CHAPTER – I

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.0  INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher discusses the following topics which will serve as a background and set our study in focus; the background of the study, magnitude of widows worldwide, widows in India, widows in Tamil Nadu, historical perspectives of widows in India, status of widows in Hinduism and other problems related to widows, social reformers in India, alcoholism in India, alcoholism leading to widowhood in India, World Health Organization (WHO) report on alcoholic deaths, causes of alcoholism, policies for widows in India (Five year plans), programmes and schemes for widows at the National and State levels, The Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act, 1856, and the salient features of the law, The Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987, conclusion and organization of the thesis.

‘A woman who has lost her spouse by death and has not married again’ is called a widow (American heritage dictionary, 2016). There are widows in every country and India has the second highest number of widows in the world. The reasons behind this high number of widows in India are; poverty, poor medical facilities, alcoholism, road accidents, terrorism and various natural calamities. The widows in India go through a hard life. The very sight of a widow is considered to be a bad omen; widows are often associated with misfortune, bad luck and inauspiciousness and some of them are blamed for the death of their husbands, because there is this superstitious opinion that the bad luck of the wife would cause the death of the husband,(Sethuramalingam and Sathiya, 2011).The widows are
subjected to some of the most prominent cruel practices which are as follows;(1) they are forbidden to move freely in the society, (2) they have to wear only white saris and avoid any beautification, (3) their heads are tonsured, (4) they are forbidden from participating in religious ceremonies and social gatherings and auspicious events. Widows are victims of social discrimination which stem out from the traditional social practices and as the result of such discrimination; the widows suffer economically, physically, socially, psychologically and spiritually. As a result of such multiple discrimination and suffering, the widows are subjected to acute depression, anxiety, worry and stress. The widows are stigmatized and deprived of support from family and society. The widows, besides many kinds of social discrimination, have to fight hard at the economic needs and stigma fronts. The widows are often subjected to sexual harassment and are often subjects of gossip by the neighbors. The widow’s resilience and quality of life are on a very low level. The present study tries to illustrate about women who have lost their alcoholic husbands and have become widows. Hence the researcher conducted a study among the widows of alcoholics of Madapalli Village, Tirupathur Block, Vellore District, Tamil Nadu State, India.

1.1 MAGNITUDE OF WIDOWS
1.1.1 Widows around the World

According to the United Nations there are 285 million widows around the world, and out of them approximately 115 million of them live in extreme poverty (UN Women, 2017). Global Widows Report in the year 2015 reports that there are 25, 84, 81, 056 widows around the world and there are 584,574,358 children of widows (children under 18 years) (Global Widows Report 2015, 2017). In 2010, it was estimated that approximately 14.8 per cent widows, (38,261,345) live in extreme poverty.
poverty without even the basic needs. The number of widows in extreme poverty has decreased by 22.2 per cent between 2010 and 2015. India has recorded around 33 million widows in the world. This is 10 per cent of total female population, compared to only 3 per cent of male population. Fifty four per cent of widows are aged 60 and above whereas 12 per cent of women are aged between 35 to 39. Only about 10 per cent of widows remarry (Loomba foundation, 2015).

As per the census of 2010, the following countries had the highest number of widows; China - 43 million, India - 42.4 million, USA - 13.6 million, Indonesia - 9.4 million, Japan - 7.4 million, Russia - 7.1 million, Brazil - 5.6 million, Germany - 5.1 million, and Bangladesh and Vietnam - 4.7 million. In India, it was estimated that there were 46,457,516 widows as of 2015. From another estimate it is revealed that there were 42,395,063 widows and the percentage of widows corresponding to female population was 9.1 in India. The Loomba foundation has estimated that in 2015 out of 258,481,056 million widows which represents 9.0 percent increase since 2010, which is 21,367,296 more widows globally. As per the Census of India 2001 there has been an exponential rise in the number of widows since 2001. The population of India was 121 crore in 2011 and of this 5.55 crore (4.58 per cent) are widowed. However, only 18.51 lakh or 0.719 per cent of the population of 102 crore was widowed in 2001. According to the Census of India (2011), there were 22.32 lakh widows in Tamil Nadu and females in the category of widowed/ divorced/ separated is 7.6 per cent (2.5 male and 12.6 female) (Loomba foundation, 2015a). One in three widows worldwide live in India or China, India, with an estimated 46 million widows, has overtaken China (44.6 million) to become the country with the largest number of widows. (World economic forum, 2017)
1.1.2 Widows in India

Table 1.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage of widows</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1901</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1911</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1921</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1931</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1941</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1951</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1961</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census of India 20011, and Sharma & Boro, 2017

According to Census of India 1901, 18 per cent of the Indian populations were widows. The population of widows remained stable till the year 1921. From 1931(15.5 per cent) the widows population had declined till 1951. A gradual decline in widows’ population is observed from the year 1961 to 1991. In the year 2001 there seems to be a similar proportion of widows’ population. As per the census 2011 the percentage average widows’ population 2001 had been increased from 6.4 per cent to 7.4 per cent in 2011. This may be due to the increased life dependency of the woman due to better quality of life (Sharma and Boro, 2017).
1.1.3 Widows in Tamil Nadu

Table 1.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage of widows</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1961</td>
<td>12.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>10.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>10.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>8.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>8.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Government of India, 2016, Gorge, 2008

According to Census 2011 the percentage of widowhood has been high in the year 1961. The proportion of widows has slightly declined in the year 1971 to 1981. In the year 1991 to 2001 the widows’ population was increased about 0.83 per cent. In the year 2011 the percentage of widow population decreased about 1.06 per cent. Hence, there is an improvement in the survival ratio and there is an upward shift in all age groups during census 2001 to 2011 (Sharma & Boro, 2017a), due to the increase of life expectancy of women. “It is a global phenomenon that women live longer than men and in India too it is catching up since 1990s” (Gorge, 2008) in India, Tamil Nadu, has the second highest proportion of widows (Sivakumar, 2015).

1.1.4 Vellore District – the Study location

Vellore district has a total population of 696,110 as per 2011 Census. Out of which 343,919 are males and 352,191 are females. In 2011 the total number of families residing in Vellore taluk is 166,169. The Average sex ratio of Vellore taluk is 1,024. In Vellore district, as per Census 2011, out of the total population, 63.4 per
cent people live in urban areas while 36.6 per cent live in the rural areas. The average literacy rate is 85.8 percent in urban areas and in rural places it is 76 percent. The sex ratio in urban areas of Vellore taluk is 1,026 and 1,015 in the rural areas of the same taluk. Vellore district consists of 3 Revenue Divisions, 9 Taluks, 20 Community Development Blocks, one Municipal Corporation, 13 Municipalities, 22 Town Panchayats and 36 Census Towns. The total number of Revenue Villages in the district is 858. Tirupattur Taluk comes under Vellore District and Madapalli village (L.C. No 00256500) falls in the taluk of Tirupattur. In Tirupattur taluk Madapalli panchayat is the village with highest population where 14,868 people live. According to 1981 census the widows population in Vellore district are 10.6 per cent while 1991 census shows 9.8 per cent widow population (Census of India, 2011).

