

ISSN - 2322-018X

Peer Reviewed Referred & Indexed

International Research Journal of Sociology & Social Science
Quarterly Bilingual

RELEVANT DERIVE

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An official publication of
Amit Educational and Social Welfare Society (Regd.)
Firozabad (U.P.) Regd. No. UP 1779/2004-05

www.amitdeliberativeresearch.com

Issue - 11

Vol.-1 (Oct.-Dec., 2015)

RELEVANT DERIVE
(International Research Journal of Sociology &
Social Science Quarterly Bilingual)

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Women living with single status: A study on single women in Agartala Town, Tripura, India.

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Abstract

A single women whether educated or illiterate always face various kind of constrain like, insecurity, disrespect, economic hardship, social exclusion etc. Single women are those adults who are not married at the age of above 30, who are not seriously coupled, or in other words, women who are not in a monogamous, exclusive relationship (Kachru, 2006). This study aimed at revealing the social status of single women and difficulties they faces within their family and surroundings for their single marital status. To achieve the objective of the study both primary and secondary data collected. 40 respondents are selected from four zonal ward areas of Agartala town. Respondents are having single marital status of widow, divorce and unmarried. The results indicate the various problems and non supportive attitude of society towards single women in Agartala town, Tripura, India.

Key words: Single Women, social status, single status.

INTRODUCTION

In patriarchal society like India, women consider as subordinate in nature and emotionally as well as economically dependent on men. The major social role of women in our society is to perform household work, child bearing and to care each and every member of their family. But through rapid changes in modern and developmental social structure both man and women have a need to work outside for survive their family with comfort.(Billington, 1895) The degree of freedom given to women to move on education and empower themselves to cope difficulties they faced. Huge numbers of women issues are recently highlighted by many agencies. But important problem to women which has been generally ignored and shunned down is the problem of single women: means those who are unmarried, divorce or widow. They are asserting their right as individuals in every walk of life. This study highlights the status and perception of society towards single women in Agartala town of Tripura.

In a society where a woman is traditionally considered to be complete when she marries preferably to a groom of her guardian choice, single status can be cruel and oppressive. There are some 40 million women in India, according to the 2001 census, who are single and over the age of 30 - divorced, separated or unmarried. India's fast-changing cities are not ready to accept single women for what they are. But society continuously changes with new dimensions of economic development which influence the family relationship vis-a-vis the perception of marital relationship. Domestic violence, dowry demand, wife bettering, extra-marital relationship, bigamy of husband is increase, whereas divorce rate are found in a handsome amount in India recently. Indian society not except singleness of women, but increasing rate of single women in India gives warning the family system which needs to change perception toward single women.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- To study about overview of single women in Indian context.
- To study about socio-economic conditions of single women at Agartala town.
- To study about various problems faced by single women at Agartala town.

METHODOLOGY

The study is mainly based on primary data collected from the respondents. A sample of 40 single women was selected through purposive sampling method and snowball sampling techniques. An un-structured interview schedule was administered to the respondents, for collecting data. All the respondents were interviewed and collect their oral responses for the study. Responses were recorded on the basis of interview schedule; which consist of questions like; income, caste, education, health and observation.

UNIVERSE OF THE STUDY

Agartala town of Tripura is the universe of the study. Agartala is the capital of the Indian state of Tripura. It is situated in Northeast India. Nearly 64 years ago Tripura was an independent princely State. Tripura became a full-fledged State on January, 1972. Tripura was divided into three districts viz North, South & West Tripura District. Agartala is situated in the west district and also head quarter of this district. It lies on the Haora River is located 2 Km from Bangladesh. (Chakraborty, 2008) Total area of Agartala city is 58.84 Km² (23 sq mi). As per 2011 Census total population of Agartala town is 40, 0004 out of which S.C population 77,663, and S.T population 19,767.

DISCUSSION AND MAJOR FINDING

CONCEPT OF SINGLE WOMEN

In India, basically urbanized women are increasingly becoming out of orbit of tradition-ridden families. In urban sector, education, delayed marriage and occupational opportunities, all of which reflect social change, pave way for emergence of '*single woman*' as a definite component of women's world. Indeed single status of women occurs due to several factors. But in modern contemporary society and especially in a region, single status of women is often regarded due to **own choice** and owing to **societal pressure**. Since this study is concerned with single women-who are widow, divorce and another who never entered into alliance or marriage.

