

Women's Work, Social Norms and the Marriage Market

Farzana Afridi (Indian Statistical Institute, Delhi)

Abhishek Arora (World Bank)

Diva Dhar (University of Oxford)

Kanika Mahajan (Ashoka University)

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- International evidence shows that working women marry at a lower rate than unskilled women
 - Higher marriage deficit among skilled women in countries with more conservative gender attitudes (Bertrand et al. (2016))

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 - Female LFP Urban India - 20% last 3 decades

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 - Female LFP Urban India - 20% last 3 decades
- What explains low FLFP?
 - Is there a role played by partner selection in marriage markets?
 - Which traits are valued in the marriage market?
 - Do employment status and nature of occupation matter?
 - Do social norms matter for the above?

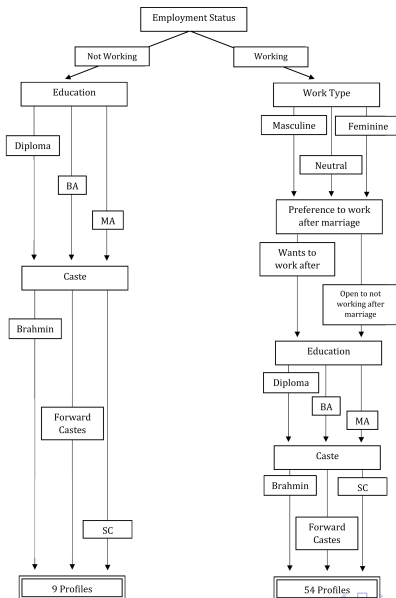
- Preferred partner traits:
 - Men typically value physical beauty (Fisman et al., 2006)
 - Women value male income (Fisman et al., 2006; Chiappori et al., 2021)
 - Men do not value women's intelligence/ambition when it exceeds their own
 - Women look for male partners with higher attributes than their own (e.g. income or height, Chiappori et al. (2021))
- Caste based preferences in the marriage market: (Anukriti Dasgupta (2017); Banerjee et al. (2013) and Dugar et al. (2012))
- Revealed traits by single women in presence of single men show less ambitious nature: (Bursztyn, Fujiwara and Pallais (2017))

- Nascent literature on valuation of employment or occupation
 - [Neyt et al. \(2019\)](#) for Belgium: find neither gender uses job status or job prestige to show initial interest (Tinder) but men less likely to start a conversation with unemployed females
 - [Dhar \(2021\)](#) for India: Varies female profiles by employment status, willingness to work post marriage and incomes of female profiles who send interests to randomized male profiles
 - Analyse the responses of men to the above expression of interest
 - Women who signal wanting to work after marriage receive up to 22% less interest from men on a marriage-market matching platform in India

What we do - Female profile creation

- Create and observe profiles for women and men on a leading matrimonial platform in India and elicit responses or 'interests' in potential partners on the platforms.
- Varied the females profiles by working status
 - Within the employed female profiles we allowed the occupations to vary by gender stereotype
 - Occupations - "Feminine" (e.g. primary school teacher), "Neutral" (e.g. data entry operator) and "Masculine" (e.g. machine technician)
 - Each employed-occupation female profile indicated whether the female was open to not working after marriage or not
- One unemployed female profile and six female employed profiles

Female profile creation



Profile creation

- Female profiles
 - Varied each profile by:
 - Education - Diploma, Bachelors of Arts (BA) and Master of Arts (MA)
 - Caste categories - Brahmins (Upper Castes), Other Forward castes (OFC), Scheduled Castes (SC, lower castes)
 - 63 females profiles created = $7 \times 3 \times 3$
 - Two cities - Delhi (North India) and Bangalore (South India)
- Male profiles - Repeat the above steps except that do not display an interest in working or not working after marriage (Total male profiles = 36 per city)
- Other fields for women: No photos, Age (25), Height (5ft 3"), Mother's occupation (Housewife), fathers occupation (retired), profile manager (self), Annual Income: Rs. 3-4 Lakhs for employed, Family Income: Rs. 5-7.5 Lakhs, Never married, Sector of employment (Private)

Other experiment details:

- The profiles were uploaded over a period of two and half months (June 12, 2021- August 22, 2021)
- First uploaded for Delhi and then for Bangalore to minimize the time span between profiles in a given city while ensuring sufficient time between new profile creation
- Around 3-4 randomly chosen profiles were uploaded on a daily basis
 - Profile suspension by platform
 - Suspicion from users
- Each profile uploaded for a month; Information collected on interests by men (women) for each female (male) profile

