainee, who had wanted to become an engineer, whether she felt her father had dreams for her to become something:

You see, it is good to dream, but you have to do something too. Like, parents want their child to become an engineer, but they have to own their responsibility also, to guide me towards that goal. So my father dreamt that his children should become something, but that’s all. He had no idea about which school he should select for his children which could be helpful towards that goal, which direction they should go… there was nothing like that. He had just one dream that my children should study well and become something. But you have to do something for that. He did not have that quality in him. If the daughter comes late from tuition, there will be questions. You come late from school, and there will be questions. How will you attain dreams through that? My father only has dreams, but he did not do anything towards those dreams. Only giving money to your children is not a big thing. Money can be adjusted from somewhere, but you have to do something extra apart from that. You also have to tell them what to do. I still feel the same. He tells me I couldn't do anything in life. I am not able to tell him, what direction have you given to your children? Had he told us that now you have cleared class ten, now you should take this subject-stream, and should do this after that, we would have taken that route. But he did not do anything like
that. We ourselves decide what we should do, what stream, what training, should we take. We did not get any advice or guidance from the family.

She continued:

My father, he certainly did not think of anything specific. He only thought we must become something, what that "something" was, he was never clear and neither did he do anything concrete towards it. Had he decided, we certainly would have done it; we would have entered that line. "Something" could mean many things. ("kuchh ban ne mein bahut kuchh aata hai"). After all, taxi driving is also a part of that "something". He has not decided to date as to what we should do. I did my 10th, did my 12th also, but I kept wandering and wondering what will I become? Nobody guided me, but I used my mind and looked at my brothers, and then I decided by myself. I didn't even know that there are three streams, but I still decided by myself alone what to pursue. I asked people which streams are there? I got admission in the Arts, then a friend of mine told me to do B. Tech. I had already taken admission in Arts, but I thought I should see what B. Tech. is about. Then I saw the book. I didn’t find it so difficult. I could have done it. But there was nobody to guide me, to encourage me. If my family would have encouraged me or told me how it would be and guided me, I could have done it.

I enquired if her father had thought about and advised her brothers:

No, he did not think about them either. Had he thought about them, he would have decided about me also. He did not think about any of his children.

Mitu, a driver trainee, linked her mother not being in employment to her inability to advise:

That’s because then the parents can guide you well. Nobody can guide us as well as our parents can. We, at such a young age, are not very aware of what is out there, what is better for us or not. Had she [her mother] been in a job, she would have guided us well and lead us to success in life. She would also have money to invest in our future. How can she guide us when she herself doesn’t have much knowledge? how will we know what to do?

Participants thus repeatedly emphasized the importance of job-related guidance, which they felt was absent from their lives.
2.2. Absence of career counselling in schools

Schools, the spaces other than their homes that the young participants spent substantial time in also did not serve as a source of job-related information. While several participants were studying through correspondence (what they called “open schooling”) and therefore did not go to a school at all, almost no participant even amongst those who did go to a school, had had a career counsellor come to it. Almost all, however, thought that having a counsellor would have benefited them. For instance, I asked Saya, a beauty trainee, if having a counsellor come to her school would have made a difference to her life. She reported, “Yes, in that case, I could have found out what to do. Like my English is very weak so I could have found out what I should do to improve my English [and then how] to get a job.”

I asked Anubha if she had had anyone to advise her in school or if she had tried to gather information, consider options and plan for her occupational future:

[long pause] I never thought about it so deeply. I had... now... what do I tell you...
I was so confused. I wondered which course I should do but no one told me anything properly. I mean, I wanted to become a singer. But I knew that I couldn’t pursue it. I had to do something or the other. So, I thought... what should I do? But no one told me anything, and my time kept getting "wasted".

Kaveri, a driver trainee, described that while a visit to her school from the “first women mountaineer” was inspirational, there was no other counselling and she did not learn about any other jobs:

G: Did she discuss only mountaineering, or advise you about other jobs too?
K: No, she only discussed about mountain climbing.
G: Did anybody advise you about how to get a job, that you have to take certain steps, or which course to undertake to get some particular jobs?
K: No, there was nobody to advise us about that.
G: Had someone counselled you in respect of jobs, careers etc. would that be of use to you?
K: Of course, yes. That would have helped us a lot.
G: How do you think it would have helped you?
K: Because then I could have taken up my studies from open scheme of schooling, despite having to leave school. In absence of such counselling, we had no options we knew about [for schooling or jobs]

2.3. Internet and mobile phone: curtailed access and use

The participants were unable to use the internet to access job related information. Studies have found that the use of internet for job search exceed traditional methods such as contacting friends and relatives for job seekers in general (Kuhn and Skuterud, 2000), but the internet as a tool for job related information is especially important for the youth who tend to use smart phones for job search (Smith, 2015). Looking at women specifically, Wheeler (2007), based on interviews with female Internet café users in Cairo, found that not only did internet use “increase information access/professional development” but also helped “expand or maintain social networks and social capital”, that helped with jobs (p 89). Banerjee et al., (2005) using the U.S. Census Bureau’s Population Survey 2001 data (a survey of approximately 50,000), showed that more females used the internet for job search than men. As such, the internet can be an important tool to gain job related information for young women.

While some participants like Rekha, a beauty trainee, had a mobile phone but no internet connection, for some others accessing a phone with internet access did not automatically mean using the internet. Their internet usage was largely encumbered by limited internet literacy and social controls. Kirti, a beauty trainee, for example, did not have a phone herself. There was a phone at home but she was not allowed to use that too:

I’m not allowed [to use the phone]. You know, there are some girls who speak on the phone with boys, so that’s not okay [with my parents].

G: Have you ever used WhatsApp or Facebook say using the phone at home?
K: Once I had, hiding it, but later the phone broke and that was that.

Fatima, a driver trainee, did not have a phone herself but she had used her friend’s internet enabled mobile phone for her entertainment. However, she seemed unfamiliar with other aspects of internet use.
F: Yes, I like to watch comedy videos on a friends’ (Bani’s) phone… I also want to use Facebook, but I don’t have a phone with internet so how can I?
G: But couldn’t you have created a facebook ID on your friend’s phone for example?
F: Oh! I didn’t know that it can be created on another person’s phone too.

Shamta, a driver trainee, had undergone training in computers. Yet, her computer literacy did not translate into internet use:

No, I wasn't allowed to create any such [email or Facebook] account. I've learnt computer hardware and software. I know how to work in Excel, Word etc. But I left it after 3 months, because of getting training over here [in driving]. I thought I could complete my computer course even after having finished this training.

In developing countries such as India, internet is often accessed through mobile phones, especially by those in low income groups (Barboni et al. 2018; Silver et al. 2019). An extensive study done by the Harvard Kennedy School’s Evidence for Policy Design (EPOD), *Understanding barriers to and impacts of women’s mobile phone adoption in India* (Barboni et al., 2018), analyses secondary quantitative data on women’s mobile phone access as well as primary qualitative data with men and women across five states in India. They find that in India, 71 percent of men own mobile phones, but only 38 percent of women do. In fact, India, along with Pakistan, and Bangladesh, exhibits one of the world’s largest gender gaps in access to technology. Further, 47 percent of the women in the sample were “phone borrowers rather than owners, as compared to 16 percent of men” (Barboni et al., 2018, p. 10). Borrowing a phone “rather than owning one imposes practical limitations on use” (ibid, p 10). In addition, the home-centric role “leaves women with few opportunities to use the phone for socially-acceptable, ‘productive’ purposes” (ibid, p. 1). This tendency is only exacerbated by constrained mobility of young women, restricting opportunities to use mobile phones in other spaces.

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*The secondary quantitative data includes three sources -- the Pew Global Attitudes Survey, Financial Inclusion Insights (FII)41, and the India Human Development Survey (IHDS) II which is a nationally representative survey of households in rural and urban areas in 33 states and union territories of India that was collected during 2011–2012.*

*The qualitative data was collected through semi structured interviews and focus group discussions across five states -- Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu.*
Moreover, Barboni et al. (2018) argue that the gender gaps in mobile phone usage in India is not an outcome of its low levels of income. They state that since India’s mobile gender gaps are wider than other countries at similar levels of income per capita, which have similar costs of mobile phone ownership, the gender gap in India’s mobile phone usage is a result of normative barriers instead. They find that phones by facilitating access to others, threaten the “purity” of women and challenge traditional gender norms. Further, across their sample, they found that “the risk to reputation is the highest for girls in the pre-marriage age group” (ibid, p. 17). The gender gap in mobile use emerges as girls enter puberty but it widens as girls become older and more likely to marry. By age 18, “the mobile gender gap is 21 percentage points” (ibid, p. 20).

Echoing these findings, ethnographic studies in India indicate how women’s mobile phones use is associated with a rise in divorce rates (Bell, 2006); elopements (Allendorf, 2013); and turning them into “sluts” (Arora and Scheiber, 2017). A study done by Chandra et al., (2014) assessing the acceptability and feasibility of mobile text messages for promoting mental health amongst women in India demonstrates the social control on young women’s usage of mobile phones. These women were young, between the ages of 16 and 18, lived in urban slums in Bangalore and had parents who worked as casual labourers. Forty such girls received messages on mental health every day for a month. The study then collected feedback on the feasibility and acceptability of receiving and acting upon the messages by sending a SMS, or a missed call, whenever the participants had emotional problems. The study found that male family members of nearly half the participants “called back to check who was sending messages, even [emphasis mine] though the consent of the parents had been sought earlier.” (ibid, p.61). These purity norms can thus force women to “make a trade-off between mobile phone use and reputation maintenance” (Barboni et al., 2018, p.32).

In addition to social controls, women’s usage of mobile phones is also curtailed by mobile phone and internet literacy, and they are more likely to cite technical literacy and confidence as a barrier to mobile phone use (Kumar and Prakash, 2016; Barboni et al., 2018). Barboni et al. (2018, p.10) calculate that “women lag behind men with relative gaps growing with task sophistication: while the relative gap is between 15–20% for making and receiving calls, the gender gap jumps to 51% for a feature as
simple as SMS and remains above 60% for other more complex activities such as social media” (Barboni et al., 2018, p.10).
Searching for jobs on the internet would have been especially challenging for the young single participants, testing gender norms as well as their internet literacy. Unable to use the internet, one more avenue of gaining job related information, was closed for the participants.

2.4. Few friends

Surprisingly, most participants reported having very few friends before they had entered into the training. Since friends can be a source of job-related information (Cappellari and Konstantinos 2011; Granovetter 1994; Klehe and Hooft 2018), participants were curtailed in accessing information through this avenue too. I asked Bhavya, an electrician trainee, who spent her day at the training or was at home, if she had any friends in her neighbourhood. She responded, “No. I don’t talk much with anyone in my neighbourhood. I just stay at home.”

Ardra, a driver trainee, explained her lack of dreams in terms of not having any links with “outsiders”:

Actually, I didn’t have any dream. Maybe that was because my parents never showed me any dream. And then, people have many friends, but once I enter home, I stay in. Only my brother, bhabi [sister in law], my family members are my friends. I am allowed to talk to them only. Apart from that, I have no links with outsiders. I don’t talk to any other girl.

I asked Shamta, a driver trainee, if her friends knew that she was thinking of becoming a driver:

S: I don’t have any friends. I don’t make any friends, neither do I talk to anybody to that extent.
G: But you have studied up to 12th standard, don’t you have any friends from school?
S: No, I have no friends from school.
G: Didn’t you talk to anybody there too?
S: I was on talking terms with most of them, but I didn’t befriend anybody.
G: Why didn’t you feel the need to make friends ever?
S: No, I never felt that need, because my brothers and mother were more than enough for me to talk about anything. We talked a lot. When I returned from school, my mother used to ask me whatever happened in school. I shared each and every incident with her.

Mariam, a beauty trainee, explained the lack of role models in her life in terms of lack of friends and people to interact with:

Yeah, like Sania Nehwal [an Indian badminton player]. Apart from her, I find nobody [that I am inspired by]. Actually, I don’t mix much with people around me, I don't get to hear much, because the atmosphere in my vicinity is not like that... I would have got more inspiration if I had mixed with people, heard more things. I would have maybe then felt that I have to become like her, I have to surpass her. You know… what it's like right? Like I have to get more marks in exams than her. There was nobody whom I could imitate or overtake. That’s why I became “dheela se” [unmotivated, slow]

Even where the participants had friends, their interactions appeared to be limited such as that to significant festivals. I asked Anchal what her friend’s reaction to her training in electronic mechanics was:

I mean, I don’t get to talk to them that much. Around Diwali [Diwali is the Hindu festival of lights], we spoke on the phone. At that time, I had told them. But there were so many firecrackers in the background that we weren't able to talk much. I only told them I was doing a diploma at an ITI. Then I asked about them and asked how they were.

Pakhi, a beauty trainee, did not know what jobs or training the other girls from her neighbourhood were doing:

They all are doing something or the other. Two girls are doing jobs, but I don’t know where they are working. They are not my friends, but only neighbours. She had lost touch with her school friend who lived in the same neighbourhood too until they bumped into each other at the local market:

Yes, she [Mariam] is my friend from school. After dropping out of school, I bumped into her in the market one day. We came in contact with each other again, and we started coming here [to the beauty training].
Aparna, fifteen, a beauty trainee, described that she only had one friend who she did not get to speak to often:

G: You must have friends in your lane, or somewhere?
A: No, I don’t speak to anyone in my lane.
G: So do you not have friends?!
A: No. I don't really have friends. I have one friend who is studying in school, so if we ever want, she comes by. But she lives in Adarsh Nagar so her parents don’t allow her to come till Jahangirpuri.
G: Do you have any friend in your vicinity? Do you have no friends at all?
A: I do not have any friend in my vicinity.
G: Your friend who is living Adarsh Nagar, what do you feel, that what will she do in future?
A: I don’t know about that. We are not able to talk much.

2.5. Restricted mobility and spaces for interaction

Physical mobility and “hanging out” in spaces can not only serve as important ways to build and maintain ties, but can also potentially make one aware of job-related information through seeing job advertisements and hoardings. Participants in both traditional and non-traditional training repeatedly expressed that they had not been accustomed to being out of the house. Being unable to see hoardings and advertisements in public spaces, or form many ties, they felt, contributed to their information poverty. Meena, a driver trainee, had come to the adjacent residential area of Model Town, where the training centre was, for the first time:

Plus, I did not have much knowledge about jobs. Had I gone out already, I would have got a job in Model Town. At that time, I didn’t go out much. My mother was scared of sending me out. Ma’am has given us the strength to go out and tells our mothers to send the daughters out. I’ve visited Model Town for the first time in my life. I never went alone to such distance.

Tuheena, a beauty and wellness trainee, explained that she hadn’t seen any female taxi drivers as she didn’t go out much.

G: Have you seen any girl working as a taxi driver?
T: No, I haven’t seen any such girl. I also don’t go out of my house often. And sitting at home, how will one see?

When they stepped out it was with a “purpose”. When I asked Meena, a driver trainee, if she liked going out of her home, she replied:

Yes, of course! But I don’t like going out without any reason. I like to go out for doing some task or something useful.

Accessing public spaces means not only a greater ability to see job related hoardings and advertisements but also form wider networks which in turn are associated with greater capability to access job related information (Cattell et al. 2008; Russell 1999). Several studies have shown that young single lower middle-class women’s mobility in India is restricted compared to both men and upper-class women (Gilbertson, 2014; Jeffrey, 2010; Ranade, 2007). As such, participants as young, single, women from low income households were restricted in their capacity to access public spaces. Several studies in India contrast women’s purposeful, goal-oriented mobility to men’s aimless loitering (Gilbertson, 2014) in Hyderabad; Lukose, (2005) in Kerala; Jeffrey, (2010) in Meerut; Ranade, (2007) in Mumbai).

For example, through his ethnographic study based amongst the youth in Meerut, Jeffrey (2011, 2010) examined experiences of youth and youth cultures in a government university. He found that “timepass” or “just passing time” became a strategy to navigate social and economic uncertainties for young men but young women were typically unable to participate in such types of public activities. He argued that, “Parents, professors and urban society at large considered it inappropriate for unmarried young women to “hang out,” except in certain public spaces, such as the sweet shops and confectionary stores near MC [Meerut College] and CCSU [Chaudhary Charan Singh University].” (Jeffrey, 2011, p. 67). Ranade, (2007) in “The Way She Moves- Mapping the Everyday Production of Gender-Space” shows how men and women experience spaces differently in the city of Mumbai. In a participatory mapping study, “putting people in place”, participants were asked to mark men and women at different

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*Ranade (2007) argues that women’s purposeful movement is to “be seen as “good” women”, as respectable women. She argues, “The purpose-defined movement of women is deeply connected to notions of respectability which define what good women should/should not do in public” (p 1525) reproducing notions of respectable femininity. She argues that a claim to respectable femininity is a claim to safety. Ranade (2007) states, “In the context of material space, safety and risk can be related to the transgression of boundaries.” (p 1523).*
points on a drawing depicting a typical residential street corner in Mumbai. One corner of the drawing has a shop marked “tea stall”. Participants inevitably marked men and teenage boys “hanging out here”(p 1525) but when participants placed middle-aged women and teenage girls at the “tea stall”, the following discussions with them revealed that they had assumed the “tea-stall” to be an “upmarket coffee-shop like Barista or Cafe-Coffee Day”. (ibid) Those who imagined the place to be a "cutting chai" or Irani café” did not place women at the stalls. The discussion also revealed that the majority of these participants reported that they would not have placed women there had they thought it to be a "tea stall" that are thought to belong to lower middle-class lives. Women’s class then is an important factor that shapes their access to public spaces, normalizing certain spaces and restricting others.

While lower-middle-class women are “excluded from lower-class public spaces by their gender”, they are excluded from “elite public spaces by their class.” (Gilbertson, 2014, p 155). If mobility is seen as a ‘resource’ that women find hard to access, then it is understandable that richer women would be able to access the resource more and the lower middle-class women less. Gilbertson (2014) argues that “Perhaps most significant, however, is the upper middle class’s greater access to exclusive privatized public places like malls, cafes and restaurants, and their increased ability to avoid the street through use of private transport.” (p 138) which allows women of the upper middle class to enjoy greater mobility. Gilbertson (2014) provides several such examples of differences in mobility that she faced when she spent time with, what she calls “middle middle-class” families and “lower middle-class” families in her ethnographic study in Hyderabad. For example, “whilst living with a middle middle-class family in a small apartment block in Kukatpally Housing Board I was strongly discouraged from jogging the 100 metres down the road to the bus stop, but in the less public, more exclusively upper middle-class gated communities I subsequently lived in, I was given permission by the families I lived with to jog around the gated community (as long as it was early in the morning and I did not go beyond the gates of the housing complex) and to swim in the pool located in a particularly prestigious gated community (as long as I wore a costume that
covered my thighs and avoided swimming when there were adult men in the pool” (p 137).

Further, by normalising certain activities, age and marital status determine avenues to access public space (Ranade, 2007). For example, young women get access to public space by going to schools and when they are older, as mothers accompanying children to spaces and taking care of household demands and unpaid labour (Ranade, 2007). These participants then, by being young, single, lower middle-class women had few opportunities to access public spaces, to “hang out”, and to form and maintain ties.

2.6. Understanding information poverty: Routine sociality, social networks and social capital

Participants across the training programs did not have information about jobs. In addition to career-counselling and internet, as sources of job-related information, absent from the lives of the participants, routine sociality could also not offer varied job-information to the participants. Parents, who they did interact with, were unable to provide information on varied jobs. Outside the family, they had few friends, and restricted mobility, which in turn meant their networks stayed narrow and they had constricted routine sociality. Moreover, the participants located at the intersection of being young, single, women, from low income households, the capacity of their narrow networks and routine sociality to provide job-related information was also limited.

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* Several ethnographic studied based in India have shown that the male gaze serves to define and maintain these gendered spatial boundaries. When women do not respect these boundaries, they often encounter eve-teasing and the male gaze. Ritty Lukose (in Gilbertson 2014), for example, describes how young female college students in Kerala frequently experience comments or ‘adi’ (being ‘hit’ with sexualized comments) and sexual touching, particularly on public transport.

* Ranade (2007) argues that these restrictions are not always imposed from the without, but are internalized and manifest as a result of subconscious self-policing. Women then reproduce these socially coded restrictions through their everyday negotiations of space. See Ranade (2007) for further details on the role of culture and self policing in restricting women’s mobility in India.
Lin and Ao (2008) argue that routine exchanges of information through everyday sociality is the ‘invisible hand of social capital’ – they are the subtle, less visible benefits of being embedded in social networks rich in resources. They state that, “From one-third to over half of the respondents in surveys conducted in American communities and elsewhere report no search in finding their current jobs” (Lin and Ao, 2008, p. 107). Hanson and Pratt, (1991, p. 229), for example, explored the extent to which differences in how people find their job explains occupational gender segregation emphasising that people tend to “fall” into jobs. Based on in-depth interviews with women and men from a representative sample of 620 households in Worcester, Massachusetts, they find that “The majority of our respondents, both women and men, had not actively searched for their present jobs, but had ‘fallen into’ them largely through informal personal contacts” (ibid, p. 229).

Information shared as part of routine exchange have at least three advantages. First, the cost of getting information is low. Second, information gathered through repeated exchanges increases the possibility of follow-ups and gathering more information about the job mentioned – “the initial informant or someone else in the network may become useful for obtaining and conveying further information about a job; finding out the likely fit; and, most importantly, providing the bridge to make contact with a firm or employer” (p 112). Lin and Ao, (2008) found that of the 998 respondents, 466 or 46.7 percent of respondents indicated that they followed up “the possibilities, openings, or opportunities she or he received in routine exchanges.” (p 127). While such studies emphasize the importance of routine exchanges for expanding awareness and information about varied jobs, increased awareness might trigger thinking about a career and career planning.

If employment information is embedded in daily social interactions, then “gender differences in activity patterns imply differences in patterns of social contact” (Hanson and Pratt, 1991, p. 232). While men in Indian cities have been reported to “timepass” with several friends, the routine sociality of the participants was restricted to their parents and a few friends with whom they did not get to ‘hang out’ with. Section 2.5 demonstrated the constraints on mobility that participants faced across training programs as part of a “dominant code” of women of similar age and class (Ranade, 2007). Many of the participants were studying through correspondence. As such a significant culturally sanctioned space for routine sociality, that of the school or college, where they could have formed friendships and
spend time together in, was absent. Training then became the place to forge friendships. In sum, their severely restricted routine sociality shaped their narrow networks.

However, merely having routine sociality does not assure job related information. Lin and Ao, (2008, p. 113) argue that the “extent and the quality of such information is dictated to a significant extent by the capacity of social capital, or accessible resources in the social networks.”. Social capital are resources embedded in familial and wider social networks (Lin 1999; Portes, 1998; Warr, 2006). Lin and Ao (2008, p. 111), for example, state that, “It is through the relations in one’s social networks' that their resources, the embedded resources, may be accessed and mobilised to receive or convey information”, amongst other aspects such as, “influence, or credentials, to gain relative advantage in the labour market”.

The participants not only had narrow networks but their networks were also restricted in their information giving capacity. As such, the experiences of the young women from low income household demonstrate the “essential contingency of social capital by different social institutions” (Lin, 2008, p. 24). The participants by being disadvantaged in at least three axes of social networks and social capital – poverty and family socioeconomic status, gender, internet access and use – were severely constrained in access to job-related information.

First, studies such as Warr, (2006) and Portes, (1998) find that poverty curtails social resources. Warr (2006), for example, argues that while poor neighbourhoods do provide ‘social support’, understood as “practical, emotional, and other forms of assistance and care and that people draw on to “get by”, they are insufficient in providing ‘social capital’ that help “individuals to rise above their poverty” (Warr, 2006, p 500). Studies such as Tigges et al., (1998) and Russell, (1999) argue that individuals living in poor neighbourhoods have little contact with other social classes and few opportunities to acquire sociability in diverse social situations. Smith, (2008) studying the job referral system in poor black neighbourhoods in Michigan, US, through surveys and in-depth interviews, emphasizes the distinction between access and mobilization. Smith (2008) finds that low-income blacks suffer from double jeopardy – they do not only access “less social capital compared to blacks not living in poverty but also suffer from their contacts rendering less help”
Relatedly, studies such as Lin, (2008), Hester and Flap, (2010); Lin and Erickson, (2008) find that family SES, especially father’s SES, education and income, is strongly correlated with social capital. Lin and Erickson, (2008) find that the prestige of the father not only has a significant effect on social resources but it has a larger effect than the effect one’s own education has on access to social resources. Lin and Erickson, (2008, p.154) argue that their “findings support the expectation that parents’ networks, or “past networks,” are important in one’s own occupational attainment.”

Second, gender structures social capital. Lin, (2008, p. 12) finds that men tend to have more social capital “especially in contexts with stronger gender stratification systems” like “Taiwan (Hsung and Lin), Japan (Miyata, Ikeda, and Kobayashi), and several other Asian countries reported elsewhere, but not in British Columbia (Tindall and Cormier) or Canada as a whole (Erickson 2004), nor indeed in most highly developed Western nations”. Not only quantity but the nature of social ties have also shown to vary by sex. Allan, 1989 (in Hanson and Pratt, 1991) shows that women have fewer friendships but they also have closer kin relationships than men. Men, on the other hand, have wider friendships based on joint activities rather than intimacy. The personal contacts through which women obtain job-related information tend to be more family and community-related than are those of men (Hanson and Pratt, 1991), making parents and the community they live in much more critical for women than for men. Studies argue that women have closer networks in the neighbourhood than men. For example, Bell and Ribbens, (1994) found a strong pattern of social exchange between mothers of young children within the local community. In another example, Morris, (1995) found a high level of support between female neighbours rooted in their shared domestic roles.

Gender has been found to be one of the most important factors influencing leisure and sociability (Allan 1989; Russell 1999). Women’s leisure and sociability are restricted in terms of time, resources, and space, as male leisure and sociability is most often not. Female leisure is likely to be restricted in terms of hours due to the double burden of work and housework and caring responsibilities and their unbounded hours (Hochschild and Machung, 1989). Female participation in leisure activities that require financial spending is also restricted by access to personal spending money (Vogler and Pahl, 1993). Where mobility constraints exist, as
demonstrated for the participants to the study in section 2.5, women’s leisure activities also tend to be restricted to the home, and participation in public spheres such as formal organisations, civic settings etc. is limited (Warr, 2006). These restrictions make female leisure and sociability more home-centred than men’s. (Russell, 1999), reducing potential to have varied ties.

While women’s access to social capital is more contained than men’s, poor women are doubly disadvantaged – “because gender contexts generally limit their participation in civic and public realms, and class circumstances further curtail sociable opportunities.” (Warr, 2006).

Further, characteristics of women such as marital status, age, location, internet access are also found to affect social capital. Married women by having access to their husband’s social capital are argued to have more social capital. Campos et al., (2015) find that in Uganda relative to married women, divorced and widowed women were less likely to be a ‘cross over’ to a male-dominated job, and cite (lack of) information about male-dominated jobs as one possible reason for the contrast. Working in Hong Kong, Lai, (2008) finds that the social capital of wives’ in her study is strongly related to their husbands’ education or employment, and notably not to their own. In contrast, the husbands’ social capital arises out of their own education or employment, and is independent of their wives’ educational and employment status.

Lin and Ao, (2008) find that age is positively correlated with social networks and capital. Social capital can be cumulative so as one ages, it is likely that the number of people an individual has ties with increases. For example, Lin and Ao, (2008), found that previous job experience had a positive effect on social capital. Additionally, neighbourhood networks might not be as strong in urban areas as rural areas (Russell, 1999). Since women’s social capital tend to be more dependent on neighbourhood and family networks, urban women’s social capital based on weaker neighbourhood relations than in rural areas are likely to be disadvantaged in this aspect. Social capital is also structured by access and use of the internet. Those more active on the internet in Japan (Miyata, et al., 2008), and those who used the internet and telephones more in the United States (Magee, 2008), were found to have higher social capital.
In sum, the participants in this study had constrained routine sociality which created narrow networks. Further, their intersectional position as women, who lived in poor urban neighbourhoods, were young, single, and as individuals who had hardly used the internet, meant that even these narrow networks yielded little social capital and unvaried job-related information. Since almost all were in training for their first job, and family as a social resource is found to be more important to a person’s labour market position early on in the career (Lin and Erickson, 2008), the lack of advice from parents especially accounted for their information poverty. In the context of information poverty, how did the participants access information about courses they entered? The next section discusses the ways by which participants accessed information to the traditional and non-traditional training that they entered. In doing so it demonstrates the gender homophily information trap that might, in part, be funnelling young women into traditional training as opposed to non-traditional training.

3. Access to information for traditional and non-traditional training

3.1. Mothers, sisters, friends, everyone: omnipresent beauty training information.

The traditional beauty training was widely known. Mariam, like many others, emphasised that she didn't have to find out about the course, but "already knew" of the course:

I already knew of this place as many girls from my lane have done this course. They say that di [short for didi, literally meaning elder sister, referred to the course teacher] teaches well here. One of them asked me to accompany her and join here. She said what are we doing sitting at home in any case. This way we'll get some skill in our hands. Both of us came here together. Now after going through this course, if di finds us a job, then we'll do that.

