CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

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This chapter first presents the conclusions arrived at as a result of analysis and interpretations. Then few possible recommendations have been suggested for rehabilitation of widows. At the end a few possible problems on which further research may be conducted have been suggested.

7.1 CONCLUSIONS

The focus of the study have been on studying the widows socio-economic and personal problems, status and background. The widows socio-economic background was found out, which helped in the construction of tools for measuring widows problems and socio-economic status. This provided a base for comparisons between the educated and uneducated widows.

The investigation yielded the following conclusions of the group comparisons -

1. There is a significant and positive relationship between education and problems of widows.
2. There are significant differences between educated and uneducated widows with respect to economic problem, social problem and personal problem.
3. Significant differences is observed with regard to socio-economic status between educated and uneducated widows.
4. There is significant differential effect of age upon the
problems of widow remarriage.
5. There is positive association between education and the problems of widow remarriage.

Thus it is evident that the statistical analysis completely rejects null hypothesis under (1), (2), (3), (4) and (5).

A comparative analysis of widows indicate that in general educated widows have higher status in society, than uneducated widows. Widows having basically received less education seem to be employed as ayahs, domestic servants, operators, saleswoman, peons etc. Most employed widows seem to have sought employment only after their husbands death on compassionate grounds. Widows endowed with less or no education could not secure high income gathering jobs. In view of their joining the labour market due to dire economic need most of the widows were able to earn very low income.

Occupation and income being functions of education, attempt was made to study the educational index of widows. The current financial status of educated widows indicate that 12% had no income at all as compared to 24% of the uneducated widows. In case of educated widows 14% belong to Low Income Group (LIG), 44% to Middle Income Group (MIG) and 30% belong to High Income Group (HIG). In case of uneducated widows 48% belong to the low income group (LIG), 10% middle income group (MIG) and 18% high income group (HIG). Thus widows with higher levels of education have high income generating employment and able to maintain high
standard of living as compared to uneducated widows.

The widows problem differ in intensity depending on several variables like education, age, income, socio-economic background and employment.

The study reveals that young and those with nil or little education and those unemployed face greater problem than those who are older in age and those educated, employed and to some extent economically independent.

To get an overall perspective of the problems faced by widows, they were classified under major headings viz:

i. Economic Problem
ii. Social Problem
III. Child Rearing Problem
iv. Problem in widow remarriage.

The degree or the intensity of the problem differs for educated and uneducated widows. The percentage wise distribution of respondents by problems faced among educated and uneducated widows have been presented in Table B – II.

The first major area of problem is that of finance. The position and status of an individual in society is largely determined by economic status. Data reveals that economically independent widows face economic problem to a lesser degree than those totally economically dependent.

The widowed women though treated with sympathy by the members of their family often are not accorded a high status within the family. The status of widows is inferior because they are considered as unfortunate women, whose sin have
brought them widowhood. While widows are sympathized for their misfortune no chance is left unexplored to exploit them. Sometimes they are lured and often victimised. Exploited by men at the work place and deprived of a respectable position in society they are not spared by their fellow women colleagues who subject them to unhealthy discussion on their personal lives so that it upsets their mental balance. Some widows reported physical depression and acute personal loss and a sense of rejection because of the loss of their husband and hence complained a lack of position and respect in society. The investigation reveals that the society had a very indifferent attitude towards the widows, and most of the widows reported that they were pained by this indifferent attitude, as society offered them no sympathy, security, status or position.

Regarding child rearing problem, most of the widows reported marriage and education of children as the major problems. In case of young widows bringing up small children and disciplining sons seemed to be the next major problem. In case of old widows ill treatment by sons and daughter-in-law and desertion by married children seem to be the next major problem confronting these women, as most old widows reported that they felt "unwanted" in the family. All widows wanted to live and see their children settled.

Regarding the problem of widow remarriage most widows had a negative attitude towards remarriage. This was due to
the presence of children and their own commitments and responsibilities towards them. They also feared that children may be ill treated by their step fathers. Children being their only solace and source of happiness most of them seem to have their welfare and well being as their main aim and to reach that end they are willing to make any number of sacrifices. Findings also reveal the fact that older widows having fulfilled their responsibilities towards children looked forward for a peaceful life and wanted to go on a pilgrimage and sought recourse in religion, while young widows were burdened with heavy responsibilities - financial and looking after young children.

7.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is the moral responsibility of the society to give a new life to the widows. Government and non-government bodies like voluntary agencies must take realistic measures to formulate and implement socio economic security schemes for upliftment and rehabilitation of the widows. However rehabilitation will depend on the kind of services they need and on their age, health, status, family background, educational level, occupational status and dependents.

