

## Emotional instability among half widows of Kashmir valley: A socio-psycho analysis

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### Abstract

The half widows feel detached economically, mentally and emotionally due to the crises they face in the society. The half widows suffer from the various psychological and emotional stresses apart from poverty and economic hazards. Not having any policy for rehabilitation and up liftment of half widows, it is quite important to draw the attention of the people who are at the helm of affairs towards this grave problem. Present study will be an attempt to have a analysis of emotional instability of Half widows and that way to provide a base for the policy formulation by various organization who are at the helm of affairs.

**Keywords:** anxiety, stress, depression. conflict zone, half widow, disappearances, mental health, victim, azadi.

### Introduction

The violence in conflict zones is having serious ramifications on the people, who may be simply the silent victims of such conflict. Among such conflict zones, the Indian part of the Kashmir is highly discussed zone. Specifically, from the last two decades, which has mostly been perceived as the most obvious reason of the India and Pakistan conflict, and is considered very crucial factor for the peace in the South Asian region? The Kashmir problem is viewed as the territorial dispute between these two countries since 1947 and in the year 1998, it results in the popular uprising in the valley against the Indian state and for Independence or "Azadi". This slogan for the independence has brought the painful currents, unforgotten memories, heavy loss of lives and property. Some of the victims are very much visible, whereas the others are silent therefore invisible and marginalized. Such silent victims of the Kashmir violence include the "half-widows", a new frame of reference, first time employed in any conflict zone. This group consists of the women whose husbands are missing but not known to be dead.

The great matter of concern apart from poor economic conditions is the psyche of half widows. Because of social stigmas some half widows are fed up with their lives and they not want to survive any more. The reason behind their survival are their liabilities "Their Children", they do not want to let them in more trouble without mothers as fathers are already disappeared. Half widows are depressed and disturbed because of the denial of property rights and remarriage. The present study will try to through light on the remedy against this great problem.

The prolonged and intermediate nature of the husbands' absence makes half widows vulnerable to several threats against their physical and mental wellbeing. While social networks have been crucial for most of the half widows.

Half widows further suffer when they are separated from their children. Given the aforementioned tense dynamics in the in-laws home, their in-laws at times choose to keep their grandchildren, while turning out the half widow and providing no visitation rights. In other cases half widows natal family take "Her" only on the condition that the children will remain with their paternal side or sent to orphanage. In certain cases children are divided between the half widow's parents and in-laws and

she may never see one/some of her children. Their forced status as "single women" coupled with gender bias result in half widow facing social isolation, shaming and physical vulnerability. Half widows have developed three sets of problems including emotional stress, sexual harassment, and social undesirability.

### Database and Methodology

Present study is based on both primary as well as secondary data. Half widows selected for the present study were selected from all over valley. 500 half widows were selected from all the districts of valley. Door to door survey was done and to study qualitative aspects face to face interactions were arranged with the half widows. Stress level of the half widows was measured by the stress scale devised by Pallavi Bhatnagar *et al.*

The main purpose of the researcher was to find out emotional instability of half widows. For this purpose standardized tool of Stress and mental health was administered on the selected sample and the obtained results were analyzed with the help of statistical treatment. The statistical technique adopted was t-value and ANOVA to find the exact level of significance between and within the variables.

### Data Analysis and interpretation

**Table 1:** Scores of Emotional Stress (Area I-Anxiety) on t-value

Group	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-value	Level of Significance
LSES	13.06	54	2.681	.365	1.03	Insignificant
HSES	12.59	54	2.261	.308		

Table 1 reveals that the t-value for anxiety is 1.03 which is insignificant. Therefore the level of anxiety of both the groups of half widows is same. Both the groups either of higher socio-economic status or low socio-economic status show same anxiety.

**Table 2:** Scores of Emotional Stress (Area II-Depression) on t-value

Group	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-value	Level of Significance
LSES	10.07	54	1.872	.255	3.13	Sig. at 0.01 level
HSES	11.19	54	1.543	.210		

Table 2 shows on t-value that the half widows with high socio-economic status and low socio-economic status comes to be significant at 0.01 level which reveals that the depression level varies in two groups.

