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**A STUDY ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF WIDOWS AND INVISIBLE WIDOWS TO ERODE DISTRICT****DR. N. MANI****HEAD****DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS****ERODE ARTS & SCIENCE COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)****ERODE****R. RAJALAKSHMI****PH.D. RESEARCH SCHOLAR****DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS****ERODE ARTS & SCIENCE COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)****ERODE****ABSTRACT**

*The word widow in the Indian cultural context is referred to women whose husband is dead and who are not permitted for remarriage. The plight of widow is indeed miserable for, almost inevitably, it carries with it problems of ill health, insufficiency of money, unemployment and strained social relations with one's children and one's friends for both men and women. In all cultures widowhood is a crisis in a woman's life because of the economic misery it attributes and cultural seclusion, it forces upon the individual. Women lost their husbands due to diverse or separations from husband with children or without children also facing the same type of socio economic and cultural problems like widows in India.*

**KEYWORDS**

socio-economic conditions, widows and invisible widows in erode district.

**INTRODUCTION**

Our country suffers from two greatest evils, the oppression of women and the exploitation of a particular section of the people in the name of caste. Indian woman faces various types of suppression and oppression. Among the women, widows are facing innumerable problems and many challenges in their family and public life.

Widows came to be regarded as inauspicious and had to suffer great disabilities. Many widows committed 'Sati' (community suicide) voluntarily to avoid inhuman sufferings at the hands of their relations including sons. They did not receive any sympathy from society. The greatest danger that can overtake a woman is widowhood. Within twelve days of widowhood, the *sindoor* and *bindi* in her forehead are smudged; her bangles, nose-ring, the coloured sari and *mangalasutra* were removed. Her long black tresses are cropped short. Among the orthodox Brahmin widows, in the south, they must shave their hair in the heads. A white saree will be replaced instead of her coloured one. A widow is ill-women. She is not allowed to attend in any auspicious functions like marriages in the South, but a prostitute is given a higher status in our society than a widow.

Broadly speaking, the widows in the North suffer greater discrimination and marginalization than widows in the South. A widow from a relatively well-up family may be subject to greater cruelty and abuse by her in-laws than a lower caste widow who free enough to work outside in the public space and to remarry. Widow neither gets socio-economic support nor do they get counseling and emotional support in distress from family and society. Indian widows are often invisible, not least in relation to their economic contribution and unpaid family work in household. In our country widows are deprived of getting pension schemes benefits due to corruption. In India, widows are facing number of problems in their life. Women who lost their husbands suffer a great loss, but they remain vital contributors to their families and societies.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The following are the objectives of the study.

1. To study the theoretical framework of marriage, widows and invisible widows.
2. To study the socio-economic conditions of the widows and invisible widows in Erode District of Tamil Nadu.

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Egitim and Bilim (2010)<sup>1</sup> assessed the life orientation among 427 students (214 females and 213 males) and found that faculty, age and academic achievement did not predict the life orientation.

Yadav (2010)<sup>2</sup> examined the depression in advanced age. It was a comparative study of ashram and family life of aged person. The results indicated that the aged people who were living in families were found to be more depressed than their counterparts. Depression has been found to be greater in 70+ people as compared to group of 60 to 65 years.

Girija Vyas (2010)<sup>3</sup> provided the detail analysis of information received it emerges that the destitute women who call Vrindavan 'home' largely belong to 5 categories, namely, Widows Women whose spouses have died, Married Women who have husbands that are unable to earn a living to support their family, Deserted Women whose husbands have married a second time, Divorced & Separated Women who have been legally separated from their spouses, Unmarried Single Women who have chosen devotion or and due to poverty were unable to marry. Amongst those interviewed 78% women were widows, 17% married (inclusive of deserted), 5% unmarried & single and only 2 cases where the separation was legal in nature.

Galhardo, et.al. (2010)<sup>4</sup> evaluated health related quality of life and depression in older patient with pressure ulcers who were living at home and found a high rate of depression with lower health related quality of life.

<sup>1</sup> Bilim, E; & Fridel, S. C. (2010). Life orientations among university student. Journal of Education and Science, 35, 157.

<sup>2</sup> Yadav, L. v. (2010). Depression in advanced age. Indian Psychological Review, Agra, 74, 3, 175-180.

