

# Condition of Widowhood from the Age of Sangam to the Modern Day

P.Kalpana<sup>1</sup>, A.Amirthavalli<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> P.G and Research Department of History.  
D.K.M College For Women (Autonomous)  
Vellore – 632001.Tamilnadu, India

**Abstract :** *In the early days Tamilnadu had three sangams namely Thalai Sangam, Idai Sangam and Kadai Sangam which promoted the Tamil Literature. The Thalai Sangam was flourished in Southern Part of Madurai, Idai Sangam in Kabada Puram and Kadai Sangam at the present day Madurai. A brief note on the position of widowhood during this time is given below.*

**IndexTerms –** Sangam age, Modern age, Widowhood, Child marriage.

## I. INTRODUCTION

### SANGAM

During this period more number of Literary of Literary works were carried and gave an impetus to the literature. Sangam means a co-operative union of poets. The term ‘Sangam’ comes from North India. At first this term was know only during the 7<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. through the songs of Appar in his Devaram. Pandiyan rulers contributed much towards the Development of Tamil Literature.

### WIDOWHOOD:

Women who lot their husbands are called Widows and their life was so miserable and they were asked to kill themselves in the funeral pyre of their husbands. They were also called as Kalikala Mahalir and they were asked sleep on the floor and they ate only the soaked rice. They were forbidden to take ghee and took bath only in cold water. Beyond that it is an inauspicious sign if a widow comes on some others way and were not allowed to take part in auspicious occasions like marriage, christening of the child etc. she was very much illtreated in the society and was branched as ‘Mundachi’.

Weaving was a cottage industry during this time and every household will indulge in this work. That is the only profession for the widows. They produced cloths using cotton, silk, and from the hairs of rats ,etc.

Window women have to go on fasting, sati (killing them in the funeral pyre) and pray to god to marry their husbands in the next generation. They tonsured their head and removed their eye brows in order to not to attract anyone.

### CHILD MARRIAGE

Girls who attained a five years of age were forcibly married which was a practice during this time. If her husband passes away she was also treated as a window. The rest of her life she will be treated as window. Sometimes there are incidences of sexual harassment. Most of the girls who became widow were appointed to mental jobs and as house maids.

For example in the Book called ‘Silappadhikaram’, Kovalan got married to Kannagi at the age of 16 and when she was only 12. Megasthenes India refers this incident.

It is pathetic to note that in India there were about 2,68,34,838 widows living, out of which 2,02,18,780 were Hindu widows. The remaining were Muslims, Christians, Buddhists. It is to be noted that widows in India from the age of 1 to 15 were widows more total 396556 and Hindu alone constituted 329079.

### MODERN PERIOD

It was only after the British period there was a dramatic change in the life of women. They fostered women education and emancipation of women saw a flip.

Widowhood is one of the serious problems in our society. This problem has been ignored for long and society had become immune to such problems. These ar5e women who perhaps had led a comfortable life of had some security during the life time of their husbands. All of a sudden they had become lonely, insecure and rudderless.

Most of the widow face many problems like food, shelter, clothing, education and marriage of their children loss of status etc. The widow who are young face problem from anti – society elements and lack adequate emotional and social care.

### POSITION OF WOMEN

The education gave Indian women a chance to grow and their life style started changing. They enjoyed freedom of education and employed themselves in various industries. The women have enjoyed this freedom and freedom and were making love with men folks and got married to the ones they love. In case of a failure they seldom returned to their homes but they took refuge in the women’s hostels.

### WIDOWHOOD IN MODERN PERIOD

The position of widows has gained a support both from the family and from the society. They worked in various sectors and lived a life equivalent to other women like wearing jewels, dresses unlike the past. They were supported by their parents ad nowadays they even go for remarriage. The society also support this cause and even the government passes bills to this effect.

Vivekanander once said the God which wipes the tears of widow is not a god and if He never feed the orphan children is not a god . The great poet Bharathi said a widow must have the guts to remarry and must have the courage equivalent to men.

Now a days widows remarry and improve their lot by I indulge I job, education and grew equal to men. Child marriage is not being practiced and parents have given them good education although some parents uneducated.

### TODAY CHILD MARRIAGE

Nowadays, Child Marriage is not common. Except few places, child marriage is not seen everywhere. Child marriage is banned by the government. Those who do not follow this rule, will be punished. Children need education about it, so parents come forward to educate them.

### CONCLUSION

During Sangam Age the position of women was very miserable and they are treated as slaves and have faced innumerable tortures. As time passes by there are changes took place in the condition of women. Now they are give education, trouble free environment in work place, no more child marriage was not being carried because of the bills passed by the government. There is a tremendous growth and the emancipation of women in every aspect of Life.

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