

Patriarchy and the Plight of Widowhood



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Abstract: *The focus of the present research study was to discover the socio- culturally created realities of widowhood, in Quetta, Balochistan. A women is said to be widow who had lost her husband and has not married again and she is said to be in the state of “widowhood”, Whereas , Widower is the term used for a men who have lost their wives. The comprehensive literature review on “widowhood” revealed that widowhood is coupled with many hardships and challenges. They have to deal with various difficulties, lack of financial and emotional support from their in-laws’ as well as other family members. The interpretative paradigm was used in the study to examine that, how widows who are already undergoing through widowhood, the society’s, (family members’) attitudes and perceptions in shaping “widowhood” culturally and socially. What effects does the social setting have on widowhood experiences? Hence, this study was conducted within the context of symbolic “interactionism” and “social construction of reality”. Theoretical framework offered the concepts and notions of internalisation, institutionalisation, historicity, social structure, social discourse, and status position to comprehend the patterns of widowhood experiences as well as the historical background and cultural norms that impact the lives of widows’. A Social welfare organization’s members have been selected as participants. In-depth interviews and FGDs were used in data collection. The research study’s findings emphasized the difficulties faced by widows, including their financial situation, loneliness, humiliation, and lack of social and family support, among other things, which are addressed in the research. Furthermore, the research findings indicate that gender discrimination against women is still practiced and patriarchy is prevailing in society it demonstrates that the status of a widow is dependent on how women are regarded in society. These factors all together determine how widows perceive widowhood. Moreover, a framework for future research on the comparative studies and analysis of widowhood among widows and widowers is provided by this study.*

Keywords: Patriarchy, Social construction, widowhood, subjective experiences

Introduction

Every society’s treatment of women varies depending on the culture. Women are dependent on their husbands, fathers, and brothers, especially in patriarchal settings. They are not eligible for inheritance or property ownership.

Pakistan is similar to other patriarchal countries in that it has a male-dominated structure that makes it more challenging for women to achieve independence. But as time has gone on, there has been a definite improvement in women’s sociocultural position. Initiatives to date have been made in many communities to provide

women the dignity they deserve, but there are still delicate issues to take into account. But as time has gone on, there has been a discernible improvement in the socio-cultural standing of women. Due to “uneven socioeconomic growth” and the predominance of tribalism, feudalism, and capitalistic structures in women’s lives, there is a significant variance in women’s status. In addition, gender is one of the structuring tenets of Pakistani society. The social significance of gender is predetermined by patriarchal beliefs ingrained in regional history and culture. Women internalize these ideals throughout their lives (Saeed, 2000).

Women have historically been considered to be living in abject poverty and being denied access to fundamental rights in underdeveloped nations for decades. While this is true for all women, it is considerably different for those who have lost the main source of support in their lives—their spouses. These women are referred to as widows, and because widowhood may be tough, their position is precarious in many communities. For the individual who lost their spouse, becoming a widow is seen as a huge loss. The death of a spouse, not only leaves a person grieving and feeling alone, but also causes the widow’s income and asset worth to decline (Koren & Lowenstein, 2008).

widows are typically restricted to their homes and aren’t allowed to associate with other men, they are seen as weak members of society, gender discrimination has long been the biggest obstacle to widows’ affluence. Despite the fact with greater respect in certain nations than others, gender inequality has been seen in almost every nation. In terms of education, the economy, and health, there is discrimination between girls and boys.

Even though women face many obstacles and hardships in our patriarchal society, little can be expected of their standard of living. However, the widows experience pain in a variety of ways rather than just one. They experience not only social and cultural shift, but they also struggle with their mental health. In our culture, widows are put in difficult situations because of the insufficient of help they receive through family and friends, such as limited financial aid, that

only exacerbates their pain as the widow’s financial strength has already lessened since her husband’s passing (Gopang, 2012).

According to Adikary in 2010, society pressures unmarried women to get married since they are seen as failures rather than active citizens in the culture. Although women have made progress throughout time, they still face social pressures before making decisions, unlike males, who are never held accountable for their actions.

