CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A review of concepts and previous studies is useful to define precisely the concepts used in the present study, to place the problem in proper perspective and to decide the framework for analysis. Precise definition of the concepts would enable both the collection of relevant data, and meaningful interpretation of the results of analysis.

2.1. Concepts

The following concepts and terms used in the present study, are given below:

- Widow
- Widowhood
- Household
- Dependency
- Decision-making
- Attitude
- Social Stigma
- Social Exclusion
- Social Status
- Economic Status
- Generation
2.1.1. Definition of Widow

The English word widow is related to a Latin root meaning 'to place apart'; widows are often treated as distinct from married women.¹

Mukesh Ahuja (1996) defines, a widow as 'one who has no issue and who has been widowed one or two years of her marriage or she may be one who becomes a widow after a period of five to ten years and has one or two small children to support or she may be one who is above 50 years of age.'²

The Webster Third New International Dictionary defines, widow as a woman, 'who has lost her husband by death and has not since remarried'.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines, 'Widow as a woman whose husband is dead and who has not married again and a wife bereaved of her husband'.

To Brook, widows are 'those whose husbands have already died or become separated from them, or whose husbands subsequently do so, are exposed to greater risks of both isolation and financial loss'.³

N. Dutt defines, 'widow as a woman whose husband is dead and who has not married again.'³

Widow in the present study is defined as a woman belonging to Naidu community, whose husband is dead and has not married again.
2.1.2. Widowhood

The term 'widowhood' is used in this work, to refer to female widowhood specifically.

Leslie remarks that widowhood is a long term proposition. Widowhood and the accompanying deep sense of loss and frustration come to an end with remarriage or with death.\(^4\)

Widowhood is a crisis in a women's life, involving new social adjustment for the family as well as for herself.\(^5\)

Widowhood is almost always accompanied by deep sense of shock, due to the sudden and unexpected death of the husband. The death of a husband entirely changes the social identity of a woman.\(^6\)

Rane, in her study on 'Rehabilitation of Widows, Problems and Prospects' found that widowhood brings sudden and unhappy changes in the life of a woman.\(^7\)

Smart S.M. and Smart L.S. remark that when an individual loses a spouse, that individual acquires a new status, widow or widower, instead of wife or husband.\(^8\)

Widowhood is both a crisis and a problem. When it occurs, its suddenness and intensity make it a crisis and as the individual finds ways of
coping it becomes a problem.9 Widowhood is a problem of many dimensions, numerical, financial and emotional.10

For the aged, widowhood is a critical situation which involves both social and personal disorganization.11 Morgan viewed widowhood as a complex transition, with multiple possible consequences.12 Widowhood is a life event that removes not only persons, closest support persons but also reduces the size of informal support network at the same time.13

Brubaker opines that widowhood is a family event and the loss reverberates throughout the later family network. The wife has lost a husband, children, a father, siblings a brother or sister.14

Widowhood is primarily a female phenomenon15 Widowhood, at all ages, changes the basic self-identity of many women.16

Hyman observes that widowhood is one of the sad facts of existence. Millions of women experience this misfortune and generally bear its burden for many years.17

According to Greg, Widowhood is an event that brings about the greatest change in the status of a woman, for it is often accompanied by deleterious consequences.18 In India, widowhood represents the last and lowest stage in life for Hindu women.
Caton and Merielli conceptualise Hindu widowhood as a life of agony, pain, suffering and austerity. It is a life which has been inflicted by social customs.\textsuperscript{19} Cormack opines that widowhood is certainly an unhappy and miserable state.\textsuperscript{20}

Mahatma Gandhi remarked that enforced widowhood upon little girls was a brutal crime. Widowhood imposed by religion or custom is an unbearable yoke and defiles the home by secret vice and degrades religion, whereas voluntary widowhood consciously adopted by a woman who has felt affection of a partner adds grace and dignity to life, sanctifies the house and uplifts religion itself.\textsuperscript{21}

In the folklore of West Bengal, women considered widowhood as a great curse.\textsuperscript{22} In the folklore of Orissa, widowhood is considered much more sorrowful than even the death of a loved daughter, for the misery over the loss of a daughter can be overcome, but widowhood dogs a woman till her death.\textsuperscript{23} In all cultures, widowhood is a crisis in a woman's life.\textsuperscript{24}

Widowhood implies a shift in position from that of a wife with economic, social and emotional security to an economically dependent and socially and psychologically insecure woman (with few exceptions).\textsuperscript{25}

Singh Gurmeet et. al (1986), finds that it is an event that constitutes the greatest and saddest change in the life of a woman. It also leads to the loss of status resulting in a state of helplessness and hopelessness.\textsuperscript{26}
In the present study widowhood indicates the status of a widow belonging to the Hindu Naidu community, who is subjected to deprivation and is dependent, socially and economically.

2.1.3. Household

A household is defined as a group of persons who usually stay together and take food from a common kitchen. These persons participate in the socio-economic and cultural activities and share the responsibility of the household they have been included.\textsuperscript{27}

2.1.3.1. Nuclear Household

Widows living with their unmarried sons.