Tuheena, in a typical response, described the multiple channels through which she knew about the course:

It’s in front of the lane where I am living. Many of the girls from my vicinity have done this course. Even one of my sisters has also done it. She is in the advance course of beauty and culture while I am doing the basic course.
Many participants such as Lubhawna had heard about the training from their mother:

My mother knew about it. She knew they make us learn many courses here. She told me, and so I came here.

While participants were informationally-poor, information about beauty training was easy and automatic, embedded in their existing patterns of routine sociality, and reinforced through multiple channels.

3.2. Non-traditional training unknown as women's work

As opposed to the traditional beauty training, the participants were largely unaware of non-traditional training as possibilities for women. Esha, an electrician trainee, told me that she had to explain to her friends that there are job vacancies for women too in the field:

Actually, my friends don't know about it [that there are vacancies for women in this job], you see. They think that electrician posts must only come out for boys and only boys can do these jobs. They think that these jobs are boys’ jobs so only boys can do it. [So, I explained to them that] you can apply for any trade and get admission, whichever field you are interested in.

Anu, a driver trainee, had formed a friend in the locality of the driver training, who worked in a homeopathic dispensary in the same locality as the training but did not know about the non-traditional training:

Yes, she knows that I am in driver training. When I told her about it, she said she would also come and see. She gets free only on weekends. She said that despite living in Model Town itself [where the training centre was located], she doesn't know about this foundation. She also wants to come and join it.

I asked, Uma, a beauty trainee, if she would have liked to drive a taxi as a job?

I would have done it, if I would have got a chance. But I wasn't aware of this field before this discussion.
Even though Patanjali, an electrician trainee’s brothers had trained at the ITI, they to begin with did not know that the electrician’s training and job are open to women too:

Prior to that [when my brother found out from instructors in the ITI that there are girls who are training in the course too], we only thought that boys could apply for it. We thought that girls couldn't apply for electrician's trade at all.

I asked Mariam, a beauty trainee, if she had considered taxi driving as a career option.

G: The girls from your vicinity are doing various kinds of courses. Some are in the taxi driving field. Did you think of it as a career option?
M: I had never heard about it. I didn’t know anyone.
I clarified, “Didn’t you see any girl driving a taxi?
No, I haven’t seen any [girl driving a taxi]. I didn’t think of it. I thought I should do a beautician’s course wherein I can progress because everyone likes beauty. So, I came here to learn it. As for taxi driving, I hadn’t even heard about it, so it never even entered my mind.

G: If you would have already known about it, would you have opted for a taxi driving training?
M: If I would have known, then maybe I would have joined it.*

3.2.1. NGO mobilizers, fathers and brothers: Information sources to non-traditional training

With non-traditional training programs less well-known, how did the non-traditional trainees learn about the courses? Mobilizers at Azad, brought the information about the driving training to the participants’ home. 16 of 21 driver trainees (76 percent) had heard about the training through mobilisers (See table below).

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*Mariam did not immediately express a desire to shift occupational paths which is to be expected – in chapter 3 I show that there is a persistence of entry into a training. The point here is that the non-traditional job training of taxi driving was not a part of her informational set at all, making it impossible for her to join the training. If she would have known, as she said, she “could have joined it”.
Hamida, told me that she learnt about Azad through Meethi Ma’am’s house visit, “She had come home, and told us that they teach us and also link us to jobs.”

Kaveri, a driver trainee, learnt about the driver training from “a recruitment camp that was held right outside the house” She met Rafiya Ma’am there who explained about the training and advised her and her mother.

Similarly, Anmol explained the central role of Meethi didi, an Azad mobilizer, in not informing her but also her mother about the training:

One didi from here [Azad], Meethi, came to our colony. When I met her on way to the local market, she asked me if I would learn to drive. I said nobody in my family would allow me. Then she accompanied me to my home. She made my mother understand. She told her that your daughter will be successful. She will learn self-defence etc. There are all the facilities over here for your daughter, and will be very good for your daughter.

Padma, described how her routine visit to the Monday market led her to driver training:

I had gone to the Monday market in Jahangirpuri, where a "tent" [booth] was set up. I was crossing the booth so I got information about it… In fact, when I saw the board displaying Azad Foundation, I initially thought it was about the foundation.
which we put on the face! When I went closer, I got the information about this institute and got the form to fill in. I also thought I was under-educated for it, but they told me that we could join it even after having passed 8th standard. Later [Ma’am called] and when I talked to the Ma’am over the telephone I felt very good. My mother also discussed the whole process with her. Then two “madams” from here also came to our home. They elaborated about the foundation and the admission process. The fee was as low as Rs.500 (GBP 5.56) which also suited us, and finally my mother allowed me to join.

Thus, mobilizers and mobilising activities such as the recruitment booth in the Monday bazaar, frequented by young women from low income households, living in tier III residential areas, were central to informing and drawing women into driving training.

In some rare cases though participants learnt about the driving training from friends too. Kalpana, was one of the only cases, where her friend worked as a taxi driver and thus knew of the training. Similarly, Anu, was another such an exceptional case:

There was this girl, Neetu who had come to live at our place on rent, because their own house was being built. She was coming here [to Azad] to get more details about the place. I came along with her [since she didn’t want to walk alone]. She had told me about the two courses they provide here. One was the driving course, and the second one is some survey type of job, wherein they go door to door surveying about Adhaar Card [a national identity card] or Voter Card. She had come here to confirm about the credentials of the institute because her father had advised her that she must enquire and confirm before joining any such institute, to see whether the place is right or not, trustworthy or not. When I came with her, Ma’am told us about the course, which I liked. I also got admission along with her.

G: You joined it as soon as you got to know about the taxi driving training?
M: Yes, I was scared, but then I discussed with Ma’am. She told me that there are all girls here and no boys and all the girls stay together. She said that if you feel troubled even a little bit then she was there for me. She said that they would support me if anything goes wrong. So, after discussing with my mother I joined the training.
At the ITI however, there were no mobilizers to correct for the information failure. Coming to the ITI after having conducted interviews at Azad, I asked Anubha, an electrician trainee, "Isn't there any advertisement of the ITI? Aren't there any ads or pamphlets etc.? Or doesn't someone come home and inform you? How do people get to know about it? Anubha explained, “We get to know from each other about the ITI, what it's all about. Government institutes don’t distribute pamphlets."

One of the most frequent ways that the trainees at the ITI found out about the electrician and electronic mechanic courses was through their fathers. Ujwala, an electrician trainee, described how her father learnt of the electrician’s course at the ITI:

An uncle named Dalbeer works at my papa's shop. His son had also done an ITI course. After doing ITI course, he has done something like polytechnic. He advised my father because my father asked him that “what should Ujwala do, she had cleared class 12th. What should we make her do next? She wants to do a course through school of open learning or regular college. Tell me a course where she can be more "successful" at a younger age. Then he advised my father. "get her to do ITI diploma. She would get a certificate. She'll get a job through ITI itself. Through this, the child would get the maximum qualification in minimum time." Then my father got all the details from him and told me about it, and we applied when the online admission started.

Others typically found about the training through brothers. Patanjali, an electrician trainee, had been advised by her brothers:

They [my brothers] made me understand everything about professional diplomas given by ITIs, Polytechnics etc. When I was very young, I think it was 2010, my brother had got a job because of the ITI diploma he had obtained. Actually, my brothers are 10 and 9 years elder to me. So, you see, both of them are much older to me. So, they explained to me these “lines”. Then I understood that this is what I had to do. I must have been studying in 8th or 9th standard at that time. So, my “mentality” became this [to enter the ITI] in 9th and 10th class.

She elaborated:

[I knew that girls were entering the electronics field but not the electrician’s field] I was told about it by my brother. In fact, he has done a diploma from Pusa. He had topped that course. The instructor who just had come here to mark
attendance was also in Pusa at that time. He also knows my brother. So, being a topper, my brother keeps in touch with his instructors. So, one of his instructors told him that girls are also joining this field. [My brother] called and enquired over the phone that girls are coming to the electrician’s field, or not.

Rekha, an electronic mechanic trainee, was the only participant who had learnt about the electrician course from her female friends who lived in her vicinity. Anchal and Anubha had learnt about the ITI from their female friends, but not about the electrician’s and electronic mechanic’s course. Anchal related how she came to the ITI with a female friend:

I came here [to the ITI] with my friend. She wanted to get admission in COPA [Computer Operator and Programming Assistant or COPA was one of the courses offered at the ITI]. She has actually already done a private course in computers. She had "knowledge". I thought I would get admission in COPA with her and would get help from her as well. My parents can't spend much [on tuitions etc.]. But I got admission in electronics.

As mentioned in chapter 3, Anchal, did not know the choices that were filled on her form.

As such, except in rare cases (as Kalpana, Anu and Rekha), participants in driver training tended to learn about the training from mobilizers, and participants training as electricians and electronic mechanics tended to learnt about the training from their fathers and brothers.

3.3. Understanding information sources for traditional and non-traditional training

So far, this chapter has suggested that participants did not have information about a wide range of jobs, especially of non-traditional jobs. In this context, the chapter found that the participants in traditional training had got the information about the beauty training from sisters, mothers and female friends and those in non-traditional training had tended to get the information either from the NGO mobilizers, or mostly from their brothers and fathers. This section drawing on the finding that information about traditional and non-traditional training was accessed differently, suggests that a gender homophily information trap might, in part, explain the differential occupational paths of the young women.
Homophily or Homans’s “like me” principle (Lin and Erickson, 2008) could account for the pervasiveness of information about beauty training. According to the principle of homophily, “interactions are more likely to occur among individuals who have similar characteristics and lifestyles” (Homans, 1958; McPherson et al., 2001) and by extension, “social networks tend to be formed among persons of similar characteristics and lifestyles (in Lin and Ao, 2008, pp. 113–114). Homophily implies that “distance in terms of social characteristics translates into network distance: the number of relationships through which a piece of information must travel to connect two individuals.” (McPherson et al., 2001, p. 416). Since information is shared in routine exchanges, especially for the participants to the study who had no other avenues to collect information, the participants tended to get information from others like them. With “a given social network, there should be a tendency toward homophily among the ties” (Lin and Ao, 2008, pp. 113).

How might gender-homophily link to job related information? Hanson and Pratt, (1991, p. 240) demonstrated that:

- women tend to obtain job information from other women, whereas men find out about jobs from other men: Of the personal contacts mentioned by women, 49 percent were female and only 34 percent were male (and two-fifths of the male contacts were the respondents’ husbands). For the remaining 27 percent of women's personal contacts, the sex of the contact could not be determined from the response. The gender bias is even clearer for men: 70 percent of men's personal contacts were male and only 9 percent were female; for the remaining 25 percent of men's personal contacts, we were unable to determine gender from the responses.

Erickson, (2008 ), explored in Canada, “Why some occupations are better known than others”. To do so they used data from a survey from the 2000 Canadian Federal Election Study, and asked the respondents if they knew “any men in an occupation, and whether they knew any women, instead of just whether they knew anyone at all” Examining the effect of size and composition of network audience on knowing about an occupation, Erickson (2008 ) found that:

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- The study drew on the 1996 Census of Canada for both the number of people in each occupation and its gender composition..
The extent to which people know a man, a woman, or both a man and a woman in an occupation simply depends on the occupation’s gender composition, in an even-handed way that shows no bias toward men or women. (...) If gender as such has no effect, then the chances of knowing only a woman will rise with the proportion of women in an occupation, the chances of knowing only a man will rise with the proportion of men in an occupation, and the two trends will be very similar. (...) The greater the percentage of women in an occupation, the more often respondents report knowing a woman and not a man (r = 0.939); the greater the percentage of men in an occupation, the more often respondents report knowing a man and not a woman (r = 0.957). (...) (Erickson, 2008, p. 339).

Since women tend to know about jobs that are dominated by women, and men tend to know about jobs that are dominated by men, homophily could explain why beauty training was known by all women. In this sense, the female-dominated jobs and the nature of social networks fulcrumed on homophily connections might be creating an information-traditional training trap – as a woman you know more about female dominated jobs and since women talk more to other women, they hear more about female-dominated jobs.

To know about the non-traditional training and come out of the traditional occupational trap, one needed to come into contact with someone different, a heterophilous connection. However, disapproval of gender mixing restricted such possibilities which was reported repeatedly even amongst women in non-traditional training. *Meena, a driver trainee, attributed why she wouldn't work in truck making with her father to the presence of boys in the job:*

I never thought of it [going into truck making along with my father and brother]. A girl will go there?! (laughs). There are only boys there. How can I go where boys are?!

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*The apprehensions around interacting with boys may be understood may be understood in terms of claims to respectable femininity. Fernando and Cohen (2014), for example, highlights the importance of “Maintaining appropriate physical and emotional distance from men” (Fernando and Cohen, 2014, p 10), as a significant aspect of respectability). While the scope of the thesis does not allow an examination of respectable femininity and its impact of gender mixing, concerns about respectability has been raised as a crucial issue in several studies of women workers in South Asia (Fernando & Cohen, 2014; Radhakrishnan, 2009; Gilbertson, 2014; Phadke, 2007, 2013; Ranade, 2007), and may be seen to understand it further.*
Bani, a driver trainee, expressed disapproval of training spaces which had boys present:

I told her [Meethi didi, the mobilizer] I was not interested. She said why don't you come and see it once; you'll like it a lot. I came here with her and found the atmosphere over here to be very good. Like there are many places where there are boys standing at the staircase or there is "gutka" or smoking but there was nothing like that here... that there are only girls here, you can come and see even, there are no boys who work here, there are "Sirs" but that’s all, and they don’t do any ‘faalto baatein’ [frivololus talk]. […]

Mamta, a driver trainee, described how her being able to train was contingent on the absence of boys at the centre:

Papa doesn’t like my going here and there. Papa agreed to send me here too because there are no boys here. He would not like to send me to a place where the boys are also working. Actually, I had never ventured out till now. I have come out of home only this year. On joining here, I have come to know what roads and routes are there, which I was never aware of.

As such in driving, their participation was often contingent on trainees being all girls and during mobilizing for potential trainees, the first question asked, and the first assurance given was the absence of boys. In the ITI, their participation was in spite of boys, a hurdle that could be overcome only through the presence of other girls which was actively sought.

Restrictions around mixing with men outside the family meant that, when information from gender-heterophilous connections was accessed, it could only be accessed through brothers or fathers. As such, the electrician and electronic mechanic trainees tended to have received the information from their brothers or in some cases their fathers. In the case of the driving training, the mobilizers substituted for the lack of heterophilous connections in the daily life of the participants.
4. Information access vs information use: autonomy from peer and neighbourhood approval

Information access might not translate to information use, the latter being constrained, for instance, by approval from peers. Participants across traditional and non-traditional training repeatedly reported that they did not care if their peers or neighbours disapproved of the course they trained in. There were only about two of the fifty-six participants who reported that peer approval would affect their course choice.

Anubha, an electrician trainee, described the reaction that her neighbours had to her training:

She [the aunty from her neighbourhood] said to my mother, "what will you make her do by getting her to do an electrician course. Will you make her sit at an electrician's shop? Will she do that type of work? Boys sit at a shop, and you are going to make her sit... this and that..." My mother said, "No. Now if she’s interested in it, she should do it. We are not going to stop her."

The reactions did not stop Anubha from telling those around her – in the neighbourhood or in the extended family – about her course:

Yes, I do tell everyone about my course. I don’t [hide it]. If they ask me what are you doing?", [I say] "I am doing a course." "Which trade?" "Electrician" I have also told all my relatives about it. They don’t say anything. (Yes) I have [told people in the lane as well]. They all know [about my training] because I go to the ITI wearing the "dress" [uniform]. One boy asked me if I was going for a doctor’s training, because of the dress.

She explained that even if she had made different choices, that other people such as her peers or those in the neighbourhood would have still been disapproving:

If I hadn’t done the ITI after SOL but directly done an ITI course after passing 12th class] then they would say “why didn’t you study further?” They would say something or the other. I can’t understand people. They have a problem with everything we do. You must have (confidence) in yourself, whatever you do.

For example, Forrest and Mikolaitis (1986) writing to develop a comprehensive theory on women’s career development, argue that a fear of compromising connectedness with others, could shape women’s career decisions in line with others’ approval. Studying the undergraduate student’s career decision making in Kenya, Koech et al., (2016) find a significant positive correlation between career choice and peer approval. Salami, (1997) finds that Nigerian adolescents choose education and occupations to meet peer expectations.
The driver trainees reported the various objections that neighbours and friends raised about training as a taxi driver: as work where “passengers misbehave with a taxi driver”; “You will not have any time to come back home”; “If you come late at night, the neighbours will keep gossiping as to where you have been until so late”; and as work which is, “rubbish/the work of vagabonds” [“lafango ka kaam”]. I asked Padma, a driver trainee, if those around her commented on the training. She explained that it was their parents’ opinion that mattered more and quelled any doubt that the reactions of others could have caused (Parent’s role in occupational outcomes of participants is discussed in greater detail in chapter 6).

They don’t say anything to our face. They say when we are gone. So, we don’t get to know exactly who is saying what. But that makes no difference to me. I know that nobody among them will help me when I will fall. They won’t support me to get ahead. Everyone in my lane is of the “selfish type”. Their daughters are married and their husbands hit them every day and that’s what they want for me. My mother’s support is enough for me and I am moving forward.

I asked her directly if she would have trained in the course if her friends had not approved. Padma told me emphatically,

Yes, definitely, I would have gone for it. Friends and relatives will do their own thing and move where they have to. I will remain where I am. I would have joined even if our friendship would have gotten broken.

While the autonomy from approval of others – friends, relatives and neighbours – could be expected from those in the non-traditional training, participants in beauty training also displayed a similar autonomy. I asked Mariam if a negative reaction from her friend would have affected her training choice?

No, it's not that. I think that it shouldn't affect you whatever others are thinking. You have to think about yourself. Other people will come, speak and go away, but you are in the same spot. You just become something. Just think that much.

It’s other’s job to speak so let them speak.

I asked her to imagine the situation wherein she was driving a taxi.

G: Suppose you were driving a taxi. In that case, how do you think people from your vicinity would have reacted?
M: As many people, so are there as many views. Someone will say that she is a
girl, and eventually, she has to be sent to her in-law’s house after marriage, so
why are you wasting your time on her? Some who are more literate think its a
good thing that at least she is doing something. Some find it right while some
think it's bad. But we shouldn't be affected by whatever they think or say because
they are not the ones who are going to live with us. We'll become self-dependent
by learning skills. It's good that we will not have to beg before someone.
Otherwise, we have to request someone else even if we only require two rupees.
But if you have a career you will have something of your own; you will straight
away go and purchase what you wish. So, I wouldn't have stopped if someone
from my vicinity would have said something bad about what I do, about taxi
driving. Because I know that as many people there are as many opinions.

Bharti, a beauty trainee, contrasting support from neighbours to that from parents
said: “I don’t care about their [the neighbours’ or friends’] support. Most important
is the support from your parents, if it’s with you, you don’t need anybody else’
support.” As Mariam, I asked Bharti if her choice of training would have been
affected by peer disapproval in the hypothetical case where she had considered
entering driver training:

Their [friends’] reaction would have been “Haw! you are doing this?!“ (laughs).
[But] No, I don’t think [it would have made a difference to my training choice].
Only my parents are important.

Participants did not report approval of individuals other than parents to be
determining. Even where participants were not impervious to the disapproval of
others, it took the form of some in non-traditional training to not share their unusual
training choice with friends and neighbours. In contrast, those in traditional training
had no reason not to tell.

Hamida, a driver trainee, was also studying in college through correspondence. I
asked her whether it mattered to her friends what job she did. She said:

It shouldn’t matter to them. They would talk about it though. I’m sure if I tell
them they would taunt me. They will say that you were only able to become a
driver, but they have never seen “professional” drivers, dressed up, speaking
professionally; when they will see me as a driver, then they will realise.
Ujala, a driver trainee, had not told her friends about her training. She explained to me what she thought their reactions would have been had she told them:

You know how these neighbours are. They don’t take anything positively. First of all, they will say it’s strange I am pursuing taxi driving despite having been highly educated. But I don’t care about any of it. One has to give one’s best, whether the work is big or small. Sometimes what appears small becomes so big that it is noticed by everyone.

She elaborated on my probing that even if she had explained the reason for her choice, it would not have helped in convincing them:

It’s always difficult to convince each and every one. We can’t satisfy everyone. When I go out, everybody asks what I am doing nowadays. Every friend, every neighbour asks the same question. I just tell them I am doing nothing because I don’t want to reveal everything to them. When I achieve some success, everybody will themselves get to know, so I want to achieve something first, and reveal later.

As such, a few driver trainees had not told others outside the family about their training. They felt they would not approve of their training as they had not “seen professional drivers” (Hamida) or because “they don’t take anything positively” (Ujala). Yet, the apprehended disapproval from peers and neighbours did not prevent their entry.

4.1. Implications of peer autonomy

Peer disapproval did not prevent entry into non-traditional training for the participants. They either did not care or they did not tell their peers, and their entry appeared autonomous of peer approval. Alkire, (2005, p. 235) explains autonomy as, “self-determining and independent; able to resist social pressures to think and act in certain ways; regulates behaviour from within; evaluates self by personal standards”. Chirkov et al., (2003, p. 98) contrast autonomy with its opposite heteronomy, “in which one’s actions are experienced as controlled by forces that are phenomenally alien to the self, or that compels one to behave in specific ways regardless of one’s values or interests.”. This autonomy from peer disapproval was not unique to participants in non-traditional training but also appeared true for those in the traditional training.
What explains young participants’ autonomy from approval of their peers and neighbours? Given that the participants did not have many friends and did not ‘hang out’ and weren’t able to spend much time with the few friends they had, it appeared that young women, are not as embedded in wider networks. Not only were their networks narrow in that they did not have many ties but even where they spoke of friends, the ties appeared to be weak. Studies have noted that a strength of a tie can be related to the amount of time spent together (Granovetter, 1983); frequency of contact (Granovetter, 1994; Lin et al., 1978) and to multiplexity or contact across contexts (Kapferer, 1969). The participants were unable to spend time with friends, where they spoke of having friends at all. Their contact was infrequent, sometimes only speaking on festivals like Diwali and with restricted mobility, they were unable to meet school-friends outside school, curtailing a multiplexity of contact. Weak ties could have made it possible for the young women to be more autonomous of peer and neighbourhood approval.

In contrast, while the research did not study men, there was a tentative indication that boys could care about peer approval. I asked, Anubha, an electrician trainee, what her brother and sister did,

A: My brother, he had studied up to 12th class. He also enrolled himself in college but he got distracted and got bored of studies and left it in the 2nd year… After that, he sometimes gets a job, and sometimes he leaves it and sits idle at home. Right now, he is at home. He's not able to find a job anywhere.
G: Didn’t he think of doing an ITI course?
A: No, he didn't. My mother keeps asking him to do some course, just do anything, because one can't get a job without any experience. He says that he can’t do any course because he’s too old to do it now. His friends are also like that [useless]. Even if he speaks of doing some course etc., his friends say what are you going to do with doing a course now, it’s the age to earn not do a course. They say that nothing can be done now. So, if my mummy says anything then he just refuses her; he says that I don't want to do any [course]

As opposed to the girls who participated in the study who were autonomous of peer disapproval but for whom parental approval was essential, for brothers it was peer suggestion and approval which seemed more critical.
Studies such as Munshi and Rosenzweig, (2006) find that in Bombay, while the “male working-class—lower-caste—networks continue to channel boys into local language schools that lead to the traditional occupation, despite the fact that returns to nontraditional white-collar occupations rose substantially in the 1990s”, the "lower-caste girls, who historically had low labour market participation rates and so did not benefit from the network, are taking full advantage of the opportunities that became available in the new economy by switching rapidly to English schools” (p 1225). Using household surveys of random samples of students “stratified by caste, who entered the twenty-eight secondary schools in Dadar [Bombay] (in the first grade) over a 20-year period, 1982–2001” (p1235), their study then also points to the limiting influence of networks in being able to make non-traditional schooling choice for those who are more embedded in networks – the lower caste boys. The findings of this chapter then suggest that there is a positive aspect to having narrow networks with weak ties outside the family: young women with narrow networks, are autonomous of and unencumbered by peer and neighbourhood disapproval to make non-traditional choices.

5. Conclusion

This chapter finds that young women who were part of this study had severe network-related barriers to accessing information on non-traditional jobs due to (i) narrow (iii) and highly-gender homophilous networks. Yet, for those (relatively rare) young women whose male contact – usually father or brother – or a NGO worker does make them aware of the non-traditional training, the woman is less likely to be inhibited by peer and neighbour disapproval. While the narrow networks hinder information access, once information is gained, they also make their use more possible. (See figure 6 below).
As such this chapter makes a counterintuitive suggestion. Studies on social networks generally only focus on it as ‘capital’. For example, several studies have looked at the effect of shrinkage of social networks on reduced social capital (McDonald and Mair, 2010; Russell, 1999); on the effect of lack of social connections on lower well-being (Jahoda et al., 2002); on effects of narrow social networks on low job attainment (Granovetter, 1994; Lin, 1999). This chapter points to a positive effect of having narrow and weak social networks – autonomy from peer and neighbourhood disapproval makes non-traditional choices possible. Relatedly, while studies acknowledge the ‘positive’ aspect of weak ties for information (Granovetter, 1983), in this study the weak ties are not useful for information but for the autonomy they offer to enter non-traditional jobs.

Further, by analysing interpersonal networks the chapter provides a micro-macro bridge. It is through “these networks that small-scale interaction becomes translated into large-scale patterns, and that these, in turn, feedback into small groups.” (Granovetter, 1983, p. 1360).

The chapter focusses on routinised social interaction as an important way of information dispersion through social networks. In doing so, it provides an
understanding of accidental career choices and how people ‘passively’ and ‘serendipitously’ fall into different careers (Hanson and Pratt, 1991). Further, questioning economic models of job search that posit it as a separate activity, it shows that job information and search is “a far more casual and socially embedded process for the majority of the population” (Hanson and Pratt, 1991, p. 237). Excluding these subtle ways of information exchange, what Lin and Ao (2008) call the invisible hand of social capital, would be underestimating the significance of social networks and social capital. Since women, especially young women from lower family SES are constrained in social networks, an approach that does not focus on routinised exchanges of information would severely underestimate their disadvantage in not having wide social networks.

The chapter emphasizes how homophily, reinforced by gendered norms, can create gender homophily-information-traditional occupational traps. It shows that participants who were in training to become electricians and electronic mechanics had tended to hear about the non-traditional training from their brothers or in some cases their fathers. Thus, men played an important role in providing information for male-dominated training for women. Yet, the restricted mobility and values around gender mixing restricted interaction with men other than brothers and fathers which prevented participants from learning about “male” jobs. As such, restrictions on gender mixing likely curtail the information that women are able to gather about non-traditional jobs. For driving, mobilizers from the NGO, substituted as the heterophilous information source for the non-traditional training.

Some of the findings resonate with and might be applicable to contexts beyond India. Studies looking at women entrepreneurs who cross over to male-dominated occupations in Uganda find that although women who cross over make as much money as men and more than women who stay in female-dominated sectors, this is “unknown to a majority of women who do not cross over, suggesting information is a key initial hurdle to crossing over” (Campos et al., 2015, p. 4). Nearly “80 percent of non-crossovers that make less than crossovers think they make the same or more.” (Campos et al., 2015, p. 16). Further, the study also found that, “crossovers are more likely to be introduced to their sector relative to non-crossovers by fathers, male friends/community members, and other male family members. (…) On the other
hand, non-crossovers are more likely to be introduced to their sectors by mothers and teachers” (Campos et al., 2015, p. 21).

The unusual findings point to the importance of looking at the effects of social networks in different contexts. For example, while Granovetter’s seminal work ‘The strength of weak ties’ (1973) based on Boston, US argues for weak ties mattering for better jobs, Bian’s (1997) study in China shows that strong ties played a more significant role in getting a better job. Using a 1988 survey in Tianjin, Bian analyses the institution that assigns jobs in China (i.e. state job assignment) and finds that unlike the market economies that Granovetter’s study bases itself on, in China, “jobs are acquired through strong ties more frequently than through weak ties.” (Bian, 1997, p. 366). Lin, (2008, p. 9 in the online version) thus concludes that “the details of the processes by which social capital leads to better jobs necessarily vary with the context’. In this case, looking at a different context, points to how having lesser social capital might actually lead to entry into a different, arguably better job. Non-traditional training is perceived to have a higher likelihood of a job, and in the case of the electrician and electronic mechanic training a better paying, more secure job, such as a job in the public sector, than the traditional beauty training.

It’s important to note the potential limitation of these findings. In spite of clear articulations of autonomy by the participants, their response might be a result of a social desirability bias. The question to the beauty trainees, “if a negative reaction from their friends or neighbours would have affected their training choice had they known about the non-traditional training,” could be affected by an interviewer effect. In other words, my positionality as a woman researcher who is pursuing a PhD from a foreign university, could have created an interviewer effect where in the participants could have felt a need to appear more autonomous of others’ disapproving opinions and more empowered, stating that if they had known about the non-traditional job at entry then other’s disapproving opinions would not have encumbered their entry into it. However, participants did not show a willingness to join any non-traditional job, which provides some reassurance against the interviewer bias changing their responses. For example, while the participants did not disapprove of women e-rickshaw drivers, they were not keen to become e-rickshaw drivers, which they made clear. For example, I asked Rekha, an electronic mechanic trainee:
G: How did you feel when you saw them [women e-rickshaw drivers]?
R: It feels a bit “wo”. It feels nice when we see them driving the e-rickshaws. Maybe their husbands are earning or not, but they are earning, which feels good. At least they are doing something for their children.
G: What do you mean by a bit “wo”?
R: That they are driving e-rickshaw despite being women and not cars. I have seen women driving cars, but they are driving e-rickshaws. That feels strange.

