

**LONELINESS AMONG WIDOWS AND WIDOWERS
IN HAULAWNG COMMUNITY**

Submitted for the partial fulfillment of Bachelor of Social Work, 2023

Submitted by

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the research, '**Loneliness among widows and widowers in Haulawng Community**' submitted by Laltluangkima, for the partial fulfilment of the Bachelor of Social Work is carried out under my guidance and incorporates the student's bonafide research and this has not been submitted for any award, degree or for any other institution of learning.



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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Widowhood

Widowhood refers to the state of being a woman whose spouse has died. It is the period of time following the death of a husband or partner, during which the surviving spouse experiences the loss and grief associated with the death of their loved one. Widowhood can bring significant emotional, social, and practical challenges as the person adjusts to life without their spouse. It's a term often used to describe the status of a woman who has lost her husband, while the male counterpart is referred to as a widower.

1.2 Status of widows and widowers

The status of widows and widowers can vary greatly depending on their individual circumstances, location, and the cultural or societal norms of the community they are a part of. Generally, widows and widowers face challenges related to grief, loneliness, and potentially financial difficulties. Support systems, such as family, friends, and social services, play a crucial role in helping them cope with these challenges.

Many countries have laws and social programs to provide financial and emotional support to widows and widowers. However, the experiences and rights of widows and widowers can differ widely around the world. It's important to note that the status and support for this group can change over time due to evolving social and legal norms.

1.3 Scenario of widowhood

Widows' experiences can vary significantly based on their location and cultural context. Let's explore scenarios for widows on a global scale, in India as a whole, and specifically in the state of Mizoram, India:

Global Scenario

In many parts of the world, widows face common challenges such as grief, financial adjustments, and social isolation. They may deal with legal matters related to inheritance, property rights, and estate settlements, depending on the local legal system. Access to support networks, including counseling services and support groups, varies widely depending on the country's resources and cultural norms. Globally, there is growing awareness of the rights and needs of widows, leading to efforts to address their unique challenges and provide support.

Scenario in Indian context

In India, the experiences of widows can differ significantly from region to region due to the country's cultural and socioeconomic diversity. India has diverse cultural traditions related to widowhood. In some regions, widows may face restrictions on clothing, appearance, and participation in certain rituals or festivities. Many widows in India may not have access to financial

resources or may face discrimination in terms of inheritance and property rights. Economic independence can be a significant challenge. There can be social stigma associated with widowhood in some Indian communities. This stigma may result in social isolation and exclusion from certain social activities. While there are support systems like government welfare programs and NGOs that aim to assist widows, the effectiveness of these programs can vary from state to state.

Scenario in Mizoram context

Mizoram, a state in Northeast India, has its unique cultural and social dynamics. Predominantly Christian, may have specific cultural practices and traditions related to widowhood. Widows may be expected to observe mourning periods or participate in religious rituals. Mizoram has a close-knit community structure, which can provide emotional support to widows. However, community expectations and norms may also influence widows' behaviors and choices. In rural areas of Mizoram, where agriculture is prominent, widows might face economic challenges if their deceased spouse was the primary breadwinner. Access to livelihood opportunities can vary. The Mizoram government, like other Indian states, may have welfare programs for widows, which can include financial assistance and support for education or skill development.

It's essential to recognize that the experiences of widows are shaped by a complex interplay of cultural, legal, economic, and social factors. These scenarios provide a broad overview, but individual circumstances can differ widely within each region.

1.4 Challenges of widowhood

Widowhood can bring various emotional, financial, and social challenges. Dealing with the emotional pain and loss of a spouse can be overwhelming, leading to grief, sadness, and loneliness. Many widows may face financial difficulties, especially if they relied on their spouse's income. Managing finances and planning for the future can be challenging. Widowhood can lead to feelings of isolation, as the support system may change, and social interactions may decrease. Widows often experience a shift in their roles and responsibilities, which can be challenging to adapt to. Handling legal matters, estate planning, and paperwork can be complex and overwhelming. The stress of losing a spouse can impact physical and mental health, making self-care essential. Adjusting to life as a single person can be a significant challenge, including redefining one's identity and interests.

Support from friends, family, and counseling can help widows navigate these challenges and find ways to rebuild their lives.

1.5 Loneliness and widowhood

Loneliness can be particularly challenging for individuals who have experienced widowhood. Losing a spouse often means losing a significant source of emotional support and companionship. It's important for widows and widowers to seek support from friends, family, or support groups to help cope with loneliness and the grieving process. Professional counseling can also be beneficial in navigating these complex emotions and adjusting to life after the loss of a partner.

1.6 Statement of the problem

Many widows and widowers experience grief, loneliness, and depression following the loss of their spouse. Coping with these emotions can be overwhelming and may impact their mental health. After the death of a spouse, individuals often lose their primary source of companionship. This can lead to social isolation, which may result in feelings of alienation and a lack of support networks. The loss of a spouse can also lead to financial strain, especially if the surviving partner relied on their deceased spouse's income or pension. Managing finances independently can be challenging.

Dealing with legal matters such as inheritance, property, and estate planning can be complex and overwhelming for widows and widowers, especially if they are unfamiliar with legal procedures. Some widows and widowers may neglect their health or experience a decline in physical well-being due to stress and lifestyle changes. Accessing healthcare and maintaining a healthy lifestyle can be challenging. Access to support services, counseling, and resources specifically tailored to the needs of widows and widowers can be limited, making it difficult for them to navigate their new circumstances effectively. Widows, in particular, may face societal stigmatization and discrimination, while widowers might encounter gender bias when seeking emotional support or engaging in traditional caregiving roles.

Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that includes emotional support, financial guidance, legal assistance, and social resources to help widows and widowers rebuild their lives and foster resilience in the face of loss.

This study will attempt to understand the psycho-social challenges of widowhood.

1.7 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- 1) To profile widows and widowers in Haulawng community.
- 2) To assess the support network of widows and widowers in Haulawng community.
- 3) To identify the coping strategies or mechanisms of loneliness among widows and widowers in Haulawng community.
- 4) To measure the level of loneliness among widows and widowers in Haulawng community.
- 5) To suggest measures for social work intervention.

