



Review On Sociological Status Of Widows In Rural Areas

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ABSTRACT:

In India, women are the most at risk and are therefore the weaker sex, and among women, widows are the most disadvantaged because of the abrupt change in their socioeconomic standing following the passing of their spouses. The death of the spouse in a marriage partnership involves the creation of new ties within the family, among the kin-group, and within the community. Even among women, widows are overlooked. In India, widows lead poor lives regardless of the social class to which they belong. Most castes forbid remarriage, and she is subject to several taboos and oppressive restrictions as a result. Worst of all, she is regarded as unlucky. This paper reflects Review on Sociological Status of Widows in rural areas.

Keywords: Sociology, Widows, Rural.

INTRODUCTION:

The traditional Indian value system is dominated by men, and widowhood brought on by a partner's death is perceived as tragic and demeaning. The primary elements that make widowhood troublesome are its frequency, exclusion from religious and caste ceremonies, economic ruin, the rarity of remarriage, and her decreased social standing. It is impossible to contradict any subjective perception and assessment of these factors. Yet with a true grasp of the situation, we might be able to re-evaluate whether widowhood in India is as serious of a problem as is sometimes claimed.

REVIEW OF LITURATURE:

According to Molefi Motsoeneng et al. (2020), the study examined the social isolation and stigma faced by widows in a rural South African environment. Participants were 10 widows who made up a purposeful sample (black = 95%; age range, 30 to 60). The widows participated in individual, semi-structured interviews about their sense of community. Thematic analysis revealed that widows felt deeply socially isolated and alone when coping with their grief and loss, and that they saw themselves as a social burden on extended family. After their partners passed away, the widows said that there

was a dearth of social support and that they were subjected to demeaning cultural stereotypes. An ongoing factor in the widowhood experience in a rural South African setting is implied guilt by the in-laws and other family members regarding the widows' participation in the deaths of their partners.

Increased mortality following marital bereavement has been seen in numerous populations, according to Liu, H. et al. (2020). The widowhood effect in a traditional culture with a developing economy has not been the subject of much research. We don't fully comprehend the causes of the widowhood effect or its gender dynamics. In this study, we examined whether widowhood-related excess mortality exists in rural China and whether it varies by gender and type of housing. In the Chaohu region of China, a six-wave panel of data collected from elderly rural residents was employed. According to Cox regression studies, spousal loss had a favourable impact on mortality for older rural Chinese, and this impact differed by gender. Also, although having a tendency to increase older men's mortality risk overall, our data imply that living with adult children after spousal loss played a protective role in lowering the risk of death for older males.

According to Ganguly, R. (2020), although widowhood in India is equated with deprivation both materialistically and symbolically, the legal status of widows as principal heirs with the same property rights as men dates back to both colonial and postwar legal developments. Since then, feminist discourses have found that these laws lack gender-neutral conceptualizations and effective implementation. The thought of a widow acting legally to claim property in the current market-driven economy, where land is a main producing resource, is abhorrent, especially in a rural, agrarian society. Rarely does she find herself in a position where she has to deal with the law because her identity is enmeshed in the spheres of family and job and because she is affected by the fact that those who don't have much struggle to "come out ahead in litigation" against their superiors. Can the widow successfully use the legal system to acquire land as property, despite the fact that having "a field of one's own" guarantees women a stable source of income, social standing, and improved bargaining power? I shall grapple with this conundrum from the standpoint of the Bengali Hindu widow, taking into account analogous trends in the destiny of widows in other South Asian nations, where widowhood obtains similar social implications due to shared gendered norms. The purpose of this study is to compare, contrast, and analyze the distinctiveness that Bengali post-colonial lawmaking, in particular, has brought about in widows' status in society.

A widow is a woman whose spouse has passed away, whereas a widower is a male in such circumstances, according to Barnali Sharma and Usha Rani Boro (2017). Widowhood is the condition of having lost one's spouse through death. Widowhood is a noun that can refer to either sex. Widowed is a phrase that is commonly used to describe both sexes. While there are differences in how widows are treated around the world, social scientists are concerned about the unequal benefits and treatment that widows typically receive when compared to those obtained by widowers globally. Widowhood is both a crisis and a problem. It is a crisis because of how abruptly and drastically it alters a woman's life.

