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## **WOMEN'S ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AND THE CONCEPT OF HUMAN DIGNITY: A SOCIO- PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH**

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### **Abstract**

This article examines the relationship between women's economic activity and the concept of human dignity from a socio-philosophical perspective. The study analyzes women's participation in economic processes as a multidimensional phenomenon associated with freedom, self-realization, social inclusion, justice, and sustainable development. Particular attention is paid to the experience of Uzbekistan, where enhancing women's economic opportunities has become one of the key priorities of social modernization and human-centered reforms. Employing ontological, axiological, and praxeological approaches, the research investigates the philosophical foundations of women's economic activity and its contribution to the realization of human dignity. The findings indicate that women's economic participation not only strengthens economic development but also expands individual capabilities, promotes social justice, and contributes to social stability. A conceptual model explaining the interaction between economic activity and human dignity is proposed.

**Keywords:** Women's economic activity, human dignity, social philosophy, gender equality, social development, economic participation, social justice, human capabilities, New Uzbekistan, sustainable development.



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### **Introduction**

The transformation of contemporary societies is closely associated with expanding opportunities for women's participation in economic, political, and social life. Over the past decades, women have become increasingly active contributors to entrepreneurship, innovation, labor markets, and community development. Consequently, women's economic activity has emerged as one of the key indicators of inclusive development and social progress.

Modern socio-philosophical discourse increasingly recognizes that economic activity should not be interpreted solely through the lens of productivity or income generation. Rather, it should be understood as a process through which individuals realize their capabilities, exercise their freedoms, and affirm their dignity.

The concept of human dignity occupies a central place within contemporary philosophical thought. It serves as a normative foundation for human rights, equality, and social justice. In this context, women's economic activity acquires particular significance because it directly influences opportunities for self-realization, independence, and participation in public life.

President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev repeatedly emphasizes that ensuring human dignity and creating equal opportunities for women constitute fundamental objectives of national development [1, pp. 12–15].

The reforms implemented within the framework of New Uzbekistan have significantly expanded opportunities for women's education, entrepreneurship, employment, and leadership. These developments have generated new conditions for strengthening both individual dignity and social cohesion.

Despite substantial progress, scholarly research often focuses primarily on economic indicators while paying insufficient attention to the philosophical dimensions of women's economic participation. Therefore, a deeper socio-philosophical analysis is required.

The purpose of this article is to examine women's economic activity through the prism of human dignity and to identify the ontological, axiological, and praxeological foundations of this relationship.



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## Materials and Methods

This study is based on an interdisciplinary methodological framework integrating social philosophy, sociology, economics, and gender studies.

The following methods were employed:

- ontological analysis;
- axiological approach;
- praxeological methodology;
- dialectical method;
- comparative analysis;
- systems approach.

The theoretical foundation includes the works of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, Uzbek scholars A. Erkayev, N. Juraev, B. Ganiyev, M. Bekmurodov, as well as international scholars such as Amartya Sen, Martha Nussbaum, John Rawls, and Pierre Bourdieu.

The legal framework includes:

- Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan (2023);
- Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men”;
- United Nations Sustainable Development Goals;
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

The methodological assumption of the study is that women’s economic activity should be understood not only as an economic phenomenon but also as a socio-philosophical process contributing to the realization of human dignity.

## Results

**Ontological Foundations of Women’s Economic Activity.** Ontology concerns the nature of existence and human reality. From this perspective, economic activity represents an essential dimension of human existence because it enables individuals to interact with society, realize their potential, and shape their life trajectories.

Women's economic activity acquires particular ontological significance due to its role in overcoming historical limitations on participation and self-expression.



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The findings indicate that women's economic activity is closely associated with:

- self-realization;
- personal autonomy;
- social recognition;
- creative expression;
- responsibility toward family and society.

According to Amartya Sen, development should be understood as the expansion of substantive freedoms that allow individuals to pursue lives they value [2, p. 36]

Women's participation in economic life directly contributes to such freedoms by creating opportunities for independent decision-making and personal growth.

**Economic Participation as a Form of Human Existence.** Economic activity functions as more than a means of earning income. It also represents a form of social existence through which individuals express their abilities and engage with the broader community.

Women who participate actively in economic processes frequently assume multiple roles:

- entrepreneurs;
- professionals;
- innovators;
- educators;
- community leaders.

Consequently, economic activity becomes a mechanism through which human dignity is realized in everyday life.

