

## **Occupational Problems and Challenges of Women Bus Conductors in Road Transport Industry: With Special Reference to BMTC**

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**ABSTRACT:** *The transport industry is traditionally a male dominated sector. Women workforces in India were away from this sector till 1980s. From past two- three decades women have gradually entered to this sector as bus conductors and different strata of employment in road transport industry in different parts of the country. This situation can also see in Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) in Karnataka state. Even today if we have a closer look at the sex balance in the transport employment, it shows that it is still male dominated. This paper is to search that the transport sector is a gendered work space dominated by masculine values and practices. Also seeks the reasons for women who entering to transport sector in larger scale in recent days. The aim of this paper is to focus on occupational problems, challenges of women bus conductors and job satisfaction.*

**Keywords**—Commuter, Job satisfaction, Occupational Challenge, Shift work, Women Bus Conductor

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

It is an open truth that working women have to face challenges and problems just by virtue of their being women. A gender bias creates an obstacle at the every stage in working environment. The age old belief of male superiority over women creates several hurdles for women at their place of work. The inbuilt conviction has developed that the women are capable of less work than men or less efficient than men. The new generation of female transformed the traditional patriarchal social structure across the globe this social shift which had been set in motion at the end of 20th century in India. This development has exposed women to previously male-dominated profession. In this view, the challenges and problems of women who work in male dominated occupations in transport industry are being explored. The study focuses on the nature of work of bus conductor and working environment in transport organization. Apart from this occupational challenge, problems relating to motivational factors and causes for entry to bus conductor's job are analyzed. Finally the argument will come across with job satisfaction of women who work as bus conductors in transport industry are being analyzed. The nature of work of every occupation has its own entity. Similarly the bus conductor work has required more physical and interactive skills than the intellectual knowledge. The nature of bus conductor is entirely different from other occupations since it is service sector for public. They have to work in different shifts every day and interact with commuters of multi personalities and bare misbehavior of commuters. Being a woman it is a challenging task for them.

### **II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Gender role is a set of perceived behavioral norms associated particularly with males or females in a given social group or system (Reiter, 1975). One of the difficulties with the working women is the adjustment with the male colleagues there are few working women surrounded by numerically preponderant group of males. This results in a feeling of isolation, and lack of communication and even improper co-ordination in the performance of tasks. He has focused on difficulties of working women at working place. He has stated that, one of the difficulties with the working women is the adjustment with the male colleagues there are few working women surrounded by numerically preponderant group of males. This results in a feeling of isolation, and lack of communication and even improper co-ordination in the performance of tasks (Srivastava 1978).

Charles, and Brown (1981) "Women, shift work and the sexual division of labour", Shift works affect women differently from men because their psychological structure is different. Women have specific tempered

structure because of the menstrual cycle. Hemalata and Suryanaryana (1983) reported that women working irregular hours have more problems than those working regular hours. In both nurses and doctors the timing of duties are too erratic since they require them to do night shifts along with call duties whereas the job of a college lecturer requires a fixed time schedule. But in service sectors the working hours is not fixed women who working had stay for long and irregulars' hours or shift hours. There are few studies on nature effects of shifts work on women workers and gender relation within the family Bosch and De Large (1987) "Shift work in Health care" ergonomics',

Adler (1991) "Sleep for sale: a study of shifts work in South Africa, Johannesburg labour and economic research center." For the better performance of the occupational roles by the women employee depend upon many factors. One of these is related to the physical facilities at the place of work. If the employer is unable to provide an adequate facility then the quality of work performance is likely to deteriorate (Kalbagh 1992). Kumud (1993) in his book "Women and modern occupational in India" has focuses on the difficulties with the working women is the adjustment with the male colleagues. There are few working women surrounding by numerically preponderant group of males. This will resulted in a feeling of isolation and a lack of communication and even improper co-ordination in the performance of tasks. He also drew an attention on problems of over stay at office. Overstay at office as a result of working over the normal working hours especially for women creates many problems, like conveyance, loneliness, sexual harassment. Another import component of study on the study is the family adjustment of the working women. He also covers various aspects on occupation careers, trends of work participation of women, commitment to work professional ideology and has also highlighted on the level of performance of working women in male dominated occupational fields.