2.1.3.2. Filial Household

It may be defined as household consisting of a widow, atleast one of her married sons and possibly other persons.

2.1.3.3. Filial Stem Household

A widow lives with only one married son.

2.1.3.4. Filial Joint Household

A widow lives with several married sons.\textsuperscript{28}

Oxford Dictionary (1997), defines household as a group of people living together in shared accommodation and with common domestic expenses. A household usually, but not always, contains people who are related or
cohabiting. Whereas the individual is the recipient of incomes, the household is the unit through which a lot of consumption expenditure is decided.  

B.R. Dictionary (1998), defines household as an economic unit which is defined for any purpose such as the Census of Population as all the people who live under one roof and who take or are subject to others taking for their joint financial decisions.  

Dictionary of Economics (1999), defines household as an economic unit consisting of a single person living alone, a married couple or a complete family, each unit with a source of income and responsibility for its disposal.  

Encyclopaedia of women (1998), found that women's and men's role in society is inseparable from their roles in the household and family. Changes in size and structure of households and families therefore have important implications for social and economic policies.  

A.M. Shah (1973), meant a household as a residential unit composed of one or more persons living under the same roof and eating food cooked in a single kitchen.  

A household is defined as a group of persons who commonly live together and take their food in a common mess unless the exigencies of work prevent any of them from doing so.
A widow's household in the present study is taken as with whom the widow chooses to live, for example, with the in-laws, parents, sons or filial etc.

2.1.4. Dependency

Dependency refers to a relationship between a person and another person, symbol, substance or material object characterized by physiological or psychological withdrawal pains contingent upon its unavailability and the absence of subjectively perceived alternatives.

G.S. Bidarkoppa (1971), had pointed out that in India, even today, a woman is a dependent on her husband for support, decision and protection. She has no independent identity, whether she works in the house or in the farm or in a factory, because here the man is the head of the family, owner of property and he is in charge of the family exchequer. Under such circumstances, when a husband dies, the wife, who is unprepared for such a situation, faces several problems connected with finance, property and other matters. She has to depend upon herself except for the help received from parents, kinsmen, and others which may not be either adequate or a constant source to depend upon. Her plight is heightened when she is uneducated, poor and ignorant.35

Berardo, in his study on 'Widowhood Status in the United States' has observed, "widowhood among aged is a critical situation. The aged widows are unemployed and are partly or wholly dependent on the assistance of children, relatives, public or private funds. But often they are getting advise from their
sisters or other related kin in solving their personal problems. Therefore, close kinship ties only can mitigate socio-economic problems of the widows.\textsuperscript{36}

Economic dependency is only one of two variables which have important independent effects upon the decision to leave an abusive relationship. The relation in unemployed cohabiting male economically dependent upon employed female may actually increase the likelihood of the female partner being abused in the first place.

Ropra Vohra (1986) relates that in traditional Indian situation irrespective of the facts whether the Indian woman is literate or illiterate, a feeling of dependency is fostered in her by the Indian culture. They are made to feel powerless to lead their own lives and that they need protection. Women (majority of them) are not even given enough opportunities to gain confidence. Even if a woman wants to learn or seek a job she is not the one who decides. This has made her fearful of responsibility, unable to stand on her own feet and has been very damaging to her personality.\textsuperscript{37}

Widows cannot have a separate establishment for they are not trained to lead an independent life. If a widow is young or middle-aged with minor children, she has to live with her near relatives. She often needs help to manage the property of the husband but frequently these very relatives may plot against her and exploit her helpless situation. If the widow is aged, she has to live with her sons, over whom she has no authority. The widow's life in their family and
with close relations becomes miserable, if they do not have any property. Often, due to conflicts between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, they are made to cook separately.

After the death of the husband, their lives become economically disorganized and they become dependent upon traditional support networks like joint family, or some specially created societal resources like widow homes, etc.\(^{38}\)

In the present study, a Hindu Naidu widow is deemed to depend upon her children - son/daughter or parents/parents-in-law for her social and economic support.

2.1.5. Decision - Making

Women “are an important segment of the family’s economy, because of their active participation in home and farm activities. They play a vital role in decision-making regarding household resources, which are specifically used by them. Their influence and decision-making in household affairs is affected due to certain factors like the degree of economic independence, socio-cultural pressures, demographic factors and physical settings etc”\(^{39}\).

Lalitha Srinath (2000), pointed out that the status of women is not only a moral imperative but women's participation in the decision-making process at all levels - from the local level to the parliament is an essential pre-requisite for fighting against violence and injustices and ensuring the dignity of
womanhood. Increased participation of women in the decision-making process, would indeed help women attain economic, social and political equality.\textsuperscript{40}

Kurukshetra, reported that most of the decisions regarding home related tasks were taken jointly where both the husband and wife play equal role but in farm related spheres a very low participation is observed among the respondents.\textsuperscript{41}

According to Joshi (1973), in the joint family, decision-making is centered in the hands of the eldest male person. But in the nuclear family, decision-making is dispersed and women are also supposed to take part in it. In the extended family system, women tend to participate more in the family decision-making.\textsuperscript{42}

Kapur (1973), found that although working women are allowed to take part in the decision-making process in the family, her decision is not final.

