New Labour Codes of India Professor K D Raju Rajiv Gandhi School of Intellectual Property Law Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur Lecture 24 Equal Remuneration

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Dear students, today we are going to discuss about Equal Remuneration. And Equal Remuneration Act was passed after sometime after our independence, but Equal Remuneration is a concept which was there in the international covenants and also on international law for quite some time from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights itself.

And paying Equal Remuneration irrespective of gender discrimination is considered as a basic human right. And when it comes to the Constitution, our Constitution has enough provisions to provide equality based on gender, irrespective of the fact of gender. So, now, as equal pay for equal work.

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So, today's discussion is on equal pay for equal work or payment of Equal Remuneration.

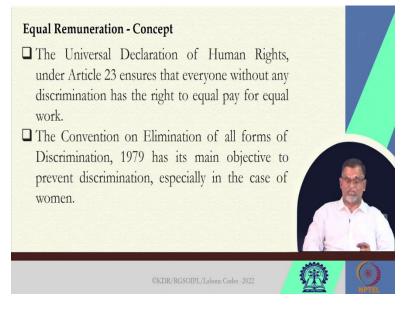
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And Equal Remuneration is a gender bias concept, so, an important ingredient of any civilized society is the popular mindset of people that females should be given a lower salary than the men workers in the same establishment those who do the same work. But it is no longer constrained to be the same mindset, maybe half centuries back. And now, society is developed and also at the international level and national levels efforts have been taken to provide equal pay for equal work through different international instruments as well as domestic legislation.

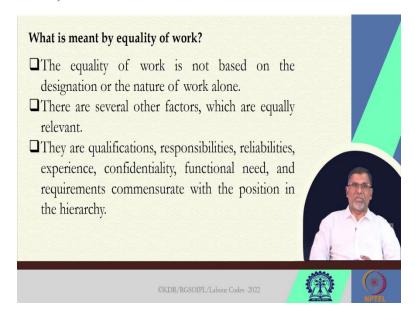
So, we can see that the ILO, International Labour Organization, the first meeting held in 1951, a convention concerning Equal Remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal value has been convened at that point of time. And, even at the beginning from 1919 onwards, the ILO was working on this particular topic continuously for providing equal pay for equal work.

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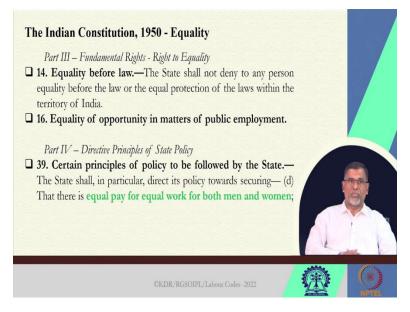
And, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 23 specifically mentions about everyone without any discrimination has the right to equal pay for equal work. So, equal pay for equal work has been considered as a basic human right. The Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination, 1979. So, the main objective is to prevent discrimination, especially, in the case of women.

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So, at the international level, there have enough instruments, which talk about equality of work. So, the equality of work is not actually based on the designation or the nature of work alone. So, the other factors of equality are imbibed into this particular concept based on qualifications, responsibilities and reliabilities, experience, confidentiality, functional need and requirements commensurate with the position in the hierarchy as well as the requirement of the organization.

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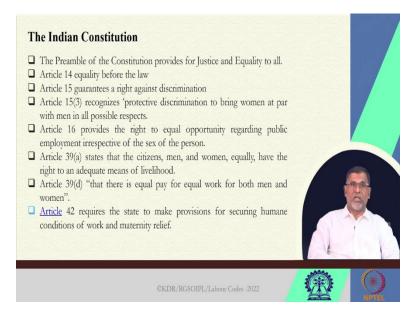


And, we can see that the Indian Constitution talked about, especially these international principles that have been incorporated into our constitution, especially under Part 3 in article 14,

equality before the law. So, the provision clearly provides that, the state shall not deny to any person equality before the law or equal protection of the laws within the territory of India. Other provisions like article 16, which talks about equality of opportunity in matters of public employment.

And the Directive Principles of State Policy, specifically article 39 clearly says that the state shall in particular direct policy towards securing that there is equal pay for equal work for both men and women.

