1.1 Introduction:

In postmodern society, women are marginalized, and abused. They constitute a part of the weaker section, and thereby, a vulnerable section of society. The happiness and well-being of a married woman depend upon her status in the conjugal family, which may give rise to problems in the marital relationship. The society is in fact facing serious crises like bride burning, dowry, physical and mental harassment, extra marital relationship, misunderstanding, adjustment problem, etc. In such a situation, if a woman wants to live separately, she requires social, financial as well as emotional support for empowerment.

The term ‘Deserted Woman’ means a woman who has been deserted by her husband or a woman whose husband does not want to continue as her life partner. The meaning of the term is indeed very painful, and only a woman who is being deserted or separated from her husband can understand the pain hidden behind this social evil. Thus, even in the 21st century, women continue to be burdened by their very womanhood. They continue to be suppressed, subordinated, and discriminated in numerous ways, and are relegated as second class citizens.

Women all over the world possess a lower status than the men in both, developed and under-developed countries. Women face difficulties and inequalities as a result of socio-cultural and economic discriminatory practices. Their status is closely related to societal structure, religion, family and kinship, cultural norms, and value system.

This is true in the context of the status of rural women in India where the process of modernization is very slow. The whole life and behaviour pattern of rural women and the attitude of the society towards them is shaped and guided by traditional socio-cultural norms and values, which are so deep-rooted in the minds and hearts of the people, that there seems a wide gap between the position according to constitution and the position they actually hold in the traditional society.

In India, families adhere to a patriarchal ideology and follow the patrilineal rule of descent, value orientations, and endorse traditional gender role preferences. The Indian family is considered stable, close, resilient, and enduring (Shangle, 1995). Family is the most important primary group in society. Family and marriage are considered to be the two pillars of any society, and as such, they are the two most important societal institutions. In India, traditionally, and from times immemorial,
marriage has been considered as sacred; and marriage for most Indians is not merely a sacrament, but is sacrosanct. Once the couple enters the bond of marriage, the relationship is considered perpetual and does not allow them to part. In other words, marriage was for life and it worked as a bulwark against social vulnerabilities. It had an inbuilt system of checks and balances, and roles and priorities were defined by the society for the couple. What distinguished marriage in India from a marriage in the West is the sanctity attached to marriage: a sense of perpetual bonding and an element of divinity in it (Ramachandrappa, 2012). Married people have higher levels of psychological and physical well-being than individuals who are single, separated or divorced (Horowitz and others, 1997; Lillard and Waite, 1995; Waite and Gallagher, 2000; and ASPE, 2007). During the past few centuries it has been seen that development has a powerful influence on family dynamics in many parts of the world (Mundu and Unisa, 2009).

Marriage is a universal institution of our society and it is considered as the turning point of a woman’s life; a significant part of her life is ordained by marriage. According to NIPCCD Report (2007), marriage is one of the three great events in life—along with birth and death. Birth just happens and death is largely beyond our control. Marriage however, can be influenced. A married woman is restricted from individual rights and power in her life. Thus, the status of a woman is derived from her family and marriage. According to Elliott and Merrill (1951), every man and woman enters into marriage from separate backgrounds with different ideas and attitudes born out of their experiences. Each possesses a scale of values developed out of a particular social group. Under the circumstances, it is not surprising that distinctive personality traits of the one may unconsciously irritate the other. Only by integrating the husbands and wife’s individual desires and attitudes can a successful family life be achieved with a harmonious functioning of the interacting personalities.

However, it is to be pointed out that tension in family life is growing in the modern age because of the rapid changes in the role and status of the partners. If a woman is deserted her situation will be very critical, compared to divorcees and widows. Her socio-economic and marital problems are entirely different from those of the divorcees and their social status will also be better than of a deserted woman. They retain the status of a married woman, and do not have the option of remarriage. Such women do not enjoy the bliss of a married life (Asagi, 2013).
In agricultural societies like India, most of the decisions are influenced by kinship, family, and marriage relationships. Kin relationship is the dominating factor for majority of the people to access social resources, economic security, and political support. In northern India, married women have low autonomy, because of her lesser link with natal kin (Moore and Dyson, 1973). Throughout history, women have generally been restricted to the role of a home-maker; a mother, and a wife. Despite major changes in the status of women in some parts of the world in recent decades, norms restricting women to the home are still powerful in India, defining activities that are deemed appropriate for women (Prabhakar, 2014).

According to Census 2011, women population constitute 586.5 million out of total population of 623cr, but her situation is cruel. For centuries, she has been deliberately denied opportunities of growth in the name of religion and socio-cultural practices. Customarily, Indian women are marginalized in a patriarchal society. The origin of the Indian belief that a woman must always be under a man’s control can be traced to the rules laid down by a Hindu religious scripture by Manu in 200 B.C.: By a young girl, by a young woman, or even by an aged one, nothing can be done independently, even in her own house. In childhood a girl child is subjected to her father, in youth to her husband, when her lord is dead to her sons; a woman will never be independent. This attitude is now found in the culture of all societies in India, irrespective of religion and class.

In the Indian society, family violence is increasing day by day. There are many reasons for family violence; Women are the victims of family violence in most of the cases. If the wife is harassed by the family, she may leave her husband and live a separate life; she will be called a deserted wife. In an Indian society, we respect women as a mother or sister and love her, but we treat our wives differently. There is family violence against wives. Many husbands treat their wives with cruelty. There is mental, physical, and economic torture of a wife, and other family members also help in torturing her. This is a common condition of women in all strata of our society. There is no exception to it whether the women are educated or illiterate, rich or poor, employed or not employed (Salivkar, 2012).

Women face a major obstacle with the lack of access to courts. Even in cities, sufficient number of courts do not exist to deal with family law cases. Women have to travel long distances to go to court. During a survey, working-class women
Introduction of the Study

complained of losing their daily wages to attend the court proceedings. The lack of financial resources does not allow many women to file and pursue a case as they cannot afford to pay the legal fees (Singh, 2012).

Personal Law (i.e., laws governing family relations, marriage, divorce, inheritance, custody rights, etc.) is a contested ground in the case of Muslim women, who are largely subjected to the Sharia Act, 1937 and the Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act, 1939. The Special Marriage Act, 1954, which allowed Indians to marry without renouncing their religion, provoked strong opposition from Hindus and Muslims. While comparing the practices in the Islamic society with those of other communities, it is observed that Muslim women suffer many problems associated with marriage (including polygamy), the practice of extrajudicial divorces (including the accursed Triple Talaq) and maintenance after divorce, and inheritance (CSSS, 2010-11).

Issues pertaining to women have received global consideration over the last decades concerning the status and welfare of women. Throughout India, women suffer from several psycho-social and economic disabilities because of the tradition and cultural norms that view women as dependents throughout their lives. Singh (2012) reveals that under Indian laws, a wife’s economic entitlements on separation from her marital home are extremely limited.

