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## PSYCHO – SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF RURAL WIDOWS AND WELFARE PROGRAMMES

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### ABSTRACT

A widow is a woman who has lost her husband by death and has not married again. It is a condition of a woman involved in the process of adjustment or integrating with the living system of the existing members of a family, community and society called as widowhood, in the sense that widowhood is a state of being widow and involving in the process of expressing behavior as an individual, that is in harmony with the existing social environment. On the basis of age and area and economic perspectives widows have been categorized as younger and aged widows, widows in rural and urban areas and working and non-working widows. The problems such as social, economic, cultural and psychological in the form of deprivation they face and suffer in integrating with the societal environment differ from category wise. Review of different Act passed, statutory provision from different Governments of Karnataka state and central Governments have been enabling the widows to be socially awakened and economically independent. As the result of all these, the difficulties faced by the widows in getting the proper facilities is being reduced. This positive changing trend is found in the living conditions of widows.



**KEY WORDS :** widowhood, Socio- economic conditions, problems of adjustment, statutory provision and welfare measures.

### 1. INTRODUCTION:

A widow is a woman who has lost her husband by death and has not married again. It is a condition of such woman involved in living with the existing members of family, community and society called as widowhood in the sense that widowhood is a state of being widow and involving in the process of integration or behavior as an individual, that is in harmony with the existing social environment, on the basis of age and area and economic perspectives, widows have been categorized as younger and aged widow, widows in rural and urban areas and working and non-working widows.

The problems such as social, economics, cultural and psychological in the form of deprivation they face and suffer in integrating with the societal environment differ for Categoriwise. Implementation of existing laws, legislative and rehabilitative and welfare programmes effectively by Government and non Government agencies, the positive changes in the status of widows can be brought.

## 2. METHODOLOGY OF STUDYING :

### 1. Introduction :

Study is based on secondary sources. This paper is the initial part of my Ph. D thesis entitled “A Sociological Study of Rural widow in Northern Karnataka”. After reviewing good number of relevant studies about 20 in number hitherto, the conceptual clarifications and objectives have been assumed and framed.

### 2. Concepts used in the study:

The following concepts were used, clarified their meaning and implication :

- **Widow:** A woman who has lost her husband by death and has not married again is known as a widow.
- **Widower :** A man whose wife is dead and who has not married again is known as a widower.
- **Widowhood:** State of being a widow is widowhood.
- **Integration :** In this present work, reintegrating to normal life or main stream of life is considered as integration process or behavior as of an individual, that is in harmony with environment.
- **Deprivation:** It is a condition in which particular external and internal factors merge tomorrow persons behavioral alternatives for achieving Self – fulfillment. These deprivations-Social Cultural, Psychological and economic are universally present in widowhood.
- **Family :** It is defined as a group of persons living together, taking food from the same kitchen and related by blood, marriage or adoption.
- **Nuclear family:** It is a small family in size, consisting of the married couple and their children.
- **Joint family:** It consists of more than three generations who live together in the same household. All the men are related by blood and the women of the household are their wives. Unmarried girls and widows of the family are kin men.
- **Neighborhood:** The place where different families live is known as a neighborhood.
- **Community:** A group of people living as a definite geographical area having a sense of feeling of oneness is known as a community.
- **Remarriage:** It is a marriage of a woman or man after having lost first or second husband or wife.
- **Divorcee:** It is married man or woman who have been separated by court of law.
- **Desertee :** It is marriage of man or woman who have been separated by the arbitrary method
- **Rehabilitative Measures:** These are the social welfare, security provisions being provided by social legislations, schemes etc., to the widows and destitutes.

### 3. Objectives of the study:

The following objectives have been set methodically to understand the issues:

1. To Understand the Socio- Economic Conditions of working and Non- working widows.
2. To understand the problems faced by different types of widows with age, regional and economic perspectives.
3. To know about the problems, issues, strategies and rehabilitation of widow which bring change in the status of the them.
4. Deprivation and atrocities on women through traditional means

### Availability Rehabilitative Programmes by widows:

In our country, which has declared itself to be a welfare state, both the Central government, as well State Government being the prime benefactors have tried to be models in identifying these problems of widow and providing appropriate services, to enable them to reshape their lives and lead a life of peace satisfaction and well-being.

Broadly speaking widows can be rehabilitated through remarriage, education and vocational training, employment and welfare programmes for dependent children. More particularly, they will require help in the following areas.

1. Protection of young widows from exploitation and victimization.
2. Temporary Shelter for young widows in distress.
3. Remarriage.
4. Education and Vocational training
5. Employment and self employment opportunities.
6. Education of Children.
7. Welfare services such as foster care and sponsorship for young children.
8. Marriage of daughters.
9. Legal aid for inheritance of property and other matters.
10. Hostel for working widows with day care facilities for children.
11. Financial assistance for destitute widows.
12. Residential institution for old, infirm and helpless widows.
13. Counseling and Guidance.
14. Community education to bring about change in the social attitude of widows.

#### **EXISTING SERVICES;**

It would be worthwhile to take stock of existing services available for the welfare of widows, offered through government and non-Governmental organizations and examine the areas covered under these services.