According to the 2001 Census, there are more than 44 million "widowed" people in the nation, the majority of whom are women. The goal of the current study is to highlight widows' lives in India in comparison to those of their counterparts, the widowers. It also focuses on how widows in today's culture are treated differently based on their gender. The following essay is not founded on any theoretical claims but rather on secondary data.

According to P. Dasgupta (2017), this research aims to paint a picture of the situation of female-headed households and the challenges faced by widows globally. It also wants to bring attention to the problems that widows face right now. Scholarly work on widows in India by feminist authors is conspicuously lacking. This essay emphasizes the importance of paradigm shifts in our thinking today in order to study the issues that these women face. Organizations have conducted research on the elderly, the majority of whom are widowed women. Nevertheless, such work disregards younger widows and widows who are not heads of households. Even the proportion of widowed women in the population is frequently unknown. Also, there is a regrettable lack of information and trustworthy data on farmer suicide, widowhood in the context of armed conflict, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. It has become clear that sufficient quantitative and qualitative data are required to inform and direct planners and policymakers. Information is more readily available for industrialized or more developed nations than for developing or less developed ones. One of the main barriers to influencing laws and programs that deal with the plight of widows is a lack of trustworthy hard data. Methods used to collect census data in many developing nations are frequently not intended to expose the unpaid economic contribution widows of all ages make to society or to identify the inequities associated with widowhood. In fact, widows may be left out of national censuses if they are homeless or frequently move among different households headed by relatives. Additionally, the poverty experienced by specific widows living in households is frequently concealed because surveys on poverty tend to hide the unequal distribution of money, land, and other essential resources within families and between households. Widows have always accepted their position as victims of a patriarchal system. According to Paule Friere (1993), this maintains their oppression by creating a culture of silence among the dispossessed. Such tyranny prevents people from having the necessary critical awareness to react to their circumstances and even the most basic words to disclose it. In essence, widowhood is a symbol of the historical disparity in power between men and women. Yet, concern for widows has mostly gone unnoticed in the women's movement, even though it is blatantly present in India.

According to Jessica M. Perkins et al. (2016), prior studies have shown the health advantages of marriage and the possibility of worse outcomes during widowhood in specific communities. Even fewer studies have looked at these correlations stratified by gender. However, few studies have evaluated the relevance of widowhood and widowhood length to a variety of health-related outcomes and chronic diseases among older persons in India. We examine the relationship between widowhood and self-rated health, psychological distress, cognitive ability, and four chronic diseases using a cross-

sectional representative sample of 9,615 adults aged 60 or older from 7 states in various regions of India. We do this both before and after adjusting for demographic characteristics, socioeconomic status, living with children, and rural-urban location for men and women, separately. When widowhood is taken into account for duration, we then evaluate these connections. After correcting for other explanatory factors, women who were widowed as opposed to married had lower health outcomes. In general, widowhood was not connected with any outcomes for males save for cognitive capacity, while men who were bereaved within 0–4 years were at increased diabetes risk compared to married men. In addition, compared to married women, women who had been widowed lately or for a long time were more likely to experience psychological distress, poorer self-rated health, and hypertension. But women who had been bereaved for 5 to 9 years were not. When determining if widowhood has the potential to have a detrimental effect on health, gender, the length of widowhood, and the nature of the outcome are all important factors to consider. Future studies should examine how the health-related mechanisms of widowhood change throughout time. It may be possible to more effectively identify prospective beneficiaries among older individuals in India by incorporating information about marital relationships into the design of intervention programs.

According to Anupama Bharti (2015), there are an estimated 245 million widows worldwide, with half of them living in abject poverty. Loomba Foundation Report (2010) with 42.4 million people, India has the second-highest population in the world. If a woman is at the top of the success ladder in many areas of public life, she yet lives a quiet social life every day, constrained by the norms and traditions of traditional Indian society. They are ostracized from society's mainstream on a cultural, social, economic, and political level. Urbanization, modernization, and globalization processes have altered the economic landscape, eroded societal norms, and weakened social institutions, particularly joint family standards. Because of this, widows are now in a worse position within families, and once they start to feel like a "burden," they are quickly removed. This study focuses on the socioeconomic issues that widows in rural Himachal Pradesh experience. With the use of the random sample procedure, fifty widows of various ages were chosen. We also employed an observational approach and an interview schedule. It turns out that there is not widespread prejudice against widows in the country. In other words, this study did not refute the presence of traditional widow discrimination in some places, but it did show that, if we concentrate on urban regions, this issue does not represent the entire country.