Morse (2001) discusses the occupation stress among the working women, influence of feminism, educated women, women related problem like childcare, low pay, sexual harassment, problems pregnant women, psychological problems, family life, work satisfaction, happiness of working women. Job related psychological stressors for the working women are fear of disapproval, feeling of dependency on male co-workers, need to submerge her own desires, fear of being aggressive, or self – assertive and hence, being labeled unfeminine, fear of failure, etc...

### **III. METHODOLOGY**

The present study is to make an intensive inquiry of various aspects of challenges of women workers in transport industry by the use of empirical approach. For the present study, the case study method is used. The unit of study is an organization namely, Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation [BMTC]. Information about the research has been collected through interview with women bus conductors at various depots of BMTC.

For the convenience of collecting data and ensuring the representativeness of the sample, stratified random sampling technique was used. In this study 300 samples has been selected, which constitutes 27.27 percent of the total workforce of women bus conductors in BMTC. . Among these selected 300 samples, 250 are permanent employees and 50 are trainees. The BMTC has 36 depots in Bangalore out of which 20 depots are selected further; samples are randomly drawn from the 5 divisions namely, North, South, East, West and Central of Bangalore city.

### **IV. RATIONAL OF THE STUDY**

Transport industry has long been considered as masculine working sector. Women were away from this sector till past two-three decades. The social stigma deprived women to work in this masculine sector. The young educated generations have stepped ahead by crossing the traditional barricades and are recruiting in masculine jobs like, police, military, journalist and transport industry. Therefore this paper attempt to study the problems and challenges of women bus conductors.

### **V. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To analyze the various challenges faced by women in transport sector.
2. To analyze the occupational problems of women bus conductors.
3. To analyze the job satisfaction among women bus conductors.

### **VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The BMTC is one of the public transport organizations which provide service to the public according to their needs. Bangalore is a metropolitan city where more than 55 lakh people commuting in public transport from morning 6AM to 12PM every day. To better understanding of the work nature and problems of women bus conductor few variables such as; shift hours, work by standing, commuters misbehavior and job satisfaction are chosen for this study.

## **6.1 SHIFT HOURS**

The BMTC has scheduled 4 shifts every day. The bus conductors have to work in different shifts on rotation basis. Work that is scheduled outside “normal” daylight hours (9 am to 5 pm) is called “Shift work”. Shift work schedules can vary from one workplace to another. Working in shift timing is one of the major hurdles for women bus conductors due to household management, taking care of their children and travelling from house and office.

The Table 1 reflects the shift timing of BMTC where women bus conductor works in different shifts. Among them 59.3 percent permanent employees were assigned to the first shift, 30 percent of them were assigned the second shift and 22 percent of permanent samples works in general shift. In the case of trainee employees the work schedule is assigned only in general shift due to train them and learn the nature of work. The general shift work has been scheduled for 12 hours those who working in this shift have to work additional four hours this will be treated as OT (Over Time Duty) and paid extra salary. Both trainees and permanent conductors who are working in this shift have fed up long duration of 12 hours. In the second shift will be closed at 10pm after that have to stay at depot for another 30 minutes and the organization not provided any transportation facilities for women employees who in night shifts therefore they reach home very late hours this has led them physical and mental stress and family related problems. Night shifts can also be tiring mental and physical effects of night work have been shown to affect a worker’s concentration, alertness, motivation, and memory. This can slow a worker’s reaction time and increase the risk of accident. Unfortunately, night work cannot be avoided in some occupations (Taylor, Briner, and Folkard, 1997). When comparing 8-hr work schedule to a 10-hr work schedule, most studies found that workers were more tired at the end of a 10-hr shift. Studies also found workers to be more fatigued following a 12-hr shift when compared to an 8-hr shift (Barber, 1995).