<sup>3</sup> Girija Vyas (2010) "Study on Widows at Vrindavan" National Commission for Women" 2009-10.

<sup>4</sup> Galhardo, V. A; magalhaes, M. G; Blanes, L; Juliano, Y; & Ferreira, L. M. (2010). Health related quality of life and depression in older patients with pressure ulcers. Wounds, Health Management Publications Inc.



Zenger, et.al. (2011)<sup>5</sup> investigated the predictive value of optimism / pessimism for anxiety, depression and health-related quality of life in female cancer patients. They found that the degree of self-assessed pessimism was significantly associated with anxiety, depression and health-related quality of life. Especially, women with a high level of pessimism are at risk for higher levels of anxiety and depression in addition to lowered health-related quality of life in the course of the disease. Brett, et.al. (2011)<sup>6</sup> investigated the determinants of differences in quality of life in old age and to include a wide range of possible predictors. The present study investigated the determinants of quality of life in two groups of older adults for whom there was an unusually informative set of possible predictor variables. Linear regression analyses revealed that HADS depression had the greatest influence on quality of life. Personality traits, most notably Emotional Stability, also predicted quality of life to varying degrees, along with factors reflecting current life circumstances. Personality traits and minor depressive symptoms have an important influence on self-reported quality of life in old age.

Zia, Ather (2013)<sup>7</sup> studied that a woman sits in protest at one the busiest intersections in the capital city of Srinagar in the Indian controlled Kashmir. A voluminous scarf covers her hair, body and face, revealing only her eyes. The study gaze is downcast and tearful. In one hand she holds a photograph of a man with a name and date written across it, and in another, she has a placard which says, "Half-widow: Return my disappeared husband". The first time one beholds this spectacle, a lot of questions come to mind. Who is this woman, why does she mourn publicly and yet remains hidden? It is also important to ask, what she makes visible and invisible at the same time. What are the political and social circumstances that enable this spectacle? What becomes visible about gender and agency against the backdrop of patriarchy and state violence?

Gopang and Saeed, et.al. (2014)<sup>8</sup> the research study analyzed the socio-economic and cultural status of widows in University of Sindh, Jamshoro Residential colony. Information was collected from the 39 widows living in the said colony on structured self-administered questionnaire. As there was no secondary data available on the widows in the colony, the research started with overall household survey in order to ascertain the number of the target population. The study aimed at comprehensive analysis of situation of the widows in the area and major problems faced by them. It also offers a set of suggestions and solutions to help these women out of various problems based on the findings of the research study.

**WIDOWS - AN OVERVIEW**

According to the Global report data 2015 the number of widows at the global level, broken down by region and country, are presented. These include measures of extreme poverty, which confirms the accepted view that the majority of widows in severe poverty are to be found in developing countries. However, as the Loomba Foundation survey conducted by WPO indicates, and other evidence presented in this report shows, there are important aspects of poverty that persist in developed countries, which have had important negative consequences for widows well being.

Poverty in developed country is not often covered in the mainstream international development literature, leading to a biased global picture of poverty and deprivation. This report covers both developed and developing countries to provide the first systematic quantitative overview of widows' deprivation in developed countries. The detailed results are given in the following sections.

The following Table 1 shows all countries with one million or more widows in their female populations as of 2015. The data presented in the following table is produced by using the most recent data on the percentage of widowed females in the female population of marital age for each country. Countries use different lower age limits for marital status in their census and survey data, the ranges used are: 10+, 12+, 14+, 15+, 16+, and 18+. A standard age of 15+ is being adopted more and more and represents a statistical convention only, not social practice on marriage or legal minimum age of marriage: population data are ordered by five year age cohorts from 0-4, 5-9, 10-14, 15-19, 20-24 etc.