1.8 Tentative Chapter Scheme

The study will be arranged in the following chapters:

- 1) Introduction
- 2) Review of literature
- 3) Methodology
- 4) Results and discussion
- 5) Conclusion and suggestions

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter indicates the literature reviewed for the research and for better understanding and knowledge.

Nishi, M & Archana, S (2009) in their work investigate the loneliness among elderly. The aging population constitutes a significant demographic segment characterized by both its substantial size and a steady increase attributable to advancements in healthcare and education. This segment faces a complex amalgamation of physical, psychological, and social transformations that often challenge their sense of self and their ability to lead a fulfilling life.

Victoriya, A.M (2014) conducted a study to examine the loneliness in elderly people. The elderly population constitutes a significant and growing demographic, primarily owing to advances in healthcare and education. This segment of the population faces a multitude of challenges that encompass physical, psychological, and social dimensions, which in turn, can profoundly influence their overall well-being.

According to Vandana, N.S (2006) in an attempt to explore the multifaceted nature of loneliness and its impact on various aspects of an individual's life. Loneliness, as a subjective and negative emotional state associated with deficient social relations, has been a subject of significant research interest. The determinants of loneliness are frequently categorized within two primary causal models. The first model emphasizes external factors, particularly the absence of specific elements within an individual's social network, as fundamental drivers of loneliness. In contrast, the second explanatory model focuses on internal factors, including personality traits and psychological aspects that contribute to an individual's experience of loneliness.

Patricia, N (2009) in his study explored the loss of a spouse, especially for elderly women, is considered one of the most disorganizing life events they may encounter. This review aims to explore the experience of loneliness among elderly widows and its impact on their mental well-being during the first year of bereavement. Additionally, it investigates interventions designed to alleviate the negative feelings of loneliness in this vulnerable population.

Donald, et.al (1986) conducted a study to provide an overview of the existing body of research on loneliness, focusing on its prevalence, demographics, its association with psychiatric disorders, and its impact on physical health. The review encompasses a wide range of studies conducted on this topic, shedding light on the multifaceted nature of loneliness and its implications for different aspects of well-being.

Claire, W.G & Anne, S (1996) in their work focus on the complex issues of social isolation and loneliness, shedding light on various correlates that have been explored in previous studies. The aim is to provide an overview of the research landscape in this field and to refine our understanding by considering covariates. Additionally, this review draws on data from a study

conducted in North Wales, incorporating many of the correlated variables, and employs statistical modeling techniques to refine models of isolation and loneliness.

Carolyn, B (1981) conducted a study to focus on the experience of widowhood, a life transition encountered by approximately 12 million people in the United States today. It considers the death of a spouse as a significant life event that propels individuals through a transformative journey from being a married person to becoming a widowed person. Central to this journey are the formation of a new self-identity and the assumption of new social roles. Additionally, this review explores the factors that can influence the degree of success in accomplishing this transition, the challenges associated with widowhood, and various intervention strategies that can support individuals through this process.

Keming, Y & R V Christina, R.V (2008) in their work was to discover loneliness among older people is a global concern, and while research on this topic has been extensive in Western countries, there is a noticeable scarcity of studies on the prevalence and risk factors for loneliness among older individuals in China. This literature review aims to address this gap by examining cross-national research on loneliness and utilizing data from two national surveys conducted in 1992 and 2000 to assess the prevalence of loneliness among older people in China. It also explores the factors that contribute to their vulnerability to this negative emotional state.

Brittany, S.L & Karen, S.R (2013) in their work attempted to explore the underlying relationship experiences that contribute to loneliness among older adults, distinguishing between emotional and social loneliness. The study found out that loneliness is a significant concern, especially in later life, where its adverse effects on health and well-being become more pronounced. They also conclude that these experiences relate to positive and negative social exchanges, with a focus on both currently and formerly married individuals.

CHAPTER III METHODOLOGY

3.1. Field of the study

The study was conducted in Haulawng community based on the sections, i.e., Khuangchera, Chawngbawla, Taitesena and Saizahawla sections. Haulawng is 40 km distance from Sub District Headquarters Lunglei. It consists of 2227 population and number of houses are 456 as per 2011 census. Female population is 46.6%. Village literacy rate is 82.3% and the female literacy rate is 38.9%.

3.2. Research design

The study is an exploratory research design using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Attempt is made to explore the level of loneliness and coping mechanisms among widows and widowers.

3.3 Sampling

The population of the study include of widows and widowers of Haulawng community. The sample size is 30 comprise of 15 male and 15 female equally. Stratified Simple random sampling technique was used for identifying the respondents for the study.

3.4 Methods of data collection

The primary data is collected through semi structured interview schedules was used for the collection of primary data. The schedule composes of four sections – profile of the respondents, support network, coping strategies and levels of loneliness.

For assessing the level of loneliness, the UCLA loneliness scale developed by Russel, et al (1978) was used. The validity of the scale was checked and found out to be .873 Cronbach's Alpha which is highly reliable. Case studies and Focus Group Discussions were also conducted to collect qualitative data. Whereas, the secondary data is collected through online journals.

3.5 Data processing

The quantitative data collected from the respondents is processed using MS Excel and SPSS package.

CHAPTER IV RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. Demographic profile of the respondents

It is necessary to know the demographic profile of the respondents in order to know the respondents. The demographic profile of the respondents is classified into gender, age, age group, religion, denomination and educational qualification. They are presented in table 4.1.

In this study, the age group is classified into 40-45, 46-50, 51-55, 56-60, 61-65, 66-70, 71-75, 76-80 and above 80. Among the respondents, one-fifth (23.3%) falls in the age group between 71-75 in which female are more (26.7%) than male (20%). Three-fifth (16.7%) falls in the age group between 61-65 in which female are more (20%) than male (13.3%). A few (13.3%) falls in the age above 80 in which they are same percent as 13.3%. A tenth (10%) falls in the age group between 40-45, 56-60 and 66-70, in age between 40-45, male are more (13.3%) than female (6.7%), in age between 56-60, female are more (13.3%) than male (6.7%), in age between 66-70, male are more (13.3%) than female (6.7%). A few (6.7%) falls in the age group between 46-50 and 76-80, in age between 46-50, male are 13.3% and in age between 76-80, female are 13.3%. A few (3.3%) falls in the age between 51-55 in which male are 6.7 percent.