Gore (1968) found that, out of his total sample of 586 women, only 2% wanted to take an active part in the decision-making process in the family. Financial decision is generally taken by the head of the family or any earning male member.

Ranjana Kumari identified decision-making in terms of who among the family members takes day-to-day as well as social decisions.\textsuperscript{43}
According to Dillion (1972) women's status in decision-making carries more weight in regard to domestic affairs as against economic decision in settling business affairs or investments in agriculture. It is presumed that women have equal, if not more, share in decision-making in relation to family size and use of contraception.

To Indira Devi (1987), decision-making is an activity process by which a course of action is consciously chosen from available alternatives. This process involves three stages, namely, awareness of the situation, evaluation of the alternatives and taking the final decision. With reference to decision-making in the family, while in the first two stages various members of the family are involved, in the final stage the one who will have the final say, is influenced more by tradition.

Dubes (1955) observed that in an ideal home, the final say in all matters connected with the family is always with the husband.

Decision-making is the oft-repeated instrument applied in studies on marital power. Expenditure on food, clothing, entertainment, going to movies, visiting friends, children's education, and giving presents to friends are taken by the head of the family.44

To Michael Mann (1983), decision-making is a process whereby decisions are arrived at over questions of general policy in an organization or over the practical implementation of an established policy. For sociologists,
the main focus of interest is the degree to which different groups with an interest in the outcome of the decision are able to participate in and influence the process. Decision-making has long been used, especially in the pluralist tradition, as a measure of where power lies.\textsuperscript{45}

A widow has to take number of decisions after the death of her husband. Those decisions may relate to personal affairs, family, finance, wealth and employment. Those decisions may affect the individual and the family as a whole.

2.1.6. Attitude

William W. Lamberit and Wallance (1973), defined attitude as "an organized and consistent manner of thinking, feeling and reacting to people, groups, social issues or, more generally to any event in the environment".

According to Davis (1964), "an attitude is an inferred factor within the individual, which involves a tendency to perceive and react".

Theodarson and Theodarson (1969), found that "an attitude is an orientation towards certain objects (including persons other than oneself) or situation".

According to Krech and Crutch field (1948), "an attitude can be defined as an enduring organization of motivational, emotional, perceptual and cognitive processes with respect to some aspects of the individual worlds".\textsuperscript{46}
Scotte (1956), Kluck Hohn (1957), English and English (1958), Rokeach (1968) have treated attitude as a psychological phenomenon.

Woodruf and Devaste (1943), have tried to point out a direct relationship between attitude and value. They indicate that an individual's attitude towards an event is based on the fact that if the event is going to affect his values favourably, he will develop a positive attitude and if it adversely affects his values, he will develop a negative one.

To Kluck Hohn Clyde (1951), Attitudes are more individualistic. Attitudes are related to value. 47

All Port (1961), found that 'attitudes are more susceptible to change, because they refer to comparatively surface evaluation'.

Rokeach (1979), argued that an attitude represents several beliefs focused on specific object or situation. The significance of attitude and value lies in the fact that temperamental and dynamic qualities are integrated into patterns of perceiving and acting. In a broader sense, an individual's entire personality structure and his behaviour may be thought of as organized around, a central value system that comprises many related attitudes. Values and attitudes are inter-related and complementary to each other. He says that attitude is an organization of several beliefs. 48
According to English and English (1958), value refers to a degree of worth ascribed to an object or activity. They further add that when specific attitudes are organized into a hierarchical structure, they comprise value system or on the other hand attitude includes the effective reactions which characterize the valuing processes, giving rise to a motive value.\footnote{49}

Thurston (1946), defined attitude as the degree of positive or negative effects associated with some psychological objects. Edward (1957) found that for a quick, convenient and reliable quantitative measurement of attitude of large groups, an attitude scale would yield fruitful results. An attitude scale therefore serves as mean of assessing the degree of positive or negative disposition of an individual towards a psychological object.

The behaviour of in-laws or of sons, relatives, employers, etc. to the widow depends not only upon the widows contribution to their need gratification but also their general attitude towards widowhood. The widows own reaction to the behaviour of others to her also depends upon her attitude towards widowhood.\footnote{50}

Krishnakumar (1987), referred attitude to the respondent's degree of favourableness or unfavourableness towards the psychological objects. Hence, it is operationally defined as the mental disposition of the respondent to respond favourably or unfavourably towards widow's remarriage, employment after widowhood, participation in social activities etc.\footnote{51}
In the present study, attitude is taken to refer to the widow’s thinking or feeling about herself or towards her in-laws or other members of the family, vice-versa, social activities, about re-marriage and employment.

