

**TITLE**

**AUTHOR**

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The status of woman varies enormously from one part of the world to another. However, nowhere do women enjoy equal status with men. But in the developing countries like Africa, the Middle East and Asia, the status of women is as low as cannot be imagined by women in the developed countries. Status is a relative term. Women's status can then be analysed in terms of their participation in decision- making, access to opportunities in education, training, employment and income.

In ancient India, women held high place of respect in the society as mentioned in Rig-Veda and other scriptures. Volumes can be written about the status of our women and their heroic deeds in the Vedic period. But later on, because of social, political and economic changes, women lost their status and were relegated to the background.

Women and men are two wheels of our society. Everyone should have equal rights and opportunities to serve in the society. Nearly half of the population is of women. For the development of any nation, women can make their contribution equal to men. In the new millennium the home and heart are not the only places for women. They are performing their responsibilities successfully both inside and outside the four walls of house. They are not mentally as well as physically weak. They are successful both in personal and professional life. They have potentials to perform their duties efficiently.

Much that has been granted by law is yet to be within the reach of them all in reality. In spite of all the efforts made so far, the disabilities and constrains on women are still far from allowing them to enjoy the rights and opportunities available to them.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century witnessed very active and multifaceted efforts in various national and international level towards a human phase of developments based on principles of equality, sustainability and empowerment with special focus to women. Females are increasingly getting assertive. They are now no more a glamour doll. They are no more folding their hands in subservience. Education has given them confidence and new breathing space where the world is looking at awe to this creation.

Even the attitudes are changing. Educated Indians are realising that there is in fact no difference between male and female and of course one has rich culture where one worships females in the form of goddesses. Women are taking calculated risks in almost every fields. All government efforts are made for girls for the betterment of their status. In this regard the advancement of women's position is the most significant factor in modern India. Conditions of working women in India have improved considerably in the recent years.

Education is essential for everyone but in case of women it is particularly significant. Education not only opens up vast avenues and opportunities for growth but affects families and future generation as well. Every Women should have given proper education. Education plays an important role in bringing about awareness on women's right. Educating a girl child is one of the most effective means to counter discrimination and enhance status of women and higher education would contribute much more effectively in abolishing gender inequality. Education helps woman to know her rights and to gain confidence to claim them. Educated women can recognize the importance of health care and know how to seek it for themselves and their children. Educated mother can pay quality attention to the needs of their children effectively.

Usually children's education attainments are linked to the education of parents, and the mother's education is certainly more influential than the father's as she is the primary source of influence on children. During early years of socialization, education of women is a step forward in direction of ensuring gender equality. Education empowers women to make decisions about themselves their families and communities. It is commonly perceived that she would be married into another family and would take with her any advantages she gains from education.

## II. DATA ANALYSIS

Analysis of the data regarding Mrs. M. Selvi, a widow who is running a Tiffin stall.

### BIO-DATA

Name : Mrs. M. Selvi  
 Date of birth : 06.07.1980  
 Age : 36  
 Native : Kovilpatti  
 School : Govt. Hr. Sec. School, Kovilpatti.  
 Father's Name : P. Govindhan  
 Father's Occupation : Farmer  
 Mother's Name : G. Malar  
 Husband's Name : R. Mani  
 Husband's Occupation : Driver  
 Father-in-law's Name : I. Ramasamy  
 Mother-in-law's Name : R. Ramani

Some questions are asked to the candidate and the data given by her is recorded.

### QUESTIONS:

#### 1. How did you overcome the loss of your husband ?

Even though it has been ten years since he passed away, still I find it much difficult to overcome the great loss. I even thought of ending up my life. But the innocent face of my children made me to change my decision. I started to live my life for the sake of my children. The biggest dream of my husband was to educate our children, and to make them as great personalities in this society. So, I took up the task of fulfilling his dreams.

#### 2. Have you felt life as a burden?

Yes, I have felt that life is not a bed of roses. After the loss of my husband, I struggled a lot to run my family. I am not well educated hence I couldn't get a good, profitable job. I was not able to feed my children regularly. No one was there to support us. As a single parent, I struggled a lot to overcome the burden.

#### 3. Was it difficult to educate your children?

Education is a must to all. Being a single parent, educating my children in a good institution was very difficult. I couldn't afford to pay the school fee of my children. But, with the help of my mother-in-law, I am able to educate them. In many occasions, I have felt that my life would have been a better one than this if I have proper education. I would have got a good job, and would have earned enough money to meet the basic needs of my family. I was very much particular not to give up the education of my children at any situation. Thank God and my mother-in-law, my children are getting good education in a good educational institution.