A lady is required to carry out the widowhood-related rites while she is a widow. Instead than being cultural standards, these acts are quite harsh penalties for the widows. The painful circumstance they are going through as well makes it worse for them because of these societal norms and customs (Sossou, 2002). It is obvious that rituals and custom take precedence over religious deltas, even though all religions instruct their adherents to honour widows with dignity and reverence (Mirza, 2012).

Although there is knowledge of human rights, but still widows continue to lead miserable lives in many south Asian nations. They continue to face discrimination from various members of society, who view them as “bad omens” and deny them the property ownership right. In addition, the process of getting remarried is made difficult for them, which is nothing more than a humiliating act that goes against all human behaviour and religious teachings (Mirza, 2012).

In Pakistan, there are significant geographical and class variations in the status of women, which significantly affects widows’ circumstances. Additionally, they endure maltreatment and social and cultural discrimination (Hasan, 2010). Additionally, there is a dearth of statistical information available on widows. However, the Quetta District has 15,908 widows of all gender, according to Balochistan’s 1998 census statistics. 3,723 were in rural areas and 12,185 were in metropolitan areas. Additionally, information was provided for both sexes by age group. With 4% or less widowed or divorced women as dependents (District Development Profile, 2011).

Statement of the problem

In terms of social and cultural background, patriarchy predominates in Pakistani culture. The two worlds of men and women are theoretically separated. L as a concept is fostering “false ideological distinction” (Saeed, 2000). The society of Balochistan is primarily tribal. Due to tribal customs, women have lower status in most tribal communities. Baloch society is deeply traditional and conservative. These traditional and religious patterns prevent women from changing their role and responsibilities.

The suffering of widows worsen in such a divisive social setting whereby women are viewed as the weakest class in society (Umar, 2016). What may the scenario be for individuals who are living all with no males support in a culture where female are not provided much prominence or empowerment? When a woman becomes a widow, her life changes and becomes more tough.

The goal of this study, however, was to pinpoint widowhood as a socially created phenomena in Quetta, a region with many diverse ethnic sub groups. The goal of the study was to better understand what “widowhood” meant in the specific context of Quetta. By getting insight into the “subjective construction of widowhood” from the widow’s viewpoint, one might learn how “widowhood” is seen in society.

Furthermore, this research examined at the community’s perspective, more specifically the family perspective, in accordance to Quetta’s social and cultural framework.

Significance of the study

Numerous studies have been conducted on widows and other relevant elements of widowhood in western nations. While Pakistan does not place much emphasis on the phenomenon of widowhood, western researchers, particularly those working in gender studies and sociology, are quite interested in widowhood. There is a dearth of scholarly research on widows and the dynamics that surround them. Studies on the difficulties of widowhood in Punjab are quite rare,

Balochistan’s academic research trend is adversely confined in comparison. The prevalent widowhood phenomenon and their suffering must be brought up in academic settings, in Balochistan.

The study investigates the sociocultural perception of widowhood. Additionally, the study clarifies how cultural and structural systems affect the pattern of widowhood perspectives. For the policymakers to support the poor widows, the research study may be useful. The research study also offers a path for future studies that may be done on the dynamics of widowhood or a comparative comparison of the sufferings of widows and widowers.

The research investigates how widowhood is seen in society. The study also illustrates how cultural and structural systems affect the pattern of widowhood experiences. The research study could be useful for policy makers who want to support widows in need. Furthermore, the study gives future research on the dynamics of widowhood or a comparative examination of the sufferings of widows and widowers some direction.

Research questions

- What issues does widowhood bring with it?
- In the light of their own experiences, how a widow interpret widowhood experiences?
- What individuals (family members) think about widowhood and their remarriage?

Research objectives

- To investigate the difficulties of widowhood and comprehend the subjective meaning of widowhood from the viewpoint of widows.
- To comprehend the viewpoints of family members on widowhood and their subsequent remarriage.

Operationalization

Social constructionism

In 1966, Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman

presented a paper on how reality is socially constructed. They believe that social reality was produced by humans since it is the result of social interaction and activities. Social constructionists contend that via contact, people shape the world's reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

The social construction of women refugees was expanded by Helene in her book, "The Social Construction of Women Refugees." The author conceptualised social construction with the intention of analysing how social factors shaped the idea. The idea that there is a certain group of people—women refugees—who should be singled out for special treatment (Moussa, 1992).