While this study indicates that having narrow networks might enable entry into more jobs, by making non-traditional jobs a part of the possible occupational ambit, the unusual finding could be strengthened by further research. Studies designed with men as a counterfactual, who have wider networks and are more embedded in networks would allow an exploration of the role that peer approval plays in training and job decisions. Relatedly, an ethnography of such young women and their friendships could provide rich details of peer friendships and neighbourhood relationships or the lack thereof.

The chapter showed how some participants gained the information for non-traditional job training and suggested that autonomy, on account of their limited embeddedness in narrow networks, allowed entry into non-traditional job training. However, in spite of information access, and even if unencumbered by network disapproval, fears about being able to do a “male” job could still prevent entry into it. How did participants come to feel efficacious towards such non-traditional jobs? The next chapter informs this question.
Chapter 5. Breaking out of perceived self-efficacy traps: role models, encouraging parents, and previous experiences.

You can’t be what you can’t see.
- Joycelyn Elders, in Pine (2012, p. 56)

1. Introduction

The previous chapter emphasized the importance of accessing information about being a driver, electrician or electronic mechanic as potential jobs for women. It argued that the use of the information was not curtailed by the disapproval of wider networks. Yet, the use of the information could be curtailed by beliefs around one’s own capability. How did the participants come to believe that they could train in “men’s” jobs? This chapter attempts to answer this question, employing the theoretical framework of Bandura’s perceived self-efficacy (PSE).

Bandura (2006, p. 307) defines self-efficacy as being ‘concerned with people’s beliefs in their capabilities to produce given attainments’ and argues that ‘Unless people believe they can produce desired outcomes by their actions, they have little incentive to act or to persevere in the face of difficulties.’ (Bandura, et al. 2001, p. 187). Self-efficacy, put simply, is one’s belief in one’s ability to succeed in a specific task or situation.

Section 2 discusses the concept of PSE – what it is and what it is not; its relationship with other constructs; its importance as a policy tool; the sources of PSE information; and finally the way that the chapter understands and applies the concept. Section 3 analyses why it is important to examine how PSE was built for the participants. The participants expressed their occupational entries in terms of what they felt they were capable of doing and not doing. While a sense of perceived self (in) efficacy influenced participants’ occupational decisions in general, building a sense of PSE was especially important for non-traditional jobs. These jobs were thought of as
men’s jobs by the larger context that the participants were situated in. Even if the gendered cultural beliefs are not individually held, they are internalised and affect the sense of capability of an individual (Correll 2001). PSE information was thus important to overcome these internalised constraints, especially since participants in non-traditional training were not first movers. Further, the driver trainees while not afraid of the tasks involved, were afraid of getting to the training, not having stepped out of the house before. In addition to mobility apprehensions, the electrician and electronic mechanic trainees were afraid of the skills involved in the training. PSE information was important to establishing driving as a job that girls do; and in the case of electricians and electronic mechanic trainees, to overcome fears around dealing with wires. Section 4 demonstrates the sources that informed a sense of PSE for the participants in non-traditional training. NGO mobilizers showed pictures of other driver trainees and introduced potential trainees to past trainees from their neighbourhood. As such vicarious experience was the most important route of PSE information for driver trainees. In contrast, at the ITI, there were no mobilizers to facilitate vicarious experience and verbal encouragement by parents was the most important source of self-efficacy information here. In addition, a few of the participants had some experience with tasks involved creating performance based self-efficacy information. Section 5 illustrates the ways by which PSE continued to build for trainees after they entered the training. While at the ITI, going through the course, implicitly augmented the participants’ PSE, Azad took steps to create a sense of PSE. The section illustrates the active ways by which the NGO transformed the participant’s willingness to enter the driver training into a confidence in the participant’s ability towards the job as well as a general sense of confidence. Section 6 demonstrates that participants in beauty training felt efficacious towards the training and simultaneously felt inefficacious towards other jobs that they or their parents would have liked them to do. Section 7 concludes by summarizing what the chapter has shown, its limitations, what PSE might mean for policy and how in the context of the study, little nudges might be enough to shape occupational behaviour.

2. Understanding PSE

Self-efficacy is part of a broad literature around the issues of agency and control (Gecas 1989). Self-efficacy, occupies a more delimited space within that literature,
focussing on perceptions and assessments of self with regard to “competence, effectiveness and causal agency.” (ibid, p. 296)

PSE was first developed by the psychologist Albert Bandura (1977) as a social learning theory; indeed Bandura’s 1977 book that discussed PSE is named “The Social Learning Theory”. Since the 1970s, the concept of PSE has been further developed by Bandura (Bandura 1977a, 1994, 2001a; Bandura et al. 2001; Bandura 2006) but also applied and developed by several other studies such as Ajzen 2002; Gecas 1989; Gibbs 2003; Maddux 2009; Sherer et al. 1982.

Bandura’s self-efficacy centers on self-evaluation processes. In contrast to the position that “individual behavior is entirely a response to external circumstances, this underlying framework sees individuals as proactive, self-reflecting, self-regulating, and motivated by subjective assessments of their own capabilities” (Wuepper and Lybbert 2017, p. 385). Bandura differentiates between efficacy expectations and outcome expectations (Bandura 1977b) or what others have termed system unresponsiveness (Wuepper and Lybbert 2017). An efficacy expectation is “a belief that one can successfully perform a particular action. It is a judgment of one’s personal efficacy. An outcome expectation is an estimate that a given action will lead to a certain outcome” (Gecas 1989, p. 294). While feelings of futility might arise from either low self-efficacy or perceptions of a social system as unresponsive to one’s actions, the former is a belief about one’s competence but the latter is a belief about one’s environment (ibid). As such addressing the futility takes different forms: “To alter efficacy-based futility requires development of competencies and expectations of personal effectiveness. By contrast, to change outcome-based futility necessitates changes in prevailing environmental contingencies that restore the instrumental value of the expectancies that people already possess.” (Bandura 1977a:205).

The PSE concept connects to other constructs of self-perception such as self-esteem, locus of control, perceived agency, confidence. However, PSE is domain specific, “such that most individuals have high PSE in some domains and low PSE in others” (Wuepper and Lybbert 2017, p. 385). This defining characteristic of PSE makes it

* While the concept of generalized self-efficacy has been proposed for example by Schwarzer (2014), studies such as Wuepper and Lybbert (2017) argue that it is the domain specificity that makes PSE useful in explaining behavior and outcomes and the characteristic remains a defining feature.
distinct from other concepts of self-perception. Self-esteem relates to the “individuals’ judgement of self-worth” (Wuepper and Lybbert 2017:387). While PSE and self-esteem can be highly correlated – an increase in domain specific PSE can increase self-esteem in general (Lane, et al. 2004). – increased sense of self-worth, a global judgement, may not necessarily imply increased domain specific confidence. Studies tend to relate having an external Locus of Control (LoC) with low PSE and having an internal LoC with high PSE (Wuepper and Lybbert 2017). While domain specific LoC can be closely linked to PSE, in general LoC “captures whether individuals generally feel in control of their life, which can have many reasons.” (ibid, p. 387). Self-efficacy and perceived agency are often used as substitutes (ibid). However, perceived agency “implies the intent to act” (ibid, p. 386) and does not comment on an individual’s belief about ability to succeed in a task. As such, perceived agency can lead to an increase in anxiety, whereas PSE by creating a belief in one’s ability to succeed, can reduce it (ibid). Many studies use PSE and confidence interchangeably. However, there are important differences. While PSE is a belief towards a domain, the latter is a characteristic of a person (ibid). Further, high confidence might coexist with domain specific perceived self-inefficacy. However, when “the phrase ‘confidence in one’s abilities’ ” is used with reference to domain-specific applications (such as by Compte and Postlewaite 2004), it is essentially indistinguishable from PSE” (ibid, p.387).

2.1. PSE matters

Several interventions in different domains demonstrate that PSE has real effects and further, it is amenable to policy tools.

Krishnan and Krutikova (2013), test the impact of a program aimed to raise non-cognitive skills of children and adolescents in the slums of Bombay. Using two comparison groups, the study controlled for unobservable effects of school and neighbourhood. They found that the program substantially raised PSE and self-esteem (by one standard deviation), which in turn led to higher school leaving test scores and improved early labor market outcomes.
In another experiment, Ghosal et al. (2019) investigated whether experimentally raising PSE of sex workers in India makes them less fatalistic and encourages more forward looking behaviour. They found that the treatment group which received eight weeks of “psychological empowerment” workshops showed higher PSE and improved saving and health seeking behaviour which persisted for at least fifteen months after the intervention.

Beaman et al. (2012), through a randomized natural experiment in Indian villages, show that observing female leaders increased PSE through a role-model effect which had real effects. Using surveys of adolescents aged 11 to 15 and their parents in rural India, they asked respondents (1) the level of education they wished their children to attain, (2) the type of occupation they wished their children to have at age 25, (3) the age at which they wished their children to marry, and (4) whether they wished their children to occupy a Pradhan (leadership) position in the future. They found that, relative to villages in which leadership positions for women in village councils were never reserved, in villages assigned a female leader for two election cycles, the gender gap in career aspirations closed by 20% in parents and 32% in adolescents; the gender gap in adolescent educational attainment was removed; and time spent by girls on household chores in villages of India was reduced.

While these studies show the significant impact of psychological variables in general and PSE in particular, identifying a causal link remains a challenge. In a recent study on PSE and climate adaptation Wuepper et al. (2020) employ instrumental variables and interaction terms between PSE and drought to overcome this limitation. They find that pineapple farmers in Ghana who have higher PSE are more likely to adopt climate smart technologies such as mulching.

As such PSE is consequential and has shown to have real effects in different domains -- education, health behaviour, agriculture. This chapter attempts to show that PSE also matters in the domain of non-traditional occupational entry.

2.2. Sources of PSE information

Bandura identifies four sources of PSE information -- vicarious experience (i.e. seeing others perform challenging or threatening activities successfully); verbal
persuasion (i.e. information from others about one’s abilities); performance accomplishment (i.e. information from personal mastery experiences), and emotional arousal (i.e. inferences individuals make about their capabilities from their emotional states, such as fear).

Vicarious experience, often referred to as role modelling, relies on “inferences from social comparison” (Bandura 1977a, p. 197). Role models provide “an example of the kind of success that one may achieve”, and “a template of the behaviors that are needed to achieve such success” (Lockwood 2006, p. 36). A large body of literature establishes that one needs a similar other, someone relatable, for the individual to serve as a role model (Almquist and Angrist 1971; Lockwood 2006; Ray 2006). The successful other serves as, first, a guide to achieve one’s goals; and second, serves as a “proxy”, such that through comparisons with this other, the individual evaluates her ability to perform the task successfully (Ray 2006).

Role models are found to be especially important for women in the context of occupations. Since men have traditionally outnumbered women in the workplace, the example of a female professional who provides evidence that women can achieve success in the workplace can be especially beneficial for them (Lockwood 2006). For women, in addition to role models providing proxies and a road map, role models help alleviate “stereotype threat”, reduce anxiety and improve performance. If stereotypes of women lead them to expect to perform worse than men, this can cause anxiety, which in turn can impair performance (ibid). For example, Lockwood (2006), based on interviews with students at the University of Toronto, examined the extent to which matching on gender determines the impact of career role models on the individual through two studies. Study 1 evaluated the impact of gender-matched and mismatched career role models on the self-perceptions of female and male participants. In Study 2, female and male participants were asked to “describe a career role model who had inspired them in the past” (Lockwood 2006, p. 36). In both studies, results indicated that “female participants were more inspired by outstanding female than male role models; in contrast, gender did not determine the impact of role models on male participants” (Lockwood 2006, p. 36).

Verbal persuasion is widely used because of its ease and its ready availability (Bandura 1977b). Bandura argues that “People are led, through persuasive suggestion, into believing they can cope successfully with what has overwhelmed
them in the past.” (Bandura 1977b:82). Verbal persuasion is easier to do but less effective – "likely to be weak and short lived" (Bandura 1977b:82) -- than other sources of PSE information such as those arising from their own accomplishment. In the “Computing Self-efficacy Among Women in India”, Verma (2010) examines women’s self-efficacy beliefs in computing in India. The study conducted in depth interviews with 60 female undergraduate – young students (between the ages of 19 and 22), who characterized their family background as middle class, and whose fathers were in professional jobs, majoring in computer science, in 2007-08 in India. The study found that the participants did not have early exposure to computers at school or at home but verbal persuasion from family member increased their self-efficacy for computing education, aiding their entry into it.

Bandura argues that performance accomplishments “provide the most dependable source of efficacy expectations because they are based on one’s own personal experiences” (Bandura 1977b:81). Performance accomplishment may not be undermined by failures. Instead the effect of failure on performance accomplishment depends on the timing and total pattern of experiences (ibid). If failures are encountered early on or if there are more failures than successes then efficacy is likely to be dampened. On the other hand, if failures are encountered after experiencing success in the tasks or if there have been many more successes than failures then mastery expectations and arising efficacy are likely to still gain.

Emotional arousal “can influence efficacy expectations in threatening situations. Because high arousal usually debilitates performance, individuals are more likely to expect success when they are not beset by aversive arousal than when they are tense, shaking, and viscerally agitated.” (Bandura 1977b, p. 82, emphasis mine). As such emotional arousal, in the forms of anxiety, gives individual negative PSE information (Betz 1992).

2.3. Applying PSE to this chapter

This chapter understands PSE at entry as a willingness or an openness to enter a training. To understand PSE as a clear expression of confidence in one’s ability to accomplish tasks involved at entry of a training, especially when it is non-traditional, and when at time participants were unsure of the tasks involved, would
be a limiting and perhaps an unrealistic application of the concept of PSE to the context.

This chapter is concerned with analyzing efficacy expectation (and not outcome expectation). It concerns itself with the first three sources of PSE information – vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and performance accomplishment. The fourth source, emotional arousal, “can influence efficacy expectations in threatening situations” (p 82, Bandura 1977). Hackett and Betz (p 332) argue that “It is important to note that Bandura (1977b) views anxiety responses as a co-effect rather than as a cause of low self-efficacy expectations. In other words, anxiety is often induced when an individual lacks expectation of efficacy with regard to specific behaviours or situations. However, the consequent presence of anxiety serves to further decrease both self-efficacy and the probability that necessary behaviours will be performed.” (Hackett and Betz 1981, p. 332). This study does not consider emotional arousal at entry for two reasons. First, theoretically, since “Fear reactions generate further fear” (Bandura 1977b:82), emotion arousal is a coeffect of PSE rather than only a source of information about it. Second, empirically, and perhaps more critically, emotional arousal did not clearly appear in the participants’ responses. While participants reported fears and apprehensions, they did not describe training as a “threatening situation” and their reactions did not seem to qualify as “tense, shaking, and viscerally agitated”, characteristics of emotional arousal (Bandura 1977b, p. 82).

3. Why was building PSE important?

Participants across non-traditional and traditional training tended to not take steps towards jobs they felt they could not achieve. Pinki, a driver trainee’s, mother had wanted her to become a teacher. Pinki wanted to fulfil her mother’s dream but did not think she was capable enough as she had opted for Arts. I asked her:

G: But one can pursue a teacher’s career with Arts stream too, right? Didn’t you ever think of becoming a teacher?

P: No, I never thought of it, because I think knowledge is paramount in that field. If we keep passing classes, it does not necessarily mean we are knowledgeable. In fact, the studies in government schools is such that we only formally pass our
classes. Students are not well versed in English either, but they are still doing a BA or a MA. You must yourself know [the subject] so that you can teach others. That makes me think that I am not capable of becoming a teacher. Therefore, I quit the idea.

Bani, a driver trainee, had dreamt of being a police woman when she was in school but had not taken steps towards it as she felt it needed a lot of “brains” which she did not have.

I liked the police-job very much. I liked the way “ladies” cops dress and their body language. I had thought of becoming one myself, but the studies for it was hard. For studying you need a lot of brains which I don’t have (she laughs!). So, I dropped the idea.

A job in the mall was one of the few jobs, Anchal, an electronic mechanic could think of that women could do. She reported that she liked seeing women working in the mall. I asked Anchal, if she would be willing to work in a mall if she were promised a job that starts immediately:

I don't think I can do that. I have seen many girls in malls. They have a good height and good personality, which I think I lack. So, I don't think that far for myself [that I can reach that].

Anchal thus, would not enter a job that she liked and was being given, because she assessed that she lacked the qualities required for the job.

A sense of PSE thus appeared important to occupational outcomes in general – participants did not take steps towards occupations they would have liked to enter, but felt ill-equipped to. A sense of PSE was especially important for non-traditional jobs. As non-traditional jobs or male dominated jobs they first had to be thought of as jobs for women. Even if the individual participants did not believe that jobs are sex typed, they tended to report that the communities they were a part of did, likely biasing their self-assessment.

Correll (2001) shows how (macro) cultural beliefs about gender influence PSE (or what she more specifically calls task self-assessment) towards mathematical ability, which in turn affects the career aspirations of men and women, even when the individual does not hold the same beliefs. Correll (2001) defines self-assessment as
“a personal conception of herself or himself as competent at the tasks believed to be necessary for that career path” (p 1698-99). She argues that while “many factors certainly influence individual career-relevant decisions and preferences, as a minimum, one must feel competent at the skills or tasks necessary for a given career in order to commit oneself to pursuing that career.” (p 1698-99). Using a large sample set of 25000 eighth grade students (as well as their parents, teachers, school administrators) from the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988, and conducting three follow up surveys -- 1990, 1992, and 1994, she tests three hypotheses: One, males' assessment of mathematical ability is higher than that of females' controlling for performance feedback on mathematical ability. Second, the effect of performance feedback is larger on females than on men. Third, higher self-assessment in mathematical ability means a higher probability of persisting in a path towards a quantitative profession. She finds significant positive evidence for all three hypotheses and concludes that "boys do not pursue mathematical activities at a higher rate than girls do because they are better at mathematics. They do so, at least partially, because they think they are better.” (p 1724). Correll (2001) explains the different self-assessments of men and women in terms of the cultural beliefs about gender that they are located in. She explains that ‘cultural beliefs’ about gender “are the component of gender stereotypes that contain specific expectations for competence” (p1695). Drawing on Ridgeway (1997), Berger et al (1977), Foschi et al (1994), Correll (2001) argues that cultural gender beliefs bias self-assessment even when the individual personally might not endorse the stereotype. As such, even women who do not believe that women are worse than men in maths, having internalised the cultural belief, i.e. the belief that most people expect men to be better at maths, will still likely have a lower self-assessment in maths compared to a male with similar ability.

In another study, Correll (2004) shows on the basis of an experiment conducted in lab settings with undergraduate students in the US, that individuals form aspirations by drawing on perceptions of their own competence at career-relevant tasks, and the perceptions men and women form are differentially biased by cultural beliefs about gender. When participants were exposed to a belief that men are better at a task, male participants assessed their task ability higher than female participants and had higher aspirations for career-relevant activities even though all were given the same scores. No gender differences were found in either assessments or aspirations in a
second situation where participants were instead exposed to a belief that men and women have equal task ability. While the study did not include a scenario where subjects are presented with evidence that females have better task ability which would have made the study more comprehensive, it showed how macro belief structures around gender constrain emerging preferences and shows their effect at a micro level.

The participants located in the (macro) cultural context where male dominated jobs are thought to be inappropriate for women needed to believe that non-traditional jobs were jobs that women did. Both driver trainees and electrician and electronic mechanic trainee did not appear to be ‘first-movers’. They needed to know that other women had come before them and trained in the course to be able to enter the training. As mentioned in chapter 4, Meena, a driver trainee’s father and brother worked in truck making. I asked her if she ever thought of doing the same work. She laughed and said, “But a girl will go there. (laughs) There are only boys there!” I questioned Meena on what made taxi driving different. She contrasted being a driver with working on truck bodies, and explained that others before her had made her entry into taxi driving possible:

G: Taxi driving is also considered to be a man’s job by many so why couldn’t you do truck making where your father and brother were working?
M: Yes, I know, that taxi driving is considered to be a man’s job, but that “line”, that of truck bodies, didn’t have any girls. No girls had joined it. So, I couldn’t go and do that.

But in taxi driving, she reported, there were other young women. Meena had been shown pictures of other women in the training by the mobilizers. Knowing she would not be the first woman to enter, and there were several other women in the driver training, appeared to make her entry into driving easier.

Similarly, I asked Mamta, a driver trainee, what she considered important in a job?
M: First of all, I want respect in a job. Plus, the job should be for women.
G: But they don’t consider a taxi driver’s job a woman’s job, do they?
M: Yes, but nowadays many girls are doing it.

Bhavya, an electrician trainee, had been introduced to other girls who had completed the electrician’s course at the ITI by her brother’s friend:
G: How did you feel talking to those girls?
B: I felt good after talking to them. They made me understand that there was nothing like I was thinking at the ITI. There would be girls there. [They said] Go there once and see. [If] you feel good then train there. You’ll feel good there. So, that’s why, I took admission in the ITI.
G: You told me that you were initially not interested in the electrician’s trade, then your brother’s friend made you talk to the girls who had studied the course. Suppose he wouldn’t have made you talk to them. Do you think you would have entered the course?
B: No. I wouldn’t have come here then. In that case, I would have been doing that same work [of sewing]. I would have even got specs by now! (laughs)

Further, located in the macro cultural context, participants tended to have a low self-assessment regarding the non-traditional jobs. At the driver training, the participants were not afraid about the skills involved but felt a bit odd about it. Some expressed fears around being able to get to the training. Kaveri, a driver trainee, felt a bit awkward about driving but her primary fear was about getting to the training institute:
Yes, it felt very strange that a girl would drive a car. Then my mother made me understand, and I understood.
G: When you started your training to become a taxi driver at your mother’s behest, how did you feel at that time?
K: I was felt good, but was also a little afraid.
G: What made you afraid?
K: Actually, I had gone out of home for the first time, so the road journey was in itself scary. Then this place also seemed to be scary. But once the classes started, all the fears were gone. Now I don’t feel scared.

Anu, a driver trainee was scared of getting to the training:
G: But men will also be around when you will drive a taxi?
A: Yeah, I am scared now too, but as I am going through the classes here, my confidence is increasing. Earlier, I was even scared of leaving home alone. I did my studies also from home itself. (…) I have never gone out. I studied from the school within our neighbourhood. Hence, I had no experience of travelling. Now when I am here, I come alone and have gotten used to it. I go to take exams too.
In contrast, the electrician and electronic mechanic trainees at the ITI, predominantly expressed fears about the skills they would have to learn. Esha, an electrician trainee, explained to me why she felt so scared before entering the training to become an electrician.

G: You mentioned that initially you were scared of joining the [electrician classes at the] ITI. What scared you?

E: I was scared about how would I be able to do it [the training]? This trade was also a bit strange... What would happen if I could not understand the electric connections etc.? I had never paid attention to such things, that how connections are made or that this is a holder etc. I didn't even know the names of the tools. Now I had to know their names, and “connection”! I was terrified and thought I didn't know anything about it. How would I be able to grasp [the instructions]? I should at least have some basic information about it [to be able to grasp it]. I felt I didn't know anything. I was never told about these things and was still put in this trade. So, I felt scared; what would happen? I thought I wouldn't understand, that I would only understand girl-type things [“ladkiyon waali cheezein”], and this was completely different. How would I manage was my concern. I thought it was very different, and maybe I wouldn't be able to understand the things [taught]... like connections, wires etc. How would I be able to do it? I didn't know where electricity came from. I didn't know anything about it. That's why I was very scared.

Esha, who had been compelled by her grandfather to train in the electrician course, stated further:

I didn't understand this “trade” at all, because us girls don't have anything to do with this field, with these wires etc. I can't understand. In fact, my brother was teasing me too, but I have another brother who said that "you must do it. It's a very good trade. At least go once." Then I said okay. We must listen to our elders too. [But you know], I used to just feel, that how would I be able to do this kind of work, these electrical things, that we stay so far from, things that only boys do, at least in our home. How would I be able to do it?

In such a context, how did the trainees come to feel a sense of PSE towards the training? The next section attempts to answer the question.
4. Building PSE for non-traditional jobs

Driver trainees, often reported a relatable role model – a woman of similar age, who lived in their residential area, with a similar socio-economic status. The NGO, Azad’s mobilization activities were key to creating this vicarious experience.

Hamida, a driver trainee, was completing the second year of her under graduation in Political Science through Open Schooling. Hamida described how her entry into driving began:

Ma’am [mobiliser from the NGO] had explained the training so well to me. She showed me photos of women working as drivers. There are two girls from my galli [lane] itself. Two sisters from near my lane in Jahangirpuri have been working [as drivers] for four years. They have got commercial licenses too. If they can do it then why can’t I? They haven’t even studied much, only until eighth or so. If illiterate people can do it, then why can’t educated people do it?

Hamida explained that she spoke to the young women in her vicinity who worked as drivers now after the mobilizers mentioned that the two women had trained as drivers with the NGO.

Bani, a driver trainee, explained where she got the belief to train in driving:

There’s a friend called Rajkumari, who comes from a very poor family. Once four of us including her learnt Mehndi [Henna designs made on the hands that women often learn to apply on other women’s hands on weddings]. At that time, she joined this driving course. At first, all of us would make fun of her, that why do you miss so many classes? See, we were behind you but now we are ahead of you.

Thereafter, Bani explained, that during the mobilization rounds she was shown Rajkumari’s pictures “in the [Azad] magazine”. She continued:

Then she became the source of inspiration for me. Nobody in my vicinity can drive a car as well as she does.

Mobilizers introduced potential trainees (like Hamida and Bani) to others in their residential area who they could relate to and carried a photo book of similarly young women in driver training during their recruitment house visits.
Figure 7. A page from the photo book that mobilizers would show to potential trainees

Azad mobilizers would point out the picture of the trainee who lived in the area of the potential recruitee from the year book and often introduce them to the trainee too.
In addition to the vicarious experience, the participants also reported that their mothers’ and the mobilizers’ encouragement and verbal persuasion helped them persist. Kaveri, a driver trainee, reported that initially she had felt a bit odd entering driving training:

K: Initially it looked odd, but my mother asked me to go and see what this is all about. I came here for 3-4 days. When I failed the first test, I lost heart, and felt like not coming here. Then Rafiya madam again came to our home and convinced me. Then I returned to the training.

G: Why had you found taxi driving odd?

K: It felt very strange that a girl would drive a car. Then my mother made me understand, and I got it.

There were hardly any reports of performance accomplishment information. Driver trainees generally had not had previous experience as participants came from low
income backgrounds and only 19 percent (4/21) of the participants’ households owned a motorbike\(^6\). Anu was an exception. Anu explained that her fears had nothing to do with driving a taxi:

No [I was not scared of driving a taxi], actually, I am the only girl in my family who knows how to drive a bike. If I can ride a bike, I can drive a car as well. Anu described her fears entering the training in terms of the potential presence of boys:

Yes, I was scared, but when I had a discussion with Ma’am, she said that there are only girls here and no boys and all the girls stay together cordially. She said if I felt troubled even slightly, she was there for me. She said that they would support me if anything were to go wrong.

At the ITI, in the absence of mobilizers who facilitated introduction to potential “role models”, verbal encouragement was the primary source of PSE information. Electrician trainee, Bhavya, described that her mother’s encouragement helped her overcome fears and enter the training:

But there were only two girls there. So, I felt a bit scared. I had never worked with boys. I went home and told my parents about it. So, my mother said never mind, that today girls are doing so many jobs. She said, that if you can’t even train with boys then that’s not good at all. So that made me [decide to] take admission here.

In rare cases, participants emphasised the encouragement that they received from their father. Ujwala, an electrician trainee, sourced her confidence that allowed her to enter the male dominated training to her father:

My papa gives me this confidence. I share my thoughts with my papa. My mummy-papa always tell me not to be worried/afraid about anything and not to take “tension”. They give me this confidence. They say, if any problem comes up then I’m there, mummy is there, we are all with you, which gives me confidence.

The effectiveness of parental encouragement raises the question that who offers the source of the persuasion has important implications for its effectiveness. Esha, was upset at first when she was to train as an electrician. Esha’s father was an alcoholic and she and her mother lived with her mother’s natal family instead. Her nana

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\(^6\) The calculation is based on the data shared by the NGO Azad.
[maternal grandfather] was a father figure for her. Her nana had compelled her to do the training and she seemed to have given in to what her elders were asking of her. I asked, Esha if electrician was her first choice. She responded: “No, my family made me fill this as my choice.”. She explained that her nana [maternal grandfather] as well as her uncles, had also trained in the ITI and got a job because of it:

All of them say that they have all been “successful” because they had done [a course at the] ITI and so you should also train at the ITI. Don’t take a trade of your choice, do as we are telling you [instead]. So, that’s why they made me put electrician as my first choice [on the form]. I told them that my drawing was very good, and I really like drawing. I told them that I want to take “draftsman trade” [because] I would be able to make drawings, maps etc well. [But] they said, keep “draftsman” on the “side”, [as your second choice], [and] we’ll see what choice you get. So, I had electrician as the first choice, and then I ended up getting the electrician's trade.