Marital discord in marriage is not new to India, and has existed throughout history. However, separation was resorted to only in severe cases where there was intolerable malice, abandonment, mental illness, sterility, and disloyalty. In the wake of the industrial mutiny, marital discord has come to presume greater importance. Men and women who come together in marriage lack knowledge of various psychological and social aspects of life, a proper understanding of which can make peace sure, flexibility, and self-control. In the commercial age, the increasing liberty of married women has changed the concept of marriage and its moral value (Tahany, 2008).

Indian women are marginalized in decision-making by a variety of processes that begin at a very early age within the family. Women have very little to say in decisions affecting them, even after marriage. For most Indian women, marriage itself is not a subject of choice. Only a small minority of educated women from well-off families could decide when and to whom they should get married. Thus, even in the
second decade of the 21st century, women continue to be hampered of their independence. They continue to be suppressed, subordinated, and discriminated in many ways, and are relegated as second class citizens. The fast-changing social and family environment has thrown up new challenges, particularly for young people, like growing instability, lack of communication, changing attitude towards sex, changing roles of husband and wife, and the tensions of a fast life. All these have resulted in a lack of harmony among married couples (NIPCCD, 2007). The study asserts that women are becoming more vulnerable as men increasingly abandon their families in the face of poverty (Kabeer, 1994). The familial support system is eroding and female headed households are expanding due to increasing numbers of divorces and desertions as men move away in search of employment (Islam, 2007).

In Indian culture, it is believed that marriages are made in heaven, but due to lack of understanding and changing lifestyles in the global environment, desertion has become a universal entity. In India, marriage has always been considered sacred. In the past several decades, the Indian marriage system has experienced various changes as a result of socio-economic development and improvement in education, dramatic increase in age at marriage of both the sexes, changes in attitude towards marriage, love-marriages, inter-caste marriages, divorce and separation (Kadi, 1987; Singh, 1992).

Since ages, women continue to be the weaker section of society (Kour, 2010). In particular, deserted women are an extremely marginalized group of people, who hardly merit the attention of state protection. As women, they occupy a position, which is more disadvantaged than deserted men, and they suffer additional vulnerability of dependency and support of others. Their contribution, both economically and socially to the household and community, is hardly recognized.

If an Indian woman is separated or deserted years after marriage, she is left almost asset-less while her husband takes full possession of all the property. It is not surprising, therefore, that most separated or deserted women, usually along with their children, are forced to live with members of their natal family, such as parents and brothers, and are financially dependent on them (Singh, 2012).

The deserted woman finds a sharp plunge in her status and standard of living. She is forced to live with or depend on her relatives/natal family. She is not welcomed by her family since she had received her share of the family resources
through dowry and the money spent on her marriage and gifts given to the groom and his family. There is a lack of concern towards these women and their children. A lot of women, therefore, suffer violent marriages. They know it would be impossible to survive in society by themselves. When these women approach the police or Santwana Centres, they do not face hostility (Singh, 2012).

This research study focuses on psycho-social and economic status of deserted women. It explores the factors, which have an impact on the psycho-social status of these women from a broader perspective, and looks into areas where women face difficulties and challenges in the wake of desertion. The study also searches for answers to the question whether economic status has an inhibitory effect on women desertion at large. The study illustrates that women mitigate restrictions and challenges through coping mechanisms. So this study aims to bring out the obstacles in the programmes and policies, and suggests reformative policies to address the critical issues faced by deserted women in the study area.

1.2 Conceptualization of the Study:

Desertion, which is called abandonment in some statutes, is a ground for divorce in majority of the states. Most statutes mandate that the abandonment should continue for a certain period of time before a divorce action may be commenced. The length of this period varies between one and five years; it is most commonly one year. The period of separation must be continuous and uninterrupted. In addition, proof that the departed spouse left without the consent of the other spouse is required in most states.

Generally, proof of desertion is a clear-cut factual matter. Courts require evidence that the departure was voluntary and that the deserted husband or wife in no way forced or agreed to the abandonment. Constructive desertion occurs when one party makes life so intolerable for his or her spouse that the spouse has no real choice, but to leave the marital home. For an individual to have legal justification for departing, it is often required that the spouse act so wrongfully as to constitute grounds for divorce. For example, a wife might leave her husband if she finds that he is guilty of adultery.

In desertion cases, it is not necessary to prove the emotional state of the abandoning spouse, but only the intent to break off matrimonial ties with no animus or intention to return.
Simple separation does not constitute desertion if the husband and wife agree that they cannot cohabit harmoniously. Sexual relations between the parties must be totally severed during the period of separation. If two people live apart from one another, but meet on a regular basis for sex, this does not constitute desertion. State law dictates whether or not an infrequent meeting for sexual relations amounts to an interruption of the period required for desertion. Some statutes provide that an occasional act of sexual intercourse terminates the period only if the husband and wife are attempting reconciliation.

Unintentional abandonment is not desertion. For example, if a man is missing in action while serving in the armed services, his wife may not obtain a divorce on desertion grounds since her spouse did not intend to leave his family and flee the marital relationship. Common Law allows an individual to presume that a spouse is dead if the spouse is unexplainably absent for a seven-year period. If the spouse returns at any time, the marriage remains intact under Common Law.

Desertion is frequently coupled with non-support, which is a failure to provide monetary resources for those to whom such an obligation is due. Non-support is a crime in a majority of states, but prosecutions are uncommon.

Desertion is the act of abandoning, particularly of leaving one's spouse and/or children without any intention to return. In desertion cases, it is often expected that a deserter, who is the family breadwinner may not intend to support the family he/she left. Such conduct is less significant legally in the present era of no-fault divorce and standardized rights to child support and alimony (spousal support). Desertion can influence a court in determining visitation, custody, and other post-marital issues.

The term ‘desertion’ is used in two senses. Desertion is a ground for divorce, and desertion as an independent status. Desertion as a ground for divorce as been recognized in Section 13(1) and 13(1) (b) and Section 10 (i) of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955. Marriage Laws (Amendment) Act 1976. Previously, it was only a ground for judicial separation. Now desertion is a ground for both judicial separation and divorce. However, desertion meaning severance of conjugal relations and staying separately without any intention to seek divorce is another practice found in all strata of society. A deserted woman is one who is legally separated from her husband, but does not enjoy or avail any right and privilege of marital relationship with her husband.
“Desertion” in Iranian law according to Article 1130 of the Civil Code and condition of marriage contract, is the husband’s abandonment of family life with no justifiable reason or his defaulting from (appearing before) or refraining from (appearing before) the court of law for six consecutive months after the summon (Seyed, 2011).