**Human Dignity as the Philosophical Foundation of Economic Participation.**

Human dignity may be defined as the intrinsic worth possessed by every individual regardless of social status, gender, ethnicity, or economic position.

The concept includes:

- freedom;
- equality;
- respect;



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- recognition;
  - participation;
  - self-determination.

According to Martha Nussbaum, dignity requires the development of capabilities enabling individuals to participate fully in social life [3, p. 72].

Economic participation represents one of the most important mechanisms through which such capabilities are developed.

The research demonstrates that women's economic activity strengthens human dignity by:

- enhancing independence;
- increasing social visibility;
- expanding opportunities;
- reducing vulnerability;
- promoting self-confidence.

These factors collectively contribute to individual empowerment and social development.

Axiological Foundations of Women's Economic Activity. Economic Activity as a Value-Oriented Social Practice. The axiological dimension of women's economic activity concerns the values, ethical principles, and social meanings that shape participation in economic processes.

From a socio-philosophical perspective, economic behavior cannot be reduced solely to rational calculations of profit and utility. Human actions are influenced by value systems that determine priorities, motivations, and goals.

Women's economic activity reflects a wide spectrum of values:

- human dignity;
- social responsibility;
- justice;
- independence;
- self-realization;
- solidarity;
- creativity.



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These values shape both individual behavior and collective social outcomes. According to John Rawls, a just society must provide fair opportunities for all individuals to pursue their life plans and participate in social institutions [4, p. 52].

Women's economic activity contributes directly to the realization of such opportunities by reducing structural inequalities and expanding access to resources.

Human Dignity and Economic Freedom. Economic freedom constitutes one of the most important components of human dignity.

Individuals who possess economic autonomy are better positioned to make independent decisions, exercise personal agency, and participate actively in social life.

The findings indicate that economic freedom strengthens human dignity through:

- independent decision-making;
- financial self-sufficiency;
- increased social status;
- enhanced self-confidence;
- broader participation in public life.

President Shavkat Mirziyoyev emphasizes that human dignity is inseparable from the creation of opportunities enabling individuals to realize their potential and improve their quality of life [1, p. 22–24].

In this regard, women's economic activity functions as a practical mechanism for translating dignity into lived social reality.

Economic Thinking and Value Transformation. Contemporary social modernization is accompanied by significant transformations in economic thinking.

Traditional gender roles often associated women primarily with domestic responsibilities. However, modernization processes have gradually redefined social expectations and expanded economic opportunities.

The research reveals that women's economic thinking increasingly incorporates:

- entrepreneurial initiative;
- innovation;
- strategic planning;



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- risk management;
  - long-term investment in human capital.

These transformations reflect broader shifts in societal values and contribute to the emergence of a more inclusive economic culture.

Social Justice and Gender Equality. Equality as a Condition of Human Dignity. One of the key findings of this study is the close relationship between gender equality and human dignity.

Human dignity cannot be fully realized where discriminatory practices restrict access to economic opportunities.

The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan guarantees equal rights and freedoms for all citizens regardless of gender [5, p. 14].

Similarly, the Law “On Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men” establishes legal mechanisms for preventing discrimination and promoting equality.

From a socio-philosophical perspective, equality should not be interpreted merely as formal legal status. Rather, it should involve the creation of substantive opportunities enabling individuals to develop their capabilities.

Amartya Sen argues that genuine equality requires the expansion of real freedoms and opportunities rather than the mere distribution of resources [2, p. 39].

Women’s economic activity contributes significantly to this objective by expanding access to education, employment, entrepreneurship, and leadership.

Social Inclusion and Economic Participation. Economic participation serves as an important mechanism of social inclusion.

Women who engage actively in economic life are more likely to:

- participate in community decision-making;
- contribute to public initiatives;
- support social development programs;
- influence policy processes.

The research indicates that economic inclusion generates positive effects not only for individual women but also for families, communities, and society as a whole.

These effects include:

- reduction of poverty;
- improvement of household welfare;



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- enhancement of educational outcomes;
  - strengthening of social cohesion;
  - promotion of civic engagement.

Consequently, women's economic activity should be regarded as a strategic resource for sustainable development.

### **Discussion**

The Capability Approach and Women's Economic Activity. The findings of this study support the capability approach developed by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum.

According to this perspective, development should be evaluated through people's ability to achieve valuable forms of functioning rather than through economic growth alone.