In the cases such as Esha’s, where the individual is young and the “verbal persuasion” comes from someone who is older, and in a position of authority, it becomes difficult to ascertain if it was persuasion or if in fact it was compulsion or even coercion. The distinctive role of parents’ in the occupational decisions of participants is discussed in Chapter 6.

In addition, some of the participants at the ITI had had previous experience with the tasks involved at the training. Manjari, an electronic mechanic trainee, described how she used to repair switch boards with the help of her father:

I repaired the [electric line to the] board [as a child]. I didn’t do it on my own. My father helped me. He had instructed me how to do it, and I did it. But he was scared of letting me do it. He said, let it be, I’ll do it, its electricity. But I did it.

She continued,

I must have done it 2-3 times. Once I repaired the board in the room on the upper floor, and the other time of the ground floor. Both with the support of my father.

Karishma, an electronic mechanic trainee, and her elder sister repaired things around the house growing up:

Actually, one of my elder sisters lives close to us. My father had purchased a plot for her, so, she’s living there. Her daughter is also very interested in this field. She
used to repair things, like she would open the iron and fix it. That made me think that if she can do it, I can do it as well. So, I also did it 2-3 times. I was able to do it too, but she did it better than me. She is also younger to me. Once I took the iron to the mechanic and brought it back. But its wire disconnected again. My mother said, "Where have you got it repaired? Go again and get it fixed. Who knows which shop you have gone to and got it repaired?" I said, "Ammi, [mother] I’ll try to repair it myself." My mother said that I would get an electric shock and I shouldn't do it. I said, "No, let me try. If I get a shock, let it happen." So, I was scared but I did it but I connected that wire nonetheless. My mother then let me do it saying that her daughter is so capable that she was able to do fix the iron. If you ask my family members, they would say that.

As such, the few participants who had experienced being successful in tasks earlier in their lives reported a sense of self-efficacy in being able to do the tasks in the training.

In sum, for driver trainees, vicarious experience and verbal encouragement were importance sources of perceived self-efficacy information. At the ITI, where sources of vicarious experiences were not as readily available, verbal persuasion and sometimes previous experience with similar tasks served to build participants’ sense of PSE.

5. From willingness to enter to confidence in one’s ability

Once they entered a training, their PSE for the task kept getting built. The process of building PSE was thus not discrete -- that occurred before entering the training and was completed then -- but one that was continuous and that further developed after entering, during training.

Studies on PSE show the continuous nature of PSE building. For example, a large ongoing research effort is the Young Lives study (http://www.younglives.org.uk). The study follows the lives of 12,000 children in India, Ethiopia, Peru, and Vietnam. Among other variables, the study tracks the evolution of PSE over 15 years of the children’s lifetime. So far, results show that PSE evolves over an individual’s lifetime.
Esha, an electrician trainee, described the change in her PSE:

I didn’t know anything at all about being an electrician. I was scared of electricity, of getting “current”... But now, we are used to it. I myself have taken electric shocks. Sir gave us voltage shots. Sir says “that how will a confectioner become a confectioner if he doesn’t taste his own sweets. Similarly, an electrician should also taste an electric shock”. So, we have tried getting electric shocks too — there is a circuit where you can reduce the voltage so we tried it on that.

While at the ITI, ongoing experience with tasks and often teacher’s encouragement continued to implicitly create PSE, at Azad, PSE was actively inculcated through various activities and methods. Picture below shows an example of the messages which adorned the walls of the NGO.

Figure 9. A poster at Azad, the driving training centre.

| Difficulties are a “part of life”;
| To come out of them laughing is “Art of life”.

The message encouraged participants to not be daunted by difficulties and believe that they could overcome them and come out of it “laughing”. In another example, the picture below shows the “Qualities of a good driver” that was put up on the bulletin board. The qualities emphasize “courage”, “perseverance”, “self-confidence” and “bravery” amongst others as qualities that the participants should be aiming to inculcate as aspiring drivers.
Azad also conducted a group activity, “Badlaav ka safarnaama” or the “journey of change” that asked trainees to report the changes they had seen in their life as a result of the confidence that they had built through technical and non-technical training at the NGO. Displayed on a road, the milestones included those that were a part of the technical training like getting a learner’s driver license (shown in figure 11), but included non-technical changes such as feeling confident to speak against what they considered unjust. The pictures of trainees were posted on the “journey of change” according to what stage they were at. There was also a monthly discussion where the trainees shared the changes in their confidence level that they have felt.
In addition, a sense of PSE, confidence and voice was integrated into personal tasks like keeping a diary. Each trainee was given a diary which only the trainee had access to. The trainees were encouraged to write about their experiences, their feelings in the diary. The diary was interspersed with messages such as the one shown in the figure 12 below, that highlighted the importance of speaking up and being confident.
6. Beauty training: Lack of sources of PSE information to break out of belief traps

Beauty training was often an expression of lack of PSE in several other options. I asked Tina how she came to think of beauty training. She said directly: “Just like that. When I didn’t get anything, then I thought of becoming a beautician.”

Saya, a beauty trainee, thought of entering beauty training when she felt she couldn’t accomplish her other dreams:

The idea to try this [beauty] field entered my mind when I was sure that I won’t be able to pursue a police job because of my height and because I’m not fluent in English. Then only did I enter the field of beauty parlour.

On the other hand, with beauty training, Saya felt fully capable of accomplishing the work:

I would look at others and think that I could do it in a much better way. I ask Ma’am that give me the machine for hair styling. I can make a hair style which is even better. I think that I can do even better.

She continued:

Basically, I am somewhat weak in studies, that is the truth. Even my family is a little disappointed because of my weakness in studies, otherwise all of my family is very intelligent. But when I try to think, something happens to my mind. So, I
thought, fine, in parlour I won’t need much studies, so then I chose [to train in] parlour.

Sejal, a beauty trainee, decided to train in beauty when she got a ‘compartment’ (conditional promotion) in class 9 and wasn’t able to train to become a doctor. She reported that she entered beauty training as she “did not have the mind for anything else”.

When the idea of a doctor’s course left my mind, I thought of doing a parlour course. That idea [of doing the doctor’s course] waned away. It’s not easy to become a doctor.

G: But why did you choose parlour training?
S: I had only thought of being a doctor. But then that idea left my mind. Then I came here [to Prayas] and took admission in 10th.

G: Didn’t you think of anything else?
S: No, I didn’t. Because I didn’t have a mind for anything else.

In contrast to other jobs, beauty trainees felt they could succeed in becoming a beautician. Mariam, explained her entry into beauty training in terms of her belief that she “could do something” in this field. I asked her if her mother had any dreams for her career:

My mother supports my own dreams. She says become what you want to become. But I also have to think what I can do. I thought I could do something in this so I came here [for parlour training].

Similarly, Niti, a beauty trainee, said:

I think I won’t be able to do any other job. I get nervous very quickly. I think I can “do it” in a parlour and I am interested in it. I think that it’s better to do what you are able to do.

For beauty training they did not need, for example, role models to overcome fear. In the absence of role models who did something different, participants in beauty courses did what others were doing. I asked, Bhavni, a beauty trainee, “Why did you want to get a beauty parlour training?”

* Prayas, where the beauty course was offered, also offered registration services for schooling through correspondence.
I really wanted to learn it. My mummy also really wanted me to learn it. Whoever is there in my house, all our relatives, i.e. my aunt’s sisters-in-law, they all have learnt parlour jobs. They have even opened their own shops.

Similarly, Saya, a beauty trainee, mentioned that “everyone” trained in beauty work:

S: Well, everyone does it. And as I have already said, I was already interested in this
G: Everyone like?
S: Like my Bhabhi (older sister-In-law) stays close to me. She’s able to take care of the house and go to the parlour also. If she gets a bridal order then she does that too, which is easy, you get one month’s salary through one bridal order. So, this is what I saw and entered parlour training.

The beauty trainees had had hardly any source to engender PSE towards non-traditional training and break out of beliefs of perceived self in-efficacy. I asked Rukhtar, a beauty trainee, if there was someone that she wanted to be like. She described the lack of occupational role models in her life:

There’s no one in my lane. Everyone is married. There are only three girls like me who are studying. Generally, amongst “Mohammedans” they don’t go to school, and the rest are Hindus, or the new people have small kids, someone is in nursery and someone is in 1st class. And no boy is studying from our vicinity (laughs). They are all in their own business like someone has a shop or does a job somewhere.

I probed, “What are the married women doing?
R: They are housewives. In our lane, there are a lot of Marathis (from the state of Maharashtra) and most of the housewives go to work in kothees (bungalows). The rest are “Mohmmadan”, they are housewives and the new ones who have come in do bangle-work from home.

She mentioned that there was only one girl in her locality who did a job. She did not know much about the job except that it was at an embassy. Yet, she did not want to do that job:

I don’t know much about it. If she does it then that’s fine. She is more educated too.
G: But you are also quite educated?
R: Yes, I am. But no other girl is doing a job. Only she is doing it.
The paucity of women in jobs, of role models, especially those who did jobs other than traditional jobs such as bangle-making from home or working in a beauty parlour, made Rukhtar’s choice of occupation as beauty training more likely.

Kirti, a beauty trainee, thought of electronics as a job that boys would be better at. She explained that she had not seen any girls do it and felt that she would not be able to understand it:

K: Electronics and driving jobs are where boys are “best” and also in carpentry
G: And are there jobs that suit girls?
K: Beauty parlour and tailoring
G: Why do you feel that jobs in electronics and driving are meant for boys?
K: I don’t understand electronics. There are so many wires etc. So, I feel like boys can do it better than girls.
G: So you feel you can’t do it but in general also do you feel that boys can do it better?
K: I have only seen boys do electronics.

Participants’ beliefs about inefficacy in other occupations and PSE towards beauty training created belief traps -- young women had many sources of vicarious experience, creating PSE beliefs, and making it easy to enter beauty training. More women entering meant that there were yet more sources of vicarious experiences to increase PSE.

To break out of these belief traps they needed PSE information – vicarious experience, verbal persuasion and mastery of tasks with other jobs. Ways such as the TV could give a window to experiences beyond that the circumstances of their lives provided, offering, for example, vicarious experience (even if providing mastery of tasks and verbal persuasion would have been more difficult) and build a source of PSE information. The next section shows that TV did not appear to serve as a source of vicarious experience through virtual role models.

6.1. Television, not a source of PSE

Although most participants watched television for some time almost everyday, TV did not seem to serve as a source of PSE information to enter non-traditional training for the (traditional and non-traditional) trainees. I probed, Mitu, a driver trainee, if movies such as Dangal [a fighting ring / a fight], based on the lives of the Phogat
sisters, where the two young girls train to become wrestlers and go on to win the Commonwealth games gold medal, had had an impact on her: “I have seen it but no, that didn’t make me feel like doing that.”

Even where the participant drew inspiration from someone they had seen on the TV, they did not prove to be a relatable role model. Farhana, a driver trainee, responded to the question on whether she had any role models that inspired her:

**F:** I feel inspired by Kiran Bedi [the first female Indian Police Service officer]. In fact, my hair style is her imitation.

Farhana’s mother had also wanted her to be a police officer. I questioned Farhana on why she did not want to be a police officer like Kiran Bedi:

**F:** I never wanted to join police, but I loved her style.

**G:** So, it has nothing to do with her job?

**F:** No, it is nothing to do with her job.

I asked Arti, a beauty trainee, if she had any occupational role models. She told me that she sees many people on the TV who she finds inspiring:

There are many people, like I’ve seen some girls driving taxis on television. I also feel inspired by fashion designers and, you know, those people who design the interiors of homes.

**G:** Did you want to become a taxi driver or a fashion designer or …?

**A:** No. I just felt good seeing them on the screen, and felt interested. I would tell my mother also, that see, these are girls who are driving taxis. They are being brave and driving taxis. I liked them on television, but that didn’t make me feel like I could be one.

People on TV lead to admiration but did not make Arti feel able to enter the jobs she admired.

Ardra, a driver trainee, found TV motivated her to be even-headed and to try and “becoming something” in general:

I only watch TV for an hour in the night to watch a serial called *Kala Teeka* [Literally a black spot. A black spot is culturally put on a person to ward off evil]. I watch it because it has two sisters in it, one of which is always envious of the other one, but the other sister always ignores her sister’s envy. She keeps ignoring her behaviour. She is very even minded, while the former is hot-headed. I also
want to be like the [even minded] sister so that I am not hurt when someone says some nasty things about me. I try a lot to be like that.

She told me about movies she watched:

Yes, I watched a movie with a female protagonist who is from a very poor family. I have forgotten the name of the movie. She wants to study and has to go out to work. She completes her studies by doing a job. One day she succeeds in fulfilling her dream and becomes a big, very, very big Collector [a government official]. Seeing her, I also thought that maybe I could do so much hard work that I become something worthy in my life.

Ardra too felt motivated generally. Both the movie and the TV did not create a belief of efficacy towards a particular occupational goal.

Ray’s (2006) concept of an “aspiration window” (discussed in chapter 3) here too offers a way to understand why individuals on TV do not create aspirations. Ray, argues that “The window is formed from an individual’s cognitive world, her zone of “similar”, “attainable” individuals” (p 409). He argues that what is outside the aspiration window is thought unattainable, and does not form a part of the aspiration and does not encourage effort exerted towards the goal. In so doing, Ray emphasizes that similarity is essential to the concept of an aspiration window. Peers or “near-peers”, as ‘similar’ individuals, frame aspirations, of what is possible, of the individuals in at least two ways. First, people form comparisons with their peers ‘because that’s just the way people are’ (p 410) which in turn forms the basis of their aspirations. Second, using the analogy of econometrics, Ray argues that ‘Looking at the experiences of individuals similar to me is like running an experiment with better controls, and therefore has better content in informing my decisions — and by extension — my aspirations’ (Ray, 2006, p. 410). Further, he points out that “similarity” is contextual” in that it “depends on how much mobility (or perceived mobility) there is in society”(Ray 2006, p. 411). He argues that “the greater the extent of (perceived) mobility, the broader the aspirations window” (Ray 2006, p. 411). As far as individuals on the TV do not appear to be similar, they are not relatable and

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Ray illustrates this through Munshi’s study on adoption of HYV seeds that shows that a farmer looks at the adoption decisions of farmers who are “close” to him, ‘spatially, economically, perhaps even socially’ (Ray, 2006, p. 410).
not a good comparator. As such they do not serve as a source of PSE for the individual.

However, several scholars have suggested that media-based interventions might be effective to achieve psychological and cultural change (Bandura 2001b; Bernard et al. 2014; Bernard et al. 2015; Ferrara 2016). For example, Bernard et al. (2014) show that custom-made video documentaries about the stories of successful peers increase the PSE of poor individuals. They raised the PSE of poor smallholder farmers by showing them a video, instrumentalizing peer effect. The study found that the farmers from the treatment group increased their total savings, the amount taken in credit, amount of credit used, children’s school enrollment and expenditure made on children’s education. Further, studying the effect of treatment intensity, they found that the indirect networks effects were also significant.

While these results are surprising in general in that showing a video for an hour affected attitudes and behavior to show a significant change, and further results from the ongoing study are awaited (Wuepper and Lybbert 2017), there could be further reasons why watching TV did not significantly impact the PSE of the participants. First, TV does not tend to show women in blue collar work. Second, in the cases of the intervention, the targeted group was shown the video. Even if TV had programs that showed women occupying a similar social location doing non-traditional blue collar work, it does not automatically imply that the girls would have seen the show. Since PSE is domain specific and relatability is important to vicarious experience, it seems that TV does not affect the PSE of the participants towards the domain of non-traditional occupations even if it might affect general gender beliefs.

7. Conclusion

This chapter has tried to demonstrate the importance of PSE in the occupational outcomes of the participants. Perceived self-inefficacy towards a job meant that steps were not taken towards the job. Apart from being situated in a cultural context where the jobs were thought inappropriate for women, several participants expressed specific fears around the non-traditional training. How then did the
participants who entered non-traditional job feel capable of undertaking the tasks? The chapter shows that vicarious experience facilitated by the NGO mobilizers served as an important source of PSE information for driver trainees. At the ITI, where there were no mobilizers, verbal persuasion by the parents was the primary mode of PSE information. Those in the beauty training, felt efficacious towards the training but often felt inefficacious towards other jobs that they would have otherwise liked to do.

Self-efficacy has been criticised on at least two counts. First, for “not being able to distinguish between activities that agents undertake because they pertain to the agent’s conception of the good, and “the activities they feel coerced or seduced into doing” (Alkire 2005, p. 240). Esha’s case that was discussed in Section 4, was one such example where it was difficult to differentiate “verbal persuasion” from her Nana [maternal grandfather], from what might be considered “verbal compulsion”. Critics have also observed “that a positive measure of self-efficacy might reflect greater functional skills and competence rather than only, or even mainly, agency freedom.” (Alkire 2005, p. 241). It is difficult to systematically separate out and evaluate competence through education and other such factors as they relate to PSE in the study, especially since many were still studying. Yet, since participants between training programs did not exhibit any clear differences in education levels (as demonstrated in the Chapter on Research Methodology) highlights that other sources of PSE information were likely more consequential.

While this study contrasts those in non-traditional training and traditional training to draw out the implications of differences in sources of PSE in their everyday lives, it does not capture the experiences of individuals who are not under training. There might have been individuals who were, say, approached by the Azad NGO that

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* Self-efficacy has been criticized in several other studies since 1977 when Bandura’s book “Social Learning Theory” first came out. For example, Lee (1989) in Journal of Behaviour Therapy and Experiential Psychiatry criticizes Bandura’s concept of PSE for the fact that the model does not clearly outline how the different information is weighted and how the synthesis of different information takes place. She argues that “Therefore, there is no way of predicting from a knowledge of these inputs what efficacy expectation will result, and no way of developing techniques which will reliably alter efficacy expectations.” (Lee 1989, p. 118). Such critiques that regard themselves with psychological techniques of therapy are not relevant to the study and I do not engage with them. However, see Lee (1989) for a review of these criticisms: for matters of emphasis (e.g., Eastman and Marzillier 1984), of method (e.g., Kirsch 1986), or of terminology (e.g., Kirsch, 1986) within the framework of self-efficacy and social-learning theories. Bandura has readily replied to these criticisms in Bandura (1980, 1984, 1986).
provided training in driving, and thus would have, for example, seen pictures of others taking driving training but who did not join the training. This study did not interview them and cannot confidently comment on their PSE.

In spite of these limitations, the relevance of PSE once again underscores that “policies may need more than just removal of external constraints. Only making opportunities available for individuals with low PSE, without additional support, can easily lead to a reinforcement” of stereotypes. This is especially relevant in the present case where jobs of taxi driving or becoming electricians are stereotyped as men’s jobs. To the extent that entry into beauty parlour reflects belief traps, policies aiming to expand the occupational opportunity set of young women need to be cognizant of internal constraints.

Studies have demonstrated that even a few women in non-traditional occupations might affect beliefs of whether women are able to do “male jobs”, and PSE of individuals entering the non-traditional occupation. Erickson (2008, p. 335–36) states,

> Anecdotal evidence suggests that people often make inferences about occupations, or about combinations of occupation and gender, from a single known case. For example, in a study of women moving into nontraditional work in the security industry (Erickson, Albanese, and Drakulic 2000), a male alarm worker reported that he was confident that a women could be a good installer because he once knew a woman installer and she did the job well.

The participants in the non-traditional training often knew only of a few women in the training but that made them feel more confident of being capable to do the tasks.

But beyond the anecdotal evidence, the context of the present study might make little nudges consequential. As discussed in chapter 3, in India, the context of widespread unemployment and paucity of jobs appears to lead to a feeling of (outcome) in-expectancy. In a situation of outcome in-expectancy, where one feels unsure and unable to get a job one dreams of, indeed where occupational aspirations themselves do not form, the individual could be more open to considering other occupations which one feels inefficacious towards to begin with. In such a situation, little nudges in the form of restricted sources of PSE information would be enough to consider and enter the non-traditional occupational training. As such, although
vicarious experience information is argued to be weak it could still be enough to allow entry into a job that was hitherto not considered.

Bandura (1977a, p. 198) argues that “in the face of distressing threats and a long history of failure in coping with them” verbal persuasion would not provide enough information to induce a contravening behavior. However, there are many situations where the individual hasn’t faced failure, but hasn’t thought about it at all and has assumed that it (for example a non-traditional occupation) is not an option for them. The theory of PSE in this way assumes that different options are a part of the choice set of an individual and the individual picks the one they have PSE towards. But such an approach assumes that the options enter first and PSE then filters options. However, the intersection between PSE and (lack of) information in general (information poverty was discussed in chapter 4) could mean that the option doesn’t emerge at all. In other words, the perceived self-inefficacy is not the result of experiencing failure. When inefficacy emerges from non-trial, verbal persuasion could be a more potent tool than it would be in situations where “they have had a long history of failure in coping with them” (Bandura, 1977a, p. 198). Further, if occupational decisions are not a result of thought out plans but are un-thought out and unplanned (as was shown in chapter 3) then verbal persuasion or vicarious experience can be enough for entry, overcoming perceived self-inefficacy barriers. In other words, little nudges can be consequential.

The next chapter moves from internal constraints to external factors, focussing on parents’ criticality in occupational outcomes of young women.
Chapter 6. “It’s not like we can do anything according to our wish alone”: The necessity of parental support for entry into an occupational training.

1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the criticality of parental support in the occupational entry of the participants. Participants were unusually unanimous in stating they would only be in a training if their parents supported them. Section 2 demonstrates that all the participants had the support of at least one parent for the training they were in. Participants’ entry into a training; continuance in the training; switching to another training; and not entering into a training, all needed parental support.

Why was parental support so critical? The section suggests that the parents were the primary source of social support for the participants. It discusses what social support is and outlines the forms of support that parents provided. It finds that in addition to the four categories of House’s (1981) social support – emotional, informational, instrumental and appraisal – one more category of support emerges from the responses of the participants – moral support. Parent’s moral support to doing non-traditional work, and training alongside boys at the ITI, made the participants feel that their training even though non-traditional, was morally legitimate. The section goes on to outline the nature of social support as long term, reciprocal, sometimes perceived as contingent and as a privilege. The section suggests that the long-term nature of support could mean that going against parental support now, could jeopardise parental support in the future too. The section argues that in spite of the contingencies of parental support, participants perceived parental support as a rare privilege which they did not want to waste by not entering the training they had support for. The reciprocal nature of the support meant that participants wanted to enter the training they had support for so that they could support their parents through the job that the training would lead to.

Further, the section briefly points to the context in which parental support assumes such criticality for the participants’ lives. The particular institutional context of India, where public safety nets are often lacking, means that the family is often the only
available and reliable safety net for those located in low income households. With narrow and weak networks outside the family (as discussed in chapter 4), the participants had hardly any other sources of social support.

Section 3 analyses the differential role of mothers and fathers, and finds that mothers tended to be key to the occupational training outcomes of daughters. It argues that while mothers were important for support for their daughters across training programs, the role of the father varied and was most discernible for the two types of training at the ITI. In beauty training, mothers had often chosen the training for the daughter. In taxi driving, mothers had nudged the daughters, convinced the father, and when the father did not acquiesce, hid the training of their daughters from the father. At the ITI, however, where the electrician and electronic-mechanic training took place, all participants had the support of the fathers (where fathers were present). Yet, here too mothers were critical in providing encouragement and making participants able to learn alongside boys. In doing so, the section discusses how mothers shaped the occupational outcomes of daughters. Section 3.2 attempts to unpack why mothers are key agents. The section suggests that the emotion work done to provide emotional support also yields mothers influence over the occupational outcomes of daughters. In doing so, the section points to the conditions that aided the formation of emotional bonds and the emotional support that mothers provided. Since mothers were mostly not in employment in contrast to the fathers, who returned late from their jobs, the mothers became central to the occupational decision-making for their daughters. The NGO mobilizers targeted mothers, and since the daughters also spent time at home, mothers and daughters talked about training decisions.

Section 4 concludes, outlining the significance of what has been argued, the literature the chapter contributes to, clarifies the limits to the argument, and points out what has been left out from the chapter.

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*Two participants at the ITI did not interact with their fathers. Esha’s father was an alcoholic and Esha, her mother and her siblings lived with her maternal family. Karishma’s father had passed away.
2. Parental support is necessary for entry

The participants were unusually unanimous in emphasising that they needed parental support for entry into a course. All the participants had the support of at least one parent to be in the training they were in. They repeatedly emphasized that they would not have entered the training had they not had parental support; would continue in the training only if they continued to have parental support; would shift to another course only if their parents supported the move; and would not enter courses that they believed that their parents would not support. Even when participants created distance from their parents as illiterate, and “from the village”, they still wanted their support.

Parent’s often explicitly determined participants’ training. Manjari, an electronic mechanic trainee, explained that courses like fashion designing at the ITI were “not an option” for her. Her father who had filled the form for her, had told her that there is no point in filling fashion designing on the form. I asked her: Why did he say that?

M: I don’t know, but my father said that there is nothing good about this trade. Girls do this course and don’t get any job, and sit home despite having done the course. I filled in those trades [on the form] that my father asked me to.

Manjari explained that her father felt that electronic mechanics offered better jobs than fashion designing: “Yes, there are more vacancies in this trade. Especially in railways. It was jobs in the railways which got my father to put this option.”

Manjari, like many others, opted for electronic mechanics as per her father’s choice.

Mitu, a driver trainee, made clear that even if her parents asked her to leave driver training which she wanted to continue in, she would not go against them, and follow their wish instead of her own. I asked, Mitu, a driver trainee, "Suppose your parents were to not allow you to drive a taxi and were to persuade you to be a teacher like your elder sister. What would you do in such a situation?"

M: I wouldn’t do anything. I would have found a job for passing the time, like I was earlier doing in Delhi Jal [Water] Board. I would not have fought with them that I definitely want to do this job. I would have put my views very clearly before them, but would never have forced them. Because I think we can’t do anything by going against parents. We can only try to convince them,
explain to them. I would have done that, but I wouldn't have gone against them.

When I asked the beauty trainees whether they would enter driving, their willingness to join was predicated on their parents’ support. I asked Tina, a beauty trainee, if she would want to go into taxi driving. She could not separate her own wishes from what her parents would want for her and support.

G. Forget the other people, would you want to do it [driving training]?
T: It's not like we can do anything according to our wish alone. There is a family. We need to have everyone's support. That's important. Having a dream is not enough. We need at least someone to support us. Alone, we can't do anything.

G. What about going into a call centre?
T: That's also fine. If there is support, then I can do anything. But if I don't have support then, I can't do anything.

Tina’s choice of job depended on parental support

Aparna, a beauty trainee, had thought of being a chef as a child. I asked her:

G: Suppose your parents didn’t support you in becoming a chef, would you still do it?
A: No, I will never go against my parents, ever. No parent thinks wrong [galat] for their children. Whatever my mummy-papa judge right that is also right for me. If I have to change my dreams, I will change it for my mummy-papa.

Participants did not join the training that they believed that their parents would not support. Lubhawna, a beauty trainee, was one such case:

I had applied for a data entry job, but I got to know when I went there that it was a job at a call centre. I refused to do it there and then.

Lubhawna explained that she knew her parents would not want her to do the job as “she knows them very well”.

Why were parents so important? What explains their determining position? Why did participants undertake the training their parents supported instead of the course they preferred? The next section attempts to answer these questions and suggests that for these participants the family is the primary and perhaps the only source of
social support. After first delineating what social support is, it outlines the ways in which parents provided social support.

2.1. Understanding the criticality of parental support: Family as the source of social support

2.1.1. Forms of social support

Several studies have defined social support in related but various ways (Caplan and Killilea 1976; Cobb 1976, 1979; Kahn and Antonucci 1980). House (1981) reviewing theoretical studies (Caplan and Killilea 1976; Cobb 1976, 1979; Kahn and Antonucci 1980), and relating it to empirical studies on social support (such as Gottlieb 1978), states that, “Social support, then, is a flow of emotional concern, instrumental aid, information, and/or appraisal (information relevant to self-evaluation) between people.” (p 26). In doing so, House (1981) puts forward four classes of “supporting behaviour or acts” – emotional support, instrumental aid, informational support, and appraisal support.

First, emotional support involves providing “empathy, caring, love, and trust” (House 1981, p. 24). House (1981) argues that emotional support is the most important category as it is included in all studies of social support, has the most effect on health, and “when individuals think of people being ‘supportive’ towards them, then they think mainly of emotional support” (ibid, p. 24).

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* House encapsulates the different dimensions of social support that a study on the concept can analyse in the question: ‘Who gives what to whom regarding which problems?’ This study finds that parents, especially mothers [who], provide all the four kinds of social support identified by House (1981) as well as an additional category of social support, moral support [what], to their daughters [to whom] regarding occupational training outcomes [which].