Occupation selection

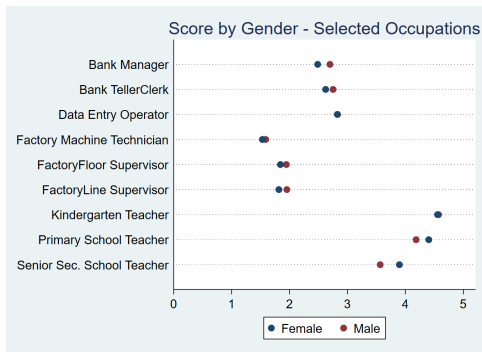
- Periodic Labor Force Survey (PLFS 2018-19): share of females across occupation categories by education
 - Shortlisted 20 occupations for which there was sufficient mass in the 3 mentioned education categories - Diploma, BA, MA
 - Feminine (F): female dominated (45% for that occupation workforce)
 - Gender neutral (N): average female workforce composition (15-35%)
 - Masculine (M): below average female workforce composition (less than 10%)
- Conducted an online survey among college students
 - Respondents were asked to rate each job (occupation) on a scale from 1 – 5 where one represented typically masculine jobs and 5 represented typically feminine jobs
 - Feminine (F) (Mean Score > 3)
 - Gender neutral (N) (Mean Score between 2 – 3)
 - Masculine (M) (Mean Score < 2)

Occupational perception survey: Selected occupations

Diploma - Machine Technician (M), Data entry operator (N), Kindergarten teacher (F)

BA - Factory Line Supervisor (M), Bank Clerk (N), Primary school teacher (F)

MA - Factory Floor supervisor (M), Bank manager (N), Senior secondary teacher (F)



- Use data on responses (interests received) by the female profiles
 - Female profiles: 185 expressions of interest on average over a month; Men receive less than 1 interest on average
 - Karmegam (2020) for India in the dating market, 40:1 ratio;
 - U.S. (Fiore et al., 2010) and China (Xia et al., 2014)
- Average proportion of expressions of interest received by female profiles over a month
- Assume that all male profiles who interacted with any of our female profiles in a city were potential male suitors for all the created female profiles in that city.
 - Average interests received by a female profile - 6.24%

Estimation Strategy: Specification 1

$$Y_{icsj} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Not Working}_i + \beta_2 \text{Education}_i + \beta_3 \text{Caste}_c + \beta_4 \text{City}_s \\ + \beta_5 (\text{Caste}_c * \text{City}_s) + X_j + \epsilon_{icsj} \quad (1)$$

- Y_{icsj} : one if female profile i of caste c in city s received an expression of interest from the male profile j
- Not Working_i : one if the female profile is indicated to be unemployed on the marriage portal and zero otherwise
- $\text{Education}_i, \text{Caste}_c, \text{City}_s, (\text{Caste}_c * \text{City}_s)$: education, caste, city and caste by city fixed effects of the female profile
- X_j : male profile characteristics, caste category, age, height, profile manager, income, highest level of education attained and whether the reported income of the male profile is less than the corresponding female profile
- β_1 : difference (in percentage points) between the expression of interest for females who are not working versus those who are working

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Estimation Strategy: Specification 2

$$Y_{icsj} = \beta_0 + \delta_1 \mathbf{Feminine}_i + \delta_2 \mathbf{Neutral}_i + \delta_3 \mathbf{Not\ Working}_i + \beta_2 \mathbf{Education}_i + \beta_3 \mathbf{Caste}_c + \beta_4 \mathbf{City}_s + \beta_5 (\mathbf{Caste}_c * \mathbf{City}_s) + X_j + \epsilon_{icsj} \quad (2)$$

- **Feminine**: value one if the female profile is indicated to be employed in a feminine occupation and zero otherwise
- **Neutral**: one if the female profile is indicated to be employed in a gender-neutral occupation and zero otherwise
- δ_1 : difference in pp between the probability of interest received by females employed in feminine viz in masculine occupations

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Effect of Work Status on Interests

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Overall	Delhi	Bangalore
Not working	0.009*** (0.001)	0.010*** (0.001)	0.002 (0.003)
Constant	0.031*** (0.009)	0.001 (0.010)	0.076*** (0.024)
Observations	329427	265545	63882
Mean Y	0.062	0.059	0.078
<i>Controls</i>			
City FE	✓		
Caste FE		✓	✓
City × Caste FE	✓		
Education FE	✓	✓	✓
Male profile controls	✓	✓	✓

- An unemployed female profile receives 14.5% higher interests than employed female: Delhi (17%) and profiles.