Widowhood, this study uses social construction as a theoretical framework to understand how widowhood is constructed in Quetta. With the aid of social relations, interaction and subjective meanings, the researchers of the study employed this phrase to investigate how widowhood is seen in society.

Widowhood

The process of becoming a widow entails transition, change, and transformation. When the word "liminality" is employed, it refers to a continuum's process of transition. A widow "becomes a symbolic "passenger" or "liminar" with an indeterminate status; at times moving and acting as a temporary bridge between the divided but occasionally mixing worlds of the living and the dead" (Aoki, 1999).

When a person loses their spouses, they are said to be in the state of widowhood. Both sexes could be described by this phrase. Women are frequently referred to as "widows" and males as "widowers." This study's primary focus is on the widows in Quetta. To understand the social viewpoint on widowhood, the widowhood phenomenon was being examined.

Subjective experiences

"The interactions between the point-of-view holder and its explicit contents are what give rise to the subjective characteristics. When the conceptual elements openly contained in the point of view cannot be semantically evaluated

purely in confrontation with the world and some knowledge about how the point of view's bearer is "positioned" in the world is needed, an experience might be considered subjective (Campos, 2015). The idea of subjective experiences was used in this study by the researchers to comprehend widows' lives. Through their personal interpretation, the viewpoint of a widow is examined.

Review of Literature

Widowhood in worldwide

The neglected widows encountered in underdeveloped nations were highlighted in a UN report titled "widowhood: invisible women secluded or excluded." This report's main emphasis was on the difficulties and suffering faced by widows in underdeveloped nations. The report's findings indicated that widows are among society's "invisible" groups since precise age and socioeconomic data for widows in developing nations are not readily available. However, in some areas where there is a pattern of child marriage and girls become widows before they reach adulthood, it is more common for older women to experience widowhood.

Widows go through the same experiences and endure the same inequity in a patriarchal society even with different cultural groups and ethnicity. Widows are still discovered to be devoid of their property rights and to be in a vulnerable state in some nations where strict enforcement and policy implementation are very effective (Sardys, 2001).

According to the survey, widowers frequently remarry well into their old age, but elderly widows seldom follow this pattern because they are either denied the option to do so or are compelled to live in a relationship with a male member of her husband's family. or else, they live their entire lives in isolation while experiencing the many difficulties that come with widowhood. All across the world, widows experience social and cultural intolerance. They are being denied inheritance rights and property rights. They are being exploited, ostracised, mistreated, and dehumanised in the name of pretended cultural and social values.

The high rate of mortality among men, according to a statistic, caused a higher number of widows in North Africa, Central Asia, and Western Europe than widows were previously the case. The second difference is that widows are less likely to remarry than widowers are. Elder widowers also favour getting married to young ladies. The majority of widows outnumber widowers for these crucial aspects.

The position of women without a spouse is relatively low in patriarchal settings, and Indian widows have been shown to be particularly vulnerable and exploited in South Asian widows face difficulties and stigmatisation. The well-known Indian tradition of Sati (burning widows) highlighted the pitiful position of widows. Indian widows are associated with misery and bad luck. (sardys, 2001). Thousands of widows, particularly younger widows, were forced into prostitution and subjected to abuse as a result of their relatives' and family members' abandonment and isolation, leading them to seek shelter in old homes like vidhwa Ashram. Despite this, their sufferings are concealed from government policymakers and social welfare organisations. The reason that women or widows are denied their right to inherit property is because of the preponderance of local customary laws.

Similarly, Compared to widows' living in urban areas, the situation for Windows in rural Bangladesh is worse. Widows' were denied access to fundamental human rights. The study's findings also draw the conclusion that because widows 'are stigmatized, they are not allowed to take part in cultural, religious rituals because they receive discriminatory attitudes from their in-laws. In such situations, they have no choice but to seek protection in shelter homes. The idea of second marriage varies depending on economic class, ethnic background, and religious doctrine; widows were thought to be the cause of their husbands' passing are considered unlucky and are therefore prohibited from getting married; on the other hand if they are permitted to get married, they are only allowed to marry with in their former husband family or other close relationships (Sardys, 2001).

