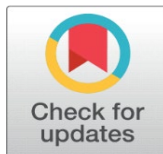


PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES FACED BY UNMARRIED (SINGLE) WOMEN IN U.T. CHANDIGARH

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ABSTRACT

It is hardly surprising that women, married or single, would want to experience the same freedom and democracy as males in this day and age in Indian society. A person who never gets married and stays single feels out of place in both society and culture. When a woman is unmarried, it is presumed that she is flawed; she might be unaccommodating or extremely difficult to get along with, which is why she is unmarried. This is the reason why being single is denigrated in Indian society. Women are trained to endure and overcome the stress and strains of marital relationships, even in the most trying circumstances, because marriage is the ultimate objective of their lives. This necessitates a thorough investigation of unmarried (single) women. Against this backdrop, the current study attempted to explore the Societal Pressure, Economic, Financial, Psychological and Emotional Challenges faced by Unmarried (single) Women.

Keywords: Unmarried (Single) Women, Problems, Challenges

1. INTRODUCTION

Motherhood and marriage have long been regarded by humans as the most important aspects of a woman's development. In our society, getting married is still viewed as an essential life step, and staying single is still frowned upon. Marriage, which is defined as a union between a man and a woman, is considered to be a trigger for a person's sense of belonging and the beginning of a family, according to a societal framework. After independence, India saw a wave of development that favored women. Indian women participated as vigorously as males in the fight for independence. Women were freed from their usual function behind the curtain as a result of this. Following independence, the constitution included particular provisions for women, granting them the same status as men. Education proved to be a benefit in addition to providing strength and awareness. Women began to receive paid employment. They became self-sufficient and autonomous.

Indeed, "women in certain occupations such as teaching, library work, and social work have fewer opportunities to meet eligible men than women in some other occupations," as noted by Landis and Landis (1948). Women's social behavior and social lives have evolved as a result of their adoption of meaningful job and financial independence. In marriage, this has led to self-choice. People now have the freedom to conduct their lives as they see fit thanks to broader changes in options. The group of 'never-married women' is becoming more defined as a result of this societal change. Indian marriage is based on a long-standing patriarchal tradition that places the male in charge of earning money and

the woman in charge of taking care of the family. The long-standing and deeply embedded misogyny in society has limited women's freedom and decision-making abilities. Her duty is specific: she restricts herself to exclusively domestic and reproductive work, which is a blatant display of patriarchy and power dominance that contributes significantly to Indian society's rigid marriage laws for women. Women's subordination is maintained in part by the domestic and child-rearing responsibilities that are attributed to them (Acker, 1993).

The stereotype of marriage and women has been a source of discussion for years. As a result, the small percentage of women who have discovered a way to avoid marriage have decided to remain single. This does not imply that all unmarried women choose to be single; some are forced to choose between being married and having to take care of their families. Depending on personal preferences and circumstances, women may choose not to get married for a number of reasons. Timing and age are also important factors in marriage since if these are not met by society, some people remain single or their marriage is postponed (Goswami, 2012). According to Cherlin, (1990) Women who have never married are more likely to have premarital sex, be independent, experience less spousal abuse and divorce, have more decision-making authority, pursue higher education, and advance their careers. People remained unmarried longer and became increasingly independent of one another as they gradually moved away from marriage. U. M. Paranjpe (1963). In reality, society is a problem for spinsters, not the other way around.

Brien (1991) choice-based analysis focused on weighing the advantages and disadvantages of getting married versus remaining single. Married people value freedom, privacy, loneliness, and independence differently than single people do. Three defense mechanisms—avoidance, isolation, and distortion—are displayed by the older, single people who have never married, keeping them apart from other people. Conversely, older women who have never married report higher levels of happiness and fulfillment than those who are married. Some of the factors contributing to the rising percentage of single people in modern society include the expansion of employment and educational options for women as well as the elimination of the shame associated with extramarital sex (Sheridan & Salaff, 1984).

In rural society in India, unmarried women are viewed as unacceptable and ineligible for marriage. According to Jethani (1994), women who have never married are viewed as strange among married women in society and are thought to bring bad luck to religious events so they face social boycott. On the contrary working unmarried women in metropolitan areas are subjected to derogatory remarks from their peers or coworkers for being unmarried, finding it challenging to secure accommodations as paying visitors, and having their privacy violated by society's ongoing surveillance (Neshla, 1994).

According to Jones & Ramdas (2004) due to their independence and status as the only provider, women in modern society are less reliant on males for their financial needs. For women, contentment and happiness are the main goals. Women who have been exposed to a variety of work cultures become more self-sufficient, which increases their involvement in both their careers and families, but it also limits their ability to marry later or never. According to Kalmijn (1998), being single would be the outcome of having high aspirations for marriage, being unable to locate potential companions, and lacking acceptance and relationship-building skills. Likewise, one of the most important considerations when choosing a spouse is selectiveness. Gopal and Sabala, (2010) highlighted that patriarchy and capitalism shape a woman's body throughout her life, making it abundantly evident that physical attractiveness for marriage is highly valued in society. If a woman lacks these attributes, she will be rejected from the marriage market and stay unmarried for the rest of her life.

According to Dalton's (1992) phenomenological research of never-married people, "not finding the right person for marriage" is the biggest cause of women's continued single status. The individual who possesses the ideal traits and personality of the ideal person with whom they could consider a relationship is the correct one. The study also showed that women employed a variety of coping strategies to deal with the stigma and pressure that come. Nagindrappa (2013) In every aspect of life, women have challenges. In India, discrimination against women persists. In India, the number of crimes against women is rapidly increasing. Not everywhere do women receive the same treatment as males. According to Kapur, K. (1977), unmarried women experience emotions of insecurity and deal with a variety of issues in their day-to-day lives, both at work and at home. Even though they are educated and employed, Sheela Bhattagar (1985) identifies the issues that single metropolitan women from the lowest, medium, or upper classes face. Their position and authority do not acknowledge them. They must take care of their brothers and family at home, and she must split her pay with them. It is challenging for single women to survive in a society that has been overtaken by men because they deal with a number of issues and are not given a prominent position in society, which makes them feel insecure. Unmarried (single) women endure various mental conflicts and the agony of living alone (Kumari, 1987).

The findings of this study and other studies on singlehood encountered issues pertaining to singlehood. According to Koeing et al. (2010), singlehood's primary obstacles include the torment of loved ones to engage in romantic relationships, uncertainty about loss, loneliness, grievances about married couples, and tickling biological clocks. Krishnakumari (1987) examined the issue of women who are not married. She asserts that unmarried women are exploited in the workplace. However, unmarried women staying home experience both psychological and financial strain. The majority of them stated that they experience stress and anxiety, which has a negative impact on their mental health. Parents are the first and most natural source of support that women turn to when under stress. Unfortunately, most women have issues even in their parents' houses. If they are single, they are viewed as a liability and a lifelong burden. This kind of approach makes unmarried women feel abandoned, which leads to serious psychological issues. Because of the poor environment at home, they endure great suffering, which leads them to distance themselves from other family members. According to Cargan (1986), unmarried women have more sexual partners than married women. Women are labeled "sluts" when they engage in sexual activity in ways that society perceives as undesirable. Society views the label of "slut" with the same disdain as it does the label of "spinster." Against this backdrop, the current study attempted to explore the problems and challenges of unmarried (single) women.

1.1. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- 1) To investigate the Social and Societal Pressure faced by Unmarried (single) Women.
- 2) To investigate the Economic and Financial Challenges faced by Unmarried (single) Women.
- 3) To investigate the Psychological and Emotional Challenges faced by Unmarried (single) Women

2. LOCALE OF THE STUDY

In view of the objectives mentioned above, the proposed study, has been conducted in different sectors of Union Territory of Chandigarh.

2.1. SAMPLING AND TECHNIQUES FOR DATA COLLECTION

In this study, women who have never been married also known as unmarried women are the primary emphasis. Investigating several important topics pertaining to the difficulties and obstacles these unmarried women encounter on a daily basis is the goal of this study. 'Never-married' and 'single women' are not classified as divorced, separated, widowed, or only mother. Women who have not married up until the age of thirty-five and above are regarded as single.

Married people can be found in the population, but single people are hard to find. Because of this limitation, the snowball sampling technique was used. To gain a comprehensive understanding of this problem, the case study method was used in this investigation. In order to investigate the problems and challenges of unmarried (single) women sixty women were chosen. This gave the researcher a thorough understanding of the problems and challenges faced by single women.

Table 1 Showing Social and Societal Pressure faced by Unmarried (single) Women

Social and Societal Pressure	Yes	No	Sometimes
Due to my single status, I am subject to social rejection or boycott	35(58.3)	11(18.3)	14(23.3)
I experience exploitation and discriminatory treatment at home	18(30)	14(23.3)	28(46.7)
I experience exploitation and discriminatory treatment at work-place	14(23.3)	9(15)	37(61.7)
Because I'm unmarried, my family and neighbors monitor me constantly when I remain out late for work	30(50)	5(8.3)	25(41.7)
Due to the fact that I am single, my neighbors and family members look downward at me	40(66.7)	5(8.3)	15(25)
Total	60(100)	60(100)	60(100)

Figures in parentheses column wise indicate percentages

Table 1 shows the Social and Societal Pressure faced by Unmarried (single) women. There were 58.3 percent of respondents who said 'yes', 18.3 percent said 'no' and 23.3 percent of respondents said that 'sometimes' they feel that

'due to their single status, they are subject to social rejection or boycott'. The study supports the findings of Jethani (1994), who states that women who have never married are thought to bring bad luck to religious events so they face social boycott. There were 30 percent of respondents who said 'yes', 23.3 percent of respondents said 'no' and 46.7 percent of respondents mentioned that 'sometimes' they 'experience exploitation and discriminatory treatment at home'. It was found that there were 23.3 percent of respondents said 'yes', 15 percent said 'no', and 61.7 percent said 'sometimes' they 'experience exploitation and discriminatory treatment at work-place.' The study supports the findings of Krishnakumari (1987), who states that unmarried women are exploited in the workplace. It was found that there were 50 percent of respondents said 'yes', 8.3 percent said 'no' and 41.7 percent of respondents said that 'sometimes' 'Because they are unmarried, their family and neighbors monitor them constantly when they remain out late for work'. The study supports the findings of Neshla (1994), who states that working unmarried women in metropolitan areas are subjected to having their privacy violated by society's ongoing surveillance. There were 66.7 percent of respondents said 'yes', 8.3 percent of respondents said 'no' and 25 percent said that 'sometimes' they 'Due to the fact that they are single, their neighbors and family members look downward at them.'

Table 2 Showing Economic and Financial Challenges faced by Unmarried (single) Women

Economic and Financial Challenges	Yes	No	Sometimes
The issue of economic uncertainty worries me	25(41.7)	8(13.3)	27(45)
I rely on my family or relatives to take care of my basic necessities	8(13.3)	52(86.7)	0(0)
Being single makes it tough for me to find a rental home	14(23.3)	9(15)	37(61.7)
People don't lend me money when I'm struggling financially since I'm unmarried and have no social support	23(33.8)	18(30)	19(31.7)
Total	60(100)	60(100)	60(100)

Figures in parentheses column wise indicate percentages

Table 2 shows the Economic and Financial Challenges faced by Unmarried (single) women. There were 41.7 percent of respondents who said 'yes', 13.3 percent said 'no', while 45 percent said that 'sometimes' 'the issue of economic uncertainty worries them'. It was found that there were 13.3 percent of respondents who said 'yes', 86.7 percent of respondents said 'no', and no respondents said that 'sometimes' they 'rely on their family or relatives to take care of their basic necessities.' There were 23.3 percent respondents who said 'yes', 15 percent of respondents said 'no', and 61.7 percent of respondents said that 'sometimes' 'Being single makes it tough for them to find a rental home.' There were 33.8 percent respondents who said 'yes', 30 percent of respondents said 'no', and 31.7 percent of respondents said that 'sometimes' 'People don't lend them money when they are struggling financially since they are unmarried and have no social support.'

