CHAPTER - III

The Problems faced by the widows:

The intensity of the Problem and the Socio-economic background of the Widows
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The Problem of Food:

Arranging for the daily food is found to be very difficult for some widows. The middle aged widows have more difficulties in arranging their daily food. The young widows have comparatively less difficulties (Figure-2).

The low educated widows have the problem of food in more acute intensity than their middle and high educated counterparts. It is least difficult for the middle educated widows. The intensity of the problem is more acute for the low occupation widows, than the better employed ones.

The low income group, as expected have extreme difficulties in arranging their daily foods than those with better incomes.

Widows from the large families have less difficulties of daily food than those from small families (Tab.46) (Figure-3)
The Problem of Shelter:

The sample data (Table-2) indicate that a large number of widows are in old age group. It seems from the sample that the younger widows confront more difficulties in finding shelters for themselves than their older counterparts. For more than 50 percent of the old widows, the task was least difficult (Figure-4).

Those in the middle income group are the worst sufferers than those in other income groups. They find it extremely ill equipped to confront the situation. Those in the low income group are surprisingly in advantageous positions. The low income respondents are mostly aged widows, who had settled down to an acceptable condition on the eve of their widowhood.

It is seen from the sample that the working widows in lower occupations face more constraints than their better placed counterparts. The middle level working widows seem to be in advantageous positions.

It is expected that higher education makes an individual more efficient. In our sample, however, we notice no association between the individuals' education and capacity to confront life. The middle educated
widows seem to be better off than their more educated counterparts. The low-educated widows are least bothered in fixing up their shelters compared to the other groups. The low educated respondents, who face no problems in this aspect are old and the old widows often own shelters before the death of their husbands.

A large number of informants in our sample belong to small families. It seems from the sample that the small families face more hazards than their larger counterparts (Tab.47)(Figure-5).

The Emotional aspect:

Our data (Tab-3) indicate that higher percentage of young widows are suffer emotionally more than their older counterparts. It seems from the sample that as the age increases, more or less emotional problems gradually dwindle. However, it appears that for large number of old widows, the problem is moderate than their younger counterparts. As a whole, the sample indicates that the older widow's are emotionally less disturbed than their younger counterparts (Figure-6).

The middle educated widows suffer emotionally more than their less and more educated counterparts.
Moreover, the less educated widows are emotionally less disturbed.

In the sample studied, only 47 informants work for their wages in different levels. Among them 29 are in low, 16 in middle and only 2 are in high occupations. It seems from the sample that the low occupational level widows suffer emotionally more than their better occupational counterparts. The problem is moderate for the high occupational widows.

Most of our informants belong to the low income group. They suffer emotionally more than their higher income counterparts. However, all income groups suffer emotionally more or less but the problem is more moderate for the high income group. A large number of our informants are from small size families, and the small size families encounter more emotional problems than their counterparts in larger sizes. It may be that widows do not get emotional support in the small families (Tab.48)(Figure-7).

The Financial Problem

The sample data (Tab.49) show that the middle aged widows encounter more financial constraints than their
younger counterparts. While it is less difficult for the old. The low-educated widows have more acute financial difficulties than the middle educated ones. However, it appears that the higher percentage of low-educated widows face least financial difficulties than their more educated counterparts. The data indicate that, irrespective of the educational level, the financial position is moderate for all, but the middle educated widows are better than the low-educated ones. The low-occupation widows have more financial constraints compared to their better placed counterparts.

The low income widows encounter more financial constraints. The middle income is better of. A large number of our respondents belong to small size families. The small size families are subjected more acute problems. The large families have less difficulties.

The Problems of bringing up Children:

Among our respondents we have 125 widows in the older age group, 49 in the middle and 32 in the younger age group. The data (Tab-50) indicate that the older widows have less difficulties in bringing up the children than their younger counterparts. Moreover, one who looses her husband when she is sufficiently old, has also
crossed the limit of bringing up her children. Therefore, it is obvious that older widows have reported no difficulties in bringing up their children (Figure-8).

