

WIDOWS IN INDIA AND POVERTY
Miss. Kshitija Rajendrakumar Chavan
Student of Economics Department
Shri Siddhivinayak Mahila Mahavidhyalaya Karve Nagar, Pune
Email Id: kshitijachavan71@gmail.com
Abstracts

India is a developing country. Although India's economy is booming, there are so many problems like poverty, literacy, unemployment, health problems and every segment of the Indian society has to face this problem, be it women, children, young or old. But the situation of widows in India is still different. Premature widowhood, inadequate education, unemployment, and poverty are some of the major problems facing widows. Therefore, the first objective of this research paper is to analyze the schemes and implementation of the Government of India for the welfare of widows as well as the problems facing widows due to poverty. The second one is to make a comparative study of widows based on 2001 and 2011 censuses and suggest solutions for their social and economic welfare. And the eradication of poverty for widows. This is the main purpose of this research.

Key Words: *Widow, Poverty*

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Introduction

All the rights and entitlements, cannot exercise its rights due to certain traditions and restrictions in the society. In Indian society, women have restrictions as a 'woman' but after the death of their husband the widow is bound by both the social restrictions as a 'woman' and the restrictions as a 'widow'. After the death of the breadwinner, widows were asked to work to run the house, but due to lack of education, it is difficult to get a job. As a result, even in their daily lives, widows face many problems, one of which is 'poverty' and the many problems associated with poverty. The need of the hours is to address this and work for the social, economic welfare, and eradication of poverty of widows.

Objectives

- 1) To find out the problems facing widows due to poverty and suggest solutions for their social and economic welfare.
- 2) To get information about the schemes of Government of India for the welfare of widows.
- 3) To make a comparative study of widows based on census of 2001 and 2011.

Literature Review

- 1) **International Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Technology – Women Alone: The Problems and**

Challenges of Widows in India by Pritha Dasgupta concluded that Widowhood is associated with trauma and presents a myriad of problems of varied nature; economic, social, and psychological dimensions. Predicaments disorganization and trauma of widowhood are unlike in men as in women. Also suggests that to further help the widow adjusts to the problem of widowhood, we must creatively seek involvement from governmental agencies, social organizations and religious institutions. Existing widows programs must be expanded but we must also continue to develop more programs such as Widowhood Research Centre.

- 2) **Recent Research on Widows in India Workshop and Conference Report by Marty Chen and Jean Dreze** In this research paper they understand the social and economic condition of widows in India. While concluding the recommended about public action, property rights, social security, pensions, employment and livelihood. Also suggests the ‘Anti-Poverty Measures’ under which widows should be given preferential treatment, land redistribution, allotment of house site and houses, health schemes, public distribution, employment programs, credit schemes, etc. and also said that the central government should provide support to state governments and non-government agencies involved in the rehabilitation of widows providing social security benefits to widows.
- 3) **Widowhood- The Problems and Challenges face by Widows in India by Rajal Dave** concluded that one of the reason widows suffer financially is because they are illiterate. Due to the lack of literacy many widows do not reach out of the scheme that’s why they suffer more financial problems and all of these things hinder the eradication of widow poverty.

Methodology

The information given in the presented research paper is obtained through secondary data. Information on the problems faced by the widows due to poverty as well as government schemes implemented for the social and economic welfare of widows and their implementation has been obtained through official websites as well as various reports and research papers.

Data Analysis

Chart 1. Widows by state – 2011

Sr.no.	States and UT	Widowed	% of ever married women	% of all widow
1.	Jammu and Kashmir	3,35,136	9.86	0.62
2.	Himachal Pradesh	3,76,019	14.06	0.69
3.	Punjab	11,85,943	11.53	2.19
4.	Chandigarh	29,216	9.08	0.05
5.	Uttarakhand	4,61,189	14.06	0.85
6.	Haryana	9,24,115	11.11	1.70
7.	NCT of Delhi	5,39,235	10.45	0.99
8.	Rajasthan	25,81,388	10.61	4.76
9.	Uttar Pradesh	59,13,805	9.95	10.91
10.	Bihar	26,02,380	8.60	4.80
11.	Sikkim	19,676	9.45	0.04

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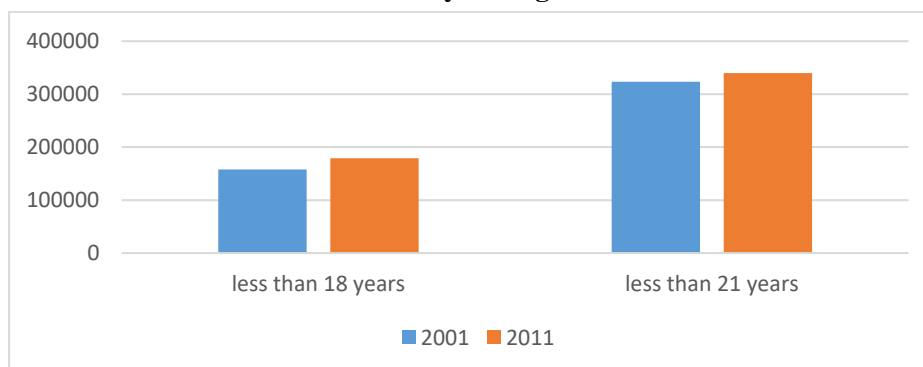
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12.	Arunachal Pradesh	56,828	10.63	0.10
13.	Nagaland	74,880	10.01	0.14
14.	Manipur	1,05,705	10.98	0.19
15.	Mizoram	56,286	11.02	0.10
16.	Tripura	2,34,116	14.73	0.43
17.	Meghalaya	1,56,899	12.84	0.29
18.	Assam	13,69,611	13.94	2.52
19.	West Bengal	49,90,318	14.05	9.20
20.	Jharkhand	14,90,318	12.61	2.75
21.	Odisha	23,06,416	13.89	4.25
22.	Chhattisgarh	14,25,351	14.10	2.63
23.	Madhya Pradesh	29,38,991	11.09	5.42
24.	Gujarat	24,52,518	11.65	4.52
25.	Daman and Diu	7,934	13.04	0.01
26.	Dadar and Nagar Haveli	13,117	9.95	0.02
27.	Maharashtra	55,21,290	13.66	10.18
28.	Andhra Pradesh	52,71,941	16.11	9.72
29.	Karnataka	37,19,236	16.20	6.86
30.	Goa	89,894	17.96	0.17
31.	Lakshadweep	4,872	13.61	0.01
32.	Kerala	22,42,174	17.96	4.13
33.	Tamil Nadu	46,29,094	16.61	8.54
34.	Puducherry	85,983	18.82	0.16
35.	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	13,491	11.88	0.02

