



## IGNOMINY, AGONY AND DESERTION OF WIDOWS IN THE SOCIETY: A SOCIO-LEGAL STUDY ON THE TRIBULATION OF WIDOWHOOD IN INDIA

Dr Rupali Deb Barma<sup>1\*</sup>

[rupalidbarman@gauhati.ac.in](mailto:rupalidbarman@gauhati.ac.in)

Banashree Roy<sup>2\*\*</sup>

[banashreeroy55@gmail.com](mailto:banashreeroy55@gmail.com)

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### Abstract

Women in a country like India where patriarchal notions take precedence are only respected if she has a husband by their side. A sad and harsh reality lies when it comes to the plight of widows in India. Widows in the country in the modern world are disdained, disgraced, and deserted, leading a life in the shadows. They are many a time ignored, humiliated, and left all alone to fend for themselves. The plight of these widows raises Goosebumps because the word “widow” is associated with the pains, cries, and helplessness of these women who are left all alone after the death of their soul mates, sometimes by their relatives and at times by their children. The widow cities in the country provide solace to the widows but that cannot hide the scars of these women who have to suffer abandonment. These widows are left all alone and dedicate their lives in the service of the deity. It is surprising to note that even today widows are considered to be a burden on society fighting every day for food, clothing, and shelter. The authors through this paper tries to throw light on the status of Hindu widows in India, real-life problems experienced by widows, the basic rights they are deprived of including the challenges they face in their day-to-day lives which are mostly unseen, unheard, and unsupported by putting an attempt suggesting some measures to curb the same.

**Keywords** Widowhood, Abandoned widow, Legal Rights, Religious taboo, Constitution of India.

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### INTRODUCTION

The word ‘widow’ cringes the one who is one, and when she is abandoned, it hurts even more. Shaming of widowhood still prevails in many parts of India, and even today, widows in many parts are deprived of any color and clad in white after their husband’s death, followed by the ridiculous rituals attached to it. Orthodox Indians are afraid of white widows just like they are afraid of seeing a black cat. Widows, both young and old, being abandoned by their own families, and having nowhere to go often seek solace in Vrindavan and Varanasi, the ‘widow cities of India’. The widows, in other words, are the victims of the social structure where the caste system and religious practices intermingle to frame laws and

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<sup>1\*</sup> Assistant Professor, P.G. Department of Law, Gauhati University

<sup>2\*\*</sup> Teaching Associate & Research Scholar, P.G. Department of Law, Gauhati University

norms for women. Those who dare to challenge the established norms are considered to be impure and treated as transgressors.

## ORIGIN OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Widows in India, even in this 21<sup>st</sup> century, are shunned by many communities and abandoned by their families, even though the evil practice of *sati-dah* has been banned long back in the country.

As per the United Nations, there are an estimated 258 million widows around the world, and nearly one in ten out of those living in extreme poverty. In India, there are roughly more than 40 million widows today, which is 10 percent of the country's female population. India.com Staff (2020, June 23). Being a widow has been a curse to many, unloved and unwanted. In most cases, abandoned widows reside on the streets, in temples, hermitages, and shelter homes. The shelter homes available for the abandoned widows are salubrious but many times are cramped with dingy rooms where they try to live like a family. Abandoned widows are still, considered to be inauspicious and ostracized by many. It is indeed shameful, that on the one hand, when we are scientifically, economically and technologically evolving, there are issues like these, on the other, which is inhumane, and one of the worst forms of human rights violations, prevalent in the society, which is of utmost concern.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodologies adopted by the researchers are primarily doctrinal method of study. The doctrinal aspect basically includes the collection of data, both by primary and secondary sources.

The primary sources include the case laws, the legislations and survey reports. The secondary sources include articles, journals and internet sources.

