

**THE DUAL ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SOVIET WOMEN :
AN ASSESSMENT OF THE STATE MEASURES TO HARMONISE
THE ROLE DILEMMA IN SOCIETY AND FAMILY**

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C E R T I F I C A T E

This is to certify that the M.Phil. dissertation entitled
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ASSESSMENT OF THE STATE MEASURES TO HARMONISE THE ROLE
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of the Centre for Soviet and East European Studies is her
own work and has not been submitted for the award of any
other degree of this university or of any other university.

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PREFACE

PREFACE

In this study an attempt has been made to assess and investigate various measures taken by the Soviet state and the government to harmonise the role dilemma of the Soviet Women in Society and family for promoting communist construction of the society.

In order to understand the women's question in the Soviet Union their transitory role has been weighed against the Marxist-Leninist views on the role of women in the socialist construction of the society.

This study has been divided into four chapters and a conclusion. The first chapter deals with the ideological perspective on women's question and the second elucidates the transitory role of women in socialist transformation of the Soviet society. These two chapters are intended to provide the ideological and theoretical background to the study. The next two chapters are directly concerned with the subject matter. The third chapter focusses on the impact of economic, legal, socio-political and educational measures as also of the scientific-technological revolution on the changing role of Soviet women under developed socialism. Thus the various measures taken by the Soviet State have made tremendous advances in combining their role as housewives and workers. In this context the fourth chapter deals with the inherent contradiction of Soviet women as housewives and workers. It further assesses the extent to which the State measures have been able to harmonise

the role dilemma of the Soviet women and provides a few solution to this problem.

An essential issue which emerges from this study is that despite the great advance made in the direction of bridging up the Soviet women's role dilemma, certain contradictions between their family and societal role still exist. These contradictions can be minimized only by taking effective measures in consonance with the concrete realities of the Soviet society.

The methodology followed in this study is mainly analytical based on the data contained in primary and secondary sources excluding field work.

I feel deeply indebted and obliged to my supervisor Prof. Devendra Kaushik of the Centre for Soviet and East European Studies, for his encouragement and able guidance, which sustained my interest in the subject for the completion of this dissertation. I am also indebted to my friend and mentor Dr. Sarojani Kumtakar for giving me her precious time for fruitful discussion, guidance and invaluable help in translating Russian source material. I owe special thanks to Dr. T.P. Singh of Council For Social Development New Delhi, for translating German sources into English.

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CHAPTER I

**MARKIST-LENINIST VIEWS
ON THE ROLE OF WOMEN**

CHAPTER - I

MARXIST - LENINIST VIEWS ON THE ROLE OF WOMEN

Social and juridical equality of men and women; provision of conditions enabling women to combine their participation in the life of society with child care is a state policy and a moral law of the Soviet system. It has its roots in the ideas expounded by Karl Marx at great length.

For many centuries the degraded, oppressed and exploited position of women in society has been viewed by the bourgeois theoreticians and sociologists as a consequence of her "biological" tragedy, her supposed inferiority to men and inability for independent creative thinking. The ideologists of the ruling class have constantly made efforts to justify the subordinated and the degrading position of women by conveniently stating that "nature" justifies their exploitation.

Marx and Engels laid bare the class roots of the problem and showed that women's inequality in society and the family had social and economic causes. The founders of scientific socialism demonstrated in their works that socio-economic causes lay at the root of the enslavement of women, that the latter had arisen together with the emergence of private property. On the one hand, this led to women's economic dependence and, on the other hand to their class oppression in society.

In principle Marx always supported the involvement of women in production activity. Marx and Engels held that "the first premise for the emancipation of women is the reintroduction of the entire female sex into public industry"¹. Though the founders of scientific communism saw this as a progressive development, they constantly pointed out that under capitalism women are subjected to the most ruthless exploitation. Without the abolition of the capitalist system it would be impossible to change women's difficult and degrading position.

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels emphasised in the first communist programme document - "The Manifesto of the Communist Party" - that women's social inequality could only be abolished by establishing public ownership of the means of production. These conclusions were elaborated by V.I. Lenin in the conditions of a new historical epoch, that of imperialism and proletarian revolutions.

Oppression of women and the relationship between the sexes within and outside family, was examined in its functional relationship to the class structure and class struggle. Marx and Engels asserted that property, and with it inequality in the allocation of work and enjoyments, has its first form in family, where wives and children are slaves of man:

1. K.Marx and F.Engels, Selected Works (Moscow, 1973), Vol.3, p.247.

"The latent slavery - however crude - in the family is the first property; (and this definition) incidentally corresponds fully to that offered by modern economists, according to which (property) is the power to dispose of the labor power of others"².

The main point about the family which attracted the attention of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels was the impact of property relations and other aspects of economic life on the relation of husband and wife in the larger society. In their joint work, "Communist Manifesto" they wrote that "the bourgeois sees in his wife a mere instrument of production. He hears that the instruments of production are to be exploited in common and ... that the real point aimed at is to do away with the status of women as mere instruments of production"³.

Engels in his work "Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State," pointed out that according to the materialist conception (meaning Marxism) the ultimate determinants of all history are production and reproduction of life⁴. He further added that "this itself is of a two-fold character. On the one hand, the production of the means of

2. K.Marx and F.Engels, Werks (Berlin, 1968-1971), Vol.2, pp. 205-208.

3. K.Marx and F.Engels, Manifesto of the Communist Party (Moscow, 1977), p. 70.

4. F. Engels, The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State (Moscow, 1977), p. 6.

subsistence, of food, clothing and of shelter and the tools requisite therefore, on the other, the production of human being themselves"⁵.

Engels linked this changing balance between productive and reproductive activities and the subject of women by asserting that the earliest human societies were matriarchies, in which women were respected and carried out important tasks. He stressed that, "Matriarchy reigned in a communistic, propertyless community blessed with equality, sexual freedom, general self respect, and respect for others"⁶.

Ever since the dawn of civilisation, when private property appeared, women's position in society became an inferior one. Division of labour regulated the distribution of property between man and woman. With the change of division of labour outside the family, the former domestic relationship also changed, the cause which had made woman supreme in the house, namely her being confined to domestic work, now assured supremacy in the house for the man. Thus the woman's house work lost its significance compared with the man's work in obtaining livelihood.⁷ In this context Engels wrote that the

5. Ibid.

6. Montaigne, The Complete Works of Montaigne, Donald M. Frame, trans; (California, 1957), pp. 150-59.

7. Engels, no. 4, p. 158.

"man seized the reins in the house also, the woman was degradedly enthralled, the slave of man's lust, a mere instrument for breeding children. This lowered the position of women..."⁸

Alfred Meyer in his article "Marxism and Women's Movement", has observed that Engels regarded matriarchy as a male-female relationship functional to early communism. As noted above Engels linked the women's dependent position to the rise of class oppression, which at various stages of development produced various forms of inequality and social disabilities. According to him the first class antagonism arose between men and women and the first class oppression was that of female sex by the male. He wrote that the class antagonism arises with the defeat of the female sex. Slavery and monogamy appear at the same time.⁹

Marx and Engels with the support of Morgan's researches were led to the conclusion that family assumed many different forms as it evolved through history and thus constituted a "series in historic development".¹⁰ Hence, for the transmission of the property, heirs were needed giving rise to another

8. Ibid., p. 57.

9. Alfred G. Meyer, "Marxism and the Women's Movement", in Dorothy Atkinson and others, ed., Women in Russia (Havester, 1977), p. 91.

10. K. Marx, Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, S. Moore and E. Aveling, trans. (Chicago, 1906), Vol. 1, p. 536.

transitional form of the monogamous family, known as the patriarchal family. This was the first form of the family found in the written history.¹¹ Thus, property was visualised to play a central role in civilised society and family was seen as a divisive force in the larger society. Within the family, Engels wrote, husband is the 'bourgeois' and wife is the 'proletarian'. Property ownership is not the only media of bringing in inequality of power. In bourgeois family the husband earns and supports family which Engels said "in itself gives him a position of supremacy".¹² Marx and Engels thought that this two-fold advantage of the 'bourgeois' husband is the source of wife's "domestic slavery".

In contrast to the bourgeois family, Engels asserted that marital equality existed in the proletarian family due to the absence of property and the frequent employment of the wife, giving her the power to dissolve the marriage and bringing her the position and respect associated with a productive economic role.¹³ In the context of the freedom from property ownership and the employment of wife, the proletarian family moves closer to the Marxian image of the

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11. F.Engels, The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State; In the light of the Researches of Lewis H. Morgan (New York, 1942), pp. 50-53.
12. Ibid., pp. 65-66.
13. F.Engels, The Condition of the Working Classes in England in 1844 (London, 1892), p. 126.

family life under communism.¹⁴ Engels argued further by saying that for all this to be accomplished the monogamous family would have to cease functioning as an economic unit.¹⁵

Under capitalism, Engels referred to family as an "economic unit of the society", by implying on the role contradiction which the woman has to play in the family and society. He elaborated this by saying that, "if she carries out her duties in the private service of her family, she remains excluded from public production and is unable to earn; and if she wants to take part in public production and earn independently, she cannot carry out her family duties".¹⁶

In the long-run Engels foresaw the abolition of all private property. He argued that this together with public child-rearing institutions, merging of all education with productive work and the recognition of equal rights of inheritance for legitimate as well as illegitimate children, would destroy the basis of contemporary marriage, freeing women of their dependence on men and children on parents.¹⁷

Like Engels, August Bebel, a German Social democrat, believed that women's liberation from oppression by men can be

14. H.Kent Geiger, The Family in Soviet Russia (Cambridge, 1970), p. 19.

15. F. Engels, "Der Ursprung" in Marx and Engels Werke (Berlin, 1968-1971), Vol. 21, pp. 75-76.

16. Engels, n. 11, p. 65.

17. Engels, "Grundsätze des Kommunismus," in Marx and Engels Werke (Berlin, 1968-1971), Vol. 4, p. 377.

achieved only through the abolition of private property and the liberation of both the sexes from the monogamous family. But unlike Engels, he stressed the importance of liberating women from legal and political discrimination.¹⁸ Besides equal rights, genuine equality means public ownership of the means of production; use of modern technology in social production resulting in the decrease of individual work load and increase in individual leisure.

"Only in this way can the woman become a member of society as productively useful as man and having equal rights. Only then can she develop all her physical and intellectual abilities fully, and carry out her sexual duties and rights. Facing the man free and his equal, she is protected against any demeaning proposition".¹⁹

Marx and Engels, the founders of scientific communism, showed that women's inequality in society and family had social and economic causes. They proved that women's inequality in society lies in the private ownership of the means of production and exploitation of man by man. This, on one hand, leads them to dependence on man and, on the other, to their class enslavement.

18. August Bebel, Die Frau and der Sozialismus (Stuttgart, 1894), edn 24, pp. 105-7.

19. Ibid., p. 174.

Basically, both concentrated on the analysis of capitalism as a socio-economic system and saw this as a progressive development. Yet they constantly pointed out that under capitalism women are subjected to the most ruthless exploitation. Therefore, without the abolition of the capitalist system it would be impossible to change the humiliating and degrading position of women in the contemporary society.

Adhering to the views of Marx and Engels, Lenin considered the work of women in the capitalist factories to be a progressive phenomenon for it took them outside the narrow confines of the family and kitchen, aroused their class consciousness and drew them into the struggle of the proletariat. He said that the "work at the factories broadens their outlook, makes them more cultural and independent and help them to break the shackles of patriarchal life".²⁰

Thus the Marxist theory linked the solution of the question of women's rights with the class struggle of the working class for revolutionary transformations and socialism. Revolutionary Marxism stresses that only in a society where there is no private ownership of the means of production and no exploitation of one class by another and in which the social equality of all people has been achieved, will women really become emancipated and be able to participate in all spheres of economic, political and social life.

20. V.I. Lenin, On the Emancipation of Women (Moscow, 1977), p. 9.

While scientifically substantiating the revolutionary transformation of the world, Lenin concretized and developed Marxist teaching by emphasising on women's role in the process. He stressed the indissoluble link between the complete emancipation of women and the victory of socialism. He regarded working women as an important force in the struggle for the fundamental restructuring of the society and pointed out that social emancipation of working people was impossible without the social emancipation of women. In this context he wrote that "proletariat cannot achieve complete liberty until it has won complete liberty for women".²¹

The women's question as fundamentally interpreted by Marxism - Leninism is that the struggle for genuine emancipation of women is an inalienable part of the general struggle for the socialist transformation of the society.²² It regards the transition from household work to socially productive labour as one of the most essential conditions for the social emancipation of women and allround development of her personality. This involves, on the one hand, the need to draw women into social production and, on the other, to free them from unproductive domestic work which serves as an impediment to the

21. V.I.Lenin, Collected Works (Moscow, 1965), Vol. 30, p. 372.

22. V. Nikolayeva Tereshkova, "Women's Role in the Contemporary Social life", Soviet Review (Delhi), Vol. XII, no. 37, 3 July 1975, p. 33.

growth of women's personality. Women perform a special social function by not only participating in socially productive labour with men but also play a special role in the "production of human beings themselves".²³

Under capitalism an acute conflict exists between women's professional labour and her maternal functions. This contradiction can be resolved under socialist society which recognises maternity as the woman's most important social function and solves the problem of involving women in socially productive labour without encroaching on her maternal functions.²⁴

Lenin believed that it is only through the revolutionary transformation of the society on the basis of socialist principles that will emancipate women from inequality and exploitation encountered both at home and work. Hence, he worked out the programmatic thesis of the working class party regarding the participation of women in socially productive labour, in public work and in state management, regarding the ways of freeing women from domestic "slavery", regarding state protection of mother and child and the role played by the women in the socialist construction of the society. Lenin saw the most important condition for the genuine

23. Marx and Engels, n. 1, p. 191.

24. Y.Z. Danilova and others, Soviet Women: Some Aspects of the Status of Women in USSR (Moscow, 1975), p.11.

emancipation of women to be in their participation in the building of a new society. He said that "to... make her the equal of the man it is necessary for the national economy to be socialised and for women to participate in common productive labour, then women will occupy the same position as men".²⁵

A woman's participation in social production encourages the development of her personality, the growth of her social activity and is an asset in moulding her outlook. However, it is essential to implement the equality between men and women in social production, bearing in mind the need to protect the labour of women due to her physical constitution and its performance of vital social function of motherhood. "... when socialists speak of equality", Lenin explained, "they always mean social equality, equality of social status, and not by any means the physical and mental equality of the individuals"²⁶.

In Lenin's view, the state and society must shoulder the responsibility for creating conditions which liberate the women from generally unproductive domestic labour. Lenin saw the key to this complex problem to lie in the development of a network of child-care institutions and public services. He considered that within the framework of the socialist

25. V.I. Lenin, n.21, Vol. 30, p. 43.

26. Ibid., Vol. 20, p. 146.

restructuring of society it was necessary to do the utmost to emancipate women from housework, which was "the most barbarous and the most arduous work a woman can do. It is exceptionally petty and does not include anything that would in any way promote the development of the woman".²⁷

Lenin further declared that it was impossible to solve the problem of the complete social equality of women or to convert them into active participants in the building of the new society without involving them in state administration and without developing their social and political activities. He insisted that "working women must take an increasing part in the administration of socialised enterprises and in the administration of the state".²⁸

Lenin regarded the socio-economic and political equality of women as the main basis for their equality in family. He came out decisively against laws which debased women and gave men privileges in matrimonial legislation and as regards children and family property.