In the sample 47 widows work for the wages in various salaried jobs, whereas 159 widows (no-occupation group) have no necessity to go out for work to earn their livelihood. The later group does not have any difficulty in bringing up children. In the wage earning category, as expected widows in lower level jobs find it more difficult in bringing up the children than their counterparts in middle and higher level jobs.

191 respondents have low level education. There are only 13 in the middle level and only 2 in higher level. Obviously the sample is too much tilted towards the lower educated group. It is found that the education level does not co-relate well with the problem of up bringing children. It appears that less educated widows find it less difficult in bringing up their children.

Nearly 70 percent informants belong to low income group, here again the sample is largely confined to the lower category. It is intriguing to note that the low income widows find it less difficult in bringing up the children.
110 respondents in the sample come from small size families. The data indicate that the size of the family does influence the level of difficulties that a widow encounters in bringing up her children (Figure-9).

Those who are from small size families find it less difficult than their counterparts from medium and large ones.

Problem of establishing right over the property:

When a man dies many issues relating to his property surface and a widow finds it extremely difficult to handle the situation. We have 70 respondents in our data (Tab-51) who had to face highly intriguing situations. Our sample indicates that the intensity of the problem is more for the young widows followed by the middle aged ones and least for the older ones (Figure-10). The sample is tilted too much towards the low education. Majority of our respondents have low level formal education. The middle educated widows confront this problem in greater intensity compared to the low educated ones. The alternative explanation may be that the low educated are old widows, and old widows do not have the problem of deprivation from rights to the properties. It is expected that as the income is in the increase, the
problems confronting life gradually dwindles. Our sample, however, shows income has no direct impact on the widows' problem. The middle income group finds more difficulties than their low income counterparts. A larger number of our respondents belong to small families. It seems from the sample that widows who belong to small families find more difficulties than those in the large families (Figure-11). Occupational status is another aspect which can solve certain problems of life more easily. In our sample, there are only 47 widows who earn wages for their livelihood. The middle occupation widows face less difficulties that the those in lower occupations.

The Problem of Educating children:

The older widows have less difficulty in educating their children than their younger counterparts. It is observed that respondents, who lost their husbands at a later age, have their children more or less established in life. Therefore, they do not face a situation of educating their children (Tab.52)(Figure-12). In this area of parental responsibility, low education does not seem to impose a constraint on the widows. However, an alternative explanation may be that the low educated in
the sample are largely from the old age group; and the old widows do not have young children to be educated. The sample shows that those in the middle level occupations face less difficulties in educating their children. The low income respondents find it less difficult in educating their children, but the low income respondents in the sample are old widows who do not have young children to be educated. The widows who belong to small families face more difficulties than those from large families (Figure-13).

Facing the Problem of being Cheated of Gold and Money:

Unscrupulous relatives often cheat the widows of their gold and other forms of movable property including hard cash. We have 22 respondents who are cheated, out right, by their relatives (Table.53). The middle aged are cheated more than their young and old counterparts. As a whole, it appears from the sample, that the old encounter less difficulties in this regard. It may be that the older widows normally have adult children. Thus they are protected from the unscrupulous 'relatives' and 'friends'. The low educated widows are more prone to cheating than their more educated counterparts. Those in lower occupations are also equally vulnerable to
situations of cheating than their better placed counterparts. In the same vain the low income widows are cheated more than their better earning counterparts.

Widows from small families are more vulnerable to be cheated than those from the larger families.

