



Widowhood: An identity not chosen
A study of social background of Roman Catholic Young Widows of Goa

JESSY CRASTO COUTINHO, Asst. Prof. & Research Scholar,
M.E.S. College of Arts and Commerce, Zuarinagar, Goa, India

ORIGINAL ARTICLE



Corresponding Author :
Jessy Crasto Coutinho,
Asst. Prof. & Research Scholar,
M.E.S. College of Arts and Commerce,
Zuarinagar, Goa, India

shodhsamagam1@gmail.com

Received on : 04/09/2019
Revised on : -----
Accepted on : 07/09/2019
Plagiarism : 09% on 04/09/2019



Plagiarism Checker X Originality Report

Similarity Found: 9%

Date: Wednesday, September 04, 2019

Statistics: 150 words Plagiarized / 1686 Total words

Remarks: Low Plagiarism Detected - Your Document needs Optional Improvement.

Widowhood: An identity not chosen A study of social background of Roman Catholic Young Widows of Goa Asst Prof Jessy Crasto Coutinho, Research Scholar, Research centre of M.E.S College of Arts and Commerce, Zuarinagar - Goa Abstract: A widow is a

Abstract :-

A widow is a woman whose spouse (husband) has died. A man whose spouse has died is a widower. The state of having lost one's spouse to death is termed widowhood. While we all know that death is inevitable and unpredictable yet we find this category of woman termed 'widows' very often becoming the victims and cause of the husband death. The core of my paper is the extent of widowhood and socio – demographic profile of young widows in Salcete taluka of South Goa. The focus of study is on young catholic widows between the age of 25 years to 40 years at the time of spousal death and on widows with children.

Keywords :-

Widowhood, Bereavement, Social construction, Identity.

Introduction :-

Widowhood is the change in the marital status of a woman brought about by the death of the spouse in a marital relationship and which necessitates the establishment of new relationship. Widowhood is a very stressful situation as it brings about socio-economic, cultural, emotional and psychological deprivation.

As per Global Widows Report, 2015 at least 245 million women around the world have been widowed and more than 115 million of them live in devastating poverty. In recent

years, there is a huge increase in the number of widows in India. As per Census Department, India's population in 2011 was 121 Crore and out of this 4.6% are widowed; with women outnumbering men.

Widowhood comes with lot of implications and restrictions. In some cultures there are elaborate ceremony during the funeral of a widows husband, including breaking glass bangles on the husbands coffin as it exists (although a small percentage now) among Christian communities in Goa too.

There are a number of mourning rites and rituals associative with widowhood such restrictions on the woman's dress code, her behaviour, her social life, and many others. A definite period of mourning and ways of mourning are also prescribed and reinforced by the society.

Young widows grieve both the loss of a companion and the death of their dreams. Again, the period of grief and loneliness is longer as compared to widowhood in later life. They also grieve for the loss of their identity as a married individual, their goals and the futures that were jointly held with the deceased (e.g. raising children, growing old together, or retiring together).

The death of the husband is a source of stress requiring major readjustment than any other event in life. The pain of bereavement (grief) itself is the first stress that a widow face. A sense of futility and suspicion that nothing in life is worthwhile, an inability to sleep and a need to blame her fate are found common among the widows.

The unique experience of young widowhood deserves to be explored so that this population that has been relatively overlooked can be offered opportunities to be heard and advocated for.

Goa is one of the states which has a catholic population of 25.05% as per Population Census 2011. This study highlights the social background of Roman Catholic Young Widows of Salcete Taluka of South Goa .

Objective :-

- To find out the extent of young widowhood in the Salcete Taluka of South Goa
- To examine the socio-economic background of the respondents

Methodology :-

Research setting :-

The Study is based in Salcete taluka of south Goa. The respondents are young catholic widows between the age group of 25 years to 45 years during spousal death.

Sampling Frame :-

A multistage sampling strategy was adopted. The first stage was to identify catholic population of Goa, then population of South Goa and North Goa was identified, finally the salcete talukas was chosen through purposive sampling as it consists of a high catholic population.

Sample Size :-

The universe of the study constituted of 20 respondents residing in 11 villages of Salcete taluka.

Data Collection Procedure :-

The primary data of this research was collected through a Structured Questionnaire which was personally administered and filled in by the researcher.

A total of 20 young catholic widows were selected from South Goa District. The taluka of Salcete is the most densely populated and has a high Christian population (294,464) as per Population census 2011. The method of identifying respondents was through Snowball Sampling Technique. It consists of Navelim, Velim, Chinchinim, Borda, Curtorim, Margao, Majord and Benaulim, chandor, Nuvem, Assolna, Betul, varca, cavelossim, Mobar, Utorda, Seraulim, Sarzora, Aquem to name a few. For this study 11 villages were selected. In this study working and non working widows, educated and less educated widows, and urban and rural widows were represented.

TABLE 1.1
Age Composition of Respondents Widows

Sr. No	Age group	Total	Percentage
1	25-30	2	10%
2	31-35	3	15%
3	36-40	6	30%
4	41-45	9	45%
	Total	20	100%

Analysis :-

The distribution of respondent widow indicates that 45% were from age group 41 to 45 years, followed by 30% in age group 36 – 40 years, 15% in age group 31 – 35 years while the rest 10% were from 25 to 30 years. Most of the widows are from the age group of 41-45 this is also because normally the husband is always older than the women.