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Effect of Occupation Type on Interests

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Overall	Delhi	Bangalore
Feminine	0.002* (0.001)	0.003** (0.001)	-0.002 (0.003)
Neutral	0.002 (0.001)	0.002 (0.001)	0.002 (0.003)
Not working	0.010*** (0.001)	0.012*** (0.002)	0.002 (0.003)
Constant	0.029*** (0.010)	-0.001 (0.010)	0.076*** (0.024)
Observations	329427	265545	63882
Mean Y	0.062	0.059	0.078
Feminine=Neutral	0.759	0.257	0.163
<i>Controls</i>			
City FE	✓		
Caste FE		✓	✓
City × Caste FE	✓		
Education FE	✓	✓	✓
Male profile controls	✓	✓	✓

- Females employed in 'feminine' occupations, 3.2% more likely to receive an interest viz those in masculine occupations: Delhi (5.1%)

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Feminine	0.002* (0.001)	0.003** (0.001)	-0.002 (0.003)
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City FE	✓		
Caste FE		✓	✓
City × Caste FE	✓		
Education FE	✓	✓	✓
Male profile controls	✓	✓	✓

- Females employed in 'feminine' occupations, 3.2% more likely to receive an interest viz those in masculine occupations: Delhi (5.1%)

Effect of Occupation Type by Work Preference on Interests

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Overall	Delhi	Bangalore
Feminine	-0.002 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.004 (0.004)
Neutral	0.002 (0.002)	0.003* (0.002)	-0.002 (0.004)
Feminine X Work after Marriage	0.007*** (0.002)	0.008*** (0.002)	0.006 (0.006)
Neutral X Work after Marriage	-0.000 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.002)	0.009* (0.006)
Work after Marriage	-0.001 (0.002)	0.000 (0.002)	-0.004 (0.004)
Constant	0.037*** (0.010)	0.005 (0.011)	0.076*** (0.026)
Observations	282366	227610	54756
Mean Y	0.061	0.057	0.077
<i>Controls</i>			
City FE	✓		
Caste FE		✓	✓
City × Caste FE	✓		
Education FE	✓	✓	✓
Male profile controls	✓	✓	✓

- Increase in the probability of receiving an expression of interest for women in 'feminine' jobs who would like to continue to work after marriage

- Fixed effects at the suitor level
 - 13% increase in probability of receiving an expression of interest for an unemployed female profile
 - Driven by Delhi: 17%
- Cluster standard errors at male suitor level

- Results driven by Delhi (North India)
 - Differences in patriarchal and gender norms between North and the South India
- Heterogeneity by female profile: Caste; Education
 - Upper castes in North India: Stringent patriarchal norms
 - Education can mediate effect of norms: Results strongest for Diploma, followed by BA and MA

Effect of Work Status on Interests by Caste

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Overall	Brahmin	Other forward castes	SC
<i>Panel A : Overall</i>				
Not working	0.009*** (0.001)	0.010*** (0.002)	0.015*** (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)
Observations	329427	109809	109809	109809
Mean Y	0.062	0.068	0.071	0.048
R-squared	0.004	0.023	0.020	0.020
Education FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
City FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Male profile controls	✓	✓	✓	✓

- High caste groups: female profiles belonging to higher caste groups of Brahmin (15% higher) and OFC (21%) when unemployed
- Driven by Delhi
- Work status results: Male Caste Results
- Occupation Type results: Male Caste Results Male Caste Results: Delhi

Effect of Work Status on Interests by Education

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Overall	Diploma	BA	MA
<i>Panel A : Overall</i>				
Not working	0.009*** (0.001)	0.011*** (0.002)	0.007*** (0.002)	0.008*** (0.002)
Observations	329427	109809	109809	109809
Mean Y	0.0623	0.0584	0.0632	0.0653
Caste FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
City FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
City × Caste FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Male profile controls	✓	✓	✓	✓

- Driven by Delhi
- Occupation Type results: By Education

Conclusion

- Online experiment to measure partner preferences
- Unemployed women have 14.5% higher probability of receiving an interest from male suitors relative to employed women
- Women employed in feminine occupations are 3.2% more likely to receive an interest viz those in masculine occupations
- Delhi and high castes drive the above; occupational results driven by female profiles with lower education levels in Delhi
- Implication: Expectations regarding returns in the marriage market may influence women's decisions about employment before marriage and the nature of work
- Caveats
 - Profile views?
 - Matching algorithm?