## **6.2 WORKS BY STANDING**

Work by standing is one of the challenging tasks for women bus conductors since the nature of work is always mobile in the bus and within the bus get in and get down by the bus frequently at every stop till last destination for issuing tickets they can’t sit for long time. Similar study about work by standing in various professions of UK reveals that hundreds of thousands of people in the UK could be suffering health problems related to prolonged standing (Franco and Fusetti, 2004). Almost 200,000 report lower limb symptoms caused or made worse by the job. Due to this nature of work many respondents were facing lot of muscular- skeletal problems which are analyzed below. The “Fig” 1 reveals that about 82% Of samples said that they have to work by standing for 8-9 hours, 14% for 10- 12 hours and 3.7% for 6-8 hours based on assignment of routes of the trips. Due to this they are suffering from muscular-skeletal pain like; leg pain 98.1%, back ache 87.4%, fatigue 82%, body ache 79.6%, head ache 55.3%, and Neck pain 52.4%, 32% miscarriage, 17.5% are suffering from swelling of lower limbs, and 7.6% of them are facing problem of varicose veins.

## **6.3 COMMUTERS MISBEHAVIOR**

In the nature of work the respondents have to interact with 300 to 500 commuters of multi personality in bus every day and issue tickets. Some commuters are behaving abnormally with women conductors this commuter’s Behavior has led them to stress this will happen routine at every trips in their work schedule. “Minimum passengers limit” of RTO rule is not being followed by the BMTC. The passengers limit is not predictable some time they are more enough which cannot be controlled due to this many difficulties faced by respondents in discharging their duty. One of the similar studies carried out to asses’ public behavior that, as many as 110 of the 250 women employee respondents of the study complained that behavior was “unbearable”. For 70 others it was “bearable”, while for 40 “normal” (BMTC service publication, 2008). In the “Fig” 2 about 71.3 percent respondents had experienced this kind of misbehavior among them 87 percent expressed sometimes whereas 7.3 percent said it is found always and only 5.7 percent of the total sample expressed that they never came across misbehavior where these respondents are seniors among the total sample. The respondents were also expressed about causes and types for the misbehavior that they had in which 29.7 percent happened due to monitory change problem leads to conflict. 20 percent happened due to not following rules and regulations and 9.3% of commuters are not give respect, about 6.3% of respondents face physical assaults by commuters. During second shift problems of drunken commuters had bare by respondents due to this about 6 percent of commuters behave abnormally. Either the police department or BMTC does not give any protection for commuters.

## **6.4 JOB SATISFACTION**

Job Satisfaction is the favorableness or un-favorableness with which the employee views his work. It expresses the amount of agreement between ones expectation of the job and the rewards that the job provides. Job Satisfaction is a part of life satisfaction. The nature of one environment of job is an important part of life as

Job Satisfaction influences one general life satisfaction. Job Satisfaction, thus, is the result of various attitudes possessed by an employee. In a narrow sense, these attitudes are related to the job under condition with such specific factors such as wages. Supervisors of employment, conditions of work, social relation on the job, prompt settlement of grievances and fair treatment by employer. However, more comprehensive approach requires that many factors are to be included before a complete understanding of job satisfaction can be obtained. Such factors as employee's age, health temperature, desire and level of aspiration should be considered. Further his family relationship, Social status, recreational outlets, activity in the organizations etc. Contribute ultimately to job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is in regard to one's feelings or state-of-mind regarding the nature of their work. Job satisfaction can be influenced by a variety of factors, eg, the quality of one's relationship with their supervisor, the quality of the physical environment in which they work, degree of fulfillment in their work, etc.