2.1.7. Social Stigma

Goffman (1963), refers social stigma to a relationship of devaluation in which one individual is 'disqualified from social acceptance'. Stigma can be physical, documentary, contextual, ascribed or achieved. In some instances, the stigmatized person has relatively little control over the character or display of his/her disfigurement. In other words, the appearance may be so organized that revelation is suppressed or ambiguous in its impact. Its sociological significance resides in its importance for the analysis of information, management, ascribed deviance and conventional character of social control.

Widows in all communities, suffer from limited freedom to participate in religious and auspicious social functions. They carry the stigma of inauspiciousness and hence have to keep away from functions. They are not allowed to touch those objects used during marriage or religious ceremonies. A widow can not cook rice fed to a prospective bride or bride groom, nor can she attend or even witness a marriage ceremony. In fact, a widow is not even entitled to perform the ritual to welcome her own daughter-in-law.²²
Because of such social stigma, they experience loneliness, insecurity of life, ill-treatment from their sons, daughters-in-law and other relatives, segregation from the outside world and isolation from the relatives.

Briefly, social stigma and financial crisis combine to make loneliness the hallmark of widowhood. Their changed and reduced social status as widow, makes establishing new relationship difficult.  

The stigma of widowhood becomes aggravated when she deviates from the traditional attitude of a widow. The deviation gets socially transferred from generation to generation as they get fixed with the generalized familial status. Such families become part of 'avoidance' for matrimonial purposes and also interactional arena.

Among the north Indian Hindus, social norms severely restrict contact between parents and married daughters and particularly strong stigma is attached to the flow of goods or money from a married daughter to her parents. Even a widowed mother is not supposed to seek help from her married daughter.

Ranjana Kumari (1981), found that a widow is held personally responsible for the death of her husband and is treated as the personification of the inauspicious and the profane. Her presence at any kind of social function and festival ranging from marriage and childbirth, to sowing of crops is considered to be very inauspicious. Loss of property and under-utilization of
the resource base are two of the most frequent consequences of the
discriminations practiced against them. 56

In the present study, the Naidu widows are restricted from wearing
'Tali', flowers, bangles, bindi, eating good food, wearing colourful dress,
sowbakya tilak, etc. These are taken as social stigma.

2.1.8. Social Exclusion

Widows are not to laugh or even talk loudly and not to speak with
outsiders. They are impressed upon to visit the temple in the evening and eat
the prasad of parched rice and dhal. If possible they do some religious work for
their spiritual welfare. Therefore, they may devote free time to bajans, visiting
temples and places of pilgrimages. After the death of the husband, they are not
to think of other men. They should never re-marry.57

The practice of widows in routine life effectively restricts their
participation in employment outside the home, her access to education,
training, credit and technology. 58

Social restrictions on the life style of women tend to become more rigid
as one moves up in the caste hierarchy. For instance, there is more exclusion of
females among upper castes than among lower castes. Within the upper-caste
communities in North India, women are strictly secluded and denied access to
gainful employment outside their homes. Low caste women have greater
freedom to take up gainful employment. 59
Indian women, soon after widowhood, are excluded from caste rituals and ceremonies. Her social, cultural and economic activities are controlled.\textsuperscript{60}

Discrimination against women shall mean any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex.\textsuperscript{61}

Martha Alter Chen (1998), said that the well-being of widows is not just a question of economic security, but also one of dignity, self-respect and participation in society. Many widows in his sample suffered from different forms of social isolation, psychological abuse or emotional distress. He found that the social marginalization of widows frequently took one or more of the following forms:

1. Rumours and accusation: Widows are often accused of being "responsible" for the death of their husband, regarded as sexually threatening, and generally considered as inauspicious.

2. Enforced dress and behaviour codes: Many widows are under strong pressure to observe restrictive codes of dress, appearance and behaviour. Some of the traditional restrictions (e.g. Shaving of head) have become quite rare, even among the upper castes, but others (e.g. Not wearing the symbols of marriage) remain widespread.
3. **Social ostracism:** A widow is often excluded from the religious and social life of the community, due to her perceived inauspiciousness.

4. **Physical violence:** Violence against widows primarily takes the form of sexual harassment (young widows being considered as sexually vulnerable and/or promiscuous) or property-related violence (many widows being seen as unwanted claimants on ancestral property).\(^{62}\)

In the present study, a widow is forced to face social exclusion when she is restricted from participating in employment outside the home, access to education, training, credit or technology.

### 2.1.9. Social Status

Social status refers to the position of an individual in family and in society. This is determined by social factors like education and caste and economic factors like employment, income and consumption.

According to Lakshmi Menon (1969), the social status of women in any community is largely dependent on the culture and tradition of the community. That a woman's primary responsibility is to her family has wide social acceptance all over the world.\(^{63}\)
K.S. Singh (1998), in his study on Indian communities, found that the Balija communities practised entogamy at the group level and exogamy at the surname at the gotras level and marriage with one’s sister’s, mother’s brother’s or father’s sister’s daughter was preferred.\(^6\)

An educated women almost always has more value and status in the eyes of her husband, her family and her community. She is more likely to share in family decisions about how many children to have, how to bring them up and how to organize domestic life.\(^5\)

To G. Duncan Mitchell (1979), the term social position is in many cases synonymous with terms like social status or social role. But this is because there is a general lack of precision in the case of these terms in sociological literature. A.R. Radcliffe Brown preferred to speak of social position because he wanted to emphasize the point in a social structure occupied by a person. Thus in a structure of kin relationships there are the positions and the norms associated with how the occupants behave in more or less determinate ways.\(^6\)

Social status is the position occupied by a person, family, or kinship group in a social system relative to others. This determines rights, duties and other behaviours, including the nature and extent of the relationships with persons of other statuses.