While attributing decisive significance to the role of socialist revolution in the emancipation of women, Lenin did not consider that socialism could immediately abolish the

27. Ibid., Vol. 30, p. 43.

28. Ibid., p. 371.

vestiges of inequality and exploitation of so many years. Speaking in 1920, of the principal task of the working women's movements, he declared:

"The chief thing is to get women to take part in socially productive labour, to liberate them from domestic slavery to free them from their stupefying and humiliating subjugation to the eternal drudgery of the kitchen and the nursery. This struggle will be a long one, and it demands a radical reconstruction both of social technique and of morals. But it will end in the complete triumph of communism".²⁹

Thus, Lenin developed theoretical propositions concerning social emancipation of women and led the drive to give practical effect to the solution of women's question in the Soviet Union. He gave a great deal of attention to the development of the international women's movement and frequently expressed his thoughts and wishes concerning its growth.

Guided by the Marxist - Leninist teachings, the Soviet state consistently carried out a whole complex of measures designed to ensure the unity of maternal functions and professional labour of the women for the socialist and communist construction of the society.

29. Ibid., Vol. 30, p. 409.

CHAPTER II

ROLE OF WOMEN IN TSARIST RUSSIA
AND THE POST-REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD
OF SOCIALIST CONSTRUCTION

CHAPTER - II

ROLE OF WOMEN IN TSARIST RUSSIA AND THE POST
REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD OF SOCIALIST CONSTRUCTION

Throughout the Soviet history particularly after the Great October Revolution women of the Soviet Union played an increasingly active role in the Socialist and Communist construction of the society. During the emergence and development of socialism radical changes have taken place in the roles governing the position of women in family and society.

The question of women's right was resolved through the fundamental restructuring of the old society in Soviet Union with active participation of women themselves.

a) Women in Tsarist Russia :

V.I.Lenin, the founder of the Bolshevik party, constantly emphasized the significance of the formation of the women's personality under socialism, for it was she who suffered most from Tsarist, capitalist and also from patriarchal conditions prevalent in the family. He wrote that centuries of oppression had turned women into the "most backward and conservative section of the population".¹

1. V.I. Lenin, Collected Works (Moscow, 1965), Vol.29, p. 182.

During the pre-revolutionary period the condition of the Soviet women was very pathetic. They were devoid of any legal, economic, socio-political and educational rights. The period of industrial capitalism which opened with terrible exploitation of women's labour in factories, mines and mills nevertheless also paved the way for their eventual emancipation.

Towards the end of the 19th century with the increase in machinery production which simplified the productive process, the capitalist widely employed, unskilled labour of women and children in factories and mills. Due to the prevalent condition of extreme poverty and lack of technical skill, a majority of women and children were forced to join low paid, technically backward trades of textiles, clothing and food industries. Thus female labour came to be widely employed in the industries of Tsarist Russia during the period from 1901-1913. In general the number of women employed in the large enterprises rose to 61.4 per cent while the number of men went upto only 27.5 per cent.² However, the influx of women in industry did not improve the status of worker's family because the value of labour power was determined by the minimum to keep the worker and his family alive. Hence, with the employment of women the wages of men continued to decrease under capitalism.

2. Vera Bilshai, Status of Women in the Soviet Union (Moscow, 1957), p. 57.

The capitalists were concerned only about their profits and flagrantly disregarded the most elementary requirements of the working women. Absence of labour laws and safety measures to protect women and children had a deleterious effect on their health, especially of those working in industries making cigarettes, rubber and matches for 13-15 hours a day. This resulted in their unemployment often leading them to starvation and prostitution.³ Absence of maternity leave and medical facilities further aggravated the condition of poverty and ill-health amongst the children and women working under the capitalist mode of production. Thus, according to the data available, 269 out of thousand infants died before the age of one and 430 before the age of five. At that time Russia had child-care institutions for only 550 children and nine women's consultation centres.⁴

With their backs bent the condition of peasant women in Tsarist Russia was no better. Majority worked for the Kulaks and the landlords with their traditional agricultural tools. Women had no right over land which again put her into the narrow confines of the family. A vivid description of the peasant women before the revolution has been given by Joseph Stalin:

3. Nina Pepova, Women in the Land of Socialism (Moscow, 1949), p. 15.

4. Srirajyam Sinha, A Story about women (Moscow, 1983), p. 16.

"Indeed, just stop and think what was the status of women formerly, in the old times, before a woman was married she was regarded, so to speak, as the lowest among the toilers. She worked for her father without respite, and still her father reproached her saying : 'I feed you'. After she was married, she worked for her husband, doing what her husband compelled her to do, and he too, reproached her with the same words: 'I feed you'. The woman was the lowest among the toilers in the village".⁵

Women's inequality in relation to men was also extended to the sphere of mental labour. In accordance with the civil service regulations women were accepted only for such jobs as clerks, book-keepers, copyists, midwives, doctors' assistants and chemists. Moreover, outside agriculture women were employed in inferior jobs like maids, nurses and laundresses.⁶ According to 1897 census, Tsarist Russia had four women engineers. Majority worked on landowners estate for very meagre wages, 13 per cent worked in industries and on construction sites, and only 4 per cent were employed in education and public health.⁷

The laws defining matrimonial rights and duties were most humiliating to the women. The legislation of Tsarist

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5. Cited in Papova, n. 3, p. 16.
 6. Bilshai, n.2, p. 11.
 7. Sinha, n.4, p. 15.

Russia in the sphere of marriage and family was permeated with the spirit of Domstroi, a guidebook containing sixty four rules to direct family life and rearing of children. The book was entirely feudal in character, as was reflected in a short section entitled: "The wife is always and in all things to take counsel with her husband", and in return for their wives' exemplary behaviour the Domstroi directed the "husbands not to beat them publicly with lash, rather it should be done in private".⁸ The feudalistic pattern of the society was also mirrored in the Tsarist code, which increased the dependence of women on men. Article 107, Volume X of the code of laws of the Russian Empire stated: "The wife's duty is to obey her husband who is the head of the family".⁹

Women were treated as slaves, as mere instruments of producing children devoid of any social standing in the society. Among the papers of an old Russian physician which are now in town archives many throw light on the condition of children in the pre-revolutionary Russia. Few lines from one of these papers read as follows:

"The father, a type-setter, died a month ago. The family has no means of support whatsoever. The mother, who used to

8. Cited in J.L. Black, "Educating women in Eighteenth Century Russia: Myths and Realities", Canadian Slavonic Papers (Toronto), Vol. XX, no.1, March 1978, p. 24.

9. Sinha, n. 4, p. 17.

be a village school teacher, cannot find any suitable work, the temperature in the house is no more than 8°. They don't heat the stove- there is only enough wood to last till tomorrow. The children shiver with cold, cough all the time and ask for food".¹⁰

Life was particularly hard for women in the Central Asian areas of the country. Here feudal and clan relation prevailed. Polygamy was practised alongwith marrying off minors and buying and selling of brides. Moreover, forced seclusion and wearing of Yashmak (veil) cut them off completely from the outside world.¹¹ The attitude to women and children in this region of Tsarist Russia can be visualized by this example:

"Concerning my serf and her four small children, namely: Naringyul, her daughters Gaibat and Saibat, her sons Kanchagi and Fatulla; these five peasants I have voluntarily sold to Lieutenant Mahmed - Hanbak resident of Kuba, for 500 rubles in silver, and therefore he, Mahmed-Hanbak, has the right to the possession of the above mentioned peasants".¹²

The subservient status of women at home combined with inferior position in society made women in Tsarist Russia culturally backward. According to the 1897 census eight-five

10. Papova, n. 3, p. 19.

11. N.A. Kovalsky and Y.P. Blinova, ed., Woman Today, L.G. Balakhovskaya and others, trans. (Moscow, 1975), p. 26.

12. Cited in Papova, n. 3, p. 21.

per cent of women could neither read nor write and 48 nationalities did not even have their own alphabets.¹³ In Central Asia the entire female sex was illiterate. A mere 15 per cent were literate belonging to the upper class, and only a handful could fight their way to the academic world. In reply to the application of work in Russia, the President of Academy of Sciences, Grand Duke Konstantin wrote to the Russian queen of Mathematics, "Since chairs in our universities are not available, to women, irrespective of qualifications or knowledge, there is no place in our country for Madame Kovalevskaya".¹⁴

The inhuman capitalist exploitation of women was further aggravated by survivals of feudalism in the country's economy, in home and in the social and political organisation, women were devoid of any electoral and political rights, in Tserist Russia - thus, according to the election laws of the State Duma "persons of the female sex", were excluded from the electoral lists.¹⁵ Further, the statute governing the elections to the State Duma stated that, "persons of female sex possessing

13. Sinha, n. 4, p. 18.

14. Ibid., p. 19.

15. Bilshai, n.2, p. 12.



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immovable property have a proxy vote, which they may concede to their husbands and sons".¹⁶ Thus even the property-based privilege was denied to women and the provisions in this regard were used to further make the position of women subservient to the male sex.

A series of protests organized by women of Tver Gubernia on the question of giving women equal rights with men was examined by the 1st and 2nd State Duma. The first draft bill of the third Duma sanctioned the female sex the right to elect and be elected to the State Duma. This was indeed met with extreme hostility by the Tsarist government on account of encouraging women to revolutionary ideals and political activity. Hence, the minister of Justice thus commented on the Bill: ".... I regard, the present concession of granting women equal rights with men to elect and be elected to the State Duma as unacceptable".¹⁷

Thus, centuries of seething oppression in lives of women evoked protests regarding their downtrodden position in family and in the society, their educational, political and economic inequality giving rise to the liberation struggle of the women's working class movement which successfully emerged as triumphant in the Great October Revolution of 1917.

16. Ibid., p. 13.

17. Cited in Ibid., p. 14.

b) Emergence of women's working class movement and Revolution:

The degrading subservient position of women in Tsarist Russia evoked protests among the progressive section of the society. Belinsky, a representative of advanced social thought vehemently denounced the ruling classes, "Your attitude towards women", he wrote, "is purely utilitarian, almost commercial".¹⁸ This view was reinforced by N.G. Chernyshevsky who declared that, "when man recognise the equality of woman he would cease to regard her as his property".¹⁹

However, these representatives of progressive thought could not provide a solution to the question of women's emancipation. Only revolutionary Marxism could solve this problem both in theory and practice, for it was solved on the basis of truly scientific principles, "Where there are landlords, capitalists and merchants, women cannot be the equal of men even before the law".²⁰

Revolutionary Marxism closely linked social emancipation of women with the general liberation of the proletariat by rooting out the class inequalities. In this connection Lenin wrote, "The ... most important step is the abolition of private ownership of the land and the factories. This and this alone opens up the way towards a complete emancipation of the women".²¹

18. Cited in Papova, n. 3, p. 23

19. Cited in Ibid., p. 24.

20. V.I. Lenin, Collected Works (Moscow, 1965), Vol.32,p. 371.

21. Lenin, n.1, Vol. 28, pp. 180-181.

He saw in working women the potential of restructuring the society and urged the party agitators and propogandists to instil the feeling of class consciousness in the female workers, to prepare them for revolutionary struggle against capitalism.

"There can be no socialist revolution", he wrote, "unless very many working women take big part in it The experience of all liberation movements has shown that the success of revolution depends on how much women take part in it". This view has further been elaborated upon by Karl Marx, who wrote that, "Anyone who has the slightest knowledge of history, knows also that great social upheavals are impossible without women's ferment".²²

Guided by the Marxist-Leninist theory the Bolshevik Party strove to do its utmost for the social liberation of women. The first programme of the Russian Social Democratic Party adopted by the Second Party Congress in 1903 put forward the demands of universal suffrage for all citizens, men and women, full equality of all citizens irrespective of their sex, religion, race and nationality, free compulsory general and vocational training for all children of both sexes, and eight hour working day. The programme provided for banning the employment of children under 16, of women on harmful jobs

22. Cited in Kovalsky and Bliņova, n. 11, p. 27.

affecting their health, for the opening of nurseries, for granting women paid maternity leave and off time for nursing their babies, for the establishment of control to ensure the application of safeguards provided for women labour.²³

These and many other demands of the party programme clearly showed the working women that their position in the capitalist society could be improved only through their joint struggle with men. In this connection Nadezhda Krupskaya wrote:

"The working woman is a member of the working class and all her interests are connected with this class. If the working class wins a better lot for itself, the position of women will be different; if it remains in poverty, ignorance and without any rights, a working woman will continue to drag out a miserable existence to which she is doomed now".²⁴

The Bolshevik party under the guidance of Lenin attached great importance to the task of organising women who differed greatly in the level of their political consciousness and organisation, in their responsiveness to socialist ideas. It was rather a difficult task to enlist women, the most backward section of the society into the emancipatory movement of the proletariat led by the communist party due to the lack of political experience.

23. Lenin, n. 1, Vol. 6, pp. 29-32.

24. Cited in, "Russia's women on the road to revolution", Socialism: Theory and Practice (Moscow), Vol.3, no. 68, March 1979, p. 61.

Carrying on propaganda and agitational work by drawing politically conscious women in the Marxist study circles and enlisting them to distribute leaflets and proclamations among the working women, the Bolsheviki called for specific forms and methods of party work among women for the training of professional revolutionaries to conduct party work among women.

While consolidating women's organizations to work for the Leninist principles, the Bolsheviki tried to neutralize the influence of feminists organisation which sought to weaken the women's movement by spreading the idea that "Women could attain equal rights with men without fighting for a radical progressive change in the social system".²⁵

Alexandra Kollantai, a staunch Marxist polemicized with the feminists in 1908 by pointing out that "neither political nor juridical equality would solve women's question in its entirety. So long as the women are compelled to sell their labour... they would not become free, independent individuals, wives choosing husbands by love and mothers free from fear for the future of their children...."²⁶

The Bolsheviki emerged successful in organizing women as excellent revolutionary fighters against feudalism and

25. Papova, n. 3, p. 29.

26. - "Russia's Women on the Road to Revolution", Socialism: Theory and Practice, Vol. 3, no. 68, March 1979, p. 64.

capitalism. This is evident from the first Russian Revolution of 1905 (the "dress rehearsal", of the 1917 revolution) which drew broad masses of women into the revolutionary movement and gave them their first baptism of fire.²⁷

The revolutionary upsurge of 1905-1907 witnessed the growing political consciousness among the women. More than 11,000 working women participated in a general strike held at Ivanovo-Voznesensk an industrial centre, where the strike lasted for 72 days. For the first time it was headed by an elected Soviet of workers' deputies and out of the 151 deputies, 23 were women.²⁸

Women workers not only heroically fought in the rank of strikers and demonstrators, but also on the barricades as well. Referring to the Moscow uprising in December 1905, Lenin wrote, "The Moscow proletariat taught us magnificent lessons in the art of ideologically converting the troops.... when two working girls, carrying red flag in a crowd of 10,000 people, rushed towards Cossacks and cried: "Kill us! we shall not surrender this flag as long as we are alive." And the Cossacks were disconcerted and galloped away, followed by the shouts of the

27. A. Shaposhnikova, "Lenin on Women's role in society and the experience of the solution of the women's problem in the U.S.S.R.," Soviet Review (Delhi), Vol. VII, no. 37, 19 May 1970, p. 7.

28. Sinha, n.4, p. 30.

crowd : 'Long Live Cossack ! such instances of courage and heroism must live for ever in the memory of the proletariat'.²⁹

The Bolshevik press played a vitally fundamental role in intensifying the development of the revolutionary movement. A big role in the political education of women was played by the newspaper Pravda founded by Lenin, on May 5, 1912.

Following several strikes, demonstrations, rallies and riots the revolutionary movement ripened and the Communist Party intensified its work among women. In January 1913, on the initiative of the women weavers a strike took place in the New Cotton Mills in Petersburg. This strike embracing large number of workers was broken by the strike breakers.³⁰ In the tactics of winning over the masses the party combined agitation by distribution of illegal pamphlets and universally set up many women department at party committees and trade unions.

