

 ISSN (O): 2320-5407 ISSN (P): 3107-4928	Journal Homepage: www.journalijar.com INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ADVANCED RESEARCH (IJAR) Article DOI:10.21474/IJAR01/23823 DOI URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.21474/IJAR01/23823	
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RESEARCH ARTICLE

PROBLEMS FACED BY DESTITUTE WIDOWS AT VARIOUS SITUATIONS IN NAGAPATTINAM DISTRICT, TAMIL NADU

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Manuscript Info

Manuscript History

Received: 10 May 2026
Final Accepted: 12 June 2026
Published: July 2026

Key words:-

Problems, Destitute widows, Vidhava
Social Inclusion, Widuwo,

Abstract

The situation of a woman whose husband has died is referred to as **widowhood**. A widow who lacks care, support, and financial resources is considered a **destitute widow**. In many societies, widows are often believed to have committed sins in their present or previous lives. As a result, they are stigmatized, socially ostracized, discriminated against, oppressed, and marginalized in all spheres of life. They face numerous challenges, including financial hardship, social isolation, and difficulties related to remarriage, especially during the early years of widowhood. The problems faced by destitute widows vary in intensity depending on several factors such as education, age, income, socio economic background, and employment status. Illiteracy, low levels of education, limited self-confidence, and lack of employment opportunities often lead to social isolation, exclusion, neglect, and marginalization in various aspects of life. In general, destitute widows experience greater difficulties in meeting the needs of their families while also fulfilling the expectations of society in accordance with prevailing social values and cultural norms. Their circumstances often require significant changes in their attitudes, behaviors, and ways of coping with life. Consequently, they encounter unique and complex problems that distinguish them from other members of society in general and from their own family members in particular. Understanding the problems of destitute widows is important because the pressures exerted by family and society often make it difficult for them to access and utilize the resources available to them effectively. Moreover, the problems of destitute widows are not confined to traditional societies alone. They continue to face numerous social, economic, psychological, and cultural challenges that require appropriate attention and intervention. Therefore, a study was conducted to examine these issues, and the findings are presented in this paper.

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Introduction;-

A **widow** is a woman whose husband has died and who has not remarried (The Shorter Oxford Dictionary, 1961). The term **vidhava** is an ancient word that can be traced beyond the Vedic language to Indo-European origins and exists, with only slight modifications, in most Indo-European languages. Accordingly, the term appears as **Vidua** in Latin, **Vedova** in Italian, **Viuda** in Spanish, **Veuve** in French, **Vidova** in Old Slavonic, **Vdova** in Russian, **Wituwa** in Old German, **Widuwo** in Gothic, **Vitavai** in Tamil, **Bewa** in Urdu, **Armala** in Arabic, **Widewe** and **Widuwe** in Old English, **Widow** in Modern English, and **Beva** in Persian. The word **vidhava** is derived from a root related to the Teutonic **wid** ("to lack"), the Latin **videre** ("to separate," as in **dividere**), and the Sanskrit **vidh** ("to be bereft") (Dutta, 1938).

Widowhood is one of the most difficult and distressing experiences in a woman's life. The death of a husband often brings numerous emotional, social, and economic challenges. In many cases, a widow realizes that her parental home is no longer considered her permanent residence, while her in-laws may perceive her as a burden on the family. Coping with the sudden loss of a spouse, dealing with grief, and simultaneously taking responsibility for leading an independent life can be extremely difficult, especially for women who become destitute widows (Singh & Gill, 1986).

Although widowhood is a painful life event, a woman's worth and individuality do not diminish upon becoming a widow. Her personality can continue to develop, enabling her to contribute meaningfully to herself, her family, society, the nation, and humanity as a whole. Across the world, widows face many common challenges. In India, the problem of widowhood is closely linked to the broader issue of the social status of women. A lasting solution to the problems faced by widows can be achieved only through a general improvement in the status of women in society.

Widows are often regarded as second-class citizens and treated as secondary members within their own families (Lopamudra, 1983). According to Barrett (1976), widows constitute a subculture whose members frequently experience loneliness, despair, and hopelessness. While they encourage one another to remain occupied and avoid self-pity, they often continue to struggle with feelings of isolation and uncertainty about the future.

Widowhood is frequently associated with reduced social participation and increased social isolation. Widows often lose their status within the family and kinship networks, face restrictions on participating in religious and cultural activities, and experience significant changes in their lifestyles and consumption patterns. They may suffer from emotional isolation, neglect, economic insecurity, and deprivation. These circumstances may also reduce the prospects of favorable marriage alliances and educational opportunities for their children. Changes in dress, restrictions on wearing ornaments, and exclusion from celebrations and entertainment further reinforce their marginalized status.

Problems of Widows:-

Destitute widows face a wide range of challenges, including inadequate food and shelter, emotional distress, financial hardship, difficulties in educating their children, ill-treatment by family members, and denial of property rights by their in-laws, including brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law. Among these, financial hardship is often the most serious, as it directly influences many other aspects of their lives.

The death of a husband frequently results in a substantial decline in household income, leading to a lower standard of living. Many widows struggle to secure basic necessities such as food, clothing, and shelter. Psychological consequences are equally severe. Loneliness, grief, anxiety, and depression may adversely affect their mental health, while prolonged isolation and insecurity increase the risk of psychological disorders. In addition, widows must adapt to changing family roles and social environments while coping with declining physical, emotional, and social well-being.

Statement of the Problem:-

The present study focuses on the problems faced by destitute widows, particularly those related to social life, personal life, remarriage, and adjustment within society. It seeks to understand the relationship between widowhood and adjustment problems experienced by destitute widows.

Some widows are able to cope with their difficulties because they receive emotional and social support from their families and communities. Such support serves as a protective factor that helps them manage stress and adapt to changing circumstances. However, widows who lack family and social support often experience loneliness, emotional distress, hopelessness, and difficulties in adjusting to life after the loss of their spouse.

Having already suffered the loss of their husbands, destitute widows frequently encounter additional challenges such as social isolation, discrimination, financial insecurity, and emotional neglect. These experiences significantly affect

their ability to adjust to their new circumstances. Therefore, it is important to examine the influence of loneliness on the adjustment problems experienced by widows.