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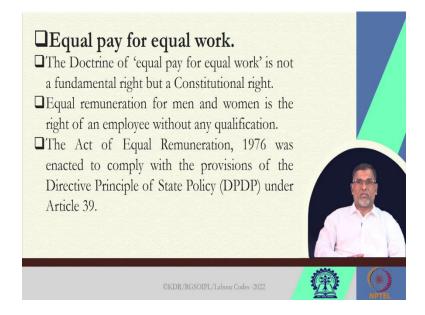


And we also have enacted a law and which we will discuss elaborately later. So, if we look into the Indian constitution, it is not only the specific provisions, but we can find a number of other provisions, including the preamble of the Constitution, which talks about justice and equality for all. Article 14, which we already talked about, and 15 guarantee the right against discrimination. And 15(3) specifically, talks about recognising protective discrimination to bring women at par with men in all possible respects.

And article 16, the right to equal opportunity regarding public employment, irrespective of the sex of the person. Article 39(a) clearly says that the citizens, men and women equally have the right to an adequate means of livelihood. 39(d) which talks about there being equal pay for equal work for both men and women. So, this Directive Principles very clearly talk about the Indian Constitution talks about equal pay for equal work for men and women.

Article 42, requires the state to make certain provisions for securing humane conditions for work and maternity relief. So, we have implemented legislation for equal pay for both men and women, as well as we have legislation for implementing maternity leave as well.

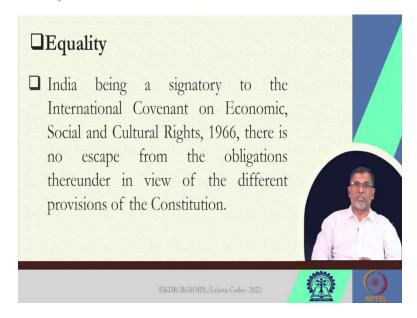
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So, the Doctrine of equal pay for equal work is not a fundamental right, but we can see it is a constitutional right. So, Equal Remuneration for men and women is the right of an employee without any qualification.

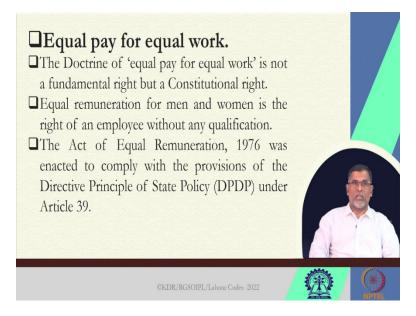
So, the Act, the Equal Remuneration act 1976, was passed in order to incorporate and in order to implement the Directive Principles of state policy under Article 39, which we talked about. So, this legislation in India implemented completely equal pay for equal work or Equal Remuneration for men and women.

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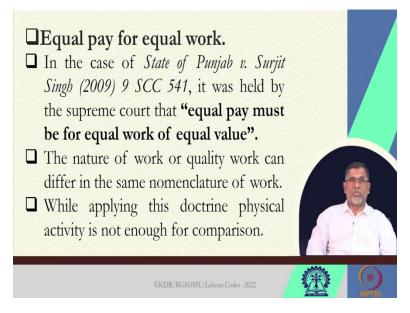
So, many times, the Supreme Court of India has mentioned that India is a signatory to other international conventions like International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966. So, India cannot escape from the obligations under these international instruments, and also the corresponding provisions of the Indian constitution.

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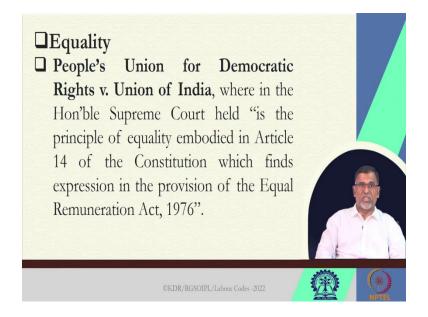
So, when we look into this particular concept, as we already said.