The overall mean age is 66.66 in which the mean age for male is 66.86 and 70.46 for female.

Religion is classified into Christianity, Muslim and Hindu in which all the respondents (100%) are Christians. Denomination is classified into Baptist, Presbyterian and UPC (NEI). Among the respondents, half (50%) falls in the denomination of Baptist in which male are more (53.3%) than female (46.7%). A little less than half (40%) falls in the denomination of UPC (NEI) in which female are more (53.3%) than male (26.7%). A tenth (10%) falls in the denomination of Presbyterian in which male are 20 percent.

Educational qualification is classified into illiterate, HSLC, HSSLC, graduate and post graduate. Among the respondents, more than half (63.3%) falls in illiterate in which female are more (86.7%) than male (40%). Three-fifth (16.7%) falls in graduate in which male are 33.3%. A tenth (10%) falls in HSSLC in which male are more (13.3%) than female (6.7%). A few (6.7%) falls in HSLC in which male are 13.3%. A few (3.3%) falls in 6 in which female are 3.3 percent.

Table 4. Demographic profile of the respondents

Sl/No	Variables	Gender		Total N=30
		Male n=15	Female n=15	
I	Age group			
	40-45	2 (13.3)	1 (6.7)	3 (10)

	46-50	2	0	2
		(13.3)	(0.0)	(6.7)
	51-55	1	0	1
		(6.7)	(0.0)	(3.3)
	56-60	1	2	3
		(6.7)	(13.3)	(10.0)
	61-65	2	3	5
		(13.3)	(20.0)	(16.7)
	66-70	2	1	3
		(13.3)	(6.7)	(10.0)
71-75	3	4	7	
	(20.0)	(26.7)	(23.3)	
76-80	0	2	2	
	(0.0)	(13.3)	(6.7)	
Above 80	2	2	4	
	(13.3)	(13.3)	(13.3)	
Mean age		66.86	70.46	66.66
II	Religion			
	Christian	15	15	30
		(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)
III	Denomination			
	Baptist	8	7	15
		(53.3)	(46.7)	(50.0)
	Presbyterian	3	0	3
		(20.0)	(0.0)	(10.0)
	UPC(NEI)	4	8	12
		(26.7)	(53.3)	(40.0)
IV	Educational Qualification			
	Illiterate	6	13	19
		(40.0)	(86.7)	(63.3)
	HSLC	2	0	2
		(13.3)	(0.0)	(6.7)
	HSSLC	2	1	3
		(13.3)	(6.7)	(10.0)
	Graduate	5	0	5
		(33.3)	(0.0)	(16.7)

Source: Computed Figures in parenthesis are percentages

4.2. Spouse and children's details

The details of the spouses' death and children are presented in Table 4.2.

The number of children is classified into 1-5, 6-10, 3 and 4. Among the respondents, majority (82.8%) falls between 1-5 in which male are more (85.7%) than female (80%). A tenth (10.3%) falls between 6-10 in which male are more (14.3%) than female (6.7%). A few (3.4%) falls in 3 and 4, in 3 and 4 both females are 6.7 percent.

Spouse death, time and year are classified into 1981-1985, 1991-1995, 1996-2000, 2001-2005, 2006-2010, 2011-2015, 2016-2020 and above 2020. Among the respondents, one-third (33.3%) falls in the year between 2016-2020 in which male are more (46.7%) than female (20%). One-fifth (20%) falls in the year between 1996-2000 in which female are more (33.3%) than male (6.7%). Three-fifth (16.7%) falls in the year above 2020 in which male are more (26.7%) than female (6.7%). A tenth (10%) falls in the year between 2011-2015 in which female are 20%. A few (6.7%) falls in the year between 2001-2005 and 2006-2010, in the year 2001-2005, both male and female are 6.7%, in the year 2006-2010, male are 13.3%. A few (3.3%) falls in the year between 1981-1985 and 1991-1995 in which both females are 6.7 percent.

Table 4.2 Number of children and year of spouses' death

Sl/No	Variables	Gender		Total N=30
		Male n=15	Female n=15	
I	Number of children			
	1-5	12	12	24
		(85.7)	(80.0)	(82.8)
	6-10	2	1	3
		(14.3)	(6.7)	(10.3)
	3.00	0	1	1
		(0.0)	(6.7)	(3.4)
	4.00	0	1	1
		(0.0)	(6.7)	(3.4)
II	Year of spouses' death			
	1981-1985	0	1	1
		(0.0)	(6.7)	(3.3)
	1991-1995	0	1	1
		(0.0)	(6.7)	(3.3)
	1996-2000	1	5	6
		(6.7)	(33.3)	(20.0)
	2001-2005	1	1	2
		(6.7)	(6.7)	(6.7/)
	2006-2010	2	0	2
		(13.3)	(0.0)	(6.7)

	2011-2015	0	3	3
		(0.0)	(20.0)	(10.0)
	2016-2020	7	3	10
		(46.7)	(20.0)	(33.3)
	2020 onwards	4	1	5
		(26.7)	(6.7)	(16.7)

Source: Computed Figures in parenthesis are percentages

4.3. Socio demographic bases

It is necessary to know the family details in order to know the respondents. The family details are classified into type of family, family social status, monthly income, occupation and other sources of income. They are presented in table 4.3.

In this study, type of family is classified into joint and nuclear. Among the respondents, majority (70%) falls in joint family in which female are more (73.3%) than male (66.7%). One-third (30%) falls in nuclear family in which male are more (33.3%) than female (26.7%).

Family social status is classified into APL, BPL and AAY. Among the respondents, majority (53.3%) falls in BPL in which female are more (66.7%) than male (40%). One-fourth (26.7%) falls in APL in which male are more (40%) than female (13.3%). One-fifth (20%) falls in AAY in which both male and female are 20%.