Desertion as the term is ordinarily employed means “the irresponsible departure from the home on the part of either husband or wife, leaving the family to fend for itself”. Several studies have shown that the deserters are husbands from the lower economic groups. Desertion is an evasion of marital responsibilities, and hence, we have no way of ascertaining its true extent. Many of the consequences of desertion are similar to those of divorce, for the family may be permanently dissolved. Desertion, however, presents a few special problems. Emotionally, the wife and children often suffer much more severely than in the case of divorce (Vinodh, 2013).

According to Memoria (1960), in general, there are two types of desertion: the permanent and the temporary. The former has been characterized as the poor man’s divorce. It implies a social break for those among whom divorce is not in vogue, the latter has been characterized as the poor man’s vacation, and is indicative of a low family wage.

According to Truxal and Merril (1953), desertion as a prelude to divorce is one phase of the problem of divorce. Desertion as a more or less permanent status is another and more important problem. According to Eubank (1916), there are five types of deserters:

1. The spurious deserter is one who leaves his family in order to escape some financial responsibility or secure charitable relief.

2. The gradual deserter is one who is forced to stay away from home by reason of his occupation, or because he is an immigrant staying away from his family and native land.

3. The intermittent husband is one who is chronically a periodic deserter and leaves home at somewhat regular intervals due to some domestic difficulties, and returns when he is free from the difficulty.
4. The ill-advised deserter: This type of deserter is one who deserts his wife when he finds that the relationship between them is quite unsatisfactory because of hastily arranged or ill-suited marriage.

5. The last resort deserter is one who makes a complete break with his family when he finds it difficult to make adjustments with his wife.

‘Desertion’ refers to a state of relationship where the spouses sever social, sexual, and marital relation with each other, but are not interested or indifferent to go in for divorce. It is also informally understood and agreed that the spouses are free to re-marry and cease to have any right over each other.

There is a need to define it in the terms of both social and legal aspects. Before coming into existence of the Hindu Marriage Act 1955, the term ‘Deserted Woman’ had not been defined. The word ‘PARITYAKTA’ found its mention in the Hindu Marriage Act Nonetheless, the term ‘Deserted Woman’ was not well-defined from the social point of view. It means a woman who has been deserted by her husband or a woman whose husband does not want to continue as her life partner.

Desertion, as the term is ordinarily employed, means the irresponsible departure from the home on the part of either husband or wife, leaving the family to fend for itself (Goode, 1963).

According to Eshleman (1978), desertion refers to a separation of the spouses that is against the will of one spouse and is intended by the other spouse to end marital life.

According to the legal point of view, desertion means desertion of the petitioner by the other party to the marriage without any reasonable cause and without the consent or against the wishes of such party, and includes wilful neglect of the petitioner by the other party to the marriage and its grammatical variations and cognate expressions (Paras, 1983).

According to the above definitions, there are certain specific conditions or constituent elements of desertion, which must be established in order to prove the fact of desertion in Section 13 (1) (ib) of the Hindu Marriage Act (1955). They are:

1. **Factum of Separation:** The deserter has in actuality abandoned all matrimonial relation with the other – the deserted spouse. In other words, marital partners must have parted and terminated all forms of joint living.
2. **Animus Deserdendi:** It means intentions to desert must be there. The deserting spouse must have the real intention to terminate cohabitation permanently, but not temporarily. If, however, a spouse abandons the other in a state of temporary passion, anger, annoyance, disgust, etc. or the like, without intending to break the marital bond, it would not amount to desertion.

3. **Absence of Consent:** The deserted spouse must not have agreed or consented to the separation or abandonment of matrimonial obligations and relationships.

4. **Statutory Period:** Desertion or cessation of matrimonial duties and relationship must have continued for a minimum period of two years.

5. **Absence of Reasonable Cause:** Desertion must have occurred without any reasonable ground or cause. The deserter must have left the other spouse on grounds, which the law does not accept as valid or legal. In the modern legal context, desertion includes actual desertion, constructive and wilful neglect.

6. **Constructive Desertion:** Desertion is a condition and a phenomenon. It is not the withdrawal from a place, but from a state of affairs or thing. There may exist a fact of desertion even if both the spouses reside in the same home or roof. Paras Dewan (1983) rightly observes, “To constitute desertion there must be separation of households, not a separation of houses. The parties thus may be in desertion even if living under the same roof. The only thing required in constructive desertion is that there cessation of actual matrimonial relationship between the spouses even though they live in the same house”. Constructive desertion takes place when a husband or wife intentionally forces the innocent spouse to leave the marital dwelling by acting in an offensive manner. The misconduct must be so extensive as to make marital relations insufferable.

7. **Wilful Neglect:** Wilful neglect of matrimonial duties constitutes desertion according to the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955. Wilful neglect connotes deserter’s failures or omission to discharge basic marital duties and obligations. It also includes refusal to have marital intercourse, denying maintenance, and declining to give company. It would be worthwhile to add here that wilful neglect has been deliberately declared equivalent to desertion in the Indian
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social context to protect the interest of womenfolk who are the real victims and sufferers on this account.

8. **Separations**: Which occur within family when marital relations, are socially broken and clashes begin. It is an informal preliminary step to divorce, but it is not guaranteed that it leads to divorce. It has the probability of reunion between husband and wife; separated couples are not free to remarry.

9. **Desertion**: "It is the irresponsible departure from the home on the part of either husband or wife, leaving the family to fend for itself" (M. Elliott and Merrill 1950).

10. **Annulment**: "It is a court decision that the marriage contains some legal flaw (coercion, fraud, unwillingness to consummate the union, bigamy)” (Goode, 1963).

1.3 Operational Definition:

The sociological explanation of desertion is somewhat different. According to the Dictionary of Sociology, desertion refers to the unexpected cessation of cohabitation between husband and wife without formal divorce, separation or other mutually agreed arrangement for support of family or care of children (Fairchild, 1962). Both legal and sociological definitions of desertion pinpoint different dimensions of the concept. A broader and more meaningful definition of desertion could be had by taking into account both definitions. It may mean as deliberate severance of actual marital ties by either of the spouses with the other living partner without the consent of the latter.

In the present study, ‘woman desertion’ refers to those women who have either deserted their husbands or whose husbands have deserted them, and have been living separately without any hope of reconciliation. Such women may be receiving some financial assistance or income from a piece of land or building. Nevertheless, two conditions are important:

1. The deserted woman should have been living separately and permanently without any conjugal contact with her husband for a minimum period of two years at least.