Although everyone encounters problems in life, the adjustment difficulties faced by destitute widows are often more severe because they must simultaneously manage family responsibilities, financial constraints, and societal expectations. Organizing and maintaining the family environment becomes particularly challenging after the death of a husband. In recent years, increasing attention has been given to the various adjustment problems experienced by widows and their impact on family functioning. These difficulties not only affect the well-being of widows but also influence their relationships with other family members.

Many psychologists have emphasized that adjustment problems among widows represent a significant loss of human potential. Difficulties in adapting to changing circumstances may create emotional instability, reduce effective functioning, and disturb the family environment. Therefore, identifying appropriate measures to support widows and improve their adjustment is essential.

Accordingly, the present study was designed to examine how the family environment influences the adjustment problems experienced by destitute widows. The study was undertaken with the following objectives.

Objectives:-

- (i). To describe the socio-demographic profile of the excluded destitute widows;
- (ii). to analyze the problems faced by the destitute widows in the study area;
- (iii). to understand the level of awareness of destitute widows towards government programmes for widows; and
- (iv).to elicits suitable suggestions for mainstreaming the destitute widows in the contemporary society.

Operational Definition :-

Widows: Widows are those whose husband have died, irrespective of their age and have not married again.

Social problems: Social Problems of widows are classified in terms of the social stigma attached to them, imposed social restrictions and social boycott resulting in their low social status.

Economic problems: Economic problems include economic insecurity, dependence on other for basic needs, and inadequate income.

Personal problems: Personal problems include several personal problems like problems of remarriage in case of young widows or ill treatment meted out by grown up children in case of aged widows.

Methodology :-

Since, this is a pioneer research in the field of problems faced by destitute widows, the researcher adopted an exploratory research design to study this problem so as to fulfill the research gap and suggest suitable solutions. The present study has been summarized conducted with the support of primary data collected through a field survey with a well structured interview schedule with the application of purposive sampling techniques in the Nagapattinam District of Tamil Nadu, between the periods of July to September 2021 and analyzed with the help of the SPSS package to draw suitable statistical analysis to put forth the results to various platforms.

Analysis and Interpretation:-

Table – 1 Distribution of the Respondents by their Age, Age at marriageand widow

S. No	Age	No. of Respondents (N*=100)	Percentage (100%)
1.	Below 25	3	3%
2.	26-30	15	15%
3.	31-35	17	17%
4.	36-40	21	21%
5.	Above 40	44	44%
	Total	100	100%
S. No	Age at Marriage	No. of Respondents (N*=100)	Percentage (100%)
1.	Below 18	47	47%
2.	19-24	35	35%
3.	25-29	18	18%
	Total	100	100%

S. No	Age at widow	No. of Respondents (N*=100)	Percentage (100%)
1.	19-27	22	22%
2.	28-31	61	61%
3.	32-34	17	17%
	Total	100	100%

**Source: Computed from Primary data*

Age:-

The age plays a pivotal role to determine one's status and role in the society. It is seen from the above table show that out of the total 100 respondents, less than half 44 (44%) of the respondents belong to the age group of above 40 years; followed by that less than one fourth 21 (21%), 17 (17%), 15 (15%) and 3 (3%) of them were between the age group of 36-40 years, 31-35 years, 26-30 years and below 25 years respectively.

Age at Marriage:-

The above table shows that out of the total 100 respondents, less than half 47 (47%) of the respondents had married at the age of below 18 years; followed by that more than one fourth 35 (35%) and less than one fourth 18 (18%) of them had got married between the age group of 19-24 years and 25-29 years respectively.

Age at Widow:-

Of the total respondents, the majority 61 (61%) of the respondents were age at the time of widowhood was between 28-31; followed by that less than one fourth 22 (22%) and 17 (17%) of them had become widow between the age group of 19-27 years and 32-34 years respectively. It is understood that due to natural calamity called tsunami also became cause for the stigma of women as destitute.

Table – 2 Distribution of the Respondents by their Religion and Caste

S. No	Religion	No. of Respondents (N*=100)	Percentage (100%)
1.	Hinduism	49	49%
2.	Islam	15	15%
3.	Christianity	36	36%
	Total	100	100%

S. No	Caste	No. of Respondents (N*=100)	Percentage (100%)
1.	Backward Classes	47	47%
2.	Scheduled Castes	31	31%
3.	Scheduled Tribes	12	12%
4.	Most backward Classes	7	7%
5.	Other Castes	3	3%
	Total	100	100%

**Source: Computed from Primary data*

Religion:-

It is obvious from the study of the data given in the above table that out of the total 100 respondents, nearly half 49 (49%) of the respondents followed the Hinduism (Hindus) religion; followed by that more than one fourth 36 (36%) and less than one third 15 (15%) of them were followed the Christianity (Christian) and Islam (Muslim) respectively.

Caste:-It is clear from the study of the data given in the above table reveals that the less than half 47 (47%) of the respondents were belong to Backward Classes; followed by that less than one third 31 (31%), less than one third 12 (12%), few 7 (7%) and very few 3 (3%) of them were belongs to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Most Backward Classes and Other Castes (Naidu, Pillai and Muthaliar) respectively.

Table – 3 Distribution of the Respondents by their Educational Status

S. No	Educational Status	No. of Respondents (N*=100)	Percentage (100%)
1.	Research Degree	3	3%
2.	Post Graduate Degree	13	13%
3.	Under Graduate	15	15%
4.	Technical Degree	13	13%
5.	Higher Secondary Level Education	19	19%
6.	Diploma	5	5%
7.	High School Education	11	11%
8.	Middle School Education	9	9%
9.	Primary School Education	7	7%
10.	Illiterate	5	5%
	Total	100	100%

**Source: Computed from Primary data*

Educational Status:-

The above table reflects that the educational status of the respondents. Out of 100 respondents less than one third 19 (19%) of them were studied higher secondary level education; followed by that less than one third 15 (15%), 13 (13%), 13 (13%), 11 (11%), few 9 (9%), 7 (7%), 5 (5%), 5 (5%) and very few 3 (3%) of them were studied under graduate such as B.A., B.SC., and B.Com etc; post graduate degree such as M.A., M.SC., and M.Com etc; technical degree such as medical, engineering etc; high school education; middle school education; primary school education; diploma; illiterate and research degrees such as Ph.D., M. Phil., etc respectively. More than half 56 (56%) of the respondents had given importance to an education; followed by that less than one third 31 (31%) and little 13 (13%) of them had given importance to an education and had not given importance to an education due to financial problems, family restrictions etc respectively.

