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Economic Status of Women in India

Prof. Neeta Yadav
Dean Faculty of Arts and Dean of Student's Welfare, Head department of Ancient History Archaeology and Culture, Siddharh University kapilvastu Siddharthnagar

I. INTRODUCTION

The commission on the status of women, the Economic and Social council and the General Assembly has on numerous occasions considered questions and adopted measures aimed at improving the Economic status of women. A woman, according to most authorities, was always a minor at Law. As a girl she was under the tutelage of her parents, as an adult of her husband, and as a widow, of her sons.[1] Early law books of Indian origin assessed a woman's wergild as equivalent to that of Sudra, whatever her class. most schools of law allowed a woman some personal property(stridhana) in the form of jewellery and clothing. The Arthashastra allowed her also to own money upto 2000 silver panas, any sum above this being held by her husband in trust on her behalf.[2] Thus the property rights of women, limited though they were, greater than many other early civilisations.

In resolution 587 F III[3], adopted on the initiative of the commission, the Council recommended that all states should adopt legislative and other measures to provide women with suitable economic opportunities by granting them equal rights with men to employment, pay, education, rest and material security in case of old age, illness or loss of capacity work," and " encourage such action as will secure for women, in the economic field, equal rights with men in all countries, including the Trust and Non self - Governing Territories." In the same resolution the Council urged non- governmental organisations to work for the eradication of all possible obstacles in the way of economic emancipation of women.

A. ILO instruments concerning the economic status of Women

Between 1919 and 1935 the ILO General Conference adopted such international conventions as the Maternity protection Convention 1919[4]; the Night Work (Women) Convention, 1919[5]; the White Lead (Painting) Convention, 1921[6]; the Night Work (Women) Convention (Revised), 1934[7];and the underground Work (Women)Convention, 1935[8].

Later, The General Conference adopted the Night Work (Women) Convention (Revised), 1948, The Equal remuneration Convention 1951, The Maternity Protection Convention(Revised), 1952, The Plantations Conventions, 1958[9];The Equality of treatment (Social Security) Convention, 1962[10]; the Social Policy(Basic aims and Standards)Convention, 1962[11];and the Human Resource Development Convention, 1975.

In 1975 the General Conference proclaimed the Declaration on Equality of Opportunity and Treatment for Women Workers. In 1981 it adopted the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, providing that men and women with Family responsibilities should be able to exercise their right to work without being discriminated against because of those responsibilities.

In 1982 it adopted the maintenance of Social Security Rights Convention, providing for the establishment of an International system for the maintenance of acquired social security rights.

B. Equal Pay for work of Equal Value

A significant early development in this field was the unanimous adoption by the International Labor Conference in 1965 of the Employment(Women with Family Responsibilities)Recommendation[13], providing that the competent National authorities should, in cooperation with the public and private organizations and in accordance with National and Local needs and possibilities,(a) pursue an appropriate policy with a view to enabling women with Family responsibilities who work outside their home to exercise their right to do so without being subject to discrimination and in accordance with the Principles laid down in the Discrimination (Employment and occupation) Convention, 1958, as well as the standards adopted by the International labor Conference relating to Women; and (b) encourage, facilitate or themselves undertake the development of services to enable women to fulfill their various responsibilities at home and at work harmoniously. Other provisions are intended to facilitate women's entry into employment, or re- entry after a comparatively long absence, so that they may enjoy equality of opportunity and training to enable them to become integrated into the labor force on a footing of equality.

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C. Access of Women to Financial assistance

Recognizing the difficulties encountered by women in many countries of the World in securing credits and loans for activities which enhanced their productive capacities and thus the contribution of their full share to the development of their families and communities and to their consequent full integration into development, The World Conference of the International Women's year adopted Resolution 10,on access of women to financial assistance.

D. Participation of Women in Rural Development

The Declaration of Principles and Programmers of Action adopted in July 1979 by the World Conference on Agrarian Reforms and Rural Development, meeting at Rome, stresses the basic principle that "Women should participate and contribute on an equal basis with men in the social, economic and political process of rural development and share fully in improved conditions of life in the Rural areas.

