

Socio- Economic and Psychological Problems of

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Widowhood: A Case Study of Dhoke Hassue,

District Rawalpindi



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DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

QUAID-E-AZAM UNIVERSITY

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**Socio- Economic and Psychological Problems of  
Widowhood: A Case Study of Dhoke Hassue,  
District Rawalpindi**



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Islamabad, in partial of Master of Philosophy in Anthropology

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QUAID-E-AZAM UNIVERSITY  
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Asma Farheen

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**Dedicated to**

Shamil, Hussain and Javed

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## Chapter 1

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### 1.1: Introduction:

Widowhood changes the social and economic status of women all over the world. After the death of a woman's husband, her status changes from that of a wife to a widow and thus her material status also changes from the central position of a wife to the marginal position of a widow. From the central position of controlling a household, she is forcefully marginalized by society to wait for her death. In a patriarchal society a widow is supposed to live physically but socially she is dead. Poverty, illiteracy and the feeling of homelessness force her to accept poorly paid jobs or to become a tool in the hands of the exploiters.

As soon as a woman becomes a widow, it is not only the loss of her late husband that troubles her but also her multidimensional issues, including socio-economic problems and physical insecurity, that lead her towards psychological depression. Her financial security does not automatically lead to her empowerment and although finance is a major constraint, however that is not the only consideration because economic assistance does not, necessarily, improve her status. Some of the major factors that expose her to a disadvantaged position are ignorance, powerlessness and vulnerability.

Pakistani societies are considered male dominated and in some of the places females are deprived of some of their rights and this becomes

worse when her status changes to a widow, then she is totally marginalized and her socio-economic role in life shrinks to the verge of nothingness. She is excluded from the family and is no longer a daughter-in-law or daughter and is not an active individual of the society and family anymore. They are only tolerated not cared for and less loved. The facts suggest that widows suffer from both economic and emotional death.

Social isolation, which is imposed on them and the emotional, economic crisis that they undergo in reorganizing their lives in order to bring change in their family positions and social relationships affect their physical and mental health. The severity of grief is greater among young widows who have short span of married life and thus have the burden of looking after their children. This results in a huge emotional and psychological stress, affecting their general status in the family and society and often is the reason of intensifying their social problems.

The research in hand focuses on the widow's socio-economic and psychological problems which are never considered important after the death of the head of the family. Society and culture impose customary practices on widows in their daily routine and marginalize them and their struggle for their identity. In this study the status of widows has not been seen just as an accidental deprivation caused by circumstances but also by constructed social practices.

The phenomenon has not been viewed just as a dissatisfaction rising out of adverse circumstances, but out of adverse social conditions and out of

the unequal status imposed by the society. The study highlights the marginalization in all its dimensions, the subtle ways by which society through a dress code, a behavior code, linguistic oppression, diet restrictions, etc., succeeds in placing widows on the periphery of society. Social discrimination, economic deprivation, psychological stress and sense of insecurity, both in widows and their children, are among the common traits of a widow's life. The end result is that this section of women is most vulnerable to abuse and violence.

Marginalization is rooted deeply in the patriarchal psyche and it is also the result of a feudal practice to keep down the claimants. Its impact differs according to culture and religion. Widowhood can affect the socio economic and psychological, physical safety, identity and mobility of widows and their children. It can also affect their access to basic goods and services, necessary for survival and their rights to inheritance, land and property.<sup>1</sup>

In patriarchal societies, especially in Pakistan, which is considered truly male dominated, women can be left entirely without social status when they lose their husbands. The death of the main bread earner can cause a breakdown in the familiar division of labor because then women take over roles which are traditionally carried out only by men. Women can face extra difficulties as heads of households if they do not have a formal

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<sup>1</sup>Giri V. Mohni (2002) *living death: Trauma of widowhood in India*. Gyan Publication House.

educational background or are being prevented from obtaining further education; this can, for example, restrict their capacity to find good jobs.

These woman-headed households are especially vulnerable to poverty because of the material status of most of the household heads, their lack of access to productive resources and income, as well as services, the decline of the traditional familial support system, size and composition of household, etc. They are also more vulnerable because they face the challenge of making market-oriented activities compatible with domestic responsibilities. With the education and training they have and their dual role as mothers and workers, the types of jobs available to them are the informal sector jobs.

And within the informal sector, there are very few options for poor women since in the cultural setting of Pakistan females are confined to jobs where sex seclusion can be assured. Since Pakistani women are trapped in a web of dependency and subordination due to their low social, economic and political status in society, their vulnerability only multiplies when they lose their life partners. They feel psychological and economic stress which leads them to immense pressure and social isolation in the society.

A widow is doubly distressed, firstly she is being victimized as a woman and secondly, after the death of her husband she is being marginalized as a widow. The tragedy of widowhood lies in the personal loss of a loved one but more so, it lies in the system that makes widows victims by

degrading their self-esteem. Despite advances in standard of living of the country, the condition of widows and divorced women remains pathetic in society. The situation is worse in developing nations like Pakistan with their unique social, cultural and economic system, which at times ignores the basic human rights of this vulnerable section of society. The fact that widowed women suffer from psychological stress is often ignored.

in various studies it has been concluded that such stresses could lead them to psychiatric illnesses e.g., depression, anxiety and hence should be taken into account by treating physicians, social workers and others who come to the aid of such women. A change in the mindset of the society is required before these women get their rightful place, for which a strong will is needed in the minds of the people and in law-governing bodies.

These woman-headed households are especially vulnerable to poverty because of the marital status of most of the household heads, their lack of access to productive resources and income as well as services, the decline of the traditional familial support system, size and composition of household, etc. They are also more vulnerable because they face the challenge of making market-oriented activities compatible with domestic responsibilities. With the education and training at their disposal and their dual role as mothers and workers, the types of jobs available to them are the informal sector jobs.



## 1.2: Statement of the Problem:

This study documented individual experiences and the impact of sudden changes in women's life when they are divorced or widowed and have to carry on life and its various burdens. This work also tried to explore the coping mechanisms of these women at family and community levels and has dissected social processes in various socio-economic classes.

In the process, this work has documented life stories of women whose partners lost their lives and has captured commonalities in the nature of their crises, family circumstances, coping mechanisms across various socio-economic classes and evaluated the effectiveness of available protection mechanism by state and society.

In this study my focus was on the socio economic, emotional and psychological problems faced by females as women and then as widows. I also tried to explore challenges faced by these widows in managing their families and maintaining their social relationships. I also tried to understand the psychological and emotional needs of widows and have compared them with other women of same age groups and, in particular, investigated issues of domestic and workplace sexual violence and other domestic hardships a widow faces. During this study I also focused on the social and psychological problems of orphans and the thematic links of these problems with other issues such as, street children and involvement of children in other criminal activates like robbery, drug addiction.



### 1.3: Significance of the Study:

This study is very important when we talk about widows in Pakistani context. It is important to understand that women are being ignored in Pakistan, when these women became widows, they became powerless, weak and vulnerable and marginalized due to the strong patriarchal system in Pakistan. Though Islam has given very respectable status to women in society, but our society imposed on them many customary laws which they are supposed to accept, as a weak and marginalized section of the society.

In this study I tried to deal with the socio-economic and psychological problems of widows. Unlike sisters, they never had an opportunity to enjoy the protection, love, care, affection, emotional support; financial assistance and psychological security of living with a man. Widows suffer a lot of social and psychological pressure, burden and sense of loneliness when their husbands pass away. Having had a sheltered life with their husbands, the grief and personal tragedy and the social stigma that they have to suffer as a consequence of widowhood is very painful in reality.

Apart from the social isolation, which is imposed on them and the emotional, economic crisis that they undergo in reorganizing their lives in order to bring change in their family positions and social relationships affect their physical and mental health. The severity of grief is greater among young widows who have short span of married life and thus have the burden of looking after their children. This results in a huge emotional

and psychological stress, affecting their general status in the family and society and often is the reason of intensifying their social problems.

#### **1.4: Objectives of the Study:**

Objectives of my study during the in-depth interview of the widows were as follows:

1. To study the socio-economic, emotional and psychological problems faced by widows.
2. To document challenges they face in managing their families and maintaining social relationships.
3. To understand the psychological and emotional needs of widows and to compare them with other women of same age groups and, in particular, to investigate issues of domestic and workplace sexual violence and other domestic hardships they face.
4. To understand the psychological problems of orphans and the thematic links of these problems with other issues such as street children and involvement of children in other criminal activities like robbery, drug addiction etc.

#### **1.5: Limitation of the study:**

As it is always the case with research, the researcher must experience some limitations during the study. The researcher however, tries various ways to eliminate the problems so that the study could be successfully concluded. As this topic is very sensitive it was not easy to access my desired respondents and interview them. After a long effort to select the locale and sample, the

respondents were not ready to tell the researcher their life stories, but after assuring and satisfying them that their provided information would be treated very sensitively with fake names and would be used only for research purpose.

The researcher conducted interviews from widows both at their work places (where these widows works as domestic labor) and at their living places. It was being observed that these women are burdened with heavy domestic work and they are paid very less as compared to their duty hours.

Many respondents refused to give detailed interviews because they knew that there is no financial aid behind this. In-depth interviews which were being conducted in the homes of the participants were very problematic in nature. These interviews were often interrupted by the arrival of guests, deaths in the family and wedding ceremonies in the locale. Sometimes the interviewers did not arrive in/on time because they were stopped by their employees in order to work extra hours and they were forced to do that, because that was their only earning source. Participants had to meet such gaps and then continue with the interviews and sometimes they lost concentration and track of the interview and this was a great draw back during field research.

### **1.6: Methodology:**

The Anthropological field researcher must have a number of tools in his or her field kit. For the purpose of data collection, the research was divided into parts in order to use right technique at the right time. Different techniques were

used in different phases. Some techniques were contained in the next phase according to the need and a few are discussed.

### **1.6.1: Rapport Building:**

For a researcher rapport building is one of the most essential tasks after entering in the field. But it can be difficult and time consuming. For gaining entry into the field one has to make use of his formal and informal contacts of his social network. I established my rapport within a few days as an observer and took on the role of a friend. At first the respondents took me formally but later on they became more frank and open, sharing their private life stories. It was necessary to become a part of their community in order to remove their hesitation in sharing information. Widows, in spite of their poverty, showed hospitality and generosity and were very co-operative.

Some of them asked me that why I selected that area for studying. How this would help them, finically, would this would be helpful to change their life style, or this would be helpful for their children in finding jobs. I tried my best to tell them how I will use their life stories in my research or I ensured them I will use their information would only be used for research purpose only.

Observation is a method which is used in the fieldwork and is continued at the end of the research and it also helps in data collection. It provides an insight into the social life of the particular community. Sometimes during research, a researcher cannot become a part of that situation or cannot participate in the given situations or conditions. Then the researcher uses this technique to collect the data. Some of the data of this study has also been collected

through observation, observing the informants performing their daily activities. It was tried by the researcher to play the role of a silent and passive observer when these widows were performing their domestic. This trick helped in data collection.

It is an essential way of extracting information. The significance of participant's observation cannot be over emphasized in anthropological fieldwork. During research a researcher becomes a member of those events that are happening at that time in the particular community and tries to break locale barriers, while living in close proximity with the locale people in order to study them and to get knowledge about them. At the initial stage of the fieldwork, the technique was used in order to get close relationship with the people of that community and collect qualitative data from the locale. It was also applied for establishing rapport and informal relations in a new community because a good participant observer is that who knows when to laugh and when to stop and he should be aware of the limits of his relations.

Use of interview schedule requires fairly thorough knowledge of local cultural patterns and social groupings. The use of an interview schedule is simple formalization of basic interviewing techniques.

One standard and highly practical use of interview schedule is in the preparation of a basic census of a research population or community. It becomes clear that interview schedules needed to provide for questions concerning complex issues. In many situations field workers devise questions concerning concrete events, behavior and possessions. Questions in

interview schedules also differ in terms of whether they are open ended or close ended questions.

Open ended question allows the respondents to give any type of answer he/she wishes, long or short. On the other hand the closed or fixed alternative questions require the respondents to choose from a given set of options or categories. Effective interviews schedules often contain a mixture of both types of questions. During field research this technique was adopted in order to get knowledge about multiple and complex issues like ethnic composition, names, family, data on sibling, spouses, place of birth, marriage and so on. The researcher tried to ask every small detail about the topic e. g., reason of their husbands' death, what was their age at that time, number of kids, treatment of their relatives, support from their parents and in laws, what was their coping mechanism at that time of grief, how they are able to fulfill their economic needs and basic necessities etc.

It was also tried that the respondents may feel comfortable during this discussion. The interview questions were organized around particular themes to enable participants to give a full picture of their experiences. The researcher tried her best to gain a deeper understanding of the problems and experiences of the participants. For individual interviews, the interviews conducted were in Punjabi language, to prevent communication problems and enable widows to express themselves well. The interviews were audio taped and later translated into English for data analysis and presentation of findings. The interview schedule was not taped as the topic is emotionally sensitive.



Case study is an anthropological method, which helps to document the information about various events or incidents in the lives of people. Anthropologists who are concerned with in-depth study or in other words, they want to know a lot about little, case study is the perfect tool. The case study method was used during fieldwork in order to collect information about criminals, nature of the crime, who forced them to do this shameful act and about their family background etc. Case studies were selected in the data because they give deeper understanding to the study. Different case studies were used for understanding of the common realities of these widows.

In depth interviews provide qualitative data to a researcher. Interviewing the respondent is a major key to collect data and proves to be very effective and useful. This method was also used for the collection of data from the interviewers who provided the researcher with a lot of information about the issues of their daily life. In-depth interviews had been done to throw light on the social problems and other issues faced by people in the community like theft, poverty, unhygienic conditions and the reason of their husbands' death, impact of drug addiction on their children etc. I also asked them about their socio economic problems, psychological pressure after the death of their husband's, difficulty in decision making regarding their children's future and each and every thing related their daily experiences and problems.