1.1.5 Madapalli Village

Madapalli is one of the villages in Tirupathur taluk of Vellore district, Tamil Nadu, India. It is located 85 kms towards west from Vellore, the district headquarters. And it is 4 kms from Tirupattur, 221 kms from the State capital Chennai. Madapalli’s Pincode is 635653 and its postal head office is Vengalapuram. There are 35 panchayaths under Tirupathur Block. Madapalli is one of the panchayaths and there are nine hamlets under Madapalli panchayath. There are 585 widows in Madapalli panchayath alone and the husbands of these widows seem to have died due alcohol abuse. Among these 585 widows, 88 of them are below 35 years of age and the rest 497 are between 35-60 years of age. The researcher contacted these widows directly, interacted with them and enquired their plight and daily life struggles; hence, the researcher found through the pilot study that it is feasible to conduct study in this village. (Census of India, 2011a)
1.2 THE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF WIDOWS IN INDIA

In order to understand the status of widows belonging to Hindu religion in a comprehensive manner, it is of paramount importance to study the changing status of widows in Hinduism through the historical perspective.

1.2.1 Women as Widows

“Widowhood is a state of social death, even among the higher castes,” says Mohini Giri, a veteran activist in the fight for women’s rights, who was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005. “Widows are still accused of being responsible for their husbands death, and they are expected to have a spiritual life with many restrictions which affects them both physically and psychologically.”(Corbacho and Barrera, 2012) The new social status and roles of a widow depends not only on her own characteristics like age, educational qualification, economic status, nature of obligations and family support, etc., but also depends on the evaluation of others such as her in-laws, neighbours, kith and kin, etc. This evaluation determines a widow’s place in society.

When a woman loses her husband, she is often compelled to remove her ‘mangalsutra’ and the toe ring. She is not permitted to wear colour saris and is forced to wear only white saris, which symbolises purity. Her head is tonsured. She is not allowed to deck her head with flowers or use a bindi or ornaments. In short, she is not allowed to beautify herself but every moment, she has to be aware of the fact that she is a widow – an inauspicious person. (Malathi & Padmanabhan, 2001)

The widows were treated as untouchables and cursed by the society. The widows were not allowed to participate in any social or religious ceremonies as they
were considered unlucky and this inhuman practice still continues in the remote parts of our country. When a woman became a widow in earlier times, she was forced to leave the house as she was considered an economic burden and social stigma to the family. The widows in general did not receive good treatment when they fell sick. The children of the widows too went through social and economic alienation and were not treated equally with other children. They were often denied quality education. (Birodkar, 1997)

1.2.2 Status of Widowhood in Medieval India

The emergence of the Bhakti movement, the cult of devotion to god, enabled the women in medieval India to transcend and see beyond their social and family roles and channelise their sexual and emotional energy towards devotion to god. The chief mood of bhakti (devotional service) is the erotic srangara, viewed from women’s point of view, whether in the phase of separation from, or union with, her beloved deity. Polygamy was practiced among the high class Hindus. The Hindu widow spent her days commonly in a very poor condition. The practice of child marriage resulted in rapid increase of child widows. The practice of ‘Sati’ was encouraged and the widows who did not perform ‘Sati’ were looked down upon by the society (Singh, 2010).

1.2.3 Status of Widowhood in the Vedic Period

During the Vedic period, the widows enjoyed freedom in selecting their male partners. They could educate themselves and were permitted to remarry. Divorce was however not granted to them. Even men did not have the right to divorce their wives. Women were given complete freedom in family matters and were treated as
‘Ardhanginis’¹ the other halves. A widow was given her husband’s share in the property.

A childless widow also inherited her husband’s property by right. The remarriage of the widow to the brother-in-law to beget sons was apparently accepted, since the son, born out of such a wedlock was qualified to perform the rituals for an ancestral worship. Widow burning was a rare event and it was prevented throughout the Vedic period. However, the practice of burning the widows prevailed among the non-priestly clan. During the medieval period, a widower could get married soon after the death of his wife whereas a widow was not allowed to remarry. As a result, a majority of widows wasted their lifetime remaining free, engaged in gossip or became sex workers, instead of using their talents and time in constructive ways (Shuani, 2017).

1.2.4 Manu’s edict on widows

Social customs in India generally followed by almost all communities including the high caste Hindus was to get their girl children married before they attained the age of puberty. It is also a custom that men married girls with a big age difference. These two factors contributed to the women becoming widows at an early age and remained so, throughout their adult life because it as customary that females who became widows did not marry again as the much as the males. The custom of preventing widows from remarriage was socially approved and therefore even the young widows were prevented from even the thought of remarriage guided by the social customs in vogue (Ahuja, 1996). Manu was resolute in his attitude towards widows’ remarriage. He did not permit women to remarry in the event of their

¹ better half or wife
husband’s death. A widow must lead a “celibate life in order not to insult the memory of her dead husband. She is expected to live on fruits and roots and undergo all forms of austerities. By means of such an austere life, she was guaranteed immortal fame in this world, a place in heaven and a happy life in heaven together with her dead husband. The widows were threatened with a severe consequence in their next birth if they did not abide by the norms of widowhood (Altekar, 1956).

1.3 WIDOWS IN HINDU RELIGION

According to Hindu religion the female was created by Brahman as part of the duality in creation, to provide companionship to men and facilitate reproduction to bring up descendents and preserve the family heredity. The death of the husband placed the widow in an inferior position. The practice of sati (though abolished now) was a vogue in India until the recent past. The voluntary sacrifice on the part of the widow during the cremation of the husband’s corpse was scaring. The wife climbs on to the fire voluntarily and kills herself. This is the practice of Sati and the Indian government has abolished the practice of it. The practice of Sati is illegal now. The Hindu law, since 1856, permits remarriage of widows. However, there were many instances where the women were forced to commit Sati and even pushed against her wish into the lighted pyre (Jayaram, 2017).

Widowhood is an event that brings about the greatest change in the status of a woman for it is often accompanied by dreadful consequences. The sad plight of the widows is not due to the death of their husbands alone, but it is the result of lack of a healthy, cultural and social outlook on the life of widows. The plight of widows is indeed miserable for almost inevitably widowhood carries with it problems of ill-
health, unemployment and lack of economic support and strained social relations with one’s children and relatives and friends (Greg, 1984).

1.3.1 Status of Widows in Other Religions

Christianity: Christianity has accepted widowhood and re-marriage as a natural phenomenon. Widowhood, therefore, was not considered a very serious problem (Tamil Nadu biblical Catechetical & Liturgical centre, 2014).

Islam: In Islam, ‘widowhood’ is a non-issue. Muslim emperors in India discouraged Sati and adopted measures to prevent it as far as possible (Jawad, 1998).

Jainism: In Jainism, widowhood is not a serious issue. Jainism prohibits re-marriage of widows, however, they enjoy freedom in socio-religious and political realm. A widow becomes a direct heir to the property of the deceased husband regardless of whether she has a son or not (Altekar, 1956).

Buddhism: In Buddhism, the widows do not suffer any social or moral degradation due to widowhood. There was no restrictions laid on her food habits, dressing and she was not required to shave her head at her husband’s death. She is free to participate in social and religious functions (Dewaraja, 1981).