* This study follows House’ conception of social support as first, it appears fundamental to the studies on social support and several successive studies draw on his typology of social support (Tara and Ilavarasan 2010; Taylor 2011; Turner and Marino 1994); second, House (1981) analyses social support in the context of individuals and their work stress which comes closer to the context of this study on work outcomes than other studies which look at say community mental health (Caplan 1974); third, House (1981) focusses on informal and non-professional forms of social support such as parents, friends, co-workers (p 22) which is more relevant to this study where participants did not have access to professional or formal sources of support (such as professionals, self-help groups) before entering the training.
Second, instrumental aid includes behaviours which directly help the individual being supported. These could include say, helping them with their work or with their bills. House (1981) notes that these instrumental acts although distinct from emotional support, nonetheless could have important psychological consequences.

Third, informational support means providing an individual with information that the person can use to cope with personal and environmental problems. In contrast to instrumental support, “such information is not in and of itself helpful, rather it helps people to help themselves” (ibid, p.25). For example, “informing an unemployed person about job opportunities or more generally teaching them how to find a job is information support.” (ibid, p 25).

Fourth, appraisal support involves providing information that is relevant to self-evaluation. Inherent to the self-evaluation, House (1981, p. 25) argues, is “what social psychologists have termed social comparison”. He explains, “Other people are sources of information that individuals use in evaluating themselves” (ibid, p 25). Appraisal support may be explicit or implicit. Elucidating through an example, House (1981) argues that explicit appraisal support might be when supervisors tell workers that they are doing good work whereas implicit appraisal support might entail telling a worker the performance of an average worker and letting them decide for themselves whether they are above or below average. Appraisal support like information support only “includes the transmission of information, rather than the affect involved in emotional support or the aid involved in instrumental support.” (ibid, p 25)

The categories of social support are not neat, distinct categories. House (1981) notes that appraisal and information support are “the most difficult to clearly define and distinguish from other forms of support” (p 25). Providing information, might in fact show care and could intersect with emotional support. Similarly, if the individual’s major need is information (say for counselling), then information support could also serve as instrumental support.

Social support is not limited to the utilization of the support but also includes the perception that such resources are available, should they be needed. Indeed, Taylor (2011) argues in the context of stress that, “people can carry their social support
networks around in their heads to buffer them against stress without ever having to recruit their networks in active ways (…)”.

Studies such as Gottlieb (1978) and House (1981) have emphasized the role of the family as an informal source of social support. Empirical studies such as Wellman and Wortley (1990) analyse different types of ties to evaluate the various kinds of supportive resources they provide and find parents to be crucial to the provision of social support. Using quantitative and qualitative data from the second East York study, they examine differences in tie strength, contact, group processes, kinship, network members’ characteristics, and similarities and dissimilarities between network members’ characteristics. They find that the kinds of support provided are related more to characteristics of the relationship than to characteristics of the network members themselves. In particular, the parent-child bond was the most supportive of all role types usually providing almost all dimensions of support. Suitor, et al (2006) studying mother’s support to adult children in Massachusetts, find through multivariate analysis, that mothers tended to support unmarried daughters who lived close, more than other children. Looking within India, Tara and Ilavarasan (2010), argue that young single women working in call centres would not have been able to work there if they did not have social support from parents. Based on interviews with women working in call centres and their parents in two cities in India – Jaipur and Delhi, they find that these young women emphasized the instrumental support they received from their mothers in the form of supporting tasks they were otherwise expected to do in the household (such as in cooking, and shopping for the household); and emotional support from their parents especially their fathers without whose support they would not have been able to conceive of working in a call centre. This emotional support included fathers accompanying the daughter for their interview when they were nervous, meeting their colleagues to understand the work culture at the call-centre, and giving them the permission to work in a call centre.

The next sections discuss the forms of social support parents provided to the participants. The section suggests that in addition to the four categories of social support – instrumental, informational, emotional and appraisal – they also provided moral support to the participants which was crucial to participants’ entry into non-traditional training.
2.1.1.1 Emotional support

Participants repeatedly reported that mothers were their confidants, who they trusted, who cared for them. Bani, a driver trainee, spoke of her closeness to her mother:

Once recently I went to our ancestral village for the first time. There was a boy who wanted to befriend me. He gave me his number. When I returned to Delhi, I told all this to my mother. I had gone to the village alone for the first time. He was a hafiz (literally meaning someone who knows the Quran by heart). I told her that I got bored in the village. How can a girl from Delhi amuse herself in a village? So, I felt very weird without any friends. So, I told her that I became friends with him. When I told my mother about this boy, she asked for his photo. I showed her his photo as well as his number saying I could delete it and never talk to him if she said so. But my mother said it was sufficient that I told her everything. When I asked her if I should delete his number or not, my mother said let it remain and I could talk to him. So, you see, how sweet my mother is. I share everything with her.

Ujala, a driver trainee, emphasized her closeness to her mother and said she wanted to become like her mother:

G: And why do you want to become like your mother?
U: My mother’s way of thinking is very good. She never disallows me for anything. She loves me so much, always encourages me. She is always there for me whenever I need her. That’s why I want to be like her, and want her to be by my side for ever.

Shamta, a driver trainee, reported that she had no friends (like most other participants, discussed in chapter 4), as she never felt the need for them:

No, I never felt that need, because my brothers and mother were more than enough for me to talk about anything. We talked a lot. When I returned from school, my mother used to ask me whatever happened in school. I shared each and every incident with her, every feeling, everything.

Shamta talked a lot to her mother and her brothers and that was all the company she felt she needed.
Studies such as Wellman and Wortley (1990, p. 576), mentioned earlier, that examine which ties provide what kind of support find that “Mothers and daughters (86%) are the most apt to provide emotional support, followed by sisters (77%)”. Further, they note that “Gender is the only personal characteristic directly related to support, with women providing more emotional aid than men” (ibid, p. 576). “Although men typically report larger social networks than women do, in part because of men’s historically greater involvement in employment and in community organizations, studies find that” women’s relationships are consistently more intimate (Taylor 2011, p. 18). Women are more involved than men in both the giving and receiving of social support (Tamres, et al. 2002; Thoits 1995). Palriwala (1991) argued in the context of India, that mothers and daughters are mutually dependent, and material help in the form of labour is interwoven with emotional support, such that mothers and daughters lead intertwined lives.

2.1.1.2 Instrumental aid

Parents materially provided for their daughters which the participants were conscious of. Driving trainee, Shamta, explained that she only drew inspiration from her parents and no one else as they were the ones who had “looked after” her:

S: I don’t want to emulate anyone else except my parents.
G: Any friends, or any other person?
S: No, they have not looked after me, my parents have. They are the people who have always taken care of me, made it possible for me to achieve something in life so that I would be able to survive on my own even if I face any problem in my married life [...] So, I only want to become like my father and mother.

While Shamta did not list the kinds of instrumental support her parents provided, her use of phrases such as “looked after”, “made it possible for me to achieve something” implicitly indicated the instrumental support that parents provided. Since participants lived in their parent’s house, and tended to not be in jobs, they were dependent on their parents to “look after” their material needs in general, from shelter to food and clothing. In the context of the training, the parents paid for their fees, the transport cost to the training institute, and any other material costs that
might have been incurred during the course of the training such as for notebooks or makeup brushes, clips, etc. By instrumentally supporting their training, parents “made it possible for (me) [participants] to achieve something”.

Participants had been unable to enter courses where the parents had not supported them financially. Anmol, a driver trainee, described her inability to study further because her parents declined to support her financially. Further, their lack of permission also meant that she was unable to work in a factory to earn the resources necessary to fund her education:

You see, you need some money to study further with open schooling. I discussed it with my mother. I discussed it with my father as well. My father says I shouldn't think about it any further, and just do household work and nothing else. He says I should take care of my younger brother. Then I asked my mother to allow me to work in some factory for a month or two, as many of my neighbours do those kinds of jobs, so that I could arrange for some money to apply for further studies through open schooling. I said to my mother that you give me money for tuitions etc. and I would take care of expenses on forms for the open exam. My mother vehemently refused saying there has been no woman in our family who had worked in a factory, and I could not work there as well. She thought I'd earn a bad name by working in a factory. I tried very hard to convince my mother saying there will be nothing like that. I would go in the morning and return by the evening, even before my father and brother return, but she didn't agree.

As such, quite apart from fees, “permission” itself was material in terms of being able to go out and take steps towards a job.
2.1.1.3 Informational aid

As discussed in chapter 4, parents were hardly able to provide information on varied jobs. Yet, the participants still looked to parents for job advice. Further, chapter 4 showed that participants had very few friends before they entered into the different types of training. The interviews revealed that even when the participants did speak with their very few friends, they tended to not talk about jobs, job advice being reserved for parents. I asked Sejal, a beauty trainee, which jobs her friends were planning to do?

(...) Friends, they will do according to their parents’ wish. They are only friends (...)
G: Do they discuss with you what their families want them to do?
S: That they only know. We are concerned only to the extent that they come, meet, eat, enjoy, and chat about nothing and everything and all that.
G: Don’t you discuss jobs?
S: No, we don't discuss jobs because we are still not mature enough to discuss it. Everybody has someone older to them, such as their siblings or parents, who handle their households and make these decisions.

I asked Kirti, a beauty trainee, what her friends in school might want to do in the future: "Well, in our home, we go as per our parents' advice and mindset. So just like that, they will also go with what their parents want. We live according to that [our parents' advice].”

As discussed in chapter 4 (on information and networks), mothers had tended to provide information about the training to those who had entered beauty parlours; mothers passed on the information about the driver training that the NGO mobilisers provided to daughters; and at the ITI, fathers (and brothers) had predominantly provided information about the training. As such parents were a critical source of informational support.

2.1.1.4 Appraisal support
In addition to emotional support, parents through verbal encouragement created a sense of perceived self-efficacy and provided appraisal support. Since chapter 5 has explored verbal encouragement from parents extensively, it will not be repeated here. It is however important to point out the similarities and differences between perceived self-efficacy and appraisal support. While there can be overlaps between the form appraisal support takes and the sources of perceived self-efficacy, appraisal support is the mechanism through which the outcome of perceived self-efficacy is enhanced. For example, verbal encouragement is a form of appraisal support through which perceived self-efficacy towards occupational training was enhanced. However, in spite of this intersection, not all sources of perceived self-efficacy may form appraisal support, or even be social in their nature. For example, as noted in chapter 5, experience with tasks, is not a social source, but is the most impactful way of building perceived self-efficacy.

2.1.1.5 Moral support: A missing category of social support?

While the theory of social support delineates four categories: instrumental, informational, emotional, and appraisal, the responses of the participants highlighted the importance of an additional albeit intersecting category – moral support. The parents’ moral support for the non-traditional training helped the participants believe that it was morally legitimate to undertake a “male” training in spite of the disapproving opinions of their neighbours and relatives. Further, since the electrician and electronic mechanic training at the ITI involved training alongside boys, parents’ support was critical to making the participants feel that gender mixing was an acceptable value and did not threaten their respectability. While emotional support provides “empathy, caring, love and trust”, and appraisal support affects an individual’s self-evaluation of ability, moral support provides approval59, affecting the individual’s assessment of whether it is acceptable to undertake the task (quite independent of whether they are able to).

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58 As was mentioned in Chapter 4, concerns about respectability has been raised as a crucial issue in studies of women workers in South Asia (Fernando and Cohen, 2014; Radhakrishnan, 2009; Gilbertson, 2014; Phadke 2007, 2013; Ranade, 2007).
59 Cambridge Dictionary (2020, emphasis mine) defines moral support as “if you give someone moral support, you encourage that person and show that you approve of what they are doing, rather than giving practical help.”
Mothers’ moral support filtered disapproval of the neighbours and relatives towards their daughters’ entry into non-traditional training. Shamta, a driver trainee, described how her mother supported her in spite of the disapproving reactions of her neighbours which bolstered her confidence.

S: Their [neighbours’] reaction is, what will you do by teaching your girl how to drive? Will she drive like boys? My mother has told them that her daughter will do whatever she wants to. She will not stop because of your reaction. Let her do what she wants to do. Even our relatives are against the idea. Recently, there was a function at home when my brother was blessed with a girl child. Some of the relatives who attended it had the same reaction as to how will this job be good for me [as a woman]? My mother replied that I was her daughter not theirs, and that I deserved to do what I wished to.

Shamta reported that her mother’s response made any possible apprehensions about driving recede.

I asked electrician trainee, Bhavya, how the people around her reacted to her training:

Their reaction is never good. Their reaction is always that, "girls don't do this job." Their thinking is like that. But, my parents say that there are no such jobs/tasks which girls can't do. They say to me, "These days girls do I don't know what all. If you can't do even this, then what's the point of you?" (laughs)

Bhavya’s parent’s moral support made jobs “girls don’t do”, morally appropriate to do. Bhavya continued:

When I told people around me what I am doing, 2-3 of them said that "you'll go house to house like men and fix fans, fix lights? is that the work you are going to do?" So, I felt a bit strange then. I went home and told my mother and father about it. They said, "You keep your focus on your job, make your career. Who knows you might get a government job? Even if you don't get a government job, who knows, maybe you'd get a good post in the private sector." So, when my parents are with me, I have their support, I didn’t listen to what others are saying.

Bhavya reported that while her neighbours disapproved of her training, her mother said “you don’t pay attention to what they are saying, just focus on yourself [on what you are doing]”, and made her autonomous of her neighbour’s opinions.
Bhavya described further, that when she found just a couple of girls in the ITI she had first joined, it was her mother who encouraged her to persist with the training and made her feel able to train with boys:

But [when I entered that ITI] there were only two girls there. So, I felt a bit scared. I had never worked with boys. So, then, I went home and told my parents about it. So, my mother said never mind. That today girls are doing so many jobs. She said that if you can’t even study with boys then that’s not good at all. So that made me [decide to] take admission here. (Still) there are 6 girls in the electrician’s trade here. So, I felt good that there are girls also (over here). So, then I decided to do this trade (only).
G: What did your mother say to you at that time?
B: She said that today, girls are also in the position that they can work along with boys. Our school was a government-run school which was for girls only. I had never spoken to boys. So, I felt a little “uncomfortable”. I had told her that. She told me that there was nothing to be worried about. That if you go out then you would have to be around boys. [She said] just don’t become that “type” of girl, like some other girls, who do “wrong” things. Just don’t do that. She said, [while working with boys] you have to take them just as friends and nothing else. That is because I am here. My mother is always supportive for me. She is very nice.

These statements from mothers that provided moral support, albeit intersect with appraisal support, are also distinct in important ways. Appraisal support, as noted, is an evaluation of the self by social comparison to others. As such appraisal support is an evaluation of ability or performance. For example, House’s (1981) example of work supervisors telling workers that they are doing good work or telling the worker about the performance of an average worker and letting them decide for themselves whether they are above or below average, both help evaluate one’s own ability or performance. In contrast, moral support helps evaluate the appropriateness of work to the individual – whether it is morally legitimate for the participants to do the training quite independent of whether she is able to do it. While mothers also provided information on ability (as explored in Chapter 5 where mothers created a sense of perceived self-efficacy), in addition to that they provided moral support by emphasising the appropriateness of the work. Further, while appraisal information is based on social comparison (doing better or worse than others), moral information
tended to be based on focusing on self and being autonomous of social comparison (doing things independent and perhaps differently from others). The mothers argued that the participant need not care about what the neighbours said or did rather than asking them to do better than others. Third, as House notes, appraisal support does not include the affect involved in emotional support. Moral support on the other hand, affects the affect of the individual by making the individual feel like moral beings and making their affect autonomous of other’s disapproving opinions. As such, focusing on women in non-traditional jobs, indicates the importance of an additional category of social support.

The moral support, helped participants feel that their training in non-traditional courses, sometimes alongside men, was morally legitimate. By doing so, moral support enabled them to filter and be autonomous of disapproving opinions of their neighbours. Chapter 4 had noted that participants had narrow networks, with few and weak ties outside their family before they had entered the training. It had argued that such limited embeddedness made participants autonomous of the opinions of wider networks. The moral support from parents further reinforced the autonomy from wider networks\(^6\) and the latter’s disapproving opinions.

### 2.1.2. Nature of support

The previous section discussed the forms that parent’s social support took. This section analyses the nature of parental support. The first sub section outlines the social support that parents provided as long term, crucial to young women’s bargaining position within their households even after marriage. Based on other instances where disobeying parents in the present compromised parental support in the future, the section suggests that participants may not have wanted to risk future parental support by going against the training their parents supported in the present. The second sub section finds that some participants comparing themselves with others around them, perceived the parental support for their training as unusual, and thus as a privilege that they needed to pursue. As such, parental

\(^6\) Mead (1934) introduced the concept of the “imagined other” as a source of judgement. As such even if there aren’t individuals in the kin and community networks who are disapproving, an individual could still feel shame or ridicule by “imagined others”. Mothers’ moral support then could have also made participants autonomous of disapproval from such imagined others.
support being long term and perceived as a privilege by participants, reinforced the importance of pursuing the training that parents supported.

Instead of answering why parental support was critical to participant’s training decisions, discussed in the previous sections, the last two subsections examine other aspects of the nature of parental support to provide a more comprehensive analysis of parental social support. First, the reciprocal nature of parental support, where several participants were keen to support their parents from the job the training would lead to; and second, the limits to parental support so that support appeared contingent on “clean”, “respectable”, behaviour.

2.1.2.1. Long-term support

Since parents are known to be an important source of support for the daughter after marriage, going against parents at this time might also mean alienating oneself from support in the future. While all the participants to this study were single, not allowing an examination of parental support in the later stages of the participants’ lives, ethnographies of young married women in similar low income neighbourhoods in Delhi have explored this continued support.

Grover (2009), finds that daughters and their natal homes extend support to each other through their life cycles. Studying women in slums and low-income settlements in Delhi who tend to marry virilocally, Grover (2009) highlights the role of emotional, material and practical support provided by the primary natal kin to their married daughters. She shows that in addition to the refuge that parents offer in times of marital conflicts, visits to the natal home are common for childbirth; for periods of rest; to attend family ritual;, as informal visits to assist parents with their chores; to look after parents when they are sick; to attend to other siblings, and demonstrate “the closeness of post-marital bonds with natal kin, especially the ties between mother and daughter, and the nature of intergenerational reliance in the city” (ibid, p.16). In Delhi, she argues, “kinship is an everyday and immediate affair as mothers and daughters meet regularly”(ibid, p. 31).

This continued support is important for daughters. Grover (2009) finds that women in unhappy (arranged) marriages do not conceal unhappy domestic relations from
their natal families, but rather parents become a source of “refuge” during times of marital distress which are often and common. As such, parents strengthen their married daughters’ bargaining position while they are in the marriage, to renegotiate her domestic arrangements and conjugal contract in the event of a dispute or conflict with her husband, and provide them with an exit option when they no longer want to negotiate with marital conflicts. As Grover (2009, p.14) notes, it is startling that women in arranged marriages, who belong to a resource-poor group in a fragile economic position, with no effective inheritance prospects and with low levels of education, are well placed to challenge male authority and renegotiate domestic arrangements that have become unacceptably unequal, violent or gone sour, by virtue of being morally entitled to parental refuge. The experience of married women in Mohini Nagar shows that income, property ownership and access to credit are not necessary conditions for determining women’s bargaining power within the household. Even in the absence of these economic assets, women succeed in negotiating with their spouses.

Importantly, such studies have also shown that instances of disobeying parents in the present, compromises parental support in the future. While parents are important sources of support for daughters after their marriage, it is primarily so for women who undertake arranged marriage, where parents decide on their marital partner (Grover, 2009). Grover (2009, p. 26) shows that in the rare cases that young women undertook “love marriage”, choosing their marital partner themselves, or even “arranged love marriage” where the daughters chose their partner who was also chosen by their parents, do not have “the same rights of access to the natal kin as it do(es to) women who enter arranged marriages”. Grover (2009) highlights that even “arranged love marriages” do not grant daughters the prolonged and repeated period of refuge at their parents’ as daughters in arranged marriages have access to. Such studies thus indicate that daughters might not want to disobey their parents’ while making occupational decisions in the present as that could have long term consequences.

2.1.2.2. Perception of support: parental support as a privilege
While the participants would have found it difficult to enter a training without the different kinds of social support parents provided, some participants also felt that having parental support was a privilege, an unusual experience, that cannot be taken for granted and should not be missed. Participants contrasted getting support from their parents to experiences of other girls, sometimes of girls within the extended family who were not as fortunate. Bani, a driver trainee, for example, described the situation of her cousin at length. Her aunt, she complained, oversaw her cousin’s movements and behaviour closely:

There is an aunt of mine. She is a very strict woman. (...) I have tried many times to bring my cousin here [to Azad], so that the teachers here speak to her but her mother doesn't allow her to come here. (...) I tell her [my aunt], that it’s not good to keep such harsh restrictions over girls. If you stretch a “rubber band” beyond its limit, then it has to break. If you keep the rubber band loose, then it will work longer. That’s the same for girls. If you give them freedom, they will be fine, but if you tighten the screw, they will eventually be forced to take a step similar to her elder sister [who had eloped]. Bani’s mother had supported her for the training, but her aunt did not support her cousin. Bani, described how her mother got her a phone but her aunt disallowed her cousin to use one:

My mother got me a phone because my character is okay. You know there are girls who use it for galat cheez [wrong things]. And other mothers are also sometimes not open minded. So, when I got a phone, my cousin also asked her mother for a phone. Her mother first said no. So, this girl [my cousin] left the job she was doing. Her mother said, don’t leave your job, I’ll get you a phone but on the condition that you won’t put a SIM card in the phone. Just put the "memory" [card] into the phone and put songs and listen to music etc. [...] Ammi tells me to focus on my life, but I feel so bad seeing her situation

She continued:

My aunt takes her with herself to work and returns accompanying her. At work too, she keeps a strict eye over her each and every moment. If she goes to the toilet and takes more than 6 minutes, then she is there the 7th minute. Bani felt that she is in a much better position even though she was asked to leave her school by her mother:

When they sit, she sits glued to her, like you are sitting very very far in comparison. So sometimes the girl gets angry. Of course, she would, it is
angering. She tells me how badly her mother behaves. So, I don’t go to their house much, because when I see her, I feel bad and then I end up fighting with her mother.

Bani contrasted her aunt’s behaviour to her mother’s, who “was unique amongst all” and who “behaved like a friend”. She said:

My mother is unique amongst everyone. When she is with us, everybody says she doesn’t seem to be our mother. Everybody says she lives with us like our friend. We can share everything with her like one shares with one’s friends. We can talk with her about boys, or regarding any issue for that matter.

This sense of being unusual in receiving parental support seemed to make participants value the training they received support for, influencing participants into entering training that they might not have been committed to or even been fearful of. Electronic mechanic trainee, Manjari, indicated that since her parents’ supported her in spite of the training she qualified for was non-traditional influenced her to enter the training:

My parents [gave me the courage]. My mother and father supported me. They said, “Beta [child], do it”. Despite my getting electronics trade, they got my admission into the training. What more could I ask for?

The perception of parental support as special, as a privilege, was not unique to those in non-traditional training. Some beauty trainees too spoke of how lucky they were to get support for the training from their parents because many of their cousins and others in the neighbourhood did not get support to train and had to “stay at home”. Razia, a beauty trainee, explained that even though her parents did not have occupational dreams for her, and their support was also related to financial distress, she was lucky to just have them allow her to go for a training.

You know, my mummy-papa are quite traditional in their thinking, so in our [extended] family, girls don’t go out. As in, they have studied, they have done BAs etc., studied for higher degrees but then they only stay at home. In our [extended] family, it’s that girls will not do anything. So that’s why; compared to them, our mummy-papa’s minds are better, that they are still sending us for training, giving us permission to do a job. That in itself is a big thing.

Sejal, a beauty trainee, explained her own interest did not matter as she was fortunate to get any parental support at all. She contrasted her situation where she
received parental support to others who “just had to sit at home” to explain entering beauty training in spite of her disinterest for it:

In many households, people don’t support their kids. I was being supported when others are not. So, if they are saying do this [beauty training], then I want to do that. I am not going to say that I don’t want to do this and I want to do something else. I don’t want to be like that when I am getting support. Sejal thus perceived her parents’ support as a privilege – an unusual opportunity that some others like her had not received. To her capitalising as well as valuing that privilege meant pursuing the training that her parents supported.

As such, it appears that parental support was perceived to be a privilege by some participants across non-traditional and traditional training, albeit in somewhat different ways. Participants in the non-traditional training felt, "what more could they ask for?” (Manjari), and that their "mothers were unique" (Bani), indicating that parental support for non-traditional training was perceived to be exceptional by some participants. On the other hand, those in the traditional training felt they had been supported more than others who were not allowed to train and work outside the home.

2.1.2.3. Reciprocal Support

While parents’ support to daughters is long term, it is also reciprocal and daughters too offer support to parents. The reciprocal nature of social support suggests that the participants wanted to enter the training that they had parental support for, so that they could provide for their parents through the job that the training would lead to. Boyd (1989, p. 299), reviewing literature on mothers and daughters, find that “The data generally indicated that the adult mother-daughter relationship is mutual and interdependent (Bromberg, 1983; Fischer, 1986), rewarding (Baruch and Barnett, 1983), and close (Bromberg, 1983; Fischer, 1986)”. Further, “Age, marital status, and living arrangement were all significant in explaining the amount of help provided to their mothers but living arrangement explained the greatest amount of variation” and “daughters who lived with their mothers gave their mothers more assistance”(p.
Indeed, daughters’ capacity to earn was an important reason for parental support. Occupational decisions for children seemed to be a family project – parents supported daughters so that they could in turn support them, and daughters entered training hoping to reciprocate parental support. Fatima, a driver trainee, explained that her mother had supported her even when her father changed his mind as she had hoped that Fatima would be able to support the household financially. Several participants, such as Manjari (discussed in Section 2), an electronic mechanic trainee, had recounted that the possibility of getting a job was the primary reason for her father’s support to her training. Daughters in their turn were conscious of their family’s financial situation and were committed to offering financial support to the families when they would earn in the future. Electronic mechanic trainee, Karishma’s father had passed away. She had laid the condition to her fiancée that she would do a job after marriage and would give the money she earned to her mother. I asked her:

G: Why do you want to work after marriage?
K: My fiancé is the brother of my Bhabhi [sister-in-law]. My first condition that I had told them was that I want to work, whether I do it for a year or two years, but I want to do a job. And whatever money I earn, I’ll give it to my mother because she has given me so much "time". If she hadn’t given me the time, then my brothers would also not have supported me. My mother asked them to let me do it. So, I am doing that. So, whatever job I do, I shall give the earning to my mother only.

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61 Palriwala (1991) studying marriage residence patterns in a village in Rajasthan finds that for married daughters who are not in employment, daughter’s provide support to their natal families through their labour. A married daughter’s labour is preferred to that of an unmarried daughter or a daughter-in-law as the married daughter is thought to be a more experienced worker, more aware and accustomed to the household and its tasks, and unlike a daughter-in-law, would not need to veil herself.

62 The scope of the thesis does not allow for a thorough exploration of family’s role in social mobility. However, several studies have found that the family is the fundamental unit of social mobility in India (Beteille 1992; Dickey 2010; Krishna 2014), reinforcing the interdependence between parents and children.
Electrician trainee, Bhavya’s primary motivation to train in the course was to be able to support her household financially and reciprocate the support her parents had provided:

I want to support my family. My father is not in a condition to do hard work. My mother had to do a job for us, to support us. So now I also want to do something for them. So that’s my dream.

I asked Ujala, a driver trainee, if her mother had been hesitant to have her train in driving:

No, my mother didn’t talk of anything like that. She thinks of me not as a daughter but as a son. I tell her I can do anything, and my mother supports me fully. So, she was not hesitant at all.

Ujala’s mother thought of her not as her daughter but her son. Clark, (2016) in her book “Valued Daughters”, recounts the exact sentence “I am their son” (pg. 88) while speaking of a daughter in her study on young women in India who are the first generation to enter employment in their family. She emphasizes the changing role of daughters in urban families, where parents support daughters entering employment, and daughters are expected to provide for their natal family. Unpacking what it means to be a son for these daughters, she argues that daughters go through a “transformation into something much bigger within their family circle than what a woman used to be” (ibid, p 88). She finds that this “transformation” hinged on these first-generation career women becoming “standard bearer for their entire natal families” (ibid, p.88), providing both pride and income. Although the language of the statement, recounted by Ujala of her mother, is still heavily gendered, and thus the transformation far from complete, the statement indicates that daughters were to serve, just as sons had traditionally, as a source of income support.

2.1.2.4. Contingent support: limits to parental support to the non-traditional training

Interestingly, in addition to Clark (2016) in her book "Valued Daughters", Veena Das in her third Smuts lecture in Cambridge, on 15th October 2019, stated the same sentence, “she is my son”, from her conversation with a mother while discussing her ethnography of a Delhi slum. The sentiment, indeed even the words, seem to be common to mother-daughter relationships explored in urban India in recent times.
Even though parental support was long term, and parents provided many forms of support, a few responses of the participants indicated that they also felt it was contingent. In taxi driving training, some girls reported that their participation was predicated on the training being only for women. As mentioned in chapter 4, Mamta, a driver trainee, informed me how her father’s support for her training was contingent on the absence of boys at the centre. Some driver trainees seemed to have internalized the importance of absence of boys to their entry into the training. As presented in chapter 4, Bani, as Mamta, related absence of boys as not only important to her entry but further she described the training as “clean” as it did not have any boys. Assuming that the training would have boys, Bani first told Meethi didi, the mobilizer, that she was not interested in the training and entered only after she was assured that “there were only girls here”.