Table – 4 Distribution of the Respondents by their Occupation and Husband's Occupation

S. No	Occupation	No. of Respondents (N*=100)	Percentage (100%)
1.	Teacher	3	3%
2.	Nurse	6	6%
3.	Clerk	3	3%
4.	Typist	12	12%
5.	Accountant	16	16%
6.	Fourth grade employee	4	4%
7.	Factory labourer	19	19%
8.	Cleaner	10	10%
9.	Sweeper	9	9%
10.	Worker engaged in agriculture	7	7%
11.	Domestic servant	9	9%
12.	Unemployed depend on others	2	2%
	Total	100	100%
S. No	Husband's Occupation (Before Death)	No. of Respondents (N*=100)	Percentage (100%)
1.	Daily wages	41	41%
2.	Carpenter	3	3%
3.	Business Men	5	5%
4.	Electrician	7	7%
5.	Mechanic	6	6%
6.	Welder	8	8%
7.	Caters	2	2%
8.	Supervisor	11	11%
9.	Tailor	10	10%
10.	Manager	7	7%

	Total	100	100%
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**Source: Computed from Primary data*

Nature of Occupation:-

The above table reveals that less than one third 19 (19%) of the respondents were working as factory labourers; followed by that 16 (16%), 12 (12%), 10 (10%), few 9 (9%), 9 (9%), 7 (7%), 6 (6%), 4 (4%), 3 (3%), 3 (3%) and very few 2 (2%) of them were working as accountants in government and private bank, grocery shop, shopping mart, textile shops; typists in government sectors, court, VAO office and taluk office; cleaners in colleges and schools; sweepers in shopping mall, textiles show rooms, marriage hall, private schools and colleges; domestic servants, workers engaged in agriculture, nurses in government hospitals, private eye hospitals, nursing home and home care; fourth grade employees, clerks in Private bank, taluk and VAO office, teachers in government and private high and higher secondary schools and unemployed depend on others respectively.

Husband's Occupation(Before Death):-

The above table shows that less than half 41(41%) of the respondents' husband were working as daily wages; followed by that less than one third 11 (11%), few 10 (10%), 8 (8%), 7 (7%), 7 (7%), 6 (6%), 5 (5%), 3 (3%) and very few 2 (2%) of them were working as supervisors in garments, textiles shops and industries; tailoring works in garments, tailoring shops and own tailoring shops; welders in industries; managers in private bank, garments and textiles shops; two wheeler and four wheeler mechanic working in car and bike service center and own mechanic shops; business men such as textiles, electrical and electronic parts, boutique, hotels, owning a bakeries, selling handcrafted items; carpenter and caters catering food respectively.

Table – 5 Distribution of the Respondents by their Monthly Income

S. No	Annual Income	No. of Respondents (N*=100)	Percentage (100%)
1.	Rs.5000-8,000	52	52%
2.	Rs. 9000-13,000	31	31%
3.	Rs. 14,000-18,000	10	10%
4.	Above Rs.19,000	7	7%
	Total	100	100%

**Source: computed from primary data*

Monthly Income:-

It is evident from the above table that more than half 52 (52%) of the respondents' monthly income between Rs.5000-8,000/-; followed by that more than one third 31 (31%), few 10 (10%) and 7 (7%) of them were Rs. 9000-13,000, Rs. 14,000-18,000 and above Rs.19,000 respectively. From the above discussion it reflects that the varying economic situation of the respondents and cannot have their days meals without work.

Table – 6 Distribution of the Respondents by their Housing Particulars

S. No	Type of House	No. of Respondents (N*=100)	Percentage (100%)
1.	Hut	29	29%
2.	Tiled	42	42%
3.	Pucca	18	18%
4.	Destitute Homes	11	11%
	Total	100	100%
S. No	Nature of House	No. of Respondents (N*=100)	Percentage (100%)
1.	Own	61	61%
2.	Rented	30	30%
3.	Leased	9	9%
	Total	100	100%

**Source: computed from primary data*

Housing Particulars:-

As far as their types of house is concerned that less than half 42 (42%) of the respondents were living in tiled houses; followed by that more than one fourth 29 (29%), less than one third 18 (18%) and 11 (11%) of them were living in hut, pucca and destitute homes respectively. Out of 100 respondents the majority 61 (61%) of the respondents were living at their own houses and the remaining more than one fourth 30 (30%) and few 9 (9%) of them were living in rental and leased houses respectively.

Table – 7 Distribution of the Respondents by their Sources of problems

Sl.No	Sources of problems	Parents		Siblings		In-Laws	
		N*=100	100%	N*=100	100%	N*=100	100%
1.	Dress up soberly	51	51%	63	63%	82	82%
2.	Apply no make-up	45	45%	45	45%	79	79%
3.	Run household on one's own	34	34%	28	28%	58	58%
4.	Feel scared at night	56	56%	45	45%	56	56%
5.	Face criticism	58	58%	61	61%	63	63%
6.	Considered unlucky by people	42	42%	58	58%	72	72%
7.	Physical urges not fulfilled	61	61%	71	71%	61	61%
8.	Presence not welcomed at auspicious functions	63	63%	47	47%	73	73%
9.	Blamed for the death of the husband	34	34%	48	48%	58	58%

*source: Computed from primary data

** Multiple Responses

*** N: Total Number of the Respondents

Sources of problems:-

The above table expressed that the more than half 51 (51%) of the respondents were facing the problems of dress up soberly by their parents such as fathers, mothers, foster mothers, step fathers; followed by that less than half 45 (45%), more than one fourth 34 (34%), more than half 56 (56%), 58 (58%), 42 (42%), 61 (61%), 63 (63%) and 34 (34%) of them were facing the problems of apply no make-up, run household on one's own, feel scared at night, face criticism, considered unlucky by people, physical urges not fulfilled, presence not welcomed at auspicious functions and blamed for the death of the husband by their parents such as fathers, mothers, foster mothers, step fathers in the study area respectively.