2. They should not have remarried.
1.4 Identified Reasons for Desertion:

As observed in many studies conducted on women desertion, there are many reasons identified for desertion among those some are the reasons directly related and some are related indirectly and some are partially related such as:

1. Alcoholic husband,
2. Wife beating,
3. Physical and mental harassment,
4. Lack of a male heir,
5. Complaints of inefficiency at domestic work,
6. Suspicious of extramarital affairs,
7. Property related matters,
8. Sexual inadequacy,
9. Dowry,
10. Arguing with partner,
11. Refusing to have sex with him,
12. Neglecting children,
13. Going out of home without telling the partner,
14. Not cooking properly,
15. Infertility in females,
16. Domestic violence,
17. Absence from house until late night,
18. Abuse and neglect by in-laws,
19. Being more bold / outgoing socially,
20. Housing shortage,
21. Economic insecurity,
22. Emotional immaturity, and
23. Infidelity of the spouse.
1.5 Difference between Separation, Desertion and Divorce:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEPARATION</th>
<th>DESERTION</th>
<th>DIVORCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Separation may be an informal preliminary step towards divorce.</td>
<td>1. Desertion is a social relationship where both spouses sever marital bonds, but legally remain husband-wife.</td>
<td>1. Divorce means judicial dissolution of marital bonds and loses all social, economic, legal, and sexual rights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. A temporary expedient to lessen the immediate conflict or a legally recognized decision to live separately without divorcing.</td>
<td>2. Desertion is a de facto or actual cessation of conjugal rights, obligations, and bonds.</td>
<td>2. Whereas divorce is both de facto and de jure dissolution of marriage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Marital separation means, one deprived of normal marital association, affecting their health, security and happiness for the children there is the loss of daily love and care of one parent.</td>
<td>3. Desertion is a continuing offence.</td>
<td>3. Divorce does not involve any penal idea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Desertion generally remains an unannounced and private affair until it becomes a ground for matrimonial relief either for restitution of conjugal life or for divorce.</td>
<td>4. Whereas divorce is always public as it leaves a record.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Desertion is both temporary and permanent. Temporary desertion forms a part of and ground for divorce. It is also called limited or partial divorce.</td>
<td>5. Divorce, both the partners essentially live in separate households.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. During the state of desertion, husband and wife may or may not live in the same household.</td>
<td>6. Whereas divorce restores the right to remarry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Neither of the spouses (desertees) is legally entitled to remarry during the period of desertion (Baber, 1953).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction of the Study

A Study on Psycho-Social and Economic Status of Deserted Women in Gulbarga District of Karnataka

Table 1.1
Age and Marital Status in Karnataka State

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Age Group (in years)</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Divorced/Separated*</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>6,221,576</td>
<td>2,490</td>
<td>0.040022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>5,381,672</td>
<td>5,001</td>
<td>0.092927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>4,886,225</td>
<td>15,137</td>
<td>0.309789</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>4,578,219</td>
<td>23,958</td>
<td>0.523304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>3,821,205</td>
<td>28,405</td>
<td>0.743352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>3,918,079</td>
<td>29,693</td>
<td>0.757846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>3,058,456</td>
<td>23,707</td>
<td>0.77513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>45-49</td>
<td>2,713,842</td>
<td>17,103</td>
<td>0.630214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>50-54</td>
<td>2,109,655</td>
<td>12,308</td>
<td>0.583413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>55-59</td>
<td>1,423,742</td>
<td>6,255</td>
<td>0.439335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>60-64</td>
<td>1,498,909</td>
<td>6,871</td>
<td>0.4584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>65-69</td>
<td>953,187</td>
<td>3,537</td>
<td>0.371071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>70-74</td>
<td>799,497</td>
<td>2,891</td>
<td>0.361602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>75-79</td>
<td>353,230</td>
<td>1,174</td>
<td>0.332361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>80+</td>
<td>457,199</td>
<td>1,437</td>
<td>0.314305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Age not stated</td>
<td>51,844</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>0.189029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>52,850,562</strong></td>
<td><strong>180,065</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.340706</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*Note: In the census, the data on deserted/divorced/separated women was not collected independently.

However, the Census of India, 2001 had put the figure of widowed/divorced/separated women as 7.38 per cent of the Indian female population in which the category of deserted and separated women was 0.47 per cent. However, as per the data from the National Family Health Scheme (NFHS) III (2005–2006), separated, deserted, and divorced women formed 1.4 per cent of the total women population. Further, as per the Sample Registration System Statistical Report (2010) the percentage of widowed/separated/divorced women was 8 per cent of the total female population.
Table 1.2
Percent Distribution of Population by Sex, Marital Status, and Age-Group in India and Karnataka both Urban and Rural (2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group (in years)</th>
<th>Urban India</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Urban Karnataka</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;10</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
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A Study on Psycho-Social and Economic Status of Deserted Women in Gulbarga District of Karnataka
Introduction of the Study

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Note: W/D/S - Widowed/Divorced/Separated.

Sources: 12SRS Statistical Report Table (2011).

Thus, if an Indian woman is separated or deserted even years after marriage, she is left without any assets, while her husband walks away with all the property. Therefore, it is not surprising, that most separated or deserted women, usually along with children, is forced to live with members of their natal family, such as parents and brothers, and is financially dependent on them. Often, they are not welcome and live as outcasts within the family.

1.6 Theoretical Framework:

In their ecological approach to marriage, Lewis and Spanier (1979) suggested that to fully understand marriage one must examine the multiple layers that comprise the marital relationship. Theoretically, these layers can have an individual effect and a combined effect on marital relations. After reviewing the empirical literature on marital quality, the authors suggested that one should examine the resources available in three different areas to fully understand marital well-being:

(a) Individual and Interpersonal Resource

(b) Social and Economic

They believed that having sufficient resources in each of these areas contributed to the overall marital quality. Thus, persons who had greater individual, interpersonal, and social and economic resources enjoyed higher levels of marital
quality than those with fewer resources.

1.6.1 Individual and Interpersonal Resources:

Individual resources include attributes that a person brings to the marriage that are indicative of their ability to successfully maintain a marital relationship. Attributes such as a person's educational level, emotional health, and physical health are individual resources that can signify a person's preparedness for marriage. Educated persons are believed to be more emotionally secure and to have greater communication skills, making them better equipped at establishing functional marital relationships (Quinn and Odell, 1998). Similarly, it is believed that persons are better equipped to handle the demands of marriage when they are emotionally healthy. Interpersonal resources are the positive feelings and attitudes developed as a result of spousal interactions. Once individuals are married, they work toward meshing personalities and coordinating behaviours so that each partner can reap rewards from the marriage. During these negotiations, certain feelings and attitudes can develop that have the potential to foster either positive or negative perceptions about the marriage. Feeling that one's relationship is equitable is an interpersonal variable that has been shown to have positive effects on marital evaluations. Research findings suggest that spouses who believe that both partners benefit equally from the marital relationship rate their marriages more favourably than spouses who believe that one partner benefits more or less from the marital relationship (Voydanoff and Donnelly, 1999; Wilkie and others, 1998). Having trust in one's spouse is also an interpersonal resource that is considered beneficial to marriage. When spouses trust one another, relationships are thought of as being safe and secure. Having trust in one's spouse often promotes sharing in relationships, allows for open and honest communication, and is essential to relationship growth because the trusted spouse is perceived as dependable and predictable. Indeed, research has shown trust to be positively related to marital adjustment, satisfaction, and relationship evaluations (Kurdek, 2002; Quinn and Odell, 1998).