Social status has a hierarchical distribution in which a few persons occupy the highest positions. The simplest theoretical model of the status
system would be a distribution in which position was determined competitively by the possession of abilities relative to the demand for abilities in the society. The institution of private property, inheritance, differential taxation and social services will modify the form of distribution of statuses.

Social status is determined by education, income, possession and the social valuation of occupation and of other activities in society.  

Social status is the position of an individual within social relationships. Social status can be both, high or low. There is an order of social status in society. In the past, Brahmans enjoyed greater respect and were considered superior to other castes.

The social status of an individual is that particular position in relation with other individuals, by virtue of which he is the recipient of respect and prestige, and wields influence and which can be recognized by symbols of prestige accruing to him and his actions.

The social status of an elderly person is determined by several factors such as physical health, marital status, level of education, position in the society, economic status etc. The widow experiences not only traumatic sorrowful pain but most of them live a miserable and inhuman social existence. For subjective experience of grief and sorrow is both inwardly felt physic state due to material-physical de-linking of closest relationship and socially induced
subjectivity of a permanent social status, wherein she is redefined a widow as distinct from married.  

Social condition refers to the status of women in society i.e., at home and at society and social awareness of legislation and rights of women in general and widows in particular.

The social status of women in society is measured in terms of the level of education, health as well as the role played by them in the family, community and in society.

The social status of the Hindu Naidu widows, in the present study, is taken to mean the customary rituals like attending marriages, religious functions, visiting friends and relatives house, writing letters to friends and relatives and watching TV and radio in group in the houses.

2.1.10. Economic Status

Padminavathi refers the term 'Economic Status' to the income available per head for the household of an individual and the expenses incurred per month per head on food. This term also refers to the level of saving and borrowing by the individual.

Paul Chowdhry (1992) pointed out the income/employment of an individual determines his/her economic status.
Joachim (1989), related economic status to the nature of occupation done by the Christians of Scheduled Caste origin, total income, assets possessed by them and their level of indebtedness i.e. assessing whether they are below poverty status or above it.  

In the present study, the economic status of the Hindu Naidu Widows is meant to include ownership of property, employment, income, expenditure and borrowings.

2.1.11. Generation

A generation is normally taken to mean thirty years. In the present study, the respondent widows are classified as 'young' below 35 years, 'middle-aged' between 36 and 50 years of age and 'old' 51 years of age and above.

2.2. Past studies

2.2.1. Age at Widowhood

In his study on the 'Hindu widows' (a study of deprivation) in Dharwad District (Karnataka State), Godavari D. Patil has analysed their social, economic, cultural and psychological deprivation. The primary data was collected from 300 sample widows - 150 rural and 150 urban - using the interview method, Chi-square test, student 'T' test and simple descriptive percentages were used to analyse the data.
He found in his study that the mean age at widowhood of rural widows was 38.11 years and of urban widows was 41.50 years. The mean duration of widowed life for rural widows was higher (14.20 years) than that of the urban widows (12.65 years).^{74}

T.N. Kitchlu had made a study of the socio-economic conditions of widows in the Union Territory of Delhi. The study was conducted in Delhi from both urban and rural areas. 500 widows were selected from all the major religious communities. The widows selected were below 45 years. The data was collected with the help of interview schedule. Simple descriptive percentage method was used for the analysis of data.

The above study established a direct correlation between the age of marriage and the age at widowhood. The wide age difference between the husband and wife was found to be the reason for the high incidence of widowhood.^{75}

Sandhiya had made a study on widows in Ambala Division, Haryana during the year 1994. There were 324 widows in her sample frame which comprised of 124 rural, 100 urban, and 100 industrial. Descriptive percentage method was used to analyse the data.

The study reports that the age of widowhood below the age of 20 were more (16%) in the rural areas. The widowhood, that befell on women between the age of 21 and 40 years, was almost equal in rural, urban and
industrial sample. The widowhood after 40 years was observable more in industrial and urban subjects.76

B. Hanumandha Rayappa and K.S. Umarani had conducted a study on the 'incidence of widowhood in Karnataka' with the following objectives. (1) To present trends and differentials in the incidence of widowhood from 1921 onwards and (2) the causes and consequences of widowhood. Trends were mostly obtained from census data and the differentials were taken from survey data. The study included 182 sample widows drawn at random from Lingayats, Vokkaligas, Brahmins, Schedule Caste, Kurumba, Kujan, Scheduled tribes, other castes and other religions. They estimated that the mean age at widowhood for those got widowed by the age of 45, ranged from 30 years in the decade 1901-11 to 35 years for the decade 1961-71.77

N.S. Krishnakumari had made a study of status of single women in India-spinsters (working and non-working), widows (working and non-working) and divorced (working and non-working). The study was conducted in Bangalore city in the year 1987. 300 widows were interviewed. Structured questionnaire was used to collect the data. Simple percentage method was used to draw inferences.