1.3.2 Remarriage of widows - a Taboo

The Status of widows has been deteriorating the most of the societies in India. Widows are discouraged from remarrying by the society, However the trend has been changing in modern times and widows are allowed to remarry without much celebration. It has been found that widows remarriage is high among the Muslim communities (35.37 per cent). The south west Asian communities who lived around a
present day Israel followed the system of ‘levirate,’ where by a man must marry the widow of his childless brother in order to maintain the progeny of the brother’s family. This practice is in force in some parts of north India. This levirate system is practiced in absolute terms where in a widow has to marry her deceased husbands’ younger brother or in the absence of younger brother, a cousin. Marriage of a widow with the elder brother of the deceased husband is avoided. The remarriage of the widow takes place only after twelve months of the death of the husband. The remarriage creamy of the widow with the younger brother of her deceased husband is performed at a small community gathering. The ceremony is a very low-key affair where in bangles are placed on the head of the widow and a piece of new cloth is wrapped around her. After this ceremony a widow enjoys all the rights and privileges of a married women (Agarwal, 1967). In India widows remarriage is allowed among some of the lower castes and encouraged especially in rural areas. Sirothia, (2017) reports that in Madhya Pradesh the one who marries a widow gets rupees two lakh. On the contrary, it is discouraged among the people of high castes. Widow Remarriage is universal among the tribal people of India and the proper groom is her younger brother-in-law. In case a widow wishes to marry an outsider, the groom has to return the bride price to the deceased husband’s family. (Misra, 1992).In Tamil Nadu and Kerala the widows were allowed to remarry in the Thanda Pulayan caste community. They do not marry the deceased husband’s brother but an outsider (Bhasin, 2007).

From the reviews presented above, it is clear that prohibition of widow remarriage was a popular phenomenon of Hindu culture, and widows were permitted

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2 The biblical institution whereby a man must marry the widow of his childless brother in order to maintain the brother's line
to remarry only among a few of the lower castes of the Hindu community. The remarried widows too were looked down upon and hence remarriages were commonly discouraged. In India therefore, the remarriages of a divorcée or a widow is generally looked upon with a social stigma.

1.4 HISTORICAL DISCRIMINATIONS THAT ARE PRACTICED EVEN TODAY

The widows are to wear a white or red sari, shave their head, forgo all beautification and cosmetics, eat a single meal and only certain kinds of foods. Foods like radish, pickle, spices are forbidden. They are not supposed to sing or dance, never look at any man outside the family, and can remarry only their brother-in-law. They are forbidden from participating in any social or religious functions and ritual ceremonies. The myths surrounding widowhood are the complex social structures namely caste, social class, and religion. Myths Surrounding Widowhood: In Hinduism, widowhood is considered a punishment for the crime committed by her in her previous life. Therefore, she is looked down upon as a sinner. Widowhood among the upper castes is considered a state of social death. Once a woman ceases to be a wife she ceases to be a person. Widows are considered inauspicious beings (Bhat, 2004).

1.4.1 Problems Related to Widows

Widows are not allowed to wear the dress of their choice they are forced to wear a particular dress which will denote their status. They are also prevented from participating in religious functions and social gatherings. They are physically and sexually abused and are often denied their husband’s property. Widows are discouraged from taking part in any socio-religious ceremonies and ritually sacred activities even now (Chen, & Dreze, 1995).
1.4.2 **Psychological aspects:** In India widowhood is not just transition from one’s marital status to another caused by the death of the husband. Entering into widowhood is more hazardous, painful and humiliating to women than to a widower because of the discriminations and ritual restrictions of the society. As a result, widows in India besides much socio-economic discrimination, suffer psychologically; they go through loneliness, depression, emotional disturbances and imbalances. Most widows face psychological problems and mental stress and they are tormented by psychological changes in their children after the death of their husbands (Johnson & Shyamala, 2012).

1.4.3 **Victim of Violence:** The widows in general, face problems related to the burdens of extra work, exploitation, domestic violence, loneliness and insecurity. Widows are often excluded from income generating activities due to lack of skills and incapacity for economic investments, and this is followed by children, particularly girl children, dropping out of school and decrease in access to basic needs such as food, clothes, shelter and health care.

1.4.4 **Economic problem:** Widows normally are destitute without any socio economic support which forces them to send their children to work and earn money. The children are prevented from going to school for education, in order to substantiate livelihood of the widowed mother. Some widows are even forced to work as sex workers to make a livelihood (Srivastava, 2015).

1.4.5 **Negligence:** The negligence of increasing number of widows in the society is due to number of reasons which are created by man. Sometimes natural calamities and wars also become the man, cause for the increase in widows. But negligence of
widows has been largely observed where widows are neglected because of their deceased husbands who were alcoholic.

1.4.6 Discriminative legal and Government policies and programmes: Widows are stereotyped commonly, either as victims or beneficiaries. Their roles as key resources and social capital in development and peace building are ignored. Widows face discrimination in Government policies and programmes. Lack of education increases their poverty; due to low economic status they become more vulnerable to exploitation, violence and abuse. Widows are often isolated, not "banding together", their voices unheard and they are not recognized as "Agents of Change". Their access to services such as health, nutrition, housing, social security schemes are limited. Property grabbing: There is a significant increase in homelessness, displacement, migration, "property grabbing" and "chasing off" of widows.

1.4.7 Unemployment: Widows are discriminated in all areas of employment and small business. They are not given employment very easily because of the status of the widows. They do not have access to small business they lack credit worthiness. They are also discriminated when it comes to the payment of wages. Many widows reported that their daughters provided them with various physical services (e.g., health care or house repair). A surprisingly high percentage of widows (16 per cent) reported to have received regular support from daughters; while many other widows exchange in kind with caste neighbours or get small gifts (or occasional loans) from wealthy employers. Despite all these, the contention is that widowhood is not recognised as an issue to be addressed (Chen & Dreze, 1995a).
1.4.8 Social isolation: Apart from the issues mentioned above the social isolation of the widows has a greater psychological impact on them which is a basic social responsibility that needs to be addressed. It is not economic security alone that matters but the dignity and self respect of widows that matters most because they are socially isolated from the rest of the society. Many widows in the ‘Chen’ example suffered from different forms of social isolation, psychological abuse and emotional distress (Trivedi et al., 2009).

1.4.9 The social marginalization of widows was frequently found to take one or more of the following forms:

Rumors and accusation are predominately found among widows who are blamed being responsible indirectly for the death of their husbands because they are unlucky of inauspicious. So they become widows at an early age in life which leads to their facing sexual harassment. In Manu’s these widows were forced to observe a dress code to point out their status of were prevented from wearing kukum or bindhi on their fore heads which signified that they were widows. However some of the traditional restriction like shaving of the head has as been stopped even among the orthodox upper castes. A widow is generally not allowed to participate in any religious or social function of the community because a widow is a symbol of misfortune. This is a very regressive social practice which is followed even today. Violence against widows is mainly through sexual harassment. The young widows are sexually assaulted by their own close relatives in order to settled property disputes (Chen and Dreze, 1995b).
1.4.10 Stigmatisation of Widows

Redefining widowhood in Modern India; Women are definitely the “fairer sex but certainly not the weaker sex. In male dominated societies of the world, women have been subjected to atrocities that have affected them physically, emotionally, sexually and psychologically.

In a male dominated society like India widowhood has always been considered a social stigma. They have been looked down upon at all social gatherings; be it a marriage, birth of a child or house warming ceremonies. Widows of upper caste especially in Brahmanical society widows have to shave their heads and have to wear coarse white saris only, and are expected to live in solitary confinement till they pass away. Newly married women were not allowed to talk to them, or drink water or eat anything from their hands because of the belief that the newlywed women would not conceive if she receives any edibles from a widow. Hence in an orthodox Indian society, widowhood is considered a curse. They are forbidden to eat good food, wearing kumkum (symbol of a married Hindu woman), shun from all jewellery. They are expected to observe various kinds of fast to atone their sins and are expected to spend the rest of their lives in religious activities (Jaitly, 2014). Widowhood has a deep social stigma attached to it in most communities but it is most severe among upper caste Hindus. Women are seen as protecting the ‘honor’ of the family. Paradoxically, Widowed women (as also other widows without male ‘protection’) are also seen as sexually ‘available,’ no matter how old a woman is once she is widowed the is not treated with respect and a lot of restrictions are imposed upon her. (Jayabalan & Sethuramalingam, 2015)
1.5 SOCIAL REFORMERS WHO WERE FOR THE CAUSE OF WIDOWS OF INDIA

Among the Social Reformers, the following were the strong supporters for the cause of widows.