1.6.2 Social and Economic Resources:

Marital relationships do not exist in a vacuum; they are embedded within social contexts that have the ability to influence them (Bryant and Conger, 1999;
Thus, to completely understand marriages, we must consider the social and economic resources available to support and strengthen them. Social resources, such as positive relations with in-laws and connections to religious institutions, are beneficial to married persons because they increase the size of the couples' networks that are available for support and guidance. Several studies examining the influence of in-law relations on marriage have found positive in-law relations to be beneficial to marital relationship (Bryant, Conger, and Meehan, 2001; Timmer and Veroff, 2000). Being connected to a religious institution has also been shown to have positive effects on marriage (Booth, Johnson, Branaman, and Sica, 1995; Call and Heaton, 1997). Furthermore, a couple's economic situation has also been shown to affect marital well-being (White and Rogers, 2000). Economic resources are a reference to the ability to fulfil economic needs that are determined by a chosen or imposed lifestyle (Allen and Britt, 1983). Thus, having adequate economic resources reduces strain and can serve as a buffer against a tenuous economic environment.

1.7 Feminism:

Feminism is a theory that men and women should be equal politically, economically, and socially. This is the core of all feminism theories. Sometimes, this definition is also referred to as "core feminism" or "core feminist theory". Notice that this theory does not subscribe to differences between men and women or similarities between men and women, nor does it refer to excluding men or only furthering women's causes. Most other branches of feminism do.

1.7.1 Cultural Feminism:

According to this theory, there are fundamental personality differences between men and women, and that a woman’s differences are special and should be celebrated. This theory of feminism supports the notion that there are biological differences between men and women. For example, "women are kinder and gentler than men", leading to the mentality that if women ruled the world there would be no wars. Cultural feminism is the theory that wants to overcome sexism by celebrating women's special qualities, women's ways, and women's experiences, often believing that the "woman's way" is the better way.
1.7.2 Eco-feminism:

Eco-feminism is a theory that rests on the basic principal that patriarchal philosophies are harmful to women, children, and other living things. Parallels are drawn between societal treatment of the environment, animals, or resources and its treatment of women. In resisting patriarchal culture, eco-feminists believe they are also resisting plundering and destroying of the Earth. They feel that the patriarchal philosophy emphasizes the need to dominate and control unruly females and the unruly wilderness.

Eco-feminism views patriarchal society to be a structure, which has developed over the last 5,000 years, while considering matriarchal societies (a society in which females are the centre of the societal roles and structures) to be the original hierarchy.

1.7.3 Individualist or Libertarian Feminism:

Individualist feminism is based upon individualism or libertarian (minimum government or an arch capitalist) philosophies. The primary focus is individual autonomy, rights, liberty, independence, and diversity. Individualist feminism tends to widely encompass men and focuses on barriers that both men and women face due to their gender.

1.7.4 Material Feminism:

A movement that began in the late 19th century focused on liberating women by improving their material condition. This movement revolved around taking the "burden" off women in regards to housework, cooking, and other traditional female domestic jobs.

1.7.5 Moderate Feminism:

This branch of feminism tends to be populated mostly by younger women or women who perceive that they have not directly experienced discrimination. They often believe that the ideals of the feminist movement are no longer viable, and therefore, question the need for further efforts. They often view feminism as overbearing and too overt. Often this group spouses feminists’ ideas, while not accepting or wanting the label of ‘feminist’.
1.7.6 National Organization for Women (N.O.W.) Feminism a.k.a. Gender Feminism:

This theory is based on the notion that in order for men and women to be equal (as the core of ‘feminism’ states), women must be granted some special privileges, and men should not be the central issue or ‘barrier’ in feminism. N.O.W. feminism encompasses only women and fights to offer special privileges to women with the intent of making women equal to men.

1.7.7 Radical Feminism:

Radical feminism is the breeding ground for many of the ideas arising from feminism. Radical feminism was the cutting edge of feminist theory from approximately 1967-1975. It is no longer as universally accepted as it was then, and no longer serves to solely define the term, "feminism". This group views the oppression of women as the most fundamental form of oppression, one that cuts across boundaries of race, culture, and economic class. This is a movement intent on social change, change of rather revolutionary proportions.

Radical feminism questions why women must adopt certain roles based on their biology, just as it questions why men adopt certain other roles based on gender. Radical feminism attempts to draw lines between biologically determined behaviour and culturally determined behaviour in order to free both men and women as much as possible from their previous narrow gender roles.

1.7.8 Amazon Feminism:

Amazon feminism focuses on physical equality and is opposed to gender role stereotypes and discrimination against women based on assumptions that women are supposed to be, look, or behave as if they are passive, weak and physically helpless. Amazon feminism rejects the idea that certain characteristics or interests are inherently masculine (or feminine), and upholds and explores a vision of heroic womanhood. Amazon feminists tend to view that all women are as physically capable as men.

1.7.9 Separatists:
Separatists are often wrongly depicted as lesbians. These are the feminists who advocate separation from men; sometimes total, sometimes partial. The core idea is that "separating" (by various means) from men enables women to see themselves in a different context. Many feminists, whether or not separatist, think this is a necessary "first step" for personal growth. However, they do not necessarily endorse permanent separation.

Liberal feminists since the nineteenth century have sought to free contemporaneous society from residual, pre-modern, patriarchal throwbacks in law and culture, investing in legal, educational, and media strategies as a form of feminist civilizing process as well as lobbying the state for formal equality within the public sphere. The radical feminists of the 1970s, by contrast, are defined in terms of an emphasis on patriarchy as the foundational system of power from which all other injustices spring, and often depicted as pursuing separatist organizing strategies that celebrate and defend women’s difference from men, under the headings of political lesbianism and global sisterhood. Marxist feminists usually come next in the list, described as holding to the view that gender oppression will be overcome with the end of capitalism and class society, and distinguished in this from socialist feminists who advocate alliances between women’s movements and working-class struggles with the goal of overcoming both patriarchy and capitalism (Sara and Cristina et al., 2011).

1.8 Theories of Women Desertion:

Desertion is a form of behaviour. The sustenance or disruption of marital relations depends on several structural, functional, and individual factors. Following are the theories related to woman desertion:

1. Functionalist theory
2. Conflict theory
3. Incompatibility of familial roles
4. Stress and strain theory

1. Functionalist theory:
Introduction of the Study

The functionalist theory explains desertion due to the changing social values in general and those associated with marriage and family. Functionalists like Parson and bales (1955) believe that a change in the larger social system will bring about changes in the sub-system. To be precise, changes in the larger society such as education, employment occupation, legal, and mass media will bring about changes in the institutions of marriage and family. For example, provisions for education, employment, and occupation rights of women have affected their relationships with the husband, mother-in-law, and other members of the family. The Rama Mehta (1975) study revealed that the most crucial factors noted for the breaking of marital ties are: women’s education, employment or economic independence, upbringing in a nuclear family or household, which make individualistic, conscience, and capable of asserting their rights as equal marital partners. In short, changes in larger society will affect changes in the individuals and sub-systems.