Led by Bolsheviks the celebration of International Women's day on March 8, 1913 went a long way in uniting and organizing women workers under the Bolshevik banner. A resolution passed on March 8, 1913 at a mass meeting of women in St. Petersburg said:

29. V.I. Lenin, Selected Works (Moscow, 1935), Vol. III, p. 350.

30. Bilshai, n. 2, p. 18.

"The proletariat demands that universal suffrage be extended to working women, in order that they too may participate in the struggle for the conquest of political power, which is a prerequisite for the achievement of Socialism".³¹

In 1914, Rabotnitsa, a journal for women (Female worker) became the organ of the labour movement in Tsarist Russia as it dealt with the major political issues.

The first world war (1914-1918) brought severe hardships to women working in agriculture and industry. Women workers already comprised a significant portion of labor force by 1890 and by 1914, their proportion grew to one third. After 3 years of war, 47 per cent of the working men were drafted in the Russian army. Women worked instead in the factories at meagre wages. These women exhausted by the long hours of queing and extreme hardships of war and working conditions represented a tremendous revolutionary potential.³²

The women workers played a very vital role in the February 1917 bourgeois - democratic revolution. On March 8, 1917 the women workers of Petrograd demonstrated against Tsarism and imperialist war and the food shortages. At the call of the

31. Papova, n. 3, p. 36.

32. Richard Johnson "The Role of Women in Russian Civil War (1917-1921)", Conflict (New York), Vol. 2, no. 2, 1980, p. 202.

Petrograd Bolshevik Committee working women came out on the streets to demonstrate against starvation, war and Tsardom. The Petrograd workers supported the demonstration of the working women by a city-wide strike movement the political strike began to grow into a general political demonstration against the Tsarist system. "Down with War", "Down with Autocracy", "Give us Bread!" sparked off the February revolution which overthrew the Tsar".³³

The bourgeois - landlord Provisional Government set up after the overthrow of Tsarism, continued to wage the imperialist war which was ruining the country. However, it was soon apparent that the new Provisional Government would not save the country and carry out democratic reforms.

"Freedom and Equality for the oppressed sex!" was one of the immortal slogans of the October Revolution along with "All Power to the Soviets!"³⁴

Together with the working class the masses of working women fought actively for the dictatorship of the proletariat. During the Great October Revolution women nursed the wounded, managed feeding centres of the Red Guards and revolutionary units,

33. History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolshevik): Short course (Moscow, 1949), p. 215.

34. Cited in Shaposhkinova, "Lenin on Women's Role in the society and the Experience of the solution of women's problem in the USSR", Soviet Review, Vol. VII, no. 37, 19 May 1970, p. 8.

and participated directly in the defence of the country by patrolling the streets, guarding factories, building barricades etc.³⁵

Finally the day of the reckoning came and thousands of workers and soldiers stormed the winter palace to seize the provisional government. They emerged triumphant on October 25, 1917 (November).

c) Post-revolutionary Period:

The Bolsheviks came to power in October 1917. The land of Soviets began to build its revolutionary gain in extremely adverse conditions of life. The four bloody years of the First World War (1914-1918) had crippled the country's economy. From 1918 to 1921 the young Soviet Republic experienced civil war unleashed by counter revolutionaries and the armed foreign intervention of 14 states.

The Bolsheviks with the establishment of the Soviet state aimed at bringing fundamental changes in political, social and economic structure of the society. However, this view of theirs was met with strong resistance from many quarters resulting in a ruthless, bloody civil war which lasted till 1921. Still the Bolsheviks moved towards their goal of transforming society, including a complete redefinition of the role of women in an attempt to equalize their status with men.³⁶

35. Cited in Papova, n. 3, p. 38.

36. Johnson, n. 32, p. 201.

Thus, the October Revolution created the prerequisite for realising women's age-old dream of freedom and equality. Drawn up with Lenin's direct participation the first Soviet decrees and laws abolished all restrictions on the rights of women, and laid the foundations for their legal equality.

Firstly, laws were passed granting women equal rights with men. Political equality was granted to working women in a decree entitled "on the Formation of the Worker and Peasant Government" (October 1917) and "The Declaration of Rights of Working and Exploited People," (January, 1918).³⁷

The first Soviet Decrees on Peace and Land, which were signed by Lenin, were very much in the interests of women. The Decree on land, for instance, gave women equal rights to land with men, abolishing the "economic basis for the dependence of oppression of peasant women".³⁸ This was the first step on the road to their complete emancipation. Lenin in his speech at the First All-Russia Congress of Working Women, November 19, 1918 said that complete emancipation of women would only be possible, "when we change from small-scale individual farming to collective farming and collective working of land".³⁹

The question of women's equality was further elaborated in the first Soviet constitution on July 10, 1918, which

37. "Soviet Women's Equal Rights", Soviet Review, n. 10, 5 March, 1984, p. 17.

38. A. Shaposhnikova, "Lenin on Women's Role in Society and the Experience of the Solution of the Women's Problem in the U.S.S.R.", Soviet Review, Vol. VII, no. 37, 19 May 1970, p. 9.

39. Lenin, n. 1, Vol. 28, p. 181.

institutionalized the equality of political and civil rights of men and women. The constitution formalised the rights of women and proclaimed all citizens of the Soviet country equal without distinction of sex, race or nationality. It granted the right of women to be elected to all organs of state power, political equality, allowed working women to participate freely in the social life of the country and in the administration of the state.⁴⁰

In the light of the views held by the Soviet government that socialism and labour are inseparable, sweeping changes were made in the labour legislation. The decree establishing an 8-hour working day was promulgated on October 29 (November 11), 1917, "prohibiting the employment of women for night work". Besides this, restrictions of night work and prohibition of women, and juveniles upto 18 years in work underground and various other measures which the working class had demanded since the days of capitalism formed the basis of Soviet Labour Code.⁴¹

On November 14(27) the Soviet Government issued social security regulations. The decree insured workers in case of sickness and provided for maternity benefits to the full extent of wages to the working women by granting allowances for eight

40. - "Soviet Women's Equal Rights", Soviet Review, no. 10, 5 March 1934, p. 17.

41. Bilshai, n. 2, p. 23.

weeks before and eight weeks after child birth. The decision of the council of People's Commissars laid down the right of workers to annual holidays with full pay.⁴²

An important factor in the emancipation of women was the amendment of the bourgeois family and marriage law. Thus, the Soviet Government revolutionized legislation defining rights of women and children on the initiative of Lenin who said that the "Soviet power has eliminated all there was of the especially disgusting, base and hypocritical inequality in the laws on marriage and the family and inequality in respect of children".⁴³

On December 18 (31), 1917, the historic decrees "On Marriage Dissolution", "On Common Law Marriage" "On children" and "on the Introduction of Registrars", were adopted which granted women equal rights with men in contracting and dissolving a marriage and abolished the unequal status of illegitimate children.⁴⁴

Summing up all that had been done by Soviet power immediately after its establishment, Lenin said:

"In this field, not a single democratic party in the world, not even in the most advanced bourgeois republic has done in

42. Ibid.

43. Lenin, n. 1, Vol. 32, p. 162.

44. - "Soviet Women's Equal Rights", Soviet Review, no. 10, 5 March 1984, p. 17.

decades so much as a hundredth part of what we did in our very first year in power. We really razed to the ground the infamous laws placing women in a position of inequality...."⁴⁵

The establishment of full equality of women with men before the law was only the first step in raising the status of women. Lenin wrote: "Owing to her work in the house, the woman is still in difficult position. To effect her complete emancipation and make her the equal of men it is necessary for the national economy to be socialised and for the women to participate in common productive labour. Then women will occupy the same position as men".⁴⁶

The fulfilment of Social and legal guarantees assuring equality of women and the creation of the best possible conditions enabling them to harmoniously combine extensive participation in the society and family constitute an element of Soviet State Policy. Thus, in the first years after the Revolution, Lenin stressed the need of liberating women from "household bondage", through transition from petty individual housekeeping to large-scale socialised domestic services. In this context he wrote:

"Petty housework crushes, strangles, stultifies and degrades her, chains her to the kitchen and nursery, and wastes

45. Lenin, n. 1, Vol. 29, pp. 428-29.

46. Ibid., Vol. 30, p. 43.

her labour on barbarously unproductive ... crushing druggery. The real emancipation of women, real communism will begin only and where ... wholesale transformation into a large-scale socialist economy begins".⁴⁷ The Soviet state undertook to produce medical care for mothers and newly-borns. The decree "On Sickness insurance" (December 1917) provided for the grant of maternity leave. The decree "On Mother and Child Welfare" (January 1918) outlined a programme for the reorganisation of all institutions connected with the upbringing and education of children and with their health. The best premises owned by the capitalists, and the landowners were converted into child care centres. The decree on the establishment of mother and child department was one of the first acts of Soviet Government under which the socialist state assumed responsibility for looking after the health of mother and child.⁴⁸

Despite the hardships and economic devastation by the civil war and foreign intervention in 1918-1920, there were nearly 1500 mother and child welfare institutions, including 567 nurseries, 108 mother and child homes, 197 women's consultation centres, 108 child-welfare departments, and 207 centres for orphaned whereas in tsarist Russia, in 1916 there were only 554 children's homes and five maternity hospitals.⁴⁹

47. - Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism Manual (Moscow, 1963), edn 2, pp. 667-68.

48. - "Soviet Women's Equal Rights", Soviet Review, no. 10, 5 March 1934, p. 17.

49. Bilshai, n. 2, p. 28.

Further decrees were enacted keeping in view special points affecting the position of women. The rules on Social security of working people, issued on October 31, 1918, the Decree "On free Nourishment for children promulgated on May 17, 1919, the "allowance to nursing mothers" and the "Mother ration card" brought into being during economic depression aimed at providing special benefits of grants, allowances and nourishment to mothers and children.⁵⁰

The implementation of these measures helped greatly to reduce the child mortality. For instance, in Moscow Gubernia the death rate among infants of upto one year was 6.3 per cent in 1913, and by 1923 the figure dropped to 3.7 per cent; in tver Gubernia the infant mortality rate was reduced during the same period from 36.9 to 14.8 per cent.⁵¹

However, it was estimated in 1920 that an additional 7,500,000 persons died from epidemics famine and cold. A country afflicted by cold and hunger and exhaustion cannot fight forever. Therefore, it began to rebuild itself, by drawing people in the socialist construction of the society.⁵²

One of the methods emphasized by Lenin from freeing women from unproductive domestic labour was public catering. "We are

50. Ibid., pp. 28-29.

51. Ibid., p. 28.

52. Johnson, n. 32, pp. 206, 208.

setting up", Lenin wrote, "model institutions dining room and nurseries that will emancipate women from housework. And the work of organizing all these institutions will fall mainly on women".⁵³

Referring to public catering establishments, nurseries kindergartens as shoots of communism, Lenin further wrote:

"There is no doubt that we have far more organising talent among the working women and peasant women than we are aware of, that we have more people than we know of who can organise practical work, with the cooperation of large numbers of workers and of still larger numbers of consumers....."⁵⁴

Under the Soviet rule, the number of public dining rooms grew from year to year enabling the masses to have good and cheap food during the civil war when the country was going through acute food crises.

The fulfilment of social and legal guarantees assuring equality of women geared their role in the socialist construction of the society. It is in this context that Lenin said, "Nothing whatever is left in the Soviet Republic of those laws that put women in a subordinate position of inequality..."⁵⁵

53. Lenin, n.1, Vol. 30, p. 44.

54. Ibid., Vol. 29, p. 430.

55. Ibid., Vol. 30, p. 41.

The age old traditions of women's dependence on the men, inheritance of cultural backwardness and many other survivals of slavery, were an obstacle to drawing them into socialist construction on the scale required.

The Soviet State adhering to Leninist principles, carried out important socio-economic and organisational measures to draw women into all spheres of social production and ensure their participation in state and social activity enabling them to develop their abilities and talents to full.

Expounding the principles of the Soviet system which provides wide scope for the initiative and activity of the masses, Lenin considered it essential to concentrate the State power in the hands of the working and exploited masses by abolishing the private ownership of land and factories. For this he stressed the need for drawing the masses into politics for which the women's participation was necessary. He said, "but you cannot draw the masses into politics without drawing the women as well"⁵⁶, for women comprise one half of the population and he added: "There can be no socialist revolution unless very many working women take a big part in it".⁵⁷

The Soviet Government took steps to spread political awareness among the masses as a precondition to the training of

56. Ibid., Vol. 32, p. 161.

57. Ibid., Vol. 28, p. 180.

skills required in factories and farms. The forms and methods of work differed at various stages of building a socialist society. To help women to exercise the rights given to them by the socialist revolution, working women's committees which had been set up in autumn 1918 by Party Organizations all over the country were supplanted by departments for work among women factory workers and peasants. These departments besides disseminating political education helped to draw working women at factories and on farms into the activities of Soviets, the local organs of government and of consumer co-operatives.⁵⁸

The introduction of equal political rights for both men and women alongwith the spread of political education was a major factor in enlisting the broad masses of working and peasant women in state activities.

On November 19, 1918, the First All-Russia Conference of Proletarian and Peasant women was convened by the Central Committee. Despite the fact that civil war was still raging, it was attended by 1,1147 working women only a few of whom were peasants. The agenda included questions connected with women's role in industrial production and in the home, female and child labour, upbringing of children at State expense, the creation of new public utilities and social education, all aimed at the enrolment of women in the building of the society. The resolution

58. Sinha, n.4, p. 38.

adopted at the conference considered it essential for women to participate in the revolutionary struggle in all its manifestation.⁵⁹ Moreover, the historical importance of the conference lies in the fact that it laid the basis of political education among the proletarian women and gave a new direction to systematic work among them. "The invaluable service rendered by that Congress", wrote Stalin, "Consisted in the fact that it laid the foundation for the organization of political education among the working women and peasant women of our Republic".⁶⁰

Soon, the Central Committee created organizational and agitational commissions at all party level with the aim of imparting political awareness among women as a precondition to the training of building socialism. These commissions through the organisation of meetings and rallies held in factories and mills brought the women in the stream line of political awareness. The forms and methods of spreading political awareness among people changed from time to time. In autumn 1919, the Central Committee of the Party changed the commission for Agitational work among women to "Women's Department", which were set up all over the country within Communist Party bodies.⁶¹ "This was mainly done to intensify the process of imparting political education among the masses of working and peasant women.

59. Pepova, n. 3, p. 45.

60. J.V. Stalin, Collected Works (Moscow, n.d), edn, Russian, Vol. V, p. 319.

61. Bilshai, n. 2, p. 33.

Illiteracy hindered the participation of women in undergoing vocational training, raising their skills and involving them in socio-political and state affairs. Hence, the political education of the masses of working and Peasant women had to be combined with the elimination of illiteracy.

Lenin pointed out that without the eradication of illiteracy it would be impossible to spread political awareness, since politics is beyond the understanding of an illiterate person. He must first learn the alphabet because "without this there cannot be politics, without this there are only rumours, gossips, hearsay, prejudices, but no politics".⁶²

In accordance with the view held by Lenin, a decree was passed by the Council of People's Commissars on December 26, 1919 for the liquidation of illiteracy and semi literacy among the people of the Soviet Republic aged between eight and fifty years. Tens of thousands of schools and centres were opened for the elimination of illiteracy and the entire State apparatus was put to work to solve the progressive aims of the decree. These measures resulted in the abolishment of illiteracy to a large extent. During the first five years after the revolution, out of 77,930 literate person in Moscow region, 90 per cent were women.⁶³

62. Cited in Ibid.

63. Ibid., p. 34.

During the early stages of educational movement factory apprenticeship, vocational schools and individual on job training were primarily taken by the training of women for skilled work. The trade unions combating illiteracy with the aim of raising industrial skill, paid special attention to the literacy among women. With this, the ranks of the builders of socialist society was gradually supplemented by politically more conscious working and peasant women, and housewives. The main task before the Party organizations was to draw the broadmasses of women into all branches of social and state activities.