At the ITI, classes were gender-mixed, but the participants explained that the parents would support them as long as they were "good". When I asked Karishma, an electronic mechanic trainee, if the opinions of others affected her, her response demonstrated her awareness that parental support is contingent on her behaviour being not “wrong”.

The family "disagrees" [objects] only when a girl’s "nature" is not good. The main thing is that when we go out, and our behaviour is wrong, the family objects to it. But until today, nothing has ever happened that my family would have to "disagree" [object] to anything I do. When I come out of home and come here, I know I have to do something in my life. So, it's better to stay away from the wrong [galat] things. So, I have to stay focused on my goal and then I have no problem at all.

In sum, this section had asked why were parents critical to participant’s occupational entry? It has found that parents as the primary source of social support were important to participant’s lives, and the occupational decisions that were located therein. In doing so, it discussed the forms of social support and demonstrated that by providing instrumental, informational, emotional, appraisal as well as moral support parental support made entry into occupational training possible. Parents instrumentally supported participants by providing fees, transport
costs, and other material costs of the training. Participants tended to turn to parents for informational support about jobs. Parents, especially mothers, supported participants emotionally and were their confidants who they turned to for care. Parents encouraged participants providing appraisal support, making them feel capable to undertake the training. Finally, parents provided moral support by approving of the non-traditional training making it morally legitimate for participants to enter the training.

Further, the section discussed that the nature of parental support is long term and could potentially mean that going against the training parents supported right now, could risk their support in the future. The perception of parental support as a privilege suggests that they did not want to agitate against the privilege of support by not pursuing the training.

The section discussed additional aspects of the nature of support. The reciprocal nature of the support indicates that the participants recognized the social support that parents provided and wanted to reciprocate by entering the training and supporting their parents through the job that the training would make possible. Further, participants sometimes reported that the support was contingent – at the driving training on the absence of boys, and on “good” behaviour at the gender mixed classes at the ITI.

Moreover, the participant’s dependence on parents’ social support was reinforced by the context that they were located in where most other sources of support were curtailed for them. First, as discussed in chapter 4, as young single women, their networks were narrow and weak outside the family. While for many individuals, friends make a large part of their network and form a crucial source of support (Wellman and Wortley, 1990), the participants did not have many friends that they could source support through. As such, their family, specifically their parents, became their primary source of support. Second, with restricted access to the internet (as discussed in Chapter 4), internet support which Taylor (2011) notes increasingly plays an important role in people's lives was absent from the participants’ lives. Third, participants could also not source support through larger kin networks. Although the family size of participants was relatively large (only one participant had a family of fewer than five members), the vast majority lived as nuclear families rather than in a joint set up. As such parents, rather than a larger kin network were their only sources of support. Fourth, the institutional context of India
by not providing alternate safety nets and sources of support, reinforced the dependence of individuals on their families. Developing countries unlike industrialised countries, are characterized by an "an informal security regime" which "reflects a set of conditions where people rely heavily upon community and family relationships to meet their security needs" to varying degrees. In India, 80% - 90% of the total employment is informal [varying with the definition of formality used], which by definition is marked by a lack of social security benefits. In such a context, the state welfare policies acquire an added significance. Yet, Palriwala and N. Neetha (2011) argue that India remains a residual welfare state where welfare policies are reactive and piecemeal rather than universal and proactive. Further, they state that policies in India are imbued by "familialism," i.e. "the assumption that the state need not deal with people as citizens with individual rights, but may deal with them as members of family and community networks" (ibid, p. 1063)". They conclude that, "familial relationships form a security and care net that people can and will turn to" (ibid, p. 1063). Even where safety nets are available, access to state benefits is restricted by their low information regarding schemes, and that they have to face complicated processes and delays to avail the benefits (ibid). Unable to afford services through the market, the family is the primary institution of care, especially for the poor (Palriwala and N. Neetha, 2011). Lastly, Thoits (1984) finds that the perception of available social support is positively correlated with socio-economic status. As belonging to low income households, even the social support available to them would have likely been perceived to be limited, reinforcing the perceived dependence on family-support.

3. Mothers, key agent in occupational outcomes of daughters

The chapter so far unpacked why parental support was important to participants, arguing that parents were the primary source of social support for daughters in a context where they hardly had any other sources of social support. It outlined the forms, the nature and the perception of social support that parents provided to daughters. The following section evaluates the differential role of mothers and

* Considering the institutional context of India and the lack of social safety nets within, is beyond the scope of this chapter. However, see Chhachhi 2008; Mishra 2014; Palriwala and N. Neetha 2011; Pingali et al. 2019 inter alia for further details.
fathers, and finds that mothers tended to be key to the occupational decisions of daughters. In doing so, it outlines the different ways by which mothers were consequential for daughter’s occupational outcomes. In other words, it answers how mothers shaped the occupational outcomes of daughters. In beauty training, where the participants tended to have the support of both their fathers and mothers, mothers tended to take the lead in deciding on the training. For driver training, mothers nudged daughters and where participants did not have the support of their fathers, mothers convinced fathers and where they were unsuccessful, even hid the training from fathers. At the ITI, where participants always had the support of fathers, mothers encouraged participants to at least try the training. Section 3.2 attempts to understand the criticality of mothers in daughter’s occupational outcomes, answering why mothers are key agents.

3.1. Mothers advised, nudged, convinced, hid and encouraged: how were mothers critical to daughter’s occupational outcomes

Mothers were reported to play a prominent role in the daughters’ occupational outcomes. In beauty training, several participants reported that mothers had decided on the training for them. Beauty trainee, Kamna, was not particularly interested in the training but had done it anyway as her mother wanted her to.

G: But as you said, you are not particularly interested in it and you also don’t think these things need to be done to get married. So, why are you learning all this?
K: I don’t have any specific reason. […] I didn’t think about it earlier. I did it because my mother said so.
She continued: “I am doing it because my mother says that if I learn these things then it would be good. So, I said, I’ll learn it. My mother feels happy if I do these things. And if my mother is happy then I’m also happy.”
G: But did she say anything about why you should do it? Did you ask?
K: No.
Kamna only wanted to make her mother happy. She did not even ask why her mother wanted her to do the training. She accepted her mother’s advice unquestioned.

Bhavni, a beauty trainee, could not speak of her occupational decisions without mentioning her mother, her mother’s advice being determining.
G: Do you want to do a job in the future?
B: Umm… right now my mummy hasn’t said that… but after doing parlour course, I want to study further, because I had to leave my studies after 10th, because I wasn’t able to do it… so I want to do it again after asking my mummy.
G: Why did you want to train in beauty parlour?
B: I really wanted to learn it. My mummy also really wanted me to learn it. Whoever is there in my house, all our relatives, i.e. my aunt’s sisters-in-law, they all have learnt the parlour job. They have even opened their own shop.
G: You could have decided to not do a job. But you want to do a job. So why do you think that is?
B: I’ll ask my mother. If she says I should work, I shall, otherwise not. Anyways, my mother says that its more important for boys to do a job because girls have house work to do.
G: But you wanted to work as a teacher, isn’t it?
B: Yes, I want that if my mother wants me to, otherwise not.
I asked Bhavni if she would want to do another job if she was given a choice: As of now, I only want to do parlour. If my mother asks me to do a job, I shall do it. Whatever I do, I do after asking my mother.
Bhavni had thought of becoming a teacher but her mother’s wish of Bhavni training in beauty superseded her own wish. Bhavni could not decide on whether she would do a job without speaking to her mother.

While mothers often took the lead in deciding on the beauty training, the participants appeared to always have the support of both their fathers and mothers. Razia’s case was a slight exception, where Razia reported that her father was slightly hesitant at first. She said, “We are Muslims, and amongst Muslims, cutting hair is a big sin”. However, her elder sister was already in beauty training and her other sister, Fatima, was in taxi driving training. Her father was initially hesitant but he came around quickly on her and her mother’s convincing.

For driving training, on the other hand, the participants always had the support of their mothers but not always of their fathers. The NGO mobilizers who visited their homes to pursue potential trainees into the training, often targeted the mothers who tended to be home during their visits. Mothers nudged their daughters to join the
training as well as convinced the fathers to support the entry. In cases, mothers did not manage to convince the fathers, the mothers and daughters hid the training from the father. These participants reported that they felt that once they had a license in their hands, their father might be more amenable to supporting them and they would reveal that they are training in driving at that opportune moment.

In several cases, mothers had convinced the participant to try the driver training. I asked, driving trainee, Meena if her parents had felt any hesitation regarding her training in the non-traditional job:

No, they did not hesitate at bit. In fact, once I felt hesitant but my mother insisted and convinced me to go for it. All three of my sisters have already married at a young age, but my mother wanted me to go get a job first, and then get married. She had all her dreams and aspirations for me. She was of the view that since they (my parents) couldn’t do much for my elder sisters, they will go all the way to support me to pursue a successful career, get me to study further or do something else.

Bani, a driver trainee, explained that her mother had nudged her to join the driver training. She wanted to study further, but had dropped out of school in class 10th as her mother had asked her to do so.

My mummy said we are Mohammedan. The girls in our religion generally do not study too much. My mother said what would I do after studying more when they did not intend to have me do a job. So, she instructed me to complete the studies of our religion [Islam]. (...) I said okay, after all, you are the ones who have to get me educated, you have the authority. If you ask me to quit, I’ll quit.

Thereafter she explained, Meethi Ma’am from Azad, repeatedly came to Bani’s home and convinced her mother to train Bani in driving.

When Meethi Ma’am went to our place for the fourth time, my mother said I should give it a try. Maybe life is asking something of me. Now it’s been one and a half months for me here. I like it very much here. In fact, it was I who was not willing to join, I had wanted to go into police but my mother said why don’t you try the training out and see what they are providing. At that time, all the girls of our vicinity had applied for it so my mother said go try it.
Bani had left education, joined a course in driving that she initially did not want to, over pursuing becoming a police officer that she did want to enter, following her mother’s advice. When Bani’s father objected to her training in driving (“My father said that I’m anyway a driver, will my daughter also be a driver?!), her mother convinced him “saying that girls should also get exposure to the outside world nowadays. Get out on the road. See the world.” Bani’s father thereafter supported her, helping her even train in a test of traffic signs. But, then:

He said that I should only learn how to drive and not pursue a job. I said okay at that time. I thought, let me first train at least, then I’ll see what I have to do. I thought let him be okay with it [the training] for now. For after that there is my mother. She will convince him.

Fatima, a driver trainee, described that while her mother supported her training, her father had changed his mind. However, she explained, the support of her mother sufficed for her entry into training as she trusted that her mother would convince her father:

G: How did you make your parents agree to let you come here?
F: Once my father and I had gone to a bank. Generally, I used to stay at home, because in Open Scheme of learning, you have to go out only for taking exams. Then, Meethi didi, who’s like our elder sister, met my father and told him about a driving institute, and told him I should acquire some skill. Initially my mother agreed and got my admission here, but later on, my father denied me to continue, saying that it’s a driving line, and who will marry a woman driver, because they do not consider it good for girls in our society. My father said we would earn a bad name in our biradari [society]. I asked her, ” Suppose you have support from only one of your parents i.e. either only your father is supporting you, or your mother is. Which situation will allow you to carry on what you are doing?
F: I don’t think such a situation will arise. I think if my mother will support me, my father will follow suit.
G: So, was it your mother who convinced your father?
F: Yes, it was my mother. She said everybody is doing it, and if some incident has to happen, it will happen at home also. Then my father didn’t argue much, and kept mum, and said okay, started laughing and said let her do it.
Anmol, a driver trainee’s mother was convinced by a mobilizer but her mother was unable to convince Anmol’s father. Anmol and her mother were hiding her training from Anmol’s father. Anmol explained that after she had failed the Maths exam in the school, her father thought that “it’s no use making me study further. He thought that there’s no point in making me study. I should just sit at home and do household chores.” She had dropped out of school the previous year. I asked her: How long have you been at the training?

A: I’ve been here for the last one month only and no one except my mother and my younger sister knows about this in my family. My father doesn’t know about it. My brother doesn’t know about it. (...) I would like the support from both my parents, but I know my father will never support me in driving so I’ve still not told him about it. My mother is supporting me. It’s my mother who gives me money to bear my expenses while coming to and from home.

However, a few driver trainees also had the support of their fathers. Samiksha, a driver trainee, for example, described that her father had supported her entry into the training. Her father was a driver too and his friend’s daughter was also in driver training.

At the ITI too mothers always supported the training, encouraging participants to at least try the non-traditional training. Electronic mechanic, Anchal, had apprehensions about the training but her mother encouraged her to try it out:

My mother said that at least go and see how it goes. Don’t give up without even trying. If you feel okay, then do it, otherwise leave it. There was no compulsion to go ahead otherwise. So, my mother asked me to go and try once. So that’s why I tried it. And then I found everything to be good — the trade was good, Sir was good, and on top of that, our seniors from this trade had already got a job. They are even employed with the Delhi Metro.

Manjari, an electronic mechanic trainee, emphasized that it was her mother’s encouragement that had made her entry possible:

M: Everyone including my brother thought that I won’t manage to get admission. But my mother was confident that her daughter will get admitted.
G: What was the reaction of your school friends when you told them that you have taken admission in electronics?
M: They said that I had beat them. “That we studied so hard but we didn’t get admission in the ITI.” They said, “we couldn't get admission in ITI and you did it! And that too in a govt. ITI! You are very lucky!” I told them that it wasn’t because of me, it was my mother’s magic ("kamaal")! She used to say that you would achieve something only when you tried for it. Throughout she has said this. So, I got it. I felt nice that my mother thought so much [about my occupational future].

However, the role of the father appeared somewhat different from that in driving and the beauty training. In contrast to driver training, the participants at the ITI always had their father’s support, where they were present. Unlike the beauty training where the fathers had not been involved in taking the decision for their training, the father had often taken the occupational training decision for the participant at the ITI.

Electrician trainee, Ujwala, had wanted to study further but it was her father’s wish that determined the decision.

G: Did you always want to be an electrician?
U: No, I had a different dream [of becoming a model] which I wanted to do apart from being an electrician. Papa had said “let’s do ITI, it has more scope and there’s a lot of talk around it”. I had wanted to do [graduation from] SOL, but papa advised me that I should do ITI before that, because if I were to do that too, then I would be doing two things at the same time which would be difficult.

While her mother supported her, her father had suggested that she do the electrician training. I asked her:
G: And did your mother also have some dream for you?
U: My mother is a housewife, and she is not very educated. My father is educated. So, my mother only says, "do whatever your father says, don't do anything wrong, only study well, earn and live well. And if there is any issue, then, tell your father as you always do. For that, we are here for you. You don't have to take “tension” for that.
What explains fathers’ unusual support and, at times, involvement in the participants’ entry into the ITI? As was discussed in chapter 4 (on information and networks), in contrast to the beauty and the driver training, the fathers were often the informational source of the training at the ITI. But in the rare cases where fathers were not the information source, why couldn’t participants enter with only their mothers’ support and hide the training as was the case for some driver trainees? It could have been that the training at the ITI had features which made it different from the beauty and the driver training that would have made it difficult to hide. The course lasted two years, required the girls to wear a uniform (which meant that the participants could not hide the training from their neighbours either), the institute hours were from 8 AM to 4 PM. In contrast the beauty training was for 6 months and the driver training was for a minimum of 6 months, the actual length depending on the pace at which the trainee learnt how to drive; both courses did not require a uniform; and while the hours for driving training could often be from 9 AM to 3 PM, and for the beauty training the hours were 12-3 PM and the participants tended to stay for longer, there was a flexibility in the hours that the training programs at the ITI did not have. Further, the ITI was also distinguished by its gender mixed classes. Since the respectability of a daughter bears heavily on the honour of the family and the respect that the family can command (Medora 2007; Tara and Ilavarasan 2010), mothers could have also been unwilling to hide the classes from the fathers, which could potentially challenge the respectability of the daughter and therefore the household.

3.2. Emotion-work and influence: why were mothers critical to daughters’ occupational outcomes

Section 3.1 showed the various ways by which mothers were key agents in the occupational outcomes of daughters, outlining how the mothers supported the daughter. This section attempts to understand why the mothers were the ones who played the key role. It asks what explains mothers’ active and consequential roles in the occupational decisions of their daughters? As section 2.1.3 on emotional aid and section 3.1 showed, daughters repeatedly spoke of their closeness to their mothers. Mothers were their confidants, mothers encouraged, mothers and daughters were each other’s support in household tasks and responsibilities, mothers mediated their relationship with fathers, convincing them for the training and even hiding the training if needed. In contrast, the participants felt a distance from fathers who were
less available than mothers who tended to not be in employment and provided emotional support. The section suggests that the emotion work that mothers undertook in providing emotional support became a source of influence for mothers. Further, the emotion work helped create bonds that in some cases allowed participants to negotiate with their mothers about entering a training.

In contrast to close, intertwined relationships between mothers and daughters, participants reported some distance with fathers. Even where the father was supportive, it was the mother who they spent time with and shared their thoughts with. Electrician trainee, Patanjali, emphasised that it was her mother who was more involved in the educational and occupational decisions for her:

While he (my father) was in a job, he was generally tired after work and didn’t have much time for conversation with us. It was my mother, who was more concerned about our studies and our future career. She is the one who would encourage us to this or that. […]

Bani, a driver trainee, for example said:

My father is also very good, his only drawback is that he drinks [alcohol] occasionally. I find drinking very irritating because the people who drink tend to think of only their point of view, they never listen to what the other person is saying. When we need something, we can’t say anything to him because he is drunk and doesn’t understand half of what we are saying. So, whenever I have to ask for anything, I only talk to my mother.

Anchal, an electronic mechanic trainee, described the distance in her relationship with her father. I asked her:

G: How did your parents feel when your name was on the electronics list? You said your mother had said that though it was a boys’ job, you should still try it. What was your father’s reaction?
A: We don’t talk much to papa. We tend to discuss things with mummy only. Papa only comes home at night, eats and then goes to sleep. So, we don’t discuss much with him.

The closeness between mothers and daughters and the emotional support extended, in large part explains the key role of mothers in daughters’ occupational entries.
Beauty trainee, Aparna, explained that she was following her mother’s wish since she is the one who takes care of her. I asked her:

G: What is the dream of your mother for you?
A: My mother wanted me to learn parlour so I am learning that. My mother once told me that you should learn parlour so I came here. Since my mother herself was saying, I came here. I don’t care about the world and their opinion or what they think about me. My mummy-papa are everything for me, they are the ones who do everything for me, so I don’t care about the world or what someone thinks of me. [...]

Emotion work in providing emotional support was almost entirely done by participants’ mothers. What is emotion work that mothers do much more of? Strazdins and Broom (2004, p. 357) refer to the intention and the actions taken in families “to meet other people’s emotional needs, improve their well-being, and maintain harmony to improve the psychological well-being of others”, as emotion work. Seery and Crowley (2000, p. 103) state that quite apart from domestic work which includes “practical work on people or things (often called housework or physical child care tasks)”, emotion work is the work of “creating bonds of solidarity, providing moral support, developing a sense of personal strength”. England and Farkas (2017, p. 91, in Strazdins and Broom, 2004) used the term emotional work to describe “efforts made to understand others, to have empathy with their situation, to feel their feelings as part of one’s own”.

While emotion work and emotional labour are similar in that they imply a management of feeling, are invisible, and are primarily done by women, Hoschschild (2012) in her seminal book “The Managed Heart” distinguishes between the two concepts. While emotional labour is often a part of service sector employment, and thus a part of the public sphere, emotion work done in the family is a part of the private sphere. As such, in a footnote on page 7, Hoschschild (2012) points out that emotional labour is sold for a wage and has exchange value. Emotion work, on the other hand, which refers to similar acts done in the private sphere, have use value.

thought”, argues that “dominant conceptions of mothering as simply a matter of feeling miss the intentional, crafted qualities of maternal effort”. Devault (1999, p. 55), drawing on Seery’s study, finds that mothers report, “conscious efforts to protect their children from hurt and disappointment, to help them manage the problems of everyday life, to spend everyday time with children, and to organize special events and celebrations.” The mothers’ accounts identify, “a multisteped work process that involves knowing about family members’ situations, assessing their needs, and then acting strategically.” (Devault, 1999, p. 55)

Devault (1999, p. 55), draws on Larson and Richards (1994) to suggest that conversation is “the medium of mothering”. Larson and Richards (1994 in Devault, 1999) studied daily activities in 55 two-parent white families with at least one adolescent child. The authors argue that these women use talk as the “glue” that “holds their families together, making plans, connecting family members, doing emotional caretaking, and responding to emergency needs” (Larson and Richards, 1994, in Devault, 1999, p. 55). They conclude that “For these women, talk is work” (Larson and Richards, 1994, in Devault, 1999, p. 55). Wharton and Erickson (1995, p. 293), in a survey of women in marriages where both partners were in jobs, too operationalize mother’s emotion work by measuring mothers “talking things over”; and “offering (me) encouragement”. Mothers of participants did much of the talk-work. Bani talked to her mother about everything including boys she had met in a village and the moral conundrums she felt therein. Shamta didn’t feel the need to talk to anyone else as she talked to her mother about everything. For Anchal, in spite of her mother first being hesitant about her entering a non-traditional training, it was still her mother she talked to and negotiated with to enter into the electronic mechanic training.

Seery and Crowley (2000), examine the relationship management work done by mothers mediating the relationship between fathers and children, to both create and maintain feelings of affection but also to prevent and reduce interpersonal tensions between them. Duncombe and Marsden (1995, p. 153) argue that “most men lack commitment to the role of fatherhood, which is only sustained if women do the work of interpreting fatherhood to them and supporting their parenting role with the children”. While participants felt close to their mothers and talked to them about everything, they felt a distance from their fathers. Mothers then mediated their
relationships with fathers. Even though Bani thought her father was “good”, he often had alcohol and she turned to her mother for any need. For many, as Fatima and Meena, their mothers mediated her relationship with her father, convincing him to let Fatima train in driving. Anchal explained that her father worked late and she did not have much interaction with him, and she “discussed things with her mummy only”.

Further, the emotion work of reconciling aspirations, opportunity, and the “hidden injuries of class” -- the dents to the “dignity” of individuals, and feelings of shame and inferiority (Sennett and Cobb, 1972, p.151), is especially pronounced amongst poorer families (Devault 1999). Bani’s mother (as several other mothers) had created responsibility in interacting with boys while creating autonomy from other’s opinions, easing entry into the driver training. Where mothers provided moral support to their daughters to be able to train alongside boys at the ITI, they created a similar autonomy from disapproval from others around them. By simultaneously, advising their daughters to not, “become that ‘type’ of girl, like some other girls, who do ‘wrong’ things” (Bhavya, electrician trainee’s mother, as mentioned earlier in the chapter), while encouraging them to enter the non-traditional training, mothers tried to keep their daughters’ respectability intact and did not foreclose the training opportunity. Such emotion work acquires a special significance for the participants since respect outside the family cannot be assumed (Devault 1999).

In addition, mothers tended to do more emotion work than fathers. Several studies have found that mothers carry out the emotion work in the family while fathers are away “breadwinning”. Seery and Crowley (2000) for example find that “full time homemakers tended to be the most involved in this [emotion] work”. They discuss the case of Frances, a full-time home maker with two children, a daughter (11) and a son (6) who was married to a college administrator who worked 70 hours a week. They recount Frances’ response “As far as emotional, I feel like I’m the only person [because] my husband is not here that much. I am kind of the interpreter of everybody’s emotions.” In another study, Strazdins and Broom (2004) measured the effects of emotion care on the psychological well-being of mothers and found that “less than 6% of men reported doing more emotional work than their wives”. Duncombe and Marsden (1995, p. 157), studying emotion work in the family, argue that, as such “women exercise greater emotional skill in recognising, anticipating and
empathising with the moods of others, and they also expend a form of work in trying to bring those moods into line with the image of happy family life”. The gender division of emotion work is so sharp that Tavris (1992 in Seery and Crowley 2000, p. 121) has described mothers to be “love’s experts”.

What were the conditions that contributed to mothers doing more emotion work with participants? As mentioned, most mothers (47/56 or 86 percent of mothers), across training programs, were not in employment. Since most mothers were not in a job, they spent the most time with the daughters who also tended to spend substantial parts of their day at home (on account of restricted mobility discussed in Chapter 4).

The emotion work of mothers enabled by greater time at home created emotional bonds and tended to become a source of their influence on daughters’ occupational decisions. Duncombe and Marsden (1995, p. 158) argues that “The ability to fulfil another person’s emotional needs may also be a significant ‘resource’ and hence a potential source of power (…)”. For example, Eichler (1981) critiques Blood and Wolfe’s significant ‘resource’ model of decision-making in families and argues that although economic resources may be important to determining the “power” balance in relationships, they are only one element in an intricate material and emotional exchange.

Duncombe and Marsden (1995) linking “power” with emotional work, argued that needing emotion work is the source of its power (and since males in relationships did not realise that they needed the emotion work from their partners, women were unable to have as much power as they could otherwise have had). Unlike these men, daughters valued the emotion work of mothers which was some indication of their need for the emotion work. Put simply, daughters’ need for the “resource” of “emotions” could have conferred some “power” to the mothers, enabling them to play an influential role in the occupational outcomes of daughters.

In addition, the emotional bonds meant that at times daughters were also able to negotiate with mothers. Fatima, for example, had declared to her mother that since she had said yes to her training in driving once, she needed to support her training and convince her father when he changed his mind. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, Anchal’s mother was hesitant about her training but she had negotiated
with her mother to enter the electronic mechanic course. Driving trainee, Padma’s mother was first hesitant. But Padma tried to convince her by saying “I keep sitting at home. It’s not like I do much work at home. Our house is small so there isn’t much work to do.” Her mother came around but still had apprehensions around sending her out to the training centre. Padma’s mother visited the training centre and after seeing her drive and speaking to the trainers, Padma recounted that “she doesn’t say anything to me at all. She supports me fully.”

Further, mothers’ greater time at home likely created an ability to carry out occupational decision making for their daughters. For example, when the NGO mobilizers came to their homes to inform about the driving training, share the benefits of the training, and convince the daughters to join the training, it was mothers who were present at home.

The finding that mothers were critical to daughters’ occupational outcomes is in contrast to that of Clark's (2016) finding in the Valued Daughters where she argues that fathers provide the main support to daughters’ occupations. Studying young women in urban India, who are “first generation career women”, through interviews with them and their parents, she argues that “status raising” is a “father-daughter project”, where father “is urging the daughter on, and his wife is supportive too” (p79). She explains that fathers of her participants wanted them to do what they could never do (p 87). As such the fathers in Clark’s study share a similarity with fathers of the participants to this study, where they too wanted their daughters to “become something” as pointed out in chapter 3. However, Clark’s participants are generally college educated and not entering male dominated jobs. The juxtaposition of these findings could indicate that when daughters enter “educated” jobs, which could lead to a significant social mobility of the family, fathers are primary supporters. Indeed, even in this study, since the ITI training was often thought of as an avenue to get the coveted government job, leading to the social mobility of the family, fathers were more involved. However, when daughters do not enter “educated” jobs which can lead to significant social mobility, mothers’ role acquires more significance.

4. Conclusion
This chapter has attempted to show the criticality of parents in the occupational decisions of daughters. It has located the individual participant in the family and shown that the family is the fundamental source of social support. In doing so, it outlined the forms of parental social support and argued that the responses of the participants highlighted the importance of an additional albeit intersecting category of social support – that of moral social support. Moral social support from parents made participants feel that entering non-traditional training and working alongside men is morally legitimate, enabling them to filter away neighbour’s disapproving opinions. As such the finding suggests that moral social support is an important category of social support for participants to enter non-traditional training.

The second part of the chapter demonstrated that amongst the parents, it was participants’ mothers who played the more prominent role in the occupational decision of daughters. In beauty training, mothers often took the lead in deciding the training for the daughters; in taxi training, mothers nudged daughters, often convinced fathers, and where fathers did not agree, sometimes even hid the training from the fathers; in the ITI, they almost always encouraged the daughters. The daughters always had the support of their mothers for the training they were in, whether or not they had the support of their fathers.

The chapter suggested that the mother’s importance in the occupational outcomes of the daughters could likely be sourced to their emotion work. Their emotion work in turn related to them not being in employment, which allowed them time at home and made them available to establish greater closeness with daughters and make occupational decisions for them. As such, when daughters had to make occupational decisions they came to the parent who was available, and the NGO mobilizer targeted the parent who was at home during the mobilization rounds. Further, since the daughters also stayed mostly at home on account of their mobility constraints, the time spent together by mothers and daughters created emotional bonds. These emotional bonds were important to the influence that mothers had over the occupational decisions of daughters, and in some cases to the occupational negotiations between the mothers and daughters.

The chapter adds to a few literatures. First, studies on Indian families such as Jejeebhoy and Sathar (2001), Karlekar (1998), Kurian and Ghosh (1978), Pandey
(2008), inter alia, emphasize their largely hierarchical and ageist nature. One can then be tempted to conclude that the parent’s criticality in daughter’s entry into a training can singularly be sourced to the parent’s culturally elevated position. This study probes the importance of parents to show that parents are critical to their daughters’ lives and their occupational entries located therein as they are the primary source of social support.