### **1.6.2: Qualitative Research Method:**

Qualitative research method has been utilized in this study to capture descriptions of the experiences of the socio-economic and psychological problems of the widows.

In this research the most suitable method was adopted for the data was in the form of stories of the respondents' experiences. The study is done in two phases. The first phase comprises of individual interviews and the second phase is done as focus group interviews.

### **1.6.3: Sampling for in-depth interviews:**

The researcher used snowball sampling technique as a way of locating the participants and making appointments for the interviews. This means that purposive sampling was important for determining who would be involved in the study but snowballing could also be integrated to augment the sampling procedure. For the collection of the data, after using the technique of snowball sampling, purposive sampling was used for in-depth interviews. Sixty respondents were being selected for in-depth interviews and case studies.

For the sake of privacy and confidentiality, fake names were used for participants of both individual interviews and focus group interview and no personal details were taken from them, so that the information can only be used for research purposes and this fact was also being assured to all the participants.



The technique of snowball sampling was used in informal settings, allowing the researcher to collect qualitative data of the highly descriptive nature. I had several sessions of informal talk, mostly over a cup of tea, with several widows on various occasions like marriage ceremonies, *Quran Khwani*, in birth celebrations and in death ceremonies. They talked about their psychological problems and especially their socio-economic problems and about the sufferings they faced after the death of their husbands. Also, some brief talks were held with their close relatives, who refused to help them at the time of grief and misery. This used to create an uncomfortable situation for me as a human being to interview someone who could not help widows to cope with their grief.

#### **1.6.4: Ethical Considerations:**

All the interviews were conducted upon the permission of the interviewees, along with their absolute right to leave the process of in-depth interview any time or refuse to answer any question they wanted. Due to the sensitive nature of the research topic, most of the time the respondents did not allow me to tape-record the conversation. Therefore, I did not use tape-recorder, but used to take notes in my diary. All the names, addresses etc. have been changed to hide the identity of those concerned.

## Chapter 2

### **Literature review:**

Literature review is very essential for any study. With the help of this we can explain and support our argument.

### **2.1: Definition of widow:**

Widows are those women whose husbands have died, irrespective of their age.

### **2.2: Social problems:**

Social problems of widows are treated in terms of the social dishonor linked to them; the social limitations imposed on them and socially imposed sanctions or elimination from the society resulting in their low social status and deep sense of insecurity.

### **2.3: Economic problems:**

The main problems of the widows were their economic insecurity and dependence on family members to meet their basic needs; they were worried about the insufficient income, discriminative facilities and exploitation at work place and at domestic level.

### **2.4: Psychological needs:**

The widows suffer at the hands of society results in several psychological problems such as, emotional insecurity, loneliness, depression, mental stress inferiority complex, etc.

## 2.5: Status of Widows in Islam:

It is difficult to generalize about the position of widows in Islam. Not only may actual positions vary greatly depending on the nationality, class, ethnic group, or the age and number of children of the widow, but Islamic notions about widows have also changed over time. Interpretations of Quranic norms concerning widows in Islamic Jurisprudence and common beliefs have changed with time and context. Widows on the Arabian Peninsula in the early days of Islam might have little in common with present-day widows in North Africa. Yet in this chapter we will make an effort of making a comparison, firstly to show the conceptuality and thus the diversity of widowhood, as well as, the divergence of the interests of widows from those of other women. Secondly, to show the similarities between the lives of widows in different times and places. This is not so much due to historically persistent religious rules, but more to the ambiguities inherent in widowhood. I will illustrate this point with the help of two cases:

The widows surrounding Muhammad the Prophet in early Islam, notably Khadija, the widow he married and 'Aisha, the young wife he left as a widow".<sup>2</sup> (*Willy Jansen, 2002, 204*)

## 2.6: Violence Against widows:

"Apart from the bereavement, isolation, loneliness and social outcaste conditions, women are also abused and brutalized. Some are overt, while

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<sup>2</sup> Moments in the history of widowhood, between poverty and pyre.

*Edited by Jan Bremmer and Lourens van den Bosch*

others are covert. Some of the violence includes: (a) physical battering (b) emotional abuse (c) verbal tirades (d) sexual abuse and (e) property deprivation".<sup>3</sup>

(Vasantha R.patri, 2002, 66)

In this article the author is of the view that a widow has to face many psychological and emotional problems, after the death of her husband she feels alone and insecure, as her most loving and caring spouse is no more with her that's why she feels so much insecurity. She has to face many kinds of violence after his death in the hands of family members and in-laws. Sexual abuse in the hands of adult and powerful male members and physical battering are very common in the uneducated class. Women have to suffer lots of physical violence on small domestic issues. Property deprivation is another common problem which a woman has to face as a widow. In Subcontinent women are being deprived of their inheritance rights due to the strong patriarchal system.

"All family members are guilty of one or more forms of abuse of a widow in many homes. Physical abuse includes beating, back breaking work schedules, food/sleep deprivation, etc. Emotional abuse includes accusations of immorality, selfishness, etc. verbal abuse includes, humiliation, attacks on personal dignity, competence, etc. Sexual assaults are specially directed against young widows. This exploitation can involve both the men and other acquaintances. Most widows do not report this for fear of not being believed or bringing a bad name to the family. Seduction, exploitation, molestation, etc., are often intra-familial".<sup>4</sup>

(Ahuja, 1996).

According to the author, poverty and physical battering, emotional abuse, verbal tirades, sexual abuse and property deprivation plays fundamental role

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<sup>3</sup>Vasantha R.patri (2002), widows in India: a psycho-social analysis, Gyan publishinghouse

<sup>4</sup>(Ahuja, M., (1996): widows. Role Adjustment and Violence, Wishwa Prakashan, New Delhi)

in a woman's life but when her status changes from a woman to a widow, these problems create double tension for her. Now they are responsible to bear the economic activities for her family. When somebody tries to harass her sexually she is afraid to report this or to tell other people, because she knows that as a widow nobody would believe her.

## 2.7: Widowhood in India: Trauma of Taboos and Tribulations:

"In India, widowhood is viewed not as a period in the life cycle of a woman, but as a personal and social aberration, to be devoutly wished away. This attitude to a great extent governs the social, cultural and even economic implications of widowhood. In the Indian psyche, there is acceptance of the inevitability of death, but the natural inevitability of the death of a spouse (husband) is often glossed over. This inherent contradiction motivates the cultural non-acceptance of widowhood. Hence the blessings given to a woman are replete with suggestions of eternal wifehood. *Akhand sowbha gyavati bhavaa; Sadaa suhagan raho* (May you be a wife forever). Even though the death of a spouse is a possibility, there is a taboo and a hesitation to discuss it between husband and wife and even between parents and children. As a result, widows are often unprepared for the change in status and the consequent decisions to be taken".<sup>5</sup>

(MeeraKhanna, 2002, 19)

According to Meera Khanna, widowhood is not accepted in Indian culture as a natural incident but considered as a major social draw back in women's life. She is of the view that according to typical Hindu mentality there is no space for widows. They are of the view that with the death of husband a woman has no right to live a life like a normal woman. She has no role in decision making in her daily life, regarding her children's future,

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<sup>5</sup>(MeeraKhanna, (2002),Widowhood in India: Trauma of Taboos and Tribulations:

about her economic resources and her own self as well. It is also observed in Indian culture after the death of one's husband widows' bangles are broken, the *bindi* is removed and all the colorful clothes are forcefully taken away from her. After the death of her husband, widow is supposed to wear white color dress all her life. After the death of her husband she must have to obey the code of dress, code of behavior and other living conditions under strict rules. She is considered socially a dead entity, but she has physical presence and she has to deal with this reality through social marginalization.

After the death of her husband she has to become an observer and become a silent listener. No male support indicates that she has the burden of acquiring economic resources; home making and child rearing make her life more miserable and difficult. That's why the life of widows is very miserable in India as compared to other countries. In Indian culture every women prayed for the long life of her husband, because her comfortable life is associated with the life of her husband's life.

Though the life of a widow is tough in Pakistan as well but they are not as socially isolated as the Indian widows. Pakistani widows are facing economic and psychological problems but in less intensity as compared to Indian widows.

## **2.8: Patriarchy and Marginalization of Widows:**

"Hence patriarchy and property are the two factors which give rise to the horrifying marginalization of windows. This also manifests itself as a dress code, a behavior code and a moral code; all calculated to depersonalize her and remove her from the mainstream of society. Her

treatment as an eyesore is given the sanctity of traditional practice. There are no uncomfortable questions raised on her status, her financial and emotional needs or her self-esteem".<sup>6</sup>

(Mohini Giri, 2002:124)

In this article the author, Mohini Giri, is of the view that patriarchy and property are the two main reasons which played an important role in the marginalization of widows. Due to the strict patriarchal system, women are supposed to behave as a submissive creature. Her role is defined just to perform domestic work, when her status changes from a woman to a widow.

In this article the author is also of the view that a widow has to suffer a lot due to widowhood and patriarchal system in the South Asian society. In Western society there is no compulsion on women regarding managing relationships. A woman is having so much freedom that whenever she wants to leave her husband she can easily do so without fearing the customary practices, culture and law. But in South Asian societies women are bound to certain restrictions regarding relationship. A woman is marginalized as a woman too but when she becomes a widow she has so many rituals which she has to perform as a widow, like her dress code, a widow is not supposed to wear very bright cloths, bangles and other ornaments for her beautification.

## 2.9: Oppressive expression:

"In Punjab again a widow is called a rand while a prostitute is called psyche. A widow's sexuality becomes suspect and a source of menace once her husband is no more. Once she is a widow it is a small step to become a "Randi" from a "rand". Both words are used as common abuses."<sup>7</sup>

(Meera Khanna, 2002, 19)

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<sup>6</sup>Mohini Giri, 2002 Patriarchy and Marginalization of Widows

<sup>7</sup>Meera Khanna, (2002), attitude towards widows



Widowhood has become an abuse in society for women. After becoming a widow, she cannot maintain her respectable status in the society. As mentioned in the above paragraph, people always call her with various abusive names like *Randi*, *Rand* etc.

In an open discussion, widows shared that people are of the view if there is a widow in the family and she must have sexual needs and they are responsible to fulfill her sexual needs. They consider her as a prostitute, which is accessible and is willing to live with them in an illegal way. Another concept narrated by widows that people often use for them the term (*bewah jannat da meeva*) means that widow is sweet like a fruit of heaven and she does not have any will desire, now they have all the rights reserved regarding all their matters, either these are about their daily routine or about their sexual desires.

**2.10: Paradigm Shift:**

We reflected on the solutions for these problems and prepared a paradigm shift.

Service Delivery Paradigm	Empowerment Paradigm
Women have been seen in terms of \ their physical needs as bof development.	Women have been seen fundamentally as creative beings, as the primary authors and actors in their development.
Strategy is to provide services either through government bureaucracies or through charitable private agencies.	Strategy is to mobilize and empower self-reliant action and provide an enabling environment in which that can succeed.
Limiting factors: Funding and management efficiency of the bureaucracy ("how much money reaches the people")	Limiting factors: Local leadership vision, commitment, information, local competency. Red tape, legal and bureaucratic obstacles.
Highly specialized top-down structures. Focusing on each sector	Broad movement to catalyze a society-wide phenomenon of people addressing



(health, education, food production, etc.)	their own local needs in holistic way.
Planning at the top: Careful monitoring required providing accountability /information to the top.	Planning is local: Information provided outward to empower people to know what's possible, what's available.
Beneficiaries must be carefully targeted as financial resources are limited.	Empowerment/communication wants to be as broad and universal as possible to ignite society wide phenomenon.
Given that existing structures are male-dominated, parallel structures must be created to address the needs of women.	As women are directly responsible for health, education, etc., they must be empowered as the key leaders for all local action.
Incremental growth: Try to do more of what the agency does well.	Take entrepreneurial leaps: Identify the next strategic breakthrough required and transform the organization to achieve it.
Follow a rigid plan that was the basis for government funding.	Meet the strategic challenge: Constantly identify new openings for action, dynamically changing the plan to seize new opportunities.

**(Mohini Giri,2002,133)**

In this article the author tries to give various suggestions for the improvement of widow's rights. She is of the view that there should be some reforms which we need to improve now on broader level. She is of the view that instead of making plans on higher level, there is need to make plans on local level, according to socio-economic needs of widows. She is also of the view that women are suffering from health related issues and they are far behind in the field of education, etc. So, they must be empowered in these fields so that they can have better and secure future in life. In the past there were so many issues which were not addressable in because of male domination but now world is changing due to globalization and women must fight for their rights.

## 2.11: Rights in property:

"Under Muslim law a man can only will away  $\frac{1}{3}^{\text{rd}}$  of his property. A widow is entitled to  $\frac{1}{8}^{\text{th}}$  of his property if she has children and  $\frac{1}{4}^{\text{th}}$  if she is childless. If a man has two or more wives, the widows together inherit  $\frac{1}{8}^{\text{th}}$  or  $\frac{1}{4}^{\text{th}}$  depending on whether they have children or not. A daughter is entitled to  $\frac{1}{2}$  her father's property if she has no brothers."<sup>8</sup>

(Leila Seth, 2002, 59)

While reading this article, I observed that Islam is the only religion which has reserved balanced rights for the welfare of widows. According to this article, Hindu communities are very concerned about Muslims property rights. According to them Muslim widow has very much freedom and liberty regarding property rights. In this article inheritance rights of widows in different religions has been explained in detail and then a comparison has been made with Indian inheritance rights. In India, widowhood is not acceptable at all. Widows are living in very miserable conditions. They are considered the most marginalized section of the society. There is no life for a woman after the death of her husband. Though in Pakistan, widows are suffering huge psychological and economic problems but they are having respectable status in the society, as compared to India.