Out of the total 100 respondents the majority 63 (63%) of the respondents were facing the problems of dress up soberly by their siblings such as elder brothers, elder sisters, younger brothers, younger sisters, cousin; followed by that less than half 45 (45%), 28 (28%), 45 (45%), 61 (61%), 58 (58%), 71 (71%), 47 (47%) and 48 (48%) of them were facing the problems of apply no make-up, run household on one's own, feel scared at night, face criticism, considered unlucky by people, physical urges not fulfilled, presence not welcomed at auspicious functions and blamed for the death of the husband by their siblings such as elder brothers, elder sisters, younger brothers, younger sisters, cousin in the study area respectively.

Of the total respondents, the vast majority 82 (82%) of the respondents were facing the problems of dress up soberly by their In-laws such as fathers-in-law, mothers-in-law, brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law; followed by that 79 (79%), 58 (58%), 56 (56%), 63 (63%), 72 (72%), 61 (61%), 73 (73%) and 58 (58%) of them were facing the problems of apply no make-up, run household on one's own, feel scared at night, face criticism, considered unlucky by people, physical urges not fulfilled, presence not welcomed at auspicious functions and blamed for the death of the husband by their In-laws such as fathers-in-law, mothers-in-law, brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law in the study area respectively.

Table – 8 Distribution of the Respondents by their Financial Problems

S. No	Financial Problems	No. of Respondents (N*=100)	Percentage (100%)
1.	Getting good food	76	76%
2.	Getting good cloths	51	51%
3.	Purchasing good things to home	67	67%
4.	Expenditure in festivals	48	48%

5.	Personal Expenses	63	63%
6.	Basic Expenditure	47	47%
7.	Financially depend on others and economic help from others	27	27%

*Source: computed from primary data

** Multiple Responses

The above table depicts that more than three fourth 76 (76%) of the respondents faced the problems of getting good food; followed by that more than half 51 (51%), majority 67 (67%), nearly half 48 (48%), majority 63 (63%), less than half 47 (47%) and more than one fourth 27 (27%) of them were faced the problems of getting good cloths, difficulty in Purchasing good things for the houses; face financial difficulties in meeting the expenditures in festivals; experience problem in meeting personal expenses; face hardship as their salaries were inadequate to meet the basic expenditure; economically hard up and face difficulty as have to depend on others and economic help from others for their basic expenditure respectively.

Table – 9 Distribution of the Respondents by their Social Life Problems

S. No	Social Life Problems	No. of Respondents (N*=100)	Percentage (100%)
1.	Considered unlucky	47	47%
2.	Blamed by the society	63	63%
3.	Auspicious functions	51	51%
4.	Suspicion among family members	61	61%
5.	Presence of old and conservative practices	67	67%
6.	Social functions as society attributes	73	73%
7.	Felt unwanted in my in-laws house	81	81%
8.	Face criticism and excessive restriction	36	36%
9.	Do not give much importance	76	76%
10.	Cannot frankly discuss problems	47	47%
11.	Cannot adhere to the rigid social norms	63	63%
12.	Cannot change mode of dress due to social objections	48	48%
13.	Dress up soberly as it is customary in the society	63	63%
14.	Fear of social criticism	67	67%
15.	Felt unhappy as lack male escort	31	31%
16.	Lack companionship	46	46%
17.	Cannot entertain male visitors	57	57%
18.	Regarding treatment	63	63%
19.	Fear sexual advance	71	71%
20.	Social organization for the fear being exploited	61	61%
21.	Regular essential outdoor activities	73	73%
22.	Physical abuse	76	76%
23.	Emotional abuse	61	61%
24.	Control feelings	96	96%

*Source: computed from primary data

** Multiple Responses

The above table reflects that the less than half 47 (47%) of the respondents were considered unlucky by the society; followed by that more than half 63 (63%), 51 (51%), 61 (61%), 67 (67%), less than three fourth 73 (73%), vast majority 81 (81%), more than one third 36 (36%), more than three fourth 76 (76%), less than half 47 (47%), more than half 63 (63%), less than half 48 (48%), more than half 63 (63%), 67 (67%), less than one third 31 (31%), less than half 46 (46%), more than half 57 (57%), 63 (63%), less than three fourth 71 (71%), more than half 61 (61%), nearly three fourth 73 (73%), more than three fourth 76 (76%), more than half 61 (61%) and significance 96 (96%) of them were blamed by the society for my husband's death, faced problem as their presence is not welcomed at auspicious functions, suspicion among family members about them becomes a problem for them, faced difficulty due to the presence of old and conservative practices in the family regarding widow, encounter difficulties in social functions as society attributes a very low status to widows, faced problem as they felt unwanted in my in-laws house after husband's death encountered difficulties as they have to face criticism and excessive restriction from their in-

laws, faced problem because their parents and in-laws did not give them much importance because they were widow faced problems because they cannot frankly discuss their problems with parents and in-laws faced difficulty as they could not adhere to the rigid social norms such as discarding ornaments, flowers, coloured dress etc, faced problem as they could not change their mode of dress due to social objections, dressed up soberly as it is customary in our society, apply no make up for fear of social criticism, felt unhappy as they lack male escort for attending social functions, faced problem as they lack companionship, could not entertain male visitors at home, faced problems in their working place regarding treatment from male colleagues, feared sexual advance from men, faced problems in being a member of any club or social organization for the fear being exploited (by taking advantage of helplessness), problem to do the regular essential outdoor activities like marketing paying electric bill, collecting gas/kerosene etc, physical abuses such as sexual harassment, continuous sit ups, touching chest, pinching the thigh, twist hand and hit on the back side, emotional abuse such as accusations of cheating and other signs of jealousy and possessiveness, constant checking and other attempts to control the other person's behaviour, constantly arguing and opposing,, criticism, solation and degradation, gaslighting and rejection, isolating the individual from their family and friends, name-calling and verbal abuse, refusing to participate in the relationship, shaming, belittling, blaming and humiliating, silent treatment, trivializing the other person's concerns, withholding affection and attention, insulting, negatively comparing with others and control their sexual and emotional feelings respectively.

