VICES AND SOME EXPENSIVE CUSTOMARY PRACTICES

Vices and some other social practices are frequently found to be the causative factors of poverty. Even if a person is not born into a poor family, these practices can drag one into a life of poverty. Vices and some social practices undoubtedly aggravate the economic condition of poor family in several ways.

Vices of one kind or the other are quite noticeably prevalent among the urban population. Though the evil effects resulting from the practice of such vices, etc., are not easily felt among the affluent class, the urban poor class suffers miserably from such evil practices, both from economic as well as health standpoint. Almost all the adult population, excepting the fatally ill persons, among the slum dwellers are found to be addicted to vices of some kind or the other. This creates a condition of chaos and conflict in slum families as well as in the respective localities, not to speak of the continuing deteriorating economic conditions of those families.

The vices that are commonly found among the slum dwellers are gambling, alcoholism, drug-addiction and smoking.

Alcoholism:

Alcoholism is regarded as one of the most important factors for the poor economic conditions of urban lower income class people. The excessive use of alcohol is marked through the ages as a serious social evil. There
is a well-known proverb that "once a drinker always a drinker". Therefore the difficulty lies in the fact that once a person starts drinking he becomes addicted to it and goes on increasing the dose which affects both the person himself along with his family and the society as well.

It is noteworthy that all drinkers are not drunkards. The popular concept of a drunkard is the one who falls into gutters or staggers around on streets mouthing obscenities. Some Psychiatrists say, that is only the last stage of alcoholism. Shanthi Ranganathan of T.T. Ranganathan Clinical Research Centre, says that a social drinker becomes a problem one when, "his drinking starts affecting on a continuous basis his health, his job efficiency and his relations with his family and friends". The World Health Organisation estimates that one out of ten drinkers turns alcoholic.

Generally there are two types of drinkers: (1) Moderate drinkers, i.e., those who can stand their liquor and (2) problem drinkers, i.e., those who cannot stand their liquor. Thus a problem drinker is one whose drinking becomes a personal and social problem to him.

Professors Elliott and Merrill have given five stages through which a person has to pass till he becomes a complete drunkard and his personality is completely disorganised. These five stages are:

2. Chengappa, R., op.cit.
(ii) Escape drinking, (iii) increasing consumption, (iv) drinking at social functions and (v) extreme behaviour. Besides certain harmful social effects, excessive drinking has physical effects as well upon the drinker.1

Excessive drinking is a costly affair to any person not to speak of the persons of lower income groups. And the problem always remains like that, a habitual drinker cannot think of skipping his quota of drink, remaining unmindful of the economic condition of his family. Thus because of a drunkard member in a family, the economic condition of a poor family deteriorates.

Besides the direct effect on the economic front, excessive drinking has physical effects also. Although when taken in moderation, drinking might not have harmful effect, acute drinking has several ill-effects on the health front. Some common pathological effects of alcoholism are cirrhosis of the liver, delirium tremens, chronic gastritis, multiple or peripheral neuritis, gout, T.P. etc. Above all, resistance to all diseases is appreciably lowered by heavy and periodic consumption of alcohol. There are more frequent instances of violent death of drinkers from accidents or like other causes than a non-drinker.

In urban areas there is much more temptation to drinking than in rural areas primarily because of the social set-up. There are very frequent instances among the urban poor where the habitual drinker at certain time falls victim to chronic diseases and the victim has to wait for death without proper medical treatment since his members of the family cannot afford expenses on medical.

Most of the poor, day labouring class people drink cheap, undiluted wine after their hard labour during the day-time. These people, especially the rickshaw pullers, drivers, handimen, construction-workers etc. drink heavily after their hard labour instead of taking proper food. They spent a major part of their income on alcohol instead of buying their necessary goods on fooding, clothing etc. Thus due to the presence of habitual drinker in a low income family, the economic condition of the family is aggravated.

Again, most of such habitual drinkers fell victim to serious diseases. When an earner (sometimes the only earner in the family) of a low income family becomes unable to earn falling victim to such diseases as well as alcoholism, the family has to suffer miserably.

