



Life Cycle Ceremonies and Widows: A Situational Analysis

KEYWORDS

Dr.C.Gobalakrishnan

Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Periyar University, Salem – 636 011.

Ms.M.Sumithra

Research Scholar, Department of Sociology, Periyar University, Salem – 636 011.

ABSTRACT *The primary group is the nucleus of the society. It is characterized by face-to-face interaction, intimate relationship and we feeling. It also plays an important role in the reduction of emotional stresses. The reduction of emotional stress is not common among the members of the primary group in particular when a married woman become a widow. In the patriarchal society like India, the widow faces lot of problems in the daily life such as losing of the social status, non-listening of the words of the widows by others, non-invitation of the widows for the family functions of the relatives and so on. The present paper analyzes the neglecting of the widows by the kin flock. In order to understand the level of being neglected by the kin flock the present study has been carried out among the widows Thathampatty Division of Ayothiyapattanam Block, Salem District of Tamil Nadu.*

Introduction

Human life and society always go together. Every individual has its own needs and desires and in order to fulfill the needs and desires he must live in the society. Similarly in order to share the happiness and sorrows with others that time also the individual needs the help of the society. The individual always live in the society. Therefore the human life and society is inseparable. In the society, the individual always happen to live in the group. On the basis of the nature and intensity of social interaction the group has been classified into primary and secondary group. The primary group is the nucleus of every society. The primary group is consisting of family, neighborhood, relative's group, peer group and children's play group.

The primary group fulfills different socio-psychological needs of an individual such as love, affection, fellow-felling, co-operation, companionship and exchange of thought. It plays an important role in the reduction of emotional stresses and mental tensions. An individual learns social norms, standards, beliefs, morals, values, sacrifice, co-operation, sympathy and culture in the primary group. Participation with primary groups provides a sense of belongingness to individuals. When a woman lives with her husband, she received all sort of respects from others and also she feels a sense of belongingness in the family. The neighbors and relatives also invite the married women for their family functions of life cycle ceremonies like naming ceremony, tonsuring and ear-piercing ceremony, puberty ceremony, betrothal ceremony, marriage, and house warming ceremony. Once a woman loses her husband she also loses her social status in the society. This problem becomes acute in the patriarchal society like India. In such a society, the status of a woman is confirmed through a man. But in the absence of a man, she deprived with all sort of rights in the daily life.

Widowhood presents a myriad of economic, social and psychological problems, particularly in the first year or so after the death of the spouse (Fasoranti et al., 2007). Amoran et al., (2005), Abdallah and Ogbeide (2002) have concluded that a higher rate of mental illness exists among the widowed that their married counterparts. Chen et al. (1999) indicated that widows had higher mean levels of traumatic grief, depressive and anxiety symptoms compared widowers. Bruce (2005), Damon (2007) UN Division for the Advancement of Women (2000) have revealed that the Indian widows are suffering by emotionally, physically and sexually abused by relatives in the day-to-day life.

In the present study the researchers wish to analyze the neglecting of the widows by the kin flock to invite in their family functions of life cycle ceremonies of the naming ceremony, tonsuring and ear-piercing ceremony, puberty ceremony, betrothal ceremony, marriage, and house warming ceremony. Further the researchers also wish to analyze the readiness of the respondents for participating in the above said ceremonies when the relatives invite them to participate in the same. In the present study the kin flock means the relatives of the respondents on both the father as well as mother side.

Methodology

The universe for the present study is the widows in Thathampatty Division of Ayothiyapattanam Block, Salem District. This Thathampatty Division is consisting of 32 revenue villages. Among the 32 villages, two villages are located in very remote area. In order to consider time and energy, the researchers have selected 30 villages from this division. From each village the researcher has identified 90 respondents by using snowball sampling method. A structured interview schedule has used as a tool of data collection. The interview schedule contains personal profile of the respondents, family particulars, age at marriage, particulars of the husbands and problem experienced by the respondents. Before collecting the data researchers have explained the purpose of the study in a detailed manner and also assured the respondents that the collected data used only for research purpose. In this way the researchers established a rapport with the respondents as well as created confidence among them. The researchers spent 20 minutes to 30 minutes for each and every respondent. The simple table and percentile score have been used for analyzing the data. Since this study describe the characteristics of the widows and therefore descriptive research design has been used.