Monthly income is classified into Below ₹10000, ₹10000-15000, ₹15000-20000 and above ₹20000. Among the respondents, a little less than half (43.3%) falls above ₹20000 in which male are more (53.3%) than female (33.3%). One-third (30%) falls below ₹10000 in which male are more (33.3%) than female (26.7%). Three-fifth (16.7%) falls between ₹15000-20000 in which female are more (26.7%) than male (6.7%). A tenth (10%) falls between ₹10000-15000 in which female are more (13.3%) than male (6.7%).

Occupation is classified into government servant, unskilled labor, agricultural practitioner and other. Among the respondents, a little less than half (40.7%) falls in government servant in which male are more (60%) than female (16.7%). One-third (33.3%) falls in unskilled labour in which female are more (41.7%) than male (26.7%). One-fourth (18.5%) falls in other occupation in which female are more (33.3%) than male (6.7%). A few (7.4%) falls in agricultural practitioner in which female are more (8.3%) than male (6.7%).

Other source of income is classified into piggery, poultry, cattle rearing and others. Among the respondents, a little less than half (46.7%) falls in other source of income in which female are more (50%) than male (44.4%). A little less than half (40%) falls in piggery in which male are more (44.4%) than female (33.3%). A few (6.7%) falls in poultry and cattle rearing, in poultry, male are 11.1% and in cattle rearing, female are 16.7 percent.

Table 4.3 Socio-demographic bases

Sl. No	Variables	Gender		Total N=30
		Male n=15	Female n=15	
I	Type of family			
	Joint	10	11	21
		(33.3)	(36.7)	(70.0)
	Nuclear	5	4	9
		(16.7)	(13.3)	(30.0)
II	Family status			
	APL	6	2	8
		(20.0)	(6.7)	(26.7)
	BPL	6	10	16
		(20.0)	(33.3)	(53.3)
	AAY	3	3	6
		(10.0)	(10.0)	(20.0)
III	Monthly income (in rupees)			
	Below ₹10000	5	4	9
		(16.7)	(13.3)	(30.0)
	₹10000-₹15000	1	2	3
		(3.3)	(6.7)	(10.0)
	₹15000-₹20000	1	4	5
		(3.3)	(13.3)	(16.7)
	Above ₹20000	8	5	13
		(26.7)	(16.7)	(43.3)
IV	Occupation			
	Government servant	9	2	11
		(33.3)	(7.4)	(40.7)
	Unskilled labor	4	5	9
		(14.8)	(18.5)	(33.3)
	Agricultural practitioner	1	1	2
		(3.7)	(3.7)	(7.4)
	Others	1	4	5
		(3.7)	(14.8)	(18.5)
V	Other sources of income			
	Piggery	4	2	6
		(26.7)	(13.3)	(40.0)
	Poultry	1	0	1
		(6.7)	(0.0)	(6.7)

	Cattle rearing	0	1	1
		(0.0)	(6.7)	(6.7)
	Others	4	3	7
		(26.7)	(20.0)	(46.7)

Source: Computed Figures in parenthesis are percentages

4.4 Family details

Number of family member is classified into 0-5 and 6-10. Among the respondents, majority (56.7%) falls between 0-5 in which female are more (73.3%) than male (40%). A little less than half (43.3%) falls between 6-10 in which male are more (60%) than female (26.7%).

Number of earners is classified into 0-5 and 3. Among the respondents, majority (88.5%) falls between 0-5 in which male are more (92.9%) than female (83.3%). One-tenth (11.5%) falls in 3 in which female are more (16.7%) than male (7.1%).

Number of dependents are classified into 0-5, 6-10 and 3. Among the respondents, majority (84%) falls between 0-5 in which male are more (85.7%) than female (81.8%). A few (8%) falls between 6-10 and 3, both females are more (9.1%) than male (7.1%).

Table 4.4 Family details

Sl/No	Variables	Gender		Total N=30
		Male n=15	Female n=15	
I	Number of family members			
	0-5	6	11	17
		(40.0)	(73.3)	(56.7)
	6-10	9	4	13
		(60.0)	(26.7)	(43.3)
II	Number of earners			
	0-5	13	10	23
		(92.9)	(83.3)	(88.5)
	6-10	1	2	3
		(7.1)	(16.7)	(11.5)
III	Number of dependents			
	0-5	12	9	21
		(85.7)	(81.8)	(84.0)
	6-10	1	1	2
		(7.1)	(9.1)	(8.0)
	3.00	1	1	2
		(7.1)	(9.1)	(8.0)

Source: Computed Figures in parenthesis are percentages

4.5. Support network

It is necessary to know the support network in order to know the respondents. The support network is divided into suffer from chronic disease, indication if yes, being looked down by the society and any support received from community. They are presented in Table 4.5.

Suffering from chronic disease is classified into yes or no. Among the respondents, a little more than half (56.7%) falls as no in which female are more (60%) than male (53.3%). A little less than half (43.3%) falls as yes in which male are more (46.7%) than female (40%).

Being looked down by society is classified as yes or no. Among the respondents, all falls as no which makes 100 percent.

Any support received is classified as Yes or No. Among the respondents, majority (96.6%) falls as no in which female are more (100%) than male (92.9%). A few (3.4%) falls as yes in which male are 7.1 percent.

Table 4.5 Support network

Sl. No	Variables	Gender		Total N=30
		Male n=15	Female n=15	
I	Suffering from chronic disease			
	Yes	7 (46.7)	6 (40.0)	13 (43.3)
	No	8 (53.3)	9 (60.0)	17 (56.7)
II	Being look down by the society			
	No	15 (100.0)	15 (100.0)	30 (100.0)
III	Any support received from community			
	Yes	1 (7.1)	0 (0.0)	1 (3.4)
	No	13 (92.9)	15 (100.0)	28 (96.6)

Source: Computed Figures in parenthesis are percentages

4.6 Financial security

Any savings account is classified into Yes or No. Among the respondents, a little more than half (55.2%) falls as yes in which male are more (73.3%) than female (35.7%). A little less than half (44.8%) falls as no in which female are more (64.3%) than male (26.7%).

Received social security/assistance from the government is classified as yes or no. Among the respondents, More than half (64.3%) falls as no in which both male and female are 64.3%. One-third (35.7%) falls as yes in which both male and female are 35.7 percent.