In order to determine the livelihoods of widows and non-widows in that country and community, a study was conducted to investigate how widowhood affects the health and quality of life of rural women in Rivers state, Nigeria. The research came to the conclusion that widows find it challenging to serve their needs since they earn less than non-widows, who receive support of family, the more importantly from their husbands which are regarded as a big and strong assistance. The research revealed that policies must be built to enable rural widows' so that they could be capable of earning enough for the fulfilment of basic necessities and can cope with the difficulties of widowhood. The study found that the social standing of single women, whether Widows, divorced seems to be very low in patriarchal culture, and women cannot live life alone with out endorsement of man (Nnodim, 2012).

A research study on the psychological effects of widowhood and divorce reveals that, in order to enhance the status of women in developing nations, general societal attitude towards females needs to be changed immediately. The status of widows is appalling; they are subjected to sexual assault and ignored by their relatives and in-laws. Thousands of widows are suffering in vulnerable, destitute, extremely vulnerable situations in underdeveloped countries, despite the lack of statistical evidence or knowledge concerning their struggles and status. Owing to these extreme circumstances widows not only face money problems and yet also their health and wellbeing and mental stability are affected. They are mostly left alone just to beg on streets and roads and thus are forced, blackmailed, and compelled for slave labour. Additionally, research suggests that society, families, and relatives should offer these women the assistance and support they require (Trivedi & Dhyani, 2009).

A study was conducted in the Kabira slums to look at widowhood experiences among various age groups. After analysing data from individuals from various socioeconomic groups and taking into account their race, researchers came to the conclusion that widows' experiences vary and according their age at

marriage, socioeconomic level, and other factors. Additionally, the study's findings indicated that they indeed have financial problems, as both widows and widowers had to deal with them. On the contrary hand, widows experienced stigmatisation as a result of which they shunned the idea of getting remarried because they were called "widows" and believed they had no value. Researchers assert that laws be made by the state to secure widows' legal protections as well as that they should be given education to help them deal with the problem (Ogweno, 2010).

According to the author of a study on widowhood and bereavement grief, the bereaved person goes through a dismal set of circumstances as a result of the death of their spouse. Due to their inability to get away from their departed spouse's memories, widows of departed spouses become the target of alienation, stigmatization, exclusion, and depression. More so than general wellbeing, widowhood has a significant impact on mental health. Additionally, widowhood has a variety of societal repercussions for both widows and widowers. The impacts of widowhood lead to a fall in social circle. The relationship between friends and family has changed from what it previously was. Widowers do not experience the very same social repercussions that widows do. Younger widows have been the most disadvantaged, predisposed, and unfortunate group, thus they have had to deal with a lot of struggles, adversities, and poverty throughout their life. Widows experience social isolation due to a lack of emotional contact and apathy from family members. Consequently, it becomes challenging to overcome the difficulties of widowhood (Destro, 2012).

A research study on "The alienation of the Nigerian women in widowhood" asserted that perhaps the practises toward the widows residing in Nigeria as well as other parts of Africa are depriving, stigmatising and dehumanising. Customarily, such behaviour is considered valuable customs attributable to the reality that these observances are in practise from centuries. From down the generations, it is afterwards normalized. Widows in Nigeria

perceived these customs as severe punishments, leading them to believe that widowhood is a sin. The patriarchal nature of Nigerian society leaves women with little power and total dependence on their husbands. The loss of a husband is a significant loss for a woman, and the societal norms surrounding tragic event make it an even greater threat and challenge. Widows experience poverty, dehumanisation, exploitation, and discrimination in society in such situations. Widows are already being denied their fundamental human rights to an inheritance and to a comfortable life. As per a research study, widows are required to follow customary widowhood rituals that have no real religious basis. (Iheanacho, 2015)