A drunkard in a family itself is a problem. There is every possibility that excessive drinker may forsake his home, his family and his business. Some excessive drinkers indulge in absenting from work regularly or very frequently. Sometimes the drunkard sells his personal properties including his household goods and even his wife's or female member’s jewellery. In many instances, the wife or other close relatives in the family has to take the responsibility of the family since the drinker’s income is spent on alcohol.

It is observed that alcoholism is a disease, because alcoholics exhibit predictable symptoms and suffer the same physical and mental trauma: severe shakes, damage to vital organs like the heart and liver and psychological breakdown. Once the disease catches on it moves with terrifying rapidity,
reducing its victims to physical, mental and moral wrecks.

Thus alcoholism can become a direct cause of poverty. Not only the drinker but everyone in the family suffers from the wave of alcoholism. In urban slums this is a very common matter attracting the attention of the sociologists and social workers.

Saraswathi Senkaran, in her study of workers at the Madras Port Trust shows how damaging alcohol can be. For this purpose she studied 162 workers. More than half of these workers were found to drink heavily, and a third of them were addicts. Senkaran studied the work performance of the drinkers and non-drinkers and found that the heavy drinkers were absenting themselves every six working day. So the non-drinkers took home 50 per cent more money than drinkers, spent 8 per cent more on food, 20 per cent more on clothing, 180 per cent more on health care and a whopping 300 per cent more on children's education. Senkaran observed, "whether it is poverty, malnutrition, marital disharmony or delinquent children, alcohol seems to have been the major cause of all their miseries."  

Drug addiction:

Another recognised social vice noticed among the urban slum dwellers is drug addiction. The World Health Organisation Expert Committee defines drug addiction as a "state of periodic or chronic intoxication, detrimental to the

1. Quoted from Chengappa, R., op.cit., pp. 78-79
2. Ibid., p. 79
individual and society, produced by repeated consumption of a drug, either natural or synthetic. Its characteristics include, (a) an overpowering desire or need (compulsion) to continue taking the drug and to obtain it by any means; (b) a tendency to increase the dose; and (c) a psychic (psychological) and sometimes a physical dependence on the effects of the drug.1 Actually this definition covers both alcoholic drinks and other narcotic drugs.

Some of the drugs frequently used by the drug-addicts are opium, ganja, bhang, charas, cocaine etc. These drugs are consumed mostly by the poor and labouring classes excepting a section of the delinquents. There are some such more costly drugs used especially by the rich delinquents.

Though prohibition of opium is now in force in India yet opium addicted persons are not rare. But ganja, bhang and charas are most extensively used by the poor and also the middle classes of people.

It is a well-known fact that drug-addicted persons become lazier as days pass on and at a time they might become unable to do any physical labour. Thus drug-addiction, like alcohol decreases the earning capacity of the addict. Moreover, these drugs are more or less costly in comparison to the income of the low-income class people. Still the addicted persons try to manage this at the cost of immense suffering of the family. They do not even hesitate to sell their belongings to indulge in their addiction. Many drunkards or drug-addicts do not bother to spend their income on domestic purposes viz. food.

clothing. So other members of the family sometimes even the minor children have to earn their livelihood. In such cases also there is every possibility that the addicted member tries to snatch away certain portion of the wife's or the earning member's income to purchase drugs or alcohol. Rich classes might afford somehow such an addict member in a family but if there is an addict in a low-income family then the family has to suffer miserably leading to poverty in the family.

Smoking and some other addictions:

A part of the income of the urban poor people is generally spent regularly on addictions like tobacco smoking, tobacco chewing, pan-chewing etc.

The forms in which tobacco is used are cigars, cigarettes, pipes, bidis, tobacco-chewing, tobacco-eating and snuff-taking. Of these several forms, most of the poor people in urban areas are frequently found to be addicted to bidis, tobacco-chewing, tobacco-eating and snuff-taking.

Smokers may be divided into various categories, namely, non-smokers, light-smokers, moderately heavy smokers, heavy smokers and chain-smokers. According to Dr. Ochsner, a non-smoker is one who has not regularly smoked one cigarette per day for twenty years. A light smoker is one who has consumed from one to nine cigarettes a day for the same period. Smoking from ten to fifteen cigarettes daily makes one a moderately heavy smoker and if one has

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2. Ochsner, Alton, quoted from Madan, G.R., Ibid.
smoked from sixteen to twenty a day for twenty years, he is a heavy smoker. An excessive smoker consumes from twenty one to twenty-four cigarettes a day. More than that makes a smoker a chain smoker. Among the urban poor, besides a major section being light smokers, moderately heavy smokers of bidi are also predominantly found. Most of the adult male persons among the urban poor are bidi-smokers, tobacco-chewers and tobacco-eaters.

