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The Status of Widow Women in Madia Gond tribe: (Reference to Bhamragad Taluka)

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Abstract : The Madia Gond are a sub-tribe among the larger Gond tribe which spread throughout Gondwana. The actual term is Madia or it is also spelt as Maria. In the areas from Chandrapur district bordering with the Hindi speaking Madhya Pradesh 'd' (n or M) is alternatively used for 'r' (j). Hence, Madia or Madya, Mari or Maria means one and the same thing. Rev. S. Hislop opines that the term Mari or Maria is derived from Mara or a tree.¹ In Marathi also Mad means a tree or a forest and hence Madia means a forest dweller. The well-known administrator anthropological Dr. B.D. Sharma who was joint secretary (Tribal Development) in the Union Home Ministry and later was Commissioner for S.C. and S.T., Government of India is also of the opinion that the Madia of Bhamragad are a spill over of the bigger tribe of the Abhujmaria from the bastar side.² The Madias pronounce Maria as 'Maahrria'.

Keywords : Status, Women, Madia Gond, Tribe, Rural society, Urban society Tribal society, widow woman, Aborigines, Primitive tribes, Jungle people, Backward Hindu, Scheduled Tribes, Family, Language, Marriage, Occupation Primary education, Widow Respondent, Suhasini, Upshakuni etc.

It is necessary to study the status of women in any society to understand its proper structure. In fact woman occupies the half part of the population and is pivotal in the making of the society. Three kinds of Indian Society: Rural society, urban society & Tribal society constitute the Indian social structure. The present research paper aims at a social study of the status of widow tribal woman. The western Anthropologist **Elvin**¹ has described this tribal society as the aborigines or the natives. **Hutton**² said primitive tribes, **Baines**³ described Jungle people, and Popular Indian sociologist Dr. G.S. **Ghurye**⁴

described so-called Aborigines or the backward Hindus. Das described it as a waning tribe. The word tribal came into existence as one that lives by herd. The Indian Constitution under its clause 342(2) describes it as 'Scheduled Tribes'.⁵

Oxford dictionary describes it as "A tribe is a group of development acknowledging the authority of a chief and usually regarding them as having a common ancestor."⁶ It means that tribe is such progressive sect. that obeys the leadership of their head and assumes that they have begotten from some one ancestor. According to **D.N. Mujumdar**, "Tribal is a group of family or collection of families bearing the same name, inhabiting on the same land, speaking one language and having commonalities in marriage, occupation and other issues, abiding common abandonment, rules, mutual responsibilities and thereby preparing a systematic set-up with all these regards".⁷

To study the social, economic status of tribal women. From the sociological point of view status means the place of a man in a particular society in a particular time.

According to **Ralf Linton**, "Status is a position given to a person at a desired time."⁸ According to **Horton and Hunt** (1964) "Status is the rank or position of an individual in a group."⁹ According to **Tollcot**, "The positional fact of the Individual role is called status."¹⁰

The present study has been selected for studying the villages from **Bhamragad Tahsil in Gadchiroli District (Maharashtra)**. The objectives of the present research paper are as follows.

1. To study the social religious status of tribal women.
2. To search the family background of the tribal widow women.
3. To take information about the welfare schemes of the Govt. undertaken for the

benefactor of the tribal-widow women.

Keeping in view the objectives of the research some hypotheses have been accepted in the present study as below:

1. The impact of social & religious traditions on tribal widow women.
2. There seems no significant growth in education of children of tribal widow women in Ashram-school.
3. The Govt. schemes have not percolated up to the tribal widow women.

A descriptive research design has been used for this research paper in this research paper in this regard. Secondary sources have been used in this research paper. In this reference book, journals, Govt. articles, Newspapers, studios articles, websites have been used. The primary sources have also been used. The present subject is interdisciplinary and a qualitative research methodology is used for this. The social and economic status of tribal widow women in Bhamaragad Tahsil is a collected one. Instead of study the collected thing some type units have been purposefully selected and the truth is collected from its study. The concept of widow is explained as below.

Widow: "A woman, whose husband is dead, is a widow." : A woman living a laboring, dangerous, hateful, insulting life and one who stimulates kindness in the heart of the people is a widow. In such a situation, the condition of a widow without any offspring is quite miserable. The society looks at the widow without any sympathy. The woman who was honored when her husband was alive becomes a hateful object in the house after his death. Her very appearance is treated as a bad omen. Living an ascetic life, suffering in a joint family, having no right of a bellyful of food, and surviving on the kindness of the others and remain contented with whatever is got these things become the shave of her life. The widow was supposed to avoid wearing rich clothes, ornaments and she was not supposed to come forward in any auspicious occasion, not even any rituals performed on her own children. The

widow was supposed to face the suffocation of all this kind.