**Problem of ill-treatment**

The young and middle aged have been unbearably ill-treated than the older widows. Some old widows do receive respectable treatment in their families (Tab.54). Ill treatment is a common feature in the life of Indian widows. It appears from the sample that the treatment is moderate, but not satisfactory for almost all educational groups but on the other hand, it shows that low educated widows are better treated. The non-working widows (the 'housewives' category) are better than those employed in low occupations. The sample indicates that income has no specific influence on the problem of ill-treatment. The low income widows are seen to receive better treatment. The possible explanation is that those in the low income group are elderly and have older children to protect them. Those who belong to small families are worse than those from large families.
Problem of facing death of children

Death of children brings acute misery to any parent and more so to a widow. The misery to a certain extent is minimised when in terms of the crisis, a widow finds emotional support from the near relatives. All widows in our sample are not fortunate to the same extent. The sample data (Tab.55) indicate that a higher percentage of young widows lost their child/children to death consequent to their widowhood compared to their counterparts in the older age group. At such a loss the older age groups seem to be more composed than the younger one. 15.38 percent among the middle educated widows are overtaken by the crisis of death of one child or more children. The shock felt by those in this group is reported to be more intense than felt by their older counterparts. The education level of the parent seem to relate to the extent of grief inflicted by the death of a child. The widows from low occupations feel this grief more intensely than their better employed counterparts who seem to handle this situation with a more composure. It is pertinent to note that the low income widows are more composed in handling a crisis situation consequent upon a child’s death than those widows from the middle or the higher income group. Those from the small size families find it extremely difficult to face the
situation following the death of a child/children while those from the large size families handle this crisis with more equanimity.

Sale of property

Some widows are under compulsion to sell their property for various reasons. Even this is found to be a difficult task on the part of some widows.

The sample data (Tab.56) indicate the problem is one of extreme difficulty for young widows whereas it seem to be less so for the old ones. The low-educated widows find it more difficult to sell their properties while the high and middle educated ones handle the problem with comparative ease. Education brings confidence to the widow to handle property transactions. The low occupations hinder the efficiency of widow to transact property while those in the middle and higher occupational status handle property with a comparative ease. The low income widows often find the necessity to dispose off their property whereas the pressure is not so much on the middle and high occupation widows.
Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment of widows, particularly of young ones, is not very uncommon. Our sample data (Tab. 57) indicate that more than 18 percent in the young and middle age groups are subjected to substantial sexual harassment. The hazard shows a decline with the older age group (4.8 percent) (Figure-14). A higher percentage of middle educated widows face this ordeal more than low or high educated ones. The low occupation widows are sexually more harassed than their better employed counterparts. The middle income widows face the problem of sex-linked harassment more than those in higher or lower income category. The widows from medium families confront more sexual harassment than their counterparts either from the small or the large families (Figure-15).

Problem of Adjustment in the family

Interpersonal adjustment in the family is often not easy for a widow. Sooner or later she confronts the problem. It is seen from our sample data (Tab. 58) that young widows find more difficulties of adjustment in the families than their elder counterparts. The older aged ones, however, problem is moderately felt in all age
groups. The middle educated widows have more difficulties of adjustment in their families compared to high and low educated ones. The low educated widows have the highest position in their adjustment score. Among the working widows, those in the low occupations have more difficulties of adjustment. Those in the middle level adjust better. The low income widows have less adjustment difficulties. The middle income group is worse. Those in the larger families have less difficulties than those in middle and small families.

Problem of marrying daughters.

The sample data (Tab. 59) show that it is extremely difficult on the part of young widows in arranging marriage for their daughters, a task which the old widows find less difficult. The older widows, however, may have very few children to be married (Figure-16). The educational level does influence the intensity of this problem. The sample indicates that the low educated widows encounter intense difficulties in arranging marriage of their daughters. While the middle educated ones experience less difficulties in finding out a suitable match for their daughters. The low-occupation widows find it more difficult in fixing up for their
daughters marriage, the middle occupation ones are fortunate enough to arrange suitable matches for their daughters. The sample indicate that extreme difficulties are experienced by low income widows. While the middle income widows face less difficulties in this respect. The widows from small families encounter acute difficulties in arranging marriage for their daughters. While it is less painful for those from middle and large families (Figure-17).