Rehabilitation of widows could be through certain measures like remarriage, education, vocational training, employment, welfare programmes for dependent children, protection to young widows from exploitation and victimisation and legal aid for inheritance of property.
Some measures that should be taken up are as follows:

1. WIDOW REMARRIAGE: Widow remarriage should be encouraged to enable young and childless widows and those with children to remarry and provide them with financial and emotional support in their life. A great deal of change in society has been brought about by education and technological innovation but it is unfortunate that the concept of widow remarriage is yet to gain popular support. The attitude of society towards widow remarriage needs to be changed. The concept advocated by social reformers from the 19th century should be widely accepted by the society. Widows are condemned by the society and forced to lead a miserable life until their death unlike a widower who remarries even before the funeral pyre of his wife cools down.

ii) EDUCATION: All widows should strive to change the society and its outlook through education and social awakening and action in order to raise their status. The right type of education to help widows to face the problems of life and build up the right attitude towards life is essential. Educational institutions through their extension services should come forward to educate the masses and mould their socio-religious attitude towards widows. Condensed courses of education should be provided. Irrespective of religion, caste and community Indian women suffer from social stigma. It is a social evil that needs to be tackled.
from the grassroots level. The very perception regarding widows in India need to be altered. Most of our women are illiterate and less educated. An uneducated widow has to depend on the joint family of her husband or her parents, and is trapped by a system that enforces the traditional rules of widowhood. A widows plight is worst if she is uneducated and ignorant, so widows need to be educated. Hence women should be encouraged to complete at least ten years of school education. This will enable them to understand the government measures and social legislation to provide protection to the exploited.

iii) VOCATIONAL TRAINING: Vocational training must be provided to widows. Training in various trades and vocational studies must be imparted to make the widows economically independent.

iv) EMPLOYMENT: One of the major economic consequences of widowhood is losing the main bread winner of the family. Therefore efforts should be made to provide reservation of jobs for widows so that they attain economic independence instead of becoming a burden on societies. Widows must also be absorbed in institutions and offices where their deceased husbands were employed. Opportunities for full time and part time employment should be provided.

v) WELFARE PROGRAMMES for dependent children of widows should be provided by giving educational concessions and a certain percentage of jobs in government and public institutions should be reserved for them, in case the widow
is not suitable for the job.

vi) The young widows elicit sympathy and compassion from the society, but these sentiments are not always translated into protection and support and most young widows are victimised and exploited. A young widows plight is worst if she is uneducated and ignorant. She is exploited by her relatives too. So specific strategies should be formulated for protection of young widows. Mass media, educational institutions, voluntary agencies and political parties should create a favourable environment for these widows to remarry and settle down.

vii) LEGAL AID: Awareness should be created among the widows regarding their legal rights in the ancestral and acquired property of the deceased husband. Free legal aid should be made available and every widow should be made aware of this facility by publicity.

Other measures to alleviate the miserable condition of widows could be taken up as follows:

- Secular homes for widows should be established.
- Voluntary organisations should take up education and opinion building programmes in favour of widow rehabilitation programme.
- Mass media, like radio, television, newspaper and films should be utilised to elevate the status of widows. People should be educated about new values and efforts should be made to put an end to the archaic ideas about widows.
- Couples should be encouraged to discuss the eventuality of possible death and plan their lives accordingly. They should be psychologically and economically prepared to face such a catastrophe.

- Seminars, conferences, and workshops should be encouraged both at regional and national levels to create awareness about problems faced by widows and to formulate new strategies for the welfare of widows and create a new machinery to increase rehabilitation work.

- Leisure time activities are to be introduced and provided to the widows.

- Pension should be provided by the government to widows regularly.

- Family Counselling Centres should be provided to help the needy widows in urban areas. There is need to publicize these welfare programmes through mass media.

- Community Services must be started to assist widowed person to cope with grief - to become well adjusted and self - actualizing.

- Programmes should be introduced to share experiences and for personal development as -

- Need assessment program where widows examine emotional status and special needs should be examined.

- Relaxation techniques, exercises, hobbies are to be offered for outlet of stress. Stress management programmes to be introduced where widows stress in life is to be
analysed and solution offered to the adjustive demands of life - as frustration, conflict etc.
- Image management programmes to be introduced where widow highlight areas of potential difficulty and investigate their own identity.
- Employment and career programmes for individuals to be introduced wherein each widow evaluates their desire and need to be employed for a financial, social and emotional perspective.
- Goal seeking programmes to be introduced where widows can construct a personal plan for building a rewarding future.

7.3 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The following suggestions for further research can be given-

1) Researches may be done to identify psychological and emotional problems of widows, and construct valid instrument to measure the degree of the problem in aspects like grief, frustration, emotional insecurity etc.

2) Investigation may also be conducted to identify the legal problems of widows, and suggest measures for creating awareness among the widows regarding their legal right in the ancestral and acquired property of their deceased husband.

3) A comparative study can be made between employed and unemployed widows.

4) A comparative study can be made between a widow and
a widower regarding their problems and status.

5) A comparative study of urban and rural widows on problems and status can also be made.

A number of other suggestions for further research can be given but the above mentioned suggestions seem to be pertinent and need immediate attention of the researcher.

With these suggestions given above the investigation concludes the report. It is hoped that the effort will be considered useful enough for further investigation into the problem and will be of benefit to widows and to the society.