United Nations organs welcomed the initiative taken by UNESCO and expressed their support for the programme on full equality of women in the economic and social development. since 1969, UNESCO has submitted a report on its activities of special interest to women to the Commission on the status of Women at each session.

Human Rights of Women in India- We envision human rights for women as the "Collective rights of a woman to be seen and accepted as a person with the capacity to decide or act on her own behalf and to have equal access to resources and equitable social, economic and political support to develop her full potential", exercised her rights as a full human being to support the development of others. The gender violence is a universal phenomenon which takes many forms across culture, race and class. Almost all Indian texts pay respect to women but they are not ready to give any equality of status to her. The Vedas had beautifully explained- "All men's minds and hearts are made of women 's blood."

Women has never been treated equal with men in any existing societies of world. Even Rousseau, the apostle of freedom who bewailed the fact that man though born free , yet everywhere in chains, condemned women to a servile position. 'Girls' he argues, 'should be early subject to restraint. This misfortune, if it be really one, is inseparable from their sex.'[14]While writing about the education of Girls, Hannah Moorey says, 'Girls should be led to distrust their own judgment; they should learn not to murmur at expostulation, they should be accustomed to expect and endure opposition. They should acquire a submissive temper and forbearing spirit. They must endure to be thought wrong sometimes, when they cannot but feel that they are right.[15]

The violation of Women's rights takes many forms such as-

- Sexual and Physical assault and harassment.
- Female foeticide and infanticide.
- Female circumcision
- Dowry deaths, sati and denial of her autonomy and authority over her body.

In the economic side the violation has been manifested in the use of women to boost the economy and in their state of powerlessness they have suffered humiliation on the process. Specific examples of this include-

1. labour exploitation in free trade zones, the denial of the right to organize thus isolating women workers and further entrenching their powerlessness.
2. Migrant women labour as a result of the impoverishment of communities and the debt and repayment demands for foreign exchange has, in too many instances, led to victimization of women through sexual assault, trafficking of women across state borders violence and slavery.
3. Woman's human rights violation also occur in the context of boosting national income through tourism that in turn foster prostitution and spawns the sex industry.
4. Land grabbing by powerful sectors and the destruction of forests denying the right of women and other vulnerable sectors to the means of livelihood or basis of survival is also a violation of human rights.

Factors Affecting Women's Economic Status

- Educational opportunities
- Social and cultural norms
- Government policies and laws
- Access to healthcare
- Availability of childcare and family support services
- Financial inclusion and access to credit

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The institutions like Family, Marriage, Religion, Cultural Traditions, The policies etc always become a barrier in women rights.

Importance of Improving Women's Economic Status

- Reduces poverty and income inequality.
- Increases household welfare and children's education and health outcomes.
- Promotes economic growth and productivity.
- Enhances gender equality and social development.

Measures to Improve Women's Economic Status

- Equal pay for equal work.
- Better access to education and vocational training.
- Support for women entrepreneurs.
- Stronger property and inheritance rights.
- Access to banking, credit, and digital financial services.
- Policies that support work-life balance, such as parental leave and childcare facilities.

Women never get freedom at her workplace. she is always been insulted by false character assassination when they talk with men in the office, market or bazaar with the view that they had illicit relations with the men. They are killed in ultrasound before taking birth. The old mother if forced to live in aged homes by her sons. This is an example of women servitude when a human is forced to do something which is against her wishes that is equal to slavery and servitude.

In conclusion, the economic status of women is a crucial measure of a society's progress and development. Although significant improvements have been made in education, employment, and economic opportunities for women, many challenges still remain. Ensuring equal access to resources, fair wages, and employment opportunities can empower women and contribute to economic growth. By promoting gender equality and supporting women's participation in the economy, societies can achieve greater prosperity, social justice, and sustainable development.