1.5.1 Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833) was from West Bengal. He was among the first who fought to eliminate sati. He finally succeeded in 1829. He also championed women’s rights. He crusaded against polygamy and child marriage and demanded property inheritance rights for women. Raja Ram Mohan Roy also fought for the introduction and spread of modern western education through English medium (Tagore, 2017).

1.5.2 Balashastri Jambhekar (1812-46) was a product of 19th century Maharashtrian new beginning. He was against the evil customs of sati and infanticide as well as the trafficking of female children. He emphasized on issues of widow remarriage and helped in creating awareness among uneducated people through mass media. He was passionate about spreading knowledge throughout India through his newspaper and preferred to build a society with a systematic outlook. He was known as the father of Marathi Journalism. Jambhekar dreamt about the society that we see today about 200 years back (Singh, 2015).

1.5.3 Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820-1891) was born in Paschim Midnapur District of Bengal. He was a powerful social reformer. He made possible with his efforts the passing of Widow Remarriage Act in 1856. He contributed to women’s education and opened a Sanskrit college for the non-Brahmins. He was a powerful advocate for women’s upliftment. He worked for female education. He set up 35 schools for girls in Bengal. He protested against child marriage (Singh, 2015a).
1.5.4 Gopal Hari Deshmukh (1823-1892) fought for old laws, that harboured inequality, to be replaced by new ones which would guarantee justice to all, including widows. He fought against the practicing of Sati, tonsuring the heads of widows, child marriage, prohibition of remarrying widows and similar practices. He defined reform as a way to public good. He was a good writer; by writing many books he created an awareness on good values among people (Sharon, 2011).

1.5.5 Swami Dayananda Saraswati (1824-1883) was born in Maurvi, Gujarat. He supported and advocated women’s right to education and their equal social status, and also started a campaign against untouchability and Child Marriage. He encouraged widow remarriage. Dayananda Saraswati was a well known spiritual guru. He emphasized if a widow wants to remarry she should be allowed to do the same (Garg, 1984).

1.5.6 Jyotirao Govinda Rao Phule (1827-90) was from Maharashtra. He stressed the importance of education to women and supported widow remarriage. He started a home for widows who were abandoned by the society. He also opened a house for the children who were born in unfortunate circumstances to prevent infanticide and suicides. He held a unique position among the social reformers of Maharashtra in the nineteenth century. He fought against caste system under which millions of people suffered for centuries. Phule opened a school for the downtrodden children and women, he encourage of people to send children to the school (Sirswal, 2013).

1.5.7 Ramakrishna Gopal Bhandarkar (1837-1925) not only championed the cause of widow re-marriage, but also got one of his daughters, a widow, remarried. He was against child marriage and encouraged women’s education. He practiced what he preached in his life. He encouraged his daughters and granddaughters to receive
University education and got his children married only after they became matured and gave freedom to choose their spouses. He collected books from all over the world and started a library so that scholars benefitted from these books. (Times of India, 2003)

1.5.8 Mahadev Govinda Ranade (1840-1901) was from Maharashtra. He founded a high school for female education in 1882. He was judge of the Mumbai High Court and was the first to advocate the lifting of travel restrictions on high caste women. He founded the Widow Remarriage Association in 1861, which sought to implement an act permitting widows to marry. Later it was passed as a law in 1856. He gave importance to education of girls and young women. In addition he joined others in bringing in a legislation to increase the age of marriage of individuals which was evaluated in the Age of Consent Bill of 1890 (Stein, 2010).

1.5.9 Gopal Ganesh Agarkar (1856-1895) was of the view that compulsory education will lead to the liberation of women. He campaigned against the injustices of untouchability and the caste system. He also supported widow remarriage. He was a co-founder of educational institutes such as new English school (Phadke, 1975).

1.6. SOCIAL REFORMERS OF TAMIL NADU

1.6.1 E.V.R. Periyar (1879-1973) was popularly known as Periyar, was a Nationalist leader and a great reformist of Tamil Nadu. He was in favour of widow remarriage and was against child marriage. He arranged for the remarriage of his sister’s widowed daughter, who became a widow at the age of 10 (Antony, 2017).

1.6.2 Thiru V. KalyananSundaranar (1883-1953) was of the view that child marriage had to be done away with before supporting widow remarriages. When a woman
desires to remarry she should not be denied. He also added that a widow shouldn’t be remarried against her will (Vishwanathan, 2008).

1.6.3 Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy (1886-1968) was the prime mover behind the legislation that abolished the Devadasi system. She also played a key role in increasing the minimum marriage age for women in India. She founded Avvai Illam (Home for the orphans) as early as 1930 for the welfare of the widows, deserted women, destitute etc. Besides, she had established an educational institution for this type of people. (Vishwanathan, 2008a)

1.6.4 Bharathidasan (1891-1964) condemned the people who opposed widow remarriage through his poems. He said that an older widow should persuade a younger one to search for a husband just as a man would search for another life partner after the death of his wife and widows could help one another in finding a new life (Chandrababu, & Thilagavathi, 2009).

1.6.5 Arignar Anna (1907-1967) the former chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, was in support of widow remarriages and inter-caste marriages and claimed that they are not blunders. He also said that widow remarriages will augur well for gender equality (Nirmala, 1992).

1.7 CONTRIBUTION OF FOREIGN MISSIONARIES TOWARDS THE LIBERATION OF WIDOWS

It was only young women from Western countries who came as missionaries to India. Besides medical and educational ministries, they concentrated on emancipation of women also. They spread literacy among women so as to make them aware of their long denied legal rights. The pioneers among the foreign missionaries who worked for
the widows’ rights were Mrs. Peit, Mrs. Debroin, Mrs. Ratcheffer, Miss. Wycoff, Miss. Dora Boomstra, Dr. Ida Scudder, Mrs. Sarah Zweemer, Mrs. Marshman, Mrs. Wilsonans, Miss. Cooke (Association for Theologians, 1991).

1.8 ALCOHOLISM WORLDWIDE

Death due to alcoholism according to World Health Organization report of 2014 was approximately 3.3 million every year (or 5.9 per cent of all deaths). It is reported a 5.1 per cent of global burden of deceases is due to consumption of alcohol. Alcoholism is a global problem that needs the attention of the whole world and the leaders of various countries should immediately address this global issue. It was found that the consumption of alcohol in 2010 at the global level per person aged from 15 years and above was equal to 6.2 liters of pure alcohol consumed in a year (World health organization, 2017).