## 2, 11: The Reactive Approach:

This is a short-term approach for a problem as it exists for example, homes for widows and short stay homes fall into this category. Of course these steps are vital because some measure of comfort has been provided for the widows already facing an insensitive society.

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<sup>8</sup>(Leila Seth, (2002) widows in disasters

## **2.12: The Proactive Approach:**

Preventive measures must be taken so that socio-economic discrimination of widows may not persist. There has to be a review of property rights, so that personal laws more or less akin to the customary laws govern property rights. The Hindu Succession Act gives the widow a right to inherit her husband's property but husband can will away his entire property leaving the widow with no form of support. A review of this act has to be made, keeping in view the various differences between statutory law, customary law and practice between ancestral and self-acquired property, between inheritance rights of women as widows and as daughters, between land and other property. The law has to ensure that widows get a right of maintenance and part of the property even if otherwise willed. To ensure that there is no discrepancy between law and practice; widows must be made legally literate.<sup>9</sup>

(Meera khanna, 2002, 49)

## **2.13: Theoretical frame work:**

### **2.13.1: Radical Feminist Theory:**

While defining my research I will choose Radical Feminist Theory to explain that violence against women is the result of power imbalances that exists in the society. The Radical feminist theorists are of the view that oppression of women is gifted to them from the patriarchal norms and values of the society. The followers of Radical feminist theory are of the view that in patriarchal societies the socialization of women is in accordance with the required role

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<sup>9</sup>Meera khanna (2004) death and dying

and status in society to serve the needs of the dominant group. Following that line of thought, it means that women have been socialized in such a way that they cannot raise their voice for their rights to inheritance of property, for their socio-economic roles or about their very basic needs which are necessary for their everyday survival against their in-laws and society.

This theory also explains that in depth, violence in the social and its relationships of a heterosexual nature, of not giving widow's socio economic roles and absence of property rights in the society. This theory also explains the emotional and psychological problems of the widows which they have to face as women then as widows. Absence of the socio-economic needs is a result of patriarchy, oppression of the women is due to the fact that society has placed women as subordinate to men. This study's position is that Radical feminist theory needs to consider it as violence against women. Central theme of this study is that to understand the social problems of widows which they have to face under patriarchal oppression and customary laws, which are imposed on them by society. So, Radical Feminism is the best theory to explain this paradigm.

### **2.13.2: SOCIAL STRUCTURE:**

The particular patterns of social relationships that characterize a society or social group are referred to as its **social structure**. Patterns of social structure are based on cultural rules. Societies or social groups may be organized on the basis of family, kinship, residential propinquity, common

interest, friendship, or class. These groupings have continuity through time. Social structure may be distinguished from **social organization** (Firth, 1951). In societies or social groups, individuals usually occupy more than one position or **social status** at the same time. An individual may be a father and a chief at the same time. Societies, of course, vary in the number and kinds of social statuses. The behavior associated with a particular social status in a society is known as a **social role**. Social roles involve behavior toward other people.

This theory is very much related to this topic, as a society, we have assigned specific roles to widows. We imposed on them that as a widow how she has to behave in a particular situation. She is not supposed to wear bright colors on marriage ceremonies. Society made life dark and black for her after the death of her husband. She is supposed to behave in a very decent way. These are social roles assigned to her, rather imposed on her from society. Though Quran has given very respectable status to widow. This kind of flexibility we don't find in other religions. Islam has given the right of remarriage to widow, share in property and respectable status in the society.

## Chapter 3

### 3.1: Community Profile:

This research was based on Rawalpindi District's area of *Dohk Hussau* which is situated near *Pir Widhai Mor*. Rawalpindi is a very important and densely populated city of Punjab which, population wise, is the largest province of Pakistan. As Rawalpindi is connected to the capital of Pakistan that's why its importance has been increased.

### 3.2: Rawalpindi:

The district takes its name from its headquarters town Rawalpindi. In *Tuzk-e-Jahangiri*, it has been recorded that the name Rawalpindi consists of two parts, viz., *Rawal* and *Pindi*. The Rawals, a *jogi* tribe, founded a village *Rawal* at the site where we have the Rawal Dam today. When Jhanda Khan, a Gakkhar chief founded a new town at the site of an old town known as Fateh pur Baori, he named it Rawalpindi. Rawalpindi carries the essence and flavor of an old city, with narrow winding lanes, old bustling bazaars and several historical sites.

The city is a rail road junction and is an important industrial and commercial center. The city has an oil refinery, gasworks, an iron foundry, railroad yards, a brewery, sawmills and factories making tents, textiles, hosiery, pottery and leather goods. Sikhs settled the area in 1765 and invited nearby traders to live in Rawalpindi. After British occupied Punjab in 1849, it became a major British military outpost. The city, strategically located astride the road between

Punjab and Kashmir, is Pakistan's army headquarters. From 1959 to 1970, it was the interim capital of Pakistan.

### **3.3: Population:**

According to the census report of 1998, population of Rawalpindi is 14,06,214 persons. Residents of Rawalpindi belong to different ethnic groups. The important races and tribes inhabiting the district are Rajput, amongst whom the important sub-divisions are Bhatti, Rawal, Janjua and Chohan, Gujar, Awan, Mughal, Qureshi, Syed, Dhunds and Sattis (who inhabit in Murree Hills) and the Gakkhars. Some of the other minor tribes of the district are Jat, Malyar and Pathan. There are a few scattered Kashmiri who are distinguished by their fair complexion and good looks.

### **3.4: Economy:**

Agriculture and labor are the two important things in the economy of Rawalpindi. But being a martial race, people prefer to serve in armed forces and police. With the setting up of industries and greater urbanization, more and more people are now working in mills, factories, trade and commerce and government service. Women work side by side with men in different fields of life. The agricultural section of the population is employed in some form or other in farm operations all the year round.

### **3.5: Industry:**

There are 132 registered units of various industries in the district which constituted 4.6 percent of the total number of registered factories in the Punjab. Attock Oil Company, Associated Cement Factory, Wah and Heavy Mechanical Complex, Taxila are the biggest concerns in the district.



### **3.6: Communication:**

Rawalpindi is situated on both sides of the Grand Trunk Road, which is now a part of the Asian Highway stretching from Istanbul to Bangkok. There is a good network of roads and railway line communication all over the district. Rawalpindi International Airport links Rawalpindi – Islamabad with the rest of the world.

### **3.7: Introduction of the research site:**

Dohk Hussau is an area which can be called as a complex society as people of different origins are living in this area. According to Rawalpindi District Council, this area is the most backward area of the city. This area is also considered as a center of criminal activities. Most of the people are involved in many criminal activities like drug addiction, robbery and child beggary. Literacy rate is also very low. The people are of the view that when they are earning much without any education so they don't need to do jobs for their survivals.

### **3.8: Population:**

Population of this area is 1, 50,000 (one lac and fifty thousands). People of this area don't belong to one origin but are from different backgrounds i.e. the residents of this area belong to different ethnic groups. They are not the native people of this area; their forefathers migrated from other parts of the country and started living here since long.



### **3.9: Ethnic Composition:**

People living here are from different areas of the country like Hazara, Murree, AJK, Fateh Jang, Tala Gang, Chakwal, Mianwali, Jhelum, Gujrat, Mandi Bahauddin, Multan, Sargodha, Khoshab, Peshawar, Mardan, Swat, Dir and from other surroundings areas of Rawalpindi. The iron and steel workers came here from Kala Bagh and Mianwali and are living in Pir Wadhai from the foundation of this area.

We can divide these people into four main categories i.e. Kashmiri, Pathan, Pothowari and Hazara Biradri.

Ethnicity can also be seen between the two main groups of Sunni and Shia sects but both of them are living in harmony with one another. Ethnic disputes have been decreased due to education.

### **3.10: Economy:**

Business and labor have a significant role in the economy of this area. People are engaged in different types of economic activities and females also contribute in the household economy. General Bus Stand also plays an important role in the economy of this area as it provides employment to hundreds of people of Dohak Hussau.

### **3.11: Occupations:**

Business and trade are the main occupations of this area. Some people are employed in small industries like shoe factories which are famous for making plastic shoes. Some people are engaged in the trade of fruits. As the biggest

bus stand of Asia is situated in this area, so a great number of people are employed there and due to this bus stand, there are a great number of hotels and restaurants situated in this area. So these restaurants also provide employment to the people of this locality. There are many blacksmiths in this area that came from Kala Bagh and Mianwali.

Some women work in factories and are involved in making paper bags, but most of these widows are housemaids. They don't like to work in these factories because of long duty hours and they are also of the view that these factory owners pay very less wages. They have heard that these owners are also involved in the harassment of women at work places. They are also of the view that these owners also forced worker women to work in late hours and then they abuse them.

### **3.12: Division of Labor:**

In most of the households, only men are the economic providers of the family and women perform domestic chores. But there are some households where men and women both equally contribute in the household economy. But usually women use to look after the household affairs and their children. Child labor is also very common in this area.

### **3.13: Language:**

Urdu is very rarely spoken by the residents of Dohk hussu. Three main languages are spoken here:

- Punjabi

- Hindko
- Pashto

The people, who belong to Murree and Hazara, speak the language of their own areas. The dialect of Punjabi spoken in this area is different from the popular Punjabi dialect.

### **3.14: Social Organization:**

In this area people of different regions and cultures are living together. All these people have gathered together for better occupational opportunities. Females of this area are very active and are willing to work. Endogamy, exogamy and polygamy, these three are in practice in this area. Purdah is not strictly practiced in this area, as in other parts of the country. Social stratification can also be seen but most of the people belong to the lower class of the society.

### **3.15: Family and Household:**

In this area, nuclear family system and joint family system both are in practice. People, who come to this area from another village or city, bring only their wives and children, not the whole extended family. In most of the households, men and women both contribute in the household economy.

### **3.16: Ethnicity in the Community:**

There are different ethnic groups in this area. People belong to two main sects of Islam i.e. Sunni and Shiah. There are sub-divisions in Sunnis like Deobandis, Ahl-e-Hadees and Barelvis. These ethnic groups used to quarrel and fight in the past but now these religious and ethnic disputes have

decreased. This is due to the awareness brought by education. People belong to different castes and tribes and different areas so these people have ethnic relations with each other.

### **3.17: Gender Segregation:**

Purdah system does exist but not in all families as people belong to different origins. Women also contribute in the household economy and work side by side with men. They are working in factories and are involved in domestic labor. They also are supposed to live a life of subordinates; men usually abuse them whenever they want. Men are the real decision makers, even if the husband is not alive; then the eldest son has the command on all the important decision at home.

### **3.18: Political Organization:**

People of this area participate in different national political parties. In Dohk Hussau, institutions of politics and religion are inter-related as different religious groups are related to different political parties.

### **3.19: Housing patterns:**

House owners are 50% of the total population and the rest of the population is living in rented houses. Houses are of both types i.e. new and old. But the old ones are very much old. All houses are made up of concrete and housing scheme is like big cities. It is a densely populated area with narrow streets. There is no proper sewerage system, streets are filled with stagnant water

and this contaminates water causing many diseases like T.B and hepatitis. Many types of skin diseases are also common in this area.

### **3.20: Basic Amenities of Life:**

As Dohk Hussau is included in the urban area of Rawalpindi, it has all the basic and modern amenities of life like electricity, Sui gas, water, telephone, internet etc. There are metallic roads in all the area and public transport is easily available for each and every area of Rawalpindi.

### **3.21: Health Facilities:**

There is no big hospital in this area but there are many private clinics, dispensaries, medical stores and small hospitals which are providing health facilities to the residents of this area. People go to civil hospital and central hospitals for better treatment.

### **3.22: Educational Facilities:**

There are some government schools the area but private schools are in abundance, in which high and primary both are included. There is a big college at the main road in this locality. Widows were of the view that this college is made only for the children's of rich people, because they can't afford to send their daughters to this college. But there is no institution for vocational education where young girls get training in sewing, knitting, etc.

### **3.22: Access to Markets:**

Here are many markets in Dohk Hussau and each and every thing of everyday use is available in this area. There are shops in every street so people can easily buy things from these shops. Fresh vegetables, milk, yogurt, small bakery item are easily available almost in every street.

### **3.23: Hygienic condition of the streets:**

Roads are very uneven and filled with drain's water. There is no proper sewerage system in this area. Drinking water is mixing with the gutter water and garbage and people are drinking this contaminated water. That's why they are suffering from dangerous disease. Streets are so narrow in this area that the sunlight cannot reach to the ground.

### **3.24: Religion:**

Majority of the people are Muslims and people belong to two major sects of Islam i.e. Sunni and Shiate. Majority of people are Sunnis and Shiates are very few in number. Then there are further groupings in Sunnis i.e. Deobandi and Ahle-Hadees. Deobandis are in majority and are the dominant ones. Some years ago, these groups used to oppose one another and there were disputes and religious clashes between these groups. Now they have forgotten these things as they have so many other problems (financial problems) to be solved. There are some Christian families and some of Quaidiani families are also living in this area.

### **3.25: Mosque:**

There are many mosques in this area where the residents of DohkHussau pray their prayers. There are also separate mosques for the sub-groups of Sunnis.

