INTRODUCTION

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Vidhava or widow is a woman whose husband is dead and who has not married again. It is a very old word which can be traced beyond the Vedic language to Indo-European origin and exists with little modifications in most of the languages of Indo-European family. Thus we get in Latin Vidua, Italian Vedova, Spanish viuda, French veuve, Old Slavonic vidova, Russian vdova, Old German wituwa, Gothic widuwo, Old English widewe and widuwe and Persian beva. The word vidhava is derived from a root like Teutonic wid, to lack, Latin videre to separate as in di-videre and Sanskrit vidh to be bereft.

Widowhood is an event that constitutes the greatest and saddest change in the life of a woman. Death of husband brings numerous problems for the widows, she realizes that for her parents she belongs to another house, whereas for her in laws she is a burden on the family economy and hence not welcome. All of a sudden she is exposed to face the pain

of bereavement as well as realign herself to a new life. It is a harsh fact of life - as the loss of a husband is the most traumatic event of a woman's life. Widowhood represents a crisis in a woman's life.

The value of a woman's life and personality is not lost as soon as she becomes a widow. Her personality can grow after widowhood and be of use to herself, to the family, to the society, to the nation and the whole of mankind at large.

All over the world widows are found to have many problems in common. The problems of widowhood is a part of the overall problem of the status of a woman - a lasting solutions to this problem can be found only when there is general improvement in the status of women in India.

Widows are regarded as second class citizens of the country and second class members of the families. According to Barrett widows belong to a subculture whose members live in despair and loneliness. They chide each other for self-pity and advice each other to keep busy. They individually hope for an avenue of escape but collectively

Widowhood is also seen as an event marking reduced social rules and leading to social isolation. Widowhood leads to loss of their position in family and kin groups, reduce their participation in religious activities, change their consumption pattern and life style for the worse, introducing feeling of social and economic insecurity and deprivation and reducing the chance of good alliance for their daughters and education of their sons. Changes is evident the way they dress, the colour of their costumes and also discard ornaments. They are expected to stay away from entertainment.

1.1 NEED AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

The study has been justified on the ground that in the state of Assam studies on the problem of widows are still in an embryonic stage. The need for such studies has been justified and long been felt, as no exploratory work has been done till now, stressing on the socio-economic conditions and personal problems of the widows as the main dimensions in Greater Guwahati. The study is thus more particularly directed and designed to investigate the socio-economic and personal problems of educated and

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uneducated widows and hence the study has been entitled —
``An indepth study of the problems of Educated and
Uneducated widows of Greater Guwahati with special emphasis
on Social, Economic and Personal Problems'’.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The basic problem undertaken for investigation in the
present study is to examine the significant problems in the
life of the widows — that is the economic, social and
personal problems of widows of Greater Guwahati. A
comparative study will be made of the problems between
educated and uneducated widows. The areas of money matters,
social life, personal life, child rearing and problems of
widow remarriage will be included under socio-economic and
personal problems.

Education of woman are proving helpful in improving the
conditions of women in present day society. Education is
required to facilitate rehabilitation of widows. Therefore
the problems will be examined and relationship established
with education.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the present investigation is to
study the — 'WIDOWS' — socio-economic and personal problems.

The specific objectives of the study leading to the
achievement of the main objective are —
(i) To use a tool for the measurement of social, economic and personal problems of widows.
(ii) To construct a standardized scale for the measurement of socio-economic status of widows.
(iii) To compare the socio-economic and personal problems of educated and uneducated widows.
(iv) To compare the socio-economic status of educated and uneducated widows.
(v) To find out the socio-economic background of the educated and uneducated widows.
(vi) To identity the problems in widow remarriage.
(vii) To investigate the effect of age and education upon the problems in widow remarriage.
(viii) To suggest measures within the present socio-cultural framework in order to improve the conditions of the widows.

1.4 Variables

The key variables include -

i) EDUCATIONAL LEVEL: Various educational levels make the point clear that problems of widows of various educational levels are different which lead to differences in socio-economic and personal problems.

Three educational levels viz:
(a) High Educational Level (H.E.L.) which include Research degree (Ph.D, D.Phil, D. Litt)
Technical Degree (Medical, Engineering)
Post Graduate (M.A., M.Sc., M.Com., LLM)
Graduate Level (B.A., B. Sc. B.Com., LLB)
(b) Middle Educational Level (M.E.L.)

which includes -
H.S.S.L.C.
H.S.L.C.
(c) Low Educational Level (L.E.L.)

which include
Middle School
Primary School
Literate

Educational level is the first important independent variable in the present study.

II OCCUPATIONAL LEVEL - Work participation of widows plays an important role in determining the problems of the widows.

Three levels of occupation viz. -

Category I includes High Administrative (Gazetted) Officer, Professor, Reader, Lecturer, Principal, Doctor, Lawyer, Engineer, Newspaper Editor, Auditor, Bank Manager, Distinguished Artist, Managing Director, Librarian, Political Leader holding salary (M.P., MLA).