Indication of social security/assistance from the government is classified into service pension, old age pension and none. Among the respondents, a little less than half (47.6%) falls in none in which female are more (54.5%) than male (40%). One-third (38.1%) falls in service pension in which male are more (40%) than female (36.4%). A few (14.3%) falls in old age pension in which male are more (20%) than female (9.1%).

Table 4.6 Financial security

Sl. No	Variables	Gender		Total N=30
		Male n=15	Female n=15	
I	Any savings account			
	Yes	11 (73.3)	5 (35.7)	16 (55.2)
	No	4 (26.7)	9 (64.3)	13 (44.8)
II	Received social security/assistance from the government			
	Yes	5 (35.7)	5 (35.7)	10 (35.7)
	No	9 (64.3)	9 (64.3)	18 (64.3)
III	Indicate social security/assistance from the government			
	Service pension	4 (40.0)	4 (36.4)	8 (38.1)
	Old age pension	2 (20.0)	1 (9.1)	3 (14.3)
	None	4 (40.0)	6 (54.5)	10 (47.6)

Source: Computed Figures in parenthesis are percentages

4.7. Support received during distress situations

Table 4.7 shows respondents support received during distress situations and gender by t-test distribution. The support network comprises of children, friends, relatives and others. Among the respondents, mean scores, the majority (3.97) is overall support network in which the majority (3.97) mean score are support others, mean score are female (4) and male (3.93).

In order to find out the relationship between support received during distress situations and gender by applying T test, hypothesis is derived as below;

H_0 There is no significance relationship between support received during distress situations and gender.

H_1 There is a significance relationship between support received during distress situations and gender.

There is no significance between support children, support friends, support relatives and support others. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted at 5% level with regard to support children, support friends, support relatives and support others because Mizos are close-knit society has no class distinction and no discrimination on ground of sex, everyone were hospitable with kind, compassionate, unselfish and helpful.

Table 4.7 Support received during distress situations by gender

Sl. No	Support Network	Male		Female		Total		t value	P value
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
1	Support children	1.40	0.83	1.67	1.11	1.53	0.97	-.745	.463
2	Support friends	2.33	0.82	2.47	0.52	2.40	0.67	-.535	.597
3	Support relatives	1.80	0.68	2.00	0.38	1.90	0.55	-1.000	.326
4	Support others	3.93	0.26	4.00	0.00	3.97	0.18	-1.000	.326
5	Overall support network	2.69	0.20	2.83	0.27	2.76	0.24	-1.538	.135

Source: Computed

*p<0.05

**p<0.01

4.8 Time most spent with by gender

Table 4.8. shows respondents most time spent and gender by t-test distribution. The time most spent with comprises of children, friends, relatives and others. Among the respondents, mean score, the majority (3.43) is overall time spent in which the majority (3.43) mean score are support others, mean score are male (3.47) and female (3.40).

In order to find out the relationship between time most spent with and gender by applying T test, hypothesis is derived as below;

H_0 = There is no significance relationship between time spent with and gender.

H_1 = There is a significance relationship between time spent with and gender.

There is no significance between children, friends, relatives and others. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted at 5% level with regard to children, friends, relatives and others because the Mizo society have cultural and social norms that promote a relatively equal distribution and interaction of the people.

Table 4.8 Time spent with by gender

Sl. No	Time spent with	Male		Female		Total		t Value	P value
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
1	Children	1.67	0.98	1.73	1.10	1.70	1.02	-.176	.862
2	Friends	2.53	0.99	3.00	0.65	2.77	0.86	-1.522	.139
3	Relatives	2.60	0.99	2.60	0.63	2.60	0.81	0.000	1.000
4	Others	3.47	0.83	3.40	0.74	3.43	0.77	.232	.818
5	Overall time spent	2.70	0.41	2.83	0.46	2.77	0.44	-.835	.411

Source: Computed

*p<0.05

**p<0.01

4.9 Coping mechanism

Table 4.9 shows respondents coping mechanisms and gender by correlation. The coping mechanisms comprises of religion/church activities, community activities, reading Bible/praying, reading/writing, works (Jhuming, farming, fishing poultry, etc.), travelling, picnic/dinner etc., alcohol/substance abuse, talking out with friends, sex/dating/romantic affairs, politics, listening to music and social media. Among the respondents, mean score, the majority (3.83) is overall coping mechanism in which the majority (3.83) mean score are female (3.93) and male (3.73).

In order to find out the relationship between coping mechanism and gender by applying T test, hypothesis is derived as below;

H_0 = There is no significance relationship between coping mechanism and gender.

H_1 = There is a significance relationship between coping mechanism and gender.

Since the P values is less than 0.05, null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level with regards to travelling, picnic and engagement in politics or political activities. Hence, there is a significant difference between widow and widowers with regards to travelling, picnic and engagement in politics or political activities.

Based on the mean score, the widowers are more into travelling, picnic/dinner etc. and involvement in politics to cope with their loneliness as compared to the widows.

There is no significance between widows and widowers in regards to religion/church activities, community activities, reading bible/praying, reading/writing, works (Jhuming, farming, fishing poultry, etc.), alcohol/substance abuse, talking out with friends, listening to music, social media and overall coping mechanisms.

Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted at 5% level with regards to religion/church activities, community activities, reading bible/praying, reading/writing, works (Jhuming, farming, fishing

poultry, etc.), alcohol/substance abuse, talking out with friends, listening to music, social media and overall coping mechanisms.

Therefore, the table reveals that the widows and widowers are finding life difficult to cope with and thus, are engage in multiple activities to defeat their loneliness in one way or another.