**Table 3:** Scores of Emotional Stress (Area III-Stress) on t-value

Group	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-value	Level of Significance
LSES	8.72	54	1.785	.243	0.04	Insignificant
HSES	8.71	54	4.030	.548		

Table 3 shows on t-value that the half widows with high and low socio-economic status come to be 0.04 which is insignificant. Thus it can be interpreted that the stress level of both the groups is same and there is not any impact of socio-economic status on stress level of half widows of both groups.

**Table 4:** Composite scores of Emotional Stress on t-value of half widows belonging to High and Low Socio-economic Status Emotional Stress

Group	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-value	Level of Significance
LSES	31.85	54	4.280	.582	0.73	Insignificant
HSES	32.50	54	4.875	.663		

Table 4 shows on t-value that the high and low socio-economic status of half widows came out to be 0.73 which is found insignificant at 0.05 and 0.01 level of significance. It shows that the half widows belonging to high socio-economic status and low socio economic status do not differ significantly from each other on emotional stress scale. Both exhibit the equal emotional disturbances and are equally anxious and depressed. The table shows that their emotions are imbalanced and status plays no role there.

**Table 5:** Summary of complete analysis of variance for 3 Areas of Emotional Stress of High socio-economic status of half widows

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Emotional stress of half widows belonging to high SES	Between Groups	221.392	11	20.127	.814
	Within Groups	1038.108	42	24.717	
	Total	1259.500	53		
Mental Health of half widows belonging to high SES	Between Groups	1634.283	11	148.571	1.187
	Within Groups	5258.032	42	125.191	
	Total	6892.315	53		

**Table 6:** Complete analysis of variance for 3 Areas of Emotional Stress of Low socio-economic status half widow

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F
Emotional stress of half widows belonging to low SES	Between Groups	386.377	10	38.638	2.843
	Within Groups	584.438	43	13.592	
	Total	970.815	53		
Mental Health of half widows belonging to low SES	Between Groups	6719.042	10	671.904	3.487
	Within Groups	8285.051	43	192.676	
	Total	15004.093	53		

Table 5 and 6 reveals that there is significant difference between the emotional stress level of half widows belonging to low status as compared to half widows belonging to high economic status. The emotional stress level of half widows of low socio-economic status is significant at 0.05 level of significance. It was found that the half widows of low Socio-economic status exhibit more stress than the half widows belonging to High socio-economic status.

The mental health status of both the groups of half widows were F Ratio comes to be insignificant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels in all seven areas of the mental health scale. So it is interpreted that the mental health status of both the groups of widows either of high socio-economic status or low socio-economic status is same and there is no significant difference between their mental health statuses. To infer it is clear that the status of half widows although differ, but the status has not any major impact on their mental health in all respects.

### Results and Discussion

Women whose husbands are missing are the sufferers of social disgrace. They are socially shaky and psychological disturbed. Disappearance of their counter parts has led them to a state of anxiety, fear, and gruesome sorrows. Half widows of the valley are in doldrums unaware of their future. The social and the economic instability have led them to a situation where from it is very difficult to recover. They are dumped under the economic burden and the social stigma has made them more vulnerable to psychological disorders. Emotional instability, social distress, anxiety, hopelessness, etc. are their common characteristics. Not knowing the fate of their husbands, they live in a state of imprecision. The half widows face extreme torment in their homes and in homes of their in laws. Social status of half widows is equally concerned. All of them being muslim have to follow the Islamic law "Sharia" which have intensified their problems as they are deprived of property rights.

Half widows of Kashmir valley are the most persecuted sect of society as they are ignored by their own society. Living in deprived conditions they are insecure, their anxiety and stress level is very high which lead them to different physiological and psychosomatic disorders.

From the analysis of the available data it can be inferred that half widows are emotionally disturbed and socially unhinged. Suffering from post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD) they sleep and have nightmares. Not only has this but they also experienced stressful events which led them to emotional instability and strain. With the result they are prone to addiction of tranquilizers, sedatives and anti-depressants. Most of the half widows are still waiting for their disappeared husbands which have stopped them from remarriage, but this status have also put grave impacts on their physical and mental health.

It is obvious from the above discussion that the half widows live a very traumatic life under stress and sprain. They are living under fear and in the state of insecurity and inadequacy. So it is the duty of the society, government, political, social and religious organization to have a understanding of this underprivileged class of society and to devise some plans for them so that they can also cherish and take pleasure of life.

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