**ECONOMICAL FREEDOM: A NEW VISTA IN SOCIOLOGICAL STUDIES**

**1Dr. R. CHITRA**

1Dr. R. Chitra, Research Associate, Department of Sociology, Tiruchirappalli, Tamilnadu, INDIA, E-mail: chitramkr2011@gmail.com

Abstract:

The ultimate aim of the concept of working women is to free our female counterparts from the socially imposed shackle of dependence. A significant number of women are getting quality education now-a-days. They cope with the difficulties and complexities more efficiently. They are recruited for their intelligence and skills in every field. They can choose from a range of good works. As a matter of fact, women in India get economical freedom legally. But, do the working women really enjoy economical freedom at their respective homes?, do the working women consider themselves as individuals with economical space? or at least, do the working women know the concept of economical freedom? If they know, how far it is practised in homes?. These empirical questions form the basis of the present research problem.

*Keywords: Quality education, Economical freedom, working women, Sociological studies*

I - Introduction:

Female economic freedom is the relatively new domain in the vistas of social work. Only a handful of research has been done so far in the domain of female economical freedom. Michael D. Stroup in his “Does Economic Freedom Promote Women’s Well-being?” highlights the gender disparity in terms of economical freedom with the evidence from the UN development programme’s Gender Inequality Index. The study is constructed based on
the empirical question “Why would a society characterized by greater economic freedom be relatively more beneficial for a woman’s pursuit of wellbeing?” (2011).

II - Economic Freedom of the World

The Economic Freedom of the World (EFW) index, which is comprehensively used by the academic researchers, is the focus of Jamie Bologna and Joshua C. Hall in their “Economic Freedom Research: Some Comments and Suggestions”. The paper aids the researcher in understanding the goal of the index, and how to properly utilize it in their research. The study addressed the common misconceptions about the EFW index, and makes suggestions for future research. It aims to improve the quality of research using the EFW index, and possibly the EFW index itself through the development of new datasets and weighting schemes.(n.d)

III - Women working for their freedom :

The research titled “Women Working for their freedom: FCWU and AFCWU and the women question” is the combination of two different processes of investigation. First part of the process involves the extent to which a trade union can participate in the struggles of working women’s rights ranging from work, motherhood and childcare, and political aspirations. Secondly, the thesis studies the ideological position of the Food and Canning Workers Union in South Africa. Research methods depends mostly on use of archival documents, oral history, classical and contemporary texts on the theory of women’s oppression and its connection with exploitation. The study examines the union’s organising strategy in terms of the following issues:1. Due to their double responsibility as a worker and a mother, women workers are ultra-exploited. 2. Inclusion of women into wage labour faces them with a task of combing motherhood and wage labour. 3. The assault on working class in terms of the right
to work, the right to live, the right to family life, and the right to a decent standard of living was a burden to working class women especially. (Schreiner, 1987)

III- Literature Review and Analysis:

Sakiko Fukuda-Parr studied the concept of feminization of poverty in 2010. This paper confronts the use of poverty incidence among female-headed households as a quantifier of feminization of poverty. It suggests a different framework of human poverty, focusing not on incomes but on human outcomes with regard to the choices and opportunities that a person faces. (2010)

Ashwini Deshpande examines the changing face of the gender-caste overlap in India in 2011. This paper considered gender and caste as two major indicators of disadvantage. The contemporary state of the gender-caste overlap suggests that the economic condition of women continues to be defined and constrained by their caste status. The study proposes the revision of the traditional distinction between lower caste and upper caste women, based on the relative egalitarianism. The findings of the study highlights the following statements: “The Dalit (low caste) women are the worst off, as they belong to a group that is materially at the bottom of the ladder; their relative deprivation is compounded by low levels of autonomy and greater exposure to domestic violence.” (2011)

It is really a matter of concern that even the special branch, Women Studies, which focus out and out on the struggles and suffocations of women, does not focus much on economical freedom. Overseas Development Institute (ODI) published its detailed report of factors that affect women’s economical freedom. The study covers 99 percent of the world’s population and the factors unveiled are divided as follows: 1. Direct Factors and 2. Underlying factors. The Direct Factors include a) Education, skills developing, and training, b) Access to quality, decent paid work, c) Address unpaid care and work
burdens, d) Access to property, assets, and financial services, e) Collective action and leadership, and f) And social protection. The Underlying factors include i) Labor market characteristics, ii) Fiscal policy, iii) Legal, regulatory, and policy framework, and iv) gender norms and discriminatory social norms.

IV- Conclusion:

Now-a-days, the number of women getting privilege from the above listed factors increase significantly. But, one of the major factors identified and listed above, “gender norms and discriminatory social norms” should be addressed with more care, as it remains the major thread to the economical empowerment of women. The treatment of family towards the working women needs to be changed. The concept of economical freedom should be inculcated in the young minds. Serving for the economical freedom of women is so important, as the social system depends mostly on one of the major participants of the society called women. The families and elders cannot be practically monitored or controlled by the external forces. Hence, it is the duty of the social workers to create awareness, and to render feasible solutions to this abstract issue.

V - References:


