



Hindi Vidya Prachar Samitis'

# Ramniranjan Jhunjhunwala College of Arts Science & Commerce

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## Proceeding of State Level Workshop on Issues of Single Women

28<sup>th</sup> September, 2018

Organized by

Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC)  
& College Women's Development Cell (CWDC)

in Collaboration with

Maharashtra State Commission For Women (MSCW)

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## ***Issues of Single Women***

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## **Message from the Principal**



The Indian society is a very dynamic society encountering rapid changes in several areas. Women representing half the population are equal partners in this change. Whether it is rural or urban the scenario is same. Women remain single either by choice or due to circumstances. Single women may be unmarried or divorcee, abandoned, single mother etc. Whatever may be the case they have several predicament at workplace, home, society. Even though she is single she is not free to make a simple decision of walking in a restaurant for a cup of tea or getting a reasonable house in a housing society without being asked a volley of question. The behavior of single women is also many a time associated with their being single. There are several misunderstandings regarding their choice of being single. Will our society grow up to understand them, treat them as normal women and not label them and how our mindset can be corrected when we are amidst single women? Being in the field of education we feel that there is a need to educate boys and girls to respect the decision of women to remain single.

**Dr. Usha Mukundan**  
**Principal**

## **From the Desk of the IQAC Convener**



IQAC is an integral part of Institution that works continuously towards quality enhancement and sustenance. It aims of developing a system for conscious, consistent and catalytic improvement in the overall performance of Institution.

IQAC ensure that all the activities in the institution are conducted efficiently and effectively with high standards. These activities are expected to satisfy the needs of the students, teaching staff and non-teaching staff.

This workshop is the step towards the upliftment of the status of women in the society.

Since independence, Indian society has been striving hard to provide gender equality. As the objective of 'Maharashtra State Commission for Women' is "improving the status and dignity of women in society, IQAC, CWDC of R J College in collaboration with Maharashtra State Commission for Women aims at finding a solution for the issues of single women , to create awareness among young generation to develop respect for single women and fight for equality.

**Dr. Seema Ratnaparkhi**  
**IQAC Coordinator**

## **From the Desk of the Convener and Chairperson of CWDC**



The State Level Workshop was organized by IQAC and CWDC of R.J College in collaboration with Maharashtra State Commission for Women on 28<sup>th</sup> of September, 2018. The theme of the workshop was 'Issues of Single Women'. The Constitution of India guarantees equal rights and opportunities to women in India. In reality the life of women is steeped in misery and subjugation. This is especially true for single women who are further exploited and victimized. Singlehood is looked down upon in Indian society. It is this attitude of society which creates stresses and problems of adjustment for single women. This calls in for an in-depth discussion on single women. The objectives of this workshop are taken up to:

- To explore the socio-economic background of single women;
- To identify the problems and challenges faced by single women;
- To find the future aspirations of single women;
- To suggest strategies to cope up with the problems of singlehood among women.

Number of people has started recognizing the remarkable adaptability of successful single women and the amount of pioneering work done by them to improve the life of the others in society. There is need to recognize the status of single women and accord respect to this important social category. This workshop on 'Issues of Single Women' was an initiative towards fulfilling the goal.

On behalf of IQAC and CWDC of RJ College in collaboration with Maharashtra State Commission for Women, we want to place on record our sincere gratitude to all those who have directly or indirectly made this workshop successful. Heartfelt thanks to all the Invited speakers Guest of honour, Chairpersons of technical sessions who has accepted our invitations and spared their valuable time to share their views on various topics of interest. Sincere thanks to all chairpersons for smooth functioning of all the technical sessions. It goes without saying that without our enthusiastic student volunteers the workshop would not have been possible. Sincere thanks for the constant support and guidance of our Management, HVPS and Principal Dr.Usha Mukundan for making this workshop a success.

**Dr. Baishakhi Dutta**  
**CWDC, Chairperson**

## **College Profile**

On the auspicious day of Shri Krishna Janmashtami, 15<sup>th</sup> August 1938, the people of Ghatkopar and the surrounding suburbs witnessed the birth of Hindi VidyaPracharSamiti, brain child of a visionary, Late ShriNandkishore Singh Jairamji. The Samiti was established with the objective of catering to the educational needs of the Hindi speaking community. The Samiti made a humble beginning by starting a primary school, which gradually expanded into a full-fledged secondary school.

The Hindi High School with its high academic standards has carved a niche for itself not only among leading secondary schools in Mumbai but also amidst educational institutions imparting instructions in Hindi throughout Maharashtra. With its primary objective achieved, the Samiti decided to extend its frontiers and broaden its horizons. As a result, Ramniranjan Jhunjhunwala College came into existence in 1963, enabling a larger section of the society to take advantage of the facilities of higher education provided.

In 1976, the Junior College section was introduced and in 1981 the Commerce faculty commenced both at the Junior and Degree College level.

From 1999-2000 the College has added a number of self-financing courses like BMS, B.B.I, B.Sc. in C.S., I.T., Biotech, M.Sc. in Computer Science and Biotechnology as well as add on courses, in order to hone the special skills of the students.

The year 2014 saw a change in education system with the focus shifting to employability of youth. As an initiative towards realizing the dreams of Make in India, Digital India, Clean and Green India, a skill based program supported by University Grants commission known as Bachelor in Vocation was started.

The college has been re-accredited with 'A' Grade by **NAAC in 2014** with a **CGPA of 3.50** and received the **Best College Award (2007-2008)** from the University of Mumbai. The College has been bestowed with **IMC Ramkrishna Bajaj Performance Excellence Trophy** in 2010. The Government of Maharashtra conferred the college with **Jaagar Jaanivancha** (First in Mumbai Suburban in 2013 and Second in Mumbai Suburban in 2014) for safety of girls. The Principal of the college was awarded **Best Teacher** by Government of Maharashtra

in 2011. She also received the **Smt. Savitribai Phule Adarsh Shikshika Puraskar** in 2015-16.

## **VISION**

- To empower students through focused teaching and research.
- To foster a world of joy through sharing and learning.
- To create and enhance teamwork and leadership qualities.
- To excel in interaction through the art of communication.
- To provide extension services to serve self and the society.

## **MISSION**

- Knowledge is all Ambrosia.
- Academic excellence with character development.
- Enthusiasm is the propelling force behind our success.

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## **SINGLE UNMARRIED WOMEN: STATUS AND CHALLENGES**

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### **Abstract**

The single women are emerging phenomena in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. They are the force to reckon with and have the potential to change the course of the near future. According to the 2011 census data, single women form 21% of India's population and are close to 73 million in number. (Times of India May 17, 2016). A woman in India has always been looked upon as an appendage to man where her identity is looked upon as a daughter, as a wife and as a mother and where her existence as such centers on her father, husband and son.

Single unmarried women are looked with suspicion and are labeled when not married. The society starts suspecting and finding many faults as to why they are not married. There is a lot of pressure from the family too as the family believes that the right place for a girl is in her husband's house. They are accused of being selfish, picky, unaccommodating and un-adjusting when all they are doing is living "their" life the way they want to.

The phenomenon of singlehood among women is claiming serious attention among social workers, journalists and women activists and bound to assume greater importance as the years gradually roll by. It is, therefore, of vital importance to dwell upon the position of single women in the existing state of affairs of the Indian society. Single women are going to command and be commended. Certainly, they are bound to play a very active and all-important role in the all-round peace, progress and prosperity of the country in this 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The objective of the paper is to discuss the status and challenges of the single women with the greater emphasis on the single unmarried women in India.

**Keywords:** Single Women, Single Unmarried Women.

## **Introduction**

The single women are emerging phenomena in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. They are the force to reckon with and has the potential to change the course of the near future. Demographic trends in recent decades such as the delay and decline in marriage and increase in divorce have meant more men and women experiencing periods of singleness. For women in particular, singleness has long been considered anomalous: normative femininity, bound up with marriage and motherhood, has meant single woman being represented in terms of deficit or deviance. The increase in singleness is one aspect of wider social changes that have implications for the categories of identity available to single women.

According to the 2011 census data, single women form 21% of India's population and are close to 73 million in number. (Times of India, May 17, 2016). Between 2001 and 2011, there was an almost 40% increase in their numbers. Women and Child Development ministry under Smt. Maneka Gandhi is slated to revise policy for the first time since 2001 to address the concerns around being single and female, which include social isolation and difficulties in accessing even ordinary services. (Kundu, 2018).

This paper seeks to dwell on the status and challenges of the single unmarried women in India.

## **Single women in India**

Singleness is not a static, rigid or homogenous category. It is porous, a wide spectrum, and extremely heterogeneous. The conventional dictionary definition of a 'single' woman is an adult female person who is not married. Though defining a single woman is a highly debatable cause, as it may vary in time and space. However, the determination of the single status may be done according to the marriageable age in a particular society at a particular point of time. Broadly speaking, "Single women are those women who have crossed the marriageable age and are still unmarried, even though they might have plans to marry."

Modern singlehood is far different from the past pessimism associated with it. It is the byproduct of modern feminism. Single is a word used to categorize a vast and divergent group of persons in order to treat them on the basis of one common criterion - their non-marriage. In India the heteronormative family model is still widely considered socially and

culturally to be the ideal model for societal organisation, and singleness is seen as a deviation from normal. Marriage and child-bearing are important markers of respectability for women in India, and hence, being a 'single' woman is also considered to be a 'problem' by the state and society alike. (India Exclusion report, 2015)

Singleness is a socially and culturally constructed category, wherein the disadvantage is manufactured by virtue of the patriarchal societal setup. In the way that gender is done to people, so is 'singleness'. Women who choose to remain or become single owing to a range of circumstances find themselves in locations of often multiple disadvantage as a result of social and cultural, and also often legal and administrative, constructions of singleness.

Woman has been faced with a strange dilemma regarding her role and recognition ever since the inception of the universe. Undoubtedly, there have been periods in history when women enjoyed freedom and privileges in the family spheres, religious rites, educational attainments, personal commitments and public life, as such they had free access even to social and political life. They surpassed in intellectual groups, philosophical depths, administrative excellence, religious understanding, moral enhancement and spiritual enrichment. In all, they had a good say in matters pertaining to life and living at all levels.

But as centuries rolled by, the situation went on changing adversely for them. Whether it was Rousseau writing the whole education of women ought to be relative to men. To please them, to educate them when young, to care for them when grown up, to counsel them, to console them and to make life sweet and agreeable to them-these are the duties of women at all times and that should be taught to them from their infancy or it was Napoleon saying, nature intended women to be our slaves, they are our property, we are not theirs. They belong to us just as a tree that bears fruit belongs to the gardener. What a mad idea to demand equality for women? (Neshla, 1994)

### **Single unmarried women in India**

In India, the minimum age for marriage of girls prescribed by the law is eighteen years but generally, the urban girls are married by the age of 22-25 years; providing a far margin of four to seven years to the legal sanctions. Therefore, such girls are considered as single women who have remained unmarried up to the age of thirty years and above.

Under the patriarchal system where life of women in general is all so suppressing and depressing, the life and living of single unmarried women can better be imagined then inscribed. Single unmarried women are looked with suspicion and are labeled when not married. The society starts suspecting and finding many faults as to why they are not married. There is a lot of pressure from the family too as the family believes that the right place for a girl is in her husband's house. They are accused of being selfish, picky, unaccommodating and un-adjusting when all they are doing is living "their" life the way they want to.

The question why they have not got married perturbs the people day and night as if rest of their worries has been somewhere buried deep and not finding a satisfactory answer. (Neshla, 1994). Many of the women who remain single do so out of personal choice or as a consequence of family circumstances or a mixture of both. The early death of parents and the need to educate younger siblings or to look after children of widowed siblings have also been identified as contributory factors. Irrespective of whether the reasons for their unmarried status are circumstantial or voluntary, these women are routinely condemned for defying the conventions of society. (Gandhi, 2016)

There is a marked sense of responsibility towards family after the loss or illness of a parent or sibling that compels the single women to discontinue schooling or higher education. Living either with their parents or brothers, they manage the affairs often as unacknowledged breadwinners of the house.

The single women have emerged as a distinct social category in rapidly changing urban India. Earlier, marriage was the ultimate goal of each and every girl, but now with increasing education, and job opportunities, independence and new ideas of gender equality, women are acquiring freedom to live their lives according to their own choices and styles. The single unmarried women of today's modern India are well qualified and financially independent and are able to decide for themselves. There are many who consciously decide to remain unmarried. It is widely acknowledged that today's single woman is very different to the stereotyped spinsters and old maids of the past. A woman living alone today is more acceptable than she would have been many years ago, but the sense of social awkwardness often experienced by many single women still remain.

## **Categories of single women**

According to National Forum for Single Women's Rights, women in the following categories are included in this concept:

**Widowed Women:** Women whose husbands have died.

**Divorced, Separated, Abandoned, Deserted, Walked-out Women:** This encompasses a large category of women who were once in a marriage like relationship but are now single. Some of the women in this category have obtained a legal divorce, but most of them have been deserted or abandoned by their husband without the due process of law. There are others who have walked out of abusive marriages, and yet others who have been thrown out of their homes. All of these women identify as 'Single'.

**Older Never-Married Women:** Women who are older than 30 years, have never married and do not see the likelihood of marriage in their future.

**Women with Missing Husbands:** Married women whose husbands are missing.

## **Problems faced by single unmarried women**

(Krishnakumari, 1987)Reveals that in general, the problems and difficulties of single women are multi-dimensional and they need a deep probe. They emerge in two situations – home and work, and they are twofold. One is of inner conflicts due to commitment and concern and the other is at the practical level- practical difficulty of combining work commitment with their role at home.

Single unmarried women face multiple problems. They are as follows:

### **a) Stress**

In single women's life stress is a crucial factor. (Cooper & Davidson, 1983)reveals that for those women living alone, lack of domestic and emotional support at home was often the major stressors. Jethani (1994), in her study reveals five main problems and stresses which single women largely face: financial, occupational, familial, neighbourhood and feelings of insecurity for future.

**b) Stigma**

For a society, marriage is the final “achievement” for a woman. While society doesn't seem to mind this when it comes to males, females, even today, are very likely to still experience the effects of the “single woman” stigma. It is difficult for society to see the single women beyond the conventions of age and relationship status. Life without marriage evokes a social ‘stigma’ among the unmarried women. “For girls’ marriage is the only means of integration in the community”. (De Beauvoir, 1997).

**c) Social Problems**

It is usually easier for a man to adjust to being single than for a woman. A single man is in great social demand and has little time to feel lonely. He is usually financially able to pursue a pattern of life that is to his liking (Ratra 2006). He says that the women encounter social complications that men do not face. She may be unwilling or reluctant to go out by herself. Further, during old age, long periods of loneliness, complicated by financial and social problem arise.

Single women’s presence in the social gatherings and marriage functions are not expected by society. Society considers them as bad omen. Blumberg and Dwaraki (1980) states that ‘if one is not married, she will face the rubbish comments from society’. While it appears that societal pressures on the unmarried women are lessening, traditional living arrangements and the needs for protection and companionship still present practical difficulties. In a society dominated by men, it is extremely difficult for single women to survive. The social condition and status of unmarried women not being very high, they seem to be harassed both by society as well as by their family members. Krishnakumary (1987) argues that social problems of single women are classified in terms of the social stigma attached to them, the social restrictions imposed on them and the social boycott or rejection society meets out to them resulting in their low social status. Under such circumstances it is natural that they suffer from numerous psychological problems.

The lives and experiences of single women vary dramatically depending on their socioeconomic status and where they live. For instance, widows and abandoned wives in rural India might be labeled as Dayan’s (witches). In urban India, unmarried women could be seen as fast and loose. What is common, however, is social ostracization.

**d) Psychological Problems**

The antagonism single women suffer at the hands of society results in several psychological problems, such as emotional insecurity, loneliness, inferiority complex etc.

Krishnakumary (1987) says psychologically, they feel insecure and experience various mental conflicts and the agony of living life of utter loneliness. They find it extremely difficult to live in a patriarchal society. Although quite a high proportion of working singles have remained single by choice they seem to be suffering from a sense of loneliness and insecurity. Loneliness is a subjective feeling which conveys the feeling of being cut off from meaningful social contact or roles, or an unwelcome feeling of lack or loss of companionship.

#### **e) Economic and Employment Problems**

The position of single women who are economically dependent is worse. Without a job to maintain themselves financially these women are harassed by their own family members and relatives. This constant feeling of dependence often makes them miserable (Krishnakumary 1987). Non-working singles seem to face more problems than working single women. Firstly, they are economically unstable; spend more time at home and secondly because of their financial dependence, they have to do household work from dawn to dusk for their relatives and they would not give any economic value for their work and consider them as a burden to their family.

#### **f) Accommodation Problems**

Besides these problems, the working single women have to face a number of practical difficulties. Since they are mainly employed in big cities, accommodation is a major problem, as working women hostels or flats are too little in number to meet their requirements. The absence of suitable housing facilities at place where jobs are available is the most important single factor which limits mobility. There has been a steady increase in the number of single unmarried women moving to big cities in search of employment opportunities. But the non-availability of safe accommodation at affordable rates is a serious concern. Single women can be denied rental accommodation or refused membership in clubs on grounds that they are single and, therefore, of questionable character and would “lure” men. (Bhandare, 2017)

### **Conclusion**

The phenomenon of singlehood among women is claiming serious attention among academicians, social workers, journalists and women activists. Understanding the phenomena of single women and finding an appropriate and relevant intervention is very important as it



is bound to assume greater importance as the years gradually roll by. It is, therefore, of vital importance to dwell upon the position of single women in the existing state of affairs of the Indian society, the problems faced by them, the probable remedies and above all on the importance of single women in the Indian society. Single women are going to command and be commended. Certainly, they are bound to play a very active and all-important role in the all-round peace, progress and prosperity of the country in this 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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**PLATONIC PARENTING- FOSTERING PARENTING PARTNERS**

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**Abstract**

A traditional family model of a father believed to be the provider and supporter of the entire family has coexisted for several years. With the passage of time, women have begun building their careers although still their role in a family is enfeebled. "Platonic parenting" often referred to co-parenting involves two or more people who join forces for the sole reason of having and raising a child. This can include a gay couple and a woman who joins them in a threesome of parenting. "Platonic parenting" is a form of modern family recently emerging based on evolving families that can be created with what works best for everyone. They range from two people partnering up specifically to have children, to married couples who dissolve their romantic relationships but remain together for their children's sake. Many single woman and men are opting for this model as these singles want a parenting partner, not a life partner. Being single is a varied concept ranging from divorcees, broken relations to some people preferring to remain single.

The present paper is a glimpse on how single women are looking towards Platonic Parenting as amicable solutions for a comfortable living. The paper deliberates on the benefits, fears and challenges that could be faced by women and also raises doubts on the future of such concepts. Platonic parenting should encompass good parenting practices. Good parenting helps foster empathy, honesty, self-reliance, self-control, kindness, cooperation, and cheerfulness. It also promotes intellectual curiosity, motivation and desire to achieve. It helps protect children from developing anxiety, depression, eating disorders, anti-social behavior and alcohol and drug abuse. Good Parenting advocates to be involved in one's child's life ,adapt parenting to fit the child, establish and set rules, foster the child's independence, be consistent, avoid harsh discipline and treat children with respect. Parent's relationship with their children is ultimately the foundation for their relationships with others.

**Introduction**

A traditional family model of a father believed to be the provider and supporter of the entire family has coexisted for several years. Family configuration has changed over the past years.

Family formation, household structure, work-life balance and child well-being are undergoing a major transformation. The concept of the traditional family that is the 'natural reproductive unit' of mother, father and the children all living under one roof, is not an irreversible one. It is a social construct that varies from culture to culture and, over time, the definition changes within a culture. In Modern families marriage is settled by the partners themselves. It is choice of mate by mate usually preceded by courtship or falling in love. The woman is not the devotee of man but an equal partner in life with equal rights. The rigidity traditionally associated with sexual relationships no longer characterizes the modern family, cases of illegitimate sex relationship of the husband and wife too can be seen in modern family. Women in modern family have attained an increasing degree of economic independence. The percentage of women employed outside the home is continually on the increase. In short, woman in the modern family has come as near achieving equality with men and children emancipation from parents. The modern family is a smaller family. It is no longer a joint family. The modern family is secular in attitude. The religious rites of the traditional family are no longer performed in modern families. Marriage also has become a civil contract rather than a religious sacrament. It can be broken at any hour. The authority of religion over the conditions of marriage and divorce has markedly declined. Divorce is a frequent occurrence in modern family. In traditional family it was a rare phenomenon. In the modern family the trend is towards the filo-centric family. A filo-centric family is one wherein the children tend to dominate the scene and their wishes determine the policy of the family. Thus the family has been subjected to profound modifications of an economic, social and biological nature. The modern family is no longer the economic and self-sufficient unit. The women are no longer subordinated to the male dominance and are no longer confined to the drudgery of incessant toil in addition to the continual bearing of children.

New social structures are increasingly placing women in roles where they need to take control of not only their own financial security, but also that of their family. With the passage of time, women have begun building their careers although still their role in a family is enfeebled. "Platonic parenting" is a form of modern family recently emerging based on evolving families that can be created with what works best for everyone. They range from two people partnering up specifically to have children, to married couples who dissolve their romantic relationships but remain together for their children's sake. Many single woman and men are opting for this model as these singles want a parenting partner, not a life partner.