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The present research paper tries to highlight the socio-economic plight of the widows and the ritual constrictions placed on them, prevalent in Hindu society and the characters and their practices in their region in particular. Through this paper, the authors try to throw light on the various atrocities connected to abandoned widows, the real-life instances of some, the impact on widows during the covid outbreak, and by putting forward some remarkable suggestions. The issue in this paper reflects the understanding of the concepts, especially the hindu widows, such as the patriarchal system, culture, caste system, and marginalization which is a gross violation of the human rights of widows.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Tracing back to the history of India, during the Vedic period, women had high esteem in the society wherein they have availed the right to education and also the liberty in their choices of selecting their spouses. In respect of the widows, too, the norms and principles were quite flexible. A widow during that period had several options like *Sahamaranathat* (voluntarily joining the dead husband on his funeral pyre), besides *Niyog* (the procedure through which a widow could conceive another man's child if she desired to do so). Alternatively, a widow could also opt for *Brahmacharya* (rigid celibacy where she ceases to

perform any sexual activity). A widow after the death of her husband also had the option of finding another spouse of her choice during that period. Verma, Shivalika (2020, September 28). Therefore, it is evident that widows during the Vedic period had quite a good status and norm of life in society.

However, during the later Vedic period and the early medieval era, the sublime status of a woman went downslide. *Manu*, the Hindu primogenitor of Mankind stated, that A righteous wife is one who after the death of her husband constantly remains chaste and reaches heaven though she has no son. The traditions like “widow-burning” or *sati-dah* in other words, framed the patterns of social behavior of Hindu society in respect of widows. The conduct towards the widows turned out to be extremely unjust and sadistic. Conventionally, the widows were held responsible for the death of their respective husbands. Even the shadow of a widow was believed to inflict depredation and thought to be bringing bad luck. It was also believed that once a woman’s husband died, the wife should pronounce all comforts of home. She should wear a plain white saree as a sign of lamentation. The appearance of widows at rituals, marriage functions, and other ceremonies and celebrations was considered to be unpropitious. Those belonging to the orthodox families, in some cases, even went further, by shaving the woman’s head after the death of her husband. These practices were being done to make the widow sexually unattractive so that no man ever gets attracted to her or she never gets married. Verma, Shivalika (2020, September 28).

As already stated, however, the evil practice of *sati-dah* was terminated during British rule in India. Despite the advancements made for the betterment of the lives of widows in this country, widows in several regions of the country live a dejected and miserable life.

In general, widowhood in India is considered to be a very insubstantial period in the life of a woman, underlined by notable impoverishment, lack of family support, and a prominent risk of mortality. Verma, Shivalika (2020, September 28).

## STATE OF WIDOWHOOD

Widowhood in a woman’s life is a crisis, involving new social adjustments for the family as well as for herself. Fritz, M.A. (1929). The most basic characteristics of a widowed woman may be cited hereunder:

- a. A woman who must have been married.
- b. Widowhood is not welcomed because people always wish marriage to continue.
- c. The loss is irreplaceable and widowhood cannot be avoided. Brubaker, T.H. (1985).

The state of widowhood in a woman’s life is considered to be the greatest change in a woman’s life which leads to the loss of status resulting in a traumatic situation for a woman in her life. Widowhood, since all ages, is considered to change the basic self-identity of many women. This is true in cases of the traditionally-oriented women for whom the role of the wife was the main priority in their lives.

Rosow says that widowhood hits women, particularly, harder than men. A widower, being economically independent, does not necessarily feel the stigma, and the loss of the spouse, as much a woman does. Widowhood, thus, is primarily a female phenomenon. Rosow, I. (1967).

According to Greg, widowhood is an event that brings about the greatest change in the status of a widow, for it is often accompanied by deleterious consequences. This is not only

because of the loss of the husband but also because of the lack of clear-cut cultural expectations regarding the proper role of the widow. Greg, A. (1976).

Hymen observes that widowhood is one of the sad facts of existence. Millions of women experience this misfortune and generally bear its burden for many years. Hymen, H.H. (1983).