According to D.M. Sahoo (2014), widows are more than just victims; they are also moms, caregivers, and household heads. No matter how old a widow is, she and her children should be treated with respect, and their rights should be upheld. The Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women should serve as the foundation for all national laws and policies. In Asia, Africa, and Latin America, UN Women supports the empowerment of widows as a global cause. We collaborate with widows' organizations so that widows can live with dignity,

rights, and economic independence, free from stigma and discrimination, and with a voice in choices that affect their lives at home and in the community. This is part of a larger effort we are making to help women's economic development, political leadership and participation, their contribution to peace and security, the end of violence against women and girls, and gender-responsive budgeting.

Subrata Dutta (2013) stated that widows are one of the people who are left out of society in India. The primary focus of this research is on the social security needs of widows in Rajasthan as well as the reach of current social security programs to them. According to the report, a sizable percentage of widows work irregular, physically taxing jobs. Since casual employment is sometimes viewed as a last alternative for making a living, involvement in it exposes widows' fragility. Social security in its various forms may be quite important to their lives.

According to Devi Kittu and Rotti S. B. (2013), the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-2) data has estimated that there are over 33 million widows in India, making up 8% of the overall female population. Widows are surrounded by cultural and social norms, and they rarely get to break away from them. To ascertain the social and cultural disadvantages they experienced after becoming widows and to convey their perspectives on widows remarrying. Younger widows without children, in the opinion of widows, can remarry. Widows claimed their family members mistreated them and laid the blame for their spouses' passing on them. The last ceremonies startled and infuriated the widows. The majority of widows lacked bank accounts. Most of the older widows expressed the opinion that, while procuring rice for food was tough, teaching their children was a challenge for the younger widows. After 50 years of marriage, widows expressed their opinion that they expected the government to provide rice. Younger widows underlined that they needed a loan from the government to survive. Many of the widows were socially and culturally impoverished.

Christopher Garroway (2013) stated that the National Social Assistance Plan is made up of five social assistance transfers that make up India's basic social protection floor. This paper reflects a thorough analysis of the widow's pension and the old-age pension, two NSAP programs. The paper uses the propensity score matching estimator to calculate the effects of the two pensions on household income, consumption, and poverty status using data from the 2005 Indian Human Development Survey on household income and consumer spending. The usefulness of the pensions is observed to differ depending on the recipients' vast range of socioeconomic status, geographic area, and social group. It has been demonstrated that the widow's pension reduces recipients' poverty by around 2.7 percentage points. Government initiatives to direct pension benefits to low-income households have proven unproductive, and efforts to make pensions universal may actually increase their efficacy.

According to K.S. Mohindra et al. (2012), the health and well-being of widows in India is a crucial yet unaddressed problem of women's rights and public health. We examine the

lives of Indian women who become widows, concentrating on the factors that led to their husbands' passing and the effects these factors had on their own lives. We also look at the chances and difficulties widows encounter in leading happy, healthy lives. In the southern Indian state of Kerala, data were gathered at a gram panchayat, which is the lowest level of territorially decentralized unit. Key informants were interviewed to better understand the local conceptions of "widowhood," as well as the welfare and social prospects for widows. Then, in order to gain insight from widows, we conducted semi-structured interviews with widows in the neighborhood about topics linked to vulnerability and health. Data were examined for emerging trends and thematic substance. To create a conceptual framework, we combined our research with theories of vulnerability and Amartya Sen's entitlements theory. The study's two key conclusions are: first, it can be argued that becoming a widow is a form of "shock" that functions in a manner akin to other "economic shocks" or "health shocks" in developing nations, with the exception that the burden is borne disproportionately by women. Second, rather than being a one-time event, widowhood may be viewed as a multi-staged process with different public health implications at each stage. Further studies on widows in India and other nations will aid in illuminating their difficulties and fostering solutions. Future studies on widows may be guided by the paradigm created in this publication.