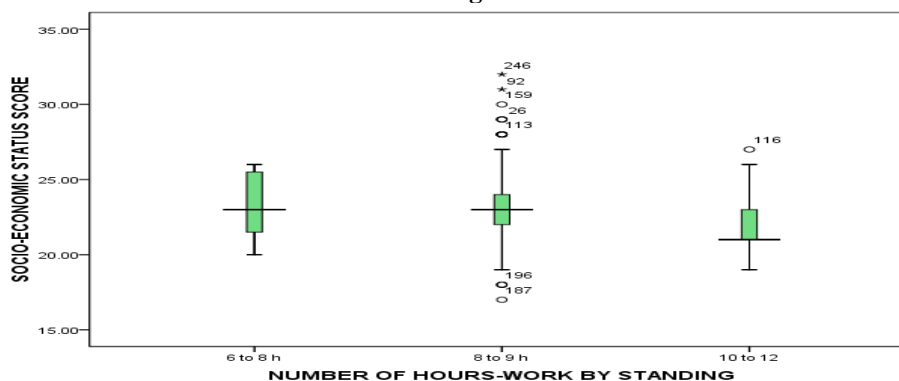
Recently there have been several studies on the relationship between work structures, establishment size and job satisfaction of employees. Scherer's (1976) work was one of the earliest studies in this area. Using 1973 Quality of Employment Survey (QES), he found that low levels of job satisfaction were associated with large establishments. Since then other studies such as Kwoka (1980) and Idson (1990) gave credence to this result. Kwoka used 1977 QES data and multivariate estimation techniques. Idson (1990) also used 1977 QES survey and examined the relationship between the establishment size, work structure and job satisfaction. He found that regimentation in the work environment of the larger establishments leads to lower levels of job satisfaction. Studies by Dunn (1980 & 1986) also indicated less worker satisfaction in larger firms. Stafford (1980) and Oi (1983) developed models with the outcome of greater rigidity in the work structure of larger firms. Association of lower levels of job satisfaction with larger establishment sizes was also reported in the UK. Clark (1996) used 5 000 British employees from British Household Panel Survey (BHPS) 1991 and investigated job satisfaction with various individual and firm characteristics. However, Clark (1996) was not able to investigate the nature of the work environment and the establishment size.

The 'Fig' 3 reveals that 76.7 percent of the total sample accepted that they are not satisfied from this job, where 19.7 percent expressed due to the shift hours, 4.3 percent expressed dual role problem, 20 percent expressed working with standing and travelling, 22.7 percent expressed due to physical and mental stress, 0.3 percent due to lack of leave facilities and 9.7 percent expressed that conductor job is not fit for woman whereas 23.3 percent of the total sample expressed they are satisfied with the job.