- **Single status due to own choice**

Single statuses through their own choice here indicate decisions of a woman herself are one of the most rigid reasons for remaining Unmarried. Marriage was avoided by these women for the reasons mentioned below:

a) **Dedication of life to a noble cause**

Religion also has an impact on lives which induce some women to not entering into marriage life. Women in our society sometimes willingly dedicate her marital life because of welfare of her own family members as well as for welfare of the society.

b) **Pursuit of Career**

A woman who is ambitious about her career might not wish to enter into matrimony. Married life involves so many duties and obligation towards husband, children and in-law kin that these might the free pursuit of career activities and might actually force married women to alter their career plan.

c) **Betrayed love or disappointment in Love**

Disappointment in love due to betrayal by liven is another factor in pushing a women into the stats of unmarried women.

d) **Parental objection to marry someone of her own choice**

As mentioned earlier, marriage in the Hindu society in generally arranged by the way at negotiation between the families of the future bride and the groom, in that time grille are not usually free to marry according to their own choice. But a new trend has appeared among the education women especially in the urban areas, to choose their

own life partners with or without the consent to the parents. Sometimes objection from the boy's parents also cause of women remains single women.

Another is often difficult for the parents as well as for the girl to find out a suitable groom of equal or a suitable match for a girl having high education and good job or economic status. Unable to find a life partner of equal status, many women choose to remain single rather than enter into matrimony. Many other causes are also create due category of single women.

- ***Single status through pressure of society***

In the second part I mentioned about those women who remain single status to pressure of society or due to compelling circumstance beyond the control of a women. In this section will try to focus on those women who are widows divorces and separated from husband.

- a) Single status through widowhood**

Sati, the practice of immolating in the burning pyre of the deceased husband by the widowed life was prohibited in British India in 1829. Though only this practice is not only problem of these women's. Basically widow means, women whose husband is dead and she has not married again (Nesla, 1994). A widow has to bear much pain and humiliation as long as she lives. In comparison to other categories of single women, it can be said that widowhood is the commonest cause for a women becoming single in Hindu Society (Ahuja, 1996)

- b) Single status through broken marriage**

The number of divorce is on the increase in modern society. Because of educational and occupational opportunities, the feeling of dependence on the other is mainly cease of problematic marital problem. Lack of Co-ordination or a genuine understanding between the married partners leads to divorce or separation. The family may break up either through separation or through formal divorce. The divorced women is legally free to remarry but a separated women is not to study the existing status of a women and her need to adjust in society, the distinction between divorced and separated status is important. The percentage of women whose marriage was broken without going to any court for legal relief is very high. They were classified as separated from their husband with or without children. In the present day separation can be taken as an index of instability in conjugal binds because Co-residence of spouses is the norm in the Hindu society. The percentage of divorced women, who were partly benefited by the legal relief, is very low. The causes of this low percentage are primarily due to lack of awareness and financial resources to move the court. Another reason is the fear of social insecurity which prevents her from resorting to divorce even with the marriage is very unhappy.

- c) Single status through unmarried**

One Important part in these categories again indicates the unmarried women who had to sacrifice the best part of their life to help the family. In the patriarchal Hindu society, a woman is at times required to take the responsibilities of her natal family as a bread winner. A women who has chronic ailments and physical disabilities are remains single. These for various reasons outline, many women in our country have to remain single along with unmarried, widows and divorces.

SINGLE WOMEN IN INDIA

In India an individual who remains single and never married, divorce, widows are feels out of place in our society. Culturally single women were supposed to be responsibility to the extended family and these traditions still continued. Single man who may unmarried, divorced or widower more expectable then it is for women. When a woman found single, it is assume that there is something wrong with her. Those women are not allowed to participate in religious festivals and marriage celebration because it is considered as unlucky (Barooah, 1998). Today in India rate at divorce is increasing and family structure are very much affected by divorce. Whereas rich or poor, widows were struggle against a deep social stigma

in most communities in India. Married Hindu woman is most commonly blessed with the word 'Sada Suhagin Raho' meaning reflect general attitude of society toward the widow versus married women, whose husband still live.(Kachru, 2006) Widowhood in India means a loss of self-esteem, dignity, social position and right. Widows are the unfortunate victims of nature and for centuries they have been ill-treated in India. Less data found about single women in India and very limited governmental and nongovernmental agenesis shown their interest on doing research studies about single women living condition and their problems. But in census 2011 there is mention the number of never married women, divorce, separated and widow women, which given in the following table:

Age group	Total Female	Never married	Widow	divorce	separated
All ages	587584719	247963442	43261478	909573	2372754
25-29	50069757	4397542	642498	129028	294031
30-34	43934277	1439770	1096010	138944	328254
35-39	42221303	770659	1839357	138501	353821
40-44	34892726	504866	2569153	116547	313695
45-49	30180213	362504	3269711	87350	252311
50-54	23225988	286189	3972473	62361	182099
55-59	19690043	219340	3996475	38843	117890
60-64	18961958	306839	6571107	32956	106238
65-69	13510657	271686	5813953	19455	61076
70-74	9557343	150126	5755159	12787	35504
75-79	4741900	76505	2942010	5664	14235
80+	6005310	270368	4144457	7734	15413
Age not stated	2116921	947054	143532	2999	6345

Source: census 2011

Marital status of the respondents

For defining single women respondents mainly selected according to their marital status. 40% respondents are widow, 22.5% respondents are separated and 20% respondents are divorce and 17.5% respondents are never married status. (See Table 1)

Table no; 1 distribution of respondents on the basis of marital status.

Marital status	Number of respondents	Percentage
Widow	16	40%
Divorce	8	20%
Separated	9	22.5%
Never Married	7	17.5%
Total	40	100.00%

The Respondents age Group

The age structure of the responded are categorized into eight groups and found that 27.5% respondents belongs to the group of 45 to 49 year, 20% respondents were belong to 30 to 34 age group, 17.5% respondents are from 50 to 54 years age group, 10% respondents belongs to 35 to 39 age group and 7.5% respondents belongs to less then 30 and between 40 to 44 years age group whereas 5% respondents belong to 55 to 59 and 60+ age group. (See table 2)

Table no; 2 distribution of respondents on the basis of age group.

Age group	Widow	Divorce or separated	Never married	Total	Percentage
Less the 30	1	2	-	3	7.5%

30-34	3	4	1	8	20%
35-39	1	3	-	4	10%
40-44	1	1	1	3	7.5%
45-49	5	2	4	11	27.5%
50-54	3	3	1	7	17.5%
55-59	1	1	-	2	5%
60+	1	1	-	2	5%
Total	16	17	7	40	100%

Educational Qualification:

Education is the most potent weapon in changing the status of women. Though in census report 2011 literacy rate of female in Tripura 83.1%. In this study 37.5% respondent were educated at primary level school, 25% respondents are found illiterate as well as educated higher level school, 10% respondents were graduate and 2.5% respondents were clear post graduate or above that.(See table 3).

Table no; 3 distribution of respondents on the basis of educational qualification.

Educational qualification	Widow	Divorce or separated	Never married	Total	Percentage
Illiterate	3	3	4	10	25%
Primary education	5	8	2	15	37.5%
High level education	7	2	1	10	25%
Graduate	1	3	-	4	10%
Post -graduate	-	1	-	1	2.5%
Total	16	17	7	40	100%

Types of family

55% respondents were live in joint family whereas 45% are live in nuclear family. Because of respondents single status most of them prefer to be with their guardians or relatives. 12 widow respondents, 6 divorce or separated and 4 unmarried are found in joint family. Eventually 4 widow, 11 divorce or separated and 3 unmarried are found to live in nuclear family. (See table 4)

Table no; 4 distribution of respondents on the basis of types of family

Types of family	Widow	Divorce or separated	Un-married	Total	Percentage
Joint family	12	6	4	22	55%
Nuclear family	4	11	3	18	45%
Total	16	17	7	40	100%

Occupation level of respondents

All respondents are working for maintain their family. Different occupational criteria make their income level differently. 42.5% respondents were domestic workers, 30% respondent were work in private sector. 10% respondents were doing business and also same percentage found in working as daily labour. 5% respondents were government job holder and 2.5% respondents were doing other types of work. (See table 5)

Table no; 5 distribution of respondents on the basis of occupation.

Occupation of respondents	Widow	Divorce or separated	Never married	Total	Percentage
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Governmental job (Regular/ Fixed/ Contractual)	1	-	1	2	5%
Private jobs	3	7	2	12	30%
Business	1	3		4	10%
Daily labour	2	2		4	10%
Domestic worker	8	5	4	17	42.5%
Others	1	-	-	1	2.5%
Total	16	17	7	40	100%

Income level of respondents

In this study 82.5% respondents income level found low (2000-6000 Rs), 12.5% respondents were found medium level of income (6001-10,000 Rs). 5% respondents belong to high level of income (above 10,000 Rs). (See table no; 6)

Table no; 6 distribution of respondents on the basis of income level.