### **3.26: Social Problems:**

Crime rate is very high in this area. Due to poverty, lack of education and lack of basic necessities of life, crime rate is increasing day by day. Drug addiction and gambling are common abuses in this area. Prostitution is also very commonly evidenced. There are so many other social problems but government is paying no attention for example people are selling drugs openly and are easily accessible. The orphans, especially girls, of this area are living a very problematic life as they are living in an environment and surrounding which is very harmful for their mental growth. Their mothers work outside their houses and run their households and in their absence, these girls feel harassed from their grown up cousins and their neighboring people.



## Chapter 4

### 4.1: Profile of widows:

The present chapter deals with the socio-economic and psychological problems of widows. Unlike spinsters who never had an opportunity to enjoy the protection and security of living with a man, widows suffer a lot of problems including social, economic and psychological problems, after the death of their husbands. Having had a sheltered and protected life with their husbands, the grief and personal tragedy and the social stigma that they have to suffer as a consequence of widowhood are miserable and unbearable.

Usually, the young widows are more exposed to humiliation, harassment, exploitation and victimization as compared to middle-aged widows. Moreover, the three most important motives are victimization-power, property and sex-property which are considered to be crucial factors in victimization in the middle class widows, sex in the lower class widows and power in both the middle-class and the lower-class widows. The study also uncovered the exploitation of widows, particularly of the young and early middle-aged widows who were sexually abused, usually by the male members of the in-laws' family. Moreover, reporting the cases of sexual abuse is usually considered to be a difficult task for the widows due to the possibility of hostile reactions from the family and society.

In addition to that, social isolation is also imposed on them and the emotional and economic crises which they undergo in reorganizing their lives to change in the family and social relationship also affects their physical and mental health. Furthermore, the severity of grief is greater among the young widows who had short span of married life and having greater burden of looking after

the young children. This also causes a huge emotional and psychological stress, affecting the general status of widows in family and society and also increasing social problems.

In the following chapter, an attempt has been made to study the socio-economic and psychological problems of widows. The main focus of the study is to explain the problems of those widows belonging to the lower and middle class of the society. There are some cases which focused on the widows of police and army soldiers. During my research work, I met with 60 widows for in-depth interviews and case studies, who belonged to lower and middle class, for better understanding of their socio-economic and psychological problems. Widow of every class has its own distinct problems and coping strategies.

To get the overall perspective of the problems faced by the widows, they are classified under four major categories.

#### **4.2:1. Socio economic needs:**

- A) Immediate loss of income and financial difficulties
- B) Financial dependence on relatives and others
- c) Dead husband's liabilities

#### **4.2. Psychological needs:**

- A) Psychological set back and emotional stress
- B) Problems with children
- C) Loneliness
- D) Inferiority complexes

#### **4.3. Problems at home and at work place:**

- A) Physical insecurity
- B) Sexual harassment
- C) Harassment by in-laws

#### 4.4. Social problems:

- A) Stigma against widows
- b) Attitude of society towards children's marriage, especially girls

#### 4.5: Age of the respondents at widowhood:

20-24	10	17%
25-26	14	23.3%
26-30	14	23.3%
30-35	12	20%
35-40	10	16%
Total	60	100%

These women were widowed when they were in their twenties. As in Pakistani culture, early marriages are very common; according to my data 17 percent women widowed in the age of 20 to 24.They were not only dependable but also unable to bear the grief and loss of their husbands. In Pakistani culture, marriage is the only bond which plays a vital role in women's life by protecting them. But if husband is no more there, her life usually becomes miserable and pathetic. Another fact is that, they have to suffer so many financial and psychological problems after the death of their husbands.

The study also makes an effort to explore the exploitation of widows, particularly young and early middle-aged widows through sexual abuse by the adult male members of the in-laws' family and the other powerful male

members where they work and also from the neighborhood. Usually, reporting the cases of sexual abuse is considered to be a difficult task for the widows due to the possibility of hostile reactions from the family and society

**4.6: Educational qualifications of widows:**

Sr.no	Educational status	Number of widows	Percentage
1	Illiterate	18	30%
2	Literate with formal education	18	30%
3	Primary	6	10%
4	Middle	6	10%
5	Matriculation	5	8. %
6	Intermediate	4	7%
7	Graduate	3	5%
	Total	60	100%

Most of the widows lack proper education which makes them unable to find any reasonable job. As mentioned in the above table that only 10 percent widows were middle passed and 8 percent metric passed. The table also shows that if they had proper education, they would get respectable jobs. Some of them were having vocational training, like stitching, knitting and other kinds of hand embroideries, which would help them to earn and improve their economic status. According to my collected data, only 5 percent widows were

graduates and they are serving as either teachers, nurses, or engaged in other kinds of office work. They are enjoying a respectable position in the society and their financial needs are also fulfilled.

#### 4.7: Cause of death of the husband:

Accidents	8	13%
Illness	8	13%
Heart attack	10	17%
Drug addiction	25	40%
Suicide	10	17%
Total	60	100%

One of the common reasons for husband's death of these widows was observed for as drug addiction. According to the data collected, 40 percent died with the diseases caused by drug addiction. This area is also very famous for the illegal activities of buying and selling drugs without any fear. The people have an easy access to drugs at very low prices, which made the addiction very common in the area. Moreover, unemployment, low standards of living conditions and strong patriarchal system lead the people to drug addiction.

In addition, the other common reasons that usually cause deaths in the area are illness. Moreover, there are also several unregistered doctors practicing in the area besides so many quacks who opened clinics with fake degrees. They usually prescribe wrong medication to the patients, without knowing about the particular details of the disease. On one hand, they seem unable to properly investigate the causes of fatal diseases. On the other hand, it seems as if there is no proper mechanism evolved by the authorities concerned to avoid such issues. Most of the respondents told me that the deaths of their husbands caused by tuberculosis and hepatitis which may possibly be caused

due to the unhygienic conditions of the surrounding. It was also observed that the dental doctors of the area are using dirty instruments for operation without sterilizing it. The other reason of the wide spread of this disease is due the lack of clean drinking water. Furthermore, the water lines are mixed up with the gutter pipes; people are using the contaminated water for cooking and drinking purposes, which cause many diseases like kidney, liver disease and gastritis etc.

There were 17 percent widows who shared their sorrows about the deaths of their husbands during the focus group discussion and said that their husbands committed suicide.

*"(Aagar moat Allah kitaraf say aay to banda roo kar sabar kar layta hay,layken isstarahki moat par to sabar bi nai aata,ar loogo kibaatain allag tang karti haan)"*

"If someone dies in a natural way, we have to accept that it was GOD's will, but if someone commits suicide, it is hard to accept the reality and society also blames us for his suicide"

Furthermore, widows shared that poverty, unemployment and mental stress forced them to commit suicide. They said that their husbands were not doing any proper job for a long time. When we demand money for household expenses and children's education, they were unable to cope with the situation. This tension and frustration developed the inferiority complexes among them. As most of the widows said that their husbands used to work on daily wages despite making efforts to get permanent job, they could not get it.

One of the main reasons for not getting good job was the lack of technical education. As a result, they developed psychological stress and made suicide attempts.

#### **4.8: Priorities of Widows:**

During the Need Assessment of widows, the needs and problems were assessed with the help of different methods then the priorities of the widows were also discovered i.e. how these widows rank and prioritize different standards for their children and better future.

#### **4.9: Ranking:**

Ranking was used as a tool for widows to know the list of most important things for their healthy and balance living in society after the deaths of their husbands. The ranking to share the priorities was done in a group discussion. They were provided with a list of their own needs which were discovered through individual interviews. They ranked all the things according to their perception. List of needs is given as below:

#### **4.10: List of needs:**

- **Apna Ghar**
- **Betiyan Ki Shaadiyaan**
- **Mard Ka Sahara**
- **Baa-Ezzat Zindagi**
- **Mali Khushaali**
- **Samaji Tahaffuz**



- Bacchon Ki Taleem
- Rishtay Daron Say Taaloqat.
- Right in property.
- Treatment of relatives on ceremonies.
- Known as Sabz qaddam in the society.
- Harassment at home.
- Harassment at work place.
- Role in decision making.
- Fulfillment of basic needs.
- Low wages at work place.
- Diseases in kids.
- Low standard of living.
- Drug addiction in children.
- Unhygienic living standards.
- Living on zakat.
- Contribution of relatives on important rituals.
- Support from in laws.
- Support from parents.

According to the data, for these widows, the first priority was "*Apna Ghar*" which means a house owned by them, where they can live independently, without problems of insecurity, harassment and high rents. However, according to some widows, owning a house plays an important role for the marriages of their daughters and future security.

Their second priority was "*Beliyon Ki Shaadiyaan*" which means the marriages of daughters. Most of the widows had also young daughters at their homes. The widows wanted to let their daughters marry and take off this responsibility from their shoulders. But the dowry seems to be one of the huge obstacles in their way.

Their third priority was of "*Mard Ka Sahara*" i.e. "the male support" for their emotional and social security for better living in society. After this priority, they said that "*Baa-Ezzat Zindagi*" is another important need which means a respectable status in the society from which they have been deprived after the death of their husbands.

Then they considered the "*Mali Khushaali*" (economic prosperity) as very important factor for their children and for themselves. They said that everyone wants to be powerful and financially strong, but they are unable to fulfill all the desires and wishes, because expenses are too much and they are earning very less. They don't want to use unfair and illegal means to attain economic prosperity. This should be achieved through fair means. The widows also said that that they worked the whole day like machines but they were not paid accordingly. They also shared that they are not having proper technical or vocational education due to which they do not have any other option except to work on these low paid jobs such as domestic workers, peons and *ayah* in schools.

The need of respectable status in life and economic prosperity there was conflict in these both issues, as half of them said that if one is *economically stable*, society automatically gives him/her a respectable status. One can buy

anything if he/she has money in his/her pocket. There is no respect for the poor in our society. Rich is becoming richer day by day and poor like us is becoming poor with every passing day. Rich people forced them to serve them on the behalf of their wealth and they have no other way except to serve them because they have to rare their children's and fulfill their basic needs. While the respondents of the other group were of the view that they can buy respect with money. This is the only thing which we earn throughout our life with our attitude, behavior and from our good action.

Then they ranked "*Samaji Tahaffuz*" very important for themselves and for the survival of their children in the society which means social security. As they said that social security plays a vital role in building personality of children, their character and confidence. But they are not in a position to fulfill this need of their children, because people always had a sympathetic behavior for them and their children.

They ranked "*Rishtaydaron Say Talooqat*" less important i.e. the relationships, intimacy and interaction with their relatives. As according to these widows, their relatives have never helped them out when they were facing psychological and economic depression.

A similarity among the thinking of all the widows was analyzed during the data collection, that they don't want the help of their relatives. They said that they never helped them whenever they needed them. Moreover, the relatives always tried to impose their opinions on them and forced to obey their

decisions. These widows want that their children should get all those luxuries which they didn't get in their life. They want better and secure future and a respectable status in the society for their children.

#### **4.11: Shelter:**

Another main problem was the need of shelter which was analyzed among these widows during the focus group discussion. Moreover, the widows face the problem of living place as they do not have their own houses. They are living in rented houses. The rented houses made them more insecure and developed among them a sense of insecurity and inferiority complexes.

A respondent told me that she had to face a bundle of problems when she was living with her daughter in a rented house. She had to change several houses as people used to harass her at night, she said that males from the neighborhood used to jump over her roof at night. She said that they used to sleep inside the room in the summer as she is fearful to save the honor of daughter. When she told about this incident to the landlord of the area and requested him to solve the issue, he said, that I myself send them at your home to fulfill your sexual needs. The landlord also considered her as loose character and said I am responsible to destroy the peace of the whole area. They said that to live in rented houses is itself a big problem. Rates of these rents are unaffordable for these widows and the houses are not in a very good condition but are very old and need renovation.

#### **4.12: Marriages of their daughters:**

In most of the houses, where this research was conducted, there were elder daughters of these widows who should be married immediately. They said

that they have great responsibility on their shoulders of the marriages of their daughters. According to these widows, no one wants to marry with an orphan girl, as people think that they have nothing to give to their daughter in the form of dowry. According to widows, there is an age limit for marriage for a girl and after that particular age, girl is considered over aged, so no one marries her.

Respondents shared that they have the tension on their shoulders, that how they will make the dowry for their daughters.

A respondent told that at the time of the marriage of her elder daughter, she didn't demanded dowry. But now at the time of the marriage of second daughter, she has to give her dowry. She is not having much money to arrange dowry of her daughter.

#### **4.13: Small scale business:**

The third priority for these widows was to establish a small scale business for themselves or for their elder sons. As according to them, there should be a permanent source of income so that they themselves and their children too can lead a prosperous life. This small scale business can be a grocery shop in their house, sale of different things like cloths, tea stall, a small *dabha*, business of embroidered cloths, beauty parlor etc. There are some widows who are doing these types of businesses to run their home expenses and for the better future of their children.

#### **4.14: Education for their children:**

For most of the widows, the only hope is the education of their children and their bright future. These widows said that these orphans can make their lives

better and can get rid of this curse of poverty only by getting higher education. They know very well that without education, they cannot bring these pleasant changes. So, for them the fourth priority was the education of their children. As without education, they cannot find good and respectable jobs and status in the society.

#### **4.15: Payment of Debt:**

A respondent told me that her husband borrowed a loan of Rs. 82, 0000 and after his death; she has to pay this loan. She said that this loan was too much for them which had become a curse. Another widow's husband also borrowed a handsome amount for business, after his death, it was very difficult for her to return it, but fortunately her parents and in-laws helped her.

A respondent and her family have also suffered this problem. They took loan for the operation of husband, as he was a heart patient. Doctors prescribed him by-pass and for this purpose, a big amount of money was needed. So they borrowed money from their relatives and from bank, because her husband was working as a watchman there. It couldn't save his life but became a problem for his wife and family after his death.