Results

The age wise distribution of the respondents shows that 42.22 per cent of the respondents are belonging to the age group of 30-40 years, 36.67 per cent of the respondents are belonging to the age group of 40-50 years, 17.78 percent of the respondents are belonging to the age group of 20-30 years, and remaining 3.33 percent of the respondents are belonging to the age group of 50-60 years.

With regard to education, 33.33 per cent have complied primary level of education, 26.67 per cent of the respondents are illiterates, 23.33 per cent of the respondents have completed high school level of education, 8.89 per cent of the

respondents have completed higher secondary level of education and remaining 7.78 per cent of the respondents have completed under graduate level of education.

While considering pattern of marriage, 60 per cent of the respondents mentioned that their marriage is arranged one, 23.33 per cent of the respondents indicated that their marriage is love cum arranged one and 16.67 per cent of the respondents revealed that their marriage is love.

While analyzing the reasons for the death of the husband, one-third of the respondents (33.33 %) mentioned that suicide is the cause for their husband's death, another one-third of the respondents (33.33 %) revealed that their husband died naturally because of old age, 21.22 per cent of the respondents indicated that illness like TB, kidney failure, jaundice, etc is the main reason of their husband's death and remaining 12.22 per cent of the respondents said that their husband died due to accident.

With regard to deviant behavior of respondents' husband, 65.56 per cent of the respondents mentioned that their husband have smoking habits and 74.44 per cent of the respondents revealed that their husband have alcohol consumers.

Table No.: 1
Distribution of the Respondents based on Invitation of the Relatives for the Family Functions

S. No.	Invitation of the Relatives	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Yes	55	61.11
2	No	35	38.89
	Total	90	100

The above table shows that 61 per cent of the respondents revealed that their relatives invite them for the family functions, and remaining 39 per cent of the respondents mentioned that their relatives don't invite them for the family functions of life cycle ceremonies like naming ceremony, tonsuring and ear-piercing ceremony, puberty ceremony, betrothal ceremony, marriage, and house warming ceremony.

Table No.: 2
Distribution of the Respondents based on their Participation in the Relatives' Functions

S. No.	Participation in the Relative's Functions	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Yes	42	46.67
2	No	48	53.33
	Total	90	100

The above table shows that 46.67 per cent respondents said that they always participate in their relatives' family functions, and remaining 53.33 per cent mentioned that they never participate in their relatives' family functions. Because of the bad treatment and curse of the relatives more than half of the respondents are always avoid to participating in the relatives' family functions like naming ceremony, tonsuring and ear-piercing ceremony, puberty ceremony, betrothal ceremony, marriage, and house warming ceremony.

Conclusion

From the above results, nearly two-fifths of the respondents' relatives didn't invite the respondents (38.89 %) for the family functions of life cycle ceremonies like naming ceremony, tonsuring and ear-piercing ceremony, puberty ceremony, betrothal ceremony, marriage, and house warming ceremony. While analyzing the respondents' willingness to participate in the relatives' family functions if they invite the respondents for the same, more than half of the respondents (53.33 %) replied that they are not willing to participate in the above said family functions. Because these respondents were treated badly by the relatives in the earlier family functions and that's why the respondents are willing to stay away from the family functions of the relatives at present. Since the study is conducted in the rural areas, therefore the level of non-invitation of the widows by the relatives as well as the intention of the respondents to participate in the relatives' family function is comparatively high. Therefore it is urgent need to conduct more number of awareness programmes regarding the inclusion of widow in the main stream of the society in the rural areas.

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