Table 4.9 Coping mechanism by gender

Sl. No	Coping mechanism	Male		Female		Total		t value	P value
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
1	Religion/church activities	1.13	0.35	1.40	0.63	1.27	0.52	8.467	.165
2	Community activities	2.67	0.98	3.40	0.83	3.03	0.96	1.812	.035
3	Reading Bible/praying	1.47	0.83	1.53	0.52	1.50	0.68	.825	.794
4	Reading/writing	2.27	0.88	2.73	0.96	2.50	0.94	.732	.177
5	Works (Jhuming, farming, fishing poultry, etc)	3.60	0.63	3.20	0.94	3.40	0.81	7.651	.183
6	Travelling	2.93	0.96	4.00	0.00	3.47	0.86	102.756	.000
7	Picnic/dinner etc.	3.33	0.72	4.00	0.00	3.67	0.61	53.282	.001
8	Alcohol/substance abuse	3.73	0.59	3.93	0.26	3.83	0.46	6.606	.242
9	Talking out with friends	2.13	0.35	2.80	0.94	2.47	0.78	33.743	.016
10	Politics	3.00	0.93	4.00	0.00	3.50	0.82	56.000	.000
11	Listening to music	2.60	0.91	2.93	0.88	2.77	0.90	.029	.318
12	Social media	2.60	0.91	3.40	0.91	3.00	0.98	0.000	.023
13	Overall coping mechanism	2.62	0.53	3.11	0.35	2.87	0.51	2.516	.006

Source: Computed

*p<0.05

**p<0.01

4.10 Inter correlation matrix of coping mechanism and loneliness

Table 4.10. shows Pearson's inter correlation matrix of coping mechanism and loneliness.

The coefficient correlation between coping mechanism and loneliness is $-.446^{**}$ which indicate a negative correlation between coping mechanism and loneliness. Hence the table shows that there is a negative correlation between coping mechanism and loneliness among the respondents.

Table 4.10 Inter correlation matrix of coping mechanism and loneliness

Variables	Coping mechanism	Loneliness
Coping mechanism	1	
Loneliness	$-.446^*$	1

Source: Computed ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed)

4.11 Inter correlation matrix of coping mechanism, loneliness, support network and time spent

Table 4.11 shows Pearson's inter correlation matrix of coping mechanism, loneliness, support network and time spent.

The coefficient correlation between coping mechanism, loneliness, support network is $-.504$ which indicate correlation between support network and loneliness. Hence the table shows that there is a negative correlation between support network and loneliness among the respondents.

Table 4.11 Inter correlation matrix of coping mechanism, loneliness, support network and time spent

Variables	Coping mechanism	Loneliness	Support network	Time spent
Coping mechanism	1			
Loneliness	$-.446^*$	1		
Support network	$.487^{**}$	$-.504^{**}$	1	
Time spent	.141	-.262	$.675^{**}$	1

Source: Computed ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed)

4.12. Inter correlation matrix of gender, coping mechanism and level of loneliness.

Table 4.12. shows Pearson's inter correlation matrix of gender, coping mechanism and level of loneliness.

The correlation between coping mechanism and gender, the P value is .490** which indicates a moderate positive correlation at 0.01 level of significance.

The coefficient correlation between level of loneliness and coping mechanism, the P value is -.446* which indicates a moderate negative correlation at 0.01 level of significance.

Hence, the table reveals that there is significant correlation between gender, coping mechanism and level of loneliness among the respondents.

Table 4.12 Inter correlation matrix of gender, coping mechanism and level of loneliness

Variables	Gender	Coping mechanism	Level of loneliness
Gender	1		
Coping mechanism	.490**	1	
Level of loneliness	-.254	-.446*	1

Source: Computed **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed)

4.13 Levels of loneliness

Table 4.13 indicates the levels of loneliness by gender. The levels of loneliness are classified into low, moderate, moderately high and high.

Vast majority (83.3%) are in high level category in which male are more with 46.7 percent. A little more than a tenth (16.7%) are scoring moderate level of loneliness in which female are more with 13.3 percent.

Table 4.13 Levels of loneliness

Levels of loneliness	Gender		Total N=30
	Male n=15	Female n=15	
High	14	11	25
	(46.7)	(36.7)	(83.3)
Moderate	1	4	5
	(3.3)	(13.3)	(16.7)

Source: Computed Figures in parenthesis are percentages

Case Study

For qualitative study, one case study and one focus group discussion session were conducted among the respondents.

Case 01

Name : Mr. Lalhminga (fictitious name)

Age : 41

Sex : Male

Mr. Lalhminga and his wife were a loving couple and they did not have children. They have shared a lot of things and have a lot of memories together. But his wife had passed away due to cancer and he was working any job for his living, also he needs to do all the works by himself.

Findings:

Mr. Lalhminga experiencing the deep emotional pain of losing his wife. He had limited social connection outside of his marriage. The loss of his wife had led to grief and depressive symptoms, including sadness, sleep disturbances, and a loss of interest in activities once he enjoyed.

Focus Group Discussion

Members present :05

Date : 11th August, 2023

Time : 11:00 am – 12:00am

Venue : Haulawng

The discussion was started with brief explanation of the topic and the purpose. Use an ice breaker to create a relaxed atmosphere and help participants become more comfortable with each other and the facilitator. Asking an open-ended question to encourage participants to share their experiences of loneliness. Ask participants about the types of support, services, or interventions they believe could be beneficial in addressing loneliness.

Findings:

The emotional impact is significant, with feelings of grief, sadness, and emptiness being commonly mentioned. Most participants describe a sense of social isolation, where they feel disconnected from family and friends. They often find themselves with fewer social interactions after losing their spouse. Participants express a strong desire for companionship and human connection and they often feel lonely because they lack the companionship they once had with their spouse.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This is the continuation of chapter 4. This chapter is about the major findings, conclusion and suggestions of the study.

MAJOR FINDINGS

5.1.1 Demographic profile of the respondents

The largest age group of respondents falls in the age group between 71-75 years of age category in which female are more than male

All the respondents practice Christianity as their religion in which the gender distribution is balanced, with an equal number of male and female.

The majority of respondents belong to the "Baptist" denomination in which there are more male than female respondents.

Majority of the respondents are illiterate out of which female contribute more than male respondents.

5.1.2 Spouse and children's details

In the "1-5" children category, there are 12 male respondents (85.7% of the total in this category) and 12 female respondents (80.0% of the total in this category). In the "6-10" children category, there are 2 male respondents (14.3% of the total in this category) and 1 female respondent (6.7% of the total in this category). In the "3.00" and "4.00" categories, there is 1 female respondent in each category (6.7% of the total in each category).