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So, some of the judgments of the Supreme Court very clearly say, what the status is or what is the opinion of the Supreme Court on equal pay for equal work. The case of State of Punjab versus Surjit Singh, was one of the important cases in 2009. So, the Supreme Court held that "equal pay must be for equal work of equal value". And also, the court has the time to explain what you mean by exactly equal pay for equal work. So, the nature of work or quality of work can differ, and the same nomenclature of work can remain. So, when you are applying this particular doctrine physical activity is not enough for comparison.

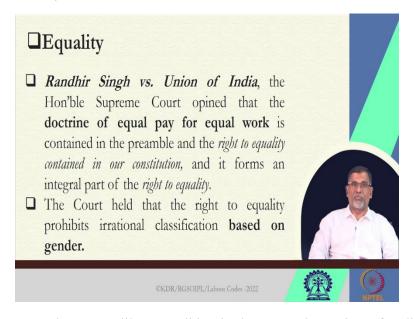
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And other qualifications have to be looked into. One of the important cases is the people's union for democratic rights versus Union of India. The court has very clearly said that it is the principle of equality embodied in article 14 of the Constitution, which finds expression in the provisions of the Equal Remuneration act 1976.

That is why when I said that equal pay for equal work is not a fundamental right, but it is a constitutional right. But the Supreme Court attributed very well that equal pay for equal work is a coronary of article 14. And Supreme Court find that this particular concept of the Equal Remuneration act of 1976 clearly studied the people's union for democratic rights versus union of India.

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If you look into some other cases like Randhir Singh versus the Union of India, the Court has held that the doctrine of equal pay for equal work is contained in the preamble and the right to equality contained in our Constitution. And also, forms an integral part of the right to equality. So, equal pay for equal work is not a standalone prohibition, but it is related to many other portions of the Indian constitution.

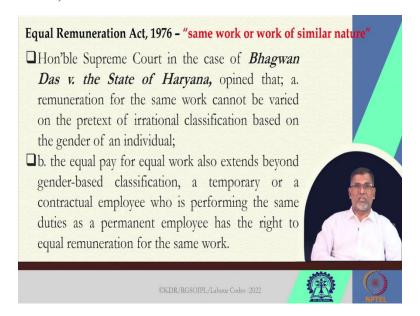
The court held that the right to equality prohibits irrational classification based on gender. And rational class classification based on gender cannot qualify to be passing the test under Article 14 of the Indian constitution.

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And, when it comes to the provision, of the 1976 Act, the objective clearly says, an Act to provide for the payment of Equal Remuneration to men and women workers and the prevention of discrimination on the grounds of sex, against women in the matter of employment and for matters others connected with. So, it clearly says that this Act is going to eliminate all forms of discrimination in with regard to men and women in the case of work, in the case of employment.

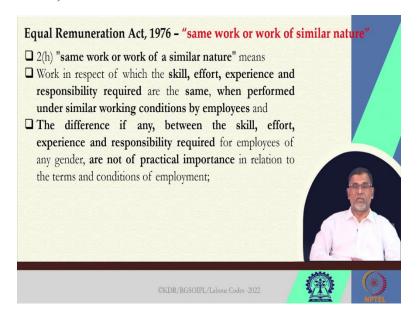
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So, if we look into the interpretation by the Supreme Court again, in the case of Bhagwan Das versus state of Haryana. The court said that the remuneration for the same work cannot be varied

on the pretext of irrational classification. That irrational classification is based on gender and individual. And it is equal pay for work is extend beyond gender classification and temporary and contractual because usually the contractual workers are paid much less than the permanent workers. And the Court said that even contractual employees have the right to get Equal Remuneration for the same work, the permanent employees are doing.

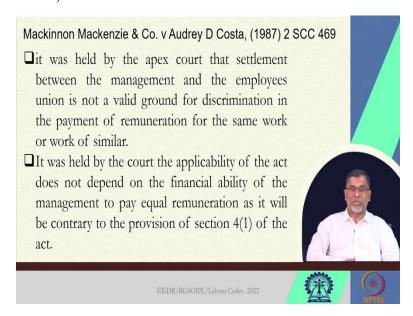
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And when we look into the same work or work of similar nature, what does it mean? So, section 2(h) of the repealed Act says that work in respect of which the skill, effort, experience and responsibility required are the same. So, when performing under similar working conditions by employees, and the difference, if any, between the skill, effort, experience, responsibility required for employees of any gender are not of practical importance in relation to the terms and conditions of employment.