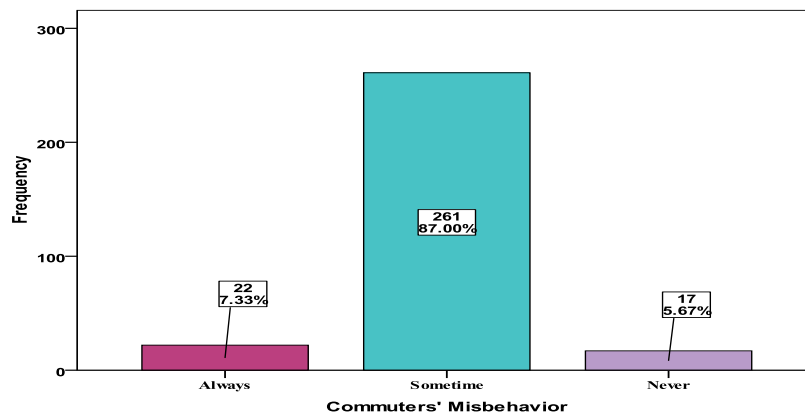
### VII. TABLES AND FIGURES

| Shift Timings                                     | Trainees   |            | Permanent   |             | Total<br>f (%) |
|---|------------|------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|
|   | f (%)      |            | f (%)       |             |                |
|   | Yes        | No         | Yes         | No          |                |
| <b>1<sup>st</sup> shift: 6AM – 2 PM</b>           | NIL        | 50<br>16.7 | 178<br>59.3 | 72<br>24    | 300<br>100     |
| <b>2<sup>nd</sup> shift: 2PM – 10 PM</b>          | NIL        | 50<br>16.7 | 90<br>30    | 160<br>53.3 | 300<br>100     |
| <b>General shift: 8 AM – 8 PM</b>                 | 50<br>16.7 | NIL        | 66<br>22    | 184<br>61.3 | 300<br>100     |
| <b>Night shift: 10 PM – 12 PM &amp; 5AM- 6 AM</b> | NIL        | NIL        | NIL         | NIL         | NIL            |

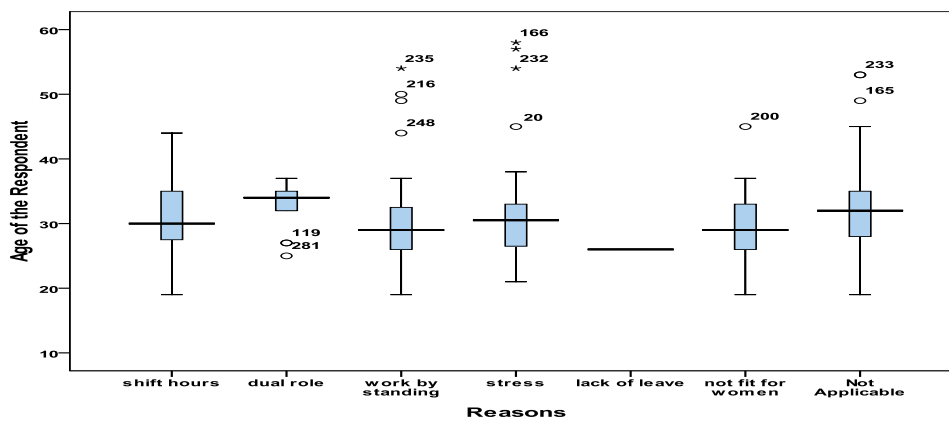
**Table 01: Shift Timing Of Work Schedule**



**FIGURE 01: WORK BY STANDING**



**FIGURE 02: COMMUTERS' MISBEHAVIOR**



**Figure 03: Reasons For Job Dissatisfaction**

## VIII. FINDINGS

This study finds various occupational problems and challenges faced by women bus conductors working in BMTC organization. Few of the important findings are mentioned below;

- Shift work has created an occupational problem among women bus conductor.
- Nature of work is standing and it is a problem in peak hours among the women conductors. Standing with long hours have led to Muscular - skeletal and other health related problems
- Handling commuters in the bus is one of challenge and various problems have been faced by the women conductor which has led to mental stress and psychological problems.
- Job dissatisfaction has been found due to over work load, occupational stress, dual role, lack of leave facilities, low salary, shift hours and health hazard.

## IX. SUGGESTIONS & CONCLUSION

### 9.1 SUGGESTIONS

Few suggestions are been listed below for the well-being and to provide facilities especially for working women conductor;

- In order to decrease Musculo-skeletal pain and fatigue organization should provide ten minutes leisure between the trips.
- To introduce new model where conductors to be seated in the particular place inside the bus and commuters should proceed to the conductors for purchasing travel ticket.
- Minimum number of commuters to be allowed according to the Regional Transport Office [RTO] [60 commuters per bus] rules to reduce the risk of overload of commuters.
- Work schedules should be flexible by allowing women workers to their convenient and strictly to avoid night shift.
- Policies and privileges to be reframed and provide more facilities to increase their job satisfaction

## 9.2 CONCLUSION

Recently women in India plays diverse role in society. Due to expansion of labour market women are entering even to the masculine jobs. Traditional society like India, women working in masculine jobs is gradually accepting the new changes and values. The recent development of work force indicates the structural changes of the society. Besides this the government should take necessary steps to implement the social legislations for working women and improve the facilities exclusively.

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