She found that early marriage was a common feature among all the respondents. Unlike non-working widows, who had enjoyed, long years of married life, working widows had a short period of married life and they were
widowed at a very young age. The non-working respondent had lost their husbands at a much older age than working widows.\textsuperscript{78}

In his study on Widows-Role Adjustment and Violence, Mukesh Ahuja had analyzed the widowhood-social position in family and society. The study was made in Jaipur City, Rajasthan. The number of widows interviewed for this study were 190. Interview schedule was used for collecting data from the respondents. The study was focused on Hindu widows. Coefficient tests and Chi-square tests were used for the analysis of data. He found that the mean age of becoming widow was 33.2 years in Jaipur City in comparison to the average age of 36.2 years of widowhood at the national level. The mean period of living with the husband was 17.5 years. The mean period of leading the life of widowhood was 15.9 years at the time of interview.\textsuperscript{79}

2.2.2. Nature of Household

H. V. Nagesh and A. P. Katti had made a study on the Socio-Economic Status of Widows in Hubli City and 8 villages from Dharwad taluk. 167 widows (50 from urban and 117 from rural areas) were covered in this study. Structured questionnaire was used for collecting data from the respondents. The descriptive percentage method was used for analysis. The study reported that about 30% of the rural and 10% of the urban widows were living with their parents.\textsuperscript{80}
Martha Alter Chen and Jean Dreze had made a study on widowhood and their well-being in North India. The study was conducted in Palanpur, Uttar Pradesh during the year 1992. The number of widows interviewed was 262. Percentage method was used for analysis of data. According to the study, the proportion of widows who lived in households headed by themselves or by one of their sons was over 80 percent. The vast majority of these households were of three types-nuclear household (widows living with their unmarried children), filial household (defined as household consisting of a widow, at least one of her married sons, and possibly other persons), and very few widows lived with their in-laws, daughters, parents, brothers etc.⁸¹

Jeuti Barooach had made a study on single woman in Assamese Hindu society covering the area of Guwahati comprising of working widows, divorcees and unmarried women. 110 single women (40 widows, 30 divorcees and 40 unmarried) were covered in this study. Structured questionnaire was used for collecting data from the respondents. The descriptive percentage method was used for the analysis.

The study reported that 28.2% of widows belonged to denuded nuclear families. 21.8% of them were belonged to joint families and 8.2% belonged to extended families.⁸²
2.2.3. Dependency


In her study Godavari D. Patil (2000) found that 8 percent of the urban sample widows were dependent due to inability to earn against 32.67 percent of the rural respondents.\(^8^3\)

Mukesh Ahuja, in his study (1996), found that out of 190 respondents, 48.4 percent respondents were depending on children, 28.4 percent were depending on in-laws and children, 11.4 percent were on in-laws, 6.8 percent living alone, 3.7 percent on parents and 1.6 percent on brothers.\(^8^4\)

2.2.4. Social Stigma and Social Exclusion

Godavari D. Patil, in her study (2000) had analyzed the social stigma and the social exclusion of the widows. She found that after widowhood 61 percent of the urban and 76 percent of the rural respondents were wearing simple clothes. Change in the food habit was noticed after widowhood among 66 percent of the urban respondents and 78 percent of the rural respondents.

The Sowbhagya Tilak like 'Kum Kum', 'Mangalsutra' and 'flowers' were not worn by a majority of widows. Most of the widows did not attend marriage ceremonies both in rural and urban areas.\(^8^5\) The study, made by Martha Alter
Chen and Jean Dreze (1992) reported that widows had very little freedom to return to their parental home. They were expected to remain in their husband's village. It was also pointed out that widows faced severe employment restrictions due to gender divisions of labour.86

In the study made by Krishnakumari (1987) working widows preferred to attend religious functions rather than social functions because of ill-treatment and lack of respect in the latter. Among the non-working widows many of them did not like to attend both religious as well as social functions.87

H. V. Nagesh and A.P. Katti, in their study (1997) observed that the participation of women in religious activities had decreased after widowhood in rural areas from 97 percent to 43 percent and in urban areas from 64 percent to 58 percent.88

T.N. Kitchulu noticed, in his study (1982) that after widowhood there were drastic changes in the life style of women. About 62 percent of the widows had undergone change in dress and they were not allowed to use kum kum or Sindhur and 28 percent of the widows had to change to simple diet after widowhood.89

2.2.5. Decision-making

In his study, on Hindu widows (A Study of Deprivation) in Dharwad District, Karnataka, Godavari D. Patil (2000) had analyzed the decisions taken by the widows in urban and rural areas. He found that about 30.6 percent of
the urban and 54 percent of the rural respondents consulted their relatives. About 12.87 percent of the urban and 4.67 percent of the rural respondents consulted their adult children.90