Being single is a varied concept ranging from divorcees, broken relations to some people preferring to remain single.

The present paper is a glimpse on how single women are looking towards Platonic Parenting as amicable solutions for a comfortable living. The paper deliberates on the benefits, fears and challenges that could be faced by women and also raises doubts on the future of such concepts. Platonic parenting should encompass good parenting practices. Good parenting helps foster empathy, honesty, self-reliance, self-control, kindness, cooperation, and cheerfulness. It also promotes intellectual curiosity, motivation and desire to achieve. It helps protect children from developing anxiety, depression, eating disorders, anti-social behavior, alcohol and drug abuse. Good Parenting advocates to be involved in one's child's life ,adapt parenting to fit the child, establish and set rules, foster the child's independence, be consistent, avoid harsh discipline and treat children with respect. Parent's relationship with their children is ultimately the foundation for their relationships with others.

With more and more people getting married later in life or choosing to not marry at all platonic parenting is becoming a popular option, for both strangers and long-time friends alike.

### **Benefits of Platonic Co-Parenting;**

- Sharing the financial load of child-rearing to splitting the time, emotional labor, physical requirements.
- Platonic parenting requires transparency in communication.
- Potential co-parents get to know each other well, and agree on a common philosophy of parenting in everything from spirituality to schooling and medical care.
- Platonic parents secure a formal agreement, to help navigate the natural changes and challenges of life as their child grows up.
- Agree on boundaries and behavioral guidelines for raising children so that there's consistency in their lives.
- Create an Extended Family Plan. Negotiate and agree on the role extended family members will play and the access they'll be granted while the child is in each other's care.

## **Fears of Platonic Parenting;**

Struggles of co-parenting can produce enormous stressors;.

- Children could become objects of adult issues which promotes feelings of helplessness and insecurity.
- Children can become self-centered, lack empathy and believe in the need to get unrealistic entitlement from others.
- Lack of healthy communication can be detrimental for children.
- A healthy biological relationship is what contributes to the emotional and physical bond that keeps many parents together. Platonic parents wouldn't have any such relationship.
- There is a probability that the parent- child relationship may not be that of total commitment.

## **Challenges of Platonic Parenting**

Platonic parenting can be complex. A living situation and financial commitments must be negotiated. And there's a lot of gray area when it comes to the legal rights of a co-parent, especially if there are more than two. Individuals need to seek legal counsel before entering a platonic parenting relationship. Co-parenting is still outside the mainstream. A big hurdle for those partaking in this adventure is sharing it with their family and friends. And the stigma might fall hardest on women. New ways to create a family and the control that women can assert in pursuing families outside of the traditional unit, whether that be solo adoption, sperm donation or co-parenting may appear threatening to the social fabric that traditional family advocates cherish. But people often criticize progress that looks unfamiliar, even when it makes a lot of people really happy.

Co-parenting, sometimes called joint parenting or shared parenting, is the experience of raising children as a single parent when separation or divorce occurs. Often a difficult process, co-parenting is greatly influenced by the reciprocal interactions of each parent. Co-parenting requires empathy, patience and open communication for success. Not an easy thing to achieve for couples who've encountered marital issues. However, placing the sole focus on your children can be a great way of helping to make co-parenting a positive experience. There are many ways to have a happy, healthy family that fall outside of the traditional nuclear family unit. Today's diverse social climate and advanced technology have expanded the definition of family, reminding us that family is a matter of love, connection and care rather than simply blood and marriage. Children need parents who are committed to loving and

supporting them, and that love and support are found in a variety of family structures. That's why many people who have split from their partners consider platonic parenting (also popularly known as co-parenting). Platonic parenting occurs when two or more people decide to raise children together, even in the absence of a romantic connection.

## Conclusion

The first group our children belong to is the family, and this is the safest place for them to learn and practice the skills necessary to be a good citizen. Children today will grow to be our neighbors, our leaders, the innovators of tomorrow, so what we do right now as parents to cultivate citizenship in our children represents a powerful opportunity to influence our future society. Families with platonic parents can take a variety of forms and living situations. People are finding more and new ways to raise a child these days that is thought most beneficial for everyone. Platonic parenting allows more freedom for the parents involved and even takes into consideration the child's needs for multiple role models. This is precisely why it is a trend on the rise all over western world. It is no longer seen as a moral necessity to sacrifice one's life after having a child. Individual adults are coming together to create teams rather than emotionally driven romantic relationships. This creates an opportunity for well-fitted people of different ages and backgrounds to come together to give a child a healthy environment to grow up in.

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## **SYSTEMATIC DISENFRANCHISEMENT OF WOMEN OF MARRIAGEABLE AGE**

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### **Abstract**

The word “enfranchisement” is generally connected to the right to vote due to the wide usage of “Universal Adult Franchise” during discussion of the political right to vote. However the word has a wider meaning and deeper nuances. It is defined by Merriam Webster, using the historical tracing, as “to set free”, and legal dictionaries would explain it as “investiture with privileges or capacities of freedom”. For the sake of our discussion further, we shall keep under consideration a broad idea- “the giving of a right or privilege”.

The past of a single woman may be dark- such as death of spouse, separation due to domestic and sexual violence, or simply by choice. At the same time light needs to be shed upon ambitious girls of marriageable age who delay their marriage to educate themselves and chase careers. At such a time, usually parents pressurize girls to give in to “societal pressure”- many-a-times dropping out of (higher) education and leaving “dignified” sources of income.

While the economic system favors well-to-do women, and for the rest there are basic entitlements by the government-both surely open to criticism, there is a lack of a robust security system for girls who are entangled into adhering to social norms while challenging stereotypes such as work capability, time deadlines, clothing, traveling and socializing.

The paper shall hence focus on socio-political and socio-economic processes that systematically disenfranchise single women, creating a whole section of average literate and highly ambitious women, with the help of a case study. The issue is then placed in Talcott Parson’s Social Action Theory wherein we identify where the problem lies, and conclude the paper with recommendations.

### **Introduction**

At the outset I would like to clarify that the issues of single women, all range across a spectrum of bad to worse, and the experience of the women and her pillars of strength with all due respect are very subjective and equally grave. While the problems of widows,



domestic violence victims and divorcees are more widely discussed, that of young girls pushed into marriage and not being allowed to pursue their education are taken as a given.

With the ideas of liberalization, western education and openness within families increasing, many girls, including myself, have been beneficiaries of a supportive social system to pursue education, work part time and be in a relationship without being coaxed to choose among the available options.

In pre-independence India, child marriage was prevalent.(Marion, 2010) Girls were married off as soon as they would reach puberty.(Pande, Undated) The 1929 Child Marriage Restraint Act was replaced with Child Marriage Prevention Act, which was enforced in 2007. Despite being a signatory to UNICEF, India's count on Child Marriage was an alarming 1.5mn girl according to the 2001 Census. (NCPCR, 2016)Over the next decade, this figure was down to 78 lakhs, yet it is a shame that 30% of all girls under 18 years of age were married, some even as young as 10 years old. (Chowdhury, 2016)

Post-independence, rural areas had continued to witness a large number of girls wedded off to get rid of a financial burden, or to prevent crimes against women. This trend has seen a steady decline due to efforts by NGOs to enforce the legislation as well as by the educative system. However, even among urban educated middle class families, where girls are educated, capable of working and contributing to the economy of the family and the state, there is a tendency of pushing them to get married "early enough" to avoid social stigma.

Hence there are many young women who are highly ambitious about their career, seeking to attain higher education and stand on their own feet. They are promising youth who come from families that understand the need for girls to be educated and independent, and hence enroll them in primary schools.(Subramanian, 2015) Yet the pressures within the socio-economic sphere are strong to make these families coax their daughters to get married. Many-a-times, they find wealthy and highly educated grooms, but the freedom and opportunity to study further is a dicey question. They are also exposed to risks of domestic abuse due to naivety. (Nationl Family Health Survey 3, 2005-06)(Jensen & Thornton, 2003)

Reproduction, according to Aristotle, is one of the basic needs of human beings, in consonance with the laws of nature.(Wilcock, 1993) Even though sexual gratification is considered a need, several people, from clergymen, to Sadhvis, to women politicians have sacrificed this basic need to achieve so-called greater purposes in life. When women have no

such agenda, justifying the need for a delayed marriage is not an easy task. They are fighting the same set of people who have given birth to her, nurtured her, educated her and “allowed” her to work.

The Indian family culture is very strong, and children are not forced to become independent early. Hence, by the time girls get a job and start working, the situation is used to attract working and well-mannered grooms, and eventually persuade her to leave it so as to not “lose the offer”.

Here we must pause and take a look at a case study. *Ms. X (name hidden and not changed due to our tendency to judge religion, caste and even sub caste and then generalise observations.) Hence I must clarify, this doesn't happen in families belonging to any particular religion or caste, but cuts across all such borders. Thankfully, since we belong to a more-or-less integrated country, except some fundamentalist sections, I shall take the liberty to mention locations.*

*Ms. X was born and brought up in Indore, Madhya Pradesh. She schooled in Hindi medium. She was determined to study and enrolled herself in junior college. Around this time, pressures for marriage began. As soon as she turned 18, she was married off to a man in Mumbai. Her only condition to accept the proposal was that she'd be allowed to study further and become a banker.*

*However, within no time she got pregnant and bore a son. The husband is an aspiring actor, and is highly controlling of Ms. X's life. He has denied her ownership of a mobile phone, restricted her social life by preventing her from going out, and beats her up when she demands to use the phone or the right to step out to work. She sadly said, "Bada actor banneychalahai, aurgharmeinwohghadipeechedhakalrahahai." (He's out to become an actor, and is pushing back the watch inside the house.) It's a sad truth that despite working in progressive sectors, within one's home and community, regressive ideas dominate.*

*Her mother-in-law is quite supportive, and allowed her to join a career guidance course. She would look after the son and send her daughter-in-law out from another door if Mr. X was present at home. But Ms. X has also commented, "Jab duniyakesaamnemunhkhohnahotahai, tohbeteyki hi side lenge. Career Guidance course meinbhejahaikyunkinghar par paidungi." (When it comes to interacting with society, they will support their son only. Their motive to send me for the Career Guidance course is because I will contribute to family expenses.)*

A rational comparison of the pros and cons of the decision to postpone marriage needs to be discussed. Due to the absence of a tight security system, it is risky for women to work night shifts, but the scenario has surely improved. The husband relieves the girl's father of a burden, and doubles up as a body guard or a pick-up and drop service. In cases of a security lapse and women facing sexual abuse, there are slim chances of marriage.

The disadvantages of choosing to postpone marriage could be late conception of a child, some biological or health issues, but science and technology has progressed to address that. There may be a section of the population that claims the usage of such advancement works against nature, but we shall not get into that debate, as there is evidence to show that it has worked. After all, marriage is not supposed to be only a reason for reproduction but also for companionship.

The determined minds of young women are thus forced to choose between education & career or marriage. This choice has wide and deep repercussions to not only the girl but also her own and future family. The choice is put forth as one of maintaining her family's respect as against being a greedy woman in their view. If the latter is chosen, all kinds of name calling and ostracization occur, whereas the male counterpart is never expected to sacrifice his career or social life.(Jandial, 2015)

There exists a dual nature of struggle of a single woman – To balance social 'traditions' against the demands of dignity and independence, which is also termed as 'modernity'. This brings us to discuss social structural-functional theory which will help us resolve this conflicting situation faced by many young women who are exposed to many opportunities, marriage being one of them.

### **Theoretical Underpinnings**

One of the most relevant and interesting theoretical concepts that can be used to understand and resolve this situation is Talcott Parson's "Structure of Social Action" in which he'd put forth the AGIL model, popularly known as the "Action Theory". Parsons was influenced by Emile Durkheim and Max Weber. These sociologists had written about studying the subject in the macro and micro perspective respectively. Parsons had brought about a balance between the views of the two and discussed conflict resolution in society. He developed a structural functional theory known by its acronym "AGIL" model on which society functions.

This theory can aid in breaking down further the understanding of the issue at hand, identifying where exactly the problem lies, and concluding this paper with some recommendations based on Action Theory.

According to Parsons, there are two orientations of Social Action- 1) Motivation, which focuses on individual cognitive, affective and evaluative traits. 2) Value, which means society's norms or position on the subject.

Single women are in a constant dilemma to cater to their Motivational needs or to fulfil Value expectations. While Motivation will lead to Achievement, Value demands Ascription, among other sets of opposing ends. And hence, every society is placed along a continuum of Traditional to Modern. The choice of women to move towards modernity is usually limited by several traditional forces of diffusion, affection (emotions in sociology), and pluralism to maintain the pattern. When a single woman insists on getting educated and employed (motivation), modernity is looked down upon (values), and the effect is that it pulls the society more toward traditionalism, forcing women to match their ascriptive notions of ("weaker") gender role, and sometimes even so called "lower caste" role to worsen the progress.

The model of AGIL is an acronym for the four structures that make up the four basic characteristics of social action. They have specific functions which enable smooth and harmonious running of society. The Adaptation structure is the working of economics - usage of resources available in the environment productively. The Goal Setting function is that of Politics. Several policies and plans are made by this structure that guide or direct society. It's the role of Integration to ensure that these are coordinated and coalesced into a healthy working relationship. At the same time, the fourth structure termed as Latency is responsible for pattern maintenance.(SleepyClasses, 2018) It would mean behaving in a manner that would be "normal", or of common orientation. This structure includes institutions of family, religion, education, social service, sports etc. that work towards catalyzing or controlling the pace and direction of society as interested within this model.(Marshall, 2013) By inserting Motivation vs Values debate in this model, we understand that one or more of these functions need to be activated or regulated.

Single women, ambitions to work find themselves in the economic function so long as Politics sets a goal aligning with their interest. In the political economy in several nation-

states, the education & employment sectors are opening up to encourage women to enjoy the freedom to study and work. Also, the average age of marriage has increased from 18.2 in the year 2001 to 19.2 in 2011. (Special Correspondent, 2016) However child marriage has yet not been completely abolished. (International Family Planning Perspectives, 1987)

However there are times when conditions of work after not ideal, single women are discriminated against at entry level, lower wages are paid to women and they're also at the risk of mental and sexual exploitation. (IANS, 2013) Braving these odds, young women march towards their bright futures only to hit one roadblock after another. While all of these might not be imposed by society, many-a-times even individuals internalize the unhealthy institutionalized norms.

The interplay between these functions is interesting to observe. (Munich, 1981) Certain institutions in the Latency structure, such as religion or caste bodies that wield informal power tend to overpower the Goal setters when it comes to execution. Religious and social institutions create norms on girls' age to marry, staying within the limits of caste while socialization, permitting to study and/or work sometimes work against the objectives set by the Goal Attainment function. Our views are cultural constructs influenced by our belief system. (New World Encyclopedia contributors, 2015) The result of disobeying these bodies is social ostracization, which can further block avenues for self-development due to their strong hold or influence over other formal institutions.

This could lead to systematic disenfranchisement of women. The right to education, the right to livelihood and the right to a dignified life are all related. The swinging of this decision leads to enjoyment or giving up some or most of these rights. The Ministry of Women & Child Development has admitted that “ . Marriage has a strong physical, intellectual, psychological and emotional impact, cutting off educational opportunities and chances of personal growth.” (PIB, GOI, 2013)

### **Motivation vs. Values Conflict Resolution**

Until and unless both- Goal Attainment and Latency have aligning objectives, Integrated within Adaptation, we might not be able to push the pin of a society towards modernity. In practical terms, this would mean institutions opening up their minds to women empowerment. Educational institutions should make curriculum training and convincing

students- all genders- on the importance of gaining skills and using them towards self, community and national development. While many laws and policies are made with clear objectives, their implementation and enforcing mechanism should be strengthened.

Religious and caste based bodies' activities must be kept in check while also providing them autonomy by not trampling upon their freedom. Within the Goal Attainment structure, there must be a separation of roles. The education system should be separated from family. While this has the possibility to lead to erosion of cultural and traditional knowledge, it could be beneficial if only regressive ideas are wiped out in the formal education system. (Johnson, 1993)

These adjustments will require an ongoing process of debate, discussions, pilot projects, impositions, balances and counter balances. But it must be done carefully to engage each stakeholder, keeping in mind the benefit of single women, who can be true assets to the society and nation.

Parsons has also discussed that biology has some role in social functioning, which he terms as a "behavioral organism". The concept is explained as- the physical body component also determines how we exist in society- the physical environment. (Silvestar, 2012) This should be scientifically investigated and made optimum use of than using it as a disempowering tool.

## **Concluding Remarks**

The above discussion has highlighted how different structures within the society can systematically create barriers to single women who have the power to challenge stereotypes, break records and outperform male counterparts. These are usually women facing stress and difficult situations within the personal realm, which they can use as stepping stones to work in a determined fashion in higher educational institutions and work spaces.

Parson's theory may make it look as though the model takes away individual decision making ability, and pushes the blame on abstract social structures alone. This is not a debate on Human Agency versus Structure, but a problem viewed as individualistic or atomic in nature, but actually involves and is dependent on a healthy interaction between several single women facing discrimination within a society. However it is interesting to note that understanding the interaction can place the problem within a functioning system, and identify which part of the

functioning must be regulated, and in which direction. It remains a challenge to mould the “behavioural organism” to prevent such unwarranted and unjustified disenfranchisement.

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## SUCCESS STORIES OF SINGLE WOMEN

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### Abstract

Many women feel that being single is a embarrassed. Being Single isn't terrible, it's actually extremely rewarding. When we heard or read the stories of single women then we learnt that how they create their own existence. A busy or goal oriented woman is so much more attractive than a woman who waits around for a man to validate her existence.

This paper is an attempt to examine the stories of successful Single Women who make the country proud. This paper will tell the journey of Arunima Sinha, Mother Teresa, Susan B. Anthony, Sudha Varghese, Lata Mangeshkar, Mamata Banerjee and Helen Keller who devoted their life for others. Each of them had different paths but their heartfelt story inspire us. Nowadays we need this power to develop ourselves as a being single. Their achievement gave direction to us how to develop ourselves.

**Keywords:** Embarrassed, Terrible, Existence.

Whenever we talk about single women our ancestors always express their opinion that "Single Women are dependent, powerless and tedious. They don't have right to freedom but still these women achieve lots of things beyond their power. Single Women prove that, "I have the ability to accomplish any task I set my mind to, with comfort and ease". This mindset we had seen in Arunima Sinha. Arunima Sinha was thrown off a moving train by thugs for refusing to hand over the gold chain, she was wearing. She lost her left leg when a train went over it. While dealing with pitying murmurs of, "Who will marry you now" and the conspiracy theories that followed, she made a decision. She would climb Mount Everest. In 2013, she did just that, becoming the world's first female amputee and the first Indian amputee, to achieve this feat. She was awarded the Padmashri, the fourth highest civilian award in India.

Single Women is not an issue but it is dynamic strength of our country. Another example of single woman is Mother Teresa was an ambassador for the power of unconditional love – even without being in love with a man. As the founder of Missionaries of Charity in Calcutta, India, She led a global movement that served the sick, orphaned, dying and poor. True, she was a nun and technically not allowed to marry but that didn't stop her from showing the world that no woman needs a man to conquer it. Mother Teresa said that:

‘Spread love everywhere you go. Let no one ever come to you without leaving happier’.

(Page No: 39, Come Be My Light)

Susan B. Anthony was a pivotal player in gaining voting rights for women, an educator, a renowned public speaker and a devoted fighter for civil rights. Anthony was independent freethinker during a time when women were best kept barefoot and pregnant. Anthony always protests women and say:

“I declare to you that woman must not depend upon the protection of man, but must be taught to protect herself and there I take my stand”. (Speech in San Francisco: July, 1871)

We always say that behind every powerful man, there’s a powerful woman but behind many a powerful woman is nothing but her own rear end. Sudha Varghese was one of them. Sudha Varghese also known as Sister Sudha is a social worker and catholic nun. In India who has devoted herself to the Musahar, the dalit of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh one of the Scheduled Castes and are considered the ‘Untouchable’. She resides and continuously working in Jamsaut, a village in Patana district. She is the chief executive officer of ‘NariGunjan’ (Woman Voice), a not for profit organization that provides education, literacy, vocational training, healthcare, advocacy and life skills for Dalit girls and women in Bihar. In 2006, Sudha Varghese was the recipient of Padmashri a civilian honour awarded by the Government of India. Mandy Hale explains the singleness of women in following words:

The next time you check the box “S” for single, remember this: Singleness is no longer a lack of options but a choice – to refuse to let your life be defined by your relationship status and live your everyday Happily and let your Ever after work itself out. Whether or not you have someone in the passenger seat, you are still the driver of your own life and can take whatever road you choose. So the next time you hit a speed bump, otherwise known as the age – old question, “Why are you still Single?” look’em in the eyes and say, “Because I’m too strong, too smart, and too fabulous to settle”. (Page No: 07, Part-1, Chap 1: Happily Single)

Single Women made their own identity in every field. Another example is our Nightingale of India. Lata Mangeshkar was a better testimony of single woman power. The Nightingale of India moved people with her melodious voice. This respected playback singer has had a stint of over seven decades in Bollywood! Her voice and songs are so prominent that people hum her tunes till date. She is the second vocalist to get the prestigious Bharat Ratna. In political

field no one can deny the power that Mamta Banerjee wields. She actually became involved in politics at the age of 15! She came to power and became the Chief Minister of West Bengal without the help of any man, and has many ardent followers. Therefore Mandy Hale says that –

“Strong Women don’t play victim, don’t make themselves look pitiful and don’t point fingers. They stand and they deal”. (Page No: 21, Part-1, Chap 3: Living your Best Life)

### **Footnotes**

i) Page No: 39, Come Be My Light: Mother Teresa ii) Page No: 07, (Part-1- Chap 1: Happily Single); ( Page No: 21, Part-1, Chap 3: Living your Best Life) - Mandy Hale : The Single Woman: Life, Love and a Dash of Sass.

Being Single is not a death sentence it’s actually really rewarding. You can focus solely on being the best version of yourself that you can be and doing exactly what you want and need. Hellen Keller is the finest example of the best version of herself. Hellen Keller is renowned for defying all odds to accomplish great things despite being deaf and blind. After an illness in her childhood robbed her of her ability to see and hear, Hellen was miraculously taught now to communicate by her instructor Anne Sullivan. She went on to become the first deaf blind person to earn a bachelor’s degree and during her years at college published her famous autobiography “The Story Of My Life”. As an author she published 12 books apart from writing numerous articles. She co-founded Hellen Keller International in 1915 and worked for the American Foundation for the blind for more than 40 years. An inspiration to millions of people around the world, Hellen Keller received numerous awards and honours including the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Hellen Keller said that:

“When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has been opened for us”. ( Page No: 23 : We Bereaved, 1929)

All these successful Single Women inspired us to live your life freely. Each successful Single Woman story tells us how to use your will power for your own development. These Single Women are the truly strength of our nation and motivate us, ‘Be Proud of who you are. You are not single by chance but by choice’.

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## **PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES FACED BY SINGLE URBAN WOMEN IN INDIA TODAY**

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### **Abstract**

Discrimination against women is ubiquitous and eternal. Problems faced by single women is just another manifestation of this age-old bias, which does not stem from mere physical differences and physical abilities, but in the final analysis from the perception of their roles in the society, perpetuated by men, and by women as well. At the outset, it becomes necessary to define who should be categorized as a single woman. The perception of single woman is dynamic, changing over the decades, as the socially acceptable age of marriage keeps getting elevated from the mere under-twenties in old days to well beyond fifties among an increasing number of urbanite women today. However, given the current trends in Indian societies with highly diverse traditions, we may tentatively agree to define a single woman, in urban India, as one who remains unmarried or without a partner-companion beyond the age of 25 to 35, depending on their background. On one hand, “progress” in terms of higher levels of education, employment and independent earning opportunities are providing a psychological independence to women to choose to remain single rather than compromise on their social, professional and personal life. On the other hand, the same progress of society especially in urban India is resulting in increasing fragmentation and isolation, making life more and more difficult for such women.

This paper examines the challenges faced by urban Indian women who choose to remain single and proposes new means to facilitate their safety, security and social wellbeing that would help enhance the happiness index of single women in India.

**Keywords:** Ubiquitous, Urbanite, Psychological Independence, Fragmentation, Happiness Index.

### **Introduction**

Discrimination against women is ubiquitous and eternal. Problems faced by single women is just another manifestation of this age-old bias, which does not stem from mere physical

differences and physical abilities, but in the final analysis from the perception of their roles in the society, perpetuated by men, and by women as well.

The number of single women in India is increasing rapidly. According the Census of 2011 there are 71.4 million single women in India, which was about 12% of the female population. It was 51.4 million in 2001, and increased by 39% in a decade. Single woman was defined then as those who never married, as well as divorcees, separated from husbands, and widows. One of the reviews [Salve] quotes the President of National Forum for Single Women's Rights, to state that the reasons for this increase in population of single women are primarily divorce, separation as well as widowhood. It also included women in the age group from 20 to over 80. The problems faced by this diverse group, even if specifically limited to their status as a single woman being the primary cause, must also be highly diverse.

In this paper, we examine primarily the problems faced by the following subset of single women in India: Those women from *urban* India, who remains, or prefers to remain, unmarried or without a partner-companion beyond the age of 30.

## **Study**

There are various conflicting factors at play leading to the growth in the population of this subset of single women, despite increasing problems faced by them. On one hand, "progress" in terms of higher levels of education, employment and independent earning opportunities are removing the psychological dependence of women on men, and permitting them to choose to remain single rather than compromise on their social, professional and personal life. A greater exposure to the world at large, particularly the western developed countries, has shaped much of the outlook of women. On the other hand, the same progress of society especially in urban India is resulting in increasing fragmentation of social structures and isolation of individuals. Support systems in extended family units are long gone. Even parents can no longer be taken for granted as a united support system, making life more and more difficult for such women to find support from within the family.

If we examine the Census of 2001 and 2011, particularly focusing on the data presented in the article by Salve closely, we find the following peculiarities.

Mean age of marriage of females has increased from 19.3 Years in 1990 to 21.2 years in 2011. This nominal increase seen up to 2011 census, and further increase in later years as indicated in several reports albeit with conflicting data, do not explain the increase in

population of single women. Widowhood is perceived to be the primary cause from the age of 30 years onwards, as indicated by Salve. However, while widowed women in rural areas, at 29.2 million, are more than double of those who never married at 13.2 million, the difference is much less in urban areas – with widows accounting for 13.6 million compared to 12.3 million who never married. Further, while the average number of single women all over India increased by about 39% from 2001 to 2011 census, the number of urban single women increased much more, by 58% from 17.1 million in 2001 to 27 million in 2011.

This observation establishes that specific socio economic exposures and opportunities in urban areas is bringing about a rapid increase in the population of urban single women in India who has preferred to remain single. Undoubtedly, if the data is obtained today, it would show a much higher increase. It is obvious that Indian society and social perception, particularly male social perception, has not evolved at par, and is the main cause of the problems faced by the urban single women today. Some of the major issues may be listed as follows:

1. The society embarks on a self-assigned watchdog activity – and persecutes single women, checking their activities and social interactions, imposing various norms on them, and even cautioning family members of their neighbours to avoid interactions, out of fear.
2. Even in official workspace – single women are exploited in various ways, including being denied promotions.
3. Since families find it difficult to have frequent interactions with single women, loneliness creeps in. Club culture is not at all prevalent among single women as among men. Even predominantly women organizations find it difficult to assign main administrative responsibilities to single women with underlying concerns about whether they would exercise a balanced outlook.
4. Single women are perceived to be more vulnerable than single men, and hence face greater security and safety threats. Among these, sexual harassment is probably the greatest threat. Urban areas have a very mixed male population from a poor economic and/or social background with poor value inculcation, where compassion could not evolve. Competition in all facets of life of urbanites further aggravates the condition. This increases the threat factor.

While many articles and papers have been written to analyze the problems of single women, some of the possible means to reduce the burden of single urban women are suggested here.

1. Strengthen the mind of girl children through learning to tackle adverse situations right from a young age, with due attention to safety, instead of submerging them continuously with protective affection. Participation in sports and challenging games is an essential mechanism to learn to tackle failure in a fun way. Even a highly talented singer, for example, must learn to compete in the playground and to tackle performance / expectation failures and adversities.
2. The government, irrespective of the political party and its social constraints, must vocally and frequently promote gender equality, rights of single women, and set early examples to suppress harassment of single women.
3. Social organizations and mentoring individuals, who desire to actively counsel people with problems and also have the gifted ability to do so, must pro-actively, on their own, pursue single women to come together in group meets and strengthen themselves by openly discussing their problems with counseling from the mentors.

## **Conclusion**

We have examined the problems faced by single women in urban areas of India and suggested some new ways to tackle these problems. We also note that the main cause for increase in number of single women in urban India may no longer be widowhood but the choice of women to remain single. This study is not exhaustive and needs to be extended further.

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## TO CLEAR MAIN PROBLEMS FACED BY SINGLE WOMEN IN MUMBAI REGION

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### Abstract

India is a traditional country and there is diversity in religion, culture and as well as in their customs. Role of single women in India mostly limits to household and to domestic issues. In some cases women can find employment as nurses, doctors, teachers the caring and nurturing sectors. But even if well qualified women engineers or managers or geologists are available, preference will be given to a male of equal qualification. The present study investigated to identify the factors preventing single woman employees from aspiring for higher post and challenges & problems faced by them. Further the study try to explain the real condition of Indian working women and also make an effort to clear main problems of single working women. Primary and secondary data were used in this paper.

**Keywords:** Challenges, Problems, Traditional, Women Workers.

### Introduction

In the history of human development, women have been as vital in the history making as men have been. In fact higher status for women vis-à-vis employment and work performed by them in a society is a significant indicator of a nation's overall progress. There are many reasons and problems that forced Indian's women to work. The financial demands on the Indian families are increasing day by day. Cost of living, expenses on education of children, and cost of housing properties in India raised and these reason force every family in India to look for ways and means of increasing the household income. As a result, women in India who were mostly known as homemakers are forced to go for jobs and take up even careers that were considered only suitable for men such as working in night shifts. Working women i.e., those who are in paid employment, face problems at the workplace just by virtue of their being women. Social attitude to the role of women lags much behind the law. The attitude which considers women fit for certain jobs and not others, causes prejudice in those who

recruit employees. Thus women find employment easily as nurses, doctors, teachers, secretaries or on the assembly line. Even when well qualified women are available, preference is given to a male candidate of equal qualifications. A gender bias creates an obstacle at the recruitment stage itself. When it comes to remuneration, though the law proclaims equality, it is not always practiced. The inbuilt conviction that women are incapable of handling arduous jobs and are less efficient than men influences the payment of unequal salaries and wages for the same job. But in most families her salary is handed over to the father, husband or in-laws. So the basic motive for seeking employment in order to gain economic independence is nullified in many women's case. Problems of gender bias beset women in the industrial sector when technological advancement results in retrenchment of employees. Women workers in India are faced with lot more challenges than their counterparts in the other countries. Besides of so many efforts from past years, female section of society is deprived in compared to male section.

## **Review of Literature**

The literature review shows that more focus is on married working women than on unmarried working women (Karl, 2009). It is also seen that focus is more on organized sector rather than unorganized sector of working women (Shalz, 2011). Eggins (1997) advocates for more facilities to women in the workplace, suggesting that "...it is an important part of developmental strategy as well as an act of social justice" The World Bank (1991) estimates that Indian Women make up one-third of the labor force. Singhal (1995) is of the opinion that, "Participation of women in workforce is essential for economic development and population planning."

Wentling (2003) showed that the twin roles of women cause tension and conflict due to her social structure which is still more dominant. In her study on working women in Delhi, she has shown that "traditional authoritarian set up of Hindu social structure continues to be the same basically and hence women face problem of role conflict change in attitudes of men and women according to the situation can help to overcome their problem."

Sophia J. Ali (2011) "investigated the challenges facing women in career development. She found that most of the women employees were dissatisfied with career development programmers and women were discriminated against in career development opportunities. The study recommended that organizations should strive to ensure that career development programmers were set to enhance career development among-st women employees. Top management should also be committed to the career development of women, and

organizations should also introduce affirmative action to urgently address career development of women.”

## Objective of Study

1. To identify the factors preventing women employees from aspiring for higher post and challenges & problems faced by women workers.
2. To clear main problems of working women.
3. To explore the socio-economic background of single women.
4. To explain the phenomenon of singlehood among women.
5. To identify the life styles of single women and to measure their level of satisfaction.
6. To identify the problems and challenges faced as well as strategies opted to overcome these problems by single women.
7. To find the future aspirations of single women.
8. To suggest methods to cope up with the problems of singlehood.

## Hypothesis

H0: This is positive hypothesis that there are many problems faced by single women in their day to day life.

H1: This is negative hypothesis that there are no problems faced by single women in their basic life.

## Research Methodology

It consists of methods of data collection primary and secondary. Primary data is collect through various online survey and physical survey. Secondary data is collected through internet and various books and magazines.

## Data Interpretation

1. Is a single woman safe in our country?

Yes	No
0%	100%

2. Should there be a change in the society so that equal rights can be given to single and married women?

Yes	No
100%	0%

3. Who gets more respect in the society?

Single women	Married women
80%	20%

4. Don't you think same rights as given to married women should be given to single women?

Yes	No
100%	0%

5. Do the men in the society seem worried about how to conduct themselves around women?

Yes	No
70%	30%

6. Do single women face more problem as compared to married women?

Yes single women face more problems	No single women don't face more problems	Both face equal problems
20%	5%	75%

## Testing of Hypothesis

Hypothesis H<sub>0</sub> is accepted as many problems and challenges are faced by single women in our society.

**Problems Faced by Working Women in India**

1. **Mental harassment:** It is an age old convention that women are less capable and inefficient in working as compared to men. The attitude which considers women unfit for certain jobs holds back women. In spite of the constitutional provisions, gender bias creates obstacles in their recruitment. In addition to this, the same attitude governs injustice of unequal salaries for the same job. The true equality has not been achieved even after 61 years of independence. Working in such conditions inevitably puts strain on women to greater extent as compared to men, thus making them less eager in their career.
2. **Sexual harassment:** Today, almost all working women are prone to sexual harassment irrespective of their status, personal characteristics and the types of their employment. They face sexual harassment on way on transports, at working places, educational institutions and hospitals, at home and even in police stations when they go to file complaints. It is shocking that the law protectors are violating and outraging modesty of women. Most of the women tend to be concentrated in the poor service jobs whereas men are in an immediate supervisory position, which gives them an opportunity to exploit their subordinate women.
3. **Discrimination at Workplace:** However, Indian women still face blatant discrimination at their workplaces. They are often deprived of promotions and growth opportunities at work places but this doesn't apply to all. A majority of working women continue to be denied their right to equal pay, under the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 and are underpaid in comparison to their male colleagues. This is usually the case in factories and labour-oriented industries.
4. **No Safety of Working Women: While Travelling** Typically, the orthodox mindset in the Indian society makes it difficult for a working woman to balance her domestic environment with the professional life. In some families, it may not be acceptable to work after six o'clock. Those families that do accept these working hours may experience considerable anxiety every day about a woman's safety while travelling. So many issues affect a single working woman because she is closely protected or watched by her family and the society.
5. **Lack of Family Support:** Lack of proper family support is another issue that working women suffers from. At times, the family doesn't support women to leave the household work and go to office. They also resist for women working till late in office

which also hampers the performance of the women and this also affects their promotion.

6. **Insufficient Maternity Leaves:** Insufficient maternity leave is another major issue that is faced by a working mother. This not only affects the performance of women employees at work, but is also detrimental to their personal lives.
7. **Job insecurity:** Unrealistic expectations, especially in the time of corporate reorganizations, which sometimes puts unhealthy and unreasonable pressures on the employee, can be a tremendous source of stress and suffering. Increased workload extremely long work hours and intense pressures to perform at peak levels all the time for the same pay, can actually leave an employee physically and emotionally drained. Excessive travel and too much time away from family also contribute to an employee's stressors.
8. **Workplace Adjustment:** Adjusting to the workplace culture, whether in a new company or not, can be intensely stressful. Making oneself adapt to the various aspects of workplace culture such as communication patterns of the boss as well as the co-workers, can be lesson of life. Maladjustments to workplace cultures may lead to subtle conflicts with colleagues or even with superiors. In many cases office politics or gossips can be major stress inducers.
9. **Other reasons :** it include Personal demographics like age, level of education, marital status, number of children, personal income and number of jobs currently had where you work for pay and Work situation characteristics like job tenure, size of employing organization, hours worked per week.

## **Conclusion**

Now a day's women workers are improved and promote in their workplace and in technological work. Trade Union should try to improve the conditions for woman's workers in many parts for example maternity leave is easily give to women and help the woman for achieve higher post actually women's nature is promotion to gain high quality in every field but if the condition is not ready then the reduction of promotion and optimization in work will be occur and etc... Women workers are often subject to sexual harassment then the Government should put strict rules for these types of crimes , also public transport system sometimes danger for woman and Government should put more Inspection. Traditionally people think that men should only work and gain money and women should work as house

hold, but The financial demands on the Indian families are increasing that's why women also should company in gaining income for families. Therefore a fundamental change is required in attitudes of employees, family members and public.

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## **SINGLE WOMEN: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES**

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### **Abstract**

According to the Indian Patriarchal society, single women are considered to be cat women (shame); even though women during Vedic period enjoyed high status. Life is not a bed of roses for single women in India even today in the world of globalization and advancement where women have reached miles upstairs from what there were before. Still there is a lack of acceptance of single women in the society. Society fails to accept it and makes it even more difficult for them to survive with equal respect. Several prejudices among the people don't approve single women's in the society. Our society is not a women friendly society yet.

**Keywords:** Patriarchal Society, Vedic Period, Globalization, Prejudices, Women Friendly.

### **Introduction**

There are several dimensions by which the issues of single women can be addressed:

- **FINANCIAL SECURITY:** Girls and women in the progressive families are encouraged to perceive higher studies they thereby land up getting higher income jobs. But there are also millions of single women today who were deprived of the requisite education and hence are forced to work for low income jobs. This poses a threat towards financial security in future.
- **SAFETY:** Safety becomes a major issue when the society itself rejects the idea of being single for a woman. Especially safety becomes a threat for the single women who travel various cities.
- **PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTURBANCES:** Several single women fail to face the societal stress and get disturbed emotionally landing into mental disorders or disturbances.
- **LONELINESS:** Loneliness is the toughest challenge faced by the women who are single because after attaining a certain age all fellow friends get married and settled down in their life and thus they have someone to share everything with at the same time singles are left with hardly anyone to talk and share everything with. However

social media and active professional life have helped alot coping up with loneliness still it exists.

Thus there are several issues and challenges faced by a woman in day to day life which is being purely ignored by the society due to the preconceived ideas of the people since generations.

## **Overview**

If we analyze the situation of single women during the Vedic period in India, we see that women enjoyed a higher status than the women today in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Today even in the world of technology, globalization a girl child's birth is still considered to be inauspicious and the institution of marriage is considered compulsory. The status of the women started declining in the post Vedic period. The minimum age for the girls is legally prescribed as 18yrs but urban girls get married by 22-25yrs of age .Thus we can consider women as a single women who has remained unmarried till the age of 30 or above. Earlier marriage was the ultimate goal of each girl child but now with the increasing education and job opportunities, gender equality, women are acquiring freedom to live their lives according to their own choices and styles.

The National Committee on status of women (1974) has observed a drastic change in the lifestyle of the women; before independence single women were seen devoting their lives towards social services, for the betterment of the society but in the present scenario many single women enjoy their successful professional life, higher positions etc,. The present research describes and investigates the phenomenon of singlehood, its related problems and challenges.

## **Objectives of the Study**

The main objectives of the study is to understand the problems faced by the single women in the society and what can we as a part of the society can contribute to create a better society for them to live in. Following are few objectives hereby enlisted:

- i. To understand what it is for a single women to live in society (issues and challenges)
- ii. To explore the lifestyle, the behavioural pattern of them.
- iii. To explain the single hood of women in the society

- iv. To understand what do they expect from the society.
- v. To find out the future aspirations of them.
- vi. To suggest methods to cope up with the problems of single hood.

## **Research Questions**

The proposed research is addressed to the following questionnaire:

- i. What is the economic background of the single women?
- ii. What is the reason for singlehood?
- iii. What is the lifestyle and satisfaction for the single women in today's life?
- iv. What are all the problems and challenges faced by the single women in day to day life?
- v. What are the future aspirations?

## **The Methodology**

The proposed research is based on both primary and secondary data collection; the primary data has been collected by interviewing 10 single women using the questionnaire said above. The secondary data has been derived from various standard books and articles published in different journals

## **Conceptual Framework**

The following concepts are to be clearly highlighted in the proposed theme of the research for better understanding:

### **1. Who is a single woman in the society?**

Single woman is a woman who has reached the age of 30 and is still unmarried. The age of 30 is been set by our own society for several reasons taking into consideration the basic education the girl can have, profession training, employment etc. Even women start perceiving themselves as single women when they reach or cross the age of 30. Hence it can be said that the cut off for the minimum age of unmarried women at 30 yrs appears to be most rational and suitable for the present study.

### **2. Life styles?**

The lifestyle refers to the study of the living patterns and adaptability to various modes of life. It exhibits the way of life a single women wishes or chooses to live

with references to her work life, identification of self and confidence in future. This will also include her behavioural patterns in situation of work, home and society.

### **3. Issues?**

Issues would reflect to those situations which a single woman perceive to be causing stress and strain in her life; which would create disturbances in her daily routine also threatening her mentally or physically and identify the causes responsible for such situations.

### **4. Challenges?**

Challenges can be reflected as the critical situations faced by the single women and their extreme boldness to accept it and move on with their own chosen decisions of their own life.

## **Major Findings**

### **1. Socio economic background**

Majority of the women belong to the age group of 30-40yrs. Most of them are educated at least up to graduation. Also most of women come from the families wherein both the parents are educated. One fourth of the single women live in women's hostel and work from there whereas half of the single women live with their own family under the same roof and work from there. More than half of the single women are themselves financially strong and also support their family they live with. Most of them have a brother or sister married off and leading their own family life. It was seen that most of the women are living their singlehood by choice and few of them are single due to some unfavorably events occurred in their life.

### **2. Lifestyle of the single women**

Single women not only have different living arrangements, but are also engaged in several jobs and job schedules. Not many of the single women. Do their household chores themselves, they hire a maid to do it for them and they keep themselves busy in their own professional firm. Majority of them don't feel the need of a life partner or a male partner and consequently the feelings of deprivation about children are also not there.

3. There are many positive and negative aspects of the lifestyles of single women in the society. Independence in all spheres of life, greater opportunities for establishing an identity are few positive aspects whereas negative aspects comprises of lack of

intimate relationships, feeling of insecurity, fear and loneliness, greater chances of being sexually harassed, fear of loneliness in old age and deprivation of sex gratification.

4. **PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES OF SINGLE WOMEN:-**

5. Empirical evidence collected on the problems and challenges of single women shows that nearly three fourth of the selected women do not experience any physical problems. Psychological problems like deprivation, frustration, awkwardness and inferiority complex are also not felt by most of them as their intensity is too high. However the problems of exploitation in the society as well as social restrictions are reported. Lack of social status, discriminative facilities are also felt.
6. It must be emphasized that in a male dominated society the greatest problem of the single women is lack of security – physical, psychological or emotional, economic or financial or social .It is seen that single women have greater capacity to work but they do not find proper avenues. They sometimes break down and lack confidence in themselves. It is the patriarchal society that breaks them down.

7. **FUTURE ASPIRATIONS OF SINGLE WOMEN:-**

8. Most of the single women have developed the feelings of social insecurity which ultimately results in the fear for old/prolonged illness. Single women have emphasized the need for establishment of social institutions for them like women's club, single women's associations and social service centers run by NGO'S, special hostels, special old age homes. They have underlined the need for developing a positive attitude towards single women and understanding their problems through empathy. The single women also aspire to work or to do something for the betterment of their fellow women.
9. We as a part of the society also have a moral duty to understand their moral needs and help them out

## **Recommendations**

In the light of the above discussion there are certain socio legislative measures that can be taken to reduce the suffering of the single women around in the society. They are as follows:-

- i. The Indian women of today should fight against the existing prejudices against women and should force themselves from the secondary status that is accorded to them in this patriarchal society.

- ii. The actual changing of minds should start from homes itself wherein boys at a tender age itself should be taught to respect women.
- iii. The ideas that careers are for women and marriage is for girls shall we wiped out.
- iv. Marriage should not be made as the ultimate aim of a girl's life. Daughters who want to remain unmarried for various reasons like perceiving a career should be encouraged and their unmarried should not be suspiciously looked upon.
- v. All the educated people should come together and strive to change the society. It has to be a team effort. No single person can do it alone.
- vi. Singlehood in society can be considered seriously when single women themselves are emotionally and socially strong.
- vii. Government and NGO'S should develop and implement sensitization programs to bring out an attitudinal change of the society towards the single women.
- viii. Government should provide reservation for single women in government jobs and ensure strict enforcement of the laws on dowry and atrocities against them
- ix. Government should also provide financial assistance for establishing community based aid centers and rehabilitation centers for single women.

It is hoped that these suggestions will be taken seriously by the government and interested agencies concerned with the welfare of women in order to uplift the conditions of those exploited and depressed.

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## **SINGLE BY CHOICE: NEVER MARRIED WOMEN IN MUMBAI**

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### **Abstract**

Marriage is seen as an important life goal for both men and women but more so for the latter. Religions recommend it. Laws do not take into account individuals who are exceptions and neither do people know how to respond to them. As a result, for men, marriage becomes a means to an end, the most common being an outlet for sexual desire and strengthening of one's financial status by asking for dowry. For women, it becomes the means for attaining social status as well as physical and financial security. In the recent past, marriage was considered a good way to find a permanent caretaker for physical or mentally challenged men but not vice versa. Marriage to one's rapist was considered a win-win situation. The use of marriage as instrument of social and individual control has been questioned today. Substance abuse, infidelity etc. are all concessions to men in marriage but never for women.

If marriage has been used for such negative purposes, people who have decided not to marry simply out of social requirement should be seen as self-aware and resistant to social pressure. Instead, they are seen as freaks or outliers who need to be scrutinized to ensure that they do not do anything "wrong" like make responsible choices and explore new options. In such a scenario, women with their greater burden of societal expectations face greater scrutiny and pressure from both family and society and it becomes important to understand the reasons for certain women never marrying, the impact of this decision on them and its implications.

**Keywords:** Social Status, Care Taker, Win-Win Situation, Infidelity, Societal Expectations.

### **Introduction**

It is expected that single women face less pressures both at home and outside and hence would have greater life satisfaction. Sundriyalet al in their study found that single women have *both* higher life satisfaction and *depression* than married women. This could be because marriage in a pluralistic society like India is a good buffer for emotional stresses and also complements occupational life and household income. This is especially so in the child-

rearing years as single women mostly being childless tend to get further socially marginalized ([www.researchgate.net/publication/272717165\\_Depression\\_and\\_Life\\_Satisfaction\\_among\\_Married\\_Unmarried\\_Women](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/272717165_Depression_and_Life_Satisfaction_among_Married_Unmarried_Women)).

The normalization of heterosexual marriages suggests that singleness is ***socially constructed***. Reynolds and Wetherell propose that singleness is not a natural fact or social arrangement but has shifting patterns of meaning and social relationships that vary culturally. They then suggest that singleness is a ***social category*** which should be seen as *discursive*, not *cognitive*. Such categorizations are revealing about the social order. These categories aim at providing orderly and accountable frameworks in social life. Singleness too has a few fixed categories like widows, divorcees and separated and also others like ‘ever single’ and ‘single again’. The categories in turn have institutional and identity consequences. Singleness should be studied as a ***discourse***. It’s a set of complex meanings and practices. The discourse of singleness produces knowledge, forms of truth and expertise which are related to power. Such a discourse naturalizes as well as pathologies and creates patches of visibility as well as invisibility. Singleness should be studied as a set of personal narratives and subject positions related to history, social practices and ideology because these become a personal identity project for single women. This process is also political and hence feminists need to develop further strategies of resistance and develop a collective voice which will help women position themselves in more enabling ways ([ro.open.ac.uk/2784/1/Discursive\\_climate\\_paper.pdf](http://ro.open.ac.uk/2784/1/Discursive_climate_paper.pdf)).

## Objectives

1. Identify the reasons for women never marrying
2. Understanding their demographic, religious and socio-economic profile
3. Understanding their and their family’s views on singlehood
4. Understanding the impact of singlehood on the respondents
5. Identifying policy implications of singlehood

## Methodology

### Research Design

As the questions were personal, the number of respondents small, the research design is interpretive.

### Sample Design



The universe of the study consists of the researcher's network of friends, colleagues and referred respondents. The sampling frame consisted of eleven women from which ten women were selected as they were the only ones willing to participate. Thus, convenience sampling was used.

**Tools of Data Collection:** In-depth interviews.

### **Data Processing and Analysis**

The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. The responses were coded and emerging themes categorized.

### **Scope of the Study**

The study's limitations include its small sample size (ten respondents) that are also from the same metro and a similar socio-economic status.

## **Results**

### **Reason for Not Marrying**

Some respondents wanted to remain single while some were dissatisfied with the gender roles inherent in an Indian marriage. One was a Manglik and hence hadn't found a suitable match in spite of searching through all possible sources. A few had not yet found their soul mate and a few had not found even a suitable candidate and were currently enjoying life in their natal family.

### **Deciding not to Marry**

*"I can get married anytime so right now I'm enjoying being single."*

Most respondents were in their 30s when they consciously stopped efforts to locate a spouse from their end. The age ranges from 30 to 38 years. However, in most cases, it was a fluid thought process based on their experiences rather than a spelt out action. These respondents are open to the idea of marriage even today but only on their terms. All the respondents are working and this indicates their economic independence is a strong factor in their choices. A few had deliberately delayed marriage as they wanted to focus on their careers.

### **Negative Experiences that may have Put Respondents off Marriage**

*“My parents’ marriage is so good, I want one exactly like it!”*

One respondent’s mother had stopped working after marriage and had to change her lifestyle to suit the new role. Except this inherent gender bias and a cousin’s acrimonious divorce due to infidelity, no respondent reported any negative experience that had put them off marriage. This finding came as a surprise to the researcher as most Marathi and Hindi literature and a few English classics have painted an unmarried woman as shrill and perennially dissatisfied with her lot in life, contributing to a similar media portrayal of this group in India.

### **Respondents’ understanding of Singlehood**

*“I’m ready to marry someone but not to just adjust to anyone.”*

*“It’s no tougher than being in a relationship.”*

The respondents see singlehood as having a career, greater freedom and convenience, and living on one’s terms, all with the added advantage of being with your family, without having to always adjust to others. A few respondents reported that they sometimes felt lonely or sad, especially since some festivals and some communities tend to be couple-oriented. Two reported that as they grow older, it becomes difficult to converse with parents and friends on this topic as they are busy with their lives. Finances are average and sometimes it’s socially difficult to be this kind of misfit, especially when there’s moral policing. Also, sometimes the caretaking of ageing parents is fobbed on to them as they are considered to have lesser responsibilities.

### **Family Response**

*“You are the cause of my unhappiness.”*

*“You are raising my BP and sugar.”*

*“You will become aggressive later.”*

*“I want to understand what you are thinking.”*

Most respondents had discussed never marrying with friends but announcing their decision to parents was universally met with dismay though the parents came to terms with it in time. Some parents are still in the process. Friends are mostly surprised at the finality of the choice but accept it more graciously. However, even after the choice has been made, the parents remain concerned for life, if not outright worried. Only one parent was not worried outright

about the decision and asked the respondent's brother to take care of her. Respondents who were previously in relationships that failed reported that their parents were happy with their daughter's choice and sometimes even relieved, especially when the parents had friends or relatives facing domestic violence. This reiterates that concern is the first parental response.

### **Friends' Response**

*"They complain about their marriages all the time and then keep recommending it too!"*

*"Even unmarried friends recommend marriage to me!"*

*"They accept but keep trying."*

Most respondents said that they had to balance the positive and negative social reactions, though the balance tilted in favor of the positive. One reported that friends initially tried to get her to change her mind. One reported that since a friend was in a live-in relationship, her decision was not considered so contrary. No respondent said that they were envious of their married friends because the latter also complained about it to them.

### **Society's Response and Effects**

*"I'm afraid of being lonely."*

*"They ask and I give back."*

*"Friends and neighbors are OK."*

*"Shopkeepers and people question me. It's annoying so I avoid it."*

*"I want distance."*

The respondents felt that their decision once accepted by their parents automatically limits societal interference but not its commentary. People are often unsure about how to understand and categorize these women. The questions range from "Are you sure you are Miss, not Mrs." To the staple TV soap figure, the neighbor aunty/relative who wants to know why you couldn't snag a good groom. The questions are however more out of curiosity than concern. One respondent had a simple to response to queries about why she was not getting married: "Aap hi dhoondhlao koi." No one ever did.

## **Rethinking the Decision**

*“I’m OK with marriage with a good guy.”*

One of the respondents had just had a break-up and was thus not in a frame of mind to think on the singlehood. However, no respondent had said a fixed “No” to marriage for life. They were open to a marriage that would be supportive and fulfilling.

## **Family Support**

*“They support my decision but are worried about the future.”*

*“Support is gender-based.”*

One respondent was totally supported whereas one started getting support a few years ago. Most parents were supportive but were concerned about issues that could be faced in old age such as physical and financial security and the need for companionship. Siblings and friends were seen as sources of support. There was no obvious gender difference with respect to parents’ support. All parents were initially unhappy with the decision but now support it, some more grudgingly than others. Also, religion is seen as a surprisingly acceptable reason for a daughter not marrying e.g. She is a Manglik.

## **Social Support**

*“Not much. Issues are phased.”*

*“It’s passable except for the moral policing.”*

*“Go out and find someone. Don’t sit at home.”*

*“Family and friends help.”*

*“I keep the front door open when I have male guests.”*

Most respondents said that they did not face too many social issues overtly. Covertly however, there is labeling and taking for granted as a person who has much lesser responsibilities than others. The fact that the respondent who spoke about leaving her front door open is also the oldest indicates the acknowledgment that society exercises a strong *extra-legal* power over this group.

## Problems faced because of Being Single

*“Social monitoring. Financially I’m ok.”*

*“There’s no match from guys. Stress, financial problems in the future...”*

*“People give me more respect. I’m responsible. People accept that.”*

*“NGOs don’t pay much so parents worry. Otherwise no impact”.*

The respondents stated that there were no obvious problems resulting from their singlehood except the occasional “advice” from people “who just want good things for you”. However, there are more practical concerns as being a single income earner for life. After the parents pass away, it’s likely that siblings may not contribute financially to help the respondents. On respondent’s brother actually usurped her parents’ house after their father’s demise. If physical security is taken care of, there were no issues that arose chiefly because of their marital status. The emotional stress occasioned by singlehood sometimes exacerbated existing health conditions like rheumatoid arthritis for one respondent. Some of the respondents sometimes felt the need for companionship of people their own age, not specifically men though.

## Change in Perception of Marriage

*“I’m happy for you but don’t want to be in your place.”*

*“Many times I feel sad. Especially when relatives comment. So I walk, chat, eat-drink, go for an outing. Keep busy.”*

*“It’s just hypocrisy regarding genderstereotypes.”*

*“Not all should marry.”*

*“Both marriage and singlehood need maturity and adjustment.”*

Respondents reported that over time, their opinion about marriage being a gender-biased institution had not changed significantly, especially since they received similar feedback from their friends almost regularly. Sometimes when they needed a diversion, they would engage in hobbies like tennis, or talk to someone, take a nap, take on work assignments etc. Festivals were seen as somewhat upsetting the routine because they meant socializing with family and friends and also because of the pressure to feel happier and do festival-related work such as cleaning and cooking.

## Conclusion

All the respondents reported lack of support from society at large in the form of questions about their physical and mental health, labeling and sometimes even moral policing. This indicates that only financial independence allows them to not marry which is actually a personal choice.

Secondly, even parental support comes after some time once their decisions appears final. Financial responsibility and ability to be independent are key elements for parental support according to the respondents.

Thirdly, social institutions like religion and law do not have provisions customized to their needs. The law too does not provide any special supportive measures such as special insurance for single women if they were to lose their earning ability. The problem of housing societies not allowing unmarried people of both genders to rent houses is universal in Indian metros. The labeling is seen at the workplace too, with unmarried women being expected to devote more time to work and report earlier and leave later than others because “they don’t have any responsibilities at home.” This belittling indicates that society only *tolerates* such women because they are following most of its other codes.

In conclusion, financially independent women in Mumbai decide not to marry because they do not accept the traditional gender-biased division of labor and stereotypes in marriage. They are educated, employed, financially independent, not religious and supported by their parents and peers. Society may not always be comfortable but tends to leave them to themselves if they do not make any obviously disruptive choices. Irrespective, being single has made these women more aware of their responsibilities, especially advancing age, which they are handling capably. Government and religion need to understand their requirements and customize certain aspects of their functioning, such as social security and rituals respectively.

*People ask me, “Why are you single? You are attractive, intelligent and creative.”*

*My reply is, “I’m overqualified.”*

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## **SINGLE WOMEN: WOMEN WITHOUT MEN**

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### **Abstract**

Do we say single women means Women without man..?

What do we as a society think about single women means...?

Does single means with no adequate resources..?

Does child of single mother to face more troubles?

Family portrait is changing?

Mother and child or father and child?

Single women how faces the Issues of accommodation , property , medical, emotional , societal , legal pains, financial carrier , or as single parent , pregnancy issue , issues of kids of single mother , or issues of growing child they have to deal signally.

**Keywords:** Women, Single Women, Harassment, Abortion, Succession, Problems, Patriarchal, Sexual, Moral, Issues, Society, Pregnancy, Emotional, Educated, Marriage.

### **Introduction**

#### **Being Single in India is roller coaster ride**

What do we as a society think about single women means...? Unmarried women separated women, divorced women or abandoned by husband ...? Or women which are out of patriarchal system means single?

Single people walk in and walk out of relationship unlike married couples?

#### **Single has shifting definition.**

According to senses 73 million single women are in India. And rate is increased by 40 percent this year. Women in India are single either by choice or by force .getting marriage is not ultimate goal of life for them though centrality of life in India is related to marriage.

Women are grabbing the headlines and doing better than before

Indira Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi, Mamata Benerjee, LataMangeshkar, Amrita Sen, Arundhati Roy..Many more living life of their choice, still report says 2000 girls killed in womb every day 92 women raped in India every day reported unreported how much?

She may be educated and liberated but we deal with men who are not.

Issues of accommodation , property , medical, emotional , societal , legal pains, financial carrier , or as single parent , pregnancy issue , issues of kids of single mother , or issues of



growing child they have to deal signally which makes her some time strong or some time weak ..making life as good roller coaster ride as being single itself is big problem which first of all need to get acceptance from the society .. Moral issues of the society we need to keep pace.

### **Accommodation / residence hurdles**

Getting accommodation in the city for single women is as difficult as in rural areas still today. If you go on searching rented apartment or ownership , till getting deal finalized for accommodation in safest place you have to go through many rejection , agent property dealers , sellers will keep on asking you various question due to fixed mind set . Buying a house is not easy unless you pretend someone like daddy or someone like your husband with you to support

### **Economical- financial problems**

Earn as well as carry house hold work. to do both responsibility together, pay light bill pay property taxes, pay expenses of children, pay medical bills, pay for rents or instalments of house and also earn for it equally handle issues of emotional part or physical part medical issues or monthly periods making her weak ...or deal with pregnancy sometime wanted or unwanted child as society may not accept single mother of child.

### **Career pains**

Being single no one knows how much balance in your account you have ,It may be on some day you have no cent in your account and you need to pay for rent of your accommodation.

You have to look after your child and also take care of his emotional needs and educational, medical needs and pay for educational needs even if you don't have money in your account or even if at workplace you are harassed by colleagues and you are dependent on your bread and butter you can't stop working

Societal problems and status: being single is not a problem, infact , society is a problem for them .

Most of we as society have mindset that the single nari not sanskari, invasion of privacy. as being single or divorced you are vulnerable for society as no one there to protect you in day to day chorus when you come to any problems while dealing with so many men in the society as plumber, or as electrical or drivers, hence they are ought to get problems and being women you have in built creative strength to overcome all problems.

Single by choice or force,12 percent of women in India are single

They face harassment by male colleagues Sms whatsapp by night.

We find in history Anjaniputra Hanuman , But in modern society still single women status is taboo by society...

Defamation, de moralization, tagging them as Divorced ,widow ,separated, single, unmarried ,lesbian, are named as upon as arrogant, spinster , bin bihai , abla, bichari , bitch, dangerous, available, vulnerable, etc may be 10,000 words we can pick But for complimentary word for them not even 1000 words we can pick for them.

After so many years of freedom we still fight for equality, Society still living in multiple centuries.

Being single having Pregnancy issues or infants to take care or, growing up children situation singally can take toll on life.

Two role at a time as father and as mother she has to play with growing child, become father and mother of child send child in school and then go in office and earn for needs of child and deal with society and also hear the sarcastic of man.

Child of single mother become more independent to deal with society and to take decision on own at.

### **Emotional pains, medical issues**

Many women feel contended and happy after divorced.

Bombay very safe outside City of dream still night mare in night

Indian society still not ready to accept the status of single women or may be government still not ready to adapt the changes that single women with child is modern family now a days ..

Being single she may not have heirs and if Biological clock is ticking... as after some years she can't be able to have biological child after 38-40 she may not have heirs... and even if she want to adopt child , it's not easy in India ..No doubt Susmita sen and some other have adopted child daughters who are financially well off and known personality for them some laws are relaxed. But for other ladies life is not as easy like this stars as People around you harassment by society thought process of them all need to change

It is seen that Single women become so strong that she survives whatever comes to her path Because of this I did this... because of that I did this... but society family thought process need to be change...harassment need to stop...

People think she don't want to take responsibility, she is selfish...she don't want husband nor children so did not married.

In modern society Single women demoralized with people gaze as how many men she may be sleeping.

In our Ancient history we see graceful example of Shakuntala brought up Bharat as single women. Sita brought up children as single women. Parvati was single mother of Ganesha.

There becomes comparison and debate as single women v/s married women

Do this, do not do this , else no one will choose to get married with you such instruction from child hood There were jerks around if U don't think who u want to be u will be in mess ...

Cosmopolitan city many women single is their life different from smaller city or village women who are single? 99 percent of women face sexual harassment but did not voice it. Sexual harassment all women face, but single women face it more though many men who are very supportive

Honour killing in some community, if she gets married by choice in other community.

We hear word Marriage, breaking broken marriage, but in reality it's a happy ending for many women. Ladies are now days working as driver, taxi drivers... women are happy after they get divorced inspite they get taboo of society other women..Single hai so successful hai as no other responsibility etc..

### **Legal pains**

Still our state government not ready to keep pace with it... as all slow legal procedures and out dated laws. changes in law need to be done...from birth certificate to Adhar card , passport forms, school admission forms, hospital register form, municipal corporation birth registration forms.

If she is unwed mother, or having test tube baby still she have to disclose name of father in government department and need to approach high court to remove name of father of child in birth certificate. Number of petition time and again filed in High Court due to it as legally ladies were compelled to disclose name of father at passport office or at birth certificate only if its kept agreed to be confidential still it is hard to convince rigid authorities and its out dated rules.

As per law Child marriage is illegal and prevented now still we are not able to eradicate it from mind set of people and it's still going on. So first of all mind set of people at all strata need to be reformed.

Property rights given to ladies in law but Laws not implemented properly. Not only on papers but things should be actually great in real and speedy implementation of laws protecting women in all walk of life be implemented in public life.

We have many acts made for specially protecting weaker section of the society i.e, 'women' and taking support of constitution we have PCPNDT Act, D.V. Act, Protection of women at work place from Sexual harassment Act, Dowry Act, and Prevention of Child Marriage Act for better life of women has been implemented still some more protection for the women is needed as equality still illusive?

..Sexual violence and harassment at work place:

99 percent of women faces sexual harassment however Single women face it more often at workplace and outside world then married women as .there is stigma around victim if single lady raises voice against sexual harassment at work place. It's part of psychology issue, body literacy issue .eyes roll on to part of body such way that you rob her of her autonomy. as it is observed in many situation that men are not so kind for single women and they think her as of less moral character than their wife and treat her as humiliating her or do such schemes and plans with intention of quid pro , no doubt hidden lust plays big role as being in civilized society they can't show their lust against single women openly.

In rural areas 44 million single women live in rural areas .... Sexual abuse, financial hardship frequently denied property rights.

Widows, abandoned wives, unmarried women are socially ostracized and stigma attached to divorced, suffering from harassment emotionally trauma, people make out any kind of stories, they do not voice their pain and do not take legal actions ,They not aware of rights they do not have voice for pain scared and alone

As single women you may not have legal heir but if you want to have child then, Whats marriage got to do it with child and heir .

Objectives: being single is 100 percent nothing to be ashamed of, After all it is not a disease, its every ones default state. Salvation lies in women's self-sufficiency, capacity to make their own decisions, boldness & ability of controlling emotions.

## **Conclusions**

Women in India ready for the change .Single parents, hetro sexual notions in family

Homosexuality is just recently de criminalized; so no doubt we will soon see the family of two women, two men or women and men as union.

Women may not want to get married but may want child, so what marriage got to do with it, we have enough latest technology we can do frozen egg and donator egg .

I personally feel as a single parent as women it's a adventurous life, every day of life new life new possibilities new statistics... women rebelling today is accepted in the society now. some

time being single is I feel like more blessing because getting in to relationship is the last thing you want or need.

We may come across in future family of two mothers or two fathers as family in our country as such relation is no more illegal, if being single mom she is able to take care of child and having girlfriend beside her.

**Suggestions**

Changes to be made in law as Technology changing modern family setup.

Better welfare policies by government need to be there , further at all government department from birth certificate to school admission , Adhar and Passport, pan card everywhere instead of name of father only name of mother would be sufficient in such way convenience should be done .

There are many reports that many single or unwed mothers has approach the high court to remove name of father from birth certificate and passport office rigid to compelled them to give or disclose name of father for child of single women.

Law has to keep pace with modern society to overcome social and institutional hurdles by implementing laws strictly. Constitution in India protects the rights of women. Medical insurances for Mother and child or father and child are made available.

Zero tolerance towards sexual violence of men against women in the society be brought.

We still need to long way to work, Indian women struggle for progress.

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This is what they had to say on the difficulties of being single in India.

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## **SUCCESS STORIES OF SINGLE WOMEN: A STUDY**

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### **Abstract**

A **single woman** includes unmarried women, widowed women and married women, but left by her husband, family etc. We say that behind every powerful man, there's a powerful women, but behind many a powerful women is nothing but her own rear end. Single women achieve success because she can spare the entire time, efforts, money for herself. Some women become single due to several reasons rather some prefer to remain single as per their choice. As rightly said by our great mother MOTHER TERESA, 'Spread love everywhere you go, Let no one ever come to you without leaving happier'. This paper deals with the success story of single women in Ulhasnagar and Ambernath region.

**Keywords:** Women, Single, Success, Powerful, Happier.

### **Introduction**

Single women can be unmarried women, widowed women and married women, but left by her husband, family, friends etc. Successful single women is the one who besides being single is in a stable condition/ achieved great success.....that is in independent.

A single woman has to face many problems and challenges in her life because she is living without male support. As our society is male dominant society, a women staying alone seems to be a question mark for the women but rather more for the society. Even if a woman prefers to stay alone, she is forced to get married or either she is not treated properly. But we should be proud to see that in our male dominant society, we can see 50 out of 100 women who stays alone and is independent. The same figure previously was 10 or 20 out of 100. In this study I came in contact with the women who is widowed but is independent and running her family in a stable and smooth condition.

### **Review of Literature**

Much research is not done in this area, but I have read literature on google.com as I have searched as "success stories of single women in India".

Mother Teresa was an ambassador for the power of unconditional love—even without being in love with a man. As the founder of Missionaries of Charity in Calcutta, India, she led a

global movement that served the sick, orphaned, dying, and poor. True, she was a nun and technically not allowed to marry, but that didn't stop her from showing the world that no woman needs a man to conquer it.

Quotable Quote: Spread love everywhere you go. Let no one ever come to you without leaving happier. PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

## **Methodology of Research**

Primary research is used for the purpose of the study. Interview method was used to collect the data.

## **Advantages of Being Single**

### **1. Independent:**

If a woman remains single, she becomes independent. With her hard work and dedication she achieves success as there is no other helping hand to her.

### **2. Take proper care of oneself:**

The single woman can focus more on oneself and if married and left by her husband and having kids, then concentrate more on them. Otherwise a married woman staying with her husband and in-laws gets less time for herself and devotes oneself for the development of her family.

### **3. Financially strong:**

A single woman can be financially strong also because otherwise the financial resources are divided into 50-50 or 20-80 or any other ratio.....but here she is the only owner of all her assets.

### **4. Decision making:**

A single women decision making capacity may become stronger compared to previous capacity. This is because usually in this male dominant society, the decision making is always left in the hands of male, so a women always waits for the decision of either her father or husband. But being single she is in a position to use her maximum capacity.

## **Disadvantages of Being Single:**

### **1. Loneliness:**

Single women may feel loneliness in life if she is unmarried. Married women with kids may not feel loneliness till her kids are small. But once they are grown up and get engaged with



some or other activity or get married, again the single women remain lonely. She always searches for someone with whom she can share.

## 2. Trouble from society:

A single woman also has to face a lot of trouble from the society. If not married, then everyone will force her to get married and if married but divorced or widowed, then also the society may force her to do re-marriage. (Here society includes family members, friends, relatives etc.)

## Case Study

1. In my study to prepare the paper I have taken Interview of widowed women who stays in Ambernath. The details are as under:

The women named Laxmi Nagesh Chawadi stays in Ambernath. She got married to Nagesh Basappa Chawadi in the year 1996. The couple was blessed with a baby girl in the year 1997. The couple, their baby and husband's father.....four members family stayed together. Her husband was a government employee in Railways. The wife was illiterate and was a housewife.....not aware or rather known to the outside world. The family was well going.....but all of a sudden her husband passed away in a road accident in the year 2005. The situation of the family became worse. Now she became the single women having to bear so many responsibilities. Her daughter was just eight years old.....i.e. in 3rd standard even not know what has happened. The Railway officials seeing her condition offered her job in Railways. But as she was illiterate and not having the habit of travelling so far to Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus station, she remained disturbed. But bearing courage in herself, she accepted the job. She faced many problems at her workplace also.....and one day she literally started crying at her workplace. But again she has to bear the responsibility of her daughter and father-in-law who was bed-ridden, so she made up her mind and started becoming stable. Today her daughter is a graduate, i.e. completed T.Y.B.M.S and B.C.A. course till date and is preparing for UPSC and MPSC exams. To your surprise, she is a very good singer and won many prizes at the state and national level competitions. Hats Off to such ladies who showed loads of courage to upgrade themselves as well as their family. Such women make the proverb true, where there is a will, there is a way'.

## Conclusion and Suggestions

In today's society we come across many single women who have achieved success in their life besides facing so many hardships. According to my study, the government should also start some schemes for these condition women. As well as a strong awareness in the society

must be made to change their mentality about the above mentioned three category women. If these changes are initiated, the ratio of their success will definitely get a boost.

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## **PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PSYCHOSOMATIC HEALTH PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH SINGLE WOMEN IN MODERN SOCIAL LIFE**

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### **Abstract**

This study explored the health problems of never-married women as they relate to modern social life.. It was found that never-married women in this modern era have experienced a variety of illnesses, such as “office syndrome” symptoms, chronic illnesses, and psychological and psychosomatic symptoms. Their social life resulted from the response to the context of modernity and was made through careful thought and deliberation. Whichever choice of social life they make, the consequences may lead them to a state of illness, distress, anxiety, and paranoia. These choices involve work, living conditions/environments, and intimacy aspects of their modern social life. This is the result of procuring by “husky modernity” which seems to be merely a “husk” or superficial modernization and changes so rapidly, but there is no core and it is full of double standards of traditional and new norms that have mixed together and fight against each other. Supporting health-related knowledge and information exchange within the network coupled with experience sharing essential for living in the modern society will enable them to sensibly decide on a path to good health.

**Keywords:** Single Women, Psychological, Psychosomatic, Double Standards.

### **Introduction**

This modern society should be called the “risk society” because of the unpredictability of the threats provoked by techno-industrial development and ecological crisis ([Beck, 1994](#), [Giddens, 1991](#), [Jones, 2003a](#), [Jones, 2003b](#)). Moreover, drastic changes in daily life over the past century are fueling the growing burden of chronic diseases, and may be central to the rising rates of depression ([Hidaka, 2012](#)). In addition, people in modern society report high levels of modern health worries, with higher levels being reported in females ([Rief et al., 2012](#)). Women, especially single women, as a group of the population can be affected by the context of modernity because they have a change in lifestyle in terms of opportunity, freedom, decision making, and other aspects. At the same time, they have to encounter risks to their lifestyle and self-identity which can result in health problems.

Empirical evidence in the literature on single women in early and later life shows that this group of women struggles with health problems, death, other severe injuries and accidents, and adjustment ([Gardner and Oswald, 2004](#), [Hokby et al., 2003](#), [Manzoli et al., 2007](#), [Prior and Hayes, 2001](#), [Shkolnikov et al., 2006](#)). The causes of their health problems can be associated with the open global economy as a precious acquisition offers them opportunity, creativity, autonomy, and wealth that leads to forms of anxiety, rootlessness, stress, and strains ([Giddens, 2002](#), [Hutton and Giddens, 2001](#)). Furthermore, their unique lifestyle in terms of the conflicting roles between family life and work ([Cummins, 2005](#), [Pavalko et al., 2007](#)) may be particularly distressing for single women, especially young women, who are constantly encouraged to work on their self-identity and to make the right choice for their future ([Wiklund, Bengs, Malmgren-Olsson, & Ohman, 2010](#)).

Single women are not only troubled by the stressors of modernity, but also the stressors of their singleness ([Reynolds & Wetherell, 2003](#)). Their social world also includes awareness of the changing reality as they become older, a reminder that they are on a different (deviant) life path, and displacement in their families of origin ([Sharp & Ganong, 2011](#)). They are often faced with an economically disadvantageous position and have to negotiate their housing, transportation, and leisure activity decisions in an environmental landscape marred by their fears of assault from men ([Chasteen, 1994](#)). These conditions also make them face many other problems such as psychological illness, normal sadness, depressive pathologies, and a sense of disconnection ([Handerson, 2012](#)).

## **Psychological and Psychosomatic health problems**

Mental stress and its association with morbidity and mortality has long been studied, with contradictory results, especially concerning women. One reason for these conflicting results is that the concept of mental stress has been defined in several different ways. Hinton and Burton's definition of mental stress describes "a given individual in a given life situation with perceived lack of control over the situation, reacts with specific emotions, reduced efficiency of performance, and psychosomatic symptoms". The American Institute of Stress defines mental stress as "physical, mental, or emotional strain or tension as well as a condition or feeling experienced when a person perceives that demands exceed the personal and social resources the individual is able to mobilize", indicating that perception of mental stress widely varies between individuals. Perception of mental stress in populations also varies with time. Mental stress can lead to a long-term deregulation of allostasis and may result in

somatic symptoms through a series of neural and endocrine mechanism. One possible mechanism through which psychosocial stress may influence the risk of coronary heart disease is progression of artery calcification as a reaction of high levels of cortisol.

Mental stress has also been associated with psychosomatic symptoms such as sleep problems, gastrointestinal symptoms, and joint, back, or muscular pain. In women working within the health care system, sleep problems were connected with decreased resilience to stress, and mental stress predicted multiple-site musculoskeletal pain among female kitchen workers and musculoskeletal pain predicted mental stress in a cumulative process. Association between mental stress and asthma as well as an increased risk of acute infectious respiratory illness has been reported. Mental stress has been shown to be a central contributor to primary headache. Persons who were older, female, black, previously married, and of lower socioeconomic status (SES) were more likely than others to develop psychosomatic symptoms and conditions over 3 years, but the risk was significantly higher only in those of lower SES.

There has been a long-standing discussion about associations between personality, depression, stress, and stressful life events, respectively, and the development of malignant neoplasms, but the results are inconclusive. For example in a Scottish study, the authors found that men with reported high stress levels were protected against mortality from smoking-related cancers, but they interpreted the results as a product of confounding factors and of no causal significance.

## **Conclusion**

Apart from the development and improvement of systems that are beneficial to never-married women's health and life, providing resources or supporting them with resources is equally important because resources play a key role in demonstrating the ability to respond to the systems. The greatest opportunity for supporting never-married women in resources is to provide information and create networks beneficial to their health and life. The large amount of health information is scattered, and its reliability cannot be guaranteed. Therefore, building an information society specifically for never-married women or creating a single women's network in various areas for information exchange and experience sharing essential for living in a risk society is an interesting channel/option. Since never-married women must be self-

reliant, information or networks linking to good living is an alternative to dependency for them.

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## **SINGLE WOMEN PARENTHOOD BY CHOICE: A CHALLENGE?**

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### **Abstract**

The role of single parent is challenging one especially when the family is headed by a women. Problem of single mother are linked with the upbringing of children, their future and setting down in life. Till the time children get married and or get jobs they are dependent on the single parent. The single mother reported that they felt lonely, helpless, hopeless, lack of identity and lack of confidence. In social sphere majority of single mothers tried to avoid attending social gatherings and had changed their dressing style due to depression they had develop poor food and eating habits. Majority of the single mothers found it hard to maintain discipline among the children due to absence of male members. The mothers complained about loneliness, traumatic and depression and found it difficult to handle the responsibility of childcare and to establish a routine for her children. In this paper I will be analyzing the problems, challenges faced by the single mother by choice.

A single mother by choice is a single woman who decides to become a mother knowingly.

Choice mothers are proactively making their dreams of parenthood come true. Most women who choose yes to single parenthood are strong-minded, independent, and creative problem-solvers in many aspects of their lives. Single women parent is a challenged to the patriarchal society not for establishing matriarchal society rather for equality. More and more successful, well-educated, professional single women are arriving at motherhood by choice and through adoption.

**Keywords:** Single Mother Parent, By Choice, Feministic Approach, Challenge To Marriage Institution, Imbibing Moral And Spiritual Values, Children Behavior.

### **Introduction**

The role of single parent is challenging one especially when the family is headed by a women. Problem of single mother are linked with the upbringing of children, their future and setting down in life. Till the time children get married and or get jobs they are dependent on the single parent. The single mother reported that they felt lonely, helpless, hopeless, lack of identity and lack of confidence. In social sphere majority of single mothers tried to avoid attending social gatherings and had changed their dressing style due to depression they had develop poor food

and eating habits. Majority of the single mothers found it hard to maintain discipline among the children due to absence of male members. The mothers complained about loneliness, traumatic and depression and found it difficult to handle the responsibility of childcare and to establish a routine for her children.

The past few decades have brought a remarkable increase in the number of families headed by single mothers. Unlike the old stereotypical images of poverty-stricken, uneducated and abandoned women facing parenthood alone, more and more successful, well-educated, professional single women are arriving at motherhood by choice and through adoption.

A single mother by choice is a single women who decides to become a mother knowingly. Choice mothers are proactively making their dreams of parenthood come true. Most women who choose yes to single parenthood are strong-minded, independent, and creative problem-solvers in many aspects of their lives. Single women parent is a challenged to the patriarchal society not for establishing matriarchal society rather for equality. More and more successful, well-educated, professional single women are arriving at motherhood by choice and through adoption.

Single women often pursue motherhood for the same reasons married women do. They cite the same need and desire to love and nurture a child of their own. But unlike married women, a single woman faces the arduous process and costs of adoption alone and with the reality that she may end up raising her child alone without a father or a partner.

Many single mothers who adopt will openly share that they are single by choice. They are not only comfortable with being single but they choose to remain single as they raise children to adulthood. Faced with ticking biological clocks, numerous women have unsuccessfully pursued intrauterine insemination with donor sperm before pursuing adoption as the road to parenthood. Single women parenthood by choice is one of the aspects of feminism. Here being feminist is being equal to do what a man do and there by criticize the marriage institution; where “She” proves that she is more competent and can able to provide comfort and moral atmosphere for the upbringing of her children.

Friends, family, and society may appreciate a married adoptive who rescues or adopts a child, but single mothers are not always so readily appreciated for their plans to pursue motherhood. But single mothers are not always readily appreciated by society for their plans to pursue



motherhood rather they are criticized more for their selfishness except celebrities like Bollywood celebrity Sushmita Sen who mothered two daughter through adoption. A documentary film maker from Kolkata film industry Anindita Sarbadhicari who mothered a son through IVF

Detractors and critics may accuse her for selfishness because they're not providing the child with a father and an intact home. Others will erroneously cite statistics linking single motherhood to a variety of potential social ills for their children. A single woman may even have to develop a newfound courage to conquer her own inner demons and alleviate her own previously-held thoughts and beliefs about adoption.

Fortunately, the Internet, television, and other mass media are trying to create awareness in the society for the problems and issues single women face in the adoption process, as well as the challenges they may deal with as an employed parent. The successful single mother realizes that it isn't a sign of weakness or an indication of failure if she reaches out for assistance and support. Other than the financial challenges, being single is also emotionally draining and stressful as they are always on their toes to combat with unique set of physical, psychological, social and emotional problems too. Many working single women parent faces the sexual harassment and colored remarked at workplaces and treated as available for exploitation. But still many single mothers tackled these issues very subtly and take right decisions whenever require. It always reminds Swami Vivekananda who says, "We are what our thoughts have made us, so take care about what you think. Words are secondary but action matters." So success is her birth right. She does not want sympathy rather empathy (understanding).

Being raised by a single women parent is challenge for both the child and the parent. The child, however, will deal with long-lasting effects when they're looking for a loving relationship. Children from single women parent homes also have opportunities for learning to manage disappointment and conflict because they're watching their single mother successfully negotiating and collaborating to make co-parenting work with situation. With kind, loving support and encouragement from the parent, resolving disappointments and conflicts is a valuable experience that helps children learn and grow into confident, competent adults who are the responsible citizen for the development of country.

Single mothers also have to tackle difficult questions from kids who want to know about the family dynamics, which are perhaps different from most of their friends. For a single mother it is important to explain to the kids the situation so that they can't feel awkward and inevitable questions that come their way about their father. They are Juggling between the office work and household chores. Single mothers need to spend quality time with their children and understand their needs and problems.

## **Conclusion**

Choice Moms are more self-sufficient. They proactively make their dreams of parenthood come true. Most women who choose yes to single parenthood are strong-minded, independent, and creative problem-solvers in many aspects of their lives—all excellent traits to pass along to their children. It is said raising a family is difficult enough but it is even more difficult for single women parents struggling to make ends meet. They don't need more obstacles but need more opportunities. In India, there are hardly any support groups or communities for single mothers. Due to the judgments directed at them most single parents prefer to keep a low profile. It is time we need to change the equation. Being a single woman as a parent is not life full of struggles, but a journey for the strong. This is an attitude of existentialist that is I am the maker of my own destiny and I will shoulder my own responsibility.

The best thing single mothers are doing for their children is to instill among them a sense of responsibility—for taking control of their own lives, for understanding their obligations to others—as well as giving them an open door for possibilities that gives them a love of learning and exploration and spirituality and mental health. For these reasons and more I feel, Choice Mothers are great role models not only for their children but for society as whole. I salute to all the choices single mothers out there that do an amazing job, both as mother and father.

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## **SINGLE WOMEN: WHY TO BE SINGLED OUT IN SOCIETY AND LITERATURE?**

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### **Abstract**

Women have been marginalized not only by their male counterparts but also by other women in society since time immemorial. Therefore, the issues of single women are demanding attention from government, lawmakers, policy makers, sociologists and even artists including creative writers as single women are on the margin of the margin means doubly marginalized. They not only face problems related to their basic needs- food, shelter, clothing but also physical, psychological and financial security due to biased social outlook and scandal mongering not only by neighbours, friends, relatives but also by near and dear ones including colleagues at workplace. The difference between the self-image and social image of a single woman at times leads to aloofness, isolation, frustration, depression and suicidal tendencies if her loneliness is not her strength rather it becomes her weakness or obstacle.

In the light of the above observations, this paper is directed to analyse whether there is a need to single out single women in society and literature because literature is a mirror to society. The male as well as female creative writers have tried to project the lives of single women from various perspectives through varied literary form. The literary texts under study for this paper are- Bibhutibhushan Bandopadhyay's Pather Panchali (Song of the Road), Mahasweta Devi's Rudali, Vijay Tendulkar's Silence! The Court is in Session and Kamala, Anita Desai's Fasting, Feasting, Anita Nair's Ladies Coupe.

### **Introduction**

Any adult female human being, who is unmarried, divorced, separated, widowed or stays alone either by choice or due to any other reason can be categorized as a single woman. Single women are on the margin of the margin means doubly marginalized due to patriarchal social system. They face myriad problems related to basic biological, psychological, social and financial needs have been aptly depicted in the works under study.

Bibhutibhushan Bandopadhyay's Film/ novel Pather Panchali (Song of the Road) depicts the sufferings of Indir Auntie, an old widowed woman. Sharbojaya, her distant daughter –in-law

dislikes Indir so much that she treats penniless hunchbacked Indir like a beggar. She never serves food or water to Indir though the house in which she resides actually belongs to Indir. She even accuses Indir that Durga has learnt thieving from her because Indir takes things from kitchen without asking Sharbojaya, so does Durga by picking up fruits from the neighbour's orchards as Indir eats those fruits with fondness. She also nags Indir many times for taking chillies or other food items from kitchen. "I have tolerated you for 8 years. My patience has exhausted. You better go elsewhere." Indir finds it difficult to tolerate the nagging at such an old age and leaves the house in anger with her bundle of ragged clothes, mat and other belongings. Durga pulls her aunt's belongings but Sharbojaya asks Durga to leave Indir alone. Indir goes to the house of Raghu, one of her acquaintances. Durga understands that no one cares for the old aunt except her. When she meets her aunt on the way, she brings her back home to see the new born child, Apu. Indir is happy at the birth of child like others but Sharbojaya doesn't like her coming and staying with them again. Her behaviour doesn't change at all though Indir is seen rocking the cradle. Indir finds it difficult to get up as her back is stiff and so requests Harihar to help her to get up. She remarks, "Who cares about an old woman?" and shows Harihar her torn and worn out shawl. She even tries to stitch her torn shawl but cannot thread the needle even. Raju Gifts Indir a new shawl and Sharbojaya quarrels with Indir and accuses her of begging and insulting them. When Indir says that she had demanded it from Harihar, Sharbojaya retorts, "You should be ashamed. Would he (Raju) feed you too? Don't you realize that children often go hungry? If you are staying here, stop begging otherwise you go" and throws Indir's belongings. Indir goes to Raju's house to stay for a few days as she is perturbed with Sharbojaya's behaviour. Durga and Apu go out to search Indir as their mother tells them to find the calf. Indir comes back as she is not well and wants to spend her last days at her old home but Sharbojaya rejects her saying, "The best thing is to leave." Indir requests to allow her to rest for a while and give some water. Sharbojaya eating her food shows Indir her bowl and suggests Indir to help herself. Indir ultimately leaves the house. Later on she is found dead sitting under a tree by Durga and Apu. Durga shakes her body and she falls down. Thus she never gets peace but only rejection till her death. The villagers perform the last rites. Thus Indir becomes an outsider insider or vice-versa in her own house.

In Mahasweta's *Rudali Sanichari*, a married woman becomes single after her husband's death followed by her son Budhua's death as her daughter-in-law had already left him forever due to poverty and illness. With the grand child in her arms, she cremated Budhua. Haroa, her

grandson grew up, worked for the few months and then ran away with the magic show lot despite Sanichari's thrashing, warning and attempts to stop him from being a strayed. Suddenly she met Bikhni, her childhood playmate and they came to know that now too they were alone at this stage of life. Bikhni had a son after three daughters whom she had brought up with hardship after her husband's death. She married him after taking a loan from the mahajan but he is now staying with his in-laws and refuses to repay the loan to mahajan by selling the cows. The mahajan is claiming their house by way of repayment. Hence she sold her two goats without letting him know and left the house as she felt that he is as good as dead and it's better to beg at station. Sanichari invited Bikhni to her hut. Soon their money got spent and for their livelihood, they started to labour as rudalis i.e., to wail over the corpse of the rich which is generally done by the whores they keep. Sanichari and Bikhni wailed so loudly that the market place randis admitted their defeat. They became businesswomen now. Then Sanichari formed a union of rudalis and Randis and became the president. She was not comfortable with inclusion of randis but Bikhni told that she will get them as they are the women ruined by the malik-mahajans and turned into whores. Slowly they had a good will in the market but old ones were being cured by doctors, vaides and hakims and they were recovering well. Sanichari was cursing the fate and thinking, "what will become of me" (p.83) but Bikhni was not despaired and said, "Their time had not come, so they didn't die. No one lives beyond their fated time." (p.83) After that Bikhni returned one day with a news that Gambhir Singh is dying and she wanted to go to Ranchi as her nephew-in-law invited her to his daughter's marriage and she would meet her wretched son too without his realization. Six days had passed and Bikhni didn't return, On reaching home, Sanichari came to know that Bikhni had died of asthma when her nephew-in-law came to find out whether his aunt had left any belonging there. Sanichari replied, "No, nothing. You call her aunt, and she died in your house but all these days we didn't even know she had a family of her own, she was roaming the countryside alone, homeless . . ." (p.88) Sanichari felt a devouring fear as Bikhni's death affected her livelihood, her profession. She is devastated now. She is forced to wail to feed herself and she invites the whores to join the professional mourning including her son Budhua's wife. Sanichari becomes an entrepreneur when she goes to kriya ceremony accompanied by at least a hundred whores as rudalis. Thus Sanichari, the widow gradually emerges as better equipped to adapt, survive and manipulate the system and more empowered at the end.

In Vijay Tendulkar's "Kamala", Kamala a destitute is victim of human trafficking as she is bought from the flesh market in an auction. Her owner JaisinghJadhav, a journalist, treats her as an object and presents her as a show piece in a surprise press conference to gain popularity and promotion in his professional life and also to prove that such incidents happen in modern democratic India. Jaisingh and his friend Jain enjoy discussing the happenings at the press conference and had some fun at poor Kamala's expense. Both friends describe the conference as 'tamasha' and 'drama' and also relish the obscene questions asked by the fellow journalists. Thus Kamala is made laughing stock but Jaisingh doesn't mind it at all. The next day when police want to contact Jaisingh, he understands that they want custody of Kamala and therefore does not attend the phone calls. He decides to keep Kamala in a woman's home or an orphanage. He orders Kamala to accompany him. He has dared to take Kamala to the press conference in the worn out sari only as he wants her to look just as she is at the press conference. He also gets angry when his wife asks about Kamala's whereabouts after she leaves their home.

In "Silence! The Court is in Session" LeelaBenare is a sprightly rebellious and assertive school teacher. She is accused of the crime of infanticide under Section 302 of the Indian Penal Code. During the so-called mock play, her private life is publicly exposed and it becomes a real trial for Benare. During this mock trial, the male co-actors try to prove that she is a woman of loose character as she has been seen in a compromising situation in professor Damle's hostel room. The learned professor refuses to accept her despite knowing that he has been responsible for her (Benare) carrying a baby out of wedlock as he fears of losing his own reputation. A tense and stunned Benare who has remained mute till then, suddenly asks Samant to stop saying anything. "That's enough. . . . it's all a lie ! A complete lie!" (p. 93) Benare chooses not to answer any question why she remained unmarried to such a mature age. Later Mrs. Kashikar deposes before the court, "That . . . when you get everything without marrying. They just want comfort. They could not care less about responsibility! . . . It's the sly new fashion of women earning that makes everything go wrong. That's how promiscuity has spread through our society." (pp. 99-100) and Benare's case is a solid proof of that as she behaves somewhat differently although she is one of us. Mrs. Kashikar as a society has strong objections to Benare's attitude as a free unmarried woman. She further states, "Look how loudly she laughs! How she sings, dances, cracks jokes! And wandering alone with how many men, day in and day out !" (p. 100) She is terminated from job. Thus evidence after evidence is piled up against Benare to prove her

guilty. But Damle, who has also his share of guilt in the situation, is not even held an accused at all and left scot-free. Kashikar asks Benare if she has to say anything in defense before the judgement is made. She recalls her past how she had been violated physically at an immature age by her own maternal uncle and later on as a grown up woman by an intellectual. Benare accuses all men as 'hypocrites' whose only interest is in her body. The judgement pronounced is that she must opt for infanticide. On hearing Kashikar's cruel verdict, Benare cries in intolerable pain, "No! no! no!- I won't let you do it- I won't let it happen-I won't let it happen!"(p. 119) Thus through Kamala and Benare, Tendulkar has tried to show how single women are singled out in society.

Anita Desai's *fasting; Feasting* is about Uma and her widowed Mira Masi, both single. Uma is rejected mostly by the groom's family while her younger sister Aruna is preferred. The family is cheated twice after spending on engagement and dowries in Uma's marriage attempts as the grooms and their families have fixed the ties only for money. In the first, after engagement the boy goes for higher education and doesn't marry; while in the second, her father comes to know long after the marriage that the groom was already married and had a family too. Her father nullifies the marriage legally. No further attempt is made for her marriage as she is considered unlucky. Thus Uma remains throughout only a caretaker imprisoned at parental home without her mistake. She is not allowed to visit her convent school, to talk to her missionary teacher Mrs. O'Henry and to accept her invitation of a coffee party during Christmas. She is not even permitted to go out with her cousin Ramunor to accept a job offer from her family doctor who is also an unmarried and educated woman. Her mother reacts without knowing Uma's wish, "Our daughter does not need to go out to work, Dr. Dutt," she said. "As long as we are here to provide for her, she will never need to go out to work."(p.146) Shocked Dr. Dutt said, "But she works all the time! At home. Now you must give her a chance to go out to work."(p.146) But papa interrupted, "There is no need."(p.146) Dr. Dutt still insisted, "Shouldn't we ask Uma for her view? Perhaps she would like to go out and work?"(p.146) But the parents were not bothered at all. Mira Masi an ardent worshipper of lord Shiva is always shown visiting the pilgrimage and on her way to the relatives who actually don't entertain her. Uma accompanies her to ashrams and holy rivers, feels that she gets some recognition in the company of her masi. Aruna also doesn't show any concern for her rather dominates her and treats her as a domestic helper. She even doesn't want Uma to go to Bombay to get her eyes tested. Thus Uma is neglected by her blood relations.



In Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe*, Akhilandeswari a forty five year old income tax clerk is a single woman who spends all her youth as the breadwinner of the family after the sudden expiry of her father when she was just 19 years old. She being the eldest and only earning member performs her role as a daughter, sister, aunt and provider even then she is supposed to take the permission of her younger brother if she wants to go out. Her family never cares for her as an individual and a human being whose natural desires and needs are to be identified. "She was always an extension to someone's identity. Chandra's daughter, Narayana's Akka, Priya's aunt, Murty's sister-in-law [...] Akhila wished for once someone would see her as a whole being." (pp. 201-202) After her brothers Narsi and Narayan became financially independent, "Akhila felt the iron bands around her chest begin to loosen: Dare I breathe again? Dare I dream again? Now that the boys are men, can I start feeling like a woman again?" (p.77) Her two brothers got married without taking anybody's permission in the family and they hardly think about Akhila. Akhila had a love affair with Hari, a north Indian young man. It was a diminutive love affair though they made physical love several times. Akhila suddenly broke this relationship as he was younger than her and she was also anxious what people and society would think if this love affair would be disclosed? She says, "Hari this is goodbye I will never see you again" (p.153). She mentions her agony like this, "Every time I look at someone watching us, I can see the question in their minds: what is he doing with an older woman? That bothers me very much, Hari. It bothers me very much that we are not suited so she decides to remain single." (p.159). One day she decides to break free from the chains of conservative Brahmin conventions and buys a one way train ticket to the sea side town of Kanyakumari to start a new life alone. She shares a ladies compartment with five different women and questions them her eternal dilemma - whether a woman needs a man to complete her or whether she can stay single and happy? In the space of one night, the women change her life with their stories, while at the same time, reminding her to think for herself. It helped Akhila to realize that she had given the society an unnecessary power of ruling her life.

Karpagam, Akhila's childhood friend, is a widow but wears the kumkum and colorful clothes. It surprises Akhila and she asks her about her family's reaction on this. Karpagam replies, "I don't care what my family or anyone thinks. I am who I am. And I have as much right as anyone else to live as I choose. Tell me, didn't we as young girls wear colorful clothes and jewellery and a bottu? It isn't a privilege that marriage sanctions. The way I look at it, it is natural for a woman to be feminine. It has nothing to do whether she is married or

not or whether her husband is alive or dead.” (p. 202) Akhila is fascinated and says “Karpagam, are you real or are you some goddess who has come here to lead me out of this.”(p.202). Then she gets back in touch with the gay who she felt in love with, someone who she did not accept for the fear of the society.

Now the question is-

अकेली नारी क्यों लगती हैं समाज को भारी ?  
वह अबला नहीं सबला होती हैं,  
इसलिए अकेले रहने की हिम्मत करती हैं  
और समाज की उपेक्षा की उपेक्षा करती हैं ।

आप उसे समाज का अटूट हिस्सा समझें क्योंकि वह कम नहीं अधिक योगदान देती हैं (self-composed)

**A single woman should not consider her loneliness as her weakness or an obstacle rather should strive to make it her strength, then only she can live a contented life.**

किसी विचारक ने कहा है - "कोई तेरे साथ नहीं तो भी गम ना कर, दुनिया में खुद से बड़कर कोई हमसफर नहीं होता ।" (Anonymous)

To conclude, even single women are made of the same flesh, blood, bone and have same needs; they too are the integral part of society without any discrimination. Hence there is no need to single out single women in society and literature.

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## **SINGLE WOMEN: PROBLEM AND CHALLENGES**

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### **Abstract**

This paper is all about problem and challenges faced by the single women .it's all about the women who live their life alone those women who are divorced ,unmarried ,whose husband is no more has to go through lot of difficulties in their life India is a country having diversified culture religion each religion has their own norms and has to work according to it in today's too there is lot of gender disparity is made in India than any other country women's are not safe yet India got it's freedom but the freedom of women's are not given .single women has to face so many problems she cannot live her life as how men lives single women has to face violence. violence against women refers to force that is use to obtain from a woman something that she does not want to give of her own free will, and which causes her either physical injury or emotional trauma or both. The research has done by interviewing few women who live their life alone they are the victim of rape and molestation sale and auction of woman. Women who don't have their husband the perpetrators of violence is their family member. According to one study 60% of women are abused by their own family members, and 40% by the stranger. single women are also the victim of social violence such as eve-teasing, sexual harassment at work place, sexual abuse in public transport and other places .which would all have a great effect like mental effect, physical effect, effect on health etc. although a number of legislation have been enacted to protect the interest of women and despite constitutional safeguards **yet** women is disadvantaged a lot, as they face number of problem.

**Keyword:** Single women, low status, social problems, violence against women.

### **Introduction**

The position of Indian women is paradox right from Vedic period to modern times. During the Vedic period, women were shown in a positive role as powerful, benevolent and destroyer of evil. However, in the present male dominated society, women are shown in a passive role of a mother, wife, daughter and sister.

Women remain single for a variety of reasons, such as financial and emotional or physical health issues, stress in the family, time constraints, education, career, personal preferences, advanced age or social fears, uninterested in relationship or divorce. Our society is very prejudiced towards single ladies. Even in the developed countries women are thought to be the second fiddle to men. It is believed that every woman needs a man and any woman that doesn't have a man must spend her most of time and energy in searching for one. Not only this is being sexist, but it is also just stupid to hold such a view. Still most of the people, both men and women, believe that there is nothing worse than a single lady in her 30s. Due to this attitude single ladies face many problems.

In India, that is in all of South Asia, historically the cultural anxieties, neglect, oppression, cruelties, exclusions and violence of overarching patriarchy towards single women has been dramatic and extreme. This great deal of these socially embedded exclusions continues into the present day also. It is noteworthy that in the nature of patriarchy single men face no such disabilities and a single woman does. Women who choose to remain or become single owing to a range of circumstances and themselves in locations of often multiple problems.

## **Review of Literature**

Since many decades, Single women have showed up themselves as sign of power, independent, fearless, fighter and as a competitor in this men dominating society. They have been surviving by facing all the obstacles in this cruel society. Dr Ginny Shrivastava, the founder of the National Forum for Single Women's Rights, in his one of the study conducted in 2013 noted: 'The stories [of single women] are not "nice" stories—they tell of human cruelty, of wicked superstition, of systemic corruption, of age-old cruel caste customs. Women "discarded", "abandoned", murdered. But generally, women have survived, and brought up their children, through the sweat and blood of their labour. They are strong women, not weak women'. Martha Nussbaum (2000), 'Women's Capabilities and Social Justice' in *Journal of Human Development*, 1:2, mentioned that women 'are treated as mere instruments of the ends of others-reproducers, caregivers, sexual outlets, agents of a family's general prosperity'.

## **Objectives**

1. To identify problem and challenges faced by single women and provide certain measure to overcome the problem.

2. To know their financial problem and suggest method to cope up with the situation.
3. To empower the women of all relationship status are the brunt of sexual harassment.
4. To know their career related aspiration.
5. To know that the problem that they have faced in upbringing of their children .

## Research Methodology

The paper consists of both the methods primary as well as secondary.

**Primary Data:** Primary data has been collected by conducting an online and physical survey.

**Secondary Data:** Secondary data has been collected through internet and newspaper.

Following were the questions asked through survey and we got respondents through online survey.

## Data Interpretation

1. Why are you staying single?

Unmarried	Divorced	Widow	Other
40%	20%	20%	20%

2. Do you work?

Yes	No
80%	20%

3. What is the major challenge faced by the single women?

Finance	Safety	Disrespect	Harassment by society	Pressure from parents
43.8%	25%	12.5%	12.5%	6.2%

4. What kind of challenges you came across in upbringing of your children?

Financial crisis	Their education
78%	22%

5. Have you ever been the victim of sexual assault?

Yes	No
45%	55%

6. How do people living in your society treat you?

Respect	Disrespect
72.4%	27.6%

7. Being, single what was the most challenging thing you came across?

Financial crisis	39.8%
Upbringing of child alone	36.6%
Getting job and setting back to normal life	23.6%

8. Do you face any domestic violence from your in-laws or dowry because of which you are single?

Yes	No
27%	73%

## Problem Faced By Single Women

- Low status of women: the single women in India still face the low status in most of the communities
  - Restriction on movement on certain communities.
  - No permission to work in offices by in-laws
- Violence against single women: women are subject to violence and harassment inside and outside her household.
  - DOWRY RELATED:** Despite, the prohibition of dowry act 1961, the system of dowry is widely practiced among most of the communities in India. there are several cases that are reported every year relating to abuse of brides in laws for inadequate dowry.

- **RAPE AND SEXUAL ABUSE:** Rape is a heinous crime against single women. It's on the increase in several parts of India .several such cases are not reported at all of the fear of negativity publicity to the victim woman and at times lack of empathy of police.
- 3. **WOES OF WIDOWS:** The widows face a number of problems in Indian society AT times they are abused by other male member in her in laws family. In several communities are not permitted to attend social celebration such as wedding, and birth ceremonies. There are also restrictions on her clothing. Widow Remarriage is difficult in most cases, as male do not prefer to marry a widow.
- 4. **SAFETY ISSUES:** No matter how developed your, women are not safe on their own. It's a shameful fact for the men of this world to Country accept but it also needs to be accepted by single women that they need to be extra careful about their safety. You can call me sexiest but it is true this is a man's world.
- 5. **FINANCIAL ISSUES:** The economy has been so rough that it is hard for a single women to survive while couples find it easier as to people bring home a salary .if one of them gets fired the other can provide for the time being but a single person has nowhere to go if they get fired.
- 6. **PREJUDICE AT WORK:** What can make the above problem even worse for women is that they still face prejudice at work .This prejudice is faced by all women but even more so by single women .Strong independent women scare men and this shows up when the boss has to hand out promotion or decide who to let go. Married women are no better off here either but finally glass ceiling are shattering all over the world and slowly we are seeing things improve for women at the work place.

### **Suggestion and Conclusion**

This research study focuses on single women problem and challenges faced by them to overcome the problems faced by single in Indian society there is a need to take appropriate measures so that women can play a constructive role in the development of Indian society .there should be effective social awareness campaign promoting the cause of women the negative effects effects of social discrimination against women must be highlighted in such campaign .The campaign need to show woman in a dignified and positive role. There should be positive approach at work place the employee and male colleagues should adopt a positive approach towards women at work place. They should not look down upon women employees. They should believe in synergetic team work. The NGOs can also play a leading role in

uplifting the status of single women in India .They should take up issues related to single women .They should assist the victimized women and support them during crisis.

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## **SINGLE MOTHER: PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES OF PARENTING IN INDIA**

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### **Abstract**

In this paper, the attempt has been made to list out the problems and challenges faced by single mother. The paper is descriptive, based on secondary data collected from research articles available on internet. The mother faces lot of hardships as single parent such as financial problems, single mothers seen as “socially unacceptable”, handling peer-pressure on their child/children, the child/children going through their resentment stage, **unwanted proposals for marriage, social pressures of getting married, less quality time to spend with her child, filing of legal documents, preying eyes on single mothers, juggling of multiple responsibilities and hard to find reliable babysitters.** Single mothers have chosen a difficult path for a reason. They have proven to the world that they are confident superwomen who can fight their life’s challenges with motherly smiles on their faces. Indian society has to change its attitude towards single Indian parents. It needs to understand the underlying problems that they are facing.

**Keywords:** Single Mother, Single Parenting, Divorce.

### **Introduction**

Parenting by definition is the act or process of raising children. In India, single parents mean father or mother the one who is living alone with their children without his/her partner, because of death, divorce, or separation. In a case of divorce/separation generally, the mother is given custody of the children. A single parent need not be the natural mother or father of the child as some individuals choose to become the single parent by adopting the child. In this paper, the attempts have made to list out the problems and challenges faced by single mother. The paper is descriptive, based on secondary data collected from research articles available on internet.

## **Need of parents**

It is a good idea of having both mother and father activity involved in child rearing. The more evenly difficult duties can be distributed between two people, the easier it will be for each person. And also raising a baby brings about some of the life's sweetest pleasures and richest rewards. The child needs to be aware that he/she has a father who can protect him/her from danger. The child also needs father's help in dealing with his angry wishes and fearful fantasies. Father's role is important to view sympathetically the child's frustration, fury, and fear at the same in silent strength, convey their reassuring message, "Don't worry, I shall not let you carry out your fearful wishes". Children especially boys, tend to idealize their father young. A mother is an important person in each child's life. The infant feels secure when the mother is out of sight and confident that the mother is taking care and protection.

## **Single mother in India**

Indian single mothers are always under pressure to perform more than other mothers to prove how good or worthy they are as a "mother." This is not only for their child and family but more so to society and the world at large around them. Being a single mother qualifies her involuntarily to be examined and judged by society at large; if she is fit enough to bring up a "good" child without a man? These people from the larger society do nothing to support her, value-add to her life, give her due dignity or space, but their sense of entitlement gives them the license to scrutinize and pass judgments on her life.

## **Statistics of Single Women in India**

As per census of India (2011), 43.8% of women never got married and 8% of women are widowed/ divorced / separated.

## **Hardships of single parenting**

### **1. Financial problems**

Parenting in itself is tough and being a single parent is even tougher, a lot of factors are related to the perils of single motherhood and though everyone may think that the worst of them is not having enough money to raise a family, there are more that contribute to this.

## **2. Single mothers seen as “socially unacceptable”**

Single mothers experience negative attitudes and support from her peers and society, she is looked down upon and pitied and seen as immoral. Single parents, especially the unmarried or separated women, are silently suffering from discrimination in many aspects of daily life and moreover this discrimination passes down to her child/children. Even with the fast growth of single parents in the Indian, society still cannot seem to grasp the fact that there are women today that would choose to bring a child into the world alone. Single mothers are just waiting for the recognition they deserve for doing the kind of child rearing they do and not be recognized for being an “immoral” woman looked down on by the rest of society.

## **3. The need of fatherly advice and guidance**

This problem is more common for single mothers with sons, when their son reaches puberty the mother is unable to relate to her son especially in the subject of sex and the changes in his body. A young adolescent boy going through puberty is often in need of a fatherly figure to find his own identity as a man and when the father is absent, the child is more withdrawn from his peers and has difficulties in developing his own positive personality. This is when the need for a father figure must be recognized back into the family or in the rearing of the child, in the event that there is no father figure to guide the child, alternative models of men of good moral and good stature can be a substitute to help the child in finding his identity

## **4. Handling peer-pressure on their child/children**

In the age we now live in where sex, drugs and alcohol is a constant variable in a teenager's life it is hard to handle the kind of pressure that is put on a single mother in trying to keep her child/children away from these and the pressure put on their children by society and more so on the child/children who find themselves lost and see drugs and alcohol as a way to relieve themselves of their pain and of the pressure from their peers. Letting the child/children know that there is someone who loves them and cares for them helps in keeping peer-pressure off and raising her child/children with good moral values set by examples is a contributor in the child's security where he/she can feel that he/she does not need to follow the trend the world is setting. If the child is comfortable in his/her own being and knows his/her own identity, the chances of the child succumbing to peer-pressure are low.

**5. The child/children going through their resentment stage**

The separation loss of a child from either father or mother brings about resentment, when a child reaches the age where he/she starts to understand the situation his/her parents are in and where he/she is in, unpleasant feelings start to arise and the child/children start to withdraw and have emotional setbacks and experience loneliness and anxiety and they have difficulty dealing with the separation or the loss of a parent. A child is also likely to put the blame of separation on himself/herself; this is when the mother must learn how to listen to her child and be sensitive towards his/her feelings and help the child recover from the loss and replace the anger with love.

**6. Unwanted proposals for marriage and indecisive state of mind**

Single women keep getting proposals to get married. However, they are always in a quagmire if they should accept a proposal or not. The thing that always keeps them on the edge is finding a trustworthy life partner. They are not sure if the person who wants to marry them will take care of their child or not.

**7. Social pressures of getting married**

Indian society always keeps putting pressure on a single women to get married. They often overlook or conveniently ignore the complex family bond that they are trying to create. The remarriage proposal may or may not work. Sometimes, it does work – at other times, it miserably fails.

**8. Less quality time to spend with your child**

Single parent needs to spend quality time with their child as it is a crucial factor in their upbringing. However, single mother keep struggling to find quality time to spend with her child. The unavailability of time keeps her worried if her child will become a confident individual or not. Will her child be able to face the challenges of the real world? Similarly, she always feel a guilt of not giving enough time for her child.

**9. Filing of legal documents**

Many legal documents in India [require](#) the name of a child's father. It is typically difficult for single mothers, who need to come up with all sorts of excuses to get the documents submitted.

**10. Preying eyes on single mothers**

Single mothers also have to fight against illicit approaches from other men. The society treats a single mother differently from someone who has a husband. Some may even try to be kind to them and show as if they care – but have different motives for it.

### **11. Juggling of multiple responsibilities**

As a single parent, she has to fulfill the duties of a mom and a dad. She need to juggle between responsibilities, which makes life a lot tougher. Time becomes a precious commodity as there are many things to do. There is always this sense of guilt for not being there for her child.

### **12. Hard to find reliable babysitters**

She is in constant mental distress about whether her child has eaten properly or not. She is always wondering if the person babysitting her child will take proper care of them. After all, it is always hard to find someone dedicated, who will stay with her child.

## **Conclusion**

In fact, Single mothers have chosen a difficult path for a reason. They have proven to the world that they are confident superwomen who can fight their life's challenges with motherly smiles on their faces. Indian society has to change its attitude towards single Indian parents. It needs to understand the underlying problems that they are facing.

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## **SINGLE MOTHERS: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN INDIA**

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### **Abstract**

Single mothers are treated differently by society than those who are living with their husbands. For purpose of this paper, single mothers are mothers who are divorced and have the custody of their children.

The paper is based on my experience of working with single mothers at Mumbai Family Court.

There are three case studies and an analysis about challenges faced by them and implications on their children.

Indian society glorifies the role of mothering. Some of the major challenges faced by these mothers include, need to take up multiple responsibilities, difficulties to find reliable babysitters, lack of or inadequate social, family or financial support, insufficient quality time to spend with their children, Implications of divorce on children mainly depend on child's age at time of parental separation, gender of child, child's attachment with the father, reason of divorce, child's physical and mental state, economic condition, availability or non-availability of support systems. The impact on children may include ill effects on their future relationships. Children will do better with their parents' divorce if they and the single parents have a smooth adjustment period and proper guidance.

**Keywords:** Single Mother, Parenting, Challenges, Impact on Children.

Marriage is a social institution which has undergone many changes over last few decades.

The family is the basic unit of society. It plays important function in creating citizens. The family is the institution where especially children receive means for survival, health, education, development, and protection. It is also the place where socialization begins and children learn emotional bonding. It has the major support and resource to provide stability and help when there are problems.

The 'Feminist' perspective examines family through the gender lens. Rather than viewing family life as personal, the assumption that the personal is public and political and that family lives are a microcosm of the society at large and it brings forth the issues of interpersonal relations within families, and especially gender relations, related issues of power and domination, etc. throw light upon the underlying social structures and institutions. It

acknowledges that men and women's experiences in a family differ considerably, which need to be studied and comparatively analysed in order to derive a multifaceted understanding of the family as a cultural and societal unit, while unravelling private experiences, we simultaneously unearth both the traditional family; rooted in patriarchy as well as the social structures that sustain it. Far from being a private haven of unconditional love, support and nurturance, the traditional family is revealed as an arena, where societal issues of power, gender, and 'otherness' are played out on a daily basis. The functions that the family as an institution performs are divided among family members in the form of roles and allocation of responsibilities.

This paper is based on my experience of working as Marriage Counsellor at Family Court, Mumbai during period of 1989 to 2013. I had worked with single parents, both mothers and fathers. However, in this paper I am including only mothers who are divorced and have custody of child/ children with them. I am attaching three case studies as an annexure.

Single parenting would basically entail single-handedly, carrying out the roles and responsibilities of 'parents' in its essence and facilitate the socialization of the children, in order to make them responsible/ well-adjusted members of the society.

There are many changes in the families living, like economic arrangements, social adaptation, overload in terms of managing dual responsibilities, child-rearing and household management, changes and evolution in her own personhood and identity following the experience of divorce.

Family has traditionally been an important social and economic unit with well-defined reciprocal rights and obligations for rearing children, in order for them to become well-adjusted and functioning adults of their society.

Breakdown of the relationship between husband and wife in any society/context has a certain immediate repercussion on the living conditions and life processes of both parents as well as of their children. The impact may differ depending upon ground or reasons for their divorce, age and sex of both parents and of children, economic condition and educational status of parents, availability of support system for them, etc. The struggle is chiefly characterized by the element of striving towards attaining a different form of equilibrium.

The children may tend to assume a very crucial link to survival in the lives of the single mothers. Especially if the children are a little grown up, there is a tendency towards them evolving as companions and confidants to their parents. Their advice and opinions may be

sought as a part of natural adaptation mechanism, and their priorities may gain equal and at times more weightage than the parents in cases of joint decision-making processes.

The primary concern when one decides to take up the responsibility of a child or children is how one is going to provide for his/her education, and make all possible provisions and arrangements for his/her healthy brought up. There is a definite concern and insecurity regarding how one will be able to do justice to the multiple roles and responsibilities one has taken on in the course of an otherwise difficult, personally stressful life, in a manner that the child's growth does not get hampered at any stage. Single parenting entails change in roles, responsibilities. Childcare along with its aspects of socialization as well as disciplining and simultaneously the handling of finances, work life dynamics and concerns, running the household, maintaining an acceptable social interaction level, and individual personality enhancement and grooming for future are interlinked with other are complex responsibilities.

It is humanly impossible for a single mother to take on all her multiple roles and being able to do justice to all and at times contradictory demands that the single parenting situation may foster. Another point which women brought out while talking about parenting dynamics is the sensitivity that sets in towards child's socio- emotional development. At times the mother might get hyper alert and over protective about the children and their moods, needs, etc.

Various other factors determine what kind of attention and degree/intensity of concern is directed towards children's growth and well-being — specifically in terms of day to day schedule, etc.

The significant others as well as important figures who interact with the children on a regular basis and for a considerable period of time tend to become determining factors in shaping the children's relationships in the reconstituted/reorganized family as well as the child's overall socialization processes.

Single parents also tend to be extremely conscious in terms of being able to fulfil the needs of their children and working hard to ensure that their children do not feel disadvantaged and deprived of what the 'other' children seem to be having naturally! Such conscious efforts and extreme sensitivity to the state of mind and expectations of the children may lead the single parent to continuously sacrifice and prioritize among various competing needs and other areas demanding attention.

The sense of obligation to ensure that the children do not suffer irreparable from lack or inadequacy of material or emotional nurturance and turn out to be 'normal', well brought-up and responsible as well as stable youngsters seems to be a part and parcel of single parenting



experience. This may also play upon the single mother's career ambitions as well as may raise her discomfort and dissatisfaction and impatience with merger or limited sources of income and women may decide to go ahead and add to them-skill base or qualifications and eligibility criteria by joining further studies, courses, trainings/workshop, etc.

Single parents may also be concerned that their children are not deprived of emotional security by the absence of one parent from their homes. Parents are very alert and conscious to mark any indicators of emotional disturbance or imbalance. There is a tendency in single parents to become exceedingly tense and alarmed if their children seem to be troubled.

Post separation and divorce, the children become part of new households and their lives may assume different forms, role redefinitions as well as high levels of functional and emotional adjustments and responsibilities may have to be taken on as a part of their day-to-day living. Children may be placed in positions where they may have to assume unusual levels of responsibility and accountability as well as share household tasks, manage their own studies, school demands and so on so as to ease the load that their single mothers are managing to do justice to.

In a two-parent family there is a scope for parents to come back and share their tensions, uncertainties and lives with each other and support each other. Whereas in a single parentsituation, parent may not be in a position to share her life with any other adult on asustained, regular basis. Children, then, tend to become junior partners — more like companions and confidants, if they are a little older or as they get older to the parents. In some cases, however, for a number of complex intricacies and dynamics, parents and children are unwilling to open up to each other and this may result in strung and bitter, revengeful, or ambiguous feelings and may result in a number of misunderstandings, defence mechanisms and cold war's amongst them. Nevertheless, over a period of time of living in a single parent situation, the family tends to draw out strategies and mechanisms that provide them with an island of stability midst the chaos and insecurities of the outer world as well as help them derive strength from each other and hold on to whatever they perceive of as family. The single parent family may develop a sense of common cause and a strong, well-guarded and intensely nurtured boundary and solidarity (sense of oneness) within the family, though the parent and children may not be Seeing Eye to eye on many issues.

Single parents at times feel that their children had to grow up a bit too fast and that they have matured earlier than their age. The single parent children grow up to have enhanced discipline, self-esteem, self-reliance and as relatively more responsible and self-monitored

youngsters than other youth at their own life cycle stage. There may also evolve a sense of pride and one tip over others in terms of having the skills and personality, which other children of their age may not possess. This sense of confidence and self-sufficiency may at times develop into high handedness and may breed contemptuous behaviour towards other children, who may not have been required to meet similar challenges in life. Thus, their relationships and dynamics with their peers, especially during adolescence, may be slightly complex and require matured handling.

The possibility of children slipping into role reversal is also quite high. Here, by role reversal, we mean the need for the child to get into a position to be able to handle and control the situation and manage on behalf of the adult. Single mothers, when they feel lonely, distressed or upset about things, tend to come and share their feelings with the children as they may be the only reliable and consistent support system accessible to them. At times, even when she does not want to trouble or upset the children, her disturbance and unsettlement may become evident on account of the closeness, understanding and comfort levels that the parent-children share and also probably due to the fine -tuning and sensitivity that may have evolved over a period of time and on account of having journeyed through a stressful life situation together. Mothers may thus, be consciously or unconsciously relying on the children for their sympathy or rather acknowledgement of her troubles and struggles and their support too. And children over a period of time may start feeling party to her troubles and struggles and start feeling directly responsible for what their mother is undergoing and even if that is not the case, there is a tendency to go beyond feeling simply sad along with the parent and trying to ease their pain and struggle in whatever manner they deem fit and are capable to take on. They automatically assume responsibility for helping the parent to recover. They may tend to get into the role of care provider, supporter and nurturer in order to ease out the situations or problems they perceive they are into.

Again, children may at times display concern and act out multiple roles even without the need shown or encouragement from the mother's side.

The impact of such role reversal on the children as well as parent is contextual and there are no rules in terms of how this relationship can be predicted. Children may just seem to be taking it up quite casually in their stride and again getting back to normal -- their original behaviour, when the parent seems to have stabilized and feels more in charge of the situation. But such behaviour, if falls into a pattern and becomes too natural and frequent, then there may be a risk of roll over burden for the child, and also the internalization of such behaviours

may lead to long term personality effects and gaps. Some children, once they are grown up enough and, in a capacity, to look back, evaluate and articulate, may then feel deprived' and may end up regretting the loss of a carefree, exciting childhood, which their other contemporaries may have had. Even the most matured, responsible child is liable now and then to get into a childish mode and may demand that kind of space and flexibility, Single parents tend to get surprised when a child who has generally been functioning as young adults and responsible individuals, suddenly act their age! Women, are at times able to draw such finer understandings as mother and sometimes are unable to shift and change their analysis and assumptions as per the context. They tend to question their parenting.

Single mother may have to work towards proper planning, organization of various tasks, time management and spending quality time with child, proper handling of emotions, developing trust, open communication with child, stress on positive things and build support systems and networks for herself and child.

However, it is always better to live in peaceful single parent family than violent two parent's family.

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## **Annexure**

### **Case studies**

#### **Case one**

Megha, age 48 years married for 28 years separated from husband for 20 years. Husband living with another woman. She has one daughter. She is post graduate and teaching in degree college. Today her daughter has completed her post-graduation and pursuing doctorate and is married. They took divorce by mutual consent when their daughter had completed her graduation. Her daughter always stayed with Megha and her father would speak with her over phone and meet her on her birthday. Megha had borne all the education expenses. They were staying in house which was on joint name but at time of divorce it was transferred on Megha's name. Their daughter chooses her partner and informed Megha about their decision of getting married. Megha met the boy's family who are at Calcutta and marriage took place in Mumbai.

Father was informed about marriage and he attended ceremony. Megha was separated for many years but decided to take divorce as her daughter insisted for it and now daughter is convincing her to go for remarriage. Megha's in laws never supported her or even attended the marriage of daughter. Megha has father and married brother. Her father did support her morally and emotionally during the process of divorce, but during her separation she had raised her daughter single-handedly. She had full time servant at home to take care of child and do household work. Megha feels that she was economically well off so could afford servant and all expenses of child.

**Case two**

Heena has two children, a boy 8 years old and a girl 14 years old. She is 30 years old. Both children are staying with her at her parent's house from last 7 years. Their father and his family stay in same city but rarely come to see them. Their father is alcoholic and do not have permanent job. He keeps on changing jobs as he is irregular at job. He has one brother and parents staying together. His brother has government job and his father is retired from private service. His mother is housewife. Heena started doing work as domestic servant after their separation. Her father's house is just one room, she has unmarried brother and parents and her children staying in such small house. Her husband and in laws were ill treating her and demanded money from her father and asked her leave their place when the boy was hardly one year old. They were not ready to give the boy to her but the boy cried and ran to her when she was thrown out of their house. Later her husband filed case in court for restitution of conjugal rights. But due to violence, Heena had fear in her mind and doubt about her safety. Also, that she had fear that they might not hand over boy to her in future.

Both agreed for divorce and custody was kept with Heena and no maintenance for her and children. Their father did not claim for meeting their children. They took divorce about 5 years ago. Heena wanted to live peacefully. Her father was government servant and brother was in search of job. She later on started working at a shop and could earn about rs.10000 per month. She had studied up to HSC. She wanted her children to take education. Today Heena is confident about taking care of both children. She has given her name to children and surname of their father. She feels children can claim property in future from their father if they want. Both children have seen her struggle to earn and take their care. Heena was lucky to have her parent's support. Her employer is also supportive.

**Case three**

Mamta, 35 years old staying alone in city and is working in IT sector. She has 5 years old daughter with her. Her parents are in another city. She got married 7 years ago and stayed with husband for one year. Her in laws are also staying in different city. Her husband had company quarters and he was working as an executive in one private firm. She got job after coming here in an IT sector. She used to come home sometimes late at night due to overwork at office. Her husband has paranoid personality and always doubted her character. During her

pregnancy also, she used to feel depressed due to his suspiciousness. Her mother came for her help during her delivery. His office had paid for all medical expenses. As his parents came to know that she had delivered a girl child, they did not even come to see her. They wanted a boy. She joined her office after 3 months and her parents were staying with her to help her. Again, her husband started doubting her character and was also unhappy about daughter. He was also complaining about her parents staying at his house. Hence her parents left and arranged for babysitting. Afterwards three of them were staying. His suspiciousness increased and there used to frequent fights and he used to abuse her. Mamta could not tolerate psychological violence and decided to leave house.

She spoke with her friends who helped her to find out rental place and full-time caretaker.

One day she left house with her belongings in his absence. She just sent him message that she is leaving the house. He contacted her and tried to convince her to come back but she was firm on her decision. He would phone and accuse her of having illicit relations with men.

She then stopped talking with him. His parents were trying for his remarriage. He filed for divorce and she agreed for it. He paid her alimony for to help her to buy house and not paid anything for their child. Now Mamta took her own small house and child is now in first standard. She solely looks after child. Occasionally her parents come and stay with her but they did not like her agreeing for divorce. Child does remember her father sometimes but do not miss him as there was never any bonding between the two.

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## **SINGLE WOMEN: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES**

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### **Abstract**

India is a country where marriage is considered very much mandatory. It is considered so important that even the corpse of the dead has to go through all the rituals that are performed during marriage.

When considering the Indian social norms, remaining single i.e. unmarried is still considered as a social stigma. In such case, when the unmarried person is a woman then the condition is even worse.

According to statistics there are nearly 74 million women in the country who are never married, separated, are divorced or widowed. This figure has seen a tremendous rise of nearly 39% between the year 2001 and 2011.

At such times it happens that the autonomy of single women is challenged from each and every aspect. When we talk about the challenges faced by single women in the Indian society we across challenges which include financial stability, harassment by the society, mental pressure, etc. Thus, this paper is an attempt to identify the issues and challenges faced by single women in the Indian Society.

**Keywords:** Single Women, Unmarried Women, Women's Autonomy, Femininity, Singlehood.

### **Introduction**

When we go through the history of human development we come across women as a major contributor towards human development. Their contribution is remarkable in each and every field. But in a country like India, the progress of a single women or the contribution is highly challenged.

Day by day, the number of single women in India is increasing. The meaning of single woman is understood as unmarried woman by the major population. But when we talk about single women, it consists of divorced women, never married women, widows, separated. The

general saying is that single woman is a woman above 30 years of age who is unmarried. But, now the definition of single woman has changed. Single (unmarried) woman is an adult female person who is unmarried. As per 2011 census, there are nearly 25.5 million unmarried women in the country. Uttar Pradesh state tops the list with around 12 million never married women followed by Maharashtra State at 6.2 million and Andhra Pradesh State at 4.7 million.

For a single unmarried woman, at times life seems to be a battle of survival for them. In these era, where the institution of marriage is given priority, single unmarried woman are looked with suspicion and are often **labeled** when not married. Remaining single is acceptable for men but not for women. When it comes to single unmarried woman she is put at fault stating that something is wrong with her or she is not able to get along.

**Note:** For the purpose of this study, a single woman refers to **never married woman**.

### **Objectives of the study**

1. To understand the meaning of single women.
2. To understand the reasons of being unmarried.
3. To understand the financial issues faced by unmarried women.
4. To know the psychological conditions of unmarried women.
5. To find out the social challenges unmarried women come across.
6. To come up with suggestions through which single women can tackle the challenges and are more respected.

### **Research Methodology**

The paper is a conceptual paper and is based on the data taken through discussions with single unmarried women. Also, data from various secondary sources i.e. internet, research papers have been taken into consideration to study the research in the given framework of the objectives.

### **Review of literature**

An article by Rick Nauert titled “Single women continue to face social challenges” concludes that in spite of the increasing number of single women the stigma has not diminished.



A research on “Single Women: Problems and Challenges” states that in this male dominated society the biggest problem faced by single women (unmarried women in particular) is lack of security- physical, social, psychological and emotional.

Promilla Kapur (1997) in her research shows that women face various problems in their day to day life be it at the work place or at home. They are exposed to problems such as insecurity, ambivalence.

The problems faced by single woman are extensively covered by various print media, articles and research papers.

### **Reasons of being Unmarried**

- A study shows that in the era of development, mostly “Woman are single by Choice and not by chance”. But this is not the case with everyone.
- Some of them decided to remain single because due to certain constraints the option of marriage is no longer available to them.

### **Problems of Single Women**

The problems associated with single unmarried women are as follows:

#### **1. Financial Problems**

Financial problem is one of the most common problems faced in general by all single women. In case of couples, two of them bring salary to home and even if one doesn't work, the other can manage the needs from his/her earning. This problem is more faced by unmarried women and they have to prepare for it accordingly. Today's, single women are qualified and are becoming financially independent.

#### **2. Psychological problems**

Unmarried women are exposed to various psychological problems. Emotional problems are one of the most common problems faced by them. At times they get depressed which lead to dysthymia. This further leads to decrease of interest in their daily routine, guilt feelings, worry, less involvement in social activities, insomnia, decrease in productivity, low self confidence, etc. Unmarried women often feel lonely as they have nobody (partner/other half). This is because they require somebody to

share their problem, their happiness. If they have an active social life on both personal both professional front this would help to get through loneliness.

### **3. Social Problem**

The way the society looks towards single unmarried women is very different. They are given a weird look by the society. At times because of the societal pressure, the parent put woman into pressure to get married. Even the so called educated people are not behind in dominating unmarried women and showing their strength. One another fact is that single woman are constantly hit upon. When men see unmarried men they take a chance of it. They start developing feeling of insecurity and displacement when their sibling or parent remark their single status and make jokes or comments on it. The society always thinks that unmarried women have all the free time as they don't have to look after anyone. Even financially stable single women are put into questions about the utilization of the money

### **4. Sexual Problems/ Harassment**

Women harassment is one of the biggest issues in the country. The number of harassment is increasing day by day. Even the workplace is not safe for single unmarried women. Unmarried women face a lot of prejudice at workplace. Single woman are considered as a stigma as people start finding fault in an unmarried woman.

### **5. Safety issues**

Safety is a major concern in India. It is a shameful fact but the reality cannot be ignored. Unmarried women need to extra careful about their safety; they must get themselves trained for their safety. When it comes to staying in a different city or even travelling unmarried women need to take extra precaution.

### **6. Accommodation Problems**

Finding accommodation is a major challenge for both men and women. Bachelor's particularly unmarried woman finds it becomes extremely difficult for her to get suitable accommodation. They routinely face the harassment of the housing societies as they are always suspicious about the activities of bachelors. At times they the landlords even go to an extent and ask why they (unmarried women) need the privacy of a apartment wherein they can even stay in working women's hostel. There are various legal opinions on this subject where single women cannot be denied accommodation, but they are hardly followed.

## **Observations**

From the above discussions, it can be easily traced that single women face a lot of problem especially in the Indian Society. Living life as a single woman is becoming challenging day by day for them. Single woman living alone are perceived as conspicuously isolated. Single woman not only face physical or financial insecurity but also face a lot of discrimination in the Indian Society. The dignity and respect of unmarried woman is not given priority. Even the media portrays a negative picture of unmarried woman.

## **Recommendations and Conclusions**

India has still a long way to be kinder to single woman. Single of this era should fight for their right. People need to understand that marriage is another the ultimate aim of a woman's life. Media of all needs to eliminate the prejudices and try to portray a favorable image of singlehood and they should strongly support in creating a sympathetic environment. The society would consider singlehood only when unmarried women are emotionally and socially strongly. This would help them to be bold and make them stand in the society. They should also plan wisely their expenses and try to save for their future.

Government along with other stakeholders of the society should come up with laws which are favoring the life of unmarried women. Also, they need to undertake various awareness and sensitization programmes to make single women strong. Equal rights in all respects should be given to both married and unmarried women. Parents need to educate children that they need to respect women of all relationship status.

It can be concluded that over a period of time, the condition of single women is changing. Also, the number of people accepting singlehood is increasing. The need of the hour is to accept and recognize the single statuses of the woman. We are willing to be a developed nation. In order to be recognized as a developed nation we must we must come up as a progressive society where treated equal in all respects are and opportunity. Single women must understand that they can break any class ceiling if they have strong determination. It is the time to tell the women that "You may be single but not alone."

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## **SINGLE MOTHERHOOD: MOTHERHOOD BEYOND BOUNDARIES OF MARRIAGE**

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### **Abstract**

Motherhood and womanhood stand in a multifaceted and ambiguous relationship with one another. In a patriarchal society, women are always expected to play the role of a mother, to the extent her womanhood is measured through her fertility. Feminists have a different perspective to put forward. According to them in mythology women were given status that no other women have enjoyed. But in reality, mothers' lives often fail to achieve such privileges. Motherhood is a potentially enjoyable challenge. It is also hard work and routinely stressful. Motherhood is central to women's lives irrespective whether they become mothers or not. Today we often see many women who are single and play the role of a mother. But there is hardly any recognition for such women, whereas due to the new reproductive technology available, men have the choice of being a father without marriage, which is not enjoyed by women. Many celebrities like Karan Johar, Tushar Kapoor have taken advantage of this technology and are enjoying their fatherhood outside the institution of marriage. There are several questions that are standing in front of the society regarding this that what if women decide to bear a biological child outside the marriage system? A feminist especially radical feminist feels that marriage is the reason for all sorts of exploitation of women be it social, sexual or mental. If motherhood is so important then why can't women enjoy this outside marriage? This paper examines the several perspectives which will try to find out certain questions regarding the empowerment of women in true sense.

**Keywords:** Womanhood, Motherhood, Single Mother, Marriage.

### **Introduction**

The experience of single motherhood by choice has become more common in the last few years and yet the literature reveals a very little information about this parenting fashion. The essays explore the various normative structures of motherhood in Indian society as articulated through religion, epics, literature and popular culture. It indicates that despite the glorification

of motherhood and the reification of the mother-child bond through rites and rituals, women's experiences of motherhood are profoundly alienating in the patriarchal structures of family. This is because, the idealization of motherhood at the symbolic level co-exists with social norms that justify family and kinship controls over women's sexuality or reproductive capacities. It determines that women who give birth to children within socially approved forms of sexual relationships, have a high status, compared to the women who bears a child outside marriage. The contradictions that exist in the motherhood ideology and the lived experiences of women point out that woman who violate the approved sexual and reproductive norms are stigmatized. There is also strong societal disapprobation against women who choose to have children outside marriage and against infertility. In Indian society, infertile women are penalized in many ways: they are seen as inauspicious and excluded from the participation of various rituals celebrating child birth and they also live under the threat of divorce by their husbands. The important point made in this is that women's reproductive capacity is controlled by the prevailing social ideology. Under patriarchy, women's capacity to bring forth a child is controlled by men. This study begins by locating motherhood within the framework of ideas, ideals and realities that shape women's experience of motherhood. It points out to the contradictions within patriarchal societies about women's reproductive labor.

## **Review of Literature**

Patriarchy is a system that privileges male power over females; this is reflected in our values, attitudes, customs, expectations, and, most importantly, reproduction. It is perpetuated through the process of socialization from one generation to the next. Patriarchy assigns certain characteristics to women, such as gentleness, modesty, humility, supportiveness, empathy, compassion, tenderness, nurturance, intuitiveness, sensitivity, and unselfishness. Whereas it allows men to use their physical, social, economic, and political power. Females, children, and those with non-traditional gender identities are largely excluded from this power and are treated as inferior or lack rights in this system. Women are thus treated as the second sex or the weaker sex (De Beauvoir, 1953). India is a land of rich cultural diversity. Though people may come from different regions, follow different religions, and identify with different cultural groups, there are some common ways of expressing motherhood in India. These common experiences and expressions of motherhood are often hijacked by patriarchy. According to Bagchi (2017), women's biological capacity to give birth has been appropriated to construct gendered social relations around the concept of motherhood.

Our various texts like the Vedas and Upanishads show that in ancient India, women were only seen as mothers or potential mothers, and the prevailing mindset valued their reproductive functions above all else. The woman was seen as the human equivalent of land in a patriarchal, agricultural society, and a submissive functionary of reproduction. Instead, a premium was placed on sons as potential producers and inheritors of property. If studied closely, it becomes evident that all ancient rituals revolved around the well-being of the husband and son. There were many prayers to this end, but scarcely any that pray for the safety of the mother. In

fact, during those times, despite the high mortality rate of women, it was believed that there will always be a way for a man to marry again and have a son or become a father, but there is no way a woman could become a mother if her husband dies (Bhattacharji, 2010; Krishnan, 2010; Lakshmi, 2010).

### **Research Methodology**

This article includes primary as well as secondary data. Under primary data unstructured interviews with mothers have been conducted. Under secondary data various books and journals are being referred.

### **Feminist Perspective on Motherhood**

Feminist feels that under patriarchy system, motherhood within marriage is also rarely enjoyed. Feminists have argued that motherhood has been used as an excuse to justify women's exclusion from all avenues of power, position and creativity in the public domain throughout history. No doubt a few women because of their social and economic power and political connections or through sheer grit of society have been able to overcome the barriers that motherhood imposed on them by society. Thereby overcoming the limitations of their allotted roles, duties, responsibilities and circumstances of their lives, these women have been able to make a mark in the annals of history. However such options are not available to the majority of women, whose lives are limited by their biology.

### **Concept of Single Motherhood**

Concept of single motherhood is not new, the concept has different meanings. Single women as mother can be due to widowhood, divorced and adoption also this are most prevailing concept, whereas there are many single mothers are the one who preferred not get into institution of marriage and either becomes biological mother or social mother of the children. Single motherhood due to widowhood and divorced is very commonly seen, amongst widowhood the general attitude of women is more like sympathetic, where as when we talk

about the divorced single women are questioned about her being divorced. Social mother is a woman who neither adopts child nor gives birth but she raises the children of the family. The concept of social mother is something which widely done by the women and accepted by the society as well.

Single mother by choice is the central theme of my article. In year 2016 single mother by choice got the legal sanction, but socially it has not yet been recognized by the society. The liberal thinking is prevailing in a very small section of the society. We have many women who are having such children but at the same time they are also aware about their genetic father, but what if mother gets pregnant with the help of donor sperm? Well under the donor sperm concept in the New Reproductive Technology, men and women both get a chance to become a parent. Unlike in the western country, in India the donor's identity is kept under the carpet, according to one of the leading fertility clinics. Doctors says ,the identity of both the person is not revealed to both the parties, at the same time, women who wants to be a single mother needs to go through several sets of counseling where she is being explained about the upcoming situations in the society which can be friendly or not so friendly. Also it is really necessary to understand why the individual would want to go for such arrangement particularly when all the requirements are met. Then the list of preferences is made and according to need the sperm donor is arranged. According to doctor even the profile of the women undergoing for such arrangement is changing from upper class to middle class women both approaching clinics for the same.

Anindita Sarbadhicari is one of such woman who has become single mother, according to her the Indian laws are supportive, but what one woman requires is courage and tremendous support of her family. Also being single one has to be economically sound so that a child gets full attention and positive attitude as even child is going to face the many questions raised by the society. She feels that society is still not ready for such transformation, when celebrity especially when men decides to take help of technology he is not grilled with questions rather this becomes news like cases of Karan Johar or Tushar Kapoor. But when ordinary woman does the same she has to answer many questions. Anindita Sarbadhicari also faced many problems while putting her son to school as the school wanted father's name, she could not apply many school's online forms because the name and photo of the father was mandatory. She feels her family is normal family like any other family.



Single mothers who chose to deliver her baby out of India is to avoid the questions from neighbor, friends and society. says, that there are many families in building who doesn't allow their children to play with her son. Many give advised to get marry again to avoid such situations. According to women, the majority times they get support is from elderly aunties as well as certain section of the society.

Kolkata based artist when she decided to go for single motherhood, she was much firmed that she wants her own baby and she doesn't want to adopt child but rather wanted to experience motherhood. Thus she had a lot of support of her own mother who stood by her. Also parents put forward the solution that, they will adopt the child so that she would not face any further criticism in the society. However but she strongly stood by her decision. Initially she had to listen to many criticisms, but gradually she learned to handle such situations.

### **Challenges before Single Motherhood**

There are many challenges for single mother and their child, but mainly there is two broader effect or challenges i.e. like socially and psychologically.

Socially single women are excluded from the society, they are looked down upon. Though these single women are mother they don't enjoy the same status like other mothers, who agrees to become mother under the institution of marriage. The upbringing of the children born to single mother is going to be different. They will also face much social disapproval, even children will face many problems like they also have to answer many question raised by their friends. The absence of one parent may be further lead to faulty socialization of the child. This kind of system will lead to destruction of the family as institution, thereby decreasing its importance of family in one's life, and also breaking the marriage as a social unit. In future it can raise many other questions for the society.

Psychologically, a woman who decides to be single mother goes to a lot of mental preparation as in the world of patriarchy she is making her stand. She is not only responsible for her mental wellbeing but also of her child's mental health is dependent on her. She is also responsible for all the decision taken by her for her child, as there will be many who can question her. The stress level is high as society will be not easy place to live. The child may suffer from mental disturbance, if the upbringing is not done rightly.

Economically single mother has to be always on her toes, for economic independence as she is solely responsible for fulfilling all the needs of the child and give her child best upbringing.

## Conclusion

The growth of single-parent families is, one of the most profound transformations of family life globally. This article shed light on this transformation and to advance sociological theorization on single motherhood and family dynamics in contemporary societies. Single mothers need decent jobs, conducive and welcoming environment to train their children who may turn out to be useful citizen in the country, also there is a need that government should provide social security to such single mothers. Society should also keep their views open for such decision.

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## **Minutes of the Workshop ‘Issues of Single Women’**

IQAC and CWDC of RJ College in collaboration with Maharashtra State Commission for Women organized a workshop on the ‘Issues of Single Women’, on 28<sup>th</sup> of September 2018. To place on record the workshop was a bold attempt to discuss various problems, challenges and opportunities brought out by eminent guest speakers on the issue.

The Workshop was inaugurated at 09:30 a.m. with the lighting of the lamp by our Chief Guest, Dr (Mrs) Manjusha Molavane, Member Secretary of Maharashtra State Commission for Women, Principal of RJ College Dr Usha Mukundan, Guests of Honour Dr. Manju Nichani, Director, Hiranandani Institute of Learning and Prof. Ritu Dewan, President of Indian Association of Women’s Studies, and all other dignitaries, followed by prayer. The programme started on a very positive note. The objective of the workshop was to provide an opportunity to share one’s experiences and insights and to deliberate upon the various challenges confronted and probable solutions for the welfare of Single Women.

Welcome address was delivered by Principal, Dr Usha Mukundan. She gave a formal introduction of CWDC and introduced the Chief Guest to the gathering. Prof. Shubhangi Vartak, Vice Principal & I/C of CWDC, spoke about the theme of the workshop.

Our Chief Guest for the Inaugural Function Dr (Mrs.) Manjusha Molavane, gave constructive opinion and stressed upon the need to discuss various sub- themes and put forth real cases for the formulation of improved policies and programmes to bring an overall development of single women in the country.

In the keynote address session, Prof. Manju Nichani, Retired Principal of KC College and at present, Director of Hiranandani Institute of Learning, emphasized the importance of the theme of the workshop and expressed her own experiences, her struggles by giving examples of social stigmas attached to single women and how she confronted those social stigmas and fought to overcome them.

Prof Ritu Dewan, Former Prof and Director, Department of Economics, University of Mumbai delivered a lead lecture and made us aware about the existing imbalances in different sections of the society and highlighted the need for ensuring protection and well-being of single women.

The Inaugural session concluded with fruitful deliberations and interactions with Guests of Honor. Formal vote of thanks was proposed by Dr. Nishigandha Muni. This was followed by Poster Exhibition on 'Laws Pertaining to Women'. The posters were prepared by students of HVPS College of Law, Ghatkopar (W). Participants proceeded for lunch thereafter.

Post Lunch session began with paper presentations. This technical session was chaired by Dr. Paromita Chakrabarti, Associate Prof, Department of English, HR College of Commerce and Economics. 13 participants presented their papers on varied sub-themes of the workshop like:

- Problems and challenges faced by Single Urban Women in India.
- Platonic Parenting- Fostering Parenting Partners.
- Success Stories of Single Women.
- Problems of Single Women in Mumbai Region
- Systematic Disenfranchisement of Single Women
- Level of Happiness experienced by Never Married Women.
- Single Parenting- Problems and Challenges, etc.

The outcome of the research papers yielded fruitful results in the form of constructive suggestions. The technical session was summed up by the chairperson, Dr Paromita Chakravarti. She commented that the workshop on 'Issues of Single Women' was very timely and extremely important. There was concerted effort on the part of the organizers to involve teachers and research students on the same platform. The papers highlighted the various aspects of social discrimination and economic inequalities that single women face. Some papers attempted to define and mark out the many ways in which the term single women can be used or applied. Some research papers were based on Quantitative Analysis and highlighted the scale and depth of social, economic, interpersonal problems that single women have to face in their daily life. One paper discussed about the importance of institutional intervention and state responsibility in mitigating the problems of single women. Two lawyers presented their papers and provided insight into various legal remedies, mechanisms and tools which can be used to secure justice. Papers on adoption, surrogacy, right to parenthood etc. were also discussed. Two papers delved into literary fiction and cultural discourse and showed how single women image have been characterized. The workshop covered a wide range of issues related to single women in particular, to sensitize

the society as to how one should deal with this group in a very modest way and not show them down.

On the basis of the suggestions and deliberations, following policy recommendations can be forwarded for the kind perusal of the MSCW who can redirect it to the concerned authorities for consideration and required modifications.

- **Role of the State –**

- Upholding women's rights as human rights.
- Zero tolerance for violence of any form against women.
- Provision of schemes and reservation in jobs especially for single mothers.
- Restructuring the official forms for removing father's/husband's name.
- Removal of parents' NOC for staying in working women's hostels.
- Financial aid for community-based and rehabilitative centres for single women.
- Tie-up with NGOs for the upliftment of women.

- **Role of the Educationists –**

- Education on rights and laws for sensitization
- Organizing workshops on similar themes to bring awareness and attitudinal change
- Online portal to discuss issues and problems

We hope that this workshop will give us a direction to bring constructive changes in the legal and socio- economic policy matters pertaining to the issues of single women. The emphasis should be on co-ordinated efforts of the state and civil society to create conducive environment for the realization and implementation of the rights of the single women. What is most important is the attitudinal change in the outlook of the society to acknowledge and uphold the dignity of single women. We hope that MSCW will look into these conclusions and forward it to the respective Government bodies for further considerations.

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