Among adults social drinking has become an accepted norm today; a drink or two of an alcoholic beverage is part of social events and gatherings. Usually, people have a glass of wine with dinner or toast the bride and groom with champagne at weddings. Fans at sporting events and people at picnics have a beer. Some of the researchers suggest that moderate drinking by adults can lower the risk of heart disease and stroke. "Moderate" drinking is no more than two drinks a day for an adult man and no more than one drink a day for an adult woman and for people who are 65 years old or older. But millions of Americans drink more than these commonly accepted measurements, leading to problems with their health and affecting their families, friends, schoolwork, and jobs: about 14 million people in the United States either abuse alcohol or suffer from alcoholism, reveals the U.S. National Institute of
Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. Other surveys put the number as high as 20 million people. It is a widespread problem, with some experts estimating that more than half of all Americans say they have a close relative with an alcohol problem. As the time passes, the person's urge to drink becomes an uncontrollable craving, like a hungry person longing for food. As a result of craving for alcohol those who are addicts behave strangely and end up failing in school, missing work deadlines and end up in drunken drives. Yet even when their drinking begins to result in bad grades, conflicts at home, legal problems or job loss, persons with addiction continue to drink. People who are addicted to alcohol need alcohol more often and in greater amounts in order to get the same intoxication that they used to get when they drank less. Their drinking continues even as their health problems and personal problems increase. When they stop drinking they may shake, sweat, and feel anxious or sick in their stomach. These are the symptoms of withdrawal, their body's adjustment to being denied alcohol (World health Organization, 2014).

1.8.1 Alcoholism in India

It is estimated that about 62.5 million people occasionally drink alcohol in India. Unlike many western countries the number of persons consuming alcohol is decreasing, India is witnessing a dramatic rise, for instance; between 1970 and 1995 there was a 106.7 per cent increase in the per capita (this means per individual in the population) consumption. According to the WHO report on the global status of the amount of alcohol consumption on a yearly basis for every country it has been found that the consumption of alcohol in India has been on the rise from 2008 to 2012. (Mid-day.com, 2017). International brewers and distillers of alcoholic beverages are
keen to establish their business in India, because the country is becoming the third largest potential market for alcohol products in the world. India has also become one of the largest producers of alcohol – it produces 65 per cent of alcoholic beverages in South-East Asia (Alcoholrehab.com, 2017). Indians prefer hard liquors and distilled spirits over beers – 80 per cent of total consumption involves these stronger beverages. It is estimated that about 20 per cent of the population has at least tried alcohol. In the past two decades the number of persons who consume alcohol has increased from 1 out of 300 to 1 out of 20. According to the medical journal ‘The Lancet’, more than half of those who consume alcohol in India would fall into the category of hazardous drinking. It has been accessed, worryingly, that there are about 14 million people in India, who could be described as dependent on alcohol and are in need of help. Another concern is the increasing tendency to engage in binge drinking where people deliberately become intoxicated (Pati et al., 2017).

1.8.2 Causes of Alcoholism

Drinking steadily and consistently over long period can lead to dependency and cause withdrawal symptoms during periods of abstinence. This physical dependency, however, is not the only cause of alcoholism. There are many factors that lead to alcoholism, including biology, genetics, culture, and psychological imbalances.

**Biological factors:** There is a relation between alcoholism and biological factors especially genetic and physiological factors. Although some individuals can limit the amount of alcohol they consume, others feel the strong impulse to keep going and thus become addicted to alcohol. **Environmental Factors:** Studies have revealed that there is a possible connection between environment and the risk of addiction to
alcohol. People who live closer to alcohol establishment tend to develop a more positive outlook on drinking and more likely to get involved in the activity. Additionally alcohol manufacturers are more public with their advertisement. **Social Factors:** The social factors can contribute to a person’s consumption of alcohol. Culture, religion, family and work can influence them to get addicted to alcohol. Here the family plays a vital role in children being exposed to alcohol abuse. New job, starting college, new friends and new relationships with peers become factors of one’s alcohol consumption. **Psychological Factors:** Psychological factors may increase the possibility of heavy intake of alcohol. Each person handles situations in their own unique method. Conversely, how the person copes with these feelings can affect certain behavioral traits. It can be depression, anxiety, and stress or other mental illnesses that lead to alcohol consumption and later getting addicted to it. In situations like these alcohol is often used to suppress feelings and relieve the symptoms of psychological disorder (Recovery Worldwide Alcoholism, 2017).

**Stressful environment:** People in stressful situations like stressful jobs, family problems think that alcohol could relieve stress. So they drink a lot. This is often the case with certain occupations. (Bressert, 2017). **Drinking at an early age:** According to the Mayo Clinic those who begin drinking at an early age are more likely be addicted to alcohol. They become even more addicted to it as they get older, because drinking may become a comfortable habit as the body’s tolerance level increases. Mental health problems like depression, anxiety can increase the risk of consuming alcohol. It is very easy to turn to alcohol when a person is feeling anxious or depressed. **Family History:** When there is a family member or a relative who is an
alcoholic, the risk of alcoholism automatically increases. Part of this is due to genetics, but environment also has a significant role (Crane, 2017).

**1.8.3 Alcohol deaths in India**

The national crime records bureau and WHO in 2015 recorded a steady increase in deaths due to alcohol from the year 2007 as follows: In 2007 it was 4042 deaths. In the following year, the number increased by 6.6 percent – about 4308 deaths. In 2009, 4483 deaths were recorded, the increase was by 4.1. However, in the years 2010 and 2012 the total number of alcohol related deaths were 4886 and 5478 respectively, hence, the increase is by 9.0 per cent and 20.5 per cent. Only in the year 2011 alcohol related deaths decreased by 6.9 per cent (4547 deaths). (World Health Organisation, 2015)

Death due to alcoholism amounts to 2.5 million people globally. Nearly 4 per cent of all deaths is due to alcohol consumption, according the WHO report, global Status report on alcohol and health. It was found that injuries in a drunken state are on the rise. Diseases like, cancer, cirrhosis of the liver and cardiovascular related diseases are the main causes of alcohol related deaths. The worldwide consumption in 2005 was equal to 6.13 liters of pure alcohol consumed per person aged 15 years or older. In India, 2.6 liters of pure alcohol was consumed per person aged 15 years and older from 2003-2005 (Thacker, 2011). One in five men in Russia and neighbouring countries, die due to alcohol related causes. Globally 320,000 young people aged 15-29 years die annually which amount to 9 per cent of all deaths in this age group, says the report. "Despite widespread consumption, most people do not drink," says the report. As per the latest information available, half of all men and two-thirds of women did not consume alcohol in 2005. Abstention rates are low in high-income,
high-consumption countries, and higher in North African and South Asian countries. However, those who do drink in countries with high abstention rates consume alcohol at high levels. In India 79.2 per cent people are lifetime abstainers; 92 per cent are females and 67.2 per cent are males (World Health Organisation, 2017). Dr. Ala Alwan Assistant Director-General for Non-communicable Diseases and Mental Health World Health Organization strongly recommends that policies should be implemented to save lives and reduce the impact of harmful alcohol consumption. He also demands that all countries need to do more on the prevention of the use of alcohol which is a public health problem (WHO, 2014a).

1.9 POLICIES FOR WIDOWS IN INDIA

Policy is defined in the Marriam- Webster Online dictionary as “a definite course or method of action selected from among alternatives, to guide and determine present and future decisions”. Policy can also be defined as making decisions that reflect values and allocation, recourses based on those values (Jayabalan & Sethuramalingam, 2016).

1.9.1 Five Year Plans for the Widows

The Government of India through its five year plan has taken some concrete steps towards the empowerment of women including the widows. 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 7th plans were dedicated towards the empowerment of women in general and there are many other plans that include the causes of widows. A few such developmental programmes based on the recent Five Year Plans are provided in the following lines.