Second, in contrast to studies which find that women who enter atypical jobs, are “rebels” (Lemkau 1979), this study finds that is not the case. They are firmly embedded in parental kinship networks. They made occupational decisions jointly with their parents, especially their mothers, to become beauticians, taxi drivers, electricians and electronic mechanics and were unwilling to against parental wishes. Parental support therein is not only necessary but often determining.

Third, empirical investigations of social support for women have focused on married working women or working mothers, and have typically looked at the spouse and the social support that originates in the workplace, providing inadequate information on the nature of social support available to single women (Tara and Ilavarasan 2010). This is especially so for those working in unconventional work (ibid). The chapter by examining social support for young single women contributes to bridging that gap.

Fourth, mothers and daughters, and work, so far has mostly been studied in terms of work and sex-role orientation (Boyd 1989; Macke and Morgan 1978; Rollins and White 1982). Socialization theories argue that through modelling mothers impart their gender values to daughters creating an orientation towards work similar to their own (Boyd 1989). For example, Macke and Morgan (1978) based on data of over 1000 girls in a high school in the US and a sample of 258 mothers have examined the influence of maternal employment on a daughter’s commitment to work. They found that for both black and white daughters, mother’s work behaviour was the best predictor of a daughter’s work orientation (albeit not unconditional). Further, a greater family commitment and more interaction with the daughters increased the modelling effects. While not refuting the modelling framework, the augmented influence of mothers who interacted more with daughters could also be seen as the influence of emotional bonds. As such, this chapter suggests another pathway
through which mothers might shape daughters’ occupational outcomes – through their emotional influence.

Fifth, the chapter highlights the significance of women’s emotion work. Even when domestic work is studied, emotion work often gets neglected (Duncombe and Marsden 1993). Although, more recently there has been a burgeoning literature on emotional labour, but that too has dealt with emotional labour in the public sphere, the way that Hoschchild uses it in her work, rather than emotion work in the family. Emotion work has not got adequate attention as a category of work, as it is subsumed into domestic work; even more invisible than other care work; seen as “spontaneous expressions of women’s essential natures, rather than work requiring effort, skill, and energy (Wharton and Erickson 1995, p. 274); and because the concept has a, “nearly infinite conceptual elasticity” (Devault 1999, p. 62). Yet, even without a sharp definition, it is an important sensitizing concept (ibid), as it is critical to women’s psychological well-being (e.g. Hochschild 2012; Strazdins and Broom 2004; Wharton 1999). Duncombe and Marsden (1995, p. 165) have suggested that women who enter the labour market, in fact undertake a triple shift -- the familiar ‘double shift’ “but with the added burden of the emotion work necessary to keep their partner and children - and even themselves – happy”. Ignoring emotion work then would be undermining the work that women tend to do.

Lastly, while emotion work implies psychological costs for women, the chapter suggests a pathway through which emotion work might also yield influence. Mothers had time at home. Their availability along with time spent with their daughters became their source of influence on the occupational decisions of daughters. As such, emotion work might be an important resource to analyse the intrahousehold bargaining power. Thus, in contrast to having time as boredom that needs to be passed (for example in Jeffrey’s (2010) “Timepass” discussed in chapter 4), time spent and emotional bonds created could serve as a source of influence.

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- Duncombe and Marsden (1993, p. 150), for example, argue that “recent developments in studying gender inequality in the private sphere have remained overly concerned with the instrumental aspects of work tasks (Morris, 1990) or financial allocation (Pahl, 1989)” and “take no account of the expressive or emotional dimensions of close personal relationships, such as love and intimacy, which many people perceive as key elements in their lives”.
- Eichler (1981), for example, studying decision making in families, has pointed out, that we cannot understand the balance of power in relationships only by measuring differences in finance or the division of labour and need to crucially look at the role of emotions.
It is important to point out the limits to the argument. Arguing that mothers’ time at home yields influence on the occupational decisions of daughters does not mean that if mothers were in jobs then they would not be able to support or have influence over the decisions of their daughters. Indeed, if that had been the case, the economic resources ensuing might have augmented their bargaining power in the households as several studies such as Joekes 1990; Kabeer 1997; World Bank 1990 inter alia have suggested. Relatedly, of course, the gender division of emotion work is linked to the wider dynamics of gender division of labour. The limited suggestion of this chapter is that since mothers were at home, their time at home made them more available than fathers, and mothers became important agents in influencing and often even taking daughters’ occupational decisions. Relatedly, mothers would have influence over their daughters for other reasons too but the emotion work mothers did is one ingredient that likely also contributed to it. Further, the focus on mothers in shaping entry into training for daughters does not necessarily imply that fathers were immaterial. That mothers had to convince fathers or otherwise hide the (driver) training from fathers; that where the participant had the father’s support (such as at the ITI), she also had the mother’s support; and that there were no instances mentioned of fathers convincing mothers or hiding a training from mothers, indicates that in spite of mother’s influence over daughter’s training outcomes, families were still centered around fathers and fathers could not be ignored.

Finally, a few words on questions that the chapter does not answer. This chapter is based on the responses of participants and their perceptions as well as the interactions with NGO mobilizers and teachers. This study did not interview parents. As such, the parents’ perspective on why they support their daughters for a training has not been addressed. Relatedly, what were the strategies used by mothers to convince fathers? Interviews with mothers or an ethnography of families would be useful to understand the intra-household dynamics. For example, the responses of the participants indicated the emotion work mothers do, but interviews with mothers could help uncover their “willful non-action” (Dressel and Clark 1990), where their “non-doing” is a tactic of emotion work. Devault (1999), for example, points out that mothers’ not speaking about fathers negatively was a significant and conscious part of their relationship management work.

At the end, this chapter locates the individual participants in their families. Béteille had argued in 1991 that “The family has been and continues to be one of the
strongest institutions of Indian society, in all regions, among all communities and in all social classes” (Béteille 1991, p. 17). This chapter finds that at least for these participants, almost three decades later, family continues to be one of the strongest institutions.
Chapter 7. Final thoughts, clarifications and policy implications

1. What does the study find?

This study started out by asking: What are the factors that structure entry into non-traditional job training for young women from low-income backgrounds in Delhi? The study found that information and autonomy from wider networks outside the family, parental support and sources of perceived self-efficacy together pave the way for a young woman’s entry into a non-traditional training, instead of her aspiration for it. She typically does not have information about many jobs, especially not of non-traditional jobs. She tends to learn about the non-traditional job from NGO mobilizers, or her father or brothers. She is not very mobile, tends to not have many friends, and she is typically not very embedded in wide friendship or neighbourhood networks. As such, her friends’ and neighbours’ (disapproving) opinions do not tend to prevent her from entering a training. But her parents’ support is almost always crucial for her, especially her mothers’. Her mother encourages her, and if she doubts what she is doing, her mother tells her not to be affected by the opinions of those around her. Her mother’s encouragement and speaking to others like her who were in training, introduced to by the NGO, make her feel that she can enter the non-traditional training. While she does not typically aspire for non-traditional occupational training, once she enters, her entry into the occupational training means that she now wants to persist in the field, get a job within it, and succeed in the occupation.

As such, the study has the following answers to the research questions:

RQ 1: Do aspirations for non-traditional jobs shape young women’s entry into these jobs? If so, how?

The study answers that specific aspirations for non-traditional jobs did not form for the participants and therefore did not account for their entry into them. In contrast to studies that argue that having occupational goals leads to their achievement, this study shows that entry into an occupational training leads to aspirations for it. As
such, it indicates that the answer to what eases women’s entry into non-traditional jobs lies elsewhere and calls for an examination of other factors to understand women’s entry into non-traditional job training.

RQ 2: Do social networks structure young women’s entry into non-traditional jobs? If so, how?

The study finds that participants’ social networks had two opposing effects for entry into non-traditional training. Their narrow networks with weak ties outside the family meant lowered information access to non-traditional occupations. But such narrow and weak networks also enabled the use of information about non-traditional occupations for those who were able to access the information about the training, as they did not feel constrained by the disapproval of wide networks. As such, the study, in addition to highlighting the importance of routine sociality as a way of accessing information for young women, has a key finding in contrast to the regnant view. As opposed to studies on social networks which focus on them as ‘capital’, this study points to a possible positive effect of having narrow social networks – lack of constraint of peer and neighbourhood approval can make non-traditional choices possible.

RQ 3: Do internal or psychological factors structure entry into non-traditional jobs? If so, how?

The study finds that the participants expressed their occupational entries in terms of what they felt they were capable of doing and not doing. While a sense of perceived self (in)efficacy influenced participants’ occupational decisions in general, building a sense of perceived self-efficacy was especially important for non-traditional jobs. These jobs tended to be thought of as “men’s” jobs by the larger context that participants were situated in. Vicarious experience and verbal persuasion for driver trainees, and verbal persuasion (and some degree of experience with tasks), for electrician and electronic mechanic trainees, served as sources of perceived self-efficacy information. Participants in beauty training felt efficacious towards the training and simultaneously felt ineffectual towards other jobs that they or their parents would have liked them to do.
RQ 4: Does the role of the family structure the entry of young women into non-traditional jobs? If so, how?

The study finds that parental support is fundamental to young women’s entry into non-traditional jobs in both explicit ways, where parents selected the training, and implicit ways, wherein parents provided support for the training without which entry would have been nearly impossible. The chapter finds that the family appears to be the primary source of social support, providing all the four categories of social support that House (1981) outlines -- instrumental support, informational support, emotional support and appraisal support. Further, the evidence revealed that parents provided an additional category of social support – moral support. The chapter shows that the parents’ moral support for the non-traditional training helped the participants be autonomous of disapproving opinions of neighbours and relatives; and at the ITI, be more open to gender mixing as an acceptable value.

Further, in answer to the research question, it finds that mothers are key to young women’s entry into non-traditional training. In contrast to the fathers who returned late from their jobs, mothers were mostly not in employment and therefore were present at home, and became central to the occupational decision-making for their daughters. The study finds that the emotion-work that is done by mothers, that create emotional bonds, also yields them influence over occupational steps that daughters take.

While it is important to recognise what matters, it is also important to consider factors that are not critical to entry into divergent – non-traditional vs traditional -- occupational paths. By comparing the responses of participants in non-traditional training and traditional training, this study was able to draw out their many similarities. As has already been highlighted in chapter 3, participants across training programs seemed to have not planned their careers or formed occupational aspirations before entry into a training. Chapter 5 (on PSE) found that participants across the training programs tended to have similar fears and negative task self-assessments. Chapter 4 (on information and networks) highlighted that participants
were similarly autonomous of peer and neighbourhood disapproval but not of parents, demonstrated in Chapter 6. 

2. Contributions of the study

The findings of this study make at least three clear theoretical contributions. First, in contrast to studies and theories that argue that having occupational goals leads to their achievement, this study shows that entry leads to aspirations for these young women. Second, while most studies on social networks emphasize the positive effects of wider networks, conceptualizing it as “capital”, this study points to the positive effect of having narrow networks. Perversely, having narrow networks, where participants only care about parental support and approval implies that individuals are unencumbered by peer and neighbourhood disapproval in making unusual, non-traditional decisions. Third, based on the finding that parents make non-traditional behaviour (for example gender mixing or performing “male” tasks) acceptable, the study adds one more category to House’s model of social support – moral support.

What does the study imply for theories of occupational gender segregation? This study finds that in contrast to women in non-traditional training being "deviants" or “castrating career women” or “renegades”(Lemkau 1979) they are in fact similar to those in traditional training, their entry being shaped by factors in their immediate lives (of access to information, sources of perceived self-efficacy, and parental support). In this sense, the findings are aligned with that of the enrichment hypothesis where the “unconventional chooser” is “not so much a renegade as she is the product of enriching experiences (...)” (Lemkau 1979, p. 243).

Yet, there are important differences between the “enrichment hypothesis” studies and the findings of this study. First, focusing on ‘white-collar’ jobs, these studies find different factors relevant to atypical job entry. For example, Almquist and Angrist (1971), found that non-traditionally oriented women had mothers who

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Additionally, this study looked for differences in further factors – participant’s perception of sex typing of jobs; orientation towards being in a job, before and after marriage (often termed as career salience in studies such as Lemkau (1979)); comfort with gender mixing – but did not find them. The study is however unable to discuss the evidence within the scope of the thesis.
tended to be more educated and in employment. As has already been mentioned, mothers of women in non-traditional training were mostly not in employment just as mothers of those in traditional training. Similarly, Almquist and Angrist (1971, p. 237) find, “a strong relationship between non-traditional career choice and career salience, i.e., the degree to which work is anticipated as an important aspect of one’s adult life”. If career salience is understood as the value of being in employment or desire to be in employment, then women in both non-traditional training and traditional training in my sample hold a career as salient. As discussed in chapter 3, participants across traditional and non-traditional training programs tended to aspire to become successful drivers, electricians, electronic mechanics and beauticians after they entered the training. If career salience is understood as career planning, then too both women in traditional and non-traditional training are unified in their lack of planning. Further, the limits to career salience are also similar. While both women in traditional and non-traditional training wanted to be in a job, they were unwilling to go against their parents, as discussed in chapter 6.

The findings of the study also stand in contrast to one of the prominent occupational gender segregation theories -- the human capital theory of occupational gender segregation. The human capital theory argues “that women would rationally choose occupations with relatively high starting pay, relatively low returns to experience, and relatively low penalties for temporary withdrawal from the labour force” (Anker 1997, p.317). "According to human capital theory, it is planned intermittency that should affect occupational choice" (Okamoto and England 1999, p. 566). However, the finding of this study shows that occupational entries are not "planned” (Okamoto and England 1999). Further, "many male-dominated ones (e.g. transport driver and auto mechanic) do not require more experience or continuity of employment than many female-dominated ones (e.g. secretary and other clerical workers)” (Anker 1997, p. 318). As such not only does the human capital theory not apply to the context of this study which focusses on taxi drivers and mechanics, the study reveals that a crucial assumption embedded in human capital theory that women plan their occupational trajectories (choosing female jobs since they allow for withdrawal from the job and the lifetime earnings of the female job given the withdrawal are superior to the lifetime earnings in a male job) does not hold. This study shows that young women from low-income contexts do not plan occupational training and entry in spite of wanting a job. Non-labour market factors shape their entry into a female and
male occupational training that in turn determine entry into traditional and non-traditional jobs for young women from low-income contexts.

Further, studies on women’s entry into atypical jobs have tended to focus on white collar jobs. For example, all the studies part of Lemaku’s review of the literature on women in non-traditional jobs from 1930 to 1976, define non-traditional as "employed women or those pursuing advanced degrees in male-dominated fields" (p 223). Levitt (1971, p. 375), who reviews variables that relate to women’s vocational development and behaviour also limits his review to, “The studies presented will be limited to those which investigate women who are either participating in the professions, or as college students, are potential candidates for the professions”. Studies such as Moore and Rickel (1980), Gale (1994), Anna et al. (2000), inter alia, study women in non-traditional managerial and ownership roles in businesses. This study then adds to the few studies on occupational gender segregation that focus on blue-collar jobs.

Methodologically, the study, by using qualitative methods, takes the knowledge base on women’s labour market decisions further. As was mentioned in the Introduction, almost all the studies on FLFP have been quantitative (Fletcher, Pande, and Moore 2017; Kapsos, Silbermann, and Bourmpoula 2014; Klasen and Pieters 2012, 2015). This study examines the question qualitatively, making possible an examination of “why” and “how” of women’s entry into jobs directly. While it is

There are traditionally largely two theories to explain the supply side of occupational gender segregation – the gender socialization theory, and the human capital theory (Anker 1997; Okamoto and England 1999). More recently, studies such as Cech’s (2013), “The self-expressive edge of occupational gender segregation” have considered if self-conceptions are actualized through occupational choice and account for occupational gender segregation in highly skilled jobs in the US. The study tests if “students with emotional, unsystematic, or people-oriented self-conceptions enter fields that are more “female,” even net of their cultural gender beliefs. Results suggest that cultural ideals of self-expression reinforce occupational sex segregation by converting gender-stereotypical self-conceptions into self-expressive career choices” (ibid, p. 747). This study does not engage with these variables – emotional, unsystematic, people-oriented self-conception. First, measuring emotional states, being systematic, and people-oriented is beyond the scope of this qualitative study. Second, and more importantly, the study evaluates these variables led by its interest in the firmly middle class (in the US) and the occupational gender segregation in highly skilled professions. As the study itself notes “Low skilled and manual work is highly sex-segregated, and I recognize that workers in low-skilled jobs face tremendous constraints in their choice of employment” (ibid, p. 778) indicating that other factors and constraints might relate to occupational gender segregation in “low skilled” work than actualising their self-conception.
informed by quantitative studies on FLFP that identify occupational gender segregation as the primary contributor to low FLFP, by employing different methodological means, it builds on them and follows a design to take the research further.

For example, several quantitative studies have found that the father’s job is significantly correlated to the daughter’s entry into atypical jobs (Lemkau 1979). However, these studies do not clearly show why these relationships matter. There may be mediating factors that are unaccounted for (or as is referred to in statistics, an omitted variable bias). For example, the father’s job in engineering might be correlated with a daughter entering engineering because she gets information on how to enter. Devine (1994, p. 101) in her qualitative study with women professional engineers and scientists in British companies finds that “A female development engineer recalled that, ‘because of my father being able to get me into factories and show me round I developed more of an interest towards engineering. Both my parents supported me, so I was in a very much an engineering family.’” Similarly, a woman engineer recalled the influence of her father and described how, “He tended to encourage me (…)” (ibid, p. 100). The findings indicate that fathers being in engineering eased entry into engineering for daughters by providing them with access to information about the course and by being sources of encouragement. The finding in this study that the fathers’ jobs did not systematically differ across training type (discussed in chapter 2 and demonstrated in appendix C) and do not seem to explain the divergent occupational paths of young women then may not be as contrary to existing studies that find that father’s jobs correlate with non-traditional job entry. Information and parental support could have mattered in both cases. This study only draws out what matters, why it matters, and how it matters, directly.

Lastly, this study moves away from what Dorothy Smith (1993) labels “SNAF” or the “standard North American family” wherein “researchers routinely design studies that include only married couples with children, only middle-class, white family groups, only families with relatively minor difficulties”, and discusses young
women who come from low income families in urban India. Since factors that bear upon women’s occupational decision are embedded in culture in general and cultural beliefs about gender in particular, findings from a Western, often developed country context cannot be automatically applied to a developing Eastern situation. Examining women’s entry into non-traditional jobs training in India adds an important developing country case study to the literature on occupational gender segregation, but examining a different cultural context brings forth factors and mechanisms other than those already found in the current literature that focusses on Western countries or the ‘Minority World’ as Kabiru et al. (2013) and Punch, (2003) term it.

3. Clarifications

A few clarificatory words are in order. This study analyses women’s entry into non-traditional jobs at the individual level. However, the level of analysis should not be understood to mean that the study believes the lack of female employment to be the problem of individual women. Instead, this study shows how different structures manifest themselves in the everyday lives of young women and structure their occupational paths.

Second, in analyzing the factors that structure entry into non-traditional occupational training, it does not claim to provide an exhaustive list of factors but those that emerged prominent and common to the participants’ experiences. An interaction with Razia, a beauty trainee, illustrated that there might be particularities of situations that could prevent entry that is not captured in this study. Razia was Fatima’s younger sister who was training in taxi driving. Razia thus had information about the taxi driving training and knew someone like her who was in training. She had thereafter wanted to train in driver training but she was unable to do so.

G: Fatima (your sister) is going for taxi driving training. You never thought about going for taxi driving training?

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While this study moves away from most identified axes of SNAF, the parents of the participants were heterosexual parents. To read on mothers’ emotional labour in non-heterosexual couples or with disabled children see, for example, Devault (1999).
R: I did want to as I told you but we had trouble with money so I couldn't go. Initially, I was not interested in parlour, but I just had to do it. I wanted to go for taxi driving, but we just didn't have enough money.

G: What is the fee charged for taxi training vs here?

R: They charge around Rupees five hundred as registration and ask for some security deposit which is refundable after completion of the training. At that time, we were not in a position to give that amount. But, now we are, but then now I am here so how can I leave this and go there?

Razia was unable to enter the driver training as her family was not able to afford the refundable security deposit at the driver training and the transport cost of two daughters travelling to the driver training. Although the difference in the distance was marginal (the two centres were 4.8 kms or 2.9 miles apart), not confident of the routes at the time, Fatima took an e-rickshaw to the driver training that cost INR 10 [0.11 GBP] for a journey. The route to the beauty training centre at the time was better known and Razia and Fatima’s elder sister, Sonam, walked to the beauty training together. Sonam wanted company at the training, and she convinced Razia not to be disappointed and accompany her to the beauty training instead. Although Fatima too moved to walking to the driver training centre, at the time Razia was going to join the course, the additional cost of INR 20 every day on transport as well as the lack of liquidity to afford the refundable deposit meant that she joined the beauty training instead, hoping to join the driver training once the financial position in the house improved. However, after entering the beauty training, she now wanted to persist with it and get a job as a beautician.

Third, while the study focusses on "supply-side" factors, i.e. what factors lead some women to enter non-traditional occupational training and others traditional training, it recognises that ‘demand-side’ factors and workplace policies might determine women’s entry into jobs and their continuation in them. For one, perceptions of women’s capabilities might mean that training may not lead to a job. For example, the Self Employed Women’s Association (SEWA) found that training women construction workers in masonry and other skills did not enable women to access different work opportunities, largely because of the negative perceptions of skills and capabilities of women construction workers among male builders, engineers, supervisors, and clients (Sudarshan 2014). Relatedly, experiences and policies at the
workplace might affect entry and continuation. Mukhopadhyay and Nandi (2007) show that even though women in India completed the training in telecentres successfully, they were less able to operate them than men after the training since no investments were made in providing a supportive infrastructure for childcare. Yet, entering a training increases the likelihood of women’s entry into a job (Fletcher et al. 2017). Further, several studies have researched perceptions of women’s capabilities and already pointed out that marriage and childbirth constrain the entry and continuance of women in occupations, and as such are important transition points for women’s employment in India (Pradhan, Singh, and Mitra 2015; Sudarshan 2014; Sudarshan and Bhattacharya 2009). The study building on the research, studied a less researched juncture – that of entry into occupational training.

This study was motivated by research that finds that reducing occupational gender segregation could hold the key to FLFP in India. Yet, the objective of the study is to understand and expand rather than direct the entry into (non-traditional) occupations of Indian women. My study, as other efforts at occupational gender equality, ‘do not have the singular aim of pushing women into non-traditional careers, but rather of removing stereotyping barriers that constrict enabling experiences and the range of career options open to women’ (Betz, 1989).

Another question that may be raised is around how unique is the FLFP in Delhi? While there is wide variation in FLFP rates across Indian states, the uniqueness or not of Delhi’s FLFP is almost irrelevant to the study. This study while motivated by FLFP, is about occupational gender segregation generally and women’s entry into non-traditional job training more specifically. Occupational gender segregation is neither unique to Delhi; and while it’s important for FLFP, its significant quite apart from it too (ILO 2017).

4. Limitations of the study

A major limitation of the study is that it only analysed those who are in training. While the study by including young women in three non-traditional training programs and a traditional training attempts to capture variation, yet those women who are in neither are left out. This study cannot comment on them with any confidence. Relatedly, while the training sites selected for this study were useful to
examine the questions that this study is concerned with, the findings may not necessarily generalise to other settings.

Second, as was pointed out in the methods chapter, an ethnography instead of semi-structured interviews could have added richness to the study. Conducting semi-structured interviews might mean that the responses were not always detailed. For example, when the participants reported that they hardly used the mobile phone, what did hardly mean? Did it mean two calls in a day or two calls in a week? Where the detail seemed relevant, the study asked follow-up questions to ascertain the information. Of course, the researcher is not always alert to what detail might provide useful richness during later analysis. An ethnography could have at times meant that the action might be observed. However, there too the capture of the participant’s life would still be partial. A study, such as this, admits, that the interviews can only partly glean information from the participants and thus fundamentally obtains a partial view of the participants’ worlds. Relatedly, as discussed in chapters 2 and 6, interviewing parents would have made the study more holistic, helping to understand what their motivations in supporting (or not supporting) their daughters. Similarly, interviewing young men, as pointed to in chapter 4, from the same locality in female-dominated jobs, or in male-dominated jobs could have provided a counterfactual to the analysis that centres on gender.

The study does not examine some themes that might interest some researchers and do relate to the topic. The study does not focus on caste. As mentioned in Ch 2, questions on caste can bias responses of participants (Hoff and Pandey, 2006). Further, the documented data from the training institutes revealed that participants in the non-traditional training of driving and the traditional training of beauty came from varied caste categories. Similarly, the study does not examine migration. It asked questions on migration only if participants’ responses related to their migrant status. However, it appeared that the participants had not migrated and it was their parents or their grandparents who had settled in Delhi. Their parents’ migration could be linked to their families having truncated kin networks in the city, or why they did not frequent houses of neighbours and have wider networks of their own, and asking questions about migration and networks could have made the study richer. While it does not appear that migration would have shaped entry into non-traditional jobs, an examination of its role in shaping networks would have made the
study more comprehensive and the findings would be stronger if migration could have been eliminated as a factor. While the participants trained in NGOs (one with an explicit agenda of women’s empowerment) and a government institute, the study does not problematize labour market intermediation processes. As one participant mentioned, trust in the organisation was material to her entry. Yet, since the participants trusted the three organizations (independent of it being a govt or a non-govt organization), their differential trust across organisations does not seem to explain their different occupational paths and was not studied.

The study could be accused of overly relying on what the participants reported. For example, the trainees reported that they don’t really talk to other people but could it be that they did, and their reporting that they don’t is biased by perception of social desirability? While an ethnography might have been able to triangulate the findings through wider participant observation, indications of trust in the interview and the similarities in responses across a large number of interviews creates confidence in the honesty of their responses. Of course, all participants could be similarly subject to the same social desirability bias but in the absence of any such evidence, the alternative, to question their responses, seemed neither necessary nor desirable. While the study acknowledges possibilities of false consciousness (Elster 1982); adaptive preferences (Sen 1999); bias and response shift (Schwartz and Sprangers 1999) that are often pointed out for response-based studies, this study believes that undermining women’s voices on this basis may be paternalistic.

While the study did ask the participants if their occupational decisions were somehow linked to other factors such as their marriage, the study might not have been able to examine the relationship between occupational and marriage decisions adequately. The study considered following a life cycle approach in interviewing but

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Labour market intermediation is “mechanisms or institutions that intercede between job seekers and employers’ organizations” (Autor 2004, p. 1).

While all the trainees at the ITI were of the General caste, those at the two NGOs were a mix of General, Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe. The intersection between caste and access to institutions of labour intermediation would be an important area to examine for women from different caste identities. Relatedly, the question of what role does labour intermediation play in women’s (non-traditional) occupational outcomes, would also be a potential fruitful area to examine for future studies.

For example, some participants reported their actual age, pointing out that their actual age was different from the formal age that they had reported to the NGO and in other formal documents. Others confided about (unusual) interactions with boys (like Rani, discussed in chapter 7), or clothes that they liked which they perceived would be socially disapproved.
such an approach too would have been unable to capture the occupational “jointness” with marriage. For one, the participants were young and do not seem to have thought about marriage. For another, and more importantly, unlike in western contexts where the individual’s role in marriage decisions can be prominent, making a life cycle approach useful, since marriage decisions in the context are primarily taken by parents, a life cycle interview of the participant might still not reveal how considerations of marriage affect decisions of occupations. As such, to capture the relationship with marriage, the study would have had to conduct interviews with parents that, as has been mentioned in chapter 2, was beyond its scope.

5. Policy implications

The introduction had highlighted that studies such as Sudarshan (2014, p. 4) have recognised that “The larger policy question remains one of understanding in what ways women could be enabled and encouraged to access work in growing sectors” (…) that have been identified to be non-traditional for women”. How does this study inform this key policy question?

First, the study finds that severe information failure constrains the entry of young women into non-traditional job training. As such, providing information about non-traditional jobs to participants is key. Information services have been found to be an effective and least expensive intervention to engage youth who are not in education and not in employment (NEET) in Europe. (Santos-Brien 2018).

But how should the information be delivered? The study highlights that where the information is available is crucial to whether it will be accessed by young women, who have mobility constraints and have narrow networks. Counsellors at schools could be one important conduit to reach young women. Masdonati, et al. (2009 p. 199) testing the impact of career counselling on Swiss students, conclude that career counselling “is not only effective considering career-specific indicators but can also

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*Several countries in Europe such as Luxembourg, Germany, France, Ireland have found that one stop shops that combine information about training and jobs in addition to other services increase participation and retention of the young in training and jobs. For example, in 2012, Luxembourg established a one-stop-shop approach called the House of Guidance (Maison de l’Orientation) which “brings together employment, education and guidance agencies to provide training information and job or career guidance to young people aged 12-19 years old” (Santos-Brien 2018, p. 12)*
positively influence other areas of functioning, such as clients’ satisfaction with life”. However, the study also finds that several young women study through “Open” or correspondence. Offering counselling at schools alone then will not be enough and will leave out a significant proportion of women who do not go to the physical structure of a school. Counselling and job training information will also have to be provided at places they have access to, through stalls in markets which they routinely visit or through NGOs where they, for example, access the forms for open schooling. Providing information through local, trusted organizations could help the youth trust the information.