Income level	Widow	Divorce or separated	Never married	Total	Percentage
2000-6000	12	15	6	33	82.5%
6001-10,000	3	1	1	5	12.5%
above 10,000	1	1		2	5%
Total	16	17	7	40	100%

Various problems faced by respondents

Almost all respondents face different kind of problem which directly related with their single status. For this study three category of single status are selected where every respondents found surround with diverse problematic situation. In the following table problem facing criteria decided on the basis of recently facing problems by the respondents. (See table no; 7)

Table no; 7 distributions of respondents on the basis of problems they face.

Problems face by respondents	widow	Divorce or separated	Never married	Total	percentage
Economic crisis	4	8	2	14	35%
Property related problem	7	1	-	8	20%
Social pressure	1	-	2	3	7.5%
Family pressure	-	3	-	3	7.5%
Child rearing problem	1	1	-	2	5%
Employment problems	-	1	-	1	2.5%
Health problem	1		-	1	2.5%
Harassment problem	1	1	-	2	5%
Protection crisis	-	1	-	1	2.5%
Feeling of loneliness	-	-	3	3	7.5%
Misbehaviour problem	1	1	-	2	5%
Total	16	17	7	40	100%

35% Respondents were facing economic crisis whereas 20% respondents have property related problems. Respondents those were facing social pressure, family pressure and feeling of loneliness found 7.5% among total respondents. 2.5% respondents were face employment problems, health problems and protection crisis. 5% respondents were faced harassment problem and misbehavior problem.

Other findings

- ❖ Most of the respondents were Hindus (75%) followed by Muslims (19%) and the rest (6%) belonged to other religious communities.
- ❖ 47.5% (19) of the respondents had 1-2 children, while 10% (4) of them had 3-4 children and 7.5% (3) respondents had more than four children. 35% (14) of the women had no children.
- ❖ Among all respondents 45% were not interested about marriage or remarriage, 53% of respondents not responding about the question of remarriage and 2% respondents are found interested to marriage or remarriage.

Suggestions or recommendations

- Society rapidly changes with new form of thinking about relationship and changing stereotype role played by man and women. But members of our society need to change their perception about single women as fast as social change take place.
- Various new problematic issues about women are adopted by gender studies but there is very limited studies done on single women in India. Governmental and non governmental both agencies are still not able to give clear data on single women. Which make a foggy image about them, so more studies are require to survey on single women life and their problems.
- Education is the most powerful weapon for empowering women for developed their social status. Single women also need to take education and skill developing trainings to make ones self dependent.
- Single women in Agartala town need to be organized by making some groups to fulfill their needs and requirements. No particular agency or governmental as well as non governmental organization found in Agartala for look after single women problematic issues.

Conclusion

The study on living condition and problems of single women in Agartala town threw up a complicated issue for which no simple solutions are possible and desirable. Social negative attitude always creates shadow on life image of single women. Many single women who were surveyed felt that society had ill-treated them and they had a deep sense of being wronged and betrayed. Almost all respondents wanted solutions to the everyday problems they face. Maintaining of social pressure, whispering about character issues without any prove are making single women more restless and ruthless. On the other hand creating strong personality in society being a single woman is not easy enough but respondents hardly tried their best efforts to get respect from society. Most of the respondents said that due to single problematic status they were passing hard time in their life but still they want to start their study or passionate work to make themselves more strong, economically vis-à-vis mentally stable. Thus, this study helps to evaluate single women feelings in front of society.

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Problems face by respondents	widow	Diverse w spouses	Never marry	percentage
Economic crisis	4	8	2	14

ISSN - 2322-018X

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An official publication of
Amit Educational and Social Welfare Society (Regd.)
Firozabad (U.P.) Regd. No. UP 1779/2004-05

www.amitdeliberativeresearch.com

Issue - 13

Vol.-1 (Apr.-June 2016)

RELEVANT DERIVE
(International Research Journal of Sociology &
Social Science Quarterly Bilingual)

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Social Stress and Single Women in Agartala City, Tripura, India

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Abstract

In Indian patriarchal society, it is very difficult for single women to survive without difficulties. A single women whether educated or illiterate always face various kind of constrain like, insecurity, disrespect, economic hardship, social exclusion etc .which creates stress and strain in their mind. Legally, singles are adults who are not officially married by state laws, and socially, singles are those who are not seriously coupled, or in other words, people who are not in a monogamous, exclusive relationship (Glendon 1989). In this paper an attempt has been made to understand the causes of social stress which affect the mind and self of single women in Agartala city of Tripura. For this study two sub-categories single women have taken - (1) women who were once married – widows and divorce or separated (2) women who have never been married. It is found that both the type of single women face some common problems like financial hardship, social exclusion and disrespect which ultimately affect their body and mind.