In the study made on 'Widows-Role Adjustment and Violence', (1996), Mukesh Ahuja reported that 44.4 percent of the respondents were never consulted by their sons, daughters, in-laws on important issues or even in giving gifts to others or selling and buying things.91

Krishnakumari, in her study on Spinsters, Widows, Divorced, Separated Women in Bangalore city, (1987) pointed out that the majority of non-working widows felt handicapped while taking decisions regarding the education and the marriage of their children. 26 percent of the respondents reported that they missed the friendship, emotional warmth and moral support provided by their husbands at times of distress.92

2.2.6. Economic Status

T.N. Kitchulu, in his study on the Socio-Economic Condition of Widows in the Union Territory - Delhi (1982), reported that about 78.48 percent of the widows started working after widowhood due to economic necessity. Among rural, widows 33 percent faced the problem of getting jobs in comparison with 14.29 percent urban widows. Almost all widows had faced two big problems viz., (i) money and (ii) finding a job because of the
inexperience in dealing with financial matters and due to lack of occupational skills.⁹³

On the other hand, N.S. Krishnakumari, in her study on Spinsters, Wiows, Divorced Separated Women in Bangalore city, (1987), reported that a majority of 56 percent of the respondents belonging to the working category had joined the work force after the death of their husbands and therefore they were solely dependent on their own income for their livelihood and for the maintenance of their families unlike non-working widows whose major sources of income was that of their children, husband’s pension and a combination of these two.⁹⁴

In his study on the Hindu Widows (A Study of Deprivation) in Dharward district (2000 ), Godavari D. Patil pointed out that both urban and rural widows irrespective of their castes, had started working after widowhood due to sheer economic necessity. It was found that a little over half of them (25.67%) started working. It is also significant to note that a greater number of urban widows (16%) as compared to the rural widows (12%) started working after becoming widows. In both urban and rural areas, a majority of widows (46.67%) are helped by their parents/brothers in getting employment, and about 40.74% of the urban widows, as against 66.67% of their rural counterparts faced problems in getting jobs due to lack of proper education. It is also interesting to note that among working widows a significant majority of those based in rural areas (87.33%) are not satisfied with their present employment.
The figure is much higher than that of urban widows. About 44.87% of the total working widows have mentioned low emoluments, as a reason for their dissatisfaction. In support of the above-mentioned fact, it may also be stated that in urban area 42.67% of the widows fell in the low income group.⁹⁵

Martha Alter Chen and Jean Dreze, in their study (1992), reported that the labour force participation rates of widows in India tend to be a little higher than those of married women of the same age. Because widows tend to be concentrated in the older age groups, their average labour force participation rate is lower than that of married women. When widows do participate in salaried work, it is mainly in the form of part-time, low paid employment in institutions such as village balwadis. The extent of remunerative self-employment among widows living in households without an adult male turns out to be strikingly restricted. This finding, which confirms the results of an earlier study of North Indian widows (Dreze, 1990), illustrates the employment restrictions that result from the gender division of labour and related social norms as well as from the disadvantages that widows face as participants in the rural economy.⁹⁶

The study (1987) made by H.V. Nagesh and A.P. Katti, reported that the average size of household among total respondents was 3.3 at the time of study. In the rural area, it was 4.6 and in the urban area 3.7 on an average; 1.4 (urban) and 1.1 (rural) members in the households were working. This might have naturally caused economic hardship to the households of the widows.
The average annual individual income was Rs.649 at the time of widowhood and it went up to Rs.877 at the time of studying in rural area and in urban area it went up to Rs.1041 from Rs.506. It indicated that the respondents were not economically active, generally when their husbands were living, but they have been forced to take some job after they lost their husbands.

Some of the respondents, who were not working when their husbands were alive, were forced to work after the death of their working partners. The proportion increased to 14.5% from 1.2% in rural areas. In the urban areas, the proportion of respondents being economically active increased in each category of workers.

About 50% of the rural respondents and 60% of the urban respondents reported that there was no change in their consumption even after they lost their husbands. 50% of the rural and 34% of the urban respondents reported that the position in respect of consumption of food was worse after widowhood. 4% of the urban respondents pointed out that they were in a better position in respect of food consumption after widowhood.

About 68% of the rural and 94% of the urban respondents had developed a sense of insecurity after they lost their husbands. It appears that widows felt insecure mostly because (i) rural widows suffered the loss of income due to the demise of the bread winner and (ii) urban respondents
suffered from the absence of anyone who can give shelter and support during widowhood.97

2.2.7. Social Status

T. Rajaretnam and E. Gandhi had made a study on socio-economic and demographic aspects of widowhood in Athoor and Batlagundu blocks in Tamil Nadu. The number of samples covered by the study was 1027 widows in Athoor block and 977 in Batlagundu blocks. Interview schedule was used for the collection of data. The collected data was analysed by using simple descriptive percentages. It was found that elderly widows aged 50 and above were mostly illiterate.98

H. V. Nagesh and A. P. Katti (1987), in their study reported, that the average size of the household among total respondents was 3.3 at the time of study. In the rural areas, it was 4.6 and in the urban areas it was 3.7.