Table – 10 Distribution of the Respondents by their Regarding Widow Remarriage Problems

S. No	Regarding Widow Remarriage Problems	No. of Respondents (N*=100)	Percentage (100%)
1.	Abstained from remarriage	71	71%
2.	Not find a suitable partner	63	63%
3.	Fear of death of my new partner	61	61%
4.	Age prevented	69	69%
5.	Inauspicious for young men to marry	73	73%
6.	Employment was an obstacle	63	63%
7.	Nobody took interest in getting married again	81	81%
8.	Lack of money	63	63%
9.	Society treats remarried widow	57	57%
10.	Respect for my late husband	61	61%
11.	Injustice to maidens	57	57%
12.	Create many social problems	63	63%
13.	Conscience does not permit to remarry	72	72%
14.	Bereavement and subsequent feelings of loyalty for husband	69	69%
15.	Accustomed to independence	58	58%
16.	Unwillingness to shoulder domestic responsibilities	79	79%

**Source: computed from primary data*

*** Multiple Responses*

The above table depicts that less than three fourth 71 (71%) of the respondents were abstained from remarriage because society does not accept/uphold widow remarriages; followed by that more than half 63 (63%), 61 (61%), 69 (69%), less than three fourth 73 (73%), more than half 63 (63%), vast majority 81 (81%), more than half 63 (63%), 57 (57%), 61 (61%), 57 (57%), 63 (63%), less than three fourth 72 (72%), more than half 69 (69%), 58 (58%) and more than three fourth 79 (79%) of them were they did not remarry as they did not find suitable partner, feared of death of their new partner prevented them from remarriage, the problem of age prevented them from remarriage because they regard their self too old to remarry, they said that it is inauspicious for young men to marry widows were an obstacle to widow remarriage, employment was an obstacle in widow remarriage, nobody took interest in getting them married again, so they remained single and did not marry, lack of money was an obstacle in getting remarried, society treats remarried widow as an outcaste in the community, so they preferred to remain widow, they had not remarried because they have love and respect for their late husband, they had not remarried because remarriage will mean, injustice to maidens whose problem had already become a complex one, they did not remarry because they feared that it will create many social problems, they did not want to remarry because they conscience did not permit them to remarry, guilt associated with bereavement and subsequent feelings of loyalty for husband was an obstacle to widow remarriage, accustomed to independence, fear of control by second husband and in laws

prevented them from remarriage, unwillingness to shoulder domestic responsibilities for a second time (looking after in-laws domestic chores) prevented them from remarriage respectively.

Table – 11 Distribution of the Respondents by their Expectations

S. No	Expectations	No. of Respondents (N*=100)	Percentage (100%)
1.	Caring	27	27%
2.	Good friends for sharing feelings	47	47%
3.	Financial support	48	48%
4.	Employment	51	51%
5.	Equality	63	63%
6.	Respect	67	67%
7.	Accustomed to independent	76	76%
8.	Independent	81	81%

**Source: computed from primary data*

*** Multiple Responses*

The above table shows that the vast majority 81 (81%) of the respondents were expecting independent such as attending functions, religious ceremony, foods, dress code and applying makeup; followed by that 27 (27%), 47(47%), 48 (48%), 51(51%), 63 (63%), 67 (67%) and 76 (76%) of them were expecting caring from others particularly parents, good friends for sharing feelings and personal problems, financial support to survival for their day-to-day life, employment for try to avoiding and depending others for financial needs, equality in properties, treating with respect and accustomed to independent with others without any restrictions respectively.

Table – 12 Distribution of the Respondents by their Level of Life Satisfaction

S. No	Level of Life Satisfaction	No. of Respondents (N*=100)	Percentage (100%)
1.	High	2	2%
2.	Moderate	17	17%
3.	Low	81	81%
	Total	100	100.0

**Source: computed from primary data*

The above table reflects that the vast majority 81 (81%) of the respondents were living with low level of life satisfaction; followed by that 17 (17%) and 2 (2%) of them were living with moderate and high level of life satisfaction due to widow in the study area respectively.

Table – 13 Distribution of the Respondents by their Level of Awareness on Government Schemes

S. No	Level of Awareness on Government Schemes	No. of respondents (N*: 100)	Percentage
1.	Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme	25	25%
2.	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment	31	31%
3.	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme.	19	19%
4.	Indira AwaasYojana	15	15%
5.	National Family Benefit Scheme	21	21%
6.	Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme	51	51%
7.	Destitute Widow Pension Scheme	32	32%

**Source: Computed from Primary data*

*** Multiple Responses*

According to the level of awareness on Government Schemes for widows existing in State and Central government. One fourth 25 (25%) of the respondents had known the Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme; followed by that less than one third 31 (31%), 19 (19%), 15 (15%), less than one fourth 21 (21%), more than half 51 (51%), more than half 57 (57%) and less than one third of them had known about the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, Indira AwaasYojana, National

Family Benefit Scheme, Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme and Destitute Widow Pension Scheme respectively.

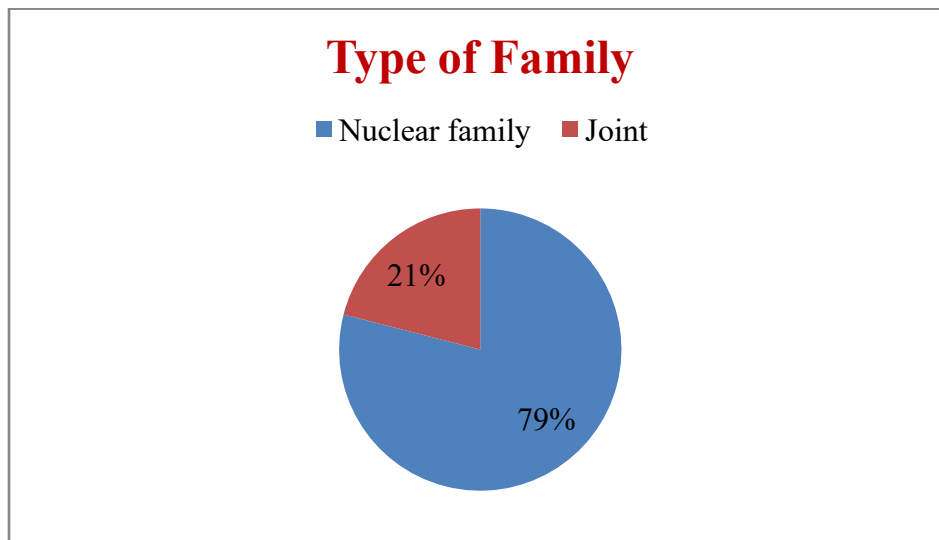
Table – 14 Distribution of Respondents According to Problems Faced while Applying for Pension