Key words: Single Women, social exclusion, social Stress, Mind, Self

INTRODUCTION

triarchal Indian society dominates women in various ways. Indian women face gender based discrimination in social, economic, educational, health, religious, political and cultural field. It is believed that women should always remain under the control of man. The Hindu laws said, "In childhood, a female must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband and when her husband is dead, to her son, and thus a woman never be independent" (Buhler 1964). So the society set marriage is the only goal for women. But things started to change with the advance of British rule in India and particularly after independence. After independence, the government of India passed several acts in favour of women like Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, Hindu Succession Act, 1956 etc. in order to pledge equality of status and opportunity of man and women equally. As a result educationally, economically women now enjoy similar status along with their male counterpart. Today a married woman can divorce and a widow can remarry. Moreover industrialization and technological change in production sector open new opportunities for women to work outside for earning and built career as they like to project. Majority of industry, factories and other work facilities are located in urban areas of the country, which attract the attention of both male and female to gather there. Along with increasing number of population, "Single women" also increase in urban areas. They are not just an insignificant group of single eccentric peoples. Single women in urban areas facing various problems where as a single male is not facing. Different types of single women facing different types of challenges and difficulties in their day to day life. Single women consider as vulnerable categories those are juggle many responsibilities including financial provision, housekeeping and also parenting. Unmarried single women are not getting emotional support from their family. Despite, once married single women (widows and divorce or separated) have lack of supportive spouse to trust, cooperate and comfort, as said by Bella De Paulo, (2006).

requent social change may produce a cultural lag, where one element of a culture or society changes more quickly than another. Single women are caught in a 'cultural lag' (Ogburn,1922) between macro social changes that encourage and sustain singlehood as a desirable option and slow-to-change cultural ideas that still elevate marriage as the ideal state. Altaker (1959) said that in Indian concept divorce was prohibited and evidence of widow re-marriage was conflicting whereas married are consider as burden and causes for dishonour of father in the Indian society.

METHODOLOGY

The study is mainly based on primary data collected from the respondents. A sample of 77 single women was selected through purposive sampling method and snowball sampling techniques. An un-structured interview schedule was administered to the respondents, for collecting data. All the respondents were interviewed and collect their oral responses for the study. Responses were recorded on the basis of interview schedule; which consist of questions like; income, caste, education, health and observation. Data were tabulated and analysed.

UNIVERSE OF THE STUDY

Agartala city of Tripura is the universe of the study. Agartala is the capital of the Indian state of Tripura. It is situated in Northeast India. Nearly 64 years ago Tripura was an independent princely State. Tripura became a full-fledged State on January, 1972. Tripura was divided into three districts viz North, South & West Tripura District. Agartala is situated in the west district and also head quarter of this district. It lies on the Howrah River is located 2Km from Bangladesh. Total area of Agartala Town is 58.84 Km² (23 sq mi). As per 2011 Census total population of Agartala town is 40, 0004 out of which S.C population 77,663, and S.T population 19,767.

DISCUSSION AND MAJOR FINDING

The single women

For this study Single women can be referred to those women who discarded their husbands, who are divorced with their spouses, whose husbands are dead, and those who are unmarried till the age more than thirty. Unmarried, divorced or separate and widow are various forms of single women and all these forms are defined in different ways. Generally single women are considered as those who are unmarried, divorced or widow. According to latest available data of 2001 census around 36 million single women live in India. In this study, unmarried, widow and divorced in Agartala city of Tripura are taken as single woman. Being both educationally and economically privileged, single women can be self-sufficient. But because unmarried single women is often not able to find a suitable partner, they are either living single or have to manage into a family, where single women all too often becomes victim of domestic violence. The author feels that urban Indian woman today can and should defy the patriarchal structures and live an autonomous life. Asha Kahru, (2006) Social attitudes towards unmarried women were generally unfavourable, single women worked to negotiate their lives free from family constraints and social gossip Tuula Gordon (1994).The status of widows in India which highlight the marginalization in all its dimensions, the insidious ways by which society through a dress code, behaviour code, linguistic oppression, diet restriction etc. To find out the situation of single women in Agartala town, this study investigates the potential social stress they face as well as their abilities to maintain an image of strong personality with in and around their surroundings.