First Five Year Plan (1951-1956). The main focus of the first five year plan was on the industrial development of the country. There were problems relating to tenancy
legislation which center on the issue of resumption of land for personal cultivation. It is a common practice to provide in the legislation that persons serving in the armed forces, unmarried women, widows, minors and persons suffering from mental or physical infirmities should be permitted to lease out land and at the same time retain the right to resume personal cultivation when the disability ceases. There is considerable work relating to the determination and payment of compensation still remains to be done. In particular, it is necessary to speed up the payment of compensation to small intermediaries, widows and minors. This plan was successful and achieved growth rate of 4.1 per cent which is more than it targeted. (Planning Commission of India, 1951)

**Sixth Five Year plan (1980-1985).** The top most priority of this plan was agriculture, industry and mines. Concerning the widows, the plan aided to overcome field problems in seeking jobs in industrial sector, efforts would be made to select women from local areas, relax minimum educational qualifications, raise upper-age limit and give first choice to widows and deserted women. In almost all the hospitals most of the nursing employees required to be females. The estimated growth rate of this plan was 5.2 per cent however; the achieved success rate was 5.7 per cent. (Planning Commission of India, 1980)

**Eighth Five Year plan (1992-1997).** During this five year plan, the focus was on the development of human resources, which are employment, education and public health. People who belonged to categories such as widows, members of armed forces, minors, etc. were given priority. Libraries were integrated with the JSNs and they served as innovative post-literacy and continuing education centres. Well known
NGOs, educational institutions, distinguished individuals, ex-servicemen, war widows, award winning teachers etc. were encouraged to set up JSNs. This plan was to afford a viable environment for housing activity by eliminating various restrictions and providing direct assistance to the disadvantaged groups including rural and urban poor households, SC/ST, physically handicapped, widows and single women. This was viewed as an important element of the national economy. The plan was to evolve a special assistance programme for specially disadvantaged groups including vulnerable sections of SCs/STs, widows from the poorer sections of the society and including those affected by natural calamities through which subsidy, preferably in kind, differential rate of interest was to be given (Planning Commission of India, 1992).

Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002). This five year plan focused on the destitute, deserted, widows, orphans, women and children in moral and social danger, with a special focus on the child / women prostitutes. Special programmes were initiated for economic rehabilitation of these underprivileged women. As a measure to prevent the girl children from becoming victims of these types of social evils, a special package was launched for the girl-child in 1997. Besides several policy initiatives in order to empower women, special programmes like training-cum-employment-cum-income generation programmes, welfare and support services and awareness generation/gender sensitisation programmes were planned for implementation.

During the Eighth Plan, under the programme of ‘Support for Training and Employment’, a total of 44 projects received financial assistance to extend training and employment on a sustainable basis to 2.59 lakh women and 6 more projects during 1997-98 to benefit 53,335 women in the traditional sectors of dairy, animal
husbandry, sericulture, handlooms, handicrafts etc. Under the Training-cum-Production Centres initiative with NORAD assistance, 693 projects during the Eighth Plan and 169 projects during 1997-98 were planned in order to train 0.78 lakh and 0.30 lakh women/girls, respectively in the modern and newly emerging trades. 5,822 training courses were conducted to benefit 1.46 lakh women and girls during the Eighth Plan and 197 courses to benefit 0.15 lakh women/girls were conducted in 1997-98 under the scheme of Condensed Courses of Education and Vocational Training. More than 2452 Units were set up during the Eighth Plan to undertake a wide variety of income generating activities for the benefit of 21,000 needy women like widows, destitutes, disabled etc. under the Socio-Economic Programme, during the Eighth Plan (Planning Commission of India, 1997).

**Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-2007).** It is during this plan period that ‘Swadhar’ - an innovative intervention for ‘Women in Difficult Circumstances’ with a special focus on the rehabilitation of destitute/young/elderly widows, including sex workers, women / girls offered to temples, women/girls in social and moral danger, single women in difficult circumstances, women-headed households, displaced women, women affected by natural calamities. Scope of the scheme had been enlarged to give space to emerging and demanding situations. The Department of Women and Child Development carried out other welfare programmes like short stay homes, hostels for working women, crèches, etc. Programs were planned during the Tenth Plan to meet the specific / emerging needs of women, especially those belonging to other disadvantaged groups, viz., SCs, STs, OBCs and Minorities. In The Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) houses are allotted to the female member of the beneficiary household and widows are given priority in the scheme. (Planning Commission of India, 2002)
Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-2012). It is to be noted that special initiatives to ensure food security to certain categories of women, emphasis was given to strengthen the PDS system and revise BPL census norms to ensure that women in vulnerable situations, particularly widows, single women, internally displaced women, and women in conflict situations are covered. It was also planned that all housing should either be half in the name of the woman in the household or in the single name of the woman. Single women, widows, and women in difficult circumstances will be given priority. Ekal Nari Shakti Sangathan-Association of Strong Single Women was established in Rajasthan in 2000. The ‘Ekla Chalo Re’ scheme is based on this association’s objectives which are aimed at exuding self-confidence, truth and dignity. This organisation with a huge working class membership has widows, separated, abandoned and abused women as its fold. The women of Ekal have closed down liquor shops and revolted against discriminative practices and fought for hike in pension and other assistances for widows. NACO is a hospital-based support service focused on the health care needs of widows and geriatric health of elderly women. As per NACO’s estimation one in three HIV patients is a woman, it is also found that about 60 per cent of HIV-positive widows are less than 30 years of age and live with their natal families. There is no financial aid for 91 per cent of them from their marital homes. (Planning Commission of India, 2007)

Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012-2017). In the twelfth plan, the issues of single women, particularly widows, was focused on. The provision of rehabilitation and compensation, besides economic packages for widows had been looked at. It is, further, recommended that the widow’s pension scheme to be extended to a larger pool of beneficiaries by
reworking the age eligibility criteria as some States have done. Indexing of pension to inflation has also been considered. A separate quota under *Indira Awas Yojana* was also planned to allot houses to widows especially to those who are single. The Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS) was started to provide pension to BPL widows in the age category of 40–64 years. Beneficiaries are given Rs.200 per month. 45 lakh beneficiaries get pension under IGNWPS. Single women, particularly widows are needed to be given priority. Besides economic packages for widows, provision for rehabilitation and compensation need to be examined. As some States have done, the widow pension scheme should be extended to a higher number of beneficiaries by modifying the age eligibility criteria. There is a pressing need to provide social assistance to the elderly and widows with empathy and dignity. (Planning Commission of India, 2012)

**1.10 LEGISLATIONS RELATED TO WIDOWS’ WELFARE IN INDIA**

In addition to the policies and programmes proposed and implemented for the welfare of widows in India, certain legal measures also have been considered; a few of them are listed below in a nutshell.

**1.10.1 The Hindu Widows’ Remarriage Act, 1856**

The Hindu Widow’s Remarriage Act of 1856, was a milestone legislation and the first of its kind which lawfully endorsed the remarriage of Hindu widows. Widows in India were historically subjected to stigmatisation by the rest of society and were forced to live a restrictive form of life. Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar’s efforts were to be lauded in making this historical legislation a reality. The law, however, had several shortcomings; one such drawback was that even though the widows were
allowed to remarry, they were not entitled to own the property of their deceased husband.

1.10.2 The salient features of the law are: No marriage contracted between Hindus shall be invalid, and the issue of no such marriage shall be illegitimate, by reason of the woman having been previously married or betrothed to another person who was dead at the time of such marriage, any custom and any interpretation of Hindu law to the contrary notwithstanding.

All rights and interests which any widow may have in her deceased husband's property by way of maintenance, or by inheritance to her husband or to his lineal successors, or by virtue of any will or testamentary disposition conferring upon her, without express permission to re-marry, only a limited interest in such property, with no power of alienating the same, shall upon her re-marriage cease and determine as if she had then died; and the next heirs of her deceased husband, or other persons entitled to the property on her death, shall thereupon succeed to the same.