#### 4. How do you run your family?

After my husband passed away, it was very difficult to run the family. I don't have enough education but I have to earn money for the well-being of my family. So, I decided to come out with the Tiffin stall. At the earlier stage, I came across many difficulties. As a widow, it was not easy to run a business all alone. The response of customers varied. But as days passed, I have adapted the atmosphere. And now I am running my business well.

#### 5. How do your mother-in-law treats you?

My mother-in-law treated me equal once in a while. Mother-in-law always supported the other two daughters-in-law because they are well educated than me. I am an outsider but they both are her relation. But sometimes she treated me equally with them. Even I do something good she tries to find faults and used to scold me. This was my condition of my earlier married life. But when my husband died, when I stood alone and struggled to rise my children on my own, She helped me to overcome the loss and taught me to face the burdens of life. Because, this was the same condition she was in when she was about my stage.

#### 6. How do you feel towards your sisters-in-law?

I have two sisters-in-law. I do not move easily with them. They never cared about me and my children. They used to make fun of me and they always criticize me. They always discourage me in my works. But that doesn't matter to me. Nothing can stop me towards my goal.

### **7. How does the society responds you?**

As a widow, I face many problems in this society. I am not allowed to attend any family rituals and ceremonies. I am denied to take part in any good occasions like marriage or temple festivals etc., They avoid to face widows if they are up to go and attend any functions. They think that it is a bad-omen to face a widow. As a widow, I don't get any respect and equality even among my own relations. They try to avoid me as much as possible. But if it happens to meet me accidentally, they talk in a rush and move away quickly as if they have to do some emergency works. Moreover, I am used to it and won't expect any sort of respect from them.

### **8. Have you felt oppressed at any situation?**

I felt oppressed here in most of the ways. First of all, I am not able to fulfill the basic needs of my children. Being a woman, losing her husband makes the entire life oppressed. I felt most oppressed when my Sisters - in-law treated my children in a different way. Since I eloped with my husband against the wish of my parents, they never talk to me. Even after the death of my husband, they did not come to meet me. They considered their pride and reputation of the family higher than their widowed daughter. They did never care about me and about my children. This left me oppressed.

### **9. Do you have ever thought that you could remarry?**

No. I did not come across the idea of getting re-married. It is not possible to forget my husband and enter into a new life. I left my family for my love, my husband. No one can replace him. Even though he is dead, he still lives in my heart and will be forever.

### **10. What is your opinion about women and education?**

Education is essential for everyone but in case of women it is particularly significant. Education not only opens up vast avenues and opportunities for growth but affects families and future generation as well. Every Women should have given proper education. Education will never leave anyone helpless. It will help us even our relations hesitate to help. It will never leave anybody unanswered. If we have good educational background, we need not worry about our future.

### **11. Solution to the problem:**

Education plays an important role in bringing about awareness on women's right. Educating a girl child is one of the most effective means to counter discrimination and enhance status of women and higher education would contribute much more effectively in abolishing gender inequality. Education helps woman to know her rights and to gain confidence to claim them.

## **III. CONCLUSION**

The treatment of widows around the world varies, but unequal benefits and treatment generally received by widows compared to those received by widowers globally has spurred an interesting the issue by human rights. In societies where the husband is the soul provider, his death can leave his family destitute. The tendency for women generally to outlive men can compound this, since men in many societies marry women younger than themselves.

A woman would carry on her spouse's business and be accorded certain rights, such as entering guilds. More recently, widows of political figures have been among the first women elected to high office in many countries. However immigrants may wear life long white in southern India to signify their widowhood and devotion to their deceased husband. In other cultures widowhood is much stricter and unarguably more demeaning to women's rights.

It is often necessary for a woman to comply with the social customs of her area because her fiscal stature depends on it, but this custom is also often abused by others as a way to keep money within the patriarchal family. It is also uncommon for widows to challenge their treatment because they are often unaware of the rights under the modern law because of their low status, lack of education are legal representation.

The prevalence of single mothers as primary care giver is part of traditional parenting trends between mothers and fathers. Cultural definition of a mother's role contributes to the preference of mother as primary care giver. In addition to their traditional protective and nurturing role, single mothers have to play the role of family provider as well; since the mother must also fulfill the social benefits whilst also providing adequate parentage.

The candidate even thought of ending her life but she earned self confidence and struggled to find her path and finally started to live for the sake of her children. Working single mothers may also rely on the help

from fictive kin, who provide for the children while the mother is at her job. From her case study, it is evident that not only education but also self confidence and mental strength would be helpful to face any circumstances of life.