THE RESPONDENTS AGE GROUP

The age structure of the responded are categorized into five groups and found that 38.97% respondents belongs to the group of 47 to 56 year, 28.57% respondents were belong to 57 to 66

age group, 16.88% respondents are from 35 to 46 years age group, 10.39% respondents belongs to 67 to 77 age group and 5.19% respondents belongs to above 77 years age group. (See table 1)

Table no; 1 distribution of respondents on the basis of age group.

Age group	Number of respondents	percentage
35 – 46	13	16.88%
47 – 55	30	38.97%
57 – 66	22	28.57%
67 – 77	8	10.39%
Above 77	4	5.19%
Total	77	100.00%

MARITAL STATUS

For defining single women respondents mainly selected according to their marital status. 49.35% respondents are divorce or separated, 29.88% respondents are widow and 20.77% respondents are unmarried status. (See Table 2)

Table no; 2 distribution of respondents on the basis of marital status.

Marital status	Number of respondents	Percentage
Un-married	16	20.77%
Divorce or separated	38	49.35%
Widow	23	29.88%
Total	77	100.00%

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION

Education is the most potent weapon in changing the status of women. Though in census report 2011 literacy rate of female in Tripura 83.1%, but majority of the respondents were only able to sign their names but they somehow arranged eight pass certificates. In this study 36.36% respondent were educated at high level school, 33.76% respondents are only primary level school, 14.28% respondents were illiterate, 9.10% respondents were graduate and 6.50% respondents were clear post graduate or above that.(See table 3).

Table no; 3 distribution of respondents on the basis of educational qualification.

Educational qualification	Number of respondents	Percentage
Illiterate	11	14.28%
Primary education	26	33.76%
High level education	28	36.36%
Graduate	7	9.10%
Post-graduate	5	6.50%
Total	77	100.00%

TYPES OF FAMILY

70.12% respondents were live in joint family whereas 29.88% are live in nuclear family. Because of respondents single status most of them prefer to be with their guardians or relatives. 17 widow respondents, 24 divorce or separated and 13 unmarried are found in joint family. Eventually 6 widow, 14 divorce or separated and 3 unmarried are found to live in nuclear family. (See table 4)

Table no; 4 distribution of respondents on the basis of types of family

Types of family	Widow	Divorce or separated	Un-married	Total	Percentage
Joint family	17	24	13	54	70.12%
Nuclear family	6	14	3	23	29.88%
Total	23	38	16	77	100.00%

OCCUPATION AND INCOME

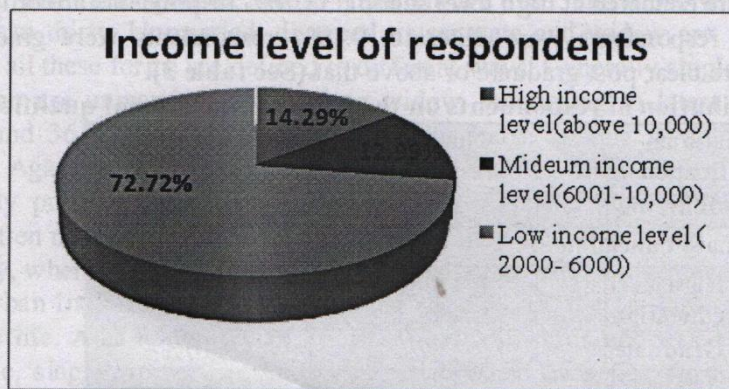
All respondents are working for freed their family. Different occupational criteria make their income level differently. 31.16% respondents were domestic workers, 19.48% have government job and 15.58% respondent were work in private sector. 12.99% respondents were other different type of job whereas 11.69% respondents were business women and 9.10% are daily labour. (See table 5)

In this study 72.72% respondents income level found low (2000-6000 Rs), 14.29% respondents have high level of income (above 10,000 Rs) and 12.99% respondents were found medium level of income (6001-10,000 Rs). (Chart-1)

Table no; 5 Distribution of respondents on the basis of occupation.