TABLE 1.2
Name of the Village

Sr. No	Name of the selected villages in Salcete Taluka	Total	Percentage
1.	Majorda	01	05%
2.	Velim	02	10%
3.	Navelim	05	25%
4.	Benaulim	02	10%
5.	Varca	02	10%
6.	Chinchinim	02	10%
7.	Curtorim	01	05%
8.	Velsao	02	10%
9.	Borda	01	05%
10.	Cuncolim	02	10%
	Total	20	100%

Analysis :-

The survey indicates that the highest percentage of respondents widow is found in village of Navelim. This village has a total catholic population of 45.44% as per Navelim Population Census 2011 – 2019

TABLE 1.3
Education of the widow

Sr.No	Education of the widow	Total	Percentage
1	Uneducated	1	5%
2	Primary	1	5%
3	Secondary	7	35%
4	Higher secondary	3	15%
5	Graduated	8	40%
6	Others specify	0	00%
	Total	20	100%

Analysis :-

In Table 1.3 it is interesting to note that 40% widowed women are graduates, followed by 35% upto secondary school ,15% upto higher secondary and 5% each in primary and uneducated category. The Female literacy rate is 84.66% in Goa as per 2011 population census.

Table 1.4
Education of the husband

Sr.No.	Education of the Husband	Total	Percentage
1	Uneducated	1	5%
2	Primary	1	5%
3	Secondary	12	60%
4	Higher secondary	3	15%
5	Graduate	3	15%
	Total	20	100%

Analysis:-

The Overall literacy rate of Goa is 88.7%. While male literacy rate is 92.65%. This explains that 60% of the husband studied up to 12th std followed by 15 % each in graduate and Higher secondary category, while 5 % each in primary and uneducated category.

Table 1.5
Place of work of the husband

Sr.No.	Working	Total	Percentage
1	India	9	45%
2	Gulf	4	20%
3	Ship	6	30%
4	Others	1	5%
	Total	20	100%

Analysis :-

Goa is known for its migration of men overseas mostly on Cruise ship and in the gulf countries. A survey shows 30% of the husband worked on ship, with 20% working in Gulf region, while a big number 45% are employed in India and 5% in Europe and USA. While the 5% comes from the group of uneducated there by taking up unskilled jobs on daily wages.

Table 1.6
No. of children

Sr.no	No. of children	Total	Percentage
1	Nil	1	5%
2	1	7	35%
3	2	11	55%
4	3	1	5%
	Total	20	100%

Analysis :-

The focus of my study is on young widows with children. In above table we see 55% having 2 children, followed by 35% having one child, 5% no children and another 5% having 3 children.

Table 1.7
Duration of widowhood

Sr. No	Duration of widowhood	Total	Percentage
1	0-5	10	50%
2	6-10	4	20%
3	11-15	4	20%
4	16-20	2	10%
	Total	20	100%

Analysis :-

One of the chief characteristics is the duration of widowhood. The above Table no 1.7 shows 50% are widowed last five years, as of 2014. while 20% f between 6 to10 years, 20% between 11-15 years, and 10% between 16 – 20 years.

Conclusions :-

The above findings infer that the extent of widowhood among young catholic widows of salcete taluka of south Goa is relatively high. And examination of the socio- demographic profile highlights the needs to empower women through education and employment. With respect to literacy, female literacy rate in Goa is very favourable that is 84.66%. Further the Uniform Civil Code of Goa guarantees gender equality. However, there are great variation in the life of an Indian widow depending on the state, caste, economic status, education, whether the family is rural or urban and social level. But irrespective of all these factors it is up to the society to change their mindset about this category of women and accommodate them in the main stream of society.

References :-

1. Barik, S. (2009). *India's Widows*. New Delhi: Adhyayan Publishers and Distributors.
2. Dandvate, P., Kumari, R., & Verghese, J. (1989). *Widow, Abandoned and Destitutes Women in India*. New Delhi: Radiant Publishers.
3. DR, S. (1990). *Widowhood a Socio-Psychiatric Study*. Delhi: Mohit Publishers.
4. Gini, E. C. (2012). *Living Death: Trauma of Widowhood in India*. New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House.
5. Glenn, & M.Vernon. (1970). *Sociology of Death and Analysis of Death Related Behaviour*. New York: The Ronal Press Company.
6. Gray, P. D. (2007). *Organising Identity*. Hyderabad : Sage Publications.
7. Kakar, S. (1979). *Identity and Adulthood* . New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
8. N.S, K. (1987). *Status of Single Women in India*. New Delhi: Uppal Publishing House.
9. Pathak, B., & Satyenda, T. (2016). *Widows in India: Study of Varanasi and Vrindavan*. New Delhi: Rawat Publications 2016.
10. Singh, D. V. (2009). *Parent-Child Relationship and Intelligence Level of Children of Single Parent* . Satyam Publishing House.
11. Sreenivas, M. (2009). *Wives, Widows and Concubines: The Conjugal Family Idea in Colonial India*. Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan Private Limited.