On the re-marriage of a Hindu widow, if neither the widow nor any other person has been expressly constituted by the will or testamentary disposition of the deceased husband the guardian of his children the father or paternal grandfather or the mother or paternal grandmother, of the deceased husband, or any male relative of the deceased husband, may petition the highest Court having original jurisdiction in civil cases in the place where the deceased husband was domiciled at the time of his death for the appointment of some proper person to be guardian of the said children, and thereupon it shall be lawful for the said Court, if it shall think fit, to appoint such guardian, who when appointed shall be entitled to have the care and custody of the said children, or of any of them during their minority, in the place of their mother; and
in making such appointment the Court shall be guided, so far as may be by the laws and rules in force touching the guardianship of children who have neither father nor mother: Provided that, when the said children have no property of their own, sufficient for their support and proper education whilst minors, no such appointment shall be made otherwise than with the consent of the mother unless the proposed guardian shall have given security for the support and proper education of the children whilst minors.

Nothing in this Act contained shall be construed to render any widow who, at the time of the death of any person leaving any property, is a childless widow, capable of inheriting the whole or any share of such property, if before the passing of this Act, she would have been incapable of inheriting the same by reason of her being a childless widow.

Except as in the three preceding sections is provided, a widow shall not, by reason of her re-marriage forfeit any property or any right to which she would otherwise be entitled; and every widow who has re-married shall have the same rights of inheritance as she would have had, had such marriage been her first marriage.

Whatever words spoken, ceremonies performed or engagements made on the marriage of a Hindu female who has not been previously married, are sufficient to constitute a valid marriage, shall have the same effect if spoken, performed or made on the marriage of a Hindu widow; and no marriage shall be declared invalid on the ground that such words, ceremonies or engagements are inapplicable to the case of a widow. If the widow re-marrying is a minor whose marriage has not been consummated, she shall not re-marry without the consent of her father, or if she has no father, of her paternal grandfather, or if she has no such grandfather, of her mother,
or, failing all these, of her elder brother, or failing also brothers, of her next male relative. All persons knowingly abetting a marriage made contrary to the provisions of this section shall be liable to imprisonment for any term not exceeding one year or to fine or to both.

And all marriages made contrary to the provisions of this section may be declared void by a Court of law; provided, that in any question regarding the validity of a marriage made contrary to the provisions of this section, such consent as is aforesaid shall be presumed until the contrary is proved, and that no such marriage shall be declared void after it has been consummated.

In the case of a widow who is of full age, or whose marriage has been consummated, her own consent shall be sufficient consent to constitute her re-marriage lawful and valid (Government of India, 2016)

1.11 PROGRAMME FOR WIDOWS IN INDIA

While the amounts granted in the few state pension schemes might allow widows to barely support themselves, they cannot be stretched far enough to provide for additional dependents. And given the rather rigid criteria under which widows can qualify for various welfare plans, it is no surprise that many widows end up living as destitutes. “Widows in India experience particularly high rates of deprivation.” However, a sign of hope is offered by a number of voluntary organisations, as Prasad’s, Ganguly’s and the Gulatis’ essays ascertain. Jhabvala further describes how the Self-Employed Women’s Association (SEWA) has pioneered an insurance scheme (Karya Suraksha) where, for an annual payment of Rs 45 or a lifetime premium of Rs 550, female members receive financial compensation for hospitalization, house
repair/maintenance and tools required for work, maternity expenses, and death of their spouse. Thus, widows have some recourse to insurance coverage in times of need (Ministry of women & child development, 2017)

1.11.1 Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS): This pension scheme, started by the Central government of India, was introduced under National Social Assistance Programme in 1995. The objective of this scheme is to provide financial help to the widow who belongs to the economically weaker section of the society or who is below the poverty line. Assistance provided under this scheme is Rs.1000 per month. Other benefits one free sari for the pensioner twice year for Pongal and Deepavali festivals. Pensioners are provided with daily free nutritious meal at child centers. 2 kilogram of rice per month to those who are taking Nutritious Meal and 4 kilogram of rice per month to those who are not taking nutritious Meal provided at free of cost. The beneficiary of this scheme should be a widow of age between 40 and 59 years, according to the criteria prescribed by the Government of India, she also must be a permanent resident of India. (Government of India, 2013)

1.11.2 The National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS): This scheme was introduced by the Central Government (Ministry of Women and Child Development) and came into effect from 15th August, 1995. Families living below the poverty line are entitled to get financial benefits after the death of the sole breadwinner under this scheme. The death of such a bread-earner should have occurred when she/he is above 18 years of age and below 60 years of age. The NFBS aimed to cover the single women who could potentially and substantially benefit from this scheme which provides one-time cash assistance of Rs.10,000. The main objective behind the implementation of the
scheme is, in case of the death of the primary breadwinner of a family living below the poverty line the bereaved family will be assisted with a financial support. From 2015 onwards, the amount has been increased to Rs.20,000. Families of BPL (Below Poverty Line) category benefit from this scheme. (Government welfare scheme, 2017)

1.11.3 Antodaya Anna Yojana (AAY): This has been launched on the 25th December, 2000. This aim of this scheme is to make TPDS (Targeted Public Distribution System) more focused and targeted towards the poorest of the poor of the population. AAY was launched in 2005. The beneficiaries are identified from the number of BPL families covered under TPDS within the states. They are provided with food grains at a highly subsidized rate of Rs.2 per kg of wheat and Rs.3 per kg of rice. The government of Tamil Nadu gives the rice free of cost. Allocation of food grains under the scheme is being released to the States/UTs on the basis of issue of distinctive AAY Ration Cards to the identified Antyodaya families. The present monthly allocation of food grains under AAY is around 8.51 lakh tones per month as on 31.12.2012. The allocation that was initially 25 kg per family per month has been increased to 35 kg per family per month with effect from 1st April 2002 (Mayilvaganan & Varadarajan, 2012).

1.11.4 Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA): Mahatma Gandhi NREGA aims to enhance livelihood security of households in rural areas of the country by providing at least one hundred days of guaranteed wages employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. The Act came in 2005 and was implemented in a phased manner. Beneficiaries of this scheme is according to the needs of the rural workers It was introduced in 200 of the most backward districts of the country. The aim of this
Act is; (i) providing not less than hundred days work as a guaranteed wages employment in a financial year to every household in rural areas per demand resulting in creation of productive assets of prescribed quality and durability. (ii) Strengthening the livelihood resource base of the poor (iii) proactively ensuring social inclusion and (iv) Strengthening Panchayat Raj Institutions and also the Public Distribution System (PDS), Mid-Day Meal (MDM), Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), and the Social Security Pensions. (Sujatha, 2013)

1.12 PROGRAMME FOR WIDOWS IN TAMIL NADU

1.12.1 Dr. Dharmambal Ammaiyar Ninaivu Widow Remarrige Assistance Scheme:
The widow remarriage scheme was introduced in 1975. The main objective of this scheme is to encourage widow remarriage and rehabilitation. Beneficiaries of this scheme are the widows who marry. Quantum of Assistance: Scheme-1: Rs.25,000 (Rs.15000 by cheque & Rs.10,000 as National Saving Certificate) along with 4 grams (1/2 sovereign) 22 carat for making Thirumangalyam. Scheme-2 Rs.50,000 (Rs.30,000 by cheque and Rs.20,000 National Saving Certificate) along with 4 grams (1/2 sovereign) 22 carat gold coin for making Thirumangalyam. The gold coin given to make Thirumangalyam has been increased by 4 more grams; it is now 8 grams (1 sovereign). The criteria for this scheme: Education qualification not required. The minimum age the bride should be 20 years and the bridegroom’s age should not exceed 40 years (Government of Tamil Nadu, 2013).