According to the results of a study done in Nepal, widows continue to face physiological, social, and cultural prejudice spite of numerous legal advancements pertaining to women's rights. The biggest issue facing widows nowadays, aside from the earlier difficulties, is financial. Due to ignorance and illiteracy, widows are denied their constitutional rights and inheritance. Every emerging and underdeveloped country is experiencing a rise in gender-based prejudice either because of her gender, widows are just being mistreated. Widows are associated with "bad luck," "misfortune," and "bad omen" in India just because of society's judgmental attitude, widows are eventually oppressed, constrained, and degraded. Widows face numerous obstacles and criticisms in a patriarchal system. This article also came to the conclusion that young widows find widowhood to be very difficult since they're not even given the option to choose whether or not to be remarried, as has been extensively mentioned in other studies. Members of the community are keeping a wary eye on younger widows (Adhikary, 2010).

Chakarvarti investigated widowhood in the framework of religion, ideology, possessions, and interpersonal ties. The study outlined the framework of widowhood, outlining how a widow's life and circumstances changed after the loss of her husband. She is obligated to abandon all the rituals and decorations she has been experiencing during her marriage.

According to Hindu traditions, a widow is required to take off the “kumkum” or “sindhore,” which is regarded as a symbol of marriage. For married ladies, colour codes that previously served as a sign of joy no longer apply to widows. Such traditions and rituals only serve to make widows feel ashamed of themselves. Colour symbolism for widows suggest that since there is no longer any colour in their lives, they are no longer deserving of happiness. She has also been excluded from the couple-focused environment in other circumstances (Chakravarti, 1995). Even though it diminishes widows' sense of dignity and, more crucially, endangers their lives, "sati" (the burning of widows) ceremonies are cultural practises that are acceptable and justified in India. "The country's estimated widows switch from being addressed as "she" to "it." They have "de-sexed" creative tendencies when their husbands pass away. Even if the current state structure is formed and regulations for the protection of women's rights are in place, widows continue to experience social marginalisation (Sahoo, 2014).

In contrary to the findings of, the cultural customs of the Luo people regarding widows' welfare are described in the study, a widow who had legally wed would have been treated with respect by the community following her husband's passing because marriages are regarded as a dignified institution. Otherwise, widows who choose to wed against their parents' wishes do not respect their parents or in-laws; as a result, following the death of the husband, their circumstances get worse as in-laws refuse to care for their late son's wife and kids. Even their parents do not accept such widows. The difficulties of widowhood worsen and become more serious in such situations. The concept of such religious activities had been misunderstood; in Luo, widows are required to carry out the practise of inheritance, which is a religious concept in the bible. The religious teachings are interpreted by the culture according to its own values. Widows are forced to participate in cleansing rituals that require them to engage in sexual activity with a man who will pay them for it. Men who decided to

participate in such ceremonies do so for their own sexual enjoyment and advantage rather than to show sympathy to widows. The study made the argument that the cultural customs, that merely serve as ways to humiliate and dehumanise widows, should be rejected and condemned by the state. In addition to engaging in such acts, widows are constrained from remarrying and are responsible for raising their children alone (Philip, 2015).

The psychological, social, and emotional effects of widowhood traditions in the Luo community of Kenya were examined by Samson O. Gunga in 2009. According to the study, family and kids are directly impacted by widowhood experiences. Children's lives are impacted by widows' pain and, in turn, by widows' circumstances. According to this study, widows of the Luo people need to get social assistance from their families as well as other community members in order to manage the obstacles of widowhood. Help from family and friends are regarded as beneficial in helping people move past their bereavement grief (Gunga, 2009).

Azumah claims that widows in Ghana go through the conventional rituals associated with widowhood, including washing, shaving of the head, engaging in sexual activity, and taking a cold bath. According to the author, these actions demean and dehumanise women's standing and splendour (Azumah, 2011).

According to a study on cultural gender ideas, Nigerian society is similarly patriarchal in that women have low status. The status of her husband has an impact on the woman's glory. In a patriarchal system, wives are totally reliant on their spouse. After her spouse passed away, the woman's status suddenly altered, and as a widow she is subject to strict cultural conventions and social censure. Whether an older or younger widow, they are all required to experience the difficulties of widowhood. As a result, these customary norms made widowhood a time of oppression, despair, loneliness, and suffering (Okemgbo, 2003).