2. Conflict Theory:

The conflict theory or the Marxist perspective focuses on clash of roles. It means that whenever women take to full-time employment they cannot fulfil employment and familial roles effectively. Kapur (1970) in her study, “Marriage and the Working Women in India” points out that it is not merely the fact of wife’s employment that affects marital relationship, but the overall changes in the attitudes of educated urban women brought about by a variety of factors, which are operating almost simultaneously in the contemporary Indian society.

Employment creates three problems:

1. It increases her physical labour
2. It increases her financial burden
3. It induces and creates feelings of guilt
In short, desertion may occur due to role conflict of employed women.

3. Incompatibility Theory:

Modernization in terms of industrialization, urbanization, formal education, and mass media is sweeping the whole world. The formal structure of marriage and family in terms of traditional customs, which reflected gender inequality, are gradually on the decline. Women are becoming conscious of their individuality. They
are not ready to subordinate themselves to elders and husbands. Relations between women, especially newly married women and family members are becoming individualistic and personal. Relations between members have to be maintained through mutual confidence, trust, and faith lest there be a breakdown in the system of marriage and family. A majority of the young married couples go in for desertion and divorce because they cannot take each other into confidence and build up a minimum level of trust.

4. Adolescent Stress and Strain:
Adolescence is a period of stress and strain. G. Stanley Hall (1954) is one of those pioneering social scientists who have made noteworthy contributions to the study of adolescence in society. Speaking briefly, Hall said that puberty is a time of great upset, emotional maladjustment, and instability in which the adolescent’s moods oscillate between energy and indifference, gaiety and depression. Hall believed that adolescence, which begins with the onset of puberty, inevitably involves psychological disturbances or tensions. According to Erikson (1950), adolescence is a turning phase in an individual’s life. It is here he/she develops his/her identity.

1.9 Age at Marriage and Desertion:
Age at marriage and desertion are related with each other. Early marriage between 14-16 years for girls is likely to create marital tensions as the spouses do not know how to relate to each other. Physically, sexually, socially, and ideologically they do not know what to expect and what not to expect from each other. Consequently, there are more chances of marital breakdown in the form of desertion/divorce (Asagi, 2014).

1.10 Status of Deserted Women in contemporary world:
The concept of status has been widely used by social scientists to understand the position of an individual or a group in the society. According to Linton (1936), status means a position in the social system occupied by designated individuals. The term status also signifies the culturally ascribed roles to individuals and even to groups, which have to be played according to the cultural norms. The concept of status also connotes the notions of rights and obligations of super ordination and subordination in relation to power, authority, and grading.
The status of women is a complex question and has to be studied as an integral part of the socio-economic structure in which the women live and they cannot be dissociated from it. The changes that have taken place in her position are part of the socio-economic structure of which the women is a part. The changes that take place in her position are a part of the process of transformation of traditional societies. In the past, women’s position was based on custom, which carried the sanction of generations of practice and tradition behind it.

Apart from religion, patriarchy seems to have played a major role in treating the women as having lower status or ranking them secondary to men. Religious texts are quite often quoted as a basis for legitimizing the lower status of women. A woman is relegated to the roles of wife, mother, as well as caretaker of the house, etc.; these roles are idealized in every society and the socialization process internalizes these ideals in the minds of the people. It is unfortunate that over the ages, women themselves believed in their lower status comparing themselves to their men. This denies them access to resources, education, and even to health facilities. They are being exploited, both by men and the society. Even from the angle of human rights, traditionally men have rights and women have duties. Majority of the women in third world countries, including India, are not aware of their rights, and even if a few are aware, they are not empowered to exercise these rights.

1.1.0 Socio-Economic Status of Deserted Women:

Socio-Economic Status (SES) is an economic and sociological combined measure of a person’s work experience and of an individual’s or family’s economic and social position in relation to others, based on income, education, and occupation. When analyzing a family’s SES, the household income, earners’ education, and occupation are examined, as well as combined income. Socio-economic status is typically broken into three categories, high SES, middle SES, and low SES to describe the three areas a family or an individual may fall into. When placing a family or individual into one of these categories any or all of the three variables (income, education, and occupation) can be assessed. Additionally, low income and little education have shown to be strong predictors of a range of physical and mental health problems.
The status of women has to start from the social framework, social structures, cultural norms, and value systems that influence social expectations regarding the behaviour of both men and women and determine the women’s roles and their position in society. A society is composed of many institutions, and most important of them, family and kinship, marriage and religious traditions. They provide the ideology and moral basis for men and women about their rights and duties and their status and role. Globally, one out of every three women faces violence at the hands of their husbands, fathers, or brothers and uncles in their homes. In every country, where reliable, large-scale studies have been conducted, results indicate that between 16 and 52% of women have been assaulted by their husbands/partners.

The study discovered that there are some women who choose to live alone and head their own households rather than tolerate abuse, neglect, or the presence of a co-wife. The event of abandonment is usually preceded by the deterioration of marital relationship, accompanied by financial hardship and/or the husband being unable/unwilling to support the household. Young wives are more likely to return to their parents’ home, if possible. During the study, it was observed that women who had been living in the natal home before abandonment get more assistance and support from them. Support from the society and village was less likely as the abandoned women are not categorized in the similar class as the widows. Society feels less obligated to help an abandoned woman rather than to help a widow. Sometimes, it is believed that the abandoned woman was at fault. The abandoned woman is expected to support herself. (Hussain and Huda, 1995).

At the 2001 Census, India had a female population of 496 million. India accounts for 15% of the world’s women characterized by vast regional differences and a variety of cultures. Nevertheless, social discrimination and economic deprivation on the basis of gender is common to all, irrespective of religion, cast, community, and state.

1.10.2 Psycho-Social Status of Deserted Women:

Psycho-social relates to one's psychological development in, and interaction with, a social environment. The individual needs not be fully aware of this relationship with his or her environment. It was first commonly used by psychologist
Erik Erikson in his stages of social development in contrast to social psychology, which attempts to explain social patterns within an individual. It is usually used in the context of "psychosocial intervention", which is commonly used alongside psycho-educational or psycho-pharmacological interventions and points toward solutions for individual challenges in interacting with an element of the social environment.

Problems that occur in one's psychosocial functioning can be referred to as "psychosocial dysfunction" or "psychosocial morbidity". This refers to the lack of development or atrophy of the psychosocial self, often occurring alongside other dysfunctions that may be physical, emotional, or cognitive in nature.