Economically, smoking entails great loss to the addicted persons especially the poor persons. There is economic loss to the individual and the concerned family because of the expenses incurred on tobacco or bidis which could have been utilized for other purposes. A moderately heavy smoker of bidi, affects the family budget of the low-income family adversely.

Another important thing to note is that a large section of the women population among the urban poor smokes bidi. And also the young boys are generally found to be addicted to bidi-smoking or tobacco-eating. Thus an urban family of low-income group spends some amount of income on bidi, tobacco etc. Besides economic adversities, smoking might cause injury to the health of the addicted persons.

Smoking has been called a communicable disease — in the sense that desire to smoke originates from the advocacy of smoking by smokers, much of it being unconscious. Besides being an expensive luxury, the habit of smoking has a bad effect on the youth and is often associated with bad habits such as gambling, drinking and undesirable social contacts in badly ventilated premises. Sometimes it is observed that smoking and chewing of tobacco provoke
drunkenness which is a very costly affair especially for the poor section of people. Mahatma Gandhi said, "Smoking, I consider, to be a vice. It deepens one's conscience and is often worse than drink in that it acts imperceptibly. It is a habit which is difficult to get rid of when once it seizes hold of a person. It is an expensive vice."  

Many of the people take pan or betel nut besides smoking bidi and tobacco. If only one member of a family is addicted to betel nut-pan then a minimum of Rs. 6 is spent on the expenses for two pens a day.

Thus poor people are greatly affected by their addiction to smoking, tobacco, pan etc. Moreover, some of these urban people of low-income group spend certain amount on recreational heads especially on cinema. The young generation prefers cinema to any other entertainment. Some of these young boys come regularly to enjoy pictures in cinema hall. Women and other children also enjoy cinema occasionally whenever they get an opportunity. But this habit adds to expenses and burden on their family budget.

Gambling:

Gambling may cause poverty even to the otherwise affluent persons. So the addiction to gambling is very harmful for the economic welfare of the low-income group people.

The term gambling designates "the deliberate waging or staking of important or valuable considerations upon events, which, so far as parties to

1. Gandhi, M.K., Drinks, Drugs and Gambling ................... 1952, p.155
the wager can know, lie in the realm of pure chance, or luck." Of purely gambling activities the simplest are those for which the circumstances of chance may be re-established easily and frequently at the will of the participants and in which the elements of skill and fate-knowledge of the outcome are reduced to a minimum.

Professor Reckless has mentioned the following media most widely utilized for gambling: (i) card games, among which the most popular are bridge and rummy, (ii) dice, (iii) lottery and number games, (iv) horse-racing, (v) sports and athletic contests and (vi) automatic gambling machines. Dr. Bergler includes another media, i.e., business speculation. Speculation is simply the act of buying and selling commodities, securities or rights in order to benefit from changes in the prices. And when he buys or sells simply in the blind hope that the market will turn his way he is gambling. So it is difficult to make a sharp distinction between gambling and speculation. Again "Gaming" and "Gambling" are synonymous terms except that gambling is suggestive of a practice more reprehensible from frequent indulgence. Gaming in the ordinary sense means there must be a game of contest and participation by the better as players and not as onlookers. To game or gamble means to use cards, dices or other instruments according to certain rules with a view to winning money or other things waged upon the issue of the contest.

Generally there are two types of gamblers, habitual gamblers and casual gamblers. Greenson has mentioned three types of gamblers: (i) Normal person (who) gambles for diversion or distraction and can stop gambling when he wants, (ii) Professional gambler (who) selects gambling as his means of earning a livelihood, and (iii) Neurotic gambler (who) gambles because he is driven by unconscious needs and who is unable to stop gambling. According to modern school of thought, the confirmed gambler is markedly neurotic. He knows perfectly well that the odds are against him. Such a person refuses to stop when winning while he also wants to suffer even the extreme thrill of losing. But the inference of neuroticism is applicable only to a chronic gambler.