From the first days of the Soviet power, women worked energetically in the Party and social organizations. During the civil war women displayed great fortitude and courage. They fought directly in the Red army, nursed, guarded the rear and helped to keep up the fighting spirit of the wounded troops. 'Few if any political movements or parties can surpass Russian,⁶⁴ radicalism before 1917 without respect to female participation'.

Women heroically defended the attack of white guard bands of Yedenich on Petrograd in the fall of 1919. 14,000 women helped in the defense of the city, of which 2,600 joined the army, 1,079 became nurses, 521 trench diggers, 496 signallers and 615 machine gunners.⁶⁵

64. Cited in Johnson, n.32, p. 202.

65. Ibid., p. 24.

Throughout the 1920's the position of women in the Soviet Union continued to improve. Women were gradually brought into the Party and occupied important posts. The conferences of women delegates set up by the women's Departments of the Party committees acted as transmission belts, between the party and the broad masses of working women.⁶⁶ In the period from the establishment of Soviet power to 1933, women Departments, with their delegate conferences functioned as the best means of drawing the mass of working women into state administration and the life of the society.⁶⁷

The delegates of the Women's Departments assisted the government in dealing with the problem of homeless children, aid sick and wounded Red Army men, organizing public catering, and taking care of children. According to the newspaper Uralskaya Robotnitsa (the Ural woman worker) in the year 1924 2,974 delegates helped in the fight against famine in Pervi Gubernia. Six hundred and thirty four days were volunteered for the benefit of children homes and schools alone, through the efforts of the delegates and peasant women, four nursery schools, 100 feeding centres for those affected by the famine were set up in the villages and several neglected, children were placed in children's home.⁶⁸

66. Ibid., p. 208.

67. Sinha, n. 4, p. 38.

68. Bilshai, n. 2, p. 38.

Thus, the party carried on its organizational and educational activities among the masses of working women through women's departments of its committees and through the women's sections of the higher Soviet government bodies, which took care of the political and vocational training of women and saw to it that the interests of women workers, mothers and children were protected.

However, the radical transformation in the position of women brought about by the events of revolution and war was accepted with difficulty due to the ingrained values of bourgeois ideology prevailing amongst many sections of the society. For instance two workers at a recruitment office during the critical period of civil war told a group of women, "Go away girls, the mobilisation does not include you".⁶⁹

This consequently hindered the participation of women in social and state activity on an equal footing with men. It became the political task of the Party to eradicate the remnants of such attitudes prevailing amongst the population through education on a broader scale. Thus for ensuring the political education among the masses of workers, the Communist Party involved them in the practical work of all Soviet Government bodies. While addressing the working women during the elections to the

69. Johnson, n. 32, p. 210.

Moscow Soviet Lenin said on 21 Feb. 1920: "We want the working women to be the equal of the working men not only before the law but in actual fact. For this working women must take an increasing active part in the administration of socialised enterprises and in the administration of state. By taking part in administration, women will learn quickly and will catch up with the men. Elect more working women to the Soviet both Communist women and non-party women".⁷⁰

In April 1921, the Council of People's Commissars issued a decree on the recruitment of working and peasant women to the work of Soviet institutions and organizing these institutions by emancipating women in daily life. This decree resulted in drawing a broad mass of women into the government activity.⁷¹ In 1922, only 1 per cent of those elected in the village Soviet were women. This percentage increased to 8.6 in 1925 and 9.9 in 1926; in the composition of the town Soviets in 1925, 10.3 per cent of the members were women, and in 1926, 18.2 per cent.⁷²

These results further reflected the growth of political and cultural level of women and the extent of that involvement in social activity. Besides, this, it also reflected the

70. Lenin, n. 1, Vol. 30, pp. 371-72.

71. Bilshai, n. 2, p. 39.

72. Ibid., p. 41.

tremendous work done by the party and the State organs in overcoming the obstacles in the way of women taking part in the state administration.

Trade unions, the largest public organisation of working people, played a significant role in solving the women's question. After the end of civil war the Eleventh Party Congress held in 1922, underscored, the importance of enhancing the party's political influence among the broadest possible masses of working women under new conditions of the country. The revolution stressed the need of women workers forming the trade unions and Soviet government bodies. The Congress drew attention to the role the peasant women could play in raising agricultural output and in the development of farm cooperations.⁷³

In accordance with this resolution of the Fifth All Russia Congress of Trade Unions in 1922, instituted the unions' women's commissions, held responsible for conducting work among women. The Congress emphasized that making one member of the factory, trade union committee responsible for work among women was primarily a means of compelling the entire factory committee to take the interests and requirements of working women into consideration. The first conference held in 1925, drew

73. Pepova, n. 3, pp. 46-47.

measures to improve the working conditions, organising public health and other services for women directly at their place of work and to assist the family in bringing up the children. As a result of these measures more and more women joined the trade unions.⁷⁴

A vivid manifestation of the political activity of women was their increasing membership in trade unions and in the Party. In 1923, there were 1,449,000 women enrolled in the trade unions; in 1927 the number grew to 2,569,000 or 26.1 per cent of the membership.⁷⁵

With the increase in political activities the number of women grew in the state apparatus as well. At the 1937 elections to the Supreme Soviet, 189 women deputies were elected and several thousands were elected to the local and Republican Soviets.⁷⁶

The involvement of women in the work of state administration was achieved by raising the cultural level, training in administrative affairs and implementing measures for combating the contemptuous and distrustful attitude to social and state activity of women.

74. Sinha, n. 4, pp. 40-42.

75. Bilshai, n. 2, p. 41.

76. Kovalasky and Blinova, n. 11, p. 34.

A vital factor contributing to the emancipation of women in the period of socialist construction is the development of productive forces, the socialist industrialization and collectivisation of agriculture and the all-round development of culture. As already stated, Marxism-Leninism stresses that women can attain full equality only on the basis of economic and social emancipation. Engels held the view that the "first premise for the emancipation of women is the reintroduction of the entire female sex into public industry".⁷⁷

The October Revolution destroyed all social, economic, juridical and conventional barriers to the participation of women in public industry. The major task facing the country following the civil war^{was} the restoration of devastated national economy. This difficult task could be solved within a brief span of time with the help of masses of working population of which women comprised a significant one-half of the population. Lenin said, "The work that Soviet power has begun can only make progress when instead of a few hundred million, and millions of women throughout Russia take part in it. We are sure that the cause of socialist development will then become sound".⁷⁸

77. K.Marx and F.Engels, Selected Works (Moscow, 1973), Vol. 3, p. 247.

78. Lenin, n. 1, Vol. 30, p. 46.

The 13th Party Congress held in May 1924 emphasized that the maintenance of the female labor force in industry has political significance. The Congress obliged the Party and economic organisations to strengthen the work among women by raising their industrial qualifications and by employing them in industries, where they were taken in insignificant numbers.⁷⁹ In 1924-25, 217,400 women were working in factories and mills. This number represented an increase^{of} more than one and a half times in the number of women employed in large scale industries.⁸⁰ With the rehabilitation of national economy the 14th Party Congress which is also known as the Congress of Agrarian Soviet Russia into an industrial one became the chief task of the country. While addressing the Congress Stalin declared:

"To transform our country from an agrarian into an industrial country capable of producing the necessary equipment by its own efforts - such is the essence, the basis of our general line".⁸¹

The year 1930, marked the turning point of the century, when employment of women into industrial production was

79. Bilshai, n. 2, pp. 30-31.

80. Ibid., p. 31.

81. J.V. Stalin, Political Report of the Central Committee to the Fourteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U. (B), (Moscow, 1950), p. 125.

accelerated to great extent. Industrialization and collectivization were given top priorities and all the efforts and resources were directed to meet the requisites of the first five year plan adopted by the Party ".... had been prepared by the whole course of the development of industrialization and collectivization and it had been preceded by a wave of labor enthusiasm which caught up the workers and peasants and which found expression in the socialist emulation".⁸²

The main object of the First Five Year Plan was to create heavy industry in the country which would re-equip the other branches of industry, agriculture and transportation with modern machinery and reorganize them on the basis of socialism. The vast amount of work involved in the realisation of Stalin's plan required extensive recruitment of labour. But the employment of women in socialist industry was not the solution to the problem of their participation in socially productive labour. To raise productivity it was necessary to bring women into occupational training for skilled work.

The Government and public organization took effective measures to make general and technical education available to all. The number of students in all branches of educational

82. - History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks): Short Course (Moscow, 1949), p. 215.

system increased from 14,358,000 in 1929 to 26,419,000 in 1933. Compared with 1928, when women comprised 28.1 per cent of the students in higher educational institutions of the country. Their percentage rose to 43.1 in 1938.⁸³

With the introduction of universal compulsory education and the growth of technical education on the number of women grew continuously in the social and industrial life. The growing number of women entering into the industries was further enhanced by freeing them from domestic chores through the expansion of public amenities.

The Government accelerated the building of kindergartens, nurseries and public dining rooms on the nationwide scale to emancipate women from the drudgery of the kitchen. At the beginning of the First Five Year Plan the number of workers using public dining rooms was 750,000. In 1934, 9,800,000 persons were eating in the factory kitchens and catering establishments.⁸⁴

All these measures taken by the Government enabled a large number of women to enter the public industry intensifying the process of industrialization. Throughout the country rose

83. Bilshai, n. 2, p. 46.

84. Ibid., n. 2, p. 49.

the scaffoldings of the great plants of socialist industry under construction. Women volunteered work at the first construction sites and took part in building the first power stations on the big Volkhov and Dnieper rivers.⁸⁵

The number of women engaged in gigantic construction of socialist industry rose steadily and the dividing line between the so called "men's" and "women's" trade gradually disappeared towards the end of the Second Five Year Plan. During the period of nine years from 1929 to 1937, the number of women employed in all branches of national economy as a whole increased by 6,053,000.⁸⁶ This signified the increased importance of female labour and the change in their qualifications.

The technical re-equipment of all branches of national economy, advanced mechanization replacing manual labour and establishment of a circle network of vocational training courses and schools, were the contributory measures in allowing women to master a series of male, "trades and successfully replacing men in leading branches of socialist industry. In 1929 the percentage of women employed in coal and mining industry was 9.47, in iron and steel manufacturing - 9.3%, in

85. Papova, n. 3, pp. 61-62.

86. Bilshai, n. 2, pp. 46-47.

machine building and metal processing - 10.3 per cent. In 1938, the corresponding figures were 24.5 per cent, 26.3 per cent and 31.1 per cent. Further, women mastered jobs requiring technical skills and became turners, adjusters, moulders, railway engine drivers, machine operators etc.⁸⁷

With the influx of women entering the public industry and the advancement of technical skill in the prevalent socialist relations of production, women were placed in position of responsibilities, technical and managerial contributing magnificently to the growth of industries quantitatively and qualitatively.

Under the first two Five Year Plans, from 1928 to 1940, the women workers multiplied four fold. On the eve of Patriotic War about 40 per cent i.e. 11,000,000 women workers were employed in industries, transport and construction jobs. Over 170,000 of these women were technicians and engineers.⁸⁸

Difficulties encountered to emancipating peasant women from the shackles of "household drudgery", were even greater. Collectivisation of agriculture was of the utmost importance for the emancipation of women as it transformed the peasant from a small proprietor into a collectivist, undermining peasant isolation by bringing women to take part in economic, cultural and public life on an equal footing with men.⁸⁹

87. Popova, n. 3, p. 64.

88. Ibid., n. 3, p. 65.

89. V.I. Lenin, On Emancipation of Women (Moscow, 1977), p.13.

From the very start Lenin regarded collectivisation of agriculture as a way of reorganizing it along socialist line. Lenin pointed out, "As long as we live in a small Peasant country there is a sure economic basis for capitalism in Russia than for Communism".⁹⁰ He stressed the need to build up large scale heavy industries that could supply agriculture with machinery and with this as a bases to reorganise farming on socialist lines.

Stalin developed Lenin's precepts into an integral theory of collectivisation of agriculture. At the 15th Party Congress held in 1927 he pointed out that the lagging agriculture was jeopardizing the national economy as a whole:

"The way out", he said, "is to turn small scattered peasant farms into large united farms based on the common cultivation of the land on the bases of a new and higher technique.

The way out is to unite the small and dwarf peasant farms gradually but surely, not by pressure but by example and persuasion, into large farms based on common cooperative, collective cultivation of the land with the use of agricultural machine and tractors and scientific methods of intensive agriculture".⁹¹

90. Cited in Pepova, n. 2, p. 68.

91. J.V. Stalin, Political Report of the Central Committee to the Fifteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U.(B), (Moscow, 1950), pp. 51-52.

The Bolshevik Party, fully realized the vital economic need and was able to swing the peasantry into the path of collectivisation. The Fifteenth Congress gave instructions for the drawing up of the First Five Year Plan for the development of the national economy. Thus in the midst of industrialization, the immediate task of collectivisation of agriculture started.

The Party created all the necessary material requisite for a mass influx of the peasantry into collective farms. For helping the peasants to improve their method of farming, funds were collected to set up machine and tractor station. The Kulaks tried to resist this fiercely by organising a "grain strike", to compel the party to retreat from such measures. The Bolshevik Party adopted emergency methods and smashed their resistance.⁹²

The collective farming put an end to poverty pauperism and kulak exploitation. The collectivisation of agriculture was "a profound revolution, a leap from an old qualitative state of society to a new qualitative state equivalent in its consequences to the revolution of October 1917".⁹³

The system of collective farming freed women from much of the household drudgery. Along with the collective farms, appeared electric power plants, children nursery and maternity

92. J.V. Stalin, A Short Biography (Moscow, 1952), pp. 98-99.

93. - History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks): Short Course (Moscow, 1949), p. 376.

hospitals in the rural districts. This also increased the extensive opportunities for cultural advancement. Radio, village reading room, library, club and cinema became a part of the Soviet village scene. The First All-Union Congress of Collective Farm, Shock workers demonstrated the great changes and improvements that had taken place in the countryside.

Joseph Stalin said in his speech in that Congress:

"As for the women collective farmers themselves, they must remember the power and significance of the collective farms for women; they must remember that only in the collective farm do they have the opportunity of becoming equal with men without collective farms - inequality; in collective farms equal rights"⁹⁴.

The Policy of the Soviet Government and Bolshevik Party and the emancipatory influence of the collective farm system awakened tremendous forces latent in the masses of peasant women. Women were the first to raise the banner of socialist emulation for a high crop yield. This emerged as the famous Stakhanov movement which raised the banner of struggle for increased labour productivity, for a high standard of work, for getting the most out of machinery.⁹⁵ For instance, Maria Demchenko, a collective farm woman initiated the movement for a harvest of 50 tons of sugarbeet per hectare, increasing the yield more than three times.⁹⁶

94. Cited in Stalin, n. 92, p.105.

95. Pepova, n. 2, p. 75.

96. Bilshai, n. 3, p. 50.

With the consolidation of the economy of the collective farms, the material well-being and cultural standards of the peasant women improved greatly. The importance of female labour on the collective farms increased, becoming a great labour force in collective agriculture. An investigation carried out in January 1936, showed that at 7,030 collective farms women made up 16.1 per cent of the managers of stock breeding sections; 21.5 per cent of the brigade leaders, 50.7 per cent of the cattle yard workers, and 66.8 per cent of the team leaders.⁹⁷

The collective farm system brought a big change in the position of the peasant women. Life in the farm abolished the century-old inequality and made them free, economically independent women, broadening their vision, and turning them into active builders of the new society. By the beginning of 1941 over a thousand women operated harvest tractors and other complicated farm machinery.⁹⁸

The Central Committee of the C.P.S.U.(B) said in a statement on the occasion of Women's Day, March 8, 1941, that "in all branches of socialist construction - in industry, transport agriculture in science and art - tens and hundreds of thousands of Soviet Women show splended example of socialist work".⁹⁹ As a result of the colossal work performed by the

97. Bilshai, n. 3, p. 57.

98. Ibid.

99. Cited in Pepova, n. 2, p. 71.

Communist Party and Soviet power through mass organisations of the working people, the role of women in production and in all spheres of life gradually grew the building of socialism.

