



# A Study on Socio-economic Living Conditions of Widows with Special Reference to Kallikkad, Palakkad

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## Abstract

The present study focuses the socio economic living conditions of widows;-the problems faced by widows and the factors responsible for her predicament and the manner in which they should attempt to overcome in Kallikkad area. This study also tries to find out the consequence caused by various kinds of deprivation to the widow herself, her family and to society in general. Widowhood provides us not only with the adequate understanding of the magnitude of the problems and its prospects in future, but also deals with the various ramifications and implications of widowhood and the state of deprivation faced by them. So far most of the studies undertaken have examined only the socio-economic aspect of the problem. Hence, this study makes an attempt to understand the sociological implications of widowhood, particularly the deprivation faced by a widow in the economic, social psychological and cultural sphere.

## Keywords

Widowhood; Socio-economic; Problem; Mental support

## 1. Introduction

Social norms and taboos consign the unfortunate widows to a very disadvantaged position. They are considered as a bad omen and inauspicious and thereby restricted in their socio-religious functions [1-2]. Widows who are young, poor and uneducated face more problems. Thus, when the position of widows is deplorable, the condition of Hindu Widows who are governed by the age old oppressive and rigid customs is, indeed, lamentable [3]. The position of the Hindu widow is miserable and her lot is unenviable [4]. As a concept, the term social refers among other things to: attitudes, orientations, or behaviours which take the interests, intentions, or needs of other people into account (in contrast to anti-social behaviour). Related to the way people live together or to the rank a person has in a society. It can also be defined through use of statistics involving unemployment rates, stock market data, and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) information among other metrics. "Living conditions" refers to the circumstances of a person's life-shelter, food, clothing, safety, access to clean water, and such. An alternative definition might be "conditions for life,"

which refers to circumstances needed for physical or biological life to exist-water, energy, a suitable environment, and such.

## 2. Objectives of the study

To understand the sufferings, problems and struggles of widows in Kallikkad.

To find out some remedies and possible solution for widow's problems

To improve the socio- economic living condition with the help of different services from Family Counselling Centre and People Service Society, Palakkad.

## 3. Methodology

Descriptive method of research is used for the study. Descriptive design can be explained as a statement of affairs as they are at present with the researcher having no control over variable. The universe of the study is widows from Kallikkad area.

A probability sampling method is any method of sampling that utilises some form of random selection. In order to have a random selection method the researcher setup some process or procedure that assures that the different units in the population have equal probabilities of being chosen. The descriptive research design was used in this study to document the result. The researcher planned to collect data through structured questionnaire interview schedule, the tool prepared on the basis of objective.

In the Family Counselling Centre under Social Service League, Mercy College Palakkad has been reaching out to ward number 47 Palakkad Municipality. Based on the availability of the widows during the day time in their residence, data were collected from 60 widows by adopting a convenient sampling method.

The collected data was coded and edited. The edited data was entered in to excel and tabulated on the basis of relevance and characteristics of variables. The data analysis was done using simple and descriptive statistical method. Interpretation was made on the basis of this and the major findings arrived at finally.

## 4. Findings

- Majority (60%) of the respondents got high school level education. Only (5%) of the respondents got above higher secondary level education.
- A vast majority (90%) of the respondents have vehicles and minority (10%) of the respondents have no vehicles.
- Nearly half 40% of the respondents are included in 40-50 age group. 11% of the respondents are included in 30-40 groups.

- Nearly half (40%) of the respondents are included in nuclear family. Only (21%) of the respondents are included in joint family.
- High majority (80%) of the respondents belong to below poverty line. Only (20%) of the respondents come under APL.
- Around 31% of the respondents income level is below 1000. Only (3%) of the respondents income level is nearly and above (20000) group.
- A vast majority (85%) of the selected respondents fell in the Hindu category. Only (7%) of the respondents belonged to the Christian category.
- More than half (59%) of the respondents belonging to OBC. Only (5%) of the respondents come under general category.
- Majority (81.67%) of the respondents come under the extend of land above 1-5 cents. Only others come under between (11-20) cents and some between (21-50) cents.
- A vast majority (88%) of the respondents have their own houses. Around (0.6%) of the respondents stay in others' house. Only (5%) of the respondents live in rented house.
- Majority of (63.3%) of the respondents staying in tiled houses. None of the widows stayed in thatched and combined type of house.
- All (100%) of respondents who have current supply in their houses.
- None of the respondents used solar energy in their houses
- Majority (62%) of the respondents used gas and only 38% of the respondents used firewood in their house.
- A vast majority (90%) of the respondents have vehicles and (10%) of the respondents had no vehicles.
- More than half 55% have metal road service. Nearly half 41% of the respondents have tar road service.
- Widows are of varied ages ranging from less than 25 years to middle age. It needs the attention that nearly 50% of the women have become widows before attaining middle age.
- A vast majority (85%) of respondents faced financial issues. Only 15% of the respondents have no financial issues.
- High majority (86%) of the respondents have no impairment or disabilities. Only (13%) of the respondents have impairment.
- Majority (60%) of the respondents are daily labours. Around 36% of the respondents are agricultural workers. Only (3%) of the respondents have government jobs.
- Majority (67%) of the respondents due to their age are not interested to do self employment
- Majority (67%) of the respondents need financial support. Eighteen percentage of the respondents want treatment support. Minority (3%) of the respondents have no problems.
- Around (20%) of the respondents have children between (3-4) category. Only (5%) of the respondents have children above 5 numbers.