S. No	Problems Faced while Applying for the Pension	No. of respondents (N*: 100)	Percentage
1.	Demand of money/bribe	6	6%
2.	M.C/Sarpanch/Panchayat not signing or attesting the forms	3	3%
3.	Non availability of proof of Residence	4	4%
4.	Non-availability of proof of Age	7	7%
5.	Form not being filled correctly	5	5%
6.	Non-availability of proof of death Certificate of husband	6	6%
7.	Form lost in the office of Gram Panchayat or any other office	2	2%
8.	Delay on one pretext or other by officials	2	2%
9.	Being asked to fill the forms and complete all formalities again and again	1	1%
10.	Not Applicable	64	64%
	Total	100	100

**Source: Computed from Primary data*

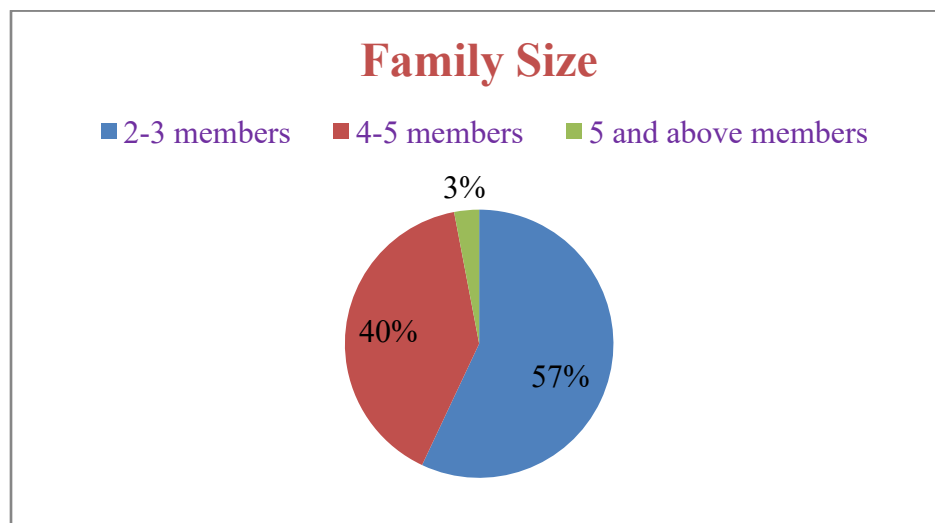
Out of 100 respondents, the majority 67 (67%) of the respondents were not getting any pension from state and central government for widows and the remaining more than one third 36 (36%) of them were getting various level of pension such as Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme and Destitute Widow Pension Scheme. Out of 100 respondents, the majority 67 (67%) of the respondents were not applicable because they were not getting any pension from state and central government for widows; followed by that less than one fourth 24 (24%) and less than one third 12 (12%) of them were getting their pension through bank account and direct cash in the study area respectively.

Out of 100 respondents, the majority 67 (67%) of the respondents were not applicable because they were not getting any pension from state and central government for widows; followed by that less than one fourth 23 (23%) and less than one third 13 (13%) of them were getting their pension every month and not regular respectively. Out of 100 respondents, the majority 67 (67%) of the respondents were not applicable because they were not getting any pension from state and central government for widows; followed by that few 7 (7%), 6 (6%), 6 (6%), 5 (5%), 4 (4%), 3 (3%), 2 (2%), 2 (2%) and 1 (1%) of them were faced the problems while applying for the pensions such as non availability of proof of age, demand of money/bribe, non availability of proof of death certificate of husband, form not being filled correctly, non availability of proof of residence, M.C/Sarpanch/Panchayat not signing or attesting the forms, form lost in the office of Gram Panchayat or any other office, delay on one pretext or other by officials and being asked to fill the forms and complete all formalities again and again respectively.

Diagram: 1

** Source: Computed from Primary data*

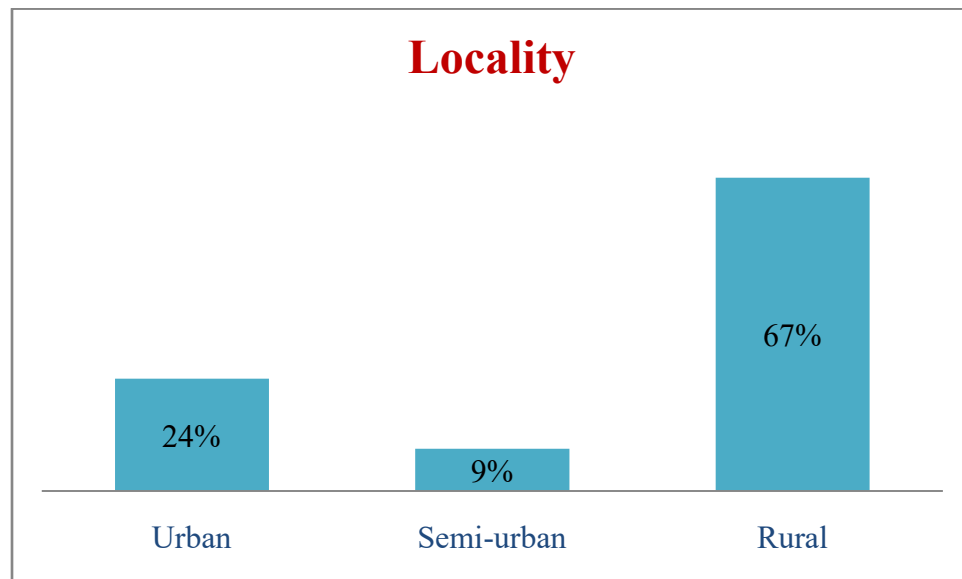
From the above chart explains while analyzing the more than three fourth 79 (79%) of the respondents were living for nuclear families and the remaining less than one fourth 21 (21%) of them were living for joint families in the study area.