Oweto and Odili in Nigeria's Ibia state examined a research by Basdan, who claimed that widows experience a severe range of ailments. The study

also revealed that widows are living in discomfort and are being denied even the most basic necessities for survival. It also cited research by Akande from 1998 that found widows to be the repressive group in Nigeria as a result of gender-based violence and intolerance. In accordance with traditional norms and practises, widows were subjected to severe punishment, whilst widowers received consolation. The widowers are never asked about getting remarried; instead, they are granted the freedom to do so as soon as their wives pass away, which is inappropriate for the widows. The study found that although widows in Arbiba have a legal claim to property under state law, they are denied this right to inheritance because of local customs related to widowhood in that community (Kingsley & Jones, 2014).

The researcher talked about how lonely widows feel after their spouses pass away. In a culture where couples are valued above all else, widows feel alienated from society and do not see themselves as belonging there without their husbands. The study examined the various emotional states experienced by widows in America. The widow may feel abandoned by her husband's memories if there is no assistance from family or friends. She was left to fend for herself in the world by the person who had shown her love, care, and luxury. When a widow observed other couples enjoying wonderful marriages, she felt incomplete. Widows' mental health is impacted by such feelings of loneliness (Lopata, 1969). According to Catherine, widowhood is not a sudden and unexpected event and is accepted by the general public as a natural occurrence, particularly among the elderly. The loss of a spouse is considered to be the most difficult event to deal with, especially for wives (Tidd, 2015).

After her husband passed away, the widow became totally dependent on her family, her in-laws, her experiences as a widow, which were impacted by her class or urban-provincial background, and her own possessions. In some social orders, such as those in the United States, a widow is more dependent on her own unique resources and choices. In others, she is completely responsible to her children and

cannot remarry. Widowhood can result in an extreme loss of status for certain people while also bringing about colourlessness and social isolation for others. However, widowhood can put the widows in a terrible condition that they must deal with. Indeed, even sadness is aware of the various forms and levels (Lopata, 1987).

Widowhood in Pakistan

A study was carried out in Punjab to compare "psychological analyses of widowhood and still-married middle age" in order to determine its impact on depression. According to the study's findings, widows tend to be more unhappy and psychologically disturbed. The study found that, widower people experience significant despair because they are unable to determine the purpose of their lives after losing their spouse. Physical health is adversely affected by depression. When a bereaved person is unable to adjust to the new demands of widowhood, depression sets in. The wellbeing is significantly impacted by widowhood. It is necessary to raise awareness about coping mechanisms. Only information on widows' psychological welfare was evaluated in this study. Widows' socioeconomic circumstances are disregarded. The psychological study of the widowhood phenomenon highlights the necessity for more research on widowhood from several angles (Batoool, 2016).

According to a study done in the Sindh, that widows experience hardship throughout working time. Widowed women deal with society's intolerable attitude. The widow forfeits her claim to an inheritance, her home, and her ability to get married again. The restrictions placed on widows by societal standards. Widows are subjected to abuse, harassment, and denial. The study also showed that following the husband's burial, the family's attitude and the legislation altered regarding widows. Dehumanization, privation, alienation, and rejection are all observed in widows (Saeed, 2012).

The tribal, feudalistic, and capitalist social structures that differ according to caste, locality, class, and the allocation of socioeconomic resources between rural and urban areas have a

significant impact on women in Pakistan. One of the regions where male dominance has long been the norm is Balochistan. Women are subject to the dominance of men, which prevents them from receiving an education, quality healthcare, and even decent interpersonal interactions and behaviours. Rigid customs, male dominance, and religious mindsets also influence women's social interactions and behaviours. The majority of Quetta's tribal residents believe that educating a female is a waste of money and resources. Because of these rigid beliefs, women are denied their rights, unable to find employment, and completely reliant on their male partners. In certain places, it is common to beat both daughters and wives. What miseries may a woman experience after becoming a widow if she is not accorded a respectable status and social standing? (Zarar, 2017).