The term psychosocial refers to one’s psychological development in and interaction with a social environment. Psychosocial problems, which can greatly affect one’s life, work, family and domestic life can be mild to most severe in terms of how pervasive and to what extent a person exhibits the personality disorder. Traditionally, it has been perceived that men are more subject to psychosocial problems because of varied responsibilities related to being the provider of the family. However, in recent times, this perception has changed. Women face more psychosocial problems now as a result of her changing roles and bearing dual responsibilities. Various psychosocial problems like anxiety, frustration, mental illness, loneliness, distress, depression, stress, anger, phobias, and other social and emotional distress are likely to affect her.

The study found that in a patriarchal society where males dominate, a growing sense of anxiety is imperative. Social situations that make women uncertain and hesitant also make them socially anxious. The ways women are perceived and evaluated by others also generate social anxiety in them (Sheikh and Bhusan, 2002).

It is never easy when a marriage relationship ends whatever the reason for the split and whether the breakup of a relationship was voluntary or not can turn the whole world upside down and trigger all sorts of painful and unsettling feelings. Desertion is painful because it represents loss, not just of the relationship, but also of shared dreams and commitments. Romantic relationships begin on a high note of excitement and hope for the future, and when these relationships fail, it experiences profound disappointment, stress, and grief.
Psychosocial support is an approach to victims of disaster, catastrophe or violence to foster resilience of communities and individuals. It aims at easing resumption of normal life, facilitates effective people participation to their convalescence, and prevents pathological consequences of potentially traumatic situations.

1.11 Coping Mechanism:

Coping mechanisms can also be described as ‘survival skills’. They are strategies that people use to deal with stresses, pain, and natural changes that they experience in life. Coping mechanisms are learned behavioural patterns used to cope. People learn from others ways to manage their stresses. There are negative coping mechanisms and positive coping mechanisms. Many people use their coping mechanisms to benefit them in a positive way. However, they are not always able to cope with the difficulties that they face.

Critical life events approaches generally focus on incidents, which lead to transitions or changes in the course of a lifespan and the process of adjustment which follows. Implicit in this conceptualization is that life events, although often stressful, have the potential to lead to growth, personal expansion, and development. Whether an individual responds in an adaptive or maladaptive manner depends on many factors, some of which are in the person's control and others which are not (Spanier and Lachman, 1980).

Psychological coping mechanisms are commonly termed coping strategies or coping skills. Unconscious or non-conscious strategies (e.g., defense mechanisms) are generally excluded. The term ‘coping’ generally refers to adaptive or constructive coping strategies, i.e., the strategies that reduce stress levels. However, some coping strategies can be considered maladaptive, i.e., increases stress levels. Maladaptive coping can thus be described, in effect, as non-coping. Furthermore, the term ‘coping’ also refers to reactive coping, i.e., the coping response which follows the stressor. This contrasts with proactive coping, in which a coping response aims to head off a future stressor.

Coping is a process that we as individuals employ every day. We engage in coping when we feel under stress or want to manage a difficult situation. The process
of coping involves two components, appraisal and coping. Appraisal is the act of perceiving a stressor and analyzing one’s own ability to deal with the stressor. Appraisal can be made in three different conditions: when we have experienced a stressor, when we anticipate a stressor, and when we experience a chance for mastery or gain. Once we appraise a stressful situation we must decide how we will respond or cope with the stressor, either choosing to master it, reduce it or tolerate it (Lazarus, 1966).

The coping style we engage in is ultimately determined by whether we believe we have the resources to resolve the stressor. There appears to be three main coping styles that people employ when attempting to resolve or remove a stressor: problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping, and avoidant coping. Problem-focused coping involves altering or managing the problem that is causing the stress and is highly action focused (Lazarus, 1966).

Individuals engaging in problem-focused coping focus their attention on gathering the required resources (i.e., skills, tools, and knowledge) necessary to deal with the stressor. This involves a number of strategies such as gathering information, resolving conflict, and planning and making decisions (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984).

Carver et al. (1989) reveals that emotion-focused coping can take a range of forms such as seeking social support, acceptance and venting of emotions, etc. Although emotion-focused coping styles are quite varied they all seek to lessen the negative emotions associated with the stressor, thus emotion-focused coping is action-orientated (Admiraal, Korthagen, and Wubbels, 2000; Folkman and Lazarus, 1980).

Avoidant coping can be described as cognitive and behavioural efforts directed towards minimizing, denying or ignoring dealing with a stressful situation (Holahan, Holahan, Moos, Brennan, and Schutte, 2005). Although some researchers group avoidant coping with emotion-focused coping, the styles are conceptually distinct. Avoidant coping is focused on ignoring a stressor, and is therefore, passive, whereas emotion-focused coping is active (Admiraal et al., 2000; Holahan et al., 2005).

1.11.1 Coping Style and Psychological Distress:
Introduction of the Study

Problem-focused coping appears to be the most adaptive coping style as it is associated with reduced psychological distress. Although many factors are involved in the development of psychological distress, coping styles have been shown to be a significant contributor. Alternatively, avoidant coping appears the most maladaptive as it is associated with increased distress (Ben-Zur, 1999; Bouteyre, Maurel, and Bernaud, 2007; Carver, Scheier, and Weintraub, 1989; Crockett et al., 2007; Folkman, 1997; Knibb and Horton, 2008; Penland, Masten, Zelhart, Fournet, and Callahan, 2000; Sherbourne, Hays, and Wells, 1995; Wijndaele et al., 2007). The results regarding emotion-focused coping are more complex as this coping style has been associated with both increased and decreased levels of psychological distress.

1.12 Important Constitutional and Legal Provisions for Women in India:

The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties, and Directive Principles. The Constitution not only grants equality to women, but also empowers the State to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women. Within the framework of a democratic polity, our laws, development policies, plans and programmes are aimed at women’s advancement in different spheres. India has also ratified various international conventions and human rights instruments committing to secure equal rights for women. Key among them is the ratification of the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1993.