A chronic gambler is a very harmful member in a poor family in the sense that it is because of him the entire family suffers in several ways, especially from the economic front. As the definition of a gambler itself points out that a gambler is an idle person depending upon chance and hates work who would rather live on the earnings of others. Thus gambling tends to promote illness, dishonesty and other vices. A chronic gambler indulges himself so much in this vice that he is not attracted to any other important aspects of life. Sometimes such a person resorts to crime such as theft and extortion in order to get money for gambling. Even incidence of such crimes as murder committed by such persons is also not uncommon. Thus this kind of vice may drag the person into extreme moral degradation, not to speak of the many instances of the state of extreme poverty.

In a low income family, if there happens to be one chronic gambler the family will be on the verge of economic ruin. If that person earns something then there is every possibility that he will spend most of his income on this vice. There are frequent instances also that such persons even steals or snatch away purses or property of other family members. It is more frequently found that a gambler becomes addicted to wine and other immoral habits. So such a person in a low-income family is bound to cause poverty of the family. Thus as in the case of alcoholism and drug addiction, gambling begins to dominate the addicted person's life and reduces him to derelict status as it often occurs in combination with excessive drinking and bad associates.

Customary practices:

Certain social as well as religious practices are greatly responsible for poverty of many of the urban poor class people. People consider these practices indispensable. So they perform these practices even at the cost of involving heavy financial burden to the family.

Marriage ceremony is the most important among these practices. Marriage at an early age is prevalent in these days also among the poorer sections of the people. A marriage ceremony is a costly affair. It would have been a far less costly affair had there been no system of dowry, prevalent in some form or the other, among almost all communities of people. Birth of a girl thus becomes like a curse to a poor family. Since marriage is of prime importance, parents or guardians would marry them away even by selling the family property.
Borrowing for a wedding is a very common affair among the poor. The bride's family happens to be at the losing end. Still these people want to arrange the ceremony in much pomp and gaiety (that is, of course, according to their own standard). So parents of bridegroom also borrow frequently from their friends, relatives or even from some money lenders.

Besides expenses on marriage ceremonies the low-income group people have to spend certain amount of their hard-earned money on several rituals due to their socio-religious convictions. For instance, besides the rituals of marriage, they perform a couple of rituals on birth of a child and on death of a person. Most of these people are caste-conscious and to remain in their castes they perform such rituals, quite often by borrowing from friends and relatives since very few of them can save money for such purposes.

Thus low-income class people very often borrow or sell property to incur the expenses on these social practices and also on vices which cause economic hardship to themselves. It is also a very important reason of migration of rural poor to urban areas thereby adding themselves to the population of the urban poor.

Case Study of Greater Guwahati:

In our survey, out of the total of 350 respondents, 295 were found to be addicted persons, i.e., as many as 84.29 per cent people were addicted to one or even more than one things. Here by addicted persons, we simply mean those persons who were regular in certain specific habits as shown in Table 6.1.
Table 6.1: Percentage Distribution of addicted persons among the Respondents according to their Income Level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Level</th>
<th>Addict</th>
<th>Alcoholic</th>
<th>Drug-Addict</th>
<th>Smoker</th>
<th>Betel-nut, Pan Chews etc.</th>
<th>Gambler</th>
<th>Total Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below 150</td>
<td>31.58</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>26.32</td>
<td>10.53</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5.95 (19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>151-250</td>
<td>85.29</td>
<td>14.71</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>58.82</td>
<td>35.29</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10.66 (34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>251-350</td>
<td>85.71</td>
<td>42.86</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>61.43</td>
<td>14.29</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>21.94 (70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>351-450</td>
<td>95.38</td>
<td>53.85</td>
<td>9.23</td>
<td>72.31</td>
<td>23.08</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20.38 (65)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>451-550</td>
<td>83.33</td>
<td>64.29</td>
<td>11.90</td>
<td>71.43</td>
<td>21.43</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>13.27 (42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>551-650</td>
<td>87.50</td>
<td>62.50</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>68.75</td>
<td>31.25</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>10.03 (32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>651-750</td>
<td>94.12</td>
<td>41.13</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>70.59</td>
<td>47.06</td>
<td>5.88</td>
<td>5.33 (17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>751 and Above</td>
<td>90.00</td>
<td>37.50</td>
<td>12.50</td>
<td>72.50</td>
<td>30.00</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12.54 (40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td>74.19</td>
<td>19.35</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>41.94</td>
<td>16.13</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8.86 (31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>84.29</td>
<td>41.43</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>63.14</td>
<td>23.71</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>100.00 (350)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(i) Here figures indicate percentages to the horizontal total.
(ii) Figures within brackets indicate absolute numbers.
Thus when we classify the addicted persons according to their income level we find that the highest percentage of addicted persons were in the income level of ₹ 351-450. And the lowest percentages of addicted respondents were in the lowest income group of our survey. Respondents who were not addicted to anything were only 15.71 per cent of the total respondents. Moreover, most of these non-addicted respondents were either the child-labourers or the vagrants. It is interesting to note that in case of the low-income group people, a major part of the female population is addicted to something especially, bidi, betel-nut, pan-chewing and even drinking.