Another study that looked into the socioeconomic and psychological aspects of widowhood was carried out in Jamia Islamia District of Arif wala. The study also looked at how families treat widows and how crucial family support is for navigating widowhood's challenges. The study's findings demonstrated that women in Pakistani society's patriarchal framework experience discrimination and several challenges. Punjabi widows in rural areas have a worse situation than those in urban ones. Rural women are often reported uneducated, which prevents them from knowing their rights and prevents them from finding work since they lack the necessary qualifications and experience (Khan, 2015). While urban women have access to career opportunities and the power of education, which aids widows in meeting their most basic needs. Widowhood has an impact on women's status and dignity as well. The study also showed that, in contrast to elderly widows, younger widows experience greater challenges due to having to care for their children and face greater social criticism, whereas older widows have the backing of their children and enjoy respectable standing as the senior family member. In addition to the many problems associated with widowhood, the absence of family support makes the experience

much more difficult. Frustrated by this attitude and the condemnation of society, the widow begins to wait for death as an escape from the difficult and unpleasant circumstances of life (Khan, 2015).

Furthermore, lack of family social support makes it difficult for widows to adjust to their new status as widows and make the transition from being wives. Such situations have an impact on widows' health. When widows believe they will never be able to get over the loss of their husband, they become sad and desperate. The patriarchal structure of society is what keeps women in a small role. According to this statement, widows are not granted a share of their husband's assets. It is observed that many nations have a special location where widows and their orphans can go to get the things they need to survive. Younger widows are often urged to remarry since it could have been tough for her to thrive alone in life. She chooses against getting married out of worry that her children would not get the right love and care if she gets wedded. Additionally, because they feel their existence has ended with the demise of their husband, the status of "widow" prohibits them from considering getting married. In their opinion, no one would be ready to marry a widow because of society's dispiriting and too sympathetic reaction (Khan, 2015).

Gaps in literature

Researchers from various fields have consequently started to take into account the main challenges faced by widows, still certain widowhood-related issues that have not been fully explored and require additional study. More consideration and relevance should be given to academic studies on widowhood. The majority of empirical research on the widowhood phenomenon has a narrow demographic focus. Additionally, the studied literature solely addressed the situation and difficulties faced by widows, ignoring other elements related to widowhood. Most importantly, the bulk of empirical investigations focused on Hindu widows and widows from the West. There is little empirical literature available on widows' life in Pakistan.

Only a small number of empirical research studies, yet, have been conducted in Pakistan that has focused only on the challenges widows confront without taking into account their age, cast, or level of education—all of which are determinants of these concerns. Furthermore, little consideration has been made of widow empowerment, independent development, or capacity building; earlier research primarily provided social welfare and policymakers-focused measures. Due to these gaps, the current study's goal is to focus on widowhood as a socially constructed phenomenon in the context of Quetta, Balochistan.

Methodology

To understand the underlying phenomena the research study applied interpretive paradigm in order to highlight subjective understanding and experiences of widowhood in their social context. Complementing the above mentioned methodological paradigm, this proposed study applied qualitative research design which is considered an appropriate method to answer the research question of this study. Universe for the study was Quetta city. The very first reason of selecting Quetta as a universe was the personal interest of researchers to know the understanding of people living in the multicultural set up regarding widowhood. Secondly, due to time and resources constraints it was difficult to cover other vicinities of Balochistan. Sample size of this research study was consist of 35 participants that was comprised of 17 widows and 18 community members (family members, married women, members of social welfare organization). That was completed on saturation point. To understand the view point of society member the participants were selected through non-probability purposive sampling. Semi structured interview guide was used as a tool for collecting data. Data was analyzed thematically as well NVIVO software was used for the coding of transcriptions. NVIVO provided a clear advantage to enhance the research quality. It helped to ease the researcher's task of data analysis. The researchers found it less time consuming to explore trends, identify themes and make conclusions (Wong, 2008).