Category II includes Middle class administrative (non-gazetted) Officer, teacher of high school or intermediate college, Research assistant, nurse, chemist, junior engineer.

Category III includes clerk, typist, Accountant,
Laboratory Assistant, primary or middle school teacher, press reporter, saleswoman, telephone operator, proof reader, fourth grade employee, factory labourer, cleaner, sweeper, worker engaged in agriculture and domestic servant are included as the second variable as occupation is the most reliable index of status.

The three categories are named

(a) High Occupational Level (H.O.L.)

(b) Middle Occupational Level (M.O.L.)

(c) Low Occupational Level (L.O.L.)

III. ECONOMIC LEVEL with its three variations -

(a) High Income Group - (H.I.G.) above 5000/- per month.

(b) Middle Income Group - (M.I.G.) between 1000/- to 4999/- per month.

(c) Low Income Group (L.I.G.) - between 100/- to 999/- per month has been considered as an important factor in determining the economic problem and has been taken as the third variable in the study. The levels of income of the widows is an important variable as it determines mostly the levels of living, saving and investment which reflect on the problems of widows.

Hence in this present study Educational level, Occupational level, Economic level are the three important
independent variables.

1.5 HYPOTHESES

Keeping in view the above objectives the following hypotheses has been formulated -

(i) There is no significant association between education of the widows and their problems.

(ii) There is no significant differences between educated and uneducated widows with respect to:
    (a) Economic problem
    (b) Social problem
    (c) Personal problem

(iii) There is no significant differences between educated and uneducated widows with regard to their socio-economic status.

(iv) There is no differential effect of age upon the problems of widow remarriage.

(v) There is negative association between education and the problem of widow remarriage.

1.6. TOOLS TO BE USED

The tools to be used to testify the hypotheses are

(a) Personal Data Sheet (PDS)

(b) Questionnaire on Problem of widows (QPW)

(c) Socio-Economic Status Scale for widows (Urban) (SESS)
1.7. ORGANIZATION OF RESEARCH WORK

With these objectives in view the proposed thesis is divided into seven chapters. An outline format of the thesis is as follows -

Chapter I - The first chapter includes a brief introduction - to the broad area of consideration. A clear statement of the problem, need and justification, objectives of the study, variables, hypotheses, significance of the problems in presented with organization of the thesis. All important key terms have been clearly defined. The first chapter is entitled -

'INTRODUCTION'

Chapter II - The second chapter reviews important literature related to the study of widows. Indian and western studies have been abstraceted. This chapter is entitled 'REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE'

Chapter III - The third chapter deals with the methodology wherein descriptive survey research and survey appraisal technique like questionnaire, autobiography and self view and statistical techniques used in analysis is discussed. This chapter is entitled 'METHODOLOGY'.

Chapter IV - The fourth chapter entitled 'Construction and Description of the Instruments' deals with the construction, description and scoring of the data gathering instruments that is Personal Data Sheet, Questionnaire on Problems of Widow and Socio Economic Status Scale.
Chapter V - The fifth chapter deals with the sampling procedure and administration of the instruments, that is Personal Data Sheet, Questionnaire on Problems of Widows and Socio Economic Status Scale for Widows. This chapter is entitled -

'SAMPLING AND FIELD STUDY'.

Chapter VI - The sixth chapter deals with scoring and analysis of the data. This chapter is entitled -

'RESULTS AND ANALYSIS'.

Chapter VII - The seventh chapter consists of a summary. Findings and conclusions are presented objectively. Findings include statement of factual information based on data analyzed, conclusions, answer acceptance or rejection of the hypotheses proposed. It also includes suggestions for further research.

1.8. DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

For the purpose of clarity and proper understanding of the findings some of the concepts adopted in the study have been operationally defined.

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

Social problems - of widows are classified in terms of the social stigma attached to them, the social restrictions imposed on them and the social boycott society metes out to them resulting in their low social status.
Economic problems - include economic insecurity, dependence on others for basic needs, and inadequate income.

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

The number of widows in our country is increasing. Widows can not be ignored from the main stream of activities of the society because they form a large population. As regards census records in India, widows outnumber widowers. From 1951 to 1970 widowhood was more or less stable around 12 percent in the population.6

Further a study of the distribution of the population of India by Marital Status according to 1971 reveals a high proportion of widow composition. The percentage of widows in the total population in 1971 was 8.86%7. According to 1981 census in India there are 2.34 crore widows. The total population of widow's household was 11.7 crores. This accounted to 17% of the total population of India8.

7. Padmanabhan, P - Census of India 1971, Series I India Report and table based on 5% Sample data 1971.
The results expected out of this research study of educated and uneducated widows in Greater Guwahati is to enable to understand the overall condition and problems of widows in the past, to visualize the present and to predict and provide guidance for better system for widows in the future, to suggest broad outline for a perspective plan for widows upliftment, to alleviate their sufferings and help them to lead a fuller life and thereby contribute to the development of the society.