1.12.2 Destitute Widow Pension Scheme: The scheme was started in the year of 1975. The Destitute Widow Pension Scheme is objective is to give pension to destitute Widows. The beneficiaries of this scheme are destitute widows aged 18 years and above who are not remarried. The widows are provided with Rs.1000 per month
under this scheme. Eligibility criteria for destitute widows are 18 years and above years of age, being not remarried and not having any source of income or means of subsistence to support. They also should not possess property valuing more than Rs.5000. Pension can be given to such widows in spite of having a male legal heir who have completed 18 years of age. The pensioner is also given free saris twice a year for Pongal and Deepavali festivals. All the pensioners are provided with daily free nutritious meal at Anganwadi Centres and 2 kilogram of rice per month to those who are taking nutritious meal and 4 kilogram of rice per month to those who are not taking nutritious meal free of cost (Government of India, 2013).

1.12.3 E.V.R Maniammaiayar Ninaivu Marriage Assistance Scheme for Daughters of Poor Widows: This scheme was started in 1990 the financial aid of Rs.1000 in 1996, 1997, 1998 and 1999 was increased to Rs.2000, 3000, 5000 and 7000 respectively. The objectives of this scheme was to help the poor widow mothers who face financial difficulties in performing the daughter’s marriage. The poor widows are provided with financial assistance to marry off their daughters. Primarily during the lunch Rs.1000/- was provided and has been enhanced to Rs.20,000 in the year 20th November 2008, to implement the marriage of the poor widows. The beneficiaries of this scheme are the bride’s widowed mother and the bride in case of the death of the applicant. The assistance is provided to those girls who passed out 10th class and to those who had passed Degree/Diploma. Quantum of Assistance: scheme one for Rs.25,000 by cheque/demand draft and 1 Sovereign (8 gm) 22 carat gold coin for making Thirumangalyam. Scheme two for degree/diploma passed girls: Rs.50,000 by cheque/demand draft and 1 Sovereign (8 gm) 22 carat gold coin for making Thirumangalyam. The eligibility criteria for this scheme is that there is no educational
qualification, scheme two for the degree holders from regular college, distance education and government recognized open university, diploma holders, also covers only one daughter who is in the age of 20 to 30 years (Government of India, 2013).

1.12.4 Free Supply of Notebooks to the Children of Poor Widows: This government scheme was introduced in 1996. The objective of this scheme is to supply notebooks to children of poor widows studying up to higher secondary course. The beneficiaries of this scheme are children of poor widows. Notebooks are provided free of cost as mentioned below; I Std and II Std – Notebooks worth Rs.50 III Std to V Std - Notebooks worth Rs.125 VI Std to VIII Std - Notebooks worth Rs.175 IX Std & X Std - Notebooks worth Rs.300 +1 and +2 - Notebooks worth Rs.600 The scheme has been extended to children in Govt. Children Homes and Service home. The criterion for this scheme is that beneficiary widow’s income should be below Rs.24,000 per annum (Government of India, 2013).

1.12.5 Welfare Schemes for the Weaker Sections: The government has introduced this scheme for widows in 1998. The objective of this scheme is for the underprivileged from all walks of life. The monthly pension under this scheme has been increased from Rs.100 to Rs.150 in 1997 and again to Rs.200 in 2000; the ceiling on the number of beneficiaries was done away with. A total of 9,53,719 people including old people, weavers, fishermen, landless farm labourers, widows, differently abled and deserted women were benefitted (Government of India, 2001).

1.12.6 Sathiyavanimuthu Ammaiayar Ninaivu Free Supply of Sewing Machine Scheme: The scheme was started in 2000. The objectives of this scheme is to supply sewing machines free of cost with a view to increase self employment potential for
the rehabilitation of destitute women/widows, deserted wives, differently abled men and women, socially affected women and women from economically backward sections. For the year 2010 to 2011 Rs.13.5 crore has been allocated in the budget for the beneficiaries under this scheme. The women who have annual income below Rs.24,000 are eligible to receive this pension. The age limit of this scheme is 20 to 40 years only. The other criteria could be that they should have knowledge of tailoring and education is not taken into consideration. (Government of India, 2013)

1.12.7 Free supply of sewing machines: This scheme was launched in the year 2002. The objectives of this scheme are rehabilitation of the destitute widows, deserted wives, socially disabled women and physically disabled men and women. The beneficiaries of this scheme are the age group of 20 to 40 years with an annual income not exceeding Rs.12,000/-. The scheme provides sewing machines for widows free of cost for destitute widows, deserted wives, and the physically and socially disabled people (Gopalan, 2005).

1.12.8 Government Service Home: The government service home was launched in 2007 at Chennai. The objective of the scheme by the Government of Tamil Nadu is to provide institutional care to widows, destitute women, deserted women, adolescent girls, differently abled women, their children and women who are economically and socially backward. These women are given accommodation, protection, food, education and vocational training. The beneficiaries should be socially and economically backward and their young children should be below the age of 5 years if they are male children, in case of girl children the age should be below 7 years. However, the maximum children per mother should not exceed 3. Criteria for beneficiary
under this scheme is that the woman should have a annual income not exceeding Rs.24000/- except differently abled, and beneficiaries between the age group of 14 and 45 years. Children of these women, male children up to 5th standard and female children up to 12th standard, are provided with accommodation, food, education, textbooks, notebooks and uniforms free of cost. These children can also stay with their mothers (Government of India, 2013).

1.12.9 Scheme for free Distribution of Milch Cows : The scheme was launched in the year 2015. The benefits given for the women in the scheme is priority to be given for the widows destitute and disable women. The eligibility criteria for this scheme is that one would be a permanent resident of the concerned village Panchayat and are below 60 years of age. At least 30 per cent of them from the village belong to the SC/ST Communities. The employees should not belong to central / State government or any organization, co-operative or members of any local body. For this free distribution of Milch cows scheme, the person should not have own land over one acre. The amount of Rs.35,000/- is provided to purchase a cow. In addition, an amount of Rs.1,000/- is allocated for the travel of beneficiary to the neighbouring State to purchase the animal and another Rs.2,000/- (depending on the District) is allocated for the transportation of the animal to their village through a safe and secure manner (Government welfare schemes, 2017a).

1.13 ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS

The contents of the thesis will be categorised into different chapters. They are;

Chapter 1- Introduction: This chapter describes the background of the study, magnitude, historical perspectives, discriminations, social reforms and the reason for
the rise of the widows in India, and about alcohol and its effects, Government policies, and the programmes for the welfare of the widows, at global level and in India.

Chapter II-Review of Literature: This chapter deals with review of concepts, theories, and previous studies that are similar in nature, the research gap has been identified as well.

Chapter III-Research Methodology: The third chapter explains in detail, statement of the problem / research questions, objectives of the study, research hypotheses, operational definitions, universe and sampling, research design, method of data collection, and Limitations of the study.

Chapter IV-Data Analysis and Interpretation: The analysis and interpretation highlights the findings of this research work in three sections the socio-psychological correlates of different scales under consideration have been analysed with the help of mean scores, ANOVA, Pearson’s Correlations, and Regression path Analysis.

The final chapter—the thesis Summary of findings, Suggestions and Conclusion—provides the major conclusions drawn from this study and implications of the results including further research needed in this area of specialization.