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[6] No 13
[7] No 41
[8] No 45
[9] No 110 (Part VII: Maternity Protection)
[10] No. 118(articles 2 and 4, where they refer to maternity benefits)
[11] No.117(Part V:Non -Discrimination on Grounds of... Sex...)
[12] No.142 (article1,Paragraph 5, where it refer to non discrimination)
[13] No 123
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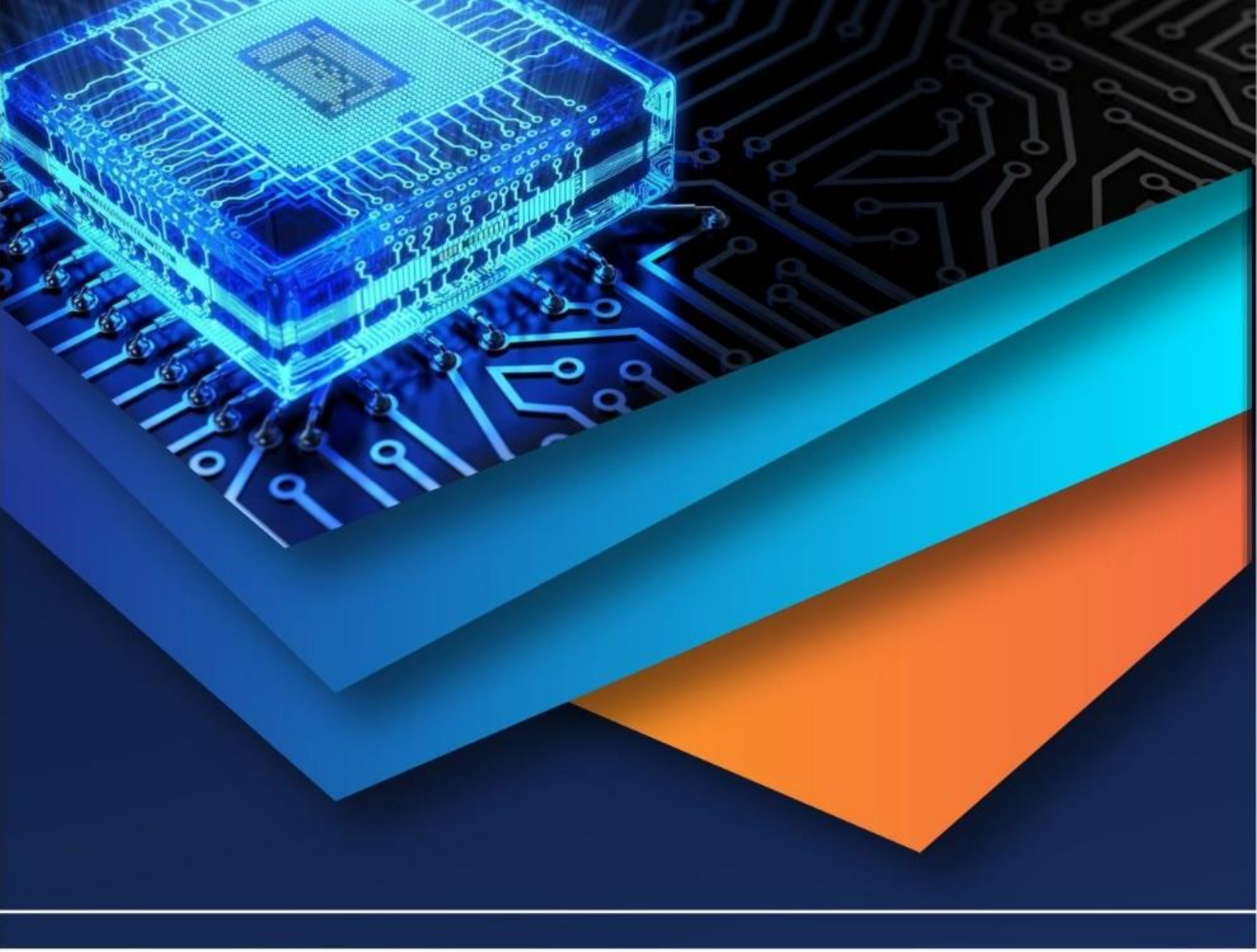

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