In our survey 41.43 per cent of the total respondents were alcoholic or rather drunkards. Some of them were chronic alcoholic. The highest number of addicted persons, were smokers (63.14 per cent). Most of the adult males and females smoked bidi etc. Some of the respondents (23.51 per cent) were found to be addicted to betel-nut, and pan. 6 per cent of the total respondents were drug-addicts. And only 1.43 per cent were gamblers.

An important thing to note there is that, of the total addicted persons (295), only 115 persons had only one addiction. Remaining 180 persons had two addictions at the same time. Some of the bidi-smokers were addicted to betel-nut and pan also while some other bidi-smokers were addicted to alcohol. Some alcoholics were addicted to gambling also while some betel-nut addicts were addicted to drugs also like bhang, ganja etc.

In this way, these addicted persons affect the economic condition of the low-income group people. Though the number of gamblers in our survey was small,
the adverse effect on economic front was quite obvious in our case-studies. The effect of alcoholism was also quite harmful in several instances both from economic and physical fronts. Moreover the drug-addicts, especially the "Bhang-addicts", though fewer in number had adverse economic as well as physical effects from their addiction. The evil effects of addiction and some social practices are made clear in the following case-studies of some of our respondents.

1) Shri Narayan Das, an office-bearer, aged 38 years is addicted to gambling. His family consists of seven members, i.e., husband and wife and five children. At first he did not confess about his addiction. His friends told us about his habit. And later after some persuasion, he confirmed about his addiction. He also regretted that he could not just leave off this addiction though he knew quite well that it is not a good thing to do; rather a harmful one.

A large part of his income is spent on gambling. He stays away from home till mid-night, sometimes overnight for gambling. Due to the expenses incurred on this evil habit, he sold his village land. He did not have a big plot of land in his village. But a part of the plot of land had to be sold when his father was ill and later died in illness. And the remaining plot of land was to be sold as he was over head and ears in debt due to his addiction to gambling. Still he cannot stay away from gambling. He told us that he had to pay off around Rs. 5000 to some of his friends and relatives. He tries to stay away.

* Once when his elder son was suffering from Typhoid he borrowed Rs. 500 from a mahajan. Now he has to pay interest, amounting Rs. 50 per month (at the rate of Rs. 10 per cent per month). Thus he is paying interest only but cannot manage to pay the actual amount.
from those persons from whom he borrowed money and is unable to pay off the debt. He swore that sometimes he even thought of committing suicide. But still he cannot abstain from his addiction. As a result, his family suffers immensely. His family could have led a better economic life had he not been addicted to gambling.

2) Smti Golapi Thapa, aged 41 years works in a school as a chowkidar-cum-'Bai'. She was an Assamese girl who worked as a maid-servant in a house in Sibsagar where her husband, Shri Thapa happened to be working as a driver. After marriage, they came to Guwahati where Shri Thapa got an appointment as a Chowkidar in a school. After the fourth year of their married life, he began to drink heavily and thus within a very short period, he turned alcoholic. After 15 years of service, Shri Thapa fell ill. Actually he had been suffering from T.B. So he was dismissed from his service. But the school authority was kind enough to appoint Golapi Thapa in place of her husband.