The majority of respondents had their spouses pass away between "2016-2020," with 10 out of 30 respondents (33.3% of the total) falling into this category. The second most common year range is "above 2020," with 5 respondents (16.7% of the total) in this category. The "2006-2010" and "1996-2000" year ranges each have 6 respondents (20.0% of the total) in their respective categories. The "2011-2015" year range has 3 respondents (10.0% of the total). The "2001-2005" year range has 2 respondents (6.7% of the total).

5.1.3 Socio demographic bases

The majority of respondents, 21 out of 30 (70.0% of the total), belong to "Joint" families. In the "Joint" family category, there are more female respondents (11) than male respondents (10). The "Nuclear" family type is represented by 9 respondents, making up 30.0% of the total. In the "Nuclear" family category, there are more male respondents (5) than female respondents (4).

"BPL" is the most common family social status among respondents, with 16 out of 30 respondents (53.3% of the total) belonging to this category. In the "BPL" category, there are more

female respondents (10) than male respondents (6). "APL" has 8 respondents (26.7% of the total). In the "APL" category, there are more male respondents (6) than female respondents (2). "AAY" is the least common social status, with 6 respondents (20.0% of the total) in this category. In the "AAY" category, the distribution of male (3) and female (3) respondents is equal.

The largest income group is "Above 20000," with 13 out of 30 respondents (43.3% of the total) falling into this category. There are more male respondents (8) than female respondents (5). The second largest income group is "Below 10000," with 9 respondents (30.0% of the total). In the "Below 10000" category, there are more male respondents (5) than female respondents (4). "15000-20000" has 5 respondents (16.7% of the total). There are more female respondents (4) than male respondents (1). "10000-15000" is the smallest group, with 3 respondents (10.0% of the total). There are more female respondents (2) than male respondents (1).

The most common occupation among respondents is "Government servant," with 11 out of 27 respondents (40.7% of the total) in this category. There are more male respondents (9) than female respondents (2). The second largest occupation is "Unskilled labor," with 9 respondents (33.3% of the total). There are more female respondents (5) than male respondents (4). "Other" occupations are the next most common, with 5 respondents (18.5% of the total). "Agricultural practitioner" has the fewest respondents, with 2 out of 27 (7.4% of the total).

The most common source of income among respondents is "Piggery," with 6 out of 15 respondents (40.0% of the total) involved in this activity. There are more male respondents (4) than female respondents (2). "Others" is the second largest source of income, with 7 respondents (46.7% of the total). There are more female respondents (3) than male respondents (4). "Piggery" and "Others" are the most common sources of income. "Poultry" has 1 respondent (6.7% of the total), there is one male respondent and no female respondents and "Cattle rearing" has 1 respondent (6.7% of the total) as well. There is one female respondent and no male respondents.

The majority of respondents have "0-5" family members, with 17 out of 30 respondents (56.7% of the total) falling into this category. There are more female respondents (11) than male respondents (6). The "6-10" family members category includes 13 respondents (43.3% of the total). There are more male respondents (9) than female respondents (4).

The majority of respondents have "0-5 earners" in their households, with 23 out of 26 respondents (88.5% of the total) falling into this category. There are more male respondents (13) than female respondents (10). The "3.00 earners" category includes 3 respondents (11.5% of the total). There are more female respondents (2) than male respondents (1).

The majority of respondents have "0-5 dependents," with 21 out of 25 respondents (84.0% of the total) falling into this category, there are more male respondents (12) than female respondents (9). The "6-10 dependents" category includes 2 respondents (8.0% of the total). The "3.00 dependents" category also includes 2 respondents (8.0% of the total). In both the "6-10

dependents" and "3.00 dependents" categories, the distribution of male and female respondents is equal.

5.1.4 Support network

Among the respondents, 13 out of 30 (43.3% of the total) are suffering from a chronic disease, and 17 out of 30 (56.7% of the total) are not. Among those suffering from a chronic disease, there are slightly more male respondents (7) than female respondents (6). Among those not suffering from a chronic disease, there are slightly more female respondents (9) than male respondents (8).

All 30 respondents in the dataset, both male and female, have indicated that they do not feel looked down upon by society.

Only 1 out of 29 respondents (3.4% of the total) has received support from the community. The majority of respondents, 28 out of 29 (96.6% of the total), have not received support from the community. Among those who have received support from the community, there is one male respondent and no female respondents. Among those who have not received support from the community, there are more female respondents (15) than male respondents (13).

5.1.5 Financial details

Among the respondents, 16 out of 29 (55.2% of the total) have a savings account, there are more male respondents (11) than female respondents (5). And 13 out of 29 (44.8% of the total) do not have one, there are more female respondents (9) than male respondents (4).

Among the respondents, 10 out of 28 (35.7% of the total) have received social security/assistance, among those who have received social security/assistance, the distribution is equal, with 5 male respondents and 5 female respondents. And 18 out of 28 (64.3% of the total) have not received it, there is also an equal distribution, with 9 male respondents and 9 female respondents.

Among the respondents, 8 out of 21 (38.1% of the total) receive "service pension," there are slightly more male respondents (4) than female respondents (4). 3 out of 21 (14.3% of the total) receive "old age pension," there are more male respondents (2) than female respondents (1). And 10 out of 21 (47.6% of the total) do not receive any type of social security/assistance. Among those who receive "none" (no social security/assistance), there are more female respondents (6) than male respondents (4).

5.1.6 Support received during distress situations Suggestions

There is no significance between support children, support friends, support relatives and support from others. This is because Mizos are close-knit society has no class distinction and no discrimination on ground of sex, everyone was hospitable with kind, compassionate, unselfish and helpful.

5.1.7 Time most spent with

There is no significance between children, friends, relatives and others. This is because the Mizo society have cultural and social norms that promote a relatively equal distribution and interaction of the people.

5.1.8 Coping mechanism

There is a significant difference between widow and widowers with regards to travelling, picnic and engagement in politics or political activities.

5.1.9 Coping mechanism and loneliness

There is a negative correlation between coping mechanism and loneliness among the respondents.

5.1.10 Support network, time spent with and loneliness

There is a negative correlation between support network and loneliness among the respondents.

5.1.11 Gender, coping mechanism and level of loneliness

There is significant correlation between gender, coping mechanism and level of loneliness among the respondents

5.1.12 Level of loneliness

Male or widowers score more in the loneliness index with vast majority (83.3%) whereas their female (widows) score more in the moderate level of loneliness index.