In 1936, a new constitution of U.S.S.R. reflecting the victory of socialism in the country confirmed the fundamental rights of women. Article 122 of the constitution read as follows:

"Women in USSR are accorded equal rights with men in all spheres of economic, government cultural, political and other public activity.

The possibility of exercising these rights is ensured by women being accorded an equal right with men to work, payment for work, rest and leisure, social insurance and education, and by state protection of the interests of mother and child, state aid to mothers of large families and unmarried mothers, maternity leave with full pay, and the provision of a wide network of maternity homes, nurseries and kindergartens".¹⁰⁰ This article reflects all the social gains of women through revolutionary struggle in the socialist construction of the society.

100. J.V. Stalin, On the Draft Constitution of the USSR : Report Delivered at the Extraordinary Eighth Congress of Soviets of the USSR, Nov. 25, 1936 (Moscow, 1951), p. 122.

CHAPTER III

**IMPACT OF THE SOCIALIST SOCIETY ON
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As Socialism took its deep roots in the Soviet Union, it brought many changes both economically and socially. For women, its impact changed her role drastically. The constitutional rights and important state measures not only helped her to play a dual role of a mother and a worker efficiently, but helped her to make a valuable contribution towards building Socialism and Communism in the Soviet Union.

All the post-revolution Constitutions give importance to the exercise of women's rights in various fields. The new Soviet Constitution adopted in 1977 lays emphasis on the guarantees for the exercise of women's rights in the socio-economic and political field. Art 35 of the Constitution says that women and men have equal rights in the USSR. It means that women are accorded equal access with men to education, vocational and professional training, equal opportunities in employment, remuneration and promotion as well as in social, political and cultural activity.¹

1. Boris Topornin, The New Constitution of the USSR (Moscow, 1980) pp. 248-49.

The Soviet women's equal rights in various fields like employment, education, political, cultural, etc., are protected by the Soviet justice. The judicial system has the aim of securing the exact and unwavering fulfilment of Soviet law by all institutions, organisations, officials and citizens of the USSR. The Soviet prosecutor and Soviet judge stand guard over the rights of women in industry and in the family, and the laws protecting the honour and dignity of woman in Socialist Society.²

Economic Rights:

In the Soviet Economy every woman has the right to work in her chosen field. She may like to work in a factory or on a construction site. Socialism guarantees her the right to choose profession. Women began to acquire a new attitude towards work under the impact of socialist relations of production. The socio-economic conditions of labour, which working women regard as the conditions of their social existence, gave rise to a qualitatively new aspect of labour activity - the concern of the working women for raising labour productivity, a concern which in fact transcended the boundaries of their direct duties. Inspired by the great creative tasks facing the country, young women went to work at the construction sites of the Five-Year Plans. They built hydroelectric power

2. Vera Bilshai, The Status of Women in the Soviet Union, (Moscow, 1957), p. 74.

stations, heavy industry enterprises, and played their part in strengthening collective farms and developing agriculture. As they worked they came to rely on their own abilities, acquired confidence in themselves and their full equality with men was asserted. Joint labour raised the relations between people, notably between men and women, to a higher level and strengthened the feeling of comradeship and collectiveness. Joint labour is considered important for the building of economy in the USSR. Women's participation in the national economy of the country is enormous. According to the 1974 survey 90 per cent of women are employed. Women constitute 49 per cent of the workforce employed in industry, 85 per cent in public health and physical culture and social security organizations, 73 per cent in education and culture, and 49 per cent in Science and Scientific services.³

The ever-widening participation of women in economic management is a logical feature of the socialist system. The 1974 survey says that about 4,000 women are working as managers of industrial enterprises, and more than 200,000 are shop superintendents or heads of departments, laboratories, etc. There are more than 200,000 forewomen in industry.⁴ This indicates that Socialism enabled her to achieve the higher posts in the industries.

3. - "The Role of Women in Soviet Society", The Current Digest of the Soviet Press (Ann Arbor, Michigan), Vol. XXVII, no. 9, March 26, 1975, p. 2.

4. Ibid.

In Industries, the Soviet Women are working both in light as well as heavy industries. The light industry, which is traditionally regarded as a "Women's Sector", has yielded first place to engineering and now comes second as regards the numbers of women employed in it. Most of the women employed in the light industry work in sewing and knitted goods industries. Their high numbers here result from the nature of the production process.

In heavy industries, the Soviet women are working in both high and low posts. Some are managers, forewomen etc. Most of them have excellent records in production and are known for efficiency. They have initiated efficiency campaigns and have achieved spectacular results in their work. Among the initiator of the movement for higher labour productivity and better quality of goods is V. Bobkova, a worker at the Moscow silk factory "Krasnaya Roza", delegate to the 25th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), Hero of Socialist Labour and winner of the State Prize.

By December 1976 many women textile workers had already fulfilled the targets of the first two years of the Tenth Five-Year Plan. They include L. Ulakhovich, member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Beylorussia, Loom Operator at the textile factory in Orsha, R. Shipkova, a seamstress at Ulyanovsk clothing factory, G. Bedareva, a worker at the Zhitomir textile plant, had already fulfilled the target of the

first three years of the Five-Year Plan and had pledged to meet her personal five year target by the time of the 60th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution.⁵

In recognition of their excellent work and leadership qualities, women working in industries have been awarded some of the prestigious awards. The awards have been conferred on the best women workers for their achievement in labour. As on January 1, 1975 women held 1,983,000 orders and medals of the Soviet Union of which 1,663,000 were for labour exploits. Ninety-one women are Heroes of the Soviet Union, 4,752 are Heroes of Socialist labour and 25 are holders of two "Hammer and Sickle" gold medals and 231,711 the order of the Labour Red Banner.⁶

Soviet Women's participation in the development of agriculture has been widely appreciated. The high mechanization of agriculture have raised many millions of peasant women to the level of creative endeavour. Women has firmly taken her place as organizer of agriculture production. But in this sector of economy, the employment of female work force has moved down to second place. The main agricultural spheres employing women at the moment are plant-growing and livestock

5. - "A few facts about Soviet Women", International Affairs (Moscow), May 1977, p. 123.

6. Ibid.

raising. Today it is usual thing to see a woman in the position of team-Leader, manager of a farm, head or member of the board of the Collective farm. N. Perverziva, harvester combine operator from the "Put Lenina" Collective farm, Peschanokopsky District, Rostov area, who is hero of Socialist Labour and a nationally acclaimed worker, has made a great contribution to the bumper grain crop of 1976. The complex harvesting and transportation team which she heads successfully completed harvesting in her own farm and went on to help the farmers in the Millerovo region. N. Perverziva's team of four "Kolos" harvester combines has threshed more than 123,000 centners of wheat and barley, setting a record in the Don Area.⁷ This demonstrates that Women in the Soviet Union have the ability as well as capability to surpass the men in their work.

Scientific and Technological Revolution:

The Scientific and technological revolution played an important role in opening up new opportunities for the wide use of female labour. To a great degree the higher effectiveness of using female labour is associated with its acceleration. The influence of this factor goes far beyond the framework of industry and is causing a revolution not only in the sphere of social labour but in the sphere of personal labour as well.

7. Ibid.

The objective prerequisites for increasing the employment of women in social production are prepared, on the one hand, by the reduced application of heavy physical labor as a result of the mechanization and automation of production and the expansion and emergence of new branches in material production and in the non-productive sphere, and on the other hand, by the dissemination of labor - saving devices in the home.

In the last 15-20 years there have been significant changes in the utilization of the labor of women in social production. Essentially, they are characterized by the increase in the number of working women, by the rise in the share of female labor, and by changes in its distribution by branch and occupation.⁸

In industrial field there have been significant changes in the application of female labor. This is a natural process, since the development of modern industrial production is characterized by the innovation of its production apparatus on the basis of the latest equipment. The transformation of industry into a branch that is in first place in terms of the size of the female workforce and the intensiveness not only of

8. N. Tatarinova, "Scientific - Technical Progress And female labor", Soviet Review (White Plains, New York), Vol. XV, No. 4, Winter 1974-75, p. 92.

quantitative but also qualitative changes in the use of female labor in their interaction with other factors in the most vivid manifestation of the influence of scientific technical progress on the application of female labor. According to the estimates, in 1970 the number of women in industry was 15.2 million, compared with 10.1 million in 1960 and 7.0 million in 1950.⁹ The number of women increased at a more rapid pace than the number of men.

In machine building the utilization of female labor power is rising chiefly in the electro-technical, bearing, and other branches in which the application of female labor is comparatively new. This is the consequence of the mechanization and automation of the majority of production process. What is more preference is given to female labor here particularly because in a number of basic operations (assembly installation work, etc.) requiring attentiveness, precision, and carefulness, women cope with the work better than men.

In agricultural field, scientific and technological revolution changed the labor of women in state and collective farms. A woman collective farmer can now be seen at the control panel at automated poultry farms or at industrial stock breeding complexes. Thousands of women are tractor and combine operators.

9. Ibid. p. 93.

Female labour is also widely employed in the sphere of public health, education trade and public catering. All these sectors employ a high proportion of women and this tendency is on the increase. The following table reflects the process:

TABLE

	Percentage of Personnel formed by Women	
	1960	1974
Public health, Physical Education and Social Security.	85	85
Education and Culture	70	73
Trade, Public Catering, Material and Technical Supply and Sale, Purchases.	66	70 ¹⁰

The number of women engineers and technicians agronomists and veterinary specialists, teachers and doctors, economists and lawyers is steadily growing. In 1928 the national economy employed 151,000 women who had Higher and Secondary specialised education, which accounted for 29 per cent of the total number. In 1975 the figure increased to 59 per cent.¹¹

10. N. Kovalsky and Y.P. Blinova, ed., Women Today, L.G. Balakhovskaya and others, trans; (Moscow, 1975).
11. - "A few facts about Soviet Women", International Affairs (Moscow), May 1977, p. 122.

The further development of these sectors resulted from public demand and was characterised by significant progressive quantitative and qualitative changes which have enabled women labour to be employed on a wide scale (extension of the network of vocational training of skilled personnel etc.). Yet there is another subjective side. When women choose to make their careers in the health and education services, their inclinations and habits help in looking better after the sick and bringing up children and also in further developing these traits of their character in the process of their work.

Soviet Women also occupy an important place in various branches of modern science. Socialism has provided them with the broadest opportunities here. Together with men they are probing deeper and deeper into the secrets of nature, mastering its forces and employing them for the benefit of humanity. Valentina Tereshkova's space flight personified the great vitality and intelligence of women who, under socialism, have attained great heights of development and have freed themselves of prejudices which for ages had fettered their intellect and energy. Women scientist have made equal contribution to the development of scientific discoveries. Already a decade back 49 per cent of the people employed in science and scientific servicing were women.¹²

12. N.A. Kovalsky and Y.P. Blinova, n. 10, p. 40.

Socialism in the USSR has also enabled women to play an important role in the development of culture and art. Women perform a great deal of varied work in libraries, houses of culture, clubs, recreation parks, theaters and cinemas, museums, exhibitions, and so on. Also they occupy an honourable place among performers and producers, artists and sculptors.

The changing role of the women in the Economic Construction of the country was mainly due to the various state measures. First of all, Women's Right to work in the industries, collective farms, in schools, universities, hospitals, public catering etc., has been protected by the state measures, various legislative laws have been implemented to improve her working conditions. The following measures have been invariably pursued and developed in Soviet legislation on Women's rights.

1. The consistent improvement of working conditions for women and providing them with relatively easier jobs.
2. Increased labour protection for pregnant women, nursing mothers and women with children under one year of age.
3. The constant increase of social maternity relief through allowances, privileges in pension receipts, a wider network of maternity and child welfare institutions, and nursery and extra-school establishments.

4. Comprehensive legal protection of women's equality in all spheres of social life, systematic supervision and control by the state agencies and the trade unions of the observance of legislation of women's labour rights and on special protection of their labour.

Next to her right to work, Soviet Woman's important right is the equal pay for equal work. In the Soviet Union men and women workers are paid in accordance with the quantity and equality of what they produce. All workers on piece work, men and women of the same qualifications and carrying out the same work are paid at the same piece-rates. If a woman is an executive she likewise receives the same pay, which includes the salary and bonuses, which are based on output and quality. Equal pay with men is received by women teachers, doctors, office employees and women of other professions.¹³

The Soviet Women has the right to improve her skill. This right is realised on the basis of universal, free and compulsory seven-year, and now ten year, general schooling and easily accessible higher education. The network of industrial and technical schools, secondary specialized schools and various courses, where women have the same unlimited chance as men to acquire the desired speciality or skill free of charge, has considerably expanded compared with the pre-war period.

13. Nina Popova, "Equality of Soviet Women in the Economic Sphere", in Equality of Women in the USSR : Materials of International Seminar, September 15 - October 1, 1956, (Moscow, 1957), p. 112-113.

The Soviet women's right to improve her skill leads to competence. Competence in return enables women to *win* authority and recognition. Special attention is devoted to the promotion of women in the Soviet Union. The Trade Union and other public organizations frequently discuss the problem of promoting women to leading positions. Women promoted to higher posts are rendered practical help and support. There are many women in leading positions, who have come all the way from a rank-and-file worker to a leader, from a worker to a shop superintendent or director of an enterprise.

The skilled workers are also trained directly in the shops of the enterprises by means of team and individual apprenticeship. The Soviet legislation protects the rights of women apprentices and requires that they be given normal conditions for training.

Taking into account the physiological peculiarities of women and the interests of maternity and child protection, Soviet labour legislation provides special guarantees for the protection of the labour of women.

According to Article 70 of the fundamentals of labour legislation of the USSR and the Union Republics Approved by the law of the Union of Soviet Republics 15 July 1970, Pregnant women are transferred to an easier job for the period of their pregnancy, and they continue to draw their previous average pay. Also nursing mothers and women with children

under one year of age who are unable to carry out their normal work, are transferred to easier jobs and continue to draw their previous average earning.¹⁴

The Fundamentals of Labour Legislation prohibits employment of women for night work, except in the sectors of the economy where there is a special need and where it is allowed only as a temporary measure. Further it says that "It shall be prohibited to employ pregnant women; nursing mothers and women with children under one year of age on night and overtime work, for work on days off or to send them on assignments". It also forbids employment of women with children from one to eight years of age on overtime work or to send them on assignments unless they give their consent (Art. 69).¹⁵

There are other Labour Laws protecting the interests of a pregnant worker take for example, the labour code of the RSFSR approved by the law of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, December 9, 1971, provides that a pregnant worker, nursing mother or mother with a child under one year of age cannot be dismissed by the management or her pay lowered. (Art 73).¹⁶

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14. "Fundamentals of Labour Legislation of the USSR and the Union Republics. Approved by the Law of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of 15 July 1970", A.M. Belyakova and others, Compiled, Soviet Legislations on Women's Right: Collection of Normative Acts, V. Barnashov, trans; (Moscow, 1978), p. 76.
15. Ibid., pp. 76-77.
16. "Labour Code of the RSFSR. Approved by the Law of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic of December 9, 1971". Belyakova and others, n. 14, p. 78.