The economic condition of the family began to worsen since Shri Thapa began drinking heavily. As time passed on, he did not bother about what his children would eat or wear. Rather he would spend the major part of his income on drinks. His children were not admitted into school. He even, borrowed money from his friends, very often, to spend on drinks. Now, even on being ill, he cannot abstain from his addiction. So whenever he gets any chance, even if by dealing from his wife, he drinks wine.

From the income of Golapi Thapa, some medicines have to be purchased regularly for her ailing husband besides the daily minimum requirements on
fooding. It has not been possible to arrange for proper medical treatment for her husband. Smti Golapi Thapa feels that the culprit to bring miseries in her family is nothing but the addiction to drinking wine.

3) Shri Bhola Pasowan, aged 43 years is a horijan by caste. He makes brooms and waste paper baskets at home and earns by selling these things. Besides some casual buyers, he has some regular customers. But his income fluctuates throughout the year. And whatever is earned, is spent on drinks only. His wife works as a Sweeper in a hospital. Her income is spent on household purposes. And very frequently, Bhola Pasowan uses to beat his wife to snatch away a few rupees to buy his drinks.

Bhola Pasowan's eldest son lives separately after his marriage. Besides, he has two sons and two daughters. The youngest daughter is only three months old. Pasowan never bothers about his daughters' marriage. And his wife also cannot manage to save a few rupees, only because of her husband. Pasowan's wife told us that if he had not spent so much on drinks they could have saved a little money for their daughters' marriages. Moreover if he had not been such an alcoholic he could have got a job in the hospital where she works. But knowing his nature and addiction well, they don't give him 'job. Thus the entire responsibility of the family falls on his wife's shoulders. She fears that Bhola Pasowan, being such an alcoholic, might die very soon.

4) Shri Jadu Rai, aged 30 years is an office-bearer in East Guwahati. He has his wife and three children in his family. The first impression on Jadu Rai will be that either there is something wrong on physical front or he is
bound to be addicted, to something. It is known that he is addicted to bhang. He smokes bidis also regularly. But he cannot spend a day without taking certain minimum quota of bhang. As a result, he is suffering in health besides the economic miseries caused to his family. He even cannot stand erect at this age of 30 years. He spends a huge amount of his income on his addiction. Moreover, his wife fears that he might be removed from service at any moment. Because many people know about his addiction to bhang.

5) Smti Sarala Gohon, aged 45 years is a widow who earns by doing household works in three houses. At present she lives with her son who is studying in a high school.

The husband of Sarala Gohon died 15 years ago. He began drinking heavily a few years before his death. He was employed as a city bus driver. One day he caused an accident while he was driving in drunkenness. In the accident, his one foot was seriously injured and later it had to be amputated. After that he was removed from his job. After the accident, he increased his doses of drinks. He even sold his wife's ornaments to buy his drinks. He used to cause tensions in the house, whenever he could not manage his quota of drink. At last, he died of T.B. During his illness, Sarala Gohon had to borrow money from friends and relatives. So after his death, she had to sell certain plot of their cultivable land to pay off the debts and to perform the shraddha ceremony.
Sarala Gohon began working in several houses after her husband was removed from his job. Two years ago, she had to sell the remaining plot of cultivable land for her daughter's marriage ceremony. Now she is living in a small house on a small plot of land.

6) Smti Maniki Kalita, aged 32 years is a widow. Now she lives with her four children. Her husband died after eight years of their marriage. He worked as a peon in a semi-government office. After seven years of their marriage, he fell in serious illness (she does not know the name of the diseases). After one year, he died. In the meantime, Maniki Kalita had to sell more than half of the plot of cultivable land to incur expenses on his treatment for one year, to provide foods etc. for the family during the period without any other source of income and lastly to perform the shraddha ceremony of her husband.

After her husband's death, Maniki Kalita took up vegetable vending. After a few years, her mother-in-law died. To perform the shraddha ceremony, she had to sell another plot of land. In the meantime, she had to borrow some amount of money owing to her mother-in-law's illness and day to day minimum requirements. After three years of her mother-in-law's death, she sold the last plot of their cultivable land for the marriage ceremony of her eldest daughter. She will have to give in marriage her other two daughters. But she has neither any property excepting the house they are living nor she has any savings' amount.