**TABLE 1: COUNTRIES WITH ONE MILLION WIDOWS OR MORE - WIDOWS ESTIMATES 2015**

Country	Widows	Marital Age Female Population	Country	Widows	Marital Age Female Population
1 India	46,457,516	504,973,000	21 Korea, South	2,787,174	21,606,000
2 China	44,590,560	557,382,000	22 Philippines	2,636,634	34,242,000
3 USA	12,883,200	134,200,000	23 Ethiopia	2,560,680	35,565,000
4 Russia	11,607,558	65,211,000	24 Spain	2,437,560	20,313,000
5 Indonesia	9,550,980	103,815,000	25 Myanmar	2,391,424	21,352,000
6 Japan	7,838,318	57,214,000	26 Afghanistan	2,350,881	11,037,000
7 Brazil	6,937,554	88,943,000	27 Nigeria	2,145,605	61,303,000
8 Germany	4,856,808	36,794,000	28 Congo, Dem.Rep.	2,083,435	24,511,000
9 Bangladesh	4,194,125	64,525,000	29 Argentina	1,690,520	16,905,200
10 Pakistan	4,051,845	71,085,000	30 Korea, North	1,599,156	10,251,000
11 Ukraine	4,000,128	20,834,000	31 South Africa	1,485,993	22,179,000
12 Vietnam	3,943,518	37,203,000	32 Romania	1,479,348	9,483,000
13 Italy	3,895,177	27,239,000	33 Kenya	1,424,689	12,281,800
14 France	3,385,134	27,747,000	34 Canada	1,397,112	15,186,000
15 Mexico	3,226,766	48,890,400	35 Colombia	1,331,648	20,807,000
16 Turkey	3,144,914	29,669,000	36 Morocco	1,263,712	12,512,000
17 Egypt	3,065,400	28,648,600	37 Uzbekistan	1,202,463	10,833,000
18 Thailand	3,039,901	29,513,600	38 Algeria	1,011,990	14,457,000
19 Iran	2,894,496	32,892,000	39 Iraq	1,006,060	12,121,200
20 United Kingdom	2,819,670	26,854,000			

Source: Global Widows Report - 2015

Table 1 shows the countries with the highest numbers widow population. It is clear from the above table that, India is the country with the highest number of widows in the world followed by China, the highest populous country, and other developed and developing countries. Among the 39 countries listed in the above table, the top two nations having share of more than 41 per cent widows and India alone have 21 per cent widows. There were a total of 39 countries with one million widows or more in 2015 among them there were only five Sub-Saharan African countries. In 2015, the USA, Russia and Indonesia composed the rest of the top five countries with the highest numbers of widows. There were a total of 39 countries with one million widows or more in 2015; there were only five Sub-Saharan African countries in this group of countries.

<sup>5</sup> Zenger, M; Glaesmer, H; Hockel, M; & Hinz, A. (2011). Pessimism predicts anxiety, depression and quality of life in female cancer patients. Japanese Journal of Clinical Oncology, 41, 1, 87-94.

<sup>6</sup> Brett, E. C; Gow, J. A; Corley, J; Pattie, A; Starr, M. J; & Deary, J. I. (2011). Psychosocial factors and health as determinants of quality of life in community-dwelling older adults. Springer Science+Business Media B. V.

<sup>7</sup> Zia, Ather (2013) "The Spectacle of a Good-Half Widow: Performing Agency in the Human Rights Movement in Kashmir" Thinking Gender Papers, Publication dt. 02-01-2013.

<sup>8</sup> Najma Gopang, Ali Gul Khushik, Shamshad Begum and Sadaf Saeed (2014). "An Analysis of Socio-Economic Conditions of Widows Living in Sindh University Colony Jamshoro, Sindh" The Women - Annual Research Journal Vol.4.

**CONSEQUENCES OF WIDOWHOOD – DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**

The negative effects of becoming a widow have far reaching consequences for societies at large. These range from the mass poverty of pension-age women, to severe destitution, as well as outcomes not dissimilar to more serious types of war crimes in some developing countries. Ultimately, each of the consequences represents a deprivation that requires immediate action, because if left unaddressed, the negative ethical and economic costs, both of which are interlinked, will be felt with increasing intensity by societies around the world. As a result, there are implications for the world’s ability to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), due to the cross-cutting themes widows’ deprivation involves, such as gender equality and the link between widows’ deprivation and girls’ deprivation.

The basic themes examined are the consequences for widows and women who have lost partners of: 1) moving into poverty and the intensification of existing poverty, 2) health risks and outcomes, 3) threats and outcomes for widows’ children, 4) widows’ social marginalization, and 5) the impact on widows’ deprivation of social norms. These themes run and overlap throughout the consequences of widowhood, which are presented individually and are also do not change when looking at widows’ deprivation in developed countries. The only exception is the impact of social norms, which have far less practical direct impact on the well-being of widows in developed countries.