Under the same law,(Art 165) women are entitled to a maternity leave of fifty-six calendar days before and fifty six days after giving birth; during this period, they receive an allowance paid out of State Social insurance funds. In the event of complications during child birth, or the birth of two or more children, the length of the postnatal leave is extended to seventy calendar days.¹⁷

Nursing mothers and women with children under one year of age, in addition to the normal meal and rest interval, are entitled to additional intervals for nussing their children. The interval is not less than thirty minutes every three hours (Art 169).¹⁸

Other state measures which give pregnant worker facilities are - Art 171 of the Labour Code of the RSFSR 1971 says that management of enterprises and organizations, in agreement with the factory or office trade union committees, issues pregnant women with vouchers for places at Sanatoria and rest-homes free of charge or at a reduced price, and also renders them material aid.¹⁹

17. Ibid., p. 83.

18. Ibid., p. 85.

19. Ibid.

The Soviet Union is greatly concerned about the working conditions of its women workers. To improve their working conditions a number of laws have been passed. The USSR State Committee on Labour and Social Questions and the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions, in accordance with the April 25, 1978, resolution of the USSR Council of Ministers and the Central Council of Trade Unions — "On Additional Measures to Improve Working Conditions for Women Employed in the National Economy" — confirmed a new list of production areas, professions and jobs with arduous and harmful working conditions in which the employment of women is prohibited.²⁰ The list was compiled with the approval of the USSR Ministry of Public Health.

USSR Ministries and Departments and the Union-Republics Councils of Ministers have been instructed to remove women from work on the new list of prohibited jobs by January 1, 1981. These women are to be placed in new jobs or, when necessary retrained or trained for new occupations. The managements of enterprises and organizations have no right to hire women for jobs on the prohibited list, not even for part-time work. Women who leave such jobs and do not take new ones are entitled to severance pay. Such women are to retain their

20. - "Women's benefits Pegged to Revised Hazardous - Jobs list", Current Digest of the Soviet Press, Vol. XXX, No. 36, 4 October 1978, p. 14.

service record, pension eligibility, etc. for six months between leaving their old jobs and taking new ones or enrolling in an educational institution. While undergoing training or retraining such women are entitled to retain their former average monthly wage for six months. They also retain their rights to departmental housing and the use of children's pre-school institutions, women who leave arduous or harmful jobs are to receive an year's bonuses for the calendar year in which they left work.²¹

The Soviet Code of Labour Laws prohibits the employment of women on heavy or harmful work such as the smelting and pouring of molten metal rolling hot metal, cleaning gas mains. Women are not to be employed in a number of branches of the chemical, printing, and meat industries, on a number of jobs in the railways, sea and local transport services as well as in the mining industry.²²

As a result of greater mechanization and automation of industry and better industrial safety and sanitation, women began to take jobs that were formerly closed to them such as, for example, tractor and lorrydriving. For the women lorry and tractor drivers, the Soviet Government passed special rules known as "On the Labour Conditions of Women Tractor and Lorry Drivers". This rule provided for a monthly medical

21. Ibid.

22. Pepova, n. 13, p. 115.

examination of these women and depending on the results of this examination, their transfer to other jobs. Special tractor starting devices and cushioned seats; paid leave during the menstrual period upon presentation of medical certificates and so on.²³

Other small facilities for the working women especially those working in enterprises are personal hygiene rooms, containing separate cabins with running warm water and all the necessary women's personal hygiene articles have been opened. Trained women are in attendance at these rooms. Another important measure of the Soviet State is the old age pension. Every working woman is entitled for it. Also pension in sickness, and in the event of complete or partial disability or loss of the breadwinner.

Political and Educational Rights of Women:

Socialism enables every Soviet women to achieve political rights. Lenin had stressed that women must take part in all social affairs. He noted that unless women are brought to take an independent part not only in political life generally, but also in daily and universal public service, it is no use talking about full and stable democracy, let alone socialism.²⁴

23. Ibid., p. 116.

24. V.I. Lenin, Collected Works (Moscow, n.d.), Vol. 24, p. 70.

In accordance with basic principles of socialism, Soviet Woman has the right to participate freely in the administration of the country. Art 48 of 1977 Constitution of the USSR says that every woman has the right to vote, be elected and elect on equal terms with man.²⁵ The electoral laws, give women a real opportunities to both elect and be elected to all organs of government in the Union Republics and the Soviet Union as a whole.

The Soviet Woman has a right to take active part in all phases of electoral campaigns. They participate in nominating and discussing candidates and in canvassing for the candidates, who are nominated by industrial enterprises, voluntary societies, co-operative associations and other public organizations. Alongwith men they inform the population on the electoral procedure, the political structure of the USSR, the rights which Soviet citizens enjoy and the forms in which those rights are exercised, and so on. A great many women are elected to district, regional, republican and all-Union electoral commissions. These commissions see to it that the lists of the electorate are drawn up properly, that they are complete, that the electoral procedure is strictly adhered to.²⁶

25. Topornin, n. 1, p. 253.

26. L. Petrova And S. Gilevskaya, Compiled, Equality of Women in the USSR : Materials of International Seminar, (Moscow, 1957), p. 20.

Women not only elect but are elected to all organs of State power. The women elected as deputies include industrial workers, collective farmers, teachers, physicians, engineers, agronomists, public workers and others. These are mostly women who have proved themselves to be efficient in public affairs and, moreover, have shown by their work that they can approach the solution of current problems in terms of the State as a whole.

Among the deputies of the Seventh Supreme Soviet of the USSR (June 1966) there were 425 women, which accounts for 28 per cent of the membership of the supreme governing body of the Soviet Union. The Ninth Supreme Soviet of the USSR (June 1974) had 475 women delegates which is 31.3 per cent of the deputies.²⁷ Among the members of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR are V. Nikolayeva, Tereshkova, President of the Soviet Women's Committee.

Women's representation in the Supreme Soviets of the Union Republics has been steadily growing from 850 (23.6 per cent of the deputies) in 1938, to 1,718 (32.3 per cent) in 1959 and 2,158 (35.4 per cent) in 1975. Women account for 35.5 per cent of the deputies in the Supreme Soviet of the Georgian SSR, 36.1 per cent in the Moldavian SSR, 34.2 per cent in the Latvian SSR.²⁸ Many of them hold responsible posts in the supreme government bodies in their republics.

27. - "A Few facts about Soviet Women", International Affairs (Moscow) May 1977, p. 123.

28. Ibid., p. 124.

Women play an important role in the local Soviets of working people's deputies. In 1939 there were 432,362 women in the local Soviets, which accounted for 33.1 per cent of the deputies. In 1959 the number of women, of the local Soviets and their share increased respectively to 690,665 and 38.3 per cent and in 1975 to 1,063,634 and 48.1 per cent.²⁹

The Soviet Women are also actively participating in the work of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). They have the right to be in the Party, Komsomol, Trade Unions and other Public organizations. The number of women in the CPSU is growing constantly. As on January 1, 1983, there were 4,968,693 women in the Party or 27.4 per cent of all Communists, as compared to 7.4 per cent in 1920.³⁰ Many women are in charge of Party organizations and carry out a great deal of organisational and educative work among both Party members and non-Party people, rally them to accomplish the tasks facing the country.

Women's role in such mass organizations as the trade unions is particularly great. They constitute half of the trade union membership and are elected to all the governing bodies of the unions. Thus, women form 34.5 per cent of the membership of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions.³¹

29. Ibid.

30. - "Statistics on Party Membership", The Current Digest of the Soviet Press, Vol. XXX, No. 39, 26 October, 1983, p. 8.

31. N.A. Kovalsky and Y. Blinova, n. 8, p. 49.

Women trade union members have certain rights like members who have temporarily stopped working to look after their children shall retain the right to remain trade union members for one year and shall be entitled to use the cultural and other services equally with all the other trade union members. In case they resume work, their previous trade union membership length shall be retained regardless of the duration of the period away from work.³²

Women participate actively in Co-operative and Youth organisations. A great contribution to public life is made by the women's councils that have been formed in enterprises, institutions, and collective farms, and by the Women's Commissions attached to the trade unions and those working under the various societies for friendship and cultural relations with foreign countries.

An organisation as massive as the Union of Soviet Friendship Societies is headed by Nina Popova, a winner of International Lenin Prize "For the Promotion of Peace Among Nations", a Deputy to the USSR Supreme Soviet and member of the CC, CPSU. The Chairman of the Soviet Women's Committee is the first, and as yet the only, woman cosmonaut, Valentina

32. Statute of Trade Unions of the USSR Approved by the 13th Trade Unions Congress and partly amended by the 14th Trade Unions Congress on 4 March 1968 and by the 15th Trade Unions Congress on 24 March 1972.
Belyakova and others, n. 14, pp. 131-132.

Nikolayeva - Tereshkova, a Hero of the Soviet Union, a deputy and member of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet and a member of the CC CPSU.

Coming to the Educational rights of Soviet Women, it can be said that education in a way helps develop human personality. As such, socialism has taken note of its importance. Under Socialism every citizen has the right to education which is free and compulsory. In the Soviet Union education was made a part of State Policy. The State implemented measures to educate the masses. Both men and women have an equal right to education.

To every woman, education is necessary. Russian progressive thinkers like Belinsky, Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubove were champions of women's education. They pointed out that an all-round education was necessary for women not merely in their personal life, but primarily to enable them to serve society.³³ Education in one way play an important role in shaping a women's personality and in her professional activity. The steadily rising standard of education will broaden the range of her cultural and material requirements, modify her ideal of life, her outlook and her attitude towards public life, towards her work, the family, child-upbringing, and so forth.

33. Lyudmila Dubrovine, "Women's Right to Education in the Soviet Union: A Report" in Equality of Women in the USSR (Moscow, 1957), p. 232.

Keeping in view the importance of education for women, the Soviet constitution of 1977 (Art 45) says that Women's right to education "is ensured by free provision of all forms of education, by the institution of universal, compulsory secondary education, and broad development of vocational, specialised secondary, and higher education, in which instruction is oriented toward practical activity and production, by the development of extramural, correspondence and evening courses, by the provision of state scholarships and grants and privileges for students, by the free issue of school text books; by the opportunity to attend a school where teaching is in the native language; and by the provision of facilities for self education. The realization of equal right with men to education was not only an important condition for actual equality, but also the only positive way of transforming the reserves into powerful factor in the development of the country's productive forces. Only in conditions of equality with men in cultural and professional training could women reach their full status."³⁴

Several valuable State measures to eliminate illiteracy were adopted. First was the measures of compulsory primary education for which, new schools were built, funds allotted for their maintenance and teaching personnel trained. Between 1918 and 1973, the State and co-operative enterprises and

34. Topornin, n. 1, p. 252.

organisations built 104,000 general education schools for 36 million pupils. Between 1946 and 1973, collective farms built 63,000 schools for nine million pupils³⁵ both male and female.

Special care was taken by the Soviet State to implement the Soviet 10-year general education system. This system provides a good, all-round knowledge of the rudiments of science. This is an earnest guarantee that each young girl will be able to apply her abilities in any sphere of modern production or the service industry, and also continue her education in any higher or secondary specialised educational establishment. Since the curriculum is the same for both boys and girls, the latter have equal opportunities either to continue studying or going to work.

Women in the Soviet Union also study while working. The State has set up evening and correspondence schools. These give industrial and office workers and peasants, both men and women, an education, while they continue to hold their jobs. At many industrial enterprises there now are educational centres offering a variety of training facilities, and branches of secondary and higher schools. Lectures are delivered by professors and academicians. Many workers, men and women, take correspondence courses at secondary and higher schools, while tens of thousands of technical courses and

35. Y.Z. Danilova and others, Soviet Women : Some aspects of the Status of women in the USSR (Moscow, 1975), p. 73.

schools train skilled workers and improve their qualifications while they continue to work in their regular jobs.

The Vocational School system is designed to meet the requirements of those who wish to learn trades at any early age. These are chiefly two-year Vocational Schools for youngsters with a seven-year schooling, giving instruction in factory, railway and mining, and other trades. Such schools train girls for a wide variety of trades. Taking into account the specific characteristics of the females, girls are not accepted in school training personnel for the coal-mining, ore-mining and iron and steel industries etc. Upon finishing the vocational school and beginning work, the girl as a rule, continues her education either in evening school or by correspondence course or in a specialized Secondary School.

For the purpose of training workers with higher skill special technical schools have been opened in recent years based on the ten-year general school, with a one-year term of study. The high educational level of the technical school applicants facilitates the training of personnel who quickly master the intricacies of their chosen trade and become highly skilled craftsmen.

The Soviet Women has the right for specialized secondary and higher education. The preparatory schools attached to higher educational institutes play an important role in preparing women factory workers and peasants for the higher schools.

Women in the Soviet Union have also the right for higher education for Science, Law, Engineering, etc. In 1975 the women scientists in the Soviet Union numbered 488,300. The number of Doctors of Science among women in 1975 were 4,500, of Candidates of Sciences 94,000, Academicians, Corresponding Members of the Academy of Sciences and Professors 2,400.³⁶

The number of women engineers and technicians, agronomists and veterinary specialists, teachers and doctors, economists and lawyer is steadily growing. This demonstrates the valuable role played by Socialism in raising the status of women and in educating her. In this way her role has been changed drastically from a mere housewife by receiving the highest education.

Soviet Women and Family:

The principles on which the family is built as the primary cell of a socialist society is reaffirmed in the fundamentals of legislation of the USSR and the Union Republics on marriage and the family. Art 53 of the 1977, Constitution of the USSR, includes the main provisions regarding the family and marriage. It says that the family enjoys the protection of the State, that husband and wife are completely equal in their family relations. Both partners have equal

36. - "A Few Facts about Soviet Women", International Affairs (Moscow), May 1977, p. 122.

parental rights and bear equal responsibility for the upbringing of their children.³⁷

The size of the Soviet family is quite small. Most of the Soviet families do not have more than two children. The Soviet Government in order to increase the birthrate has encouraged maternity by giving women financial assistance and other facilities. The financial assistance is in the form of allowances paid out of state social insurance funds. This is paid during maternity leave of fifty-six calendar days before and fifty-six days after delivery of the child. Further, a pregnant working woman is also entitled for certain facilities, for example, during the time of her pregnancy she is transferred to an easier job, etc.

Other measures to increase the birth rate include discouraging the use of contraceptives, abortions and divorces. Even unmarried mothers are given right to receive the legislatively stipulated allowance for the maintenance and upbringing of the child she bears, and the right to place her child in children's institution for maintenance and upbringing completely at state expense if the child's father is not established in the statutory way.³⁸

37. Topornin, n. 1, p. 255.

38. "The Law of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of June 27, 1968, On the Approval of the fundamentals of Legislation of the USSR And the Union Republics on Marriage and the family".
Belyakova and others, n. 14, p. 51.

Moreover, Soviet Women are morally encouraged to have more children by giving them honorary titles. Women who have borne and raised 10 children are awarded the honorary title of mother Heroine and given the Order of Mother Heroine. The women who have borne and raised nine, eight and seven children are awarded the Order of Mothers' glory of the First, Second and Third Degrees respectively, and those who have borne and raised six and five children the Motherhood medal of the First and Second Degree respectively. The Mother Heroine title was held by 201,000 Soviet Women till the year 1976.³⁹ This indicates the encouragement to women the Soviet state extends in order to increase the birthrate in the country.

In the Soviet Union every thing possible is done to create conditions enabling women to combine labour in social production and family duties without detriment to their maternal functions. The State has assumed responsibility for the health of the mother and child. Among social measures are paid maternity leave, the special protection of women's labor, the development of the network of children's pre-school institutions, and free medical assistance.

In family relations the Soviet State always protects the rights and interests of women. Wife has equal rights with

39. - "Few facts about Soviet Women", International Affairs (Moscow), May, 1977, p. 126.

her husband. According to the law of the Soviet Union, marriage is contracted at a state registrar's office and it is registered both in the interests of the state and society and of safeguarding the personal and property rights and interests of husbands, wives and children (Art 9). A husband is not entitled, without the consent of his wife, to apply to the court for dissolution of the marriage during the pregnancy of the wife and during one year after a child birth (Art 14).⁴⁰

Upon entering into marriage both husband and wife are entitled to choose the surname of either as their common surname, or either of spouses may retain his or her premarital surname (Art 11). Also women enjoy equal personal and property rights in family relations. Parents enjoy equal rights and bear equal duties in relation to their children in cases where the marriage has been dissolved (Art 18).⁴¹ Thus women's equal rights with men in family relations is one of the most important features of a socialist society.