- Majority (68%) of the respondents have no problem related to their children. Minority (31%) of the respondents have problems related with children.
- Majority (61%) of the respondents have occupation. Only (38.5%) of the respondents has no occupation.
- Majority 75% of the respondents are facing sexual harassment. Only 25% of respondents are not facing sexual harassments.
- There is a relationship between caste and widowhood proportionately the number of widows in the traditional lower caste more than traditional higher caste.
- Illiterates and primary level educated widows do not use education to improve their life style. There is a relationship between education, economic status and widowhood. Those who finished high school and graduates improved their education after the death of their husbands.
- There is a close relationship between the physical surroundings and the mental state of affairs.
- Widows felt helplessness after the death of their husband if they were too dependent.
- Family members can play a vital role in bringing the widows back to normal life.
- Majority 70% did have not increased in income level after becoming a widow. Only 30% respondents have increased their income level after becoming widows.

Table 1 and the corresponding bar diagram (Figure 1) show the kind of support widows need as a widow

**Table 1 Kind of support widows need as a widow**

Sl No	Kind of support	Frequency	Percentage
1	Financial	19	31.67
2	Treatment	11	18.33
3	Education	1	1.67
4	Residence	18	30
5	Marriage and children	3	5
6	Widow	3	5
7	Self employment	3	5
8	Nothing	2	3.33
	Total	60	100

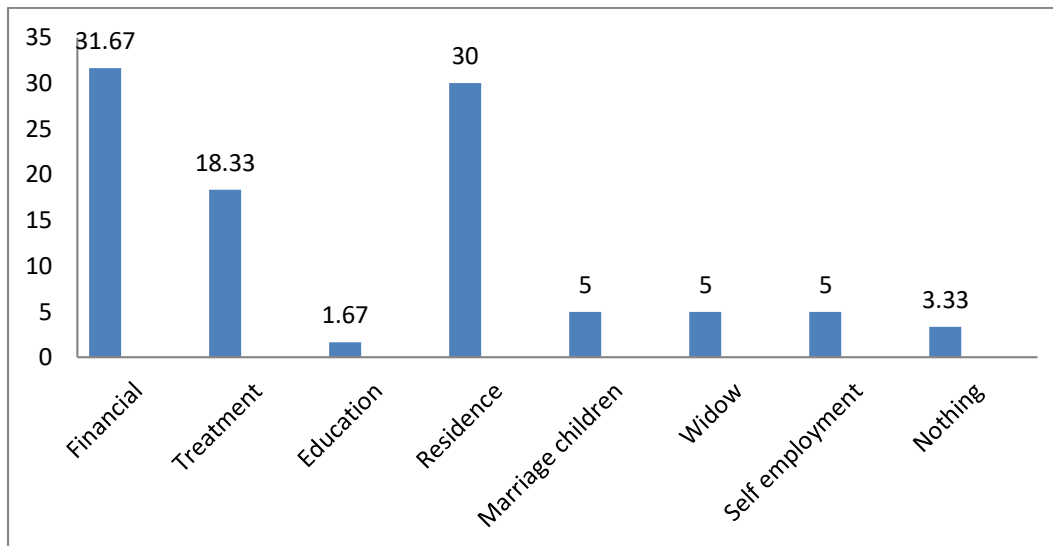


Figure 1 Bar diagram of the kind of support widows required as a widow

## 5. Suggestions

- Widows are very conscious about the attitude of society towards them.
- Almost all the young widows are interested in taking up some work if they are given an opportunity.
- As the rural widows prefer self employment they can be engaged so.
- Government and NGOs together can arrange a few courses on self employment on the basis of need, requirement and resources available in the area.
- As there is a close relationship between the socio economic background of the widows and the consequences of widowhood it is imperative to raise the standard of living of the widows
- The government and other agencies should come forward to evolve a methodology to register under the issues of widows.
- Counselling Centres may be made available for the widows
- Widows may be given proper social education to face the life situations.
- The attitude towards the widows should be the same as the attitude towards normal individuals.
- Ignorant widows should be given extra care.
- Counselling Centres are to be open to solve the problems of widows.
- Counselling Centres can teach the widows on the available opportunities for the widows in government and other agencies.

## 6. Conclusion

The problem of the widowhood needs considerable attention. The needs of the widows can be differentiated as mental, physical, social, emotional, and psychological support. Voluntary organisation should start free counselling facilities for the widows who are weak psychologically and emotionally. There should be consistent efforts to reduce alienation due to powerlessness, meaninglessness, cultural, social and work estrangement of the widows. Social security should be provided to the widows who have given service to the family without any remuneration in the form of money and this is the crying need. There should be meaningful roles for widows who are hale and hearty. They should be provided with work so that they can

feel that they are still economically, emotionally and socially useful citizens. It is recommended that continuing education and multi-skill development programmes for widows. Widow help centres should also be established. In order to help widows, it is necessary to institute widow relief fund even at ward levels. Ideally such funds should be established by the society alternatively such funds should be established by the government. Relief through such funds should be granted only to those who have no means to survive. Finally, social movements should be initiated and strengthened to rehabilitate the widows in the social structure and dignity and honour be restored. The movement could also be strengthened through the educational system and counselling centres.

## References

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