**TABLE 2: COUNTRY’S WIDOWS ESTIMATES - 2015**

South Asia Estimates	Number of Widows per Country	Female Population (follows marital status ages)	Widows Age Range (marital status ages)	Percent of widows of marital age females	Date of data source for widows percent
Afghanistan	2,350,881	11,037,000	10+	21.3%	2007
Bangladesh	4,194,125	64,525,000	10+	6.5%	2011
Bhutan	15,132	291,000	10+	5.2%	2005
<b>India</b>	<b>46,457,516</b>	<b>504,973,000</b>	<b>10+</b>	<b>9.2%</b>	<b>2011</b>
Maldives	2,210	130,000	15+	1.7%	2006
Nepal	218,040	4,740,000	10+	4.6%	2011
Pakistan	4,051,845	71,085,000	10+	5.7%	2007
Sri Lanka	554,334	8,399,000	15+	6.6%	2012
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>57,844,083</b>	<b>665,180,000</b>			

Source: Global Widows Report - 2015

The available comprehensive data that give a clear global results of individual country tables for widows estimates 2015 is shown in table 2: The Female population in 2015 by marital status age range refers to all females (girls and women) at and above a specified age range of marital status (10+, 12+, 13+, 14+, 15+, 16+ and 18+), this group covers all females for the following categories: 1: Single, 2: Married, 3: Divorced; 4: Separated; 5: Widowed. It is noted that some countries use different categories specifications, however, these five are the essential marital status categories. Therefore, widows are a percentage of the total of this group of five categories. We do not use widows as a percentage of the total female population (0+ years) because it is assumed very few children under a certain age are married, and we do not use the whole country population (males and females) because this as well does not make sense for understanding trends in female circumstances in married life (marriage practices and how they affect the female population eligible for marriage). In India, it is observed that 9.2 percentage of widows of marital age females and widows age range with 10+ (marital status ages).

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

*Chi-Square Analysis*

**Relationship between Age of the Respondents and Monthly Income**

With a view to find the association between age of the respondents and the income earned per month by the widows a two way table was prepared and is exhibited in table 4.3.

**TABLE 3: AGE OF THE RESPONDENTS AND MONTHLY INCOME**

Age of the Respondents	Monthly Income			Total
	Low (Rs. 3000 and below)	Medium (Rs. 3001 - Rs. 6000)	High (Above Rs. 6000)	
Young (Below 36 Years)	12 (13.5)	16 (27.1)	28 (36.4)	56 (24.9)
Middle (36 to 50 Years)	24 (27.0)	25 (42.4)	34 (44.2)	83 (36.9)
Old (Above 50 Years)	53 (59.6)	18 (30.5)	15 (19.5)	86 (38.2)
<b>Total</b>	89 (100.0)	59 (100.0)	77 (100.0)	225 (100.0)

Note: Figures in the Parentheses indicate percentage

It is highlighted from the above table that the percentage of high amount of income earned by the widows’ was the highest (44.2%) among the respondents belonged to 36 to 50 years age group and the same was the lowest (19.5%) among the respondents of above 50 years age group. The percentage of medium income earned by the widows was the highest (42.4%) among the middle aged category of widow respondents and the same was the lowest (27.1%) among the young category of respondents. On the other hand, the percentage of low level amount of income (Rs. 3000 and below) earned by the widow’s was the highest (59.6%) among the above old (50 years) aged category of respondents and same was the lowest (13.5%) among the (below young 36 years) aged category.

In order to find the relationship between age of the widows and their amount of income earned per month, a chi-square test was employed to test the following hypothesis and the result of the test is shown in table 4.4.

**HYPOTHESIS**

*Null Hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>):* There is no close relationship between age of the respondents and the amount of income earned per month.

*Alternative Hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>):* There is a close relationship between the age of the respondents and the amount of income earned per month.