Upanishad-period: In the opinion of Alteker, "There came upon a great change in the status of women in the Upanishad period. The Right of women over the wealth was ruined. The girls have take education in the family itself. This was supposed to be received from father, brother or Uncle on whom there is an impact of the earlier customs, traditions & cultures. The women of such family used to extend Vedic prayers in the morning and evening."¹¹

Raj put period: Colonel Ride writers, "I was kept for the education of the prince of Bundy. When the widow Royal-Mother would speak us, there used to be a thick curtain between us and a reliable soldier of the state would sit with us."¹² Megasthenis has thrown light upon the Indian life in his book 'India' polygamy was in vogue that time. The only object of marriage was sexual - pleasure and to make a companion for a woman by giving birth to a child. He says further that women were sold and purchase that time. The kings would purchase beautiful girls from their parents. After marriage a bride was prohibited strictly from the father's house.

Medieval period: The Medieval period proved to be laborious for the women. The contact of the Muslims proved responsible for the luxury of the princes. The Muslims did every possible evils with the women won over in the wars. Child marriage became customary that time. In the period of Allauddin, Hindu people led the worst and insulting life. One Muslim legal counselor wrote to Allauddin Khilji, "I have heard that you have brought down Hindus to such a possible condition that their wives and children beg at the doors of the Muslims. Turki sultan and their knights used to go for forced marriages with the Hindu girls."¹⁴

The society is formed with the interactions of the Individuals. When thought about the human society, it is clearly visible that human society has made a gradual progress as compared with the other animals. Man has a civilization and Human civilization is the part of Human personality."¹⁵ Tolcot Parson has

discussed in detail about the social system and the concept in his book "social-system" According to him, "social system is a system of interactions created when different individuals interact mutually."¹⁶ Civilization, social institute, social moderations and standards & social controls etc all these things are mutually complementary with each other."¹⁷

In Hindu society child marriage is in vogue and there is a big ratio of people dying of accidents. As a result of this a group of widows has come into existence. Widows are given more humiliating treatment than the slaves. There were several restrain put on their conduct of life. Ishwarchand Vidyasagar from Bengal aroused public opinion in this regard¹⁸. According to Altekar the literacy of male in tenth decade was not more than 30%¹⁹. There is no any record of higher class society women engaged in the time arts like dance, music & painting. Even the high class Muslim society women never assimilated such type of Arts. They kept a considerable pace with reading and writing but the contract of dance & song was entrusted towards the professional women only²⁰.

From Vedic period to Sutra period (300 B.C.). It was difficult to decide the exact limit of women education. Upnayan used to be in practice. Prayers well made an intelligent female child to be born.²¹ for the women deprived of sexual pleasure with their husband at the young

age and socially distracted wives it was not possible to draw themselves to this profession²³. About its century, The child marriages began. The Smrutikars after Manu, maintained that the parents who didn't marry their girls before their sexual maturity, are the sinners of feticide. That is why, broom 4th to 5th century, The marriages were held between 11-12 yrs. Ashulalayan, Sanvart, Kashyap used to believe the marriages at the age of 7 or 8 to be Ominicions. As a result of the early marriages, the primary education came to an end²³. In Rug Veda, child marriage was not in vogue, The Sati custom was not in vogue, and Women were free for study.

A Record and Analysis received from Widow Respondent :-

The social disparity structure in Indian social system, which comprises the Varna, caste and gender systems. More or less, people have become accustomed to live life in this way, when though about gender system, mostly male and female is thought over. Although this is a reality, among women there is basically a mention of two concepts made in the view of the structural point; such as - 'Suhasini', whose husband is alive and 'Upshakuni' (Bad Omenons) whose husband is no more - the widow. In this essay, the analysis of social problems like the widow respondent's view about the remarriage - is made in detail.

The chart showing the age of the respondent at the time of marriage

Table No.1

Sr. No	Age of the time of marriage(in years)	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	15	06	12
2	16	06	12
3	17	18	36
4	18	15	30
5	19	03	06
6	20	02	04
	Total	50	100%

The Govt. fixed different age limits of the child marriage in different periods. In the present times, the actual age of a girl for child marriage was fixed by the Govt. as 18yrs. But in the above chart, it seems that, 18yrs of less than 18yrs

number is 20 which 40% in the total. If at all this is true, in tribal community the marriage of a woman takes place only when her menstrual period beings. This is proved from the above figures.

The chart showing the period of the Husband's death of the respondent
 Table No.2

Sr. No	Period of the death of Husband (in years)	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	1 to 3	06	12
2	4 to 6	19	38
3	7 to 9	11	22
4	10 to 12	10	20
5	13 to 15	04	08
6	16 More than	--	--
	Total	50	100%

In the above chart the ratio of the death of husbands in the first three years of marriage of the respondent is 12% of the total percentage. The no. of the offspring's of such respondents is the same at majority places. There are 38% of respondents who live life after their husband's death within 4 to 6 years. It means majority of the respondents become widow at the young age. In short, majority respondents live the life of loneliness.