So, the section clearly defines what are the components of the same work or work of a similar nature. So, with regard to skill, with regard to effort, with regard to experience, and with regard to responsibility required. So, the provision is very clear.

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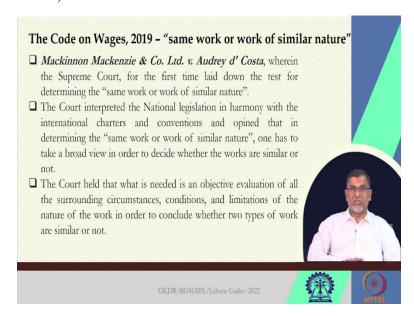


And the jurisprudence, which is through the interpretation by the Supreme Court of India. So, the famous case of Mackinnon Mackenzie and Company verses Audrey D Costa, 1987. The Supreme Court, in this case, looked into the particular case that if this particular provisions of this particular Act can be excluded through an agreement between management and workmen.

So, in this particular case, Supreme Court said that, so, the agreement between management and employees union is not a valid ground for discrimination, especially in payment of remuneration for the same work or work of similar nature, even though there is an agreement between the employer and employee that is invalid under the act.

And the Court said that the applicability of the Act does not depend on the financial ability of the management to pay Equal Remuneration as it will be contrary to the provisions of Section 4(1) of the Act. So, this particular provision if there is an agreement between employer and employee for a reduced, man and woman reduced remuneration, it is going to violate the provisions of this particular Act. And the letter and spirit of the Act is going to be undermined.

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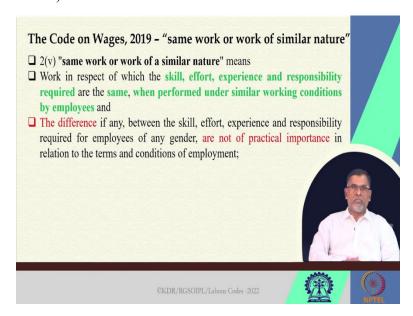


So, we can see the number of other cases, the Supreme Court continued to discuss and interpret what exactly the tests for the same work or work of similar nature. So, the court said that the National Legislation must be in harmony with international legislations or international covenants or international agreements.

And the same work or work of similar nature has to take a broad view, not to decide the workers on the same footing, the workers of men and women on the same footing. And the Court held that what is needed for time being is an objective evaluation of all the surrounding circumstances, the conditions of work, and limitations of the nature of the work, in order to conclude whether two types of work are similar or not.

So, the Supreme Court said that the complete work and circumstances are to be taken into consideration for deciding what are the components of the same work or work of similar nature in this particular case.

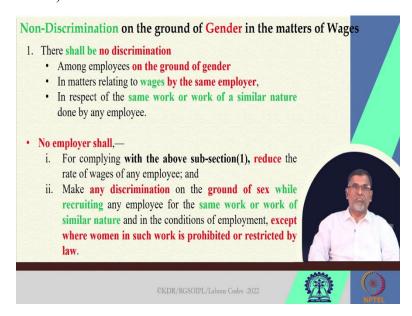
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And the same word for its same, almost similar provision, which is incorporated in The Code on Wages 2019 with regard to equal pay for equal work, is written same work or work of similar nature. So, it is the same definition in which you can find skill, effort, experience and responsibility required are the same when performed under similar working conditions by employees.

So, there are qualifications similar working conditions, similar working conditions by employees, and the difference if any, between the skill, effort, experience and responsibility required for employees of any gender are not of practical importance. So, it is the same definition that has been incorporated into section 2(5) of The Code on Wages 2019 from the repealed provisions.

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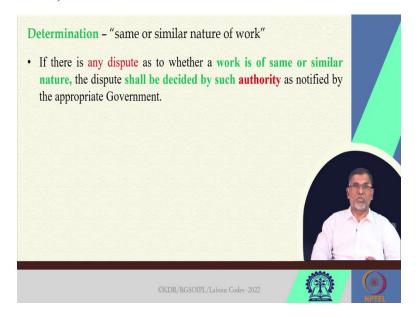


So, if you look into non-discrimination on the grounds of gender, in there, so, it is very clearly said, there shall be no discrimination among employees on the grounds of gender. And also the matters relating to wages by the same employer. So, the same work or work of a similar nature, so, the components are the same.