Table 3 Showing Psychological and Emotional Challenges faced by Unmarried (single) Women

Psychological and Emotional Challenges	Yes	No	Sometimes
Stress about lack of caretakers during illness and being left alone in an emergency	23(33.8)	18(30)	19(31.7)
I experience emotional stress and psychological issues	50(83.3)	3(05)	7(11.7)
The sense of belonging to the family is absent	9(15)	43(71.7)	8(13.3)
My family does not treat me with the same respect as other married women	33(55)	6(10)	21(35)
My neighbors and relatives taunt me because of being single	45(75)	3(5)	12(20)
My neighbors and relatives taunt my parents because of me being single	47(78.3)	2(3.3)	11(18.3)
Social pressure and negative judgments of others make me feel low in self-worth	35(58.3)	11(18.3)	14(23.3)
I feel anxious and depressed because of the taunts from my family and society give me because of being single	23(33.8)	18(30)	19(31.7)
Total	60(100)	60(100)	60(100)

Figures in parentheses column wise indicate percentages

Table 3 shows the Psychological and Emotional Challenges faced by Unmarried (single) women. It was found that there were 33.8 percent of respondents who said 'yes' and 30 percent said 'no' while, 31.7 percent of respondents said that 'sometimes' they 'Stress about lack of caretakers during illness and being left alone in an emergency'. There were 83.3 percent of respondents who said 'yes', 05 percent of respondents said 'no', and 11.7 percent said 'sometimes' they 'experience emotional stress and psychological issues' because of being single. The study supports the findings of Kumari (1987), who states that Unmarried (single) women endure various mental conflicts and the agony of living alone. It could be said that there were 15 percent of respondents who said 'yes' 71.7 percent said 'no' while, 13.3 percent of respondents mentioned that 'sometimes' they feel that the 'sense of belonging to the family is absent.' There were 55 percent of respondents said 'yes', 10 percent said 'no' and 35 percent said that 'sometimes' their 'family does not treat them with the same respect as other married women'. There were 75 percent of respondents said 'yes', 5 percent said 'no', and 20 percent said 'sometimes' their 'neighbors and relatives taunt them because of being single.' There were 78.3 percent of respondents said 'yes', 3.3 percent said 'no' and 18.3 percent said 'sometimes' their 'neighbors and relatives taunt their parents because of them being single.' There were 58.3 percent of respondents said 'yes', 18.3 percent said 'no' and 23.3 percent said 'sometimes' 'social pressure and negative judgments of others make them feel low in self-worth.' There were 33.8 percent of respondents said 'yes', 30 percent said 'no' and 31.7 percent said 'sometimes' 'they feel anxious and depressed because of the taunts from their family and society give me because of being single.'

According to the respondents' narratives, unmarried (single) women deal with a lot of problems and challenges. They included a few things that their friends, family, and neighbors use to describe them in their day-to-day interactions, which they must put up with since they are single. They brought forth the following statements:

"Zyada padh likh gayi hai...isi liye ab shadi nahi krna chahti..ldkion ko zyada padhai likhayi nhi krvani chahiye".

"Ladke pasand krne main bohot nakhre dikha rahi hai...is umar main aab ladke nahi milte apni pasand ke..jo mil raha jesa mil raha accept karo or jald se jald shaddi krlo".

"Shaddi krne main kya problem hai...kya tum ek hi ladke ke sath apni sari zindagi nahi nikal skti...kitni options rakhni hai?...jo hum bo, rahe hai usi se shaddi krlo ab apna dimag lagane ki koi zarurat nahi hai".

"koi kami hai isme isi liye iski shaddi nahi ho payi ab tak"

"Itni umar ho gayi hai ab tak shaddi nahi ki..ab to koi budha hi milega..jo bhi milta hai bs shaddi kro..kuvare rehne main kisi ka Bhalla nahi hua"

3. CONCLUSION

Even though single women embrace spinsterhood as a different way of living, society still devalues it and views it as a personal failure of the girl or women. It also perpetuates pathological stereotypes of single women, such as their lack of beauty, excessive pride and arrogance, personality deficit, incapacity to form close relationships, parents' lack of interest in their daughter's career, and so on. This societal mindset is what causes stress and adjustment issues for unmarried women. It is crucial that families and society at large treat unmarried (single) women with respect, love, and understanding as fellow humans in these situations.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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