About 79% of the rural respondents and 58% of the urban respondents were illiterate. 4% of the rural and 1% of the urban respondents had studied between seventh standard and Matriculation. Educational attainment of the urban respondents was slightly better than that of rural respondents.

In the rural areas, respondents had, on an average, 2.5 children at the time of widowhood and 2.5 children in urban areas.
Most of the respondents had to face many problems like food, shelter, clothing, education and marriage of their children, loss of status etc. Only 10% of the rural and 2% of the urban respondents reported that they did not face any serious problems.

About 78% of the rural and 72% of the urban respondents had received some help from certain sources mainly relatives and friends.

G.D. Patil (2000), in his study reported, that the level of illiteracy is higher among the rural children than the urban children. A greater number of the rural widows were saddled with dependent children than the urban widows. Widows received further financial support from unmarried children rather than the married ones.

About 66.67% of the urban widows take care of their children than the 56% of the rural widows. Of the total widows, 71% stated that their children seek advice from them sometimes, if not often.

The frequency of visits between friends was greater before widowhood than after widowhood. Over 90% of the widows do not use 'Sowbhagya Tilak' on their forehead. Over half of them have not attended socio-religious functions because they do not feel like doing so but send their children instead.

Regarding the status of widows in Hindu society, about 63.33% of the urban widows in Hindu society, in comparison to 42% of the rural widows,
have stated their status is inferior. About 25% of them held religious conventions as responsible factors for their inferior status. About 29.33% of the urban widows and 36.67% of the rural widows have said preference in employment will improve widow's economic status. About 67% of the widows have preferred to live in the joint family with sons, because they need money and protection. 100

The study made by Krishnakumari (1987), reported, that 79%- of the working widows held a very low status in society in their caste or community. Only 14% opined that they were accorded equal treatment with other married women. 5% reported sympathetic treatment from their caste people, 2% were unable to decide the status ascribed to them.

A vast majority of non-working widows (87%) claim that they have a low status in their caste and community. 11% of non-working widows reported an equal status with other married women, the remaining 2% of the respondents received sympathetic treatment from their caste. 101

T.N. Kitchulu, in his study, 'Widows in India', reported that a majority of Hindus considered performing all the customary ceremonies on a widow essential as these were prescribed by the social customs (breaking of bangles, removal of married signs, serving food to Brahmins etc). 102
2.2.8. Re-marriage of Widows

In the study 'A Socio-Economic Study of Widows in Northern Karnataka' H.V. Nagesh and A.P. Katti (1988) reported that 47% of rural and 64% of urban respondents would approve of re-marriage of other widows. The remarriage of 43% of the rural widows was not approved by elders from husband's side and 72% of rural widows said that elders from father's side did not approve of re-marriage. In urban areas 16% approved re-marriage from husband's relatives and 24% of urban widows reported that relatives of father approved re-marriage. 58% of the urban respondents felt that children will be neglected and they will not tolerate re-marriage. A few were afraid of society, custom and other things.103

Godavari D. Patil (2000) reported that 80% of widows favoured widow re-marriage and 39.32% stated one year as the ideal gap between widowhood and re-marriage. 39.08% of the respondents hold the opinion that young widows should re-marry and 81.67% of them accept re-married widows. 46.34% of the respondents have opined that it would be difficult for a married woman to adjust to a second marriage. The widow's disapproval of re-marriage clearly pointed out that religious and social sanction for re-marriage were lacking.104

Krishnakumari in her study (1987) "Status of single Woman in India" (1987), reported that 32% of non-working widows and 18% of working widows have positive attitude not only if the widow is young and childless but
also in other instances. Instances of widow re-marriage in the family were unknown in the majority of both the working and non-working widows' families.

It is noted that a higher proportion of non-working widows advocate re-marriage than those who would actually consider it for themselves, if an occasion arose. The consistency in attitude and action seems to be more among working widows than among non-working widows. This may be due to their being practical in view of a society which does not advocate re-marriage. Only 3 to 6% cases (Bangalore) are willing to re-marry.¹⁰⁵ In her study "Socio-Economic Psychiatric Study of Widows" in two districts of Ambala Division, Sandhiya (1994) reported that only a very few cases encouraged re-marriage. They advocated re-marriage of young widows without issue.¹⁰⁶

2.2.9. Conclusion

The review of the above studies reveal that the present study, on the socio-economic status of Hindu Naidu widows—a three generation study, is different from them both in content and dimension. The present study is confined to a community which has been declared 'forward' both socially and economically. The study relates to three generation of widows-young, middle-aged and old. It is possible to identify the changes that have occurred on the socio-economic status of Hindu Naidu widows over a period of time. The methods adopted for the present study is presented in the Fifth Chapter.
REFERENCES


38. Muhesh Ahuja, Op cit, p.59-64.


57. Manusmriti, IX, 13, p.27.