#### **4.16: Treatment of relatives on ceremonies:**

Respondents were of the view that they are treated very badly in the family in different ceremonies. The very close relatives, even our brothers and sisters don't allow us to participate in their marriage and birth ceremonies or any kind of feast, because of our bad fortune. They are treated us as unwanted guests

and considered as burden on the family. We are only acceptable as domestic workers such as maids, helpers, but not as a relatives or guests.

As it is stated before, the widow is supposed to live like a socially dead person in this society. But she also has a physical presence but nobody is ready to give her space in the family. This is done through her social marginalization. She is acceptable only as an observer, never as an active participant in society. As an observer, she is tolerated, never welcomed. A widow, at any wedding or auspicious ceremony, stands far away from the center and watches all the events from a distance.

According to these widows, they are strictly restricted by their relatives not to take part in any wedding ritual; because their relatives seem to believe that their misfortune might affect the fate of their children as well. In various festivals, their kids wait that somebody would visit their homes; but nobody likes to visit them due to their poverty. Usually, for the children of theses widows, people use very sympathetic words which make them more down.

#### **4.17: Known as *Sabz qaddam* in the society:**

Because of their ill-fate and misfortune, people considered them *sabz qaddam* in the family and society. Their mother in-laws always curse them by saying that they are responsible for their son's death. They also said that after the death of their husbands, it was very tough for them to cope with that grief and misery. They said "In our life everything happens with God's will and nobody can fight with God. But this society treated us with degradation, disrespectfully."



#### **4.18: Harassment at home:**

Young widows who are living in joint family system, they said that everybody takes them as "*Mufat ka mall*". Male persons in the family always tries to touch their hands and tries to touch their bodies whenever they came in their house and if served with some tea or food, they take this as a token that these widows want to gain their attention or want to develop some kind of relationship with them.

A young widow told me during focus group discussion that her husband died after one year of her marriage. She was so young and pretty. But her beauty became a curse for her. Whenever, she goes to her in-laws home, her brother in-laws harass her, in various ways. Her mother in-laws always asked her to serve tea, water, food. If she refuses, her mother in-law abuse her, she cried a lot in front of me and said that "I don't know why my husband died so early, why God is so unhappy with me. I don't know when my suffering and misery will be over. My parents are dead, my brother has his own family, he is not ready to keep me in his house and I am forced to live with my in-laws."

#### **4.19: Harassment at work place:**

There were some widows who were educated and are working as nurses, teachers and engaged in some office work. They said that everybody knows them as a widow, so people take benefit from their misery and powerlessness; sometimes they forced them to do extra work for late hours in the offices. Because, they know we can't leave this job that is why they force us to bear all the miseries and harassment by the male staff of the office.

#### **4.20: Low wages for work:**

These widows also shared in focus group discussion that very less amount is being paid to them for their work. They shared that after all day's physical work, the land lady just pays them Rs 800 for a month; they don't pay them for their extra work. These complaints were made by both the educated and non-educated widows.

#### **4.21: Role in decision making:**

In focus group discussion, widows shared that they have no role in decision making after the death of their husbands either in the family or at work place. Nobody allows them to take part in decision making, either they are at domestic level or decision about the future of their children. Nobody gives them importance; they are living like physically alive but mentally dead persons. They were also of the view that this society is very cruel which don't allow them to take decision about the future of their own children for their better education, admission in schools, regarding their work, or marriages of their daughters.

#### **4.22: Fulfillment of basic needs:**

Widows express their feeling in focus group discussion that they work all day like a machine, but they are unable to fulfill their basic necessities of life. Things are so expensive they can't buy their everyday necessities. They are unable to fulfill their children's educational needs, then their desires for new clothes, toys, books; they are unable to provide them medical assistance,

when they fell ill. This causes huge mental and psychological stress for them. Households are female headed with no regular form of adult male support. Younger widows end up in shouldering dual responsibility-caring for the young and old while earning a living. There is a tendency on the part of widows to move from less poor localities to poorer localities. Overwhelming number of widows has no option but to find for themselves. With the limited support and financial assistance from relatives very meager, almost all the poor widows have to engage in some income generating activities.

#### **4.23: Forced to live on zakat:**

In Pakistan mechanism of zakat for income support have contributed in minimizing the damage of wide spread poverty. Widows expressed their feelings in focus group discussion widows told me that they are forced to take the help of people in the form of zakat. Because there is no other way to fulfill our economic needs. In the month of Ramadan people help them a lot, from that money they buy clothes for their children for various occasion. Sometimes this help means a lot to them, because with the help of this money they are able to fulfill their children's small desires. But their children do not like this help they are of the view that this help leads us to inferiority complex.

#### **4.24: Drug addiction in kids:**

During the field research I observed that many young boys are involved in the abuse of drug addiction, because their fathers were also involved in this abuse. In focus group discussion their mother told me that they are very worried for their children, because they have already loss their husband due

to this disease. Their children became the victim of this disease because of the bad environment of this community. They explain that most of the people are unemployed in this area and they are involved in such kind of illegal activities. Access to drugs is so easy because these unemployed people are selling them and everybody can buy them easily.

#### **4.25: Low standard of living:**

Widows of this area are forced to live low standard of living. Unemployment drug addiction, dirt, contaminated water, load shedding are the common complains of the people. Streets are so narrow in this area that the sunlight hardly enters in houses, that's why people are suffering from various kinds of diseases. Construction of the houses is also illegally done in this area. People are using one room for their residence; because they can't afford the rent of the full house. Sanitation condition is very bad in this area; streets are filled with garbage and with contaminated water.

#### **4.26: Social status of widows:**

In individual interviews and focus group discussion, these widows told that they demand respect from the society from which they are being deprived of. They said that demand for respect is their right like other women. According to the respondents,

"We are living in an Islamic society and Islam teaches us to give a respectable status to all women and there are special orders for the rights of a woman then especially a widow. But unfortunately, in our society level of respect and honor is not given to a widow as it should be".

According to them they are always treated as an unwanted person in the family, who have no right to celebrate any festivals, birth rituals, or they are not supposed to take part in any marriage ceremony of their close relatives, because of their bad fortune and bad luck, they are supposed to stay away from the bride and groom. This attitude is very painful and degrading, especially in the ceremonies of very close relatives. It is always claimed that Pakistan is a Muslim country but all the people are influenced by Indian traditions, they also follow the misbehavior with a widow as practiced in India. Instead of following the Quranic teachings which gave widows a respectable status in the society.

A respondent shared that a widow has to be very careful because people keep a sharp eye on each and every activity of her life and try to find a time to destroy her reputation. They don't help her but claim to be the free guards of her and try to interfere and interrupt in her life. According to her those are the people, who cannot remain happy in any condition or situation.

Another widow told that in our society, people only know to make gossips, about others, they never helped poor nor they allow them to do work. As in the area in which she is residing, the women who work outside their homes are not seen with respect and honor and are suspected as of loose character. Most of the widows are in the age which is appealing for second marriage. Some are very good looking and charming but this thing proves to be a trouble for these widows. As their beauty attracts people when they go out for

work, they tried to harass them and ask them to come when their wives are not at home, they offered them extra money if they fulfill their need and they feel very insecure. Most of them told that several times they have been offered the second marriage by different people.

When someone offers a widow for second marriage, she is pressurized by her parents and other relatives. But on the other hand, there are some factors which push her to refuse. For example, the man who will marry a widow will only take the responsibility of herself not of her children. In case, if he takes this responsibility, there is another problem that her daughters will become insecure as he will not be their real father. These widows said that they can't take the risk.

In a focus group discussion which was conducted in Dohk Hussau, widows told that people use to tease and harass a woman which seems to them helpless and miserable and without any support. These types of behaviors cause mental torture and psychological stress for these widows and these problems become hurdles and obstacles in their earning ways.

A respondent still lives with her in laws and belongs to Pathan family. She told that there is a tradition in Pathan's that the widow has to remarry with the younger brother of the dead husband. So she is also pressurized by her mother-in-law, parents and all the family members forced her to do so. But she is not willing to do so as according to her, she considers her husband's brother as her own brother. Her mother-in-law told me that this is the only way



to keep her and her children with them as if she will not marry with her younger son their relatives will dislike this act and this is against the honor of our traditions that she is living in one house with her unmarried brother-in-law, otherwise she will have to leave this house.

The widows who are remarried have to withdraw from their children as in the case study of a respondent who now lives with her grandmother. Another widow told me that she is still living with her in-laws. She has five children and her source of income is sewing clothes. Three of her children are studying in a school but she has to face many problems for their education and the fulfillment of other needs. She wants to do a small scale business for income generation but her husband's brother is very strict. He doesn't permit her to sit in the shop and sell things as it is against their honor and integrity and he cannot compromise on this because in Pathans, the *Pardah* system is strictly followed.

These widows were very young when their husband died. They faced huge psychological trauma after the death of their loved ones, they said that "It was unacceptable for us to believe that our life partner is no more with us; life in the early days was very dark and was full with grief. It looked like that our life has no meaning without the presence of our husband." Young widows said that they often miss the touch, love, affection, care; moral and emotional support of their husbands and their presence at home and everything which is associated with them.



#### 4.27: Express of their grief in words:

- "In sickness, there is no one to help. If someone comes from my parental home, then there is someone, otherwise, no one."
- "I am given some grain by my in-laws, but I make *Roti* for myself and my children"
- "Society doesn't understand the problems of widows, we feel alone"
- "I am sad, but I can't show my sadness"
- "A husband is like a tube light when he is alive, there is light when he is alive and there is light everywhere. When the light goes out, darkness prevails. After his death, everyone questions everything; where are you going, why are you wearing this or that and so on."

#### 4.28: Problems of Widows:

Sudden loss of the earning hand of the family brings troubles, hardships and difficulties in the lives of the whole the family. To solve these problems, these widows have to come out of their houses and earn for their children, especially when all the orphans are at very young age.

#### 4.29: Poverty:

Respondent shared in-depth interviews, that poverty is the mother of all problems and when one's husband dies; her problems become double for her. They have to earn for themselves and also for their children as nobody supports and helps them. They also told that the people around them create problems and hurdles in their ways instead of helping them. Each and every moment they have the tension that how they will feed and educate their children. How they can increase their income and provide a safe shelter to

their children. The widows who have many children, have to face so many financial problems, like from where they will bring money for their children's education, medication, cloths and toys etc.

There were some orphans who were mentally or physically disabled. Their mothers have to suffer a lot of problems for their survival. As in the case of one widow whose one daughter and one son are mentally and physically disabled and she cannot go anywhere as she has to take care of these children. She can't do any job outside her home due to the disability of her children. One son of another widow is also mentally retarded so she also has to look after him every time. There are so many problems which these widows have to face alone as nobody supports them after the death of their husband.

#### **4.30; Economic status of widows:**

According to these widows, in this society, where they are living is truly male dominated and males are considered the head of the family, there is no economic role define for women in this society. They have to earn for themselves and also for their children as nobody supports and helps them.

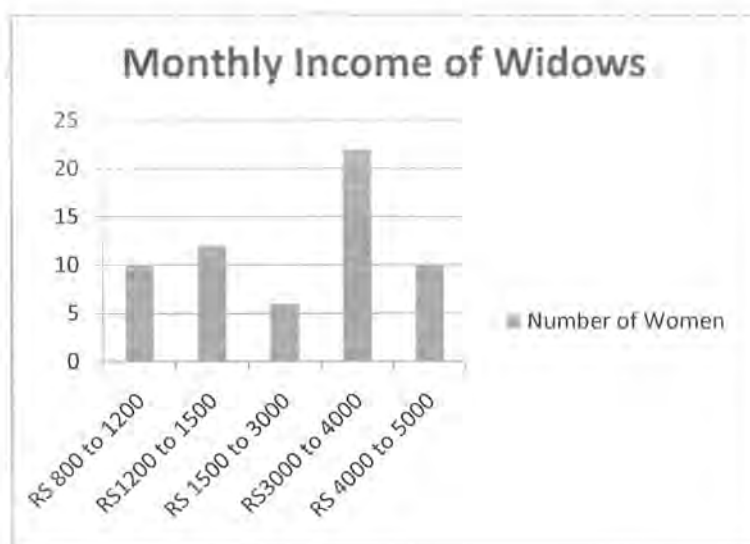
The widows who have elder daughters have to face more harassment problems, because when they take along them for domestic work, every them treat them as a free worker and they are there to serve them, now they have reserved all the rights to treat them as they can. Their mothers were also of the view that these daughters are grown up, they will get married in near future and go away to their husband's homes, in spite of contributing in the household economy. Their marriages also demand a big amount of money.

On the other hand, if there is an elder son, he will contribute in the household economy after getting good education, and then her mother's future will be more secure. This is the reason that people don't educate their daughters.

There are also some widows who don't do any type of job as they are living with their parents or in-laws. That's why they have to obey their decisions, willingly. That's why their parents and in-laws force them to stay in their houses and look after their children and domestic chores. Because these widows don't have right to earn that's why they are not empowered in decision making about their children and other domestic affairs as they do not contribute in the household economy. Then the elder male member of her family is responsible to make decision about her kids and herself as well.

A widow told that after the death of her husband her parents took her and her children with them to their house. But when her parents died she came back to her husband's house as her brother was willing to support her but not her children. There was no source of income and nobody was ready to support her and her innocent children. So she started working as a housemaid as she was forced to do so. She is a heart patient and had two severe attacks. Doctors asked her to take care of herself and take proper medication as the third attack can prove fatal. But she is the only earning member of her family, her children are so young that they are unable to earn. She says that the only room in which she is living with her children (in her father-in-law's house) is not less than any blessing.