**TABLE 4.4: CHI-SQUARE TESTS**

Chi-Square Value	DF	Table Value	Remarks
31.389	4	9.488	Significant at 1% level

It is divulged from the above table that the calculated chi-square value is greater than the table value and the result is significant at 1% level. Hence, the Null Hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) is rejected and the alternative Hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>) is accepted. The hypothesis, “age of the widows and the amount of the income earned per month” are associated, holds good. From the analysis, it is concluded that there is close relationship between age of the widows and their amount of income earned per month.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PLACE OF LIVING AND MONTHLY INCOME

TABLE 4.5: PLACE OF LIVING AND MONTHLY INCOME

Place of Living	Monthly Income			Total
	Low (Rs. 3000 and below)	Medium (Rs. 3001 - Rs. 6000)	High (Above Rs. 6000)	
Village	47 (52.8)	28 (47.5)	30 (39.0)	105 (46.7)
Town	42 (47.2)	31 (52.5)	47 (61.0)	120 (53.3)
Total	89 (100.0)	59 (100.0)	77 (100.0)	225 (100.0)

Note: Figures in the Parentheses indicate percentage

It is highlighted from the above table that the percentage of high amount of income earned was the highest (61.0%) among the respondents living in town and the same was the lowest (39.0%) among the respondents living in villages. The percentage of medium amount of income earned was the highest (52.5%) among the respondents living in the town and the same was the lowest (47.5%) among the respondents living in villages. On the other hand, the percentage of low amount of income earned by the widows was the highest (52.8%) among the respondents living in village and the same was the lowest (47.2%) among the respondents living in town locality.

In order to find the relationship between the respondent’s place of living and the income earned per month, a chi-square test was employed to test the hypothesis and the result of the test is shown in the following table 4.6.

**Hypothesis**

*Null Hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>):* There is no significant relationship between respondents’ place of living and the income earned per month.

*Alternative Hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>):* There is significant relationship between respondents’ place of living and the income earned per month.

TABLE 4.6: CHI-SQUARE TESTS

Chi-Square Value	DF	Table Value	Remarks
3.201	2	5.991	Not Significant

It was learnt from the above table that the calculated chi-square value is much less than the table value and the result is not significant at 1% level and 5% level. Hence, the Null Hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) is accepted and the Alternative Hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>) is rejected. The hypothesis, “Respondents place of living and the amount of income earned” are associated, does not hold good. From the analysis, it is concluded that there no close relationship between place of living of the widows and income earned by them.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGION AND MONTHLY INCOME

TABLE 4.7: RELIGION AND MONTHLY INCOME

Religion	Monthly Income			Total
	Low (Rs. 3000 and below)	Medium (Rs. 3001 - Rs. 6000)	High (Above Rs. 6000)	
Hindu	78 (87.6)	43 (72.9)	66 (85.7)	187 (83.1)
Other Religion (Muslims and Christian)	11 (12.4)	16 (27.1)	11 (14.3)	38 (16.9)
Total	89 (100.0)	59 (100.0)	77 (100.0)	225 (100.0)

Note: Figures in the Parentheses indicate percentage

It is highlighted from the above table that the percentage of high amount of income earned by the widows was the highest (85.7%) among the respondents belonged to Hindu religion and the same was the lowest (14.3%) among the other religions such as Muslims and Christian religion. The percentage of medium amount of income earned was highest (72.9%) among the respondents of Hindu. Religion and the same was the lowest (27.1%) among the other religions. On the other hand, the percentage of low amount of income earned by the widows was the highest (87.6%) among the respondents belonged to Hindu religion and the same was the lowest (12.4%) among the respondents belonged to other religion.

In order to find the relationship between religion of the respondents and the amount of income earned, a chi-square test was employed to test the hypothesis and the result of the test is shown in the following table.

**Hypothesis**

*Null Hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>):* There is no significant relationship between religion of the respondents and the income earned.

*Alternative Hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>):* There is significant relationship between religion of the respondents and the income earned.

TABLE 4.8: CHI-SQUARE TESTS

Chi-Square Value	DF	Table Value	Remarks
6.071	2	5.991	Significant at 1% level

It is found from the above table that the calculated chi-square value is greater than the table value and the result is significant at 5% level. Hence, the Null Hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) is rejected and the Alternative Hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>) is accepted. The hypothesis, “religion of the respondents and the amount of income earned” are associated, holds good. From the analysis, it is concluded that there is close relationship between religion of the respondents and the amount earned by them.

**MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS**

A regression is a statistical tool used to find out the relationship between two or more variables. One variable is caused by the behavior of another one. The widows’ socio-economic data are chosen as independent and the later variables is defined as the dependent (amount of income earned) when there are two or more independent variables, the analysis that desirables the relationship between the two is called multiple regression analysis. The main objective of using these techniques is to predict the variability of the dependent variables based on its co-variable with all the independent variables. It is useful to predict the level of dependent phenomenon through multiple regression analysis, if the levels of independent variables are given.