Women's economic activity contributes to capability expansion by increasing:

- freedom of choice;
- educational opportunities;
- access to resources;
- social participation;
- political engagement.

Thus, economic participation becomes both a means and an outcome of human development.

Social Capital and Economic Empowerment. Pierre Bourdieu's concept of social capital provides additional insight into women's economic activity.

Social capital refers to networks of trust, cooperation, and social relationships that facilitate collective action [6, p. 101].

Women entrepreneurs frequently rely upon social networks to:

- obtain information;
- access financial resources;
- build partnerships;
- develop markets.

The findings demonstrate that social capital plays a crucial role in transforming economic opportunities into sustainable outcomes.



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The Dialectics of Tradition and Modernization. One of the most significant socio-philosophical challenges concerns the relationship between traditional cultural values and women's economic participation.

Some perspectives view modernization as requiring the abandonment of tradition. However, the evidence suggests a more nuanced reality.

In Uzbekistan, women's economic activity increasingly develops through the integration of:

- cultural traditions;
- family values;
- entrepreneurial innovation;
- technological modernization.

This process demonstrates a dialectical relationship between continuity and change. Traditional values such as responsibility, mutual support, and social solidarity continue to influence economic behavior while simultaneously adapting to contemporary conditions.

Women's Economic Activity and Sustainable Development. The research confirms that women's economic participation contributes significantly to sustainable development.

Its impact extends beyond economic indicators and includes:

- social stability;
- poverty reduction;
- human capital development;
- community resilience;
- intergenerational well-being.

Consequently, policies supporting women's economic activity should be regarded as investments in long-term societal development rather than merely labor market interventions.

Conceptual Model. Based on the findings, the following socio-philosophical model is proposed:

Ontological Level

- Human existence;
- Self-realization;
- Freedom;



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- Personal autonomy.

#### Axiological Level

- Human dignity;
- Justice;
- Equality;
- Responsibility.

#### Institutional Level

- Education;
- Legal guarantees;
- Economic opportunities;
- Social support systems.

#### Practical Level

- Employment;
- Entrepreneurship;
- Innovation;
- Community participation.

#### Social Outcome

- Human development;
- Social inclusion;
- Sustainable development;
- Social stability.

This model demonstrates the dynamic interaction between women's economic activity and the realization of human dignity.

### **Conclusion**

The study demonstrates that women's economic activity represents a multidimensional socio-philosophical phenomenon closely connected with the realization of human dignity. The findings confirm that economic participation should not be interpreted solely as a mechanism of income generation but also as an important means of self-realization, freedom, social recognition, and capability development.

From an ontological perspective, women's economic activity functions as a form of human existence through which individuals construct their identities, exercise



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agency, and participate actively in social life. The research indicates that entrepreneurship, employment, and economic initiative provide women with opportunities to realize their creative potential and strengthen their social position.

From an axiological perspective, women's economic activity is grounded in values such as dignity, justice, equality, responsibility, and social solidarity. These values shape economic behavior and contribute to broader processes of social transformation.

The study further reveals that women's economic participation contributes significantly to:

- strengthening human dignity;
- reducing social inequalities;
- promoting social inclusion;
- enhancing economic resilience;
- supporting sustainable development.

The experience of Uzbekistan demonstrates that human-centered reforms aimed at expanding women's opportunities can generate positive outcomes not only for individual women but also for families, communities, and society as a whole.

Consequently, women's economic activity should be regarded as a strategic resource for achieving social modernization, inclusive development, and sustainable social progress.

**Scientific Novelty of the Research.** The scientific novelty of this study is reflected in the following aspects:

1. Women's economic activity is interpreted as a socio-philosophical phenomenon through the categories of ontology, axiology, and praxeology.
2. The relationship between human dignity and women's economic participation is theoretically substantiated.
3. The role of economic activity in the realization of human capabilities and freedoms is analyzed through a socio-philosophical framework.
4. The dialectical interaction between traditional values and women's economic empowerment is conceptualized.



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5. A comprehensive socio-philosophical model linking economic activity, human dignity, and sustainable development is proposed.

**Practical Significance.** The results of this research may be applied in:

- social philosophy and gender studies;
- entrepreneurship education programs;
- public policy development;
- women's empowerment initiatives;
- sustainable development strategies;
- academic research on social modernization.

The conceptual framework developed in this article may also serve as a methodological basis for future studies on economic culture, gender equality, and human-centered development.

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