#### 4.31: Poor economic conditions of these widows:



These widows are earning very less, they were of the view that Rs 4,000 are not enough for the whole month expenses. "Our wages are so less that we are unable to pay our monthly bills and other expenses. Our children's are having so many wishes but they are out of our range. People are paying us so less for our work, though we worked all day like machines, but we are not paying accordingly", said some of them.

In a focus group discussion, widows told that "poverty" and unemployment create that circumstances which force them to come out of their houses for work to run their households. A widow told that she had to work hard to rare her children, to save them from hunger and to educate them. She was also of the view that after her husband's death, all her relatives claimed to support her children. But with the passage of time she realized that she had to earn by herself to feed her children and herself.

She can't beg that's why she has to work and run her household. But according to her, she is satisfied that she has provided her children with *Rizq-e-Halal*. Some of them told me that they didn't even complete their *Eddat* and started working as they surely knew that nobody was going to support and feed their children. Their monthly income is too less to fulfill their basic needs. These widows were so worried that they are unable to pay their utility bills and other bills to run their households. Their monthly income is only around Rs 4000 to 5000. They are forced to take borrow from where they work and shopkeepers located in their locality. They also shared that they worked all the day, but even then they are unable to survive. They also shared that due to their low economic resources they are unable to fulfill the desires of their children's, which leads them to inferiority complex.

#### **4.32: Share in Property:**

There is another problem for these widows i.e. they don't get their share in their husband's property. They have to face many problems to get their share of their husband's property from their in-laws. Some widows are fighting in court for their right and share in their husband's property against their husband's sisters who have occupied all the property. A respondent told that recently she has got her share in her husband's property after facing a hell of problems.

## 4.32: Property in their names:

With property	06 -10%
Without property	54-90%
Total	60-100%

### 4.32.1: Knowledge about property rights:

Knowledgeable	20-33%
Unknowledgeable	40-67%
Total	60-100%

Most of the widows did not know about their property rights. As 67 percent of them were of the view that they don't know that Islam has given a women inheritance rights. Thirty three percent were aware about their property rights, but they were of the view, they have given their property to their brothers because they already have lost their husband, now this is the only way to keep healthy relationship with their brothers. Only 10 percent of widows were having their property, after the death of their husband, but 90 percent are fighting for their property rights.

According to a widow, that her husband was running a small hotel in Peer Wadhi and he was earning good money from that hotel. They were spending a good life but when her husband died, her mother in law and sister forced her to leave the house along with her kids. She left the house after the 4<sup>th</sup> day of her husband's death. She shifted to her brother's house where she spent her

days of *Eddath*. Her brother is working on daily wages, he also have his own family, his wife does not like their stay there, all the time she had a fight with her as she is an extra burden. They are also living hand to mouth life. Though her father left a big house but his brother is not agree to give property right to her.

Now her father in-law is running that hotel but he is not ready to give them a single penny from the income. She works in people houses as a care taker of children and bearing her home expenses.

### **4.33: Working conditions:**

Some widows shared their working experiences that due to washing clothes in so many houses, their hands have rotten away and they are suffering from different skin diseases. One widow shared that she was doing job as a maid in a very big house. Her salary was good. But she used to feel very insecure and harassed while working there by the males of that house. They were not morally good people and one of them tried to harass her sexually, when she was busy in kitchen she became very frightened and left the job.

These widows have to face problems when they go out for their jobs, because people considered them more accessible and easy prey, they are more vulnerable, weak and powerless. Moreover, they are bound to work at homes, because most of them are uneducated. They are unable to do any other reasonable work. During the focus group discussion, most of the widows shared that people think that working in the school as peon or ayah is safer; yes it is safe, until all the staff and kids of the school are there. One widow



narrated that one day the school principle called me in his office and tried to offer her a handsome amount for staying after the school hours to spend some time with him. He even tried to snatch her *duppalta* but her hue and cry made him ran away.

**4.34: Occupations of widows:**

Teacher	4	7%
Midwives	8	13%
Ayah/peon	8	13%
House maids	20	33%
Care taker of a child	10	17%
Tailor	10	17%
Total	60	100%

Most of Respondents were doing very low paid jobs, as 33 percent widows were working as house maids, midwives, 17 percent were working as care taker, 13 percent were ayah and peons in private schools and 17 percent were working as tailors. They are forced to do these low paid jobs because they are not educated or literate. There were only 7 percent educated widows who were working as teachers or in offices. They were so happy with their profession. They said that their education helped them a lot to get respectable status in the society.

One orphan's mother works in a day care center. Her job is very tough. They don't offer any food; she has to work all day in a standing position and nobody is happy with her and they abuse her as well. If she commits any mistake, that makes her salary cut down. But she is still working as she has 5 daughters.

Education and marriages of her daughters are the primary factors which forced her to work in such conditions. Widows have to go far off places for jobs as there are very rare opportunities of jobs for widows. So they have to go in the early morning and return in the late evening.

#### **4.35: Possibilities of income generation:**

In focus group discussions, widows expressed their views about the possibilities of income generation. In this locale there is not a variety of possibilities of income generation for these widows. But opportunities like sewing clothes, embroidery, running a shop of sweets, making any type of eatables on commercial basis, peeling different types of dry fruits for fruit shops etc. are available. These are the ways which some of them are using for the enhancement of their income and for betterment of their living standards.

#### **4.36: Health problems:**

Some of the respondents were suffering from severe health problems but they have to work for their children as their children totally depend on them. One of the reasons of these diseases and problems is the tension and depression which is resulted by poverty, mental and physical fatigue and the difficulties which they have to face for their survival in the society.

Some respondents were having skin problems as they wash clothes with different chemicals in different houses. A respondent said that if they start to take care of their hands and all these things, then they would not be able to work. One respondent has kidney problem and she has to discontinue her job

due that. One respondent was suffering from liver problem and all of her children are very young that's why she alone has to work and earn for her children.

Another respondent has heart problem and is a patient of high blood pressure and she had two severe heart attacks. She told that she often has high blood pressure due to the tension that if she dies, what would become of her children and especially of her four daughters who are still unmarried. In this situation, how these widows can take care of themselves as they are the only caretakers and bread winners.

#### **4.37: Emotional and Psychological Security:**

A widow faces more problems if her age is appealing for second marriage. This problem is in addition to the problems stated above. Moreover, she feels insecure, unprotected as she has to go out to run her household. Due to increased mental and physical pressure, one respondent said that she feels very depressed and tensed and sometimes sick. But irrespective of her own problems she has to run with the struggle of life.

In focus group discussions and individual interviews they told that when they have to go out for their jobs, they also have to tolerate the improper behavior and unbearable attitude of people. They feel very insecure and they have to face different types of strange people. On the top of that, poverty acts as a major catalyst to increase their vulnerability. Supporting mechanism is very important for widows as they need someone, especially a male, to support them.

According to a respondent, people don't respect them like other women who have their husbands. Education and economic independence are also of great importance in a widow's life. These widows told that after the death of their husband they feel very insecure and often become the victim of sexual harassment because there is no one to protect them, even their brothers and father don't support and protect them. So, all of the widows and their children are living in very miserable and problematic life with financial stresses and psychological depressions.

Most of them don't have any safe shelters or their own houses. They said that if they have their own house, half of their problems will vanish or solved because to live in a rented house is itself a big problem.

Widows have to pay double attention to their children in the absence of their husbands so that they can be trained and educated in a right way.

They don't want to get married again as they think that no one will bear their children and the women who are remarried, leave behind their children weeping and crying and start a new life. Mothers are unable to give sufficient time to their children as they are forced to do work outside their houses for better living standards.

#### **4.39: Common myth among the widows of this community:**

I observed very strange myth during my field work in these widows. They were of the view, that when someone's husband dies, then they become *na mahram* for each other. So, they are not supposed to celebrate his burial

rituals. Widow is not supposed to watch her dead husband's face. She will spend her *iddath* period as Islam has ordered her. She will spend her whole life with his name and in his home. According to them this is their tradition.

#### **4.40: Rehabilitation of War Widows:**

For twenty five years old girl, widowhood became a harsh reality even before she had seen the dreams of a bride. Married on first July 2004 with an army soldier, she was with him just for 48 hours before he left for the military operation in North Waziristan. He came home for 15 days leave. She became widow just after the 1 month of her marriage. He was martyred in North Waziristan.

Social and cultural taboos compel Maria to cry for a man whom she hardly knows, she cried not for him but on her fate for being trapped in hostile surroundings. Tradition demands from her to stay with her in-law's home as the widow of a martyred, adhering to strict moral code, a heavy price for one year of married life. The support system of armed forces, the regimental help, the payment of gratuity and pension all ensure that Maria is comfortably well off.

The state is responsible for the care of the widows left behind by soldiers martyred in the defense of the nation. The soldiers have made their ultimate sacrifices leaving behind their families for whom the war has just begun; war against deprivation, poverty and loneliness. Both her parents and in laws are having a tug of war to keep her with themselves because in this way they can have access to that money which she got as the widow of a martyr.

The Government of Pakistan is responsible for the social and economic security of these widows. Government is responsible for the free education and medical treatment in military hospitals. The Government tried to make every possible effort to ensure that widow is not cheated of her right by issuing the cheque in the name of the wife. But the money itself divides her away from her in-laws. The compensation attracts the greed of relatives and an illiterate widow is easy to dupe. She becomes the golden goose to be tolerated but not to be loved or cared. These needs were observed while interviewing these widows

- Respectable status in society.
- Employment opportunities.
- Property rights.
- Social security and social identity.

#### **4.41: Social Safety measures for the widows:**

1. Social security must be made available to every war widow regardless of her education or economic status.
2. Anti-poverty measure, under which widows should be given extra treatment, land redistribution, allotment of house sites and houses, health schemes, self-employment programs.
3. Rehabilitation measures targeting widows, such as vocational training, female education, awareness camps for their legal rights and provisions of assets for the self-employment.

#### **4.42: Case studies:**

This research was conducted in Dohk Hussau. In this locale, the life stories of the widows and their socio economic and psychological problems were the main focus of this study. Although the main purpose was to capture the life stories of widows and their experiences which they suffer as a woman then as a widow and then to know about their economic needs and psychological problems which they have to face.

Widows have very strong religious beliefs as a respondent said that God has made man a guardian for woman. So, a woman always needs a man may that be in the form of father, brother, husband, son and so on because she is dependent on man, especially in patriarchal societies. Besides all these religious beliefs they are pure eastern women who are very loyal to their husband even after their death. In a focus group discussion which was conducted on the issues related to second marriage of these widows, Nadia said that all widows should maintain their loyalty to their husbands by not remarrying again.

After the death of their husbands, these widows are taking care of their families and are earning to run their households and to fulfill the needs of their family. They have to work hard to earn as the whole family use to depend on their mother for their survival. Most of these widows seem to be very disappointed with their relatives as they have never helped them out in the time of trouble.



According to the respondents that whenever they asked for help from relatives, they refused to help them by saying that if she has as much problems then why don't she discontinue the education of her children and send them on jobs to increase her financial resources. There is a great contradiction in what people say and what they do, as all mothers said that children should get equal rights of good food and education, irrespective of their sex but on the other hand, they differentiate between their children and they do against their saying by giving more attention to boys than girls, consciously or unconsciously.

These widows are the heads of the households and they have the empowerment as they are the only economic providers for the family. But in Pathan families, woman is considered as less sensible and fool as compared to man. So in these families, no doubt widows are the economic providers but don't have as much empowerment, because when their sons are grown up, they become the head of the household and decision markers for his whole family.

In this area drug addiction is very common. The widows, whose husbands died of drug addiction, faced lots of problems in the life of their husbands now they were worried about their sons because now they are also involved in the same activities in which their husband's used to be. As in the cases of some widows.

A widow told me that his husband was employed in a private firm in Saudi Arabia; he came to Pakistan to attend the marriage ceremony of his brother in law. Here he became the victim of drug addiction and didn't returned. He sold all the household items and machinery even the gold jewelry which he brought for her from Saudi Arabia.

In a society which is truly male dominated, a widow has to face a miserable life, even more miserable when she is accompanied with small children. In our society, education for female is more important because in case of such problems she will be in a position to support her family by virtue of her education and will minimize her problems. Commonly, in our society which is called a Muslim society, there is no concept of dividing the assets and property and transferring in widows 'name. Consequently, this act results in the increase of her problems in every sector of her life.

Various groups of social welfare and various programs which are run by the government like (BISP) Benazir Income Support Program claims to help the helpless and poor widows and actually they are providing some assistance but a very short portion is addressed by them.

According to the data, the problems of the widows that are manifested include loneliness, insecurity and consequent depression and desertion. The second major area of problems is that of finance. The status and position an individual holds in society is largely determined by her economic status.

## Chapter 5

### 5.1: Assessed needs of Orphans

#### 5.1.1: Ranking:

Orphans said that the loss of their father is an irreplaceable one and nobody can take the place of their father and can fill the gap. They also said that if one is economically stable, society automatically gives him/her a respectable status. They ranked their needs as under:

- **Their own house**
- **Their education**
- **Good Food**
- **Good Health**
- **Respectable status in the society**
- **Entertainment**
- **Drug addiction among the young boys.**
- **Involvement in illegal activities.**
- **Attitude towards work.**

We can categorize these needs by making a pattern of these needs.

According to this pattern, the assessed needs are:

- a) **Basic needs**
  - i) **Food**
  - ii) **Clothes**
  - iii) **Shelter**

- b) Health related needs
- c) Social needs
  - i) Kinship
  - ii) Marriage
- d) Educational needs
- e) Emotional and psychological needs

## **5.2: Basic Needs:**

In the category of basic needs come those which are very essential for the survival of every human being. The fulfillment of all the basic needs is very essential for their survival, proper mental growth and physical health. It was discovered that most of these orphans were not properly provided these basic needs. In the focus group discussion young girls told the researcher that from many days they did not eat anything, as their mothers were sick and they could not go to work. They are not supposed to go out alone because according to their mothers it is not safe to go for work because people will harass them at work place. Now the shopkeeper also refused to borrow them vegetables and other stuff, as they are unable to return his money which they borrowed before on different occasions.