It was found that among the 9 variables; only 2 variables were closely related with the socio-economic conditions of widows. In order to measure the interdependent of independent factors and dependent factor and their total contribution to the socio-economic conditions of widows, the result of the analysis were put in to multiple regression analysis and the detail results are shown in the following table.

TABLE 4.9: REGRESSION RESULTS

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	10928.878	3568.134		3.063	0.0025
Age of the Respondent	-34.677	46.039	-0.065	-0.753	0.4522
Educational Qualification	1318.026	409.262	0.233	3.220	0.0015
Years of Living Separately	-96.814	69.180	-0.104	-1.399	0.1631
Marital Status	-253.858	862.901	-0.019	-0.294	0.7689
Place of Living	-513.715	1205.288	-0.029	-0.426	0.6704
Size of the Family	-455.212	522.962	-0.058	-0.870	0.3850
Type of Family	-562.896	692.629	-0.054	-0.813	0.4173
Religion	-2965.018	1060.419	-0.184	-2.796	0.0056
Community	1301.978	1003.580	0.095	1.297	0.1959
N	225				
F	5.715				
R <sup>2</sup>	0.439				
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.411				

Dependent Variable: Monthly Income earned by the respondents.

Predictors : (Constant), respondent's age, education, years of living separately, marital status, place of living, size of family, type of family, religion and community. The multiple linear regression components is a statistically a good fit. The R<sup>2</sup> value is 0.439 indicated that 43.9 per cent of variation in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variables. Even though the R<sup>2</sup> value is low (0.439), the overall regression is significant, which is indicated by the F-Statistics (F=5.715, Significant at 1 per cent level).

It shows the two independent variables contribute on the variation in the amount of income earned per annum, which is the most important economic indicator of widows this is statistically significant at 1 % level.

The table indicates that the co-efficient of respondents education qualification and religion of the family were significant at 1% level. It is also noted that the variables such as age of the respondents, Marital Status and community are positively associated with the income earned by widows. Further, it indicates that these variables that contribute to the income earning capacity of widows are statistically not significant.

The rate of increasing the income earned per month by the widows shows better result of the independent variables such as respondents capacity based on education qualification with 3.220 units change and 1.297 changes in community.

From the analysis, it is concluded that out of 9 variables only 2 variables namely education qualification of the respondents and the religions are positive and significantly influences to generate income among the selected sample of widows in the study area.

## FINDINGS

- There is close relationship between age of the widows and their amount of income earned per month.
- There no close relationship between place of living of the widows and income earned by them.
- There is close relationship between religion of the respondents and the amount earned by them.
- It is concluded that out of 9 variables only 2 variables namely education qualification of the respondents and the religions are positive and significantly influences to generate income among the selected sample of widows in the study area.

## SUGGESTIONS

- To concentrate on capacity building so that single women would be better equipped to manage their lives and their families.
- To recognize the importance of psycho-social counseling, emotional support and empowerment.
- To enact adequate national legislation to protect and assist widows, in particular be establishing, or ensuring respect for, their rights to land and inheritance.
- Plan and implement location specific programmes / projects for the overall development of the widows with the active involvement of the local Non Governmental Organizations.
- Provide financial assistance for establishing community based aid centers and rehabilitation centers for the widows.
- Introduce special loans and schemes for widows and popularize them through banks and Panchayat.
- Establish vocational training centres for the widows.
- Establish an association for widows and provide a platform for sharing their problems.
- Sensitization programmes to bring out an attitudinal change of the society towards the widows.
- Form more self-help groups and organize special programmes for widows through Kudumbasree Mission.

## CONCLUSION

The status of women in India tells the story of a fall in the status of women to an abysmally low position from a relatively high status and nobility of the Vedic times. The fall in status has led to a socio-economic and religion-cultural deprivation of women. From the womb to tomb women are victims of violence and deprivations. The vulnerability of women in rural status is worse compared to the all India levels. Of course, there are certain initiatives in the country, especially after the Independence towards raising the status of women. However, there are miles to go in order to reach the goal of gender equality.

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