Regarding the upbringing of children Art 66 of the 1977 constitution of the USSR says that "Citizens of the USSR are obliged to concern themselves with the upbringing of children,

40. "Fundamentals of Legislation of the USSR And the Union Republics on Marriage and the family", July 27, 1968, in L.N. Smirnov, ed; Legislative Acts of the USSR (Moscow, 1983), Book-III, p. 70.

41. Ibid.

to train them for socially useful work, and to raise them as worthy members,⁴² of socialist society. Besides the contribution of the parents in the up bringing of their children, the Soviet state also plays an important role in it. The State role is in the form of numerous state measures in the field of child welfare. A broad network of child care centres has been set up throughout the country. In 1974 some 11 million children attended round-the-clock creches and nursery schools in the towns and villages. In addition, about 5 million children were looked after in seasonal children's institutions. All these institutions are easily accessible, since parents contributes very little towards the upkeep of the children. The amount payable by parents is determined in accordance with family income. Some families primarily large ones, pay nothing at all. Average contributions by parents amount to between 15 and 25 per cent⁴³ of the cost of the child's maintenance. The remainder is paid by the State. In order to provide greater assistance to families in the up-bringing of children, boarding schools, extended-day schools and groups and various outdoor children's centres are being set up.

42. Topornin, n. 1, p. 257.

43. N.A. Kovalsky and Y.P. Blinova, n. 8, p. 56.

Another important measure of the Soviet State for the children is to give them rest and leisure. Their holidays are organized during summer. In 1974, some 20 million children and teenagers⁴⁴ spent their holidays in Young Pioneer and school camps, children's health homes or excursion centres, or were taken by children's institutions to the country-side for their holidays. For the leisure of the children the Soviet state has set up Young Pioneer Palaces and Houses, Young Technicians and Young Naturalists Stations, some parks, theatres and Special libraries for children. All these institutions help the children to reveal and develop their abilities and bring them up in the spirit of humanism and friendship among peoples.

Soviet State measures for the welfare of child and mother were reaffirmed at the 25th party Congress in 1976. It recommended increase in pension benefits for mothers with many children, rise in the allowances for invalid children to be paid regardless of age. Pre-school child-care network was to be expanded. The 25th Party Congress also called for greater opportunities to mothers with children to have a shorter workday, shorter work week, or to work at home.⁴⁵

44. Ibid., p. 57.

45. Twenty-Fifth CPSU Congress: Documents And Resolutions (Delhi, 1976), pp. 216, 217.

Besides the state measures to enable women to combine their working life with household duties, the Soviet Government has seen that certain other facilities are given to them in order to lighten their house work. A broad net work of cheap canteens, snack bars, restaurants, cafes and various other public catering establishments selling ready-to-eat or over-ready foods has been set up. Also in order to develop public utilities for the benefit of the family, the Ministry for Public Utilities has created in each republic a network of laundries, repairs and sewing workshops, dry cleaners, points from which household equipment can be hired, at your-service agencies, etc.

Other steps taken by the Soviet Government to lighten their housework is by giving them good living houses. The year 1974 saw the construction of 2,250,000 modern flats and private houses. Over 11 million people moved into these new houses.⁴⁶ This has contributed to the lightening of women's housework because they now have good living accommodation with all the modern conveniences - an up-to-date kitchen, central heating, gas, electricity, running water, plumbing etc.

46. Ibid., p. 60.

Inspite of all the above mentioned measures taken by the Soviet State to protect and develop women's rights which have enabled them to combine their household duties with their working life, there are several contradictions between their role as housewives and workers which are still awaiting a satisfactory solution.

CHAPTER IV

ROLE DILEMMA OF SOVIET WOMEN;
PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

CHAPTER - IV

ROLE DILEMMA OF SOVIET WOMEN: PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

Nowhere has the emancipation of women been as rapidly promoted as in the Soviet Union. Communism has given women full legal equality with men and successfully integrated them into the production process. However, it has not been able to fully free them from the dual burden of housewife and worker.

The socialist system has gone a long way towards emancipating women by liberating them from age-old slavery and oppression. Illiteracy and the occupational backwardness of women have been eliminated, as also discrimination against female labor and other consequences of the dominance of capitalism. Women participate in gainful socialist employment along with men. In the USSR, women comprise more than 50 per cent of all professional and para-professional work force with higher and secondary education. During the Soviet period, women's political and civic activity has risen beyond measure and the intellectual life of women has been enriched.

Yet their largescale employment in industry, agriculture and professions has not eliminated the contradiction between women's activity in their occupation and their social role as wives and mothers. In this connection, one often hears about a second workday,

because the main burden of the household work rests on the shoulders of women. According to a survey conducted in Moscow, Leningrad, Novosibirsk, Minsk, Uzhgorod and Pskov, working women get one-half to one third less free time than is available to men. This figure, however varies substantially according to the level of public consumer service facilities, as for example, between Leningrad and Novosibirsk.¹

This contradiction results in serious losses to society in the ethical, social, demographic and economic spheres. It has been observed that technical progress will erase the differences between "men's" work and "women's" work. To some extent this is true. Women are better educated than men. The average educational level of boys engaged in production work is 8.8 grades, while that of girls is 9.4 grades. However, the relatively higher level of education is not always used sensibly to women's advantage as 9 per cent of the surveyed women were found to be working on low grade maintenance jobs and 11 per cent were working as farmers inspite of having secondary education.²

Even women with more education, longer experience at a single enterprise and greater vocational stability often lag behind

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1. Problemy byta, braka i semi'i, compiled by N.Solov'ev, (Vilnius, 1970), p. 9.
 2. D.N.Karpukhin and A.B. Sheteiner, "Women's Work and work by women", Ekonomika i organizatsia promyshlennovo proizvodstva (Moscow), no.3, May-June 1978, pp. 36-47, in (The Current Digest of the Soviet Press, (Ann Arbor, Michigan) Vol.XXX, no. 31, 30 August 1978, p. 8, hereafter CDSP).

men in their skill level. In most branches of industry women tend to cluster in low-level jobs and are not promoted as rapidly as men. It cannot be considered normal that women workers remain in the first job category three times longer than men, in the second category twice as long and in the third category 50 per cent longer. Women work in first category jobs, on an average, for 4.6 years, while men remain at that level for only 1.5 years.³

Moreover, even though the Communist Party is committed to female emancipation - a policy which has unquestionably improved the lot of Soviet Women in many spheres - the leadership of CPSU itself is dominated by males. True, women representatives of the Supreme Soviet account for a third of its strength, but in Politbureau which is the apex body in the CPSU hierarchy they are not at all represented.⁴ In the Soviet Union, where women make such a sizeable contribution to the national economy, their absence in the top political circles is quite noticeable.⁵ It is therefore, understandable that the persistent and marked numerical disadvantage experienced by women in the party adversely affects their overall status in the society.

In view of the above fact, women have less opportunity to develop their personality through a meaningful participation in

3. Ibid.

4. Patriot (New Delhi), 9 December 1979.

5. Lotta Lenon, "Women in USSR", Problems of Communism (Washington, D.C), Vol.XX, July-August 1970, p. 49.

civic and cultural life of the country. Also they have been found to be enjoying less opportunities to upgrade their work skills and for displaying initiative and inventiveness at their work places and cases discrimination in pay have also come to light. Women at many enterprises earn less, on the average than men on account of their inferior work skills.

The following solutions have been suggested to resolve the problems arising out of the role dilemma of Soviet women by Soviet and Western sociologists, experts, ethnographers and demographers:

- a) One way to raise women's skills is to guarantee opportunities for study and advancement to women who have worked for three years in the first skill category, four years in the second and five years in the third. Women with children should be offered special benefits, such as the right to paid study during work time.⁶
- b) Enterprises and industries should draw up a list of jobs for which women would be given preference in employment. Women should be freed from heavy manual work.
- c) The system of vocational and technical education is not doing enough to train female workers. At present the plan targets for admission of girls to vocational - technical schools are inadequate. In recent years, only some 30 per cent of the youngster

6. D.N.Karpukhin and A.B. Sheteiner, "Women's Work and Work by Women", Ekonomika i Organizatsia Promyshlennogo proizvodstva, no. 3, May-June 1978, pp. 36-47, in (CDSP, Vol.XXX, no. 31, 1978, p.8).

enrolled in city vocational- technical schools and fewer than 10 per cent of those in rural schools were girls.⁷ The optional ratio between boys and girls admitted to such schools should be based on the percentage of women employed in the given industry.

d) Long-range plans should be developed for upgrading the qualifications of women workers and production training for women must be improved. At present, even after they complete advanced training courses women are promoted less often than men. Special mention should be made in the constitution about women's considerable involvement in science, education, public-health and politics.

e) For an effective political participation of women in larger numbers, the CPSU must encourage women to participate in the decision-making process with a sense of involvement and commitment. Men in power must help women to raise their voice and extend a helping hand to societal progress. This for sure would help promote the participation of a workforce constituting more than half the population for an overall development of the country.

2. In principle socialist society opposes the social inequality of women. Women in the Soviet Union as some Soviet commentators say are more equal than men.⁸ But in practice

7. Ibid.

8. Promilla Kalhan, "More Equal than Men?", Hindustan Times (Delhi), 17 September 1975.

traditions are still quite strong and they impede an equitable division of family labor and responsibilities between the sexes. The expansion of employment for women, no doubt makes them economically self-sufficient but at the other end they are burdened with multiple responsibilities like child-rearing and household work. In a socialist society like the USSR the State is supposed to give considerable aid to women in the rearing of children. In 1975, 11.5 million children were enrolled in pre-school institutions. Parents pay only 1/5 of the cost of maintaining children in day nurseries and kindergartens.⁹

But while the state can provide a wide array of consumer and cultural services, it cannot take over all household and motherhood responsibilities a considerable share of which must be borne by the parents. Much of the inequality in the division of labour between sexes occurs here. Although men and women have equal rights, the responsibilities are not always divided equitably. Women have a much longer total working day - their jobs plus housework. This means that they have no free time.

Soviet women generally lead a tiring life. Very few part-time jobs are available and they have to do the housework, bring up the children, and spend long hours queuing and shopping. Soviet men are not liberal in their attitudes. Population experts have

9. M.Ya Sonin, "Equal Rights Unequal Burdens," "Ekonomika i Organizatsia promyshlennogo proizvodstva, no. 3, May-June, pp. 5-18 (CDSF, Vol. XXX, no. 30, 23 August, 1978, p.3).

calculated that most women besides their jobs are compelled to work four to six hours a week at home, while men work about 50 hours a week Soviet women work 80.¹⁰

Women are unable to perform to the full the functions of training children and monitoring their behaviour, which results in a state of partial lack of supervision of children even in families with both parents present, thus adversely affecting the general level of upbringing in the family. One way to rectify the situation is to prepare men for family life and train them for what may be called physical labour in the family. A change in men's attitude with regard to traditional division of labour ("Public" Man "Private" woman) should be the call of the day.

Another solution is to draw children into the household work. While giving instructions in the labor skills, pre-school institutions and schools should pay more attention to housework, in order to help socialize them, bridging the gap between traditional "Male" and "female" sex role. This would not only help to make children industrious, disciplined and scientific but also would do much to ease women's burden at home.

The differences between the social roles taken by men and women are largely determined by differences in upbringing and vocational training starting at a very early age. These patterns

10. Times (London), 30 December 1980.

arose ages ago, took roots and came to be considered natural. It is highlighted by the fact that women play multiple roles in the face of a single role played by their counterparts.¹¹

3. Work schedules also deserve attention. The five-day work week has made possible a considerable improvement in working and recreational conditions. However, this innovation has added to women's multifarious problems. Evening shifts end late, at times when there is no public transportation to take women home and inconvenient schedules often prevent husbands and wives from spending their days off together.¹²

Further, the physical and mental fatigue of women impairs the psychological atmosphere in the family, the "general tone" of its life, gives rise to conflicts and disputes between spouses, reduces the family's capacity to resist forces tending to pull it apart, and is one of the indirect causes of divorce.

In an average Russian family, the mother spends less and less time with her children as she is often exhausted after the day's toil. Family instability is increasing on account of emotional incompatibility between husbands and wives. Therefore, to bolster the role of women as wives and mothers and to encourage more stable families husbands and wives must spend a considerable period of time with each other.

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11. M.Ya Sonin, "Equal Rights Unequal Burdens," Ekonomika i organizatsia Promyshlennovo proizvodstva, no. 3, May-June, (CJSP, Vol. XXX, no. 30, 23 August 1978, p. 3).
12. Ibid.

The process of abolishing night shifts for women (particularly for those with pre-school children) in industry should be accelerated except for those branches where round the clock operations are required by the technology or are essential to serve the population (medical care, communications, transport, etc.). Moreover, husbands and wives should preferably put in the same industrial set up in order to enhance rapport among them.

4. In as much as there has been a decline in modern society in economic incentive for having children and concern for them, and motherhood is presently stimulated primarily by factors in the moral realm, the contradiction between occupational and familial roles of the women is one of the factors exerting a negative influence upon the birth rate, particularly in those cities and republics where regular employment of women is most prevalent (Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, Sverdlovsk, the Baltic Republics, the Ukraine, the Russian Republic, Belorussia and Georgia).

As a result of differences in birth rates between the various Soviet Republics and inadequate mobility of labour the role dilemma has been sharpened in the Soviet Eastern Republics where the birth rates are generally much higher than in the European parts of the USSR. On account of lack of adequate public consumer services and pre-school institutions it is difficult to draw women into the process of production. In the European parts, on the contrary, lower birth rates are due to stresses generated in the family by increased employment rates among women.

The negative effects of "surplus migration" are being felt in several provinces of the Russian Republics Non-Black - Earth Zone. In some of them as persons of child bearing age have left the area, there have been more deaths than births for several years now. In Kalinin Province, rural population in the 20 to 29 age group fell from 153,000 in 1959 to 57,000 in 1970, and in Novgorod Province decline was from 78,000 to 26,000.¹³

In the same period, the number of people in the 60 to 69 group increased by 5 per cent to 7 per cent in these two provinces. The heavy outflow of young people leads to the "ageing" of the rural population. Incidentally, higher labor productivity in agriculture's communal sector is conducive to rural to urban migration, but in the Non-Black-Earth Zone, farm workers are leaving faster than the increase in farm machinery which reduces the need for manpower.¹⁴

Although rural to urban migration is largely inevitable, these contradictions in economic and demographic processes should be removed by the gradual effacing of the economic, cultural and social differences between city and countryside.

In future the bulk of the USSR's population will continue the trend toward lower birth rate, and families with one or two children will be the norm. Hence, reproduction below replacement level is not excluded in the long-term future. The consequences of

13. D.Valentei, A.Kvasha and V. Sysenko, "Socio-economic problems of Demographic Policy". Planovoye Khozvaistvo, no. 11, November 1976, pp. 92-99, (GDSP, Vol. XXIX, no.3, 16 February 1977, p. 15).

14. Ibid.

this tendency are already having some economic impact. The absolute decrease in number of births (beginning about 1960) will eventually mean a drop in labor resources.

One consequence of reproduction below replacement level - the rise in the percentage of elderly people is more intensive in some republics than in others. According to the 1970 census, the proportion of those 60 and older was 16.8 percentage in Estonia, 9.7 percentage in Moldavia and 8% in Azarbaidzhan. In 1970 it was 19.7% in rural Novgorod province and 22.5% in Pskov province.¹⁵

The socio-economic consequences of reduced reproduction over an extended period of time as a result of the drop in the birth rate are rather complex. Such consequences take the form of demographic accelerated ageing process and related problems, new difficulties in supplying the national economy with manpower resources, and many others. On a historical plane, a very low birth rate is undesirable to society. From this follows the necessity of implementing a broad complex of measures aimed at forming the "ideal" as to the number of children in the family, which would correspond to the interests and possibilities both of the individual family as well as of society as a whole. One of the directions in such a policy would be creation of conditions enabling the woman successfully to combine work with rearing her children.¹⁶ Population growth

15. Ibid.

16. - "A Demographic Problem : Female Employment and Birthrate", Soviet Review (White Plains, New York), Vol.XI, no.1, Spring 1970, pp. 79-80.

in the USSR involves the construction of new schools and child-care facilities and the training of teachers, pediatricians, midwives and gynaecologists. Because of the great variations in population patterns, these outlays - part of the demographic investment - cannot be distributed evenly by region. The distribution of funds for these purposes among the union republics requires constant reviews.