Diagram: 2

** Source: Computed from Primary data*

The above diagram expressed about the Family size of the respondents. More than half 57 (57%) of the respondents' family members were 2-3 members; followed by that more than one third 40 (40%) and very few 3 (3%) of them family members were 4-5 members; 5 and above members respectively.

Diagram: 3



** Source: Computed from Primary data*

The above diagram shows about the locality of the respondents most of them were coming from all the three localities such as urban, semi-urban and rural in the study area. The majority 67 (67%) of the respondents were living in rural areas; followed by that nearly one fourth 24 (24%) and few 9 (9%) of them were from urban and semi-urban areas respectively. Most of them rural areas destitute widows were faced the social life, remarriage and financial problems compared to urban and semi-urban areas destitute widows in the study area respectively.

Findings, Suggestions and Conclusion:-

Findings of the Study:-

Socio-Demographic characteristics:-

- * The age plays a pivotal role to determine one's status and role in the society. Out of the total 100 respondents, less than half 44 (44%) of them were belonging to the age group of above 40 years; nearly half 49 (49%) of them were belonging to Hindu religion; less than half 47 (47%) of them were coming from Backward classes.
- * More than half 56 (56%) of them had given more importance to an education; less than half 41 (41%) of the respondents' husband were working as daily wage earners; more than half 52 (52%) of the respondents' monthly income between Rs.5000-8,000/- and the varying economic situation of the respondents lead to very difficult for them to meet out their daily eke outs.
- * Less than half 42 (42%) of them were living in tiled houses; and 61 (61%) of them were living at their own houses.
- * The majority 67 (67%) of them were living in rural areas; more than three fourth 79 (79%) of them were leading nuclear families; more than half 57 (57%) of the respondents' family members were 2-3 members.
- * More than half 56 (56%) of the total respondents were leading their self life; the majority 67 (67%) of them had one brother; more than one third 39 (39%) of the respondents had two sisters in the study.

Married life:-

- * Nearly half 49 (49%) of the respondents had got married within same caste; less than half 47 (47%) of the respondents had married at the age of below 18 years; less than half 40 (40%) of the respondents had enjoyed their married life upto ten years; the majority 61 (61%) of the total respondents were age at the time of widowhood was between 28-31 years; and the majority 61 (61%) of the respondents had 10-14 years old male boys and girls children.

- * Less than half 44 (44%) of the respondents' paid dowry for cash at the time of marriage; the majority 61 (61%) of the respondents' husband died due to natural calamity called tsunami also became cause for the stigma of women as destitute; 31 (31%) of them leading separate life after they become widowhood.
- * Majority 67 (67%) of the respondents' source of income was wholly depend on husband's income before widowhood; 70 (70%) of the respondents income source were employed after widowhood; 61 (61%) of the respondents expected helps from their parents immediately after the death of their husbands; and 60 (60%) of the respondents were travelling by bus to work place in the study area.

Sources of problems:-

- * More than half 51 (51%) of the respondents were facing the problems of dress up soberly by their parents such as fathers, mothers, foster mothers, step fathers; followed by that 45 (45%), 34 (34%), 56 (56%), 58 (58%), 42 (42%), 61 (61%), 63 (63%) and 34 (34%) of them were facing the problems of apply no make-up, run household on one's own, feel scared at night, face criticism, considered unlucky by people, physical urges not fulfilled, presence not welcomed at auspicious functions and blamed for the death of the husband by their parents such as fathers, mothers, foster mothers, step fathers in the study area respectively.
- * From the total respondents, the majority 63 (63%) of them were facing the problems of dress up soberly by their siblings such as elder brothers, elder sisters, younger brothers, younger sisters, cousin; followed by that 45 (45%), 28 (28%), 45 (45%), 61 (61%), 58 (58%), 71 (71%), 47 (47%) and 48 (48%) of them were facing the problems of apply no make-up, run household on one's own, feel scared at night, face criticism, considered unlucky by people, physical urges not fulfilled, presence not welcomed at auspicious functions and blamed for the death of the husband by their siblings such as elder brothers, elder sisters, younger brothers, younger sisters, cousin in the study area respectively.
- * Of the total respondents, the vast majority 82 (82%) of them were facing the problems of dress up soberly by their In-laws such as fathers-in-law, mothers-in-law, brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law; followed by that 79 (79%), 58 (58%), 56 (56%), 63 (63%), 72 (72%), 61 (61%), 73 (73%) and 58 (58%) of them were facing the problems of apply no make-up, run household on one's own, feel scared at night, face criticism, considered unlucky by people, physical urges not fulfilled, presence not welcomed at auspicious functions and blamed for the death of the husband by their In-laws such as fathers-in-law, mothers-in-law, brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law in the study area respectively.

Financial Problems:-

- * More than three fourth 76 (76%) of the respondents faced the problems of getting good food; followed by that 51 (51%), 67 (67%), 48 (48%), 63 (63%), 47 (47%) and 27 (27%) of them were facing the problems of getting good cloths, difficulty in purchasing good things for the houses; face financial difficulties in meeting the expenditures in festivals; experience problem in meeting personal expenses; face hardship as their salaries were inadequate to meet the basic expenditure; economically hard up and face difficulty as have to depend on others and economic help from others for their basic expenditure respectively.