Occupation of respondents	Number of respondents	Percentage
Governmental job (Regular/ Fixed/ Contractual)	15	19.48%
Private jobs	12	15.58%
Business	9	11.69%
Daily labour	7	9.10%
Domestic worker	24	31.16%
Others	10	12.99%
Total	77	100.00%

Chart no; 1 Distribution of respondents on the basis of income level.



Single Women - The Dark Side

SELF - CONCEPTION

Self-concept seemed to go hand-in-hand with life-satisfaction that is whether a single woman was satisfied with herself in regard to her singlehood status. The expectations set by the women affected their self-concept. Self image of respondents are found very miscellaneous, but most of the respondent found confident about their choice of single status as same as any kind of decision they take for them or their family. 68.83% respondents were express dissatisfaction with their

present life situation and 22.07% respondents express their satisfied regarding singlehood status whereas 9.10% respondents unable to express their feeling in this regard. (See table 6).

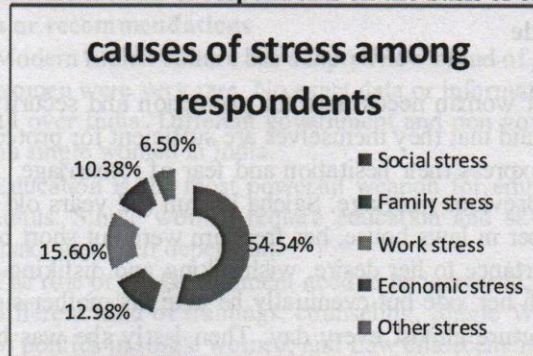
Table no; 6 distribution of respondents on the basis of income level.

Are you satisfied with your single status in society?	Total	Percentage
Yes	17	22.07%
No	53	68.83%
No response	7	9.10%
total	77	100%

STRESS

In the present complex social situation “stress” is not only found particular individual. No one is free from stress in their life, but the causes of stress may vary form individual to individual. In this study 54.54% of respondents facing social stress, which indicate negative gossip or comments from known people or neighbors only because of their single status. 15.60% respondents found stressful because of huge workload in the working place and within their family. 10.38% respondents were facing economic crisis which make them stressful. 12.98% respondents share their family members negative comments and intolerable behavior is make them stress and 6.50% respondents discuss different causes, like physical and mental illness, children’s proper education and career, thinking about secure future etc make stressed for them.

Chart no: 2 Distribution of respondents on the basis of causes of stress



REGRETS

It was found that respondents have feeling of regret because of their single status. Social myths and misconceptions are found for women side only. Causes of regret feeling found different from respondents. Divorce single women have blamed their own decision or may parent’s decisions to choose life partner, widow single women give all regret feeling for the god’s injustice and their curse faith. Unmarried single women were found regret feelings about their awful faith.

SOCIAL PRESSURES

The patriarchal social values always make critiques and pose unseen pressures to the young single women. All their activities are seriously watched with negative eyes. They are not supposed even to talk to other males in society. Single respondents those have children bear huge amount of responsibility and earning pressure that they cannot have a better life even when they dare to remarry. Constant social pressures make them two different type of self mortification which makes positive energy of their mind and self with happiness, life satisfaction. On the other side single women found themselves in the darker side in life with depression, anxiety. Previous

research showed results with single women feeling pressure from society, family, friends, and neighbors.

LONELINESS

Among all 77 respondents 54.14% feel loneliness in life, 33.16% not share any feeling of loneliness though they have facial gesture of sharing the pain and somehow ashamed to share personal feelings. 12.70% of respondents strongly said that they never feel lonely in their busy life schedule. Majority of the respondents said that some time they feel alone and they wish to get mental, moral support from someone. Those who are once married they miss their husband a lot and lastly suffer from depression. The feeling of loneliness become more when they do not find a place where they are really express their feeling, grievance dream etc. Chakhum Jamatia (46 year old divorce) security stuff of a private hospital said that she always feel the need of physical or mental support from someone for making life more bearable.

Table no; 7 Distribution of respondents on the basis of income level.

Do you feel lonely because of your single status?	No of respondents	percentage
Yes	44	54.14%
No	9	12.70%
No response	24	33.16%
Total	77	100%

Single Women - The Bright Side

Protection

Generally it is believed that woman needs man for protection and security, but this is not always true. Some respondents said that they themselves are sufficient for protecting themselves. While some other respondents express their hesitation and fear of remarriage because of their bed and horrible experience of previous marriage. Saleha khatun (32 years old divorce) school teacher said, When she was in her in laws house, her freedom were cut short by her mother-in-laws and did not give any importance to her desire, wish ,liking and disliking. She said one or two time her husband stand with her side but eventually he take his mother side. Then its take place of physical and mental torture almost every day. Then lastly she was back to her natal family under the protection of her guardian. Now she is happy with her present single status and able to give some time to her selves. Saleha said she feel more protective along with her parents then in-laws.