As a matter of public policy, social measures are called for to bring about expanded reproduction and regulate it. The optimal birthrate could range from an average of 4 children per woman to 2.3 - 2.4 children, depending on the structure of local population. A coordinated set of economic, legal and socio-psychological measures should be designed to influence the birth rate. Regional variations must be considered, and it must be remembered that such a policy will take years, possibly decades to produce results.

One economic measure, could be family allowances, i.e. direct cash payments to families for the first, second and third child (combined with economic aid to large and low-income families). The allowance should partially or fully compensate the family for the cost of child care. For the first, child compensation could be substantially less than the family's expenses, but for the second and third, children payments should be close to actual per-child costs. Efforts should be made to

expand the network of child-care institutions, improve the services they provide and consumer services in general, and give financial aid to newly weds. The mass media should be used to propagandize the advisability of a certain number of children per family, stressing that this will benefit both society and the family itself.

As the factors affecting the formation of various population patterns in the USSR are complex and diverse, only a comprehensive, long-term demographic programme will be effective. Such a programme should include measures for planning population migration and distribution, scientifically valid socio-demographic forecasts and stepped up research on population problems. Demographic factors must be given full consideration in economic planning at all levels. The long-term plan for the country's socio-economic development should include a comprehensive population programme. Demographic data are becoming increasingly important in regional economic plans and in cities' general plans. However, the methodology for handling these data is inadequate. Population problems must be analysed carefully and thoroughly, and the network of demographic research organisations must be reinforced.

5. According to demographic statistics recently published by the USSR Central Statistical Administration, there were 861,000 divorces in the USSR in 1976, this was 78,000 more than in 1975

and over three times as many as in 1960, when 270,000 divorces were reported.¹⁷ In 1977 there were 898,000 divorces in the USSR.¹⁸ In 1960 there were 104 divorces per 1,000 marriages, in 1975 288 per 1,000 and in 1976, 332 per 1,000. So, now there is one divorce for every three marriages.¹⁹

Studies show that one-third of divorces are of those couples who have been married for less than a year and another one-third are of couples who have been married for one to five years. Hence, it is apparent that divorce is largely a problem of young families.²⁰ However, according to A. Korolev it would be wrong to infer from the tripled divorce rate in the Soviet Union, that the Soviet family is threatened with disintegration. One trend in recent Soviet marriages is the declining average age of the young spouses. One bride among four belongs to age group upto 20 years. The average age for girls entering wedlock had come down to 22-23 years in 1970-77 from 27 in 1960. Naturally, the young divorced spouses whose marriages generally break up on account of inexperience remarry.²¹ One of the reasons for

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17. V. Pervidentsev, "Incompatibility", Literaturnaya Gazeta (Moscow), February 15, p. 13, (CDSP, Vol. XXX, no. 7, 15 March 1978, p. 1).
18. V. Pervidentsev, "Two in the Family Boat", Yunost (Moscow), no.8, August, pp. 67-72 (CDSP, Vol. XXXI, no.45, 5 December 1979, p. 15).
19. V. Pervidentsev, "Incompatibility," Literaturnaya Gazeta, February 15, p.13, (CDSP, Vol. XXX, no. 7, 15 March 1978, p.1).
20. Tribune (Chandigarh), 15 February 1983.
21. Iu. A. Korolev, Brak i Razvod. Sovremennye Tendentsii (Moscow, 1978), p. 280.

rising divorce rate alongside achievement of economic independence by women who constitute 51 per cent of the Soviet work force is the rising expectation of Soviet women from their husbands on account of their raised educational and cultural standard.²²

An important reason for divorce in Soviet Union is the drunkenness or alcoholism of husbands. More than half of all divorce suits (61%) are initiated by wives and in nearly half of these cases (47%) drunkenness or alcoholism is given as the main reason for divorce. However, drunkenness and divorce both stem from other causes that are common to both.²³

The difficulties that the young Soviet families are experiencing essentially lie in the fact that they are going through a period of transition from patriarchal family, in which the husband's supremacy was complete and unconditional, to a "biarchal" family, in which husband and wife enjoy equality. This transition is difficult, since men do not want to "yield their positions" and women do not want to reconcile themselves to the former inequality. Women are rebelling and for obvious reasons.

The equality of rights between men and women that was proclaimed in the Soviet Union more than 60 years ago has led to women's equality with men in social production, whereas previously only the man, the husband, was employed and was the only bread-winner, and the wife was a housewife, who shouldered all concern for home and children, now the wife is also a bread-winner on par with the husband.

22. Ibid., pp. 153-54

23. V. Pervidentsev, "Incompatibility", Literaturnaya Gazeta, February, p. 13 (CDSF, Vol. XXX, no. 7, 15 March 1978, p. 1).

One must admit that Soviet women have made very effective use of the broad opportunities to obtain education. Statistics, show that young women are better educated than men of the same age, even if one considers external indicators above - years of schooling, diploma, etc. This means, that women make higher intellectual and moral demands on their chosen partners. It is evidently no mere coincidence that divorce increased sharply just when the Soviet young people's educational level was rising rapidly and women were achieving educational superiority.

From a situation of equality, the young wife land in a family in which her husband and her in-laws frequently expect the wife voluntarily to assume the duties of a servant and do all the housework entirely by herself. If a wife agrees to this, the result is that she has two full work days - on the job and at home - every day and practically does not have a single free minute, while her young husband (if he is not combining work and study) doesn't know what to do with his free time - how to "kill" it. So he resorts to pass-time by drinking, which often results in marital discord. The husband and wife often determine domestic duties virtually in open combat. The wife taking the offensive and the husband defending himself supported by traditions that say house work degrades a man.

Notwithstanding the vehement offensive waged by young wives, there are still great vestiges of inequality within the family.

N. Solovyev, a specialist in family, estimates the husband's work week (on the job and at home) to be 50 working hours, and wife's 80.²⁴ There is no doubt that women are seriously overburdened, that equality does not yet exist in all families and that women do not want to (and cannot !) put with this.

The way to normalize family relations is the way of equality. Only then will the problems of relations between spouses and the problem of strengthening the family will be solved, and only then will the tasks of reducing the number of divorces and their negative consequences be accomplished. "It would be desirable for all school curriculums to include a course of training for personal life: to teach young people to manage the family budget and household affairs and maintain good relations within the family".²⁵ All the upbringing of the younger generation should be carried out in the spirit of equality between the sexes - not only equal rights in public life and at work, but actual equality in every family.

6. Some women resolve this contradiction by abstaining from regular employment. According to the 1970 census, over 10,000,000 women of working age, a considerable portion of whom have been trained in employable skills, engage only in housekeeping and care

24. Ibid., p. 3.

25. Ibid.,

for their children.²⁶ Thus, the funds expended in teaching skills to these women are not fully recovered by society. The level of these losses, their regular appearance and the threatened rise in the number of housewives urgently demand that immediate and effective measures be taken to overcome contradictions between the role of women in the family and their role as regularly employed persons in contemporary Soviet society.

The measures for improving women's working and living conditions may be summed up as follows:

The introduction of partially paid leave for working women to enable them to care for children under the age of one year;

The creation of greater opportunities for mothers to work part-time and at home;

the expansion of the network of pre-school institutions and extended-day schools and groups;

the construction of day nurseries and kindergartens for 2.5 to 2.8 million children;

an increase in the number of young pioneer camps; and the creation of conditions for reducing the amount of time spent on housework.

26. A.G. Kharchav and S.I. Golod, "Recommendations of the Symposium on: Women's Employment and the Family", Soviet Review (White Plains, New York), Vol. XIV, no.4, Winter 1973-74, p. 57.

These measures should help solve such problems as the higher total work load that women bear as compared to men (on the job and at home), the inadequate level of mechanization and automation, and the continued existence of strenuous working conditions and night shifts for women workers in some branches of economy.

CONCLUSION

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It is clearly evident from the foregoing survey and analysis that women have played an increasingly active role in the socialist and communist construction of the society in the USSR. The women's question as interpreted by Marxism-Leninism is an inalienable part of the general social problem, the solution of which is linked with the revolutionary reconstruction of the society. The revolutionary transformation taking place in the society as a whole, has resulted in the changing role of the family related to its numerical size, structure and functions.

Marxism - Leninism emphasises that women's role and position in society depends on their participation in socially productive labour, creating the real basis for true equality of women with men in all spheres of life by ensuring them economic independence and raising their cultural level. Social labour with relations of social equality and collectivism stimulates the professional activity of women enabling them to develop and rise to civic and political maturity for the socialist and communist construction of the society.

During the pre-revolutionary period, the Soviet women had a low status devoid of any legal economic, socio-political

and educational rights. Notwithstanding its terrible exploitation of women's labour industrial capitalism at the same time creates objective conditions for the eventual emancipation of women under socialism. Initially due to strong remnants of the feudal past it was a difficult task to draw women into the various fields of social production. The actual transformation of women's social status took place only against the background of socialist revolution. The fulfilment of social and legal guarantee proclaiming equality of women and the creation of best possible conditions for enabling them to harmoniously combine their role in society and family formed an essential element of the Soviet policy.

Thus steps were taken by the Soviet State and the government to assist motherhood by implementing various measures to involve women in the process of production, administration, in cultural life and in all fields of social activity for the new socialist reconstruction of the society. The first Soviet decrees and laws abolished all restrictions on the rights of women and laid the foundation for their legal equality as the first step towards emancipation of women. The second step for the social emancipation of women and their equal rights with men was directed towards their economic independence enhancing their social status in family and providing them a better living standard.

To socialise the national economy, the Soviet State carried out important socio-economic and organisational measures to draw women in all spheres of social production and activity by creating conditions favourable for developing their abilities and talents to the full. Thus the Soviet power successfully tackled the question of the conversion of the legal to economic equality.

The vitality of women's personality and their actual equality with men are determined by their active and creative participation in production and in other spheres of public life, including their role in family. Limitation of women's activity to domestic functions results in the deformation of their personality. Likewise refusal to perform family roles for the sake of professional and socio-political interests, impoverishes a women's personality. Therefore, the formation of a woman's personality is one of the principal objective of a developed socialist society. It includes her active participation in all spheres of life including family life which combines housekeeping, childrearing, education, organizational and executive functions, all differing in character and content.

Division of domestic labour has promoted the participation of women in social production. Work for women is an essential pre-requisite for equality of sexes. It is also conducive to the desired communist upbringing of the children in state sponsored

childcare institutions. The leading trend of the Soviet family structure, its smaller size and transition from patriarchal to biarchal family have helped in increasing the equality of roles between the two sexes.

In the recent years, Soviet women have been more involved in socio-political activities than in the past, although extent of their proportionate share in senior and responsible positions is still much less.

The scientific and technological revolution which has caused a deep qualitative change in the nature of work and resulted in rise in income and better health protection is a crucial factor in successfully combining their work and family duties. Various special Soviet legislations, in addition to general labour protection standards, provide additional guarantees protecting the labour of women.

The Trade Unions and factory management have special clauses envisaging the improvement of women's working and living conditions, expansion of child care institutions, their training and transference to higher skilled jobs, provision of relatively higher and well-remunerated jobs. Other progressive forms of communal services are gradually replacing the housework steadily expanding social forms of servicing. An indicator of women's heightened role in public life is their fruitful participation in trade union activity. Trade unions are an excellent school for women to acquire knowledge of economic and social management.

The high employment rate of Soviet women and their overburdening with work, psychological tensions and the difficulty in management of household affairs has however resulted in fatherless and functionally motherless families giving rise to a major social problem. It has further sharpened the role dilemma of Soviet women making it difficult from them to cope up with their dual responsibility at home and work place. A number of state and government measures have been devised to support and enforce family as an institution. The Soviet family policy has been somewhat cyclical in nature changing from radical to more conservative. The ideological orthodoxy has been suitably diluted taking cognisance of the concrete realities. Soviet demographic policy which has an important bearing on the women's question has undergone many changes over the years. Until 1935 it was determined by the ideology of freedom and equality for women, by open recognition of difficult material conditions, and by the hope that the state would somehow be able to take up the task of child-rearing. After 1935 the desire to halt the downward trend in the birth rate and the decision to rehabilitate the legitimacy of parenthood and family life became important.

The Soviet State assumes the responsibilities for caring of the mother and child. The realisation of the social programme advanced by the 24th and 25th Congress of the CPSU, is of

particular importance as it aims at raising their material status and increasing the household amenities at their disposal, thus limiting the time expended on the house work.

Today the Soviet women are educated and intensively engaged in labour force. They are more politically involved and are free to choose their marriage partners. However, exploitation can occur even in a society without private ownership of the means of production. Social disorders, rapid changes and economic hardships have played a highly functional role in shaping the status of women in society and family. Urbanisation and industrialisation have resulted in the reduction of the size of the Soviet family and changes in its composition. With several functions taken over by larger economic and social organisations, the role dilemma connected with the separation of workplace and home has been further aggravated. In, one sense, the Soviet women are far from equality because they have to shoulder the responsibilities of housewives and mother in addition to their wider social obligations.

Thus extensive participation of women in socially useful labour confronts the Soviet State with the task of creating conditions for combining their work with family and civic duties. Despite various efforts made by the Soviet government in this direction, the contradiction inherent in the dual responsibilities of women to combine their role of wives and workers in national economy is far from being fully resolved.

The general experience of women in the Soviet society and family has been that of diversity of social organisation of family and their adjustment to the changing pattern of family in the rapidly evolving society. Changes like low birth rate, increase in marital equality and discord, rise in educational and cultural standard have been overshadowed by the struggle to maintain the family life intact. The slowness of family to change is indicative of mainly indirect mediations through economic, political and other systems of outer society to alter it. In the realm of sex roles the legal and ideological changes in the status of women outside the family have their repercussion inside it too.

Nevertheless, the systematic involvement of women in socially organised professional labour ever since the establishment of Soviet power has been accompanied not only by changes in the conditions, character and substance of this labour, but also by an enhanced level of women's general and professional knowledge and the growth of their self-awareness.

The experience of USSR shows that a society which has created the necessary socio-economic conditions is capable of successfully dealing with the most complex problems of the utmost realisation of the potential of women's personality. The Soviet State makes every effort to guide and regulate the social process

which promotes the harmonious development of woman's personality and enhance her professional and public activity. With the formation of socialist society and the rise of socialist production a majority of women have turned to professional activity to satisfy their urge to participate in socially useful labour and to be in a working collective. Thus work for Soviet women is no longer mainly a material requirement but also a spiritual need. This change in the sequence of motives encouraging women to take part in production and socio-political activity shows that she is acquiring a new positive attitude to labour. Thus in developed socialist society considerable changes have taken place in the family and everyday life. Now, besides the reproductive function the family's main function is the rearing and moulding of the new man.

Yet there exists a basic role contradiction for women in society and family irrespective of the social system. Socialism, as practised in the Soviet union has, however, made a distinct contribution towards resolving the role contradiction of Soviet women by implementation of various measures for promoting equality of sexes not only in the legal sense but in broader economic and socio-political aspects as well. Despite the great advance made in the direction of bridging up Soviet women's role dilemma through effective State measures, certain contradictions between the family and societal role still continue. Nevertheless there exists a much greater possibility of resolving the Soviet women's role dilemma under socialism than under capitalism.

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