

HEALTH CAPABILITY OF WIDOWS IN INDIA**Prof. Kiran V. Jadhav***Head & Assistant Professor of Economics**Bhavan's H. Somani College, Mumbai**Email Id: kiranvsjadhav@gmail.com***Abstracts**

In accordance with the capability approach, a widow is one of the deprived people especially in Indian society even after so many years of independence of the country. They may possess all the required things, amenities, education, and health and so on; they are unable to have or enjoy a decent or healthy life as they are not supposed to do so. They are assumed to be staying in deprivation in terms of daily routine life which is not just confined to clothing and food. They are not supposed to have a healthy lifestyle before society. They lack basic capability in terms of health and proper nutrition. A widow may not have a good employment opportunity, a shelter, not able to move freely in the society and so on. This research paper put forth the health condition of widows in India in terms of capability approach and also examines the cost of capability achievement in the context of health capability. Though women empowerment is the most spoken phenomenon today; she has been still seen one of the inescapable components as observed to be unfortunate and unexpected where goddess worship is widely held in the region. In this research, an examination will hold on the health conditions of widows in the country and her comparison with their counterparts in terms of health conditions.

Key Words: *Health, Capability Approach, Widow, Women, Sen.*

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Introduction

Health of women has always been an issue for every one in the society as a whole. It is ignored not just by every family member but the woman by herself too. It ignores her health just like that and takes it so granted that it will heal automatically. The one important thing to be observed in every family more specifically in India that a woman does housework which is considered passionately one of the gymnastic exercises and predominantly presumed to a very healthy for her. This has been concluded in not necessary to go for any exercises or workouts for a healthy lifestyle. The money spent is deduced to be worthless on being spent on a woman in majority of the families in India. Though the views have changed over the period of time and nowadays women besides men are taking every step for a healthy life style. The questions here not true every woman in the society. There are different categories of women and unfortunately all the categories are more or less underprivileged somewhere or the other. The most abundant section of the women society is widow. These women are for no reason and for no fault are under

privileged for every right of humanhood. They are not just ignored by the policymaker; do forget society but her family members are also one of the predators in her well-being. There should be clean demand for well-being of widows and there should be enough provision by the lawmakers in the settlements of widows in their every aspect.

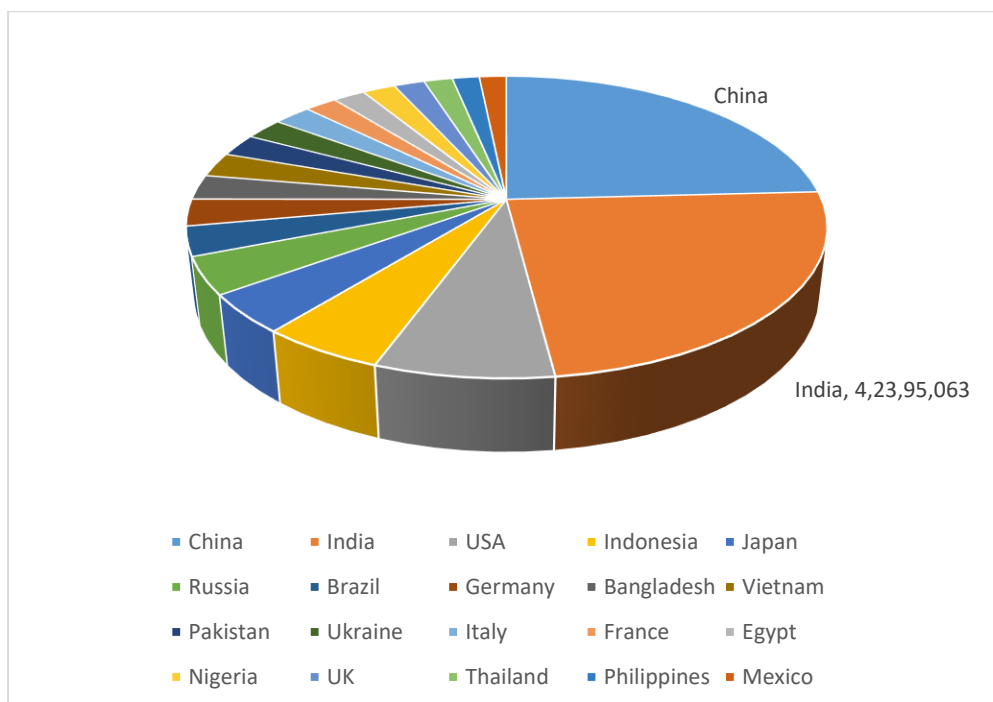
Objective of Paper

In this research, an examination will hold on the health conditions of widows in the country and her comparison with their counterparts in terms of health conditions.

Number of Widows

The underestimated fact among all the other issues, there has been a substantial number of widows in the country which has been rising over the years. As per the Lomba Foundation statistics, India is ranking second largest country after China to have largest number of Widows in the top 20 Listed country comprising of all major countries like USA, Russia, Japan and Pakistan. As compared to these 20 countries, India is standing second and having more than 23 percent of all the widows. The clear idea can be gauged from the below pie chart.