### **WIDOWHOOD IN INDIA**

India is a country, which has incidents portraying the miserable life of widows for ages. The country having diversities of religions, has diverse notions pertaining to widowhood and the plight is indeed pitiable and sorrowful, as it carries with it, problems of ill-health, insufficiency of money, unemployment and strained social relations with one's children, friends and family.

Christianity in the country, however, has accepted widowhood and remarriage as natural. Christian women and widows are treated with respect, thereby, not being considered a serious problem. J.M Jogula, J.M. (1988).

In Islam, widowhood like divorce is a non-issue. Its acceptability in society is free from inhibitions and taboos. Jogula, J.M. (1988). Even in Jainism, widowhood is not a serious problem. Though in Jainism, widow remarriage is not allowed; however, the widow's have freedom in the religious, social, and political fields.

In India, the widow represents the last and lowest stage in life for Hindu Women. It is evident throughout the country, widowhood in the Hindu religion is considered to be punishment for some horrible crime or crimes committed by the woman in her previous birth due to which she suffers the consequence of being a widow.

An exploration into the folklore of the different regions of India widens our awareness about the conditions of the plight of widows. In the folklore of West Bengal women consider widowhood as a great curse. Akshaya, Kumar. (1969).

The Tamil folklore mentions that the condition of the widows in all castes is indeed miserable. Her presence is considered inauspicious and hence, a widow is discouraged from appearing in any social and cultural events. She lives an unseen existence. Akshaya, Kumar. (1969). In the folklore of Orissa, widowhood is considered much more sorrowful than even the death of a loved daughter, for the misery over the loss of a daughter can be overcome, but, widowhood dogs a woman till her death. Akshaya, Kumar. (1969).

Therefore, in almost all cultures, widowhood is a crisis in a woman's life. However, the different cultures differ among themselves to overcome the cultural crisis. While some cultures, allow the widows to remarry, some allow it only in exceptional circumstances.

### **WOMEN AS VICTIMS – SOME REAL LIFE INSTANCES**

Violation of rights and abuses is almost an indispensable part of some women's lives, since time immemorial, though the nature; type and intensity are often different based on class, caste, and ethnicity. Women of all ages have experienced acts or threats of violence whether within the four walls of a house, at the workplace, or any other place. It is not something new or recent issue that has been in existence for a very long time. Women all over the world have been victims of humiliation, torture, and exploitation as evident in various historical records. Widows after her husband's death not freed either from the spokes of humiliation, deprivation, and hatred.

Women, since ancient times, have been considered to be inferior to that of men. As such, patriarchal notions are infused in a woman since her birth. Starting as a toddler to being married off, a woman is always taught to be a thing of subjection. She is taught the values of a family, and how to hold that family. And managing all the activities and also age-old thoughts make her weak at times. Widows too, consider the evil remarks and the hatred infused as her fate and silently suffers in distress.

Though in this 21<sup>st</sup> century the status of women has gained new dimensions, there are some places, where women still consider themselves to be the weak and feeble ones and, as such they end up being soft targets, always, be it a young girl, or a married woman or a widow. The age-old patriarchal notions and values have greatly affected and as such, despite of developing us to such an extent in the present century, these practices are still considered very relevant, especially concerning women.

Subudra Dasi, aged sixty-seven, has stated that her children had abandoned her after the death of her husband. She walked, hitching rides from truck drivers to sleeping on roads, finally reaching Vrindavan. She further states that the widows residing in Vrindavan at present are her family where she lives a life of dignity. Shafi, Showkat. (2016, March 7).

Meera Dasi, who is of seventy-three years of age states that she went to her parent's house after she became a widow, but her parents refused to accept her. The time she spent with them after the death of her husband was a nightmare for her. She was beaten, starved, and not allowed to enter the main house to socialize with other family members. She ran away after all the tortures and negligence and sought solace in Vrindavan which has been her home since then. Shafi, Showkat. (2016, March 7).