## **5.3: Food:**

These orphans need better and healthy food. With the help of individual interviews it was discovered that they want to have better, healthy and delicious food and told their choices. These kids are young boys and girls who need proper and quantity food for their growth.

In a focus group discussion, they said that they don't want unlimited food items but want at least better, healthy, sufficient food, so that their bodies can grow normally. In another focus group discussion, orphans said that better food is very necessary for their survival and not only survival but for a normal and healthy life. One orphan reported that he doesn't have the food of his own choice. These uneven circumstances lead towards angry, aggressive and rebellious attitude. He also told that there are occasions when nothing is available to eat.

According to a very young girl, their neighbors cook meat and the smell of the food increases their hunger. Sometimes she wants to steal food from other homes. Another young girl told me that whenever her mother brings food, she keeps big portion of the food for her brothers separately and give very less portion to her. This is a big discrimination which she often does on various occasions, despite the fact that girls help their mothers by doing different chores all day long, while boys do nothing. But girls are taught by their mothers to obey their brothers because they are above them and they are the decision makers.

#### **5.4: Clothes:**

Another need which was assessed during this research is the desire to have better, fashionable and new stitch cloths. The word "new" is much thought provoking as most of these orphans don't wear new clothes because their mothers can't afford it. These orphans also need proper and warm clothes for winter season. But most of the times their mothers have to beg clothes from

the people with whom these widows work or have to buy old clothes for their children.

In focus group discussion young girls told me that they can only dream of new cloths because they are unreachable and unaffordable for them. Sometimes the land lady, for whom they work, gave them their children's old cloths which are not less than a blessing for them. But they also want new fashionable clothes on different festivals but this is only a dream for them.

### **5.6: Shelter:**

Most of the orphans are living in rented houses as they don't have their own houses. According to these orphans, to live in a rented house is itself a big problem and a great sense of insecurity. These orphans want to have their own house so that they can have a sense of security. It was observed that the young girls feel very insecure and harassed in these houses. They were of the view that the owners of these houses don't respect them, they always warn them to throw their luggage out of the house if they are unable to pay the bill of that particular month due to some reason. They also told me that the owner of the house forced them to do domestic work without paying them anything. Their girls go to school and colleges but for us they are not having any kind of pity and sympathy in their behavior. In a focus group discussion which was conducted from the elder sisters, it was found that to own a house gives a sense of security and completeness.

In the "Ranking" they ranked the need of their own house on number one. An orphan told me that she is the only daughter of her mother. After the death of

her father, they had to face tremendous hardships to have a safe shelter. She told that first they used to live in Dohk Matkal in a rented house, then near the railway ground in another rented house. But it was really unsafe and difficult for them to live there, as people harass them, when they see them alone and weak, without any male support.

Another respondent shared that he lives in one room with his family in his grandfather's house. In rest of the house, families of his father's brothers are living. They don't want to live with them in the same house. His mother has also her share in this house. They don't have any other shelter and they have no other way except to live in this house.

### **5.7: Health related issues:**

Health related issues were very serious among these kids as these kids are living in very unhygienic condition. Some orphans have physical problems and disabilities. Their lives are very sympathetic and miserable than the other orphans who are at least physically fit. As the brother of one respondent is suffering from physical disability by birth. Improper food, poor living conditions and tensions have resulted in bad health conditions of them. They are very malnourished. Lack of medication and food forced them to live in miserable condition. Their mothers are unable to fulfill their health needs.

Similarly sister and brother of a very young orphan are also mentally and physically disabled. They are not growing normally and have no senses and feelings and are like dead bodies. These orphans also need the love and care



of their relatives, but most of their relatives don't want to keep any relationship with the family after this crisis.

Another orphan has the disease of Tetanus and is physically weak. Sometimes this disease disturbs his education. Sister of one respondent also has the same disease in a severe form. She is not a healthy child and can't attend the school due to this disease. But her mother can't afford the proper treatment.

Sister of another orphan is suffering from Tuberculosis and is very weak. Doctors have referred her to Murree for further treatment. Her mother told that treatment and medicines of this disease are very expensive. Another problem is that the whole family lives in a dark, humid and small room. So it is also feared that this disease may be transferred to anyone of her siblings as they all are living very close to each other in that room. As germs of this disease nourish and spread in this type of atmosphere.

A respondent has the disease of Tuberculosis of bones (a disease related to the bone marrow). Her mother told that the treatment of this disease is very expensive and she has to face many problems for the expenses of his treatment. He is the eldest of all. He is very intelligent but this disease disturbs his studies. He needs proper and continuous treatment.

There is another problem that some orphans are victimized by the hereditary diseases as one respondent has heart problem by birth and he inherited this problem from his father.

A respondent has a problem in her retina that's why her eye sight is very weak. She wears spectacles and can't see anything properly. Last month, doctors have tried to improve this weakness with the help of a surgery but she still has difficulty to see. Due to this she faces difficulty in her studies.

A very young girl who is 9 years old, it was diagnosed that she has become the victim of many psychological problems after the death of her father and is suffering from huge mental stress and poor health conditions. Whenever she hears about her father, she use to weep severely and falls ill.

The orphans, whose father died due to the excessive drug addiction, have the awareness about the abuses of drug addiction. They say that they will never use drugs as their fathers did. Elder brother of Sana Jahangir told that he will never use drugs as he has seen the pathetic end of his father.

In this locale health facilities are available but in very poor form. There are clinics of doctors in this locale but they all are illegal quack doctors, which cause more dangerous diseases in the people. They are much cheaper from the regular doctors; people can't afford their fees and are forced to visit these illegal doctors because of financial problem. These people can't afford expensive treatments and medicines.

All the orphans expressed their need in focus group discussions and individual interviews that they want to play and enjoy in parks and play grounds. This is very necessary for their health, proper physical growth and fitness. But their mothers don't permit them to do so as they can't take the risk of sending them alone to far off places and they can't go with their children to parks in order to observe them. This is the moment when children feel the absence of their father.

### **5.8: Social Needs:**

Satisfaction of social needs is also very necessary. Social needs of these orphans were felt and assessed through different methods. In a focus group discussion which was conducted from these orphans they said that they demand the respect, love and care, protection, affection, support, education and the fulfillment of their basic needs from the society.

### **5.9: Kinship:**

The mothers of these orphan children told that when their children see how other children are enjoying happy and prosperous life with both of their parents then they feel the absence of their father more. When they see that other children demand different new things from their fathers and their fathers provide them with these things with love, then these orphans become the victims of agitation.

There are some social needs which are not satisfied like they don't have the love of their relatives as they told that their relatives don't want to keep

relationships with them. Similarly orphans, who don't have any friends, sometimes become the victim of psychological pressure as they have no one to take care of them and love them. As in the case of one respondent who is suffering from a psychological complex because she doesn't have any friends and no one wants to talk to her,

Those children, who don't have both parents, intensely need someone to take care of them and look after them. Orphans who live in joint family system and are living with their paternal relatives, don't feel as much insecurity like those orphans who live with their maternal relatives. But even these children often become the victim of inferiority complex when they see other children living with both of their parents. One of the respondents said that when she saw her uncle loves his children, she felt the absence of her father very intensely. In fact they want to have a complete family.

Here they need the love, attention and care of their friends. For example, one orphan told me that she has 21 friends. Such a big number of friends reflect her need of companionship and love as she is being deprived of the love and care of both the parents.

### **5.10: Marriage:**

There is a great problem faced by orphan girls regarding their marriages. In our society parents have to suffer a lot when they want to find out a proper spouse for their daughters. Then there is another big problem i.e. the curse of dowry. In our society this is really a curse for poor people who are forced to

give dowry to their daughters. It requires a big amount of money and it is very tough to satisfy the demands of the in laws in poverty.

Mother of an orphan told that she didn't give dowry to her elder daughter as it was the second marriage of her son in law. But she has to give dowry this time to her younger daughter as her in laws are demanding it. Some girls told that their mothers have to bear the burden of the responsibility of their daughters' marriages alone. An orphan girl, without a strong financial background, who don't have any support of paternal or maternal relatives, if she not marries then she has to suffer a lot because in this society a woman cannot lead a respectable and happy life alone.

One orphan (who is the breadwinner for her sisters and grandmother) told that she went to the marriage ceremony of a neighbor's daughter and saw that the father was saying fare well to his daughter, she wept bitterly to remember the time when there was nobody to see off her elder sister at the occasion of her marriage.

In a group discussion, all orphans said that they know that their mothers are working hard for them so they want to grow up immediately so that their mothers can take rest and stay in houses and they can work hard to run their household. These orphans want to help other orphans like them after achieving their goals and becoming stable in the future. According to a respondent, "I want to have a respectable position in the society that's why I am working hard in my studies. So that I can help poor children like me."

They need double love and care from their mothers but their mothers are unable to give them sufficient time as they are forced to go out for their jobs. But their mothers try to keep them away from problems, pressures and troubles but they know what type of difficulties they and their mothers are facing. These children think that if they could have their fathers, they would not have to face as much problems. Orphans become mature and sensible earlier than their age as compared to other kids of the same age. They understand their situation, status in the society.

Orphans think and perceive that money is the first and last solution of each and every problem as they see it around themselves. An orphan told, "All is the game of money. Money can overcome each and every problem. Today, if we had money, we would not have faced such problems and tensions in our life. Then all our relatives will meet us and everyone will love us."

From a very young age children develop some desires to become rich and have honorable status in this bitter world but their circumstances become a hurdle in the way of their achievements and dreams. They need good socialization which can develop the structure of their personalities. As widows said that their children need guidance, socialization and training like other children. But their mothers are unable to give them sufficient time as they have to perform double duty. In their situation food is more important than love, care and affection.

### 5.11: Educational needs:

Educational needs were assessed through the analysis of their academic performance and educational life. The elder children who have to stop their education, they are unable to have good jobs. That's why they cannot bring pleasant changes in their disastrous life.

Orphans told me in focus group discussion that they are studying in schools but these schools don't provide them with quality education so, they want to study in good schools which give quality education. I asked them why then they were of the view the level of education which is providing them at government school and then in any private school is very different. They were of the view that it is the duty of the government to take measures for the establishment of equal level and quality of education in schools.

Unfortunately, in Pathan families girls are being deprived of education as they have very strict "Pardah System". Sister of a very young orphan also discontinued her studies due to this reason.

One respondent told that she wanted to take admission in college but her mother can't afford her education expenses. So, unfortunately, she has to discontinue her studies. All children have the exposure and understanding that without education they can't do anything and can't achieve respect and money in their lives. They want to become independent as soon as possible. Some of them told me that they have to face many problems to meet their



educational needs and expenses. Most of the orphans and their families make kites to meet these needs and expenses.

There are also some orphans who have to earn and work very hard to meet their economic needs. For example, one respondent has to do labor work and earn Rupees 25 daily. He doesn't go to school and just wander in the streets. He is living in the surroundings which are very harmful for him as his elder brothers and his brother in law uses drugs. His mother told me that he is the victim of child sexual abuse.

A respondent and all her sisters have never attended school but all of them are very fond of studying and going to school. But their economic conditions don't permit them to do so. She wants to study but her mother is unable to fulfill their educational needs. She said that her age has exceeded for school but she can take admission in a Madrassa. But the problem is that if she attends Madrassa, she has to quit her job but that is not possible for her because her household and family depend a lot on her income.

One orphan has 6 sisters and 2 brothers. Her father was a truck driver. This family is leading a miserable life after the death of her father as he was the only breadwinner of the family. None of these children have ever attended school. Both of Ayesha's brothers are very young and cannot earn for their family. Her sisters are illiterate that's why they cannot find any reasonable work. They said that if they were education they would never have faced such problems. Ayesha's mother and sisters use to make laces and peel the garlic and sell these items in the Sunday market. This is their only source of income.

These orphans need someone who can give them proper guidelines and help regarding their studies as they can't afford tuition fees. Their mother is illiterate that's why she can't help them out. In the case of some orphans, their elder brothers and sister are literate and can help them in their studies but those orphans whose elder sisters and brothers are also illiterate face many difficulties and troubles in their studies.

Elder sister of a respondent wants to continue her studies but according to her, she will have to discontinue her studies in the future as her mother can't afford it. She seems to be very disappointed with her future. An orphan said that her elder sister has not studied more and other two are disable, that's why they can't get education. So she is the one and only hope for her mother. She wants to become a lawyer and is working hard in her studies to make her dreams come true.

An orphan said, "I want to have good education and achieve a successful position in society as my father wanted me to get good education".

Another girl also wants to continue her studies after finishing school but she can't afford it as both of her parents have died.

In a focus group discussion, all the elder sisters of these orphans said that as they had not completed their education due to economic depression and didn't get those things which they wanted but they have the desire that their

younger siblings must get good education and all those things which they didn't get.

When in a group discussion, the desires of orphan girls were asked, a respondent and some other girls replied that they want to read good story books and religious books in their free time but to buy a book is a big burden on their pocket.

Some orphans have outstanding minds and are very intelligent but they don't have proper environment and surroundings for the nourishment of their personal talents, abilities and skills. A respondent is very intelligent and wants to become a pilot in future. But his economic condition is so poor that he can't afford to go to school. How it is possible for his mother to bear his expenses of getting higher education.

### **5.12: Emotional and psychological needs:**

Emotional and Psychological needs are those which, if not fulfilled, can destroy the whole personality and a man can become victim of severe psychological disorders. So the fulfillment of these needs is very essential.