The widows of Vrindavan which is based on field research conducted in Vrindavan between 1990 and 1992. The paper also gives the self-view of the widows in Vrindavan. Widowedhood is a crisis in a woman's life in any culture, and financial and emotional setbacks are unavoidable. But cultures differ greatly among themselves in their means of overcoming the dilemma. According to some, the widows serve as the most dreadful role models in Hinduism. Living in Vrindavan is a way of life for widows who have come to this hallowed spot to live and die. Most of them don't go back to their houses or see their relatives in Vrindavan. Most widows in Vrindavanavasi come from poor socioeconomic backgrounds. A widow is socially isolated and excluded from activities in the community that she had formally participated in with her husband. Widows of Vrindavan establish a specific form of language or way of contact. Recent arrivals to Vrindavan, including a number of young widows, claimed that they were ready to leave if better services were offered elsewhere. However, despite the fact that her hometown had facilities, nobody wanted to go there.

Shadow Lives: Essays on Widowhood work is a superb effort to show the social fabric of widowhood in all its complexity. Widows' legal rights to remarry and even enter into legally binding relationships are inextricably linked to the notion that wives move into the conjugal unit of habitation. Even after independence and the legislation changed, remarriage of widows was only permitted with in-laws in specific regions of North India. The widows of Sikh families who lost loved ones in the 1984 riots and the Kargil War experienced a similar predicament in which they were coerced into marrying their in-laws in order to control the settlement funds. The snippets also poignantly depict the Hindu widow's physically impoverished and depressed circumstances, which were deliberately constructed.

Widowhood in Rural India discusses widowhood in a number of North and South Indian locations. She presents a nuanced picture that accounts for changes in conventional caste norms brought on by new castes looking for upward social mobility of widows, who have developed their own theories about which widows are more likely to remarry and which are less likely. One widow of Bihar remarked that an upper caste widow would remarry if she had no children, a middle caste widow would remarry if she had only girls and a lower caste widow even if she had sons. According to Chen, factors such as the number, age, and gender of children influence factors such as social security to determine which widows remarry. If the widow has children, her in-laws will arrange her remarriage; if she does not, her parents will. Even now, some ladies seek tonsure because they think it is the shastric stance. A widow from the Kargil conflict was assassinated by her in-laws as recently as the year 2000 because she refused to give them the settlement money. Widows had lower consumption levels and higher rates of poverty than the general population. It is amazing how many widows wind up in prostitution, begging, domestic work, becoming religious mendicants, or beggars. The widow's situation must be the focus of public involvement and policy because it is not just a personal issue but also a larger social one.

The Veiled Women: Changing Gender Equation in Rural Haryana is an interesting description of the condition of women in rural Haryana during colonial and post-colonial times. The significance of women in agriculture led to the recognition of customs like polyandry, widow remarriage, and the sale and purchase of brides as being economically necessary. As part of the agrarian criteria that permitted bride price, widow remarriage, also known as Karewa, Kurao, and Chunddar andazi, was institutionalised. The relatives of a deceased husband had complete authority over a widow's ability to remarry. A caste panchyat would require the groom to dissolve the marriage or pay a price to the widow's family to emphasise ownership if the widow married someone from another family or a stranger. In addition to the widow's need for hard labour, the requirement to keep landed property led to the popularity of widow remarriage with the family. Only the widow's sons would inherit the property if she had offspring. The widow lost her claim to her ex-property husband's after remarriage. Even if some widows opposed being remarried, the current structure prevented this opposition from showing itself.

Widows and Health in Rural North India, remarriage is uncommon among widowed women. The main justifications given for not remarriage were that they didn't want to have more kids and that they didn't know if a new husband would take good care of their kids. She would lose her claim to the property of her deceased husband if she got remarried, thus she wanted to keep it, was another frequently cited reason. The other reasons which were given were caste taboo on remarriage, likelihood of severe treatment of the widow herself by second husband's children and uncertainty over whether the marriage will offer happiness or security. The research on widows was done in eight North Indian villages, two of which were in each of the states of Bihar, West Bengal, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh.

In all of the major states over the past three decades, with the exception of Kerala, widowhood has been gradually declining, according to a recent study. Also, it was discovered that in 1981, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu had the greatest proportion of widows and Haryana had the lowest. The findings indicated that there are more widows than widowers, and widowhood is more common among illiterates and in rural areas than in metropolitan ones.

CONCLUSION:

The male-dominated traditional Indian value system views widowhood brought on by a partner's death as sorrowful and degrading. The main issues with widowhood include its prevalence, exclusion from religious and caste rites, financial devastation, the rarity of remarriage, and her lowered social standing. Any subjective view and appraisal of these things cannot be refuted. We might be able to re-evaluate whether widowhood in India is as significant of a problem as is commonly asserted, though, if we have a true understanding of the circumstances.

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