Chart showing the no. of off springs of the respondents.
 Table No.3

Sr. No.	No. of off Springs	Boys	Girls	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	1	10	06	15	30
2	2	22	11	22	44
3	3	09	06	09	18
4	4	01	01	01	02
5	6	01	--	01	02
6	Nil	--	--	02	04
	Total			50	100%

There are 15(30%) respondents in the above chart bearing only one child. There are 06(12%) respondent who live life with only one girl child. The no. of respondents having 2 to 3 children in the survey is more and its percentage to the total is 62% which is notable 4% of the respondents have no any issue as their husband died within one year. In short, it proves that the women live life for their children - it may either be a male or female child.

The chart showing respondents opinions about education at asylum - schools.

Table No. 4

Sr. No.	Respondents Remark	Not Applicable	No. of Respondent	Percentage
1	There is a good lodging & boarding facility for poor students		03	06
2	The feeling of unity in student		03	06
3	Good education & Good socialization		04	08
4	All above options are correct		06	12
5	Not Applicable	34	34	68
	Total		50	100%

It is proved from the survey that about 16(32%) boys of the respondent takes education from the 'Asharam-shala' considering Asharam-school as a centre of development for the students of the tribal committee, the arrangements of lodging-boarding and educational material have been made. The respondents mentioning the growth of the feeling of adjustment this ratio is 32%. The remaining it is formed that 68% respondent's boys are illiterate or to some extent they take education in other schools. In short, the various educational welfare schemes of the Govt. have promoted the tribal to the main stream of education. This way, the tribal are linked to the educational sector.

A chart showing the problems aroused for the respondents after their death.

Table No.5

Sr. No	Nature of Problem	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Problem of Survival with reference to economy	17	34
2	Filling of loneliness and grief of parting of companion	05	10
3	Problem of child education	03	10
4	Problem aroused in fixing marriages of child	02	04
5	Agreed to all above options	21	42
	Total	50	100%

Every woman has struggle against the problems after their husband's death. The ratio of this is 100%, it is proved. It is also found that the respondent had to face social, economic, familiar, educational, Psychological & marital problems which 21(42%). The grief of parting of the companion and loneliness is found only with respondents bearing a female child and it's 10% of the total percentage. The main problem of survival is 34%. In short, the women who lived under the support of their husband before death had to struggle every problem.

Chart showing the nature of problems aroused after death of respondents husband.

Table No.6

Sr. No	Nature of Respondents	Total No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Father in Law's house	34	68
2	Mother's house	05	10
3	Independent	11	22
	Total	50	100%

The no. of respondents whose husband died within 2 years of their marriage is 05 which 10% of the total percentage. These respondents have a support of mother, father, and brother. This is also proved by a survey. The independent respondent's number is 11(22%) and those who live in their father in law's house live there only nominally. They look after then affairs independently. Its ratio is 68% with the total percentage. In short, it is proved that the total responsibility of the family falls naturally on the widow woman.

Chart showing the treatment given of festive occasions.

Table No.7

Sr. No	Nature of Treatment got during the public festival	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Not allowed for Puja-Path	20	40
2	People consider them bad ominous	10	20
3	Frequent in solving treatment from society	07	14
4	Then have to face all above problems	13	26
	Total	50	100%

Even today, the widows are looked down upon. They didn't get uniform treatment like the other women. The respondents who tell like this are 100%. In the above chart widows are not allowed to participate in family programmed, marriage, religions festivals etc. They are treated as bad ominous and discarded. That type of widows are more in number i.e. 40% in short, in the flow of globalization, the social & religious condition of the widow is miserable.

Conclusion :- It is farmed that, the custom regarding the status of women which prevailed in the Brahmin category percolated in other society as well. Whichever may be the society, the problem of women was there. With the help of the secondary sources we can say that the condition of women was miserable in the concerned period. In Rig-Veda, there was no child marriage, not even the custom of 'Sati' and women enjoyed the liberty of study. Through the ancient culture literature, various Scholars have looked at the women category or widow with a special view. Most of the times there is an evil part in culture as well. Civilization this soft of opinion is made and it is imbibed that it is civilization. With the help of the primary sources we, can say that there is always a domination of the socially % religiously higher people on most of the problems related to the widows. The other part of the society follows the higher class people. The women are one no exception to this. In ancient day woman was looked as an object of enjoyment only. The liberal feminism is the view of the modern people. It is also with the contact of the western this common belief still existing.

But as the abuse of woman is there, the references of praise for woman are also there. This should also be considered.

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