Data Analysis/Discussion

The researchers looked at what it was like for women to become widows in this study. In other words, the life of a widow as seen and experienced from her own perspective, as well as from the perspective of the widows' family members as to how they think or believe is vital for a widow to live her life. When a woman acquires the status of widow, a new set of social conventions and laws are formed to treat her differently from other women, whether single or married.

Widows' perceptions of widowhood are primarily influenced by how society views and treats them. The research study highlighted the persistent economic circumstances and problems a woman must face following the loss of her husband, particularly in a culture like ours. Given the limitations and shackles of gender discrimination and other privations that women, and especially widows, must endure owing to the constrained and exceedingly conservative mentality of the inhabitants of Quetta city. After his demise, the financial condition of the majority of families grows worse over time, and since a widow's in-laws are often of little assistance to her or her children, it becomes extremely challenging for her to provide her children with a happy and healthy living. If the mother is uneducated, things could get even worse for the children because she might try to take the easy way out and stop their education, forcing them into child labour. Meanwhile, according to the findings, the widow herself has no choice but to work as a maid or a factory worker at most because she is illiterate. Second, the social relationships of a widow are an important component of this research since it outlines all the social challenges and difficulties that a widow encounters as widowhood progresses. However, all the love and affection towards the widow and her children changes either into pity or hatred as they no longer have the support of her husband and their father. The behaviour and attitude of the family, whether it's the in-laws or her own family, all have their own importance in a woman's life. Two responders' comments about abuse or the depravity brought on by money

serve as evidence of the awful shift a widow and her children must endure. False societal criticism and judgement that widows experience are comparable to third-degree torture in a jail. There are other misconceptions that have made life difficult for all widows, including the idea that widows always have the mis fortune. In addition, social marginalisation and a feeling of estrangement from society are problems that widows frequently experience. The social exclusion of widows worsens their depression as if they were not already grieving the death of their devoted husbands. They are instructed to keep away from events like weddings, parties, and new-born birth celebrations since they will bring bad luck to those particular occasions or events. In patriarchal countries, a woman who fulfils her responsibilities as a wife and mother is referred to as "a good woman," whereas a woman who dissatisfies these obligations and is unable to make the community happy and proud of herself is referred to as "a terrible woman." The conventional mindset of the people is that if a woman's spouse passes away, she is only seen as a "show piece" and "a needy human," someone to be pitied because she has lost her husband and is now weak and unable to enjoy her life under the protection and affection of her husband. Due to a number of variables, including social expectations, widows' ages, the responsibility for and security of their children, and current marriage market trends, widows face obstacles and constraints when it comes to their remarriage options. This suggests that the title of widow makes the possibility of remarriage more challenging.

Recommendations

Though other studies have discussed various aspects of widows' lives in different societies. Despite, the empirical research on the existing phenomena in Balochistan, particularly in Quetta city among multi ethnic group, there is no available literature found so far. This research study intended to offer a starting point for further work with this population to confirm and enlarge academic knowledge in the field of sociology.

It must be said that this research study, in the tradition of the qualitative method, and in its relatively small sample size is limited to its

context. However, the observations, suppositions and suggestions arising from this research are intended only as a starting point for further investigation with this population and beyond with the cultural communities in different regions of Balochistan.

For example, the widows who had discussed their subjective meanings might be different from those who had been living outside of Quetta city, they might have their own interpretation and meanings of widowhood. A fertile topic with of subsequent research would be to further elaborate on this area of widowed woman. Moreover, future researches could be done on the comparative analysis of widowhood experiences of both sex. Widowhood phenomena could also be further elaborated in different dimensions, with respect to culture, religion and gender. On the other hand, to expand knowledge regarding remarriage of widows there is a need of more empirical studies so far.

Although this research study includes the social perspective (family, social activists and widows), however to enhance the knowledge there is a need to include more perspective in order to study widowhood from all aspects and dimensions. Whereas, most of the research studies are conducted with cross-sectional method which is insufficient to provide long term policies, therefore longitudinal studies are required in order to achieve a thoughtful knowledge regarding widowhood phenomena.

This research study also suggests to expand research base studies for the welfare and empowerment of widows. Instead of providing policies to the welfare organization, research based surveys should be conducted to provide awareness and skill development programs to the widows.

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