1.12.1 Constitutional Provisions:

The Constitution of India not only grants equality to women, but also empowers the State to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women for neutralizing the cumulative socio-economic, education, and political disadvantages faced by them. Fundamental Rights, among others, ensure equality before the law and equal protection of the law, and prohibits discrimination against any citizen on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth, and guarantees equality of opportunity to all citizens in matters relating to employment. Articles 14, 15, 15(3), 16, 39(a), 39(b), 39(c) and 42 of the Constitution are of significant importance in this regard.

i. Equality before law for women (Article 14).
ii. The State not to discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them [Article 15 (i)].

iii. The State to make any special provision in favour of women and children [Article 15 (3)].

iv. Equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State (Article 16).

v. The State to direct its policy towards securing for men and women equally the right to an adequate means of livelihood [Article 39(a)], and equal pay for equal work for both men and women [Article 39(d)].

vi. To promote justice, on a basis of equal opportunity and to provide free legal aid by suitable legislation or scheme or in any other way to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities (Article 39 A).

vii. The State to make provision for securing just and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief (Article 42).

viii. The State to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and to protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation (Article 46).

ix. The State to raise the level of nutrition and the standard of living of its people (Article 47).

x. To promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India and to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women [Article 51(A) (e)].

xi. Not less than one-third (including the number of seats reserved for women belonging to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes) of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Panchayat to be reserved for women and such seats to be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a Panchayat [Article 243 D(3)].

xii. Not less than one-third of the total number of offices of Chairpersons in the
Panchayats at each level to be reserved for women [Article 243 D (4)].

xiii. Not less than one-third (including the number of seats reserved for women belonging to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes) of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Municipality to be reserved for women and such seats to be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a Municipality [Article 243 T (3)].

xiv. Reservation of offices of Chairpersons in Municipalities for the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and women in such manner as the legislature a State may by law provide [Article 243 T (4)].

1.12.2 Legal Provisions:

To uphold the Constitutional mandate, the State has enacted various legislative measures intended to ensure equal rights, to counter social discrimination and various forms of violence and atrocities, and to provide support services, especially to working women.

Although women may be victims of any of the crimes such as 'Murder', 'Robbery', 'Cheating', etc., the crimes, which are directed specifically against women, are characterized as 'Crime against Women'. These are broadly classified under two categories.

1. Crimes identified under the Indian Penal Code (IPC)
   a) Rape (Sec. 376)
   b) Kidnapping and Abduction for different purposes ( Secs. 363-373)
   c) Homicide for Dowry, Dowry Deaths or their attempts (Sec. 302/304B)
   d) Torture, both mental and physical (Sec. 498-A)
   e) Molestation (Sec. 354)
   f) Sexual Harassment (Sec. 509)

2. Crimes identified under Special Laws (SLL)

Although all laws are not gender specific, the provisions of law affecting women significantly have been reviewed periodically and amendments carried out
to keep pace with the emerging requirements. Some acts, which have special provisions to safeguard women and their interests, are:

a) The Employees State Insurance Act, 1948
b) The Plantation Labour Act, 1951
c) The Family Courts Act, 1954
d) The Special Marriage Act, 1954
e) The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955
f) Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956
g) The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 (Amended in 1995)
h) Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961
i) The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971
j) The Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1976
k) The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976
l) The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 1983
m) The Factories (Amendment) Act, 1986
n) Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986
o) Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987
p) The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005
q) The Hindu Succession Act, 1956 with amendment in 2005
r) The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006

1.12.3 Special Initiatives for Women:

National Commission for Women (NCW)

In January 1992, the Government of India set-up this statutory body with a specific mandate to study and monitor all matters relating to the constitutional and legal safeguards provided for women, review the existing legislation to suggest amendments wherever necessary, etc.

I. Reservation for Women in Local Self –Government (LGS)
Introduction of the Study

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act passed in 1992 by the Parliament ensures one-third of the total seats for women in all elected offices in local bodies, whether in rural areas or urban areas.


This Plan of Action is to ensure survival, protection, and development of the girl child with the ultimate objective of building a better future for her.

III. National Policy for the Empowerment of Women, 2001 (NPEW)

The Department of Women and Child Development in the Ministry of Human Resource Development had prepared a “National Policy for the Empowerment of Women” in the year 2001. The goal of this policy is to bring about the advancement, development, and empowerment of women.

1.13 Statement of the Problem:

The present study is aimed to study the psycho-social and economic status of the deserted women. Indian society is religious and tradition oriented, and at the same time, male dominated. There is a tradition in India that women should worship her husband as God. In Indian society, social stigma is attached to divorced men and women, especially women. Despite the introduction of marriage laws and legal sanction to the divorcée to remarry, divorce is not easily accepted in Indian society. It is highly stigmatized and undesirable (Gore, 1968; Kurien, 1982; Choudhary, 1988; Singh, 1988; Amato 1994).

Educational systems and training institutions could help to promote the needed cultural transformation. Science and technology are powerful instruments for the development of women and have often been misused to marginalize women and reduce their status.

After desertion, Indian women face a multitude of problems in the social arena because there are very few deserted or separated parent families, and thus, minimal or little social support is available to them. Moreover, they are hesitant to make friends with men (either single or married) because it might be misinterpreted that the woman is immoral and sexually permissive. Therefore, Indian women are hesitant to remarry.
Remarriage for an Indian woman is relatively uncommon and she will have to experience loneliness.

There are many lacunae in the studies on deserted women. There is a number of studies abroad and on Non-Residential Indians. There are also some studies India on separated Muslim women as well as on socio-economic security, reasons for desertion, issues and concerns of deserted women; most of these studies are based on non-participatory approach and on socio-economic issues.

The present study intends to understand and explore factors, viz., psycho-social and economic status and coping mechanism of the deserted women in Kalaburagi District of Karnataka.

1.1.4 Significance of the Study:

In a democratic country like India, where the Constitution has given equal status, dignity, and rights to women, she is still a second class citizen. After 66 years of independence, the status of women is very low and they have to face different types of difficulties in their lives. Modernization and urbanization have enhanced the lifestyle pattern and it has positive and negative effects on the status of women. Sixteen percent of the world’s population lives in India, and it ranks as the seventh largest country. There are huge diversities among the people of the country with regard to race, caste, religion, language, and socio-economic conditions. It is evident from one of the studies that marital well-being varies between people of different races (Goodwin, 2003). Therefore, the present study is an attempt to understand the dynamics of the termination of marriage in India, and to estimate its vulnerability through various socio-economic characteristics.

Kirti Singh (2012) reveals that while separations, desertions, and divorces are increasing in India today, not much attention has been paid to the manner in which these deserted and separated women live, often with their children, and what their rights and entitlements are in/from the marital home. Very few empirical legal studies exist on the economic status of divorced and separated women in India. In the recent past, some studies by social scientists on single women, particularly widows, highlighted their general social and economic condition. In some of these studies, the condition of separated/deserted women has been described as even worse than that of
Moreover, no such study has been reported in the Hyderabad-Karnataka region. Hence, this study occupies significance as there is a need to study the aspects of deprived women in India, the major issue being desertion. In India, Karnataka stands second in desertion of women.

Women constitute about 50 per cent of the total population. They are a part of the weaker section. The social work profession is development directed for all sections in general and the weaker section in particular. Social work intervention aims at women development for gender justice has something to do with integrated and inclusive development.

The study is unique in nature, as it explains the multi-dimensional issues of women desertion, its causes and consequences, and evolves possible intervention for empowerment through equality and justice. It will enrich the existing body of knowledge, and will be helpful to policy makers, planners, and women empowerment interventionists in implementing proper programmes in India, and thereby, attaining gender equality, justice, and inclusive development.