APPENDIX

Data: Intra-caste vs Inter-caste interests

- Brahmin: 68% of the total interests sent by Brahmin men are towards Brahmin female profiles,
- OFC: 72% of total interests by OFC men are towards OFC or Brahmin female profiles
- 71% of total interests by SC men are towards SC females.
- Caveat: caste categories for the male profiles were obtained after fuzzy matching with detailed caste lists provided by the respective states

Effect of Working status on Interests by Caste (Male profile)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Overall	Brahmin	Other forward castes	SC
<i>Panel A : Overall</i>				
Not working	0.0087*** (0.0013)	0.0099*** (0.0025)	0.0099*** (0.0015)	-0.0044 (0.0036)
Observations	329427	75159	225351	28917
Mean Y	0.0623	0.0577	0.0650	0.0532
Education FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Caste FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
City FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Male profile controls	✓	✓	✓	✓

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Effect of Work Status on Interests by Caste (Delhi)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Overall	Brahmin	Other forward castes	SC
<i>Panel B : Delhi</i>				
Not working	0.010*** (0.001)	0.015*** (0.002)	0.017*** (0.003)	-0.001 (0.002)
Observations	265545	88515	88515	88515
Mean Y	0.0586	0.0629	0.0690	0.0439
R-squared	0.003	0.025	0.023	0.023
Education FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Male profile controls	✓	✓	✓	✓

Effect of Occupation Type on Interests by Caste (Male profile)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Overall	Brahmin	Other forward castes	SC
Panel A : Overall				
Feminine	0.0021* (0.0011)	0.0027 (0.0022)	0.0021 (0.0014)	0.0007 (0.0034)
Neutral	0.0018 (0.0011)	0.0012 (0.0022)	0.0014 (0.0013)	0.0059* (0.0034)
Not Working	0.0099*** (0.0014)	0.0112*** (0.0028)	0.0111*** (0.0017)	-0.0022 (0.0041)
Observations	329427	75159	225351	28917
Mean Y	0.0623	0.0577	0.0650	0.0532
Education FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Caste FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Male profile controls	✓	✓	✓	✓

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Effect of Occupation Type on Interests by Caste (Male profile)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Overall	Brahmin	Other forward castes	SC
<i>Panel B : Delhi</i>				
Feminine	0.0030** (0.0012)	0.0028 (0.0023)	0.0032** (0.0015)	0.0021 (0.0038)
Neutral	0.0016 (0.0012)	0.0016 (0.0023)	0.0012 (0.0014)	0.0053 (0.0038)
Not working	0.0118*** (0.0015)	0.0142*** (0.0030)	0.0129*** (0.0019)	-0.0024 (0.0045)
Observations	265545	62937	179676	22932
Mean Y	0.0586	0.0557	0.0603	0.0531
Education FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Caste FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Male profile controls	✓	✓	✓	✓

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Effect of Work Status on Interests by Education (Delhi)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Overall	Diploma	BA	MA
<i>Panel B : Delhi</i>				
Not working	0.010*** (0.001)	0.013*** (0.002)	0.008*** (0.002)	0.010*** (0.002)
Observations	265545	88515	88515	88515
Mean Y	0.0586	0.0550	0.0589	0.0619
Caste FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Male profile controls	✓	✓	✓	✓

Effect of Occupation Type on Interests by Education

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Overall	Diploma	BA	MA
<i>Panel A : Overall</i>				
Feminine	0.002* (0.001)	0.012*** (0.002)	-0.000 (0.002)	-0.006*** (0.002)
Neutral	0.002 (0.001)	0.001 (0.002)	0.003* (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)
Not working	0.010*** (0.001)	0.015*** (0.002)	0.008*** (0.002)	0.007*** (0.002)
Observations	329427	109809	109809	109809
Mean Y	0.0623	0.0584	0.0632	0.0653
Caste FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
City FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
City × Caste FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Male profile controls	✓	✓	✓	✓

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Effect of Occupation Type on Interests by Education (Delhi)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Overall	Diploma	BA	MA
<i>Panel B : Delhi</i>				
Feminine	0.003** (0.001)	0.016*** (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.006*** (0.002)
Neutral	0.002 (0.001)	0.001 (0.002)	0.005** (0.002)	-0.000 (0.002)
Not working	0.012*** (0.002)	0.018*** (0.003)	0.009*** (0.003)	0.008*** (0.003)
Observations	265545	88515	88515	88515
Mean Y	0.0586	0.0550	0.0589	0.0619
Caste FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Male profile controls	✓	✓	✓	✓