5.2 CONCLUSION

The study concludes that both widows and widowers show signs of loneliness with the death of their spouse. They find it difficult to cope with the loss and loneliness is a common symptom among them. To cope with their loneliness, the respondents find all means and ways to relief their stressful situations and are looking for multiple sources of activities and habits in life. Male or widowers cope better in spite of their higher level of loneliness than the female respondents.

5.3 SUGGESTIONS

From the findings, the following social work interventions are suggested at multiple levels:

Micro-level:

Counseling and Therapy: Encourage widows and widowers to seek individual counseling or therapy to process their grief, loneliness, and emotional struggles. Mental health professionals can provide them with coping strategies and emotional support.

Support Groups: Widows and widowers can benefit from joining local support groups or online communities where they can connect with others who have gone through similar experiences. These groups offer a sense of belonging and understanding.

Mezzo-level:

Widow Support Groups: Establish and promote local support groups specifically for widows. These groups provide a safe space for widows to share their experiences, connect with others who can relate, and offer emotional support.

Community Events: Organize community events, social gatherings, and activities tailored to the interests and needs of widows. These events can help widows build social connections with neighbors and friends.

Community Outreach: Conduct outreach programs to identify and connect with widows who may be isolated or in need of support. Engaging local volunteers to reach out to widows can help ensure that no one falls through the cracks.

Public Awareness: Raise awareness about the specific challenges widows face, including loneliness, and promote empathy and support within the community. This can help reduce the stigma surrounding widowhood and isolation.

Macro-Level:

Social Programs: Advocate for government and community-based social programs that provide financial and emotional support to widows and widowers. This can include bereavement counseling, financial assistance, and housing support.

Awareness Campaigns: Launch public awareness campaigns to reduce the stigma associated with loneliness and grief. Promote understanding and empathy for widows and widowers in society.

Elderly Care Services: Advocate for improved access to healthcare and caregiving services for older adults. These services can help address physical and mental health needs.

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Loneliness Among Widows And Widowers In Haulawng Community

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Section 01 – Profile of the respondents

Personal details:

1. Gender: i) Male ii) Female
2. Age: _____
3. Religion: i) Christian ii) Hindu iii) Muslim iv) Others
4. Denomination: i) Baptist ii) Presbyterian iii) UPC(MZ) iv) UPC (NEI) v) Pawlchhuak
vi) Others
5. Educational Qualification : i) Illiterate ii) HSLC iii) HSSLC iv) Graduate
v) Post Graduate
6. No. of children: _____
7. When did the spouse died: _____
8. Cause of spouse death: _____
9. How old was the spouse at the time of death: _____

Family Details

1. Type of family: i) Joint ii) Nuclear iii) Extended
2. Family social status: i) APL ii) BPL iii) AAY
3. Monthly income: i) Below 10000 ii) 10000-15000 iii) 15000-20000 iv) Above 20000
4. No of family member: _____
5. No of earners: _____
6. No of dependents: _____
7. Occupation: i) Government servant ii) Unskilled labour iii) Agricultural Practitioner
iv) Other
8. Other sources of income: i) Piggery ii) Poultry iii) Cattle rearing iv) Others

Section 02- Support network

1. Do you suffer from any chronic disease? i) Yes ii) No
2. If yes, please indicate _____
3. Please rate the support you received during distress situations.

Sl/No	Variables	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1	Children	1	2	3	4
2	Friends	1	2	3	4
3	Relatives	1	2	3	4
4	Others	1	2	3	4
5	None	1	2	3	4

4. Please rate the one you spent most of the time with from the following:

Sl/No	Variables	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1	Children	1	2	3	4
2	Friends	1	2	3	4
3	Relatives	1	2	3	4
4	Others	1	2	3	4
5	None	1	2	3	4

5. Are you being looked down by the society? i) Yes ii) No
6. Have you received any support from your community? i) Yes ii) No
7. If yes, please indicate _____
8. Do you have savings account? i) Yes ii) No
9. Do you receive social security/assistance from the government? i) Yes ii) No
10. Indicate the social security/assistance from the government:
i) Service pension ii) Old age pension iii) Widow pension iv) None

Section 03- Coping mechanisms

Please rate the reliability of the following:

Sl/No	Variables	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1	Religion/Church activities	1	2	3	4
2	Community activities	1	2	3	4
3	Reading Bible/Praying	1	2	3	4
4	Reading/Writing	1	2	3	4
5	Works (Jhuming, farming, fishing poultry etc)	1	2	3	4
6	Travelling	1	2	3	4
7	Picnic/dinner etc	1	2	3	4
8	Alcohol/Substance abuse	1	2	3	4
9	Talking out with friends	1	2	3	4
10	Sex/dating/romantic affairs	1	2	3	4
11	Politics	1	2	3	4
12	Listening to music	1	2	3	4

Section 04 – Level of loneliness

Please indicate the level of your loneliness

Sl/No	Variables	I often feel this way	I sometimes feel this way	I rarely feel this way	I never feel this way
1	I am unhappy doing so many things alone	1	2	3	4
2	I have nobody to talk to	1	2	3	4
3	I cannot tolerate being so alone	1	2	3	4
4	I lack companionship	1	2	3	4
5	I feel as if nobody really understands me	1	2	3	4
6	I find myself waiting for people to call or write	1	2	3	4
7	There is no one I can turn to	1	2	3	4
8	I am no longer close to anyone	1	2	3	4
9	My interests and ideas are not shared by those around me	1	2	3	4
10	I feel left out	1	2	3	4
11	I feel completely alone	1	2	3	4
12	I am unable to reach out and communicate with those around me	1	2	3	4
13	My social relationships are superficial	1	2	3	4
14	I feel isolated from others	1	2	3	4
15	No one really knows me well	1	2	3	4
16	I feel starved for company	1	2	3	4
17	I am unhappy being so withdrawn	1	2	3	4
18	It is difficult for me to make friends	1	2	3	4
19	I feel shut out and excluded by others	1	2	3	4
20	People are around me but not with me	1	2	3	4