Relatedly, the study highlights the mobility constraints that young women experience, which contributes to their information poverty. Access to the internet promises a way to go beyond the mobility barriers in the physical world. First, policies need to address the technological illiteracy that young women experience. The study finds that only a small minority had ever used a computer. As such, computer classes, especially classes on using the internet, need to be invested in in schools. However, simply giving phones to young women even if they are technologically literate will likely not be successful as there are cultural barriers around their usage. Policy will have to give attention to how barriers around phone usage can be addressed.

Third, counselling women may not be enough. Given the necessity of parental support to occupational decisions of daughters, counselling parents, especially mothers, would be important. Barboni et al. (2018, p. 14) argue that by “shifting perceptions of which attitudes and behaviours are typical or desirable (i.e. perceived norms), one can influence actual behaviours down the line (i.e. actual norms).” This study finds that parents of young women are critical in determining what daughters believe is acceptable behaviour (for example through moral support discussed in chapter 6). As such parents will need to be targeted if the aim is to affect the perceived norms of young women.

Fourth, while removing such external barriers of information and parental support constraints are important, the study finds that fostering a sense of perceived self-efficacy and removing internal constraints supports non-traditional occupational entry. Building perceived self-efficacy is especially important for women from low-
income contexts. A large ongoing research, the Young Lives study\textsuperscript{a} follows the lives of 12,000 children in India, Ethiopia, Peru, and Vietnam and shows that children who grow up in material poverty, develop lower PSE (Dercon and Krishnan 2009). The finding that poverty reduces PSE indicates that a poverty trap could be in operation – poverty lowers PSE, and low PSE prevents individuals from taking efficacious decisions that could pull them out of poverty. Yet, it is possible to aid a break out of the poverty trap since "the dynamics that create the low-level equilibrium are not structural but behavioural" (Wuepper and Lybbert 2017, p. 317). Here too, schools are critical spaces. Wuepper and Lybbert (2017, p. 387) argue that:

In schools, children receive critical feedback on their capabilities and problem-solving skills, in absolute terms and relative to their peers. Thus, schools have the power to build up or destroy PSE in general and distinctly for individuals from different backgrounds.

Studies such as Krishnan and Krutikova (2013) (discussed in chapter 5) show that targeted programs in schools in urban slums in India raised PSE and affected targeted behaviour. Similarly, apprenticeships could be an important way of providing PSE information to the poor who have few other sources, and as experience is the most important feedback resource (Bandura 1977).

The study finds that aspirations follow opportunities. As such interventions in the demand side that create opportunities (as well as interventions that address factors in the immediate lives of young women) might be enough for entry even without affecting occupational aspirations. While affecting aspirations may not be required, targeting it might also not lead to the desired objective. The Oaxaca Hope Project in Mexico (Lybbert & Wydick, 2016), conducted with female community bank members, shows that while raising aspirations is easier than raising PSE, "the effect of higher aspirations is heterogeneous (e.g., depending on PSE, actual ability, and individual context).” As such calls to raise aspirations might have weak foundations.

Providing non-traditional training in single sex environments might encourage entry by young women. Several studies find that single sex environments encourage achievement amongst adolescent girls in schools (Lawrie and Brown 1992; Monaco

\textsuperscript{a} See http://www.younglives.org.uk
and Gaier 1992; Watson, Quatman, and Edler 2002). For example, Watson et al. (2002, p. 323) testing the effect of single sex environment on career aspirations of adolescent girls in high schools find that, “Girls at single-sex schools had higher real career aspirations than did girls and boys at coed schools”. While in many such studies the implicit reason for such findings might be the avoidance of stereotype threat (where women expect to perform worse than men) or role conflict (say between future careers and marriage), inter alia, that girls can experience in heterosocial environments (Watson et al. 2002), in the context of this study, the reason for single sex environments easing entry into the training relates to values and social desirability. Interventions that aim to encourage women in atypical entry would meet less resistance and likely be immediately more successful in drawing women if they were single sex. However, since most occupations are heterosocial, policy will have to consider whether providing single sex training would be tantamount to postponing the issue of hetero-sociality to when women are at the juncture of entering jobs.

Further, who should provide the training? Since the level of trust emerges to be automatic and higher with govt institutes, govt provision of training might be best to encourage entry of young women into atypical training. NGOs too could provide the training, but it takes time to build a reputation and trust within targeted communities which needs to be borne in mind while framing interventions. Employing trusted local NGOs then could provide an alternate conduit rather than new NGOs which are perceived to be largely unknown and therefore untested entities by the community.

In sum, policymakers need to address non-labour market variables to affect labour market outcomes of young women. These policy suggestions might be relevant well beyond India as occupational gender segregation is a current and critical issue in other countries, such as in South Asia. In Bangladesh, where FLFP rates are increasing, the challenge of occupation sex segregation takes another form -- women in Bangladesh are concentrated in the vulnerable and low-paid sectors such as the garment sector, which constrains women’s quality of work as well as their wages (Rahman and Islam 2016). In Sri Lanka, Gunatilaka (2016) argues that “job opportunities for women are limited to only a few sectors, whereas males have a
wider range to choose from” (p. 157), which means that women’s employment rate is half that of men even though women are as educated as men.

In the end, it’s an oft repeated statement that, “women can do anything men can do”. This study takes a small step towards understanding the barriers that need to be broken for women to in fact be able to do what until now men have tended to do.
Appendix A: NSS data on women as drivers, electricians, electronic mechanics and beauty workers

Table 4. National Sample Survey data on proportion of women that are drivers, electricians and electronic mechanics, and beauty workers in Delhi and in India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Women as drivers based on the National Sample Survey, 2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delhi, 15-64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>180708</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delhi, 15-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India, 15-64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9468582</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India, 15-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1326608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Women as ‘Electrical and Electronic Equipment Mechanics and Fitters’ based on the National Sample Survey 2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delhi, 15-64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delhi, 15-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14551</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The data analysed in appendix A was accessed and analysed with the support of the Institute of Human Development, Delhi.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>India, 15-64</td>
<td>1824839</td>
<td>14150</td>
<td>1838989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>99.2%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India, 15-24</td>
<td>393406</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>393406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Women as beauty workers based on the National Sample Survey, 2011**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delhi, 15-64</td>
<td>5516</td>
<td>7221</td>
<td>12737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delhi, 15-24</td>
<td>2464</td>
<td>2509</td>
<td>4973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>India, 15-64</td>
<td>1776682</td>
<td>295165</td>
<td>2071846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India, 15-24</td>
<td>318957</td>
<td>86437</td>
<td>405394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix B: Participants and their characteristics

#### Table 5. Tier III localities that the participants came from

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jhaangir Puri</th>
<th>Not Jahangirpuri</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier of the colony</td>
<td>Tier of the colony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 3</td>
<td>Tier 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 3</td>
<td>Tier 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tier 3</td>
<td>Tier 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tier 3</td>
<td>Tier 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Sub-tier classification of the colony | Sub-tier classification of the colony |
| G | G |
| G | G |
| G | G |
| G | E |
| G | G |
| G | G |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prayas</th>
<th>Prayas</th>
<th>Prayas</th>
<th>Prayas</th>
<th>Prayas</th>
<th>Prayas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
* I could not locate three colonies in the classification of 2025 colonies done by the Dharmarajan Committee in 2011. Perhaps these colonies will be included in the next classification which has been completed and awaiting clearance of the govt. to be made public.

Table 6. Participants' Social Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Category</th>
<th>Azad</th>
<th>Prayas</th>
<th>ITI Electrician</th>
<th>ITI Electronic Mechanic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBC</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>96%*</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Social categorisation of one participant in Prayas was missing which account for the total of 96% instead of 100%.
### Appendix C: Participant Details

**Table 7.** Participants' details: biographic, family size, father’s, mother’s and siblings’ jobs, family income, social category, and residential locality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Participant Pseudonym &amp; Biographical Information</th>
<th>Family Size &amp; Composition</th>
<th>Father's job</th>
<th>Mother's job</th>
<th>What do your siblings do?</th>
<th>Income range (INR)*</th>
<th>Social category</th>
<th>Locality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1       | Electronic Mechanic
Rekha, 20 (On record 22), Passed Class 12th | 9; Mother, father, three elder sisters, two younger sister, one younger brother. | Guard at a govt. office | Housewife | Sister 1: Married, Sister 2: Married, Sister 3: Younger, electronics training course, ITI Mangolpuri; Sister 4: Nursing course but left it because of care needs at home after their father had a heart attack. Sister 5: Younger, failed in class 12th exam and preparing to retake them. Younger brother: studying in class 10th. | 17000 - 25,000 | Hindu; General | Sultanpurri |
| 2       | Manjari, 19 (On record 17), Passed class 12th | 5; Mother, father, two younger sisters. | Makes bags | Makes bags | Sister 1 and sister 2: younger and studying in school. | 17000 - 25,000 | Hindu; General | Prem Nagar, Nangloi |
| 3       | Anchal, 20, Undergraduation (does not know the name of the degree) | 7; Mother, father, one elder sister and two younger sisters, and one brother. | Peon at the district, court | Housewife | Sister 1: Elder, searching for a job; Sister 2 and Sister 3: younger and in school, | 3,000 - 17,000 | Hindu; General | Shakti Nagar |
| 4       | Sanyukta, 18, Passed class 12th. | 6; Mother, father, one elder brother, and one younger brother and sister. | Peon at a govt. office | Housewife | Brother 1: Older, Preparing to take the Staff Selection Commission, Brother 2 and sister: younger and studying in school. | 17000 - 25,000 | Hindu; General | Azadpur |
| 5       | Karishma, 20, BA (Hons.) English, in the fourth year as she failed a course. | 9; Mother, four brothers, and four sisters [Two brothers are living with her and her mother. Rest of the siblings are married and don’t live with family. Her father has passed away.] | Father passed away ten years ago. Used to work in an artificial jewellery shop. | Housewife | Brother 1 and brother 2: married and live separately and have no relationship with their natal family. Brother 3 and brother 4: work in call centres as delivery men. Sister 1: married and is a housewife. Before marriage she was a tutor. Sister 2 and sister 3: younger and in school. | 3,000 - 17,000 | Muslim; General | Bhalaswa Dairy, near Jahangir puri |
| 6       | Kriti, 17, Passed class 10th. | 6; Mother, father, two younger sisters, and one younger brother. | Father works as a peon in a bank. | Works in a factory that packs light bulbs. | Sister 1: younger, studying in class 10th, Sister 2; younger, studying in class 6th, Brother: younger, studying in class 5th. | 17000 - 25,000 | Hindu; General | Nangloi |

* - INR 17,000 - 25,000 (188.9 - 277.8 GBP); INR 3,000 - 17,000 (33.33 – 188.89 GBP)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Father's Occupation</th>
<th>Mother's Occupation</th>
<th>Siblings</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Monthly Income ( ₹ )</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Esha, 19, BA (does not know the course name)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Bakauli Village near Alipur</td>
<td>Unemployed. He is an alcoholic.</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>Brother: Elder, recently completed an electrician's course at the ITI and is now looking for a job. At present he does odd jobs like fixing computers when her manages to get a task. Sister: Younger, studying in class 11th.</td>
<td>3,000 - 17,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ujwala, 18, Passed class 12th.</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12th</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Lal Bagh, Azadpur</td>
<td>Electrician</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>Brother: Elder, Studying in 3rd year of BA Prog. Sister 1 and Sister 2: Both elder, both passed class 10th, both married and are housewives.</td>
<td>3,000 - 17,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bhavya, 20, BA Program</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>BA Program</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Nangloi</td>
<td>Factory worker (handicapped)</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>Brother: Elder; Graduate in BA Program and is now working as a manager in auto parts in a company in Bawana Industrial Area.</td>
<td>3,000 - 17,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Lubhawna, 20, Passed class 12th.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12th</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Haiderpur</td>
<td>Factory worker</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>Brother 1: Younger, studying in school. Brother 2: younger, studying in school. Sister: Older, studying in second year of B.Com through SOL and &quot;works at a computer in the Fortis hospital&quot;.</td>
<td>3,000 - 17,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Anubha, 21, Graduated from BA Programme in 2018</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Savan Park</td>
<td>Auto driver. Earlier motor mechanic.</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>Brother: Elder, Left college in 2nd year of BA. Is unemployed at the moment. Sister 1: Younger, in second year of BA in Hindi. Sister 2: younger, studying in school</td>
<td>3,000 - 17,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Patanjali, 19, Passed class 10th</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10th</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Jahangir puri</td>
<td>Railways (Electric field)</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>Brother 1: Elder, completed an ITI diploma in the Electrician trade at ITI, Pusa. He is now working at a Power Grid in Madhya Pradesh (a central Indian state). Brother 2: Elder, completed Masters in Computers, and is working in BSES, a power distribution company in Delhi.</td>
<td>17,000 - 25,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Driving Trainees**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Father's Occupation</th>
<th>Mother's Occupation</th>
<th>Siblings</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Monthly Income ( ₹ )</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Kalpana, 21, BA (does not know the course name), second year</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>OBC</td>
<td>Amrit Vihar, near Burari.</td>
<td>Makes vehicle parts</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>Brother 1: Older, works as an electrician. Brother 2: younger, studying in school.</td>
<td>8000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pinki, 19, BA (does not know the course name), second year</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>OBC</td>
<td>Mukund pur (near Burari), Delhi</td>
<td>Fruit vendor (using a pull cart)</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>Sister 1: younger, studying in class 11th. Sister 2: older, married, and is a housewife. Brother: older, works with father in fruit vending.</td>
<td>9000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Farhana, 24, Passed 10th class.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10th</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Jahangir puri</td>
<td>A shopkeeper in a wholesale market</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>Brother 1, brother 2, brother 3 and brother 4: older, married, work in poultry farms in Delhi and now live separately from the family. Sister, sister 2 and</td>
<td>16000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Class/Qualification</td>
<td>Family Composition</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Member Occupation</td>
<td>Details</td>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Cast</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bani</td>
<td>19, Passed 10th</td>
<td>8; Mother, father, two elder sisters and three younger brothers.</td>
<td>Auto driver</td>
<td>Factory worker</td>
<td>Sister 1 and sister 2: older, give cooking classes. Brother 1: Younger, left studies, is unemployed and &quot;a loafer&quot;. Brother 2 and brother 3: younger and both study in class 9th.</td>
<td>25000</td>
<td>Muslim; OBC</td>
<td>Jahangir puri</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mitu</td>
<td>20, Passed class 12th.</td>
<td>7; Mother, father, an elder sister and a younger brother, parental grandfather and grandmother.</td>
<td>Driver</td>
<td>Housewife. Sister 1: Elder, teaches accounting at a coaching centre; Brother: younger, studying in school.</td>
<td></td>
<td>6000</td>
<td>Hindu; SC</td>
<td>Swaroop Nagar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Hamida</td>
<td>21, B.A Political science, third year.</td>
<td>5; Mother, two brothers sister-in-law</td>
<td>Passed away but used to be a hakim [a doctor using traditional remedies]</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>Brother 1: Older, married, works in a mobile repairing shop; Brother 2: older, works in a mobile repairing shop.</td>
<td>24000</td>
<td>Muslim; OBC</td>
<td>Jahangir puri</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Anmol</td>
<td>18, Passed class 9th.</td>
<td>6; Mother, father, one older brother and one younger brother, and elder sister who is married (and doesn’t live with the family post marriage).</td>
<td>Car mechanic</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>Brother 1: &quot;Collects tax from small shops that have not paid taxes&quot;. It’s not a govt job. Anmol was not able to provide further details. Brother 2: Younger, studying in class 9th. Sister: Older, married, a &quot;housewife&quot;</td>
<td>10000</td>
<td>Hindu; General</td>
<td>Jahangir puri</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Mamta</td>
<td>19, Passed class 12th.</td>
<td>5; Mother, father, younger brother and younger sister.</td>
<td>Labourer</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>Brother: Younger, studying in 1st standard. Sister: Younger, studying in class 9th.</td>
<td>7000</td>
<td>Hindu; SC</td>
<td>Nathapur Bura Burari</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Meena</td>
<td>19, Passed class 12th.</td>
<td>6; Mother, father, elder brother, his wife, their son.</td>
<td>Makes the body of a truck</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>Brother: Older, married, works with their father in making truck bodies.</td>
<td>15000</td>
<td>Muslim; OBC</td>
<td>Bhalaswa Dairy near Jahangir puri</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Kaveri</td>
<td>18, Passed class 8th.</td>
<td>8; including the brother who is in jail; Mother, father, paternal grandmother, three sisters, and a brother who is in jail. Other family members like her uncles and aunts live in neighbouring houses.</td>
<td>Doesn’t work as he is an alcoholic. Earlier was a van driver.</td>
<td>Factory worker</td>
<td>Sister 1: Older, married, housewife. Sister 2 and sister 3: younger and studying in school. Brother: Elder, in jail now for a case of robbery, used to work as a van driver before that.</td>
<td>4000</td>
<td>Hindu; SC</td>
<td>Amrit Vihar, Mukund puri</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Fatima</td>
<td>18, Passed 9th.</td>
<td>13; Mother, father, two brothers, eight sisters.</td>
<td>Labourer</td>
<td>Domestic worker</td>
<td>Brother 1: Older, is ‘separate’ from the family, works as a plumber. Sister 1: Older, learning how to stitch, she had studied up to class 8th. Sister 2: younger, studied until class 11th and training in beauty parlour (Razia); Sister 3: younger, studying in class 9th; Sister 4: youngest, studying in class 7th.</td>
<td>10000</td>
<td>Muslim; OBC</td>
<td>Jahangir puri</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Anita</td>
<td>20, Passed class 12th.</td>
<td>4; Mother and two older brothers (father has passed away)</td>
<td>Father has passed away</td>
<td>Housewife. Earlier she worked in a</td>
<td>Brother 1 and brother 2: older and do not work and &quot;just roam around&quot;.</td>
<td>8000</td>
<td>Hindu; General</td>
<td>Jahangir puri</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Class</td>
<td>Mother, father, siblings</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Status</td>
<td>Other details</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Anisha</td>
<td>B.A</td>
<td>one older sister, brother</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>Sister: Older, works as a ground staff in Indigo at Indira Gandhi International Airport. Brother: younger, studying in class eleventh.</td>
<td>16000</td>
<td>Hindu; General Burari</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Ardra</td>
<td>Passed</td>
<td>two brothers, one younger</td>
<td>Driver</td>
<td>Brother 1 and brother 2: Older, married, both working as drivers in Dubai, UAE.</td>
<td>4000</td>
<td>Hindu; OBC Mukund pur</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Shaama</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>younger and one younger</td>
<td>Peon in a finance company</td>
<td>All siblings: younger and studying in school.</td>
<td>10000</td>
<td>Hindu; OBC Jahangir pur</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Padma</td>
<td>Passed</td>
<td>mother, father, two sisters</td>
<td>Street vendor</td>
<td>Brother 1 and brother 2: younger, studying in class 9th, Brother 3, brother 4 and sister are toddlers.</td>
<td>9000</td>
<td>Muslim; OBC Adarsh Nagar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Ujala</td>
<td>Graduated in BA (Hons) Political Science</td>
<td>Mother, father, two brothers, one younger sister and brother</td>
<td>Labourer</td>
<td>Sister 1: Older, married, housewife. Sister 2, sister 3 and sister 4: younger and studying. Brother: older and works with their father in rubber work (cutting rubber parts and supplying it for orders), Brother 1 and Brother 2: married, housewives.</td>
<td>9000</td>
<td>Hindu; ST Mukund pur</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Mohini</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>one older sister, one younger brother</td>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>Brother 1: Older, works in McDonalds, Sister 2: Older, works in McDonalds, Sister 3: younger, studying in class 10th, Brother: younger, studying in class 8-</td>
<td>17000</td>
<td>Hindu; OBC Pratap Nagar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Shantia</td>
<td>Passed</td>
<td>three brothers, one sister</td>
<td>Compounder in a hospital</td>
<td>Sister: Older, married, housewife. Brother 1: Older, working in printing of cards for weddings etc; Brother 2: Owns and runs a salon Brother 3: chauffeur.</td>
<td>20000</td>
<td>Hindu; SC Jahangir pur</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Anu</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>one older sister and one younger sister and brother</td>
<td>Milkman</td>
<td>Sister 1: Older, ill from a chronic disease and stays at home. Sister 2: Younger (15), studying in school. Brother: Younger (14), studying in school.</td>
<td>6000</td>
<td>Hindu; OBC Swaroop Nagar</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Smriti</td>
<td>Passed</td>
<td>one older sister and one paternal uncle</td>
<td>Tailoring job in a denim factory</td>
<td>Sister: Younger (10), studying in school.</td>
<td>9000</td>
<td>Hindu; OBC Jahangir pur</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Beauty and wellness trainees**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Mother, father, siblings</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Other details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sanskriti</td>
<td>Passed</td>
<td>two brothers and a younger sister</td>
<td>Cook for a catering service</td>
<td>Sister: Younger, studying in class 9th and training in the beauty course with her. Brother 1: Younger, training in electrician's course at an ITI. Brother 2: Older, Graduate in B.Com and working in catering with their father.</td>
<td>10000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Tuheena</td>
<td>Passed</td>
<td>three brothers</td>
<td>Auto driver</td>
<td>Brother 1: Works as a video editor, Brother 2: Trying to set up a shoe shop. Brother 3: Works at a</td>
<td>NA*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Age, Class, Course</td>
<td>Details</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Additional Information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Uma</td>
<td>21, BA in Urdu, second year</td>
<td>9; Mother, father, one older brother and five sisters. Retired from the railways. The participant is unclear about exactly what he did.</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>Brother 1: Older, Studying Law. Sister 1, Sister 2, Sister 3, and Sister 4: older, married and housewives. Sister 5: Older, works at a call centre in Karol Bagh.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>8000 Muslim, General</td>
<td>Jahangir puri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sarthi</td>
<td>20, Passed class 10th.</td>
<td>6; Mother, father, elder sister, elder brother, and younger brother. Helper at a watch shop</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>Sister: Older, studying in BA. Brother 1: Older, searching for a job, wants to start something of his own. Brother 2: Younger, in school.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5000 Hindu; OBC</td>
<td>Adarsh Nagar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Trishna</td>
<td>18, Passed class 10th.</td>
<td>6; Mother, father, younger sister and two elder brothers.</td>
<td>Mason</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>Sister: Younger, just graduated from BA. Brother 1: Older, completed graduation, working in Snapdeal in postage. Brother 2: Younger, completed graduation, working in a call center.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8000 Muslim, General</td>
<td>Jahangir puri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Mariam</td>
<td>19, Passed class 12th.</td>
<td>5; Mother, father, brother and sister.</td>
<td>Brother and sister: younger and studying</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4700 Muslim, General</td>
<td>Jahangir puri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Saya</td>
<td>22, BA (does not know the course name), second year</td>
<td>6; Mother, father, and three brothers.</td>
<td>Lighting work</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>Brother 1: Older, &quot;works in a company related to taking care of lights&quot;. Brother 2: Working and studying. Brother 3: studying.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8500 Hindu; OBC</td>
<td>Swaroop Nagar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Niti</td>
<td>22, BA (does not know the course name), second year</td>
<td>8; Mother, father, three elder sisters, and two elder brothers.</td>
<td>Catering</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>Brother 1 and sister 2: Older, married, housewives. Brother 1: Older, married, has a bike repairing shop at which he works. Sister 2: Younger, in Agra, studying. Brother 2: Younger, in Agra, studying (?).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3600 Hindu; OBC</td>
<td>Jahangir puri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Razia</td>
<td>17, Passed class 10th.</td>
<td>10; Mother, father, five sisters and two brothers.</td>
<td>Labourer</td>
<td>Domestic worker</td>
<td>Brother 1: Older, lives separately from the family, works as a plumber. Brother 2: Younger, does a &quot;calling job&quot; in a &quot;company, like repair work or something like that of mobile phones&quot;. Razia was unable to be more specific. Sister 1: Older, learning how to stitch, she had studied up to class 8th. Sister 2: Older, in taxi training (Fatima), Sister 3: younger, studying in class 9th; Sister 4: youngest, studying in class 7th. Brother 1: Older, married, stays with grandmother in Meerut.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>10,000 Muslim, General</td>
<td>Jahangir puri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Tina</td>
<td>20, Passed class 12th.</td>
<td>6; Mother, four brothers [father has passed away] [many years ago]</td>
<td>Father passed away</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>Brother 1 and brother 2: Older and tailors. Brother 3 and brother 4: younger and in school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8000 Hindu; General</td>
<td>Jahangir puri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Ambika</td>
<td>17, Passed class 10th.</td>
<td>6; Mother, two elder brothers, on older sister and one younger sister [father has passed away].</td>
<td>Father has passed away</td>
<td>Makes poppadoms from home</td>
<td>Brother 1 and Brother 2: Older and in &quot;jobs related to electric fans&quot; Ambika was unable to more specific. Sister 1: Older, married, housewife; she had learnt stitching earlier. Sister 2: younger and in school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8000 General</td>
<td>Jahangir puri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Class</td>
<td>Family Size</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Siblings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Bhavni</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9th</td>
<td>7; Mother, father, two older and one younger brother, and one younger sister.</td>
<td>Mason</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Rukhtar</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>7; Mother, two brothers, and three sisters. (father has passed away)</td>
<td>Father passed away three years ago. He used to run their shop of undergarments in Jahangirpuri.</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Prachi</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12th</td>
<td>5; Mother, father, a younger brother and a younger sister.</td>
<td>Drives a loading vehicle he owns.</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Rukhtar</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12th</td>
<td>7; Mother, father, three elder sisters, two brothers, a sister-in-law, niece.</td>
<td>Govt job. The participant is unsure exactly what.</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Masum</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9th</td>
<td>5; Mother, father, elder brother, and sister-in-law.</td>
<td>Shopkeeper</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Preeti</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9th</td>
<td>7; Mother, father, an elder brother and a younger brother, and an elder sister.</td>
<td>Auto driver</td>
<td>Factory worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Kirti</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11th</td>
<td>5; Mother, father, and two brothers.</td>
<td>Catering</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Bharti</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10th</td>
<td>5; Mother, father, a younger brother and paternal grandmother.</td>
<td>Auto driver</td>
<td>Factory worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Aparna</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10th</td>
<td>Family size:5; Mother, father, an elder and a younger brother.</td>
<td>Labourer</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Ragini</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10th</td>
<td>6; Mother, two sisters and three brothers. The three brothers are married and living separately. [Father has passed away]</td>
<td>Father has passed away</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Sejal</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10th</td>
<td>17; Mother, father, elder sister, younger brother, paternal grandmother, paternal grandfather (passed away a month ago), two paternal uncles, their wives, their three children each. The joint family is set up as a family of three</td>
<td>Auto driver</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Income</td>
<td>Religion</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Kamna, 19, B.A. (Prog.), second year.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>At Delhi Jal Board</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>Brother and sister: younger and studying in school.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D: Interview guide

The following is the interview guide that I used with the primary participants of the study – the young women trainees in Delhi. The questions were complemented by prompts (e.g. ‘You have not mentioned X: what do you feel about that?’), probes (e.g. ‘Tell me more about this?’, ‘Why do you say that?’, ‘How did that come about?’) and verbal and non-verbal cues to continue (e.g. nodding, smiling, maintaining eye-contact or saying ‘I see’ in an encouraging way). The themes explored in the interviews were based on a reading of the literature and were informed by the experiences on the field. As such the themes explored in the interviews included – socio-biographical and familial characteristics, occupations of the family, value of work, peer networks and relationships, familial relationships, autonomy and relationships, gendered cultural beliefs, information and advice, occupational goal making and planning, inter alia.

- What is your name?
- How old are you?
- Until what class did you study?
- Where do you live? Whom do you live with? Who are your family members?
- What do they do?
- How did you think of entering the training?
- Did you always want to enter this occupation? Why or why not?
- What did you want to become as a child? Why?
- Had you thought about it or planned for it?
- How did you decide what you want to become?
- How did you get into this occupational training?
- What do you want to become now?
- Did your parents want you to become something? What did they want you to become?
- Do your parents support you for the training? What was their reaction to the training? Is your parent’s approval important to you? If so, why?
- If they did not support you, would you still be able to do the training? Why?
- How did you learn about the training?
- What was your friend’s reaction to the training?
- Does your friends’ approval or support matter to you?
- What do your friends do? Who are they? Where do you know them from?
- How did your neighbours react to your training?
- Do you want to do a job? Why?
• Imagine that you are married and you have no dearth of money, would you still want to do a job? Why?
• When you thought of joining this training, how did you feel? Why?
• What kinds of jobs do you think men are good at? What kind of jobs do you think that women are good at? Why?
• Are there jobs you wouldn’t want to do? Why?
• Is there anyone who inspires you, who you look up to? Who is it and why do they inspire you?
• Do you use social media like Facebook? What do you tend to look at on Facebook? Does Facebook provide you with useful information regarding jobs?
• Have you seen women driving a taxi? Or an e-rickshaw? How do you feel when you see them? Would you want to do those jobs?
• If I tell you that there is an NGO which trains you in driving and then also links you with a job, would you want to do the training?
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