So, based on gender, the same employer and the same work, work of a similar nature by any employee, irrespective of the fact that this man or woman. And also, under certain prohibitions, no employer shall with the above conditions reduce the rate of wages of any employee, or make any discrimination on the grounds of sex by recruiting any employee for the same work or work of similar nature.

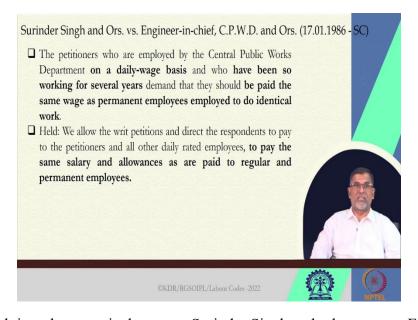
And in the conditions of employment, except where women in such work are prohibited or restricted by law. So, now, the employees cannot discriminate between employees on the ground of gender. But, again in modern times, similar works, and the uniform wages are, the concept of uniform wages is disappearing, and now, each and every employee in a company may be getting different salaries. So, the concept is very important in the present situation, this particular situation as well.

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And also, the conditions of the same or similar nature of work are also very important. So, if there is any dispute with regard to work of similar nature or the same work, who is going to decide, so, the appropriate government should appoint authorities for the interpretation of the same or similar nature of work. So, these authorities have to be appointed by the respective governments in the coming days.

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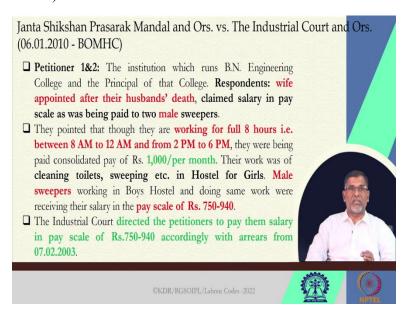
So, when we look into these particular cases, Surinder Singh and others verses Engineer-in-chief C.P.W.D, so, 1986 case. So, here you can see that if somebody is working on a daily wage basis,

and also somebody who is permanent. So, the question is whether the daily wage workers should be given a different salary than the permanent workers.

So, the daily wage workers are also doing the same work, that the permanent employees or identical work, they are also doing. What does the Court hold? The court held that another petition and direct response to pay the petitioners and all of the daily rated employees to pay the same Salary and Allowances as are paid to regular and permanent employees.

So, Supreme Court is very clear, the Supreme Court is not finding any difference between permanent employees and temporary employees. So, they cannot be made changes, and they cannot be differentiated between the two classifications, especially on gender and also on payment. So, the permanent employees and temporary employees should get the same payment.

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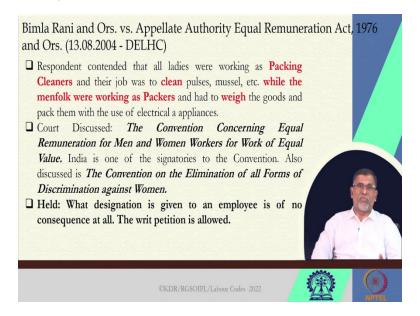
And if you look into this particular case, so Janta Shikshan Prasarak Mandal and others versus Industrial Court, 2010 case. So, in this case, you can see that the wife was appointed after the husband's death on a compassionate basis, and claimed the salary in PayScale as being paid to the 2 other male sweepers. And we know that discrimination is very rampant at the lower level of employment.

And this lady works the similar same type, the working time is the same. And working conditions are the same, but consolidated payment of only 1000 per month. And they are

working with regard to the cleaning of toilets, sweeping and other places. And here, the male workers were getting a pay scale of 750 to 940.

But this lady was getting only a consolidated payment of 1000 per month. So, in this case, the Industrial Court directed the petitioners to pay the same salary in this case of 750 to 940, and also arrears to this particular lady. So, there is no discrimination based on gender, for the same work or similar nature, the work of similar nature, which they are doing.