Sources: Census data 2011

As shown in the chart. 1 above, the number of widows varies from state to state. However, some southern states like Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, etc., have a low mortality rate but still have a high number of widows. In contrast, states with worse human development indicators, such as Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, have lower rates of widow.

Chart.2 Very Young Widows



Sources: census data of 2001 and 2011



We have a relationship between widowhood and old age, but widowhood is not limited to old age. The number of young widows is also high. Although child marriage is illegal in India, girls under the age of 18 are married off. As shown in the chart.2 above, in the year 2011 there were around 3.5 lakh widows under the age of 21 in India, out of which more than half were under 18 years of age. The decade 2001 to 2011 saw a huge increase in the number of child widows leads to specific problems which are more severe than the problem of older widows. Inadequate education of widow to work, including poverty, has put strain on the lives of widows. As a result, widows face many difficulties in their daily lives. Poverty also deprives them and their families of basic necessities like food, clothing, and shelter. The result is that their standard of living deteriorates. Some of the financial difficulties caused by poor conditions do not complete the education of the children in their families. Lack of proper and quality education creates unemployment problem in future and this cycle of poverty continues. Poverty also makes it impossible for widow to have health problems. Because of the lack of money, it is impossible to treat serious illness.

The following are some of the schemes that the Government of India has formulated to alleviate the problems of widows and alleviate their social and economic problems:

1) Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS)

The Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme is started by Central Government (Ministry of Rural Development) for providing financial help to widow women who belong to a very economically weaker section or who has (BPL). The scheme is introduced under National Social Assistance Programme in 1995. The scheme is specially meant for widow women because under this scheme woman gets a pension every month up to her death. Rs. 300 provided a financial assistance per month. All eligible women are provided with assistance in order to make life easier and independent and a kind of support is been provided through this scheme. For getting benefits of this centrally sponsored scheme applicant women need to qualify some eligibility criteria. Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme provides benefits in the form of financial assistance to the widow women. Rates of pension are mentioned below:

Widow of the age 40 years or more and below the poverty line is eligible and will get Rs. 300 per month up to 79 years and above that Rs. 500 per month.

2) Vidhwa Pension Yojana 2022

Widow Pension Scheme is operated by the government for all such women. Through Vidhwa Pension Yojana 2022, a pension is provided to the eligible widow women of the country every month. So that he can earn his living. Only those women can get the benefit of this scheme who are living below the poverty line. In this article, complete information related to vidhwa pension scheme will be shared with you.

Under this scheme, the amount given by the government is being transferred directly to the bank account of the beneficiary widow women, so it is mandatory for the applicant to have a bank account and the bank account should be linked to Aadhaar. Raising the standard of living of widowed women through this scheme.

The main objective of the Widow Pension Scheme is to provide financial assistance to widowed women. Women have to face many financial difficulties after the death of their husbands. Keeping this in mind, the widow pension scheme is run by the government. Through this Vidhwa Pension Yojana, financial assistance is

provided by the government to widowed women, So that they can make a living. Through this scheme, widow women will become self-reliant and empowered and their economic condition will also improve.

Now through this pension scheme, widowed women will not even need to depend on others to fulfil their needs. These are some schemes designed by the Government of India for the welfare and alleviation of poverty of widows.

Conclusion

From all of the above, it is clear that the main reason for widows' attachment to poverty is lack of employment. Also, their children do not get quality education and cannot meet their daily needs due to financial constraints. When dealing with health problems, there are many financial problems. As a result, the standard of living of widows deteriorates.

According to the census 2011, the southern states of India, despite having low mortality rate have the highest number of widows. But the states with worse HDI such as Bihar and Uttar Pradesh have lowest number of widows. A comparative study of both the 2001 and 2011 censuses shows that there was a significant increase in the number of young widows between 2001 and 2011 due to illegal child marriages in India. For this, child marriage, which is taking place illegally in India, must be stopped completely. Although it is not possible to reduce or control the number of widows, the Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme and the Vidhwa Pension Scheme 2022, designed by the Government of India for their social and economic welfare as well as to raise their living standards and alleviate their poverty. Efforts should be made to provide benefits to widows. In addition, to alleviate the poverty of widows, it is necessary to provide them with employable educational facilities and employment opportunities.

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