At the outset, it may be noted that India does not have officially adopted policy for women welfare exclusively, as we have national policy for education, health or recently adopted policy for children. Welfare of widows forms a part of broad policy for women welfare. In the absence of the policy resolution India, five years plans and legislations relating to women provide broad guidelines for organizing welfare programmes for women in general.

#### **THE CENTRALLY SPONSORED SCHEMES**

At the central level, the department of women and child Development under the Ministry of human Resource Development is responsible for providing services for welfare and development of women. The following centrally sponsored schemes have direct relevance to the rehabilitation of widows.

##### **1. Women's Training Centers for the Rehabilitation of Women in Distress:**

The Scheme introduced in 1977-78, envisage short term training of women in distress including widow in the age group 18-50. The main objective of the scheme is to rehabilitate such women and their dependent children through residential care by imparting them training in various trades and making them economically independent.

##### **2. Short Stay Homes for women and Girls :**

Under this scheme, the Department of women and Child Development provides grant-in-aid to voluntary agencies for running short stay homes for rehabilitation of women and girls facing social and moral danger:

##### **3. Hostels for working women:**

The Government of India provides financial assistance to voluntary organization engaged in the filed of women welfare for construction/Expansion of hostel buildings for working women.

### 1. Rural Development Schemes :

Some of the rural development programs have indirect relevance to the welfare of widows. For instance the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) accorded priority to women heads of households. Women comprised 7 percent of the beneficiaries covered under the IRDP.

Similarly, under the scheme of Training of Youth for self-Employment (TRYSEM), one third of the beneficiaries are expected to be women. The new scheme of Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) introduced in 1982-83. Provide training for a group of 15-20 women in selected economic activities. Poor widows in rural areas should be helped make full use of these schemes.

### 2. Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) Programmes:

The CSWB Plays a significant role in the welfare of women and provides financial assistance to voluntary agencies to implement the following schemes.

#### 1. Socio-Economic Programme:

The main objective of the Socio-Economic Programme is the economic rehabilitation of needy women such as destitute, widows, deserted and the disabled. These women are provided with opportunities for full time or part time work to supplement their family income. The programme covers different categories of schemes of small industries, ancillary units, handicrafts, training Cum-Production units, handloom units and egr based units.

#### 2. Condensed Courses of Education for adult women and V. National Training programmes :

Condensed Courses of education, Started in the years 1958, is an important programme run by the CSWB. The main objective of this programme is to give an intensive educational course to deserving adult women in the age-group of 18-30 in shortest possible time. This enables them to qualify for middle school or High School matriculation or equivalent examination and thereby makes them eligible for further training or employment.

#### 3. Voluntary Action Bureau :

The CSWB set up the Voluntary Action Bureau in 1982 to help women in difficult situation such as family discord, exploitation of women, atrocities on women etc., the Bureau provides services of counseling, short-stay facilities, medical and legal aid and police assistance wherever needed. The voluntary Action Bureaus have been setup at the Headquarters of all states and union territories.

#### 4. Family Counselling Centers:

Since 1984-85 the CSWB is implementing the scheme of Family Counseling Centers. The services rendered by these centers are more or less the same as provided by the voluntary action Bureaus. There are 18 faulty counseling centers in 11 states, now they have extended to few more states.

It seems, some help is available for needy widows in urban areas through these agencies. Similar services need to be developed at the district level.

### STATE GOVERNMENT PROGRAMMES :

The Department of social welfare, of the most of the state Governments have many schemes for welfare of women in general and widows in particular.

#### 1. Social and Moral Hygiene and after Care Programmes

This programme aims at providing protection, treatment and rehabilitation services in moral danger. The women and girls in these institutions are rehabilitated through vocational training programmes, employment, reconciliation with relatives and marriage.

## 2. Rescue Homes:

The voluntary agencies providing shelter to the destitute and deserted women are given grant-in-aid by the state Department of Social welfare and these institutions play an important role in protecting young widows from exploitation and victimization by giving them temporary shelter and helping them in their eventual rehabilitation.

## 3. Grant of Marriage Allowance to destitute widows for remarriage:

In order to improve the socio- economic status of widows, to prevent them from falling in the hands of anti – social elements and to provide them with security , the scheme of providing the grant in-aid of 3000 towards the remarriage of widows below 35 yrs of age was introduced in 2009-10.

## 4. Grant of Marriage Allowance towards marriage of Daughters of Destitute widows:

It is generally noticed that destitute and distressed widows find extremely difficult to arrange the marriage of their daughter due to various factors, including the menacing dowry system. As a result, these daughters are likely to become desperate and frustrated, sometimes leading themselves to extreme steps like moral degeneration and suicide.

## 5. Sanjay Gandhi Niradhar Yojana (Financial Assistance to Destitutes and widows):

The state Government introduced this scheme in 1980-81 in order to provide financial assistance at the rate of P. M. for destitute old persons (Males above 65 years and females above 60 years) who have no means of livelihood and destitute widows who are unable to maintain their dependent Children below 10 years.

## CONCLUSION :

Review of different Acts passed and statutory provision from different Government of Karnataka State and Central Government have been enabling the widows to be Socially awakened and economically independent. As the result of all these, the difficulties faced by the widows in getting the proper facilities is being reduced. This positive changing trend is found in the living conditions of widows.

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