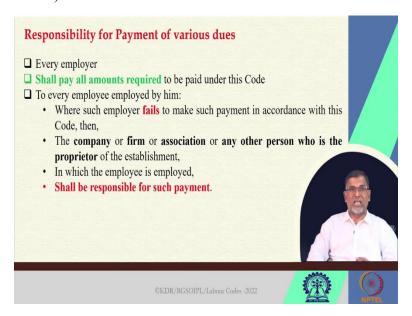
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And I think there are a number of cases where the Court upheld the value and validity of equal pay for equal work. And here, we can see that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. So, the Supreme Court and High Courts, different High courts have talked about even international conventions.

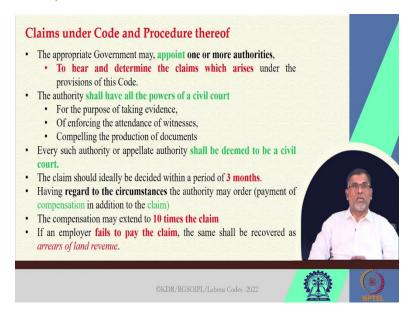
And also, the provisions and obligations on the part of the government of India for implementing these international conventions. So, the Court held that designation given to an employee is of no consequence at all. So, it means the designation is not important, whether they are doing the same work or work of similar nature, then the same salary has to be given to the women workers as well.

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And here is the responsibility with regard to the payment, which says that any employer fails to make such payments in accordance with this particular code. So, any person or association, any person who is the proprietor of the establishment shall be responsible for such kind of payments of the payments due to the employees. And also, here you can see that the payments dues or paid on account of the death of any of the workers. So, in that case, to be paid in repaid to the person who is nominated by him. And if there is no such nomination be deposited with the government, such authorities mentioned.

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And also, any type of claims should be taken. So, the government should appoint such kind of authorities to hear and determine the claims, which arise under this particular Act. And such authorities have the powers of a civil court to the extent of taking evidence, enforcing the attendance of witnesses, and compelling the production of documents. And for all purposes, these purposes these authorities' powers are deemed to be a civil court and any claims should be settled within 3 months, 3 months of submission.

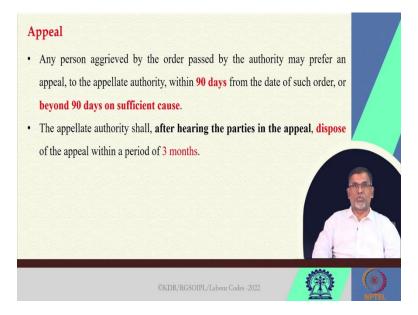
And also, you can see that the compensation may be extended to 10 times the claim and if an employer fails to pay the claim, the same shall be recovered as arrears of land revenue. So, the authorities to the extent of even for these purposes have the authority of a civil court. So, the governments for settling claims under this particular act have the wide powers which are mentioned under this particular Act.

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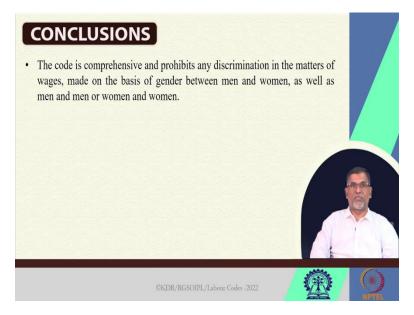
And also, if any claim should be filed within 3 years of such claims arising. So, with regard to any employee or even the union's registered employees also can or the inspector-cum-facilitator also can claim files under this particular provision.

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And appellate authorities are also to be notified by the respective governments within 90 days. Within 90 days, the appeal should be submitted. And also, the hearing of what is within 3 months the appeal should be disposed of.

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And we can see that the Equal Remuneration Act these provisions incorporated into the wages court is very progressive in nature. And also, almost all the provisions of international conventions are embodied in the new provisions. And also, we can see that there is the court has absolutely or comprehensively prohibited discrimination in the matter of wages based on gender.

And all constitutional provisions are also incorporated into the new code. So, it means that the concept of Equal Remuneration is fully implemented through this particular provision.

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So, we can see that the new rules coming up is going to be fully implemented under this particular code. Thank you.