Freedom

For this particular study freedom does not indicate about uncontrollable lifestyle for women whereas its means decision making power of respondents. 74.02% respondents have that much of freedom to take a part of personal as well as family decisions. 25.98% respondents were totally depends on their family members or son for taking personal or family decisions. Deboshmita (42 years, unmarried) said, "I am lower in profession and single. I am living with my mother and all responsibility and decision is on my solder. I believe my parents make me empowered and educate me". Sushmita (52 year, divorce) business women said, "I have a lot of time to focus on me." Sushmita also noted that being single allowed her to grow and reflect her strong personally; "I am single but enough strong to take own decision of my life when I am able to make things better emotionally, physically, and mentally."

Other findings: -

- ❖ Most of the respondents were Hindus (75%) followed by Muslims (19%) and the rest 6% belonged to other religious communities.

- ❖ 47.5% (19) of the respondents had 1-2 children, while 10% (4) of them had 3-4 children and 7.5% (3) respondents had more than four children. 35% (14) of the women had no children.
- ❖ 15 respondents have taken loan from the non register credits giver 7 respondents taken money loan from bandhan. 10 respondents have taken credits from self help groups. 2 respondents have taken home loan from bank on the basis of their job. Other 43 respondents have no loan burden but they taken credits from their parents or relatives.
- ❖ Among all respondents 45% were not interested about marriage or remarriage, 53% of respondents not responding about the question of remarriage and 2% respondents are found interested to marriage or remarriage.

Limitation of study

The two faces of Single Indian women resulting from this study are in contradiction. From one side, single women were depicted as complaining of loneliness, insecurity, defection and frustration; from the other they seemed aware of their choices, of the consequences, and seemed able to face the difficulties that their choices involved, with the self-determination they developed in their study and life. Similar to other studies, there are certain limitations to the current study. As with in-depth interviews, generalizations about the results are usually not able to be made because of the small sample chosen. That is the case here with the sample being ten participants. To get a better understanding of the population of single women, a larger sample would need to be taken. A survey with scales developed specifically for finding a correlation between self-concept and life satisfaction would be beneficial for future research.

Suggestions or recommendations

- Modern Indian culture has adopted new brand of gender study, but study of single women were very rare. No exact data or information is found on single women in all over India. Different government and non government agency need to survey on single women in India.
- Education is the most powerful weapon for empowering women on their social status. Single women require education and skill development programmed to make them self dependent.
- The role of the Government need to be increased, with more schemes and fund for different kind of trainings, counseling, Single Women hostels, etc., participation of politics in single women; and Law enforcement with no tolerance to those, who treat women cruelly.
- Single women in Agartala need to be organized by making some groups to fulfill their needs and requirements. Agartala has a crisis of governments and non-governmental organization for welfare of single women.
- Social media, television, internet, radio and print media had to play vital role for making changes of social attitudes towards single women.

Conclusions

The study on the social stress among single women in Agartala town threw up a complicated issue for which no simple solutions are possible and desirable. Stress and anxiety were as like shadow among single women. Many single women who were surveyed felt that society had ill-treated them and they had a deep sense of being wronged and betrayed. Almost all respondents wanted solutions to the everyday problems they face. Maintaining of stress and pressure on the other hand creating strong personality in society being a single woman is not easy enough but they tried their best efforts to get respect from society. A lot of the respondents said that they should have studied further and been economically sound. Thus, this study helps to evaluate single women feelings in front of society. Respondents of this study wanted this study to lead to a change in social thinking and society may feel their life style and thinking as single.

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VANTAGE

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No Place for Single Women in Agartala City; Social Challenge and its Realities

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Abstract

Indian society is never except women with a single identity. Rather always seen women as wives, reproducer of children, rearing of their children and care-taker of family members (Harlambos 1980). Women prestigious position always determine by their male counterpart. Socially, women with single status found themselves as out of place. In religious view women must be under control of their father in childhood, husband in their young age and son in their old age. It was clearly mentioned in Manu Smriti that women were never be independent or single (Altaker 1938). This study aimed to understand the realities of challenges of single women