Figure 1 Top 20 Countries with the Highest Number of Widows, 2010



Source: The Loomba Foundation – Caring for Widow around the World, 2011

The figure 1 clearly indicates the feeble condition of India's in the world. The foremost argument should be why India is listed in these countries where a woman is worshipped and prominent person in every family. The latter should be thought it is listed why it is getting positioning at the top level. It is misery on the part of developing nation where there is strive for the so-called sustainable development for all.

The all India figures would be more expounding on the state of Widows in the country which is shows in the following Table 1:

Table 1 State Wise Total Number of Widows in India - 2011

Region	Total Widows	Percent*
India	43261478	--
UTTAR PRADESH	4856188	11.2252
MAHARASHTRA	4520764	10.44986
ANDHRA PRADESH	4297481	9.933736
TAMIL NADU	3856398	8.914161
WEST BENGAL	3792184	8.765729
KARNATAKA	2989429	6.910141
BIHAR	2238793	5.175027
MADHYA PRADESH	2160609	4.994302
GUJARAT	2015742	4.659439
KERALA	2010984	4.64844
RAJASTHAN	1983634	4.58522
ODISHA	1612627	3.727628
ASSAM	1156042	2.67222
JHARKHAND	1027878	2.375966
CHHATTISGARH	973787	2.250933
PUNJAB	928158	2.145461
HARYANA	773297	1.787496
NCT OF DELHI	456613	1.055472
UTTARAKHAND	387215	0.895057
HIMACHAL PRADESH	293475	0.678375
JAMMU & KASHMIR	283650	0.655664
TRIPURA	164969	0.38133
MEGHALAYA	84825	0.196075
MANIPUR	77990	0.180276
GOA	77935	0.180149
PUDUCHERRY	73579	0.17008
NAGALAND	39496	0.091296
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	31787	0.073476
MIZORAM	28569	0.066038
CHANDIGARH	24496	0.056623
SIKKIM	13717	0.031707
ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS	12525	0.028952
DADRA & NAGAR HAVELI	7378	0.017054
DAMAN & DIU	6816	0.015755
LAKSHADWEEP	2448	0.005659

Source: Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, 2011

*Calculated

In the above table, the state wise total number of widows is shown and the percentage of each state to the total number of widows is also shown in the third column in the above. Table 1. The same has been shown in the descending order. Among all the State, Uttar Pradesh followed by Maharashtra are bearing the most unfortunate position and surpassing all other states where around more than 10 percent of the total number of widows are being located. One of the developed States in India, Kerela is also having more than 4 percent widows in there.

The all above figures and observations are requiring the obligations on the part of ministries and concerned authorities to have comprehensive programmes and plans not just on the paper but need a robust nationwide implementation in a persistent manner.

Health is seen as a major concerned of widow. As said earlier, it is ignored spontaneously in every region irrespective of caste, religion and creed. The traditional approach could never be functional economically as it talked about things in possession. The more relevant concept in this context could be capability approach propounded by Sen Amartya (1999) and also popularised by Martha Nussbaum (2000). The approach talks about what a person can do or be. In accordance with the approach the health of women could be weighed up in a more precise manner and also methodically. Few of the health capabilities could be summed up in Nussbaum's capability framework.

Health Capabilities

The health of widow if examined in terms of Life capability which is in jeopardy as she herself, as observed expect a very low life expectancy. The average life expectancy is in India of women is 71 years as per 2019 figures from World Bank and as per the latest National family Health survey 2019-20, Women age 20-24 years married before age 18 years (%) are 23.3 percent (which is 27 percent in rural areas). If it is carefully observed then the situation seems to be more worsened as she is more vulnerable and weakened when she is a widow, having lesser support as compared to her counterparts.

A widow who is having responsibilities to run the house along with the one or more children is also observed to be more susceptible in terms of bodily health. Widows though found to be having good income source are witnessed falling short of food consumption or nutrition as much required for her. The frequency of falling sick is not lesser than her male counterpart but seeking medical help is always seen meagre. She is less likely to be taken to the medical health at the time falling sick.

The bodily integrity has also to be questioned in the purview of widows. She has to move from one place to another for her and her dependents livelihood. The social evils are rife in their life. The movement is time bound and more of a dependent on others as she is not supposed freely move around in the society. The literacy though is good to be 71.5% in India as per NFHS – 5, the predominance of social values on women brings hindrance and become more acute especially in case of widows. The lack of bodily integrity makes them more exposed in not getting employed and which then turned into misery with less source of income.

Another capability to be conversed is the senses, imagination and thought. Where they have the freedom of expression. The question here is whether they have access to the established cultural experiences. It is not a hidden fact that their views are taken for granted and treated more secondary. The emotion capability follow suit as they

are not able to express their love or care to their belonged and left far away to get attached to anyone they like as it is more comprehended widely in the Indian Society.

Conclusion

A widow is one of the important citizens of the country. She has all the rights to be lived a healthy life. But her health has been a major concerned as being a woman who is downtrodden in all the sections of the society. There have been a significant number of widows in the country and there is clear understanding that they also have to be given proper attention in the context of human development. Her health is observed to be poor in terms of major capabilities as she is poor in her life expectancy, bodily health, bodily integrity, senses, imagination and thought, emotions and so on. A proper courtesy is required by the law makers and needed more interventions by the public for the well-being of the widows.

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