Social Life Problems:-

- * Less than half 47 (47%) of the respondents were considered as unlucky by the society; followed by that more than half 63 (63%), 51 (51%), 61 (61%), 67 (67%), 73 (73%), 81 (81%), 36 (36%), 76 (76%), 47 (47%), 63 (63%), 48 (48%), 63 (63%), 67 (67%), 31 (31%), 46 (46%), 57 (57%), 63 (63%), 71 (71%), 61 (61%), 73 (73%), 76 (76%), 61 (61%) and significance 96 (96%) of them were blamed by the society for my husband's death, faced problem as their presence is not welcomed at auspicious functions, suspicion among family members about them becomes a problem for them, faced difficulty due to the presence of old and conservative practices in the family regarding widow, encounter difficulties in social functions as society attributes a very low status to widows, faced problem as they felt unwanted in my in-laws house after husband's death, encountered difficulties as they have to face criticism and excessive restriction from their in-laws, faced problem because their parents and in-laws did not give them much importance because they were widow, faced problems because they cannot frankly discuss their problems with parents and in-laws, faced difficulty as they could not adhere to the rigid social norms such as discarding ornaments, flowers, coloured dress etc, faced problem as they could not change their mode of dress due to social objections, dressed up soberly as it is customary in our society, apply no make up for fear of social criticism, felt unhappy as they lack male escort for attending social functions, faced problem as they lack companionship, could not entertain male visitors at home, faced problems in their working place regarding treatment from

male colleagues, feared sexual advance from men, faced problems in being a member of any club or social organization for the fear being exploited (by taking advantage of helplessness), problem to do the regular essential outdoor activities like marketing paying electric bill, collecting gas/kerosene etc, physical abuses such as sexual harassment, continuous sit ups, touching chest, pinching the thigh, twist hand and hit on the back side, emotional abuse such as accusations of cheating and other signs of jealousy and possessiveness, constant checking and other attempts to control the other person's behaviour, constantly arguing and opposing, criticism, isolation and degradation, gaslighting and rejection, isolating the individual from their family and friends, name-calling and verbal abuse, refusing to participate in the relationship, shaming, belittling, blaming and humiliating, silent treatment, trivializing the other person's concerns, withholding affection and attention, insulting, negatively comparing with others and control their sexual and emotional feelings respectively.

Regarding Widow Remarriage Problems:-

- * Nearly three fourth 71 (71%) of the respondents were abstained from remarriage due to non-acceptance of the society and uphold widow remarriages; followed by that more than half 63 (63%), 61 (61%), 69 (69%), 73 (73%), 63 (63%), 81 (81%), 63 (63%), 57 (57%), 61 (61%), 57 (57%), 63 (63%), 72 (72%), 69 (69%), 58 (58%) and 79 (79%) of them were did not remarry as they did not find suitable partner, feared of death of their new partner prevented them from remarriage, the problem of age prevented them from remarriage because they regard their self too old to remarry, they said that it is inauspicious for young men to marry widows were an obstacle to widow remarriage, employment was an obstacle in widow remarriage, nobody took interest in getting them married again, so they remained single and did not marry, lack of money was an obstacle in getting remarried, society treats remarried widow as an outcaste in the community, so they preferred to remain widow, they had not remarried because they have love and respect for their late husband, they had not remarried because remarriage will mean, injustice to maidens whose problem had already become a complex one, they did not remarry because they feared that it will create many social problems, they did not want to remarry because they conscience did not permit them to remarry, guilt associated with bereavement and subsequent feelings of loyalty for husband was an obstacle to widow remarriage, accustomed to independence, fear of control by second husband and in laws prevented them from remarriage, unwillingness to shoulder domestic responsibilities for a second time (looking after in-laws domestic chores) prevented them from remarriage respectively.

Expectations:-

- * The vast majority 81 (81%) of the respondents were expecting independents like attending functions, religious ceremony, foods, dress code and applying makeup; followed by that 27 (27%), 47 (47%), 48 (48%), 51 (51%), 63 (63%), 67 (67%) and 76 (76%) of them were expecting caring from others particularly parents, good friends for sharing feelings and personal problems, financial support to survival for their day-to-day life, employment for try to avoiding and depending others for financial needs, equality in properties, treating with respect and accustomed to independent with others without any restrictions respectively.

Level of Life Satisfaction:-

- * The vast majority 81 (81%) of the respondents were living with low level of life satisfaction due to widow in the study area.

Socio-psychological feelings:-

- * Out of 100 respondents, vast majority 82 (82%) of them were felt sad; followed by that significance 98 (98%), 61 (61%), 47 (47%) and 31 (31%) of them were felt lonely, affected by stress, anxiety and depression respectively.

Level of Awareness on Government Schemes:-

- * According to the level of awareness of the respondents on Government Schemes existed for widows in State and Central government is that one fourth 25 (25%) of the respondents had known the Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme; followed by that Less than one third 31 (31%), 19 (19%), 15 (15%), 21 (21%), 51 (51%), 57 (57%) and less than one third of them had known about the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, Indira AwaasYojana, National Family Benefit Scheme, Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme and Destitute Widow Pension Scheme respectively. The majority 67 (67%) of the respondents were not able to get any pension from state and central government for widows.

Suggestions:-

- ❖ Rehabilitation of widows could be through education, vocational training, employment or welfare programmes and remarriage to protect widows from exploitation and victimization.
- ❖ Widow remarriage should be encouraged to enable young and childless destitute widows and provide them with financial and emotional support in their life.
- ❖ Mass media, educational institutions, voluntary agencies, and political parties should formulate policies for the protection of widows and create a favourable environment for these widows to remarry and settle down.
- ❖ Voluntary organizations should take up education and opinion building programmes in favour of the widow rehabilitation programme and establish secular homes for widows.

Conclusion:-

The status of destitute widows is inferior because they are considered as unfortunate women whose sin brought them widowhood. While widows are sympathized with for their misfortune, no chance is left unexplored to exploit them. Sometimes they are lured and often become victims. Some destitute widows expressed their feelings of physical depression, acute personal loss, and a sense of rejection because of the loss of their husband. They complained of a lack of position and respect in society and were subjected to unhealthy discussion of their personal lives by their male co-workers. Most destitute widows expressed that they were pained by this indifferent attitude as society offered them no sympathy, security, status and position. They had a negative attitude towards remarriage due to the presence of their parents, in-laws, society, and their own commitments and responsibilities towards them in society. It is evident from the analysis of primary data that it has been concluded that destitute widows, having fulfilled their responsibilities towards family, looked forward to a peaceful life and wanted to go on a pilgrimage and seek resources in religion.

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