Both parents of a six years old child are dead and he is living with his mother's brothers. He was the only son of his parents. His brightness and naughtiness has vanished and he speaks very rarely. Wife of his mother's brother told that when his mother was alive, he used to make different types of demands from his mother. But now he doesn't demand anything. Even if she doesn't give him anything to eat he remains hungry for full day but says

nothing. His guardians want to send him to a boarding house where he can learn and study as they are also poor, have a big family, living only in one room and the respondent also lives with them in that room.

One orphan is a 6 years old child. He is suffering from huge psychological stress after the death of his father. When he sees a new person or a stranger, he thinks that the stranger will take away him from his mother and family. That's why he seems to be frightened all the time. This is because he has lost his father and don't want to lose her mother.

In focus group discussion I observed that all the orphans were very much aware of the fact that what their emotional and economic problems are and why they are suffering from these problems and where they stand in the society. They know very well that due to the absence of their father, their families are suffering this low status in the society. As one orphan said that her mother faced a lot of problems for them and kept away her children from all the sorrows and miseries of life.

These orphans have a great sense of insecurity and incompleteness in their lives. They were not satisfied with their life styles. Most of the children have sensitive personalities and they have the awareness of their problems from a very young age. They became more sensitive, emotional and aggressive because of their uneven circumstances and environment. These types of problems and complexes are directly affecting the quality of their education

and their academic performance. Some of them have become the victim of inferiority complex.

Due to the death of their father or both parents, these children suffer from certain complexes like they become stubborn, rebel; some of them lose their confidence and their naughtiness, due to the harshness of life. Some of them become very serious, responsible and sensible and able to understand their problems and situation in the society. As one respondent said, they become mature and sensible before the time and can understand their responsibilities. Most of them feel their insult in taking money or any kind of help from someone else. It means that they don't like to be seen with sympathy and mercy. They want to become respectable and independent as soon as possible. As one orphan said that at this time they have to take Zakat from people but in the future he will give Zakat to other children like him and will help them.

### **5.13: Need of social security:**

Need of social security cannot be ignored and all the orphans feel a great sense of insecurity. This need was felt and observed during my stay in the community and during the discussions with different respondents and their elder brothers. They all live in one room of the house and rest of the house is occupied by their father's sister and her family. One respondent's mother has claimed their share from this house. Their fathers' sister's families want them to leave this house. But they say that where they will go. They have no other shelter. Their father's sister's son and his friends use to harass her and her

sisters so that they leave this room. So the respondent and her sisters feel very insecure, especially when their mother goes out for her job.

Another respondent and her sisters are also facing this problem they have their own house but they gave one of its portion for rent. Since then they are victimized by a great trouble as this family is very notorious and is involved in criminal activities. She and her sisters told that one of the drunken boys entered their house at mid night and misbehaved with them. He tried to harass her and abuse her. She cried a lot but nobody came for her help. After that event they have become very frightened and harassed.

#### **5.14: Use of drug addiction in these orphans:**

As there is no elderly hand is on the heads of these kids they are involved in all kind of illegal activities, like drug addiction, smoking and various kinds of other addictions. During my research I observed that these boys are young in age but they talk and behave like older people. They command their mother and snatch money to buy drugs. After using drugs they remain unconscious for hours. They are also involved in other kinds of addictions, likes addiction of Samad Bond, chars and drinking habit.

#### **5.15: Conclusion:**

A person's social position is defined by certain roles that are played by an individual. A married woman takes on the role of a wife, mother, etc. a widow has to suddenly 'engage' in certain roles and disengage in others. The dominant role is that of a mother to her children, the disengagement would



have to be in terms of her socio-economic, emotional and social activities. Due to the disengagement, many widows feel a lowering of their self-worth. Many widows feel guilty for outliving their spouse, others feel poor about their dependency; still others experience frustrations in their lives. Many feel depressed at being isolated. Most widows feel the absence of social and emotional support. All these could lead to difficulties in adjustment. Unable to cope with these could often lead to poor health. Ill-health rarely wins any favors' for a widow. This compounds her difficulties further. So, the package of psycho-social problems is complete for most widows.

Many widows are fortunate in terms of the slowly breaking down of the rigid cultural/social norms. This is resulting in some of the traditional ways being done away with. Better economic support is also helping widows in their adjustment. Resources like higher education, work, wages, etc., are also leading to enhanced control a widow has over her life. This is also resulting in better self-esteem.

Many families are also viewing widows more positively and treating them with dignity and respect. Some young widows are even encouraged to remarry and spend happier lives. The social isolation of widows is considerably less now, at least in urban settings. So, many widows have taken to leading meaningful lives by engaging in new activities like social work, starting their own enterprises, going back to study, pursuing religion, art and other forms of diversions.

Different forms of support groups have been formed in many metropolitan and rural centers. These groups engage in religious discourses, community work,



income-generation activities, recreation, social, political activities, etc. all there are changing the face of widows in hitherto tradition of Pakistan.

It should be noted that economic deprivation is a result of widowhood. But the deprivation is consequential to the socio-cultural marginalization. It is the patriarchal nature of society that keeps women in a supplementary role. The material resources are never at her command. She always has to receive largesse at the discretion of her father, brother, husband or son. Her identity is further reduced on widowhood. Customary tradition gives her no right in her natal home. With the death of her husband, her right in the marital home is questioned. Her economic deprivation is a result of her low status in society.

This is the legal position. But what happens in practice may be at total variance with the spirit of the law. There are many obstacles to a woman actually enjoying full control of her property inherited as a wife and as a daughter. Often women who do inherit are cheated of their independent shares. A widow whose husband had not separated from the joint estate is given only usage rights over the land. Her share is not registered which means that she can be deprived even of her usage rights. A widow has neither the resources nor the legal awareness to demand her right. Even if she has independent land in her name, she rarely has full control over it to sell, mortgage or even gift it. She does not get the absolute control, which she is entitled to by the law. The general perception that persists even today is that the land that a widow inherits is for her maintenance only not for her absolute use. In general, while the claims of the widow are recognized by law

and by society. A large percentage still does not inherit and the rights of those who do inherit are severely limited.

As daughters women's claims have much less acceptance. Their chances of inheriting are more in sonless families. Sonless families often adopt a male heir thus eliminating chances of the daughter inheriting completely. The reason for this discrimination is in the patriarchal attitude towards a daughter. She is *paraya dhan* (property belonging to others). So any property she inherits will belong to another. This is really, most important reason, a desire to keep the land within the extended family and lineage. In northern India, where close-kin marriages are forbidden in most communities, land given to daughters is perceived as lost to the matrilineal descent. gap between statutory law and customary practice, the dichotomy between having a right over land and getting actual control over it; the difference between independent and limited control over the land; the social pressures to will away a meager inheritance to her sons; the withdrawal of natal support; the hostile environment in the marital home, all are contributory factors to the economic deprivation of the widow.

With regard to remarriage the perception of widows is that unmarried men do not like to marry a widow and widower can easily get an unmarried girl as second or third wife. However, a childless widow is preferred for remarriage to one with children.

It is true to say that many widows live happily with the respect and affection of their children; the studies show that most widows to a greater or lesser degree are "unwanted insiders" in the families of which they are a part.

Possibly, as I see it self esteem is the strongest armour protecting a woman from the victimization of society. But our customs, traditions, and social practices are calculated to annihilate a widow's self esteem. A carefully worked out strategy involving rehabilitated and implementation measures coupled with capacity building and sensitization of civil society will alone give these victimized women the dignity that is rightfully theirs.

## Chapter 6

### 6.1: Suggestions and recommendations:

Islam established a respectable status for women in society and then especially as a widow. But our customs, traditions and social practices are designed to wipe out a widow's self-esteem. We are very inspired from Hindu traditions and customs, that's why we are totally ignoring Quranic laws regarding widows. A carefully worked out strategy, involving rehabilitation and implementation measures, coupled with capacity building and sensitization of civil society will alone give these victimized women their dignity that is rightfully theirs. Create awareness in public, media and administration regarding the plight of widows through workshops and seminars, thereby providing a forum for interaction between NGO's, engaged in the field of rehabilitation of widows and administration in different states. NGOs and Charitable Trusts must be encouraged to provide shelters for widows and abandoned women. These shelters should also run rehabilitation programmes, so that those women can become productive members of society. Enable widows and single women to access education, counseling and training, in order to attain economic independence, by reserving seats for them in educational/training institutions.

Their legal rights must be secured. Pensions for widows and deserted women be revised to provide for their present day needs and made compulsory. Support services and rehabilitation measures like shelter, employment/training measures for widows and deserted women must be given priority in all government programs. Special programs for income generation be devised

for widows. Children of widows belonging to weaker sections must be promoted by giving preference to them in schools and colleges.

In a society where gender variance is prevalent, disasters provide yet another occasion for discrimination. Disasters not only destroy the physical endowments of society but also affect the social structure. Where the structure is stratified the brunt is borne by the lowermost rungs of the society. Women across all the categories form such a group. Disasters not only reinforce the traditional disadvantages but also create new forms of discrimination. Hence, it is necessary to address gender issues in disaster management and take appropriate actions. The practical gender needs must be fulfilled in order to provide true solace to the affected people. Similarly, strategic gender interests need to be catered for genuine rehabilitation. This can be accomplished only if gender constraints and deprivations are overcome. This approach needs to be impregnated in the policy and needs to be implemented through the relief and rehabilitation measures. The process of gender discrimination could then alone be arrested and the severity of disasters reduced.

## **6.2: To Civil Society and Public:**

Public should support efforts made by Government of Pakistan. Each family is to be responsible for restoring self-esteem of widows and deserted women and assist in building a climate of moral concern and community care for rehabilitation of widows and deserted women. Monitor such families which indulge in violence against helpless women.

### **6.3: To Educationists and Educational Institutions**

Impart Human Rights education and prepare text books to be gender friendly.

Care of elderly by part of a child's education. More emphasis must be paid to skill development.

### **6.4: To Media**

- (a) Project success stories of brave women.
- (b) Educate public through slogans and holdings.
- (c) Government's schemes to be disseminated through mass media.

### **6.5: To NGOs**

- (a) Encourage community based organizations to mobilize people's participation towards the uplift of widows and deserted women.
- (b) Facilitate networking and coordination among like-minded individuals/ organizations working for the welfare and rehabilitation of widows.
- (c) Extend help to widows and other marginalized women to solve their problems by counseling.

### **6.6: Need to Introduce Values and Change Mind-set**

We need to change hearts and minds about attitudes towards women because no one wants a girl child and it becomes worse when one gets older. Religious leaders have a key role to play in changing attitudes. We need to lobby them. There are marginalized groups (women, divorced women,

widows) in the society which need respect from the members of society but, in general, people are having less and less respect.

An important issue for widows is loneliness. People don't have problems with poverty or health but with loneliness, the mind-set of educated people is not necessarily enlightened. There is not necessarily a connection between education or class and progressive positions on gender equality. Sex discrimination starts at birth; daughter is seen as an outsider's property (*Paraya Dhan*). The discrimination faced by widows adds to the woes of women. To change mind-set of men and children, start at young age. We need to think about the rights of weak sections of the society.



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## GLOSSARY:

Sadaa suhagan raho

May you be a wife forever

Randi

Abuse in Punjabi

Apna Ghar

Own house

Betiyon Ki Shaadiyaan

Marriages of their daughters

Mard Ka Sahara

protection of a man

Baa-Ezzat Zindagi

Respectable life

Mali Khushaali

Economic prosperity

Samaji Tahaffuz

Social protection

Bacchon Ki Taleem

Children's education

Rishtay Daron Say Taaloqat.

Relation ship with relatives

Sabz qaddam

Unfortunate person

Mufat ka mall

Thing which easily accessible

Zakat

Way of help for Muslims in the form of money.

Roti

Wheat bread

Rizq e-Halal

Money which is earned after hard work, or earned by hand.

Eddat Period

which a Muslim woman Has to stay home after the death of her husband. This is the order of God that she has to wait for 40 day in the home.

Namahramm

Strange person, a term used in Muslim community, it is order of Quran and GOD that a Muslim women cannot go out with her close relatives.

## APPENDIX

## Questionnaire

1. Name.
2. Age.
3. At what age you became widow?
4. Number of kids.
5. How many Years passed of your husband death?
6. Who is the bread earner in the family?
7. Any support from the family members?
8. Is this your own home?
9. How your husband died, like was he sick or some other reason.
10. How much you earn in a month?
11. How much educated you are?
12. How many Kids go to school?
13. Did u get any financial assistance for the government in any form (zakat) or any other form?
14. Did u ever feel any kind of harassment from your relatives and other male members from neighbor?
15. Do u feel any kind of harassment at work place?
16. Does your daughter also help you when you go for work?
17. You think that your daughters feel any kind of harassment where they work, or when they are alone at home?

18. How u bear your monthly expenses, like bills, and other basic needs of life?
19. Do u think that your widowhood has deep impact on your children behavior?
20. Does your son support you to bear your domestic expenses, if yes then how much?
21. Did u ever think to remarry?
22. Did you ever ask to your parents or in-laws about your right from their property?
23. How many hours you spent for work in a day?
24. What is the behavior of your relatives at the occasions of different festivals, did they allow you to participate fully or not?
25. Did your relatives showed any concern regarding your daughter's marriage?
26. What was your coping mechanism after the death of your husband?
27. How your life changed after the death of your husband?
28. Can you discuss your feelings of depression with your kids, inlaws, parents, or friends?
29. On which Occasions you missed your husband mostly?
30. What was the effect of widowhood on your and hour's children's social life. You feel behavior of the people and relatives has changed after the death of your husband?