Arti Mishri, who lost her husband when she was only eighteen years of age, was thrown out of the house by her in-laws because they feared that she might demand a share in the ancestral property, who is now sixty-five years old. Arti's brother even didn't wish to live with his family because widows bring bad luck and thereby, she, too found refuge in Vrindavan. Shafi, Showkat. (2016, March 7).

Pingela Maiti, aged eighty-five, states that she was barely only nine years old when she was forced to marry a forty-year-old man. She added that her husband died within a few years after her marriage, and she returned to her maternal home as a child widow. Her family forced her to shave her head and was forced to beg for food. Facing all these difficulties, she finally ran away and moved to Mathura to be with the widows. Shafi, Showkat. (2016, March 7).

The above-mentioned are some of the real-life incidents shared by widows in India who seek solace in the "widow cities of India." Speaking about their traumas and the hardships they faced after becoming a widow, it can be imagined how tough it has been for them to face these hardships. All of them however sought refuge in Vrindavan, which is home to more than twenty thousand widows. The widows by seeking solace in the widow cities and also many shelters that are run by the government and the NGOs has at least some shelter now to live in who are deprived of even a house to live in.

## PLIGHT OF WIDOWS DURING ‘COVID-19’ OUTBREAK

The already known pandemic of covid-19 which started seeing cases during the latter part of 2019, not only threatened society with the deadly disease but it brought along with some serious repercussions on society.

The lockdown announced worldwide affected the widows of various regions including India which is evident. Many women from rural areas were severely affected. More than 30,000 children have been orphaned in India and many women have suffered as they lost their husbands during the brutal pandemic. Kad, Renuka, (2021, June 27). India has had more than 30 million covid cases and 411,000 deaths. More than 200,000 of those deaths took place during the second wave alone, which began in April and peaked in May. And it's hard to measure how many have faced the wrath of widowhood during the second wave. The national government did not provide gender-specific data on covid-19 deaths, however, the data shows the mortality rate during India's second wave in regions like Bangalore and Pune has had a greater toll on men as compared to women. Ghosh, Agnee.(2021, July 19).

According to a survey carried out in the year 2015, by rating agency Standard and Poor's (S & P), 35 percent of men across the globe are financially literate compared to 30 percent of women, BBC reported. But in India, financial literacy is lower and the gender gap is wider, with 27 percent of men being financially literate compared to just 20 percent of women. Deb Roy, Lachmi. (2022, January 24).

This proves the fact that women who lost their husbands, who in many cases were the sole breadwinners for their families, were left all alone to face the battle of life. Many of them were unable to read and write, could not get hold of a job, and were abandoned by their families. Besides the lockdown paved the way for more difficulties as hindrances in obtaining a job on their own.

These women who became widows were being termed as ‘covid widows’ as referred to by the Indian media who were deprived of their rights, abandoned by their families, forced to live away from their children, and faced sexual harassment including mental torture which has become darker due to covid-19 pandemic.

## WIDOWS DEPRIVED OF CERTAIN RIGHTS

Deprivation of the widows in general means a widow who is physically, psychologically, and socially handicapped to fulfill her bio-social needs in the society.

Widows in our country are seen to be deprived of various rights at various times. It is evident that even though the evil practice of *sati-dah* (burning the widow in the pyre along with her husband) has been banned long back in the country, there are some practices that are still barbaric and inhuman. Widows in many parts of the country after their husband's death is deprived of any color and clad in white after their husband's death, followed by the ridiculous rituals attached to them. The rituals which follow after the death of the husband of a woman are breaking of the bangles which a woman adorns, removing the vermilion from the forehead, removing other jewellery, and accessories and cladding her in pure white to make her a symbol of the age-old traditions. It is indeed pitiable that instead of focusing on providing sympathy to a woman who lost her husband, society is keener to do such acts sometimes, forcibly, claiming it to be upholding the age-old traditions.

Widows in India face and have been facing several problems since time immemorial. The problems faced by a widow may range from lack of proper shelter, to sexual harassment, emotional, and economic is counted to be some among the many.

Widows after the death of her husband in many households, is considered to be cursed women not accepted by the husband's family members after the former's death. As a consequence, that follows is the grabbing and throwing out of a widow from the house deprived of shelter. A widow who has no financial stability of her own has nowhere to go after being thrown out. Widows, both young and old, being abandoned by their own families, and having nowhere to go often seek solace in Vrindavan and Varanasi, the two prominent cities also popularly known as the 'widow cities of India'.

A woman after losing her husband, or in other words, her guardian, becomes all alone in society. And taking advantage of the situation of her loneliness, many times people try to harass and exploit the widows making situations worse for her.

Widows also face emotional abuse from their family members and society. She many a time, is neglected, and many is considered to be a bad omen, wherein, in many rituals or functions like marriage functions she is not allowed to participate and take part considering is something not *shubh* (auspicious).

Though woman in the present-day world stands on an equal footing to that of a man, there are instances, where, she is deprived of education, and many a time because of poverty, she is being married off, completely to be dependent on their husband. As such after the death of her husband, she has to face an economic crisis because of her ill fate as society considers it. She is being neglected as a result is sometimes deprived of good food, clothing, and proper shelter, as such. Sometimes, the children also have to face the consequences, as a result of this which forces them to work for others, depriving them of their basic education.

#### **VRINDAVAN AND VARANASI-THE WIDOW CITIES OF INDIA**

Vrindavan and Varanasi are popularly known as the widow cities of India. Nobody can quite precisely explain why both these towns attract widows around India. Some come there as genuine worshippers to commit their remaining years to the service and devote to the name of *Radha-Krishna*, but many others opt to come there to get away from the barbaric family homes as they are considered to be unwanted baggage. Some of the widows here lead a disgusting life as they have no one to look after them engaging themselves in practices like begging and prostitution for maintaining a sustainable livelihood. India.com Staff (2020, June 23).

The Apex Court of India, after taking into consideration the media reports of the discreditable living conditions of the widows in these towns ordered the government and the civic agencies to ameliorate the lives of women in Vrindavan. The Uttar Pradesh government also has initiated to appointment a panel to collect data on the socio-economic conditions of widows. (2020, June 23).

Besides, Varanasi and Vrindavan, Mathura is another holy city in Uttar Pradesh in India where several widows have found refuge. Undoubtedly, the shelter available for the widows heaves a sigh of relief for the homeless widows, but the life they spend there is not enough to be called a happy life where most of the rooms are populated and dingy, many a time not giving a homely feeling altogether. The widows living in those shelters cook their

food using the money they earn either by begging or by singing devotional songs at temples. Such is the scenario that the widows face during their lifetime.

### **INTERNATIONAL STATUS**

The Global Fund for Widows, Widows for Peace through Democracy, The Guild of Service (India), Widows Rights International, Women for Human Rights- Single Women's Groups (Nepal), the Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme, Aurat Foundation (Pakistan), INMAA Organization for Development (Iraq), Association of Anglo-Iranian Women in the UK, Association of War Affected Women (Sri-Lanka), Women in War, All India Women's Conference, WUNRN- Women's UN Report Network, and The Global Alliance for the Last Woman First have for many years been urging governments, UN entities, and the international community, in general, to acknowledge and urgently address, the extreme discrimination, abuse and violation of human rights that has neglected to acknowledge the experiences of millions of widows around the world, across regions, cultures, religions, irrespective of caste, class, economic or educational status.

### **NATIONAL LEGAL STATUS**

The Constitution of India, the supreme law of the land, places women on an equal footing with that men under Article 14. (1950). "*Right to Equality.*" The Constitution of India. Article 15(2) (1950). "*No discrimination on religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth or any of them....*" The Constitution of India. and 15(3) (1950). "*Special provision for women and Children.*" The Constitution of India. of the Grundnorm also prohibits discrimination and permits the State to make special provisions for the women and the children respectively which is remarkable. Besides, Article 21, (1950). "*Right to life and personal liberty.*" The Constitution of India. which guarantees the right to life, also includes within its ambit, the right to live with human dignity, except according to procedure established by the law.

In India, many portions of the rights of widows are given a uniformity such as rights regarding property, coparcenary, inheritance, and others. Under the provisions of the Hindu Succession Act, 1956, the widows who choose to remarry do have a right to their deceased husband's property. Young girls who are married off at a very early age after the death of their husband have to endure the pain of both child marriage and widowhood at such an age. These child widows undergo multiple violations of their basic human rights at such a tender age. Being a widow, at such a tender age, she lacks ingress to justice and is often manipulated by various persons. However, rights are provided by the Government for safeguarding them.

The Hindu Widow Remarriage Act, which was enacted under British rule, enacted in the year 1856 on 26<sup>th</sup> July, was the first important and pivotal social reform law after the abolition of *sati-dah* initiated by Lord William Bentinck. The enactment of the Act has paved the way for the widows who are now entitled to marry of their choice which is applaudable.

### **SCHEMES FOR THE WELFARE OF THE WIDOWS.**

In a country like India, where the sufferings are not an exception like most countries, a need to form schemes and a helping hand for providing relief to the abandoned widows was



felt. Some of the notable among the many are mentioned here under which aim for providing relief like monetary relief, proper education, rehabilitation, counseling, and other training provided to the former.

The Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme, the Vidhwa Pension Yojana, and the National Family Benefit Scheme are some of the notable schemes in India which provide monetary relief to the widows of the nation.

Besides the schemes, some notable NGOs working in the field of widow welfare by providing care and access to sustainable livelihoods are Maitri India, VeerNari Shakti Resettlement Foundation, Action Aid, Manav Vikas Seva Sangh and the Rehabilitative Assistance for people in Distress works for the aid of the widows in India. Swamy, V. Kumara (2021, June 23).

In the state of Assam too, where widows are often misbranded as 'witches' after the death of their husbands too face the same wrath of deprivation in society and covid-19 is not an exception. In June in 2021, the state announced that it would give one-time financial assistance of about \$3,357 to 'covid widows'. Akshaya, Kumar. (1969). Besides, as per the latest reports dated September 11, 2022 the Assam government announced to launch of a scheme to offer a one-time exgratia of Rs. 25,000 to more than 12,000 women, who lost their husbands after 2020. However, the scheme will be applicable only in the age group of 18-45. And that will be in addition to the monthly pension of Rs. 300 which is specified under the Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme. Kalita, Kangkan. (2022, September 11).

Though the government and several NGOs have taken initiatives to provide a helping hand by offering training, education, clothing, shelter, and schemes afforded to the widows yet researchers say that it does not suffice enough.

## **ANALYTICAL REVIEW**

Widows in India have seen a transition from the early period till date. Women who were considered to be slaves or a mere property have over the years attained the dignity of a human being having all rights and remedies associated with her. From being burned alive along with her dead husband to attaining various rights today, widows have indeed embarked upon new horizons.

However, there prevails issues which needs to be a concern in several aspects as far as the widows are concerned which implies a long way to go.

Firstly, the worst sufferers as far as widows are concerned are the Hindu widows which even today are entwined with the age old harsh customs combined with illiteracy and poverty attached to that of a widow. Many being unaware regarding the rights and remedies provided to them by law itself is deprived of their legal rights.

Secondly, in a country like India, where child marriages are still rampant in some of the major cities in spite of having laws to curb the same has a severe impact on the young girls who lost their husbands at such a young age, often ending their lives or thrown out of the homes having nowhere to go.

Thirdly, although the present era has accorded rights in relation to property to widows in almost all the religions in India, there lie complexities of laws governing them because of lack of uniformity in these aspects.

It is evident that there prevails several schemes working with the objective of upliftment of widows, however, there lacks responsibilities regarding the implementation of the same combined with lack of robust monitoring mechanisms and utilization of funds. Even the schemes sometimes are not inclusive.

Last but not the least, the hygiene and the living conditions of the shelter homes provided to widows are far from satisfactory.

## A WAY FORWARD

From the above study, the authors would like to suggest some proposals wherein the issue related to abandoned widows can be curbed at least to some extent.

Firstly, the concept of remarriage which is even recognized by the legal documents should be applauded in society. In the modern based world, society is in a situation to perceive this notion and should be happily accepted. Women who lose their husbands, even in a bad marriage, are made to feel all alone and helpless at times. Instead of forcing them to go through that trauma, they should be given a new life, to lead a happy and contented life after the death of their soul mates.

Secondly, women should be provided the basic education so that they remain financially independent and every household should provide this opportunity to their girl child boosting confidence among them and thus, not facing economic insecurity. Education as an important tool can change many things. Women like *Pandita Ramabai* (from Madras Presidency), *Dr.V. Mohini Giri* (From Lucknow), and *Mamoni Raisom Goswami* (From Assam) who are glaring examples in this context should be an inspiration to many who worked for the upliftment of widows in the society.

Thirdly, the media by creating awareness in the form of short plays or documentaries can play a pivotal role to change the mindset of the people in the society.

Initiatives by the governments to destitute widows especially, the child widows, who ends up being a widow because of early marriage, their health, education and the rights should be monitored making them aware to live a life of dignity in the society.

Thus, these are some of the ways forward to tackle the issues related to widowhood that can be taken care of.

## CONCLUSION

Based on above mentioned headings and grounds, it may be concluded that Indian widows tend to be highly marginalized people and her widowhood is an easy cause of discrimination and vulnerability. Loneliness is the major issue widows face after the demise of their husband. They were asked to spend their life of austerity devoted to the memory of their husband. And the bitter truth is that widows are often seen as an economic burden on their families. It has been also observed that in all cultural settings, widowhood is associated with trauma and presents myriad problems of varied nature; social, economic, and psychological dimension. Therefore, first steps to be taken up by all of us are to increase public awareness about the problems of widowhood. Governmental agencies, social organizations and religious institutions need to be involved to take action for the positive inclusion of this silent and innocuous section which is tolerating the pain and stigma of Indian society since time immemorial.

**Endnotes:**

- <sup>1</sup>See India.com Staff (2020, June 23). "International Widows' Day 2020: History, Significance of the Day And Theme for This Year." <https://www.india.com/festivals-events/international-widows-day-2020-history-significance-of-the-day-and-theme-for-this-year-4065701/>.
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- <sup>14</sup>Deb Roy, Lachmi. (2022, January 24). "How Life Changed for the 'Covid Widows' of India." <https://www.outlookindia.com/national/how-life-changed-for-the-covid-widows-of-india-news-46912>.
- <sup>15</sup> See (1950). "Right to Equality." The Constitution of India.
- <sup>16</sup>See (1950). "No discrimination on religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth or any of them, be subject to any disability, liability, restriction or condition with regard to access to shops, hotels and palaces of public entertainment or the use of wells, tanks, bathing ghats, roads and places of public resort maintained wholly or partly out of State funds or dedicated to the use of the general public." The Constitution of India.
- <sup>17</sup>See (1950). "Special provision for women and Children." The Constitution of India.
- <sup>18</sup>See (1950). "Right to life and personal liberty." The Constitution of India.
- <sup>19</sup>Swamy, V. Kumara (2021, June 23). "Top 5 Indian NGOs working for widow welfare." <https://www.giveindia.org/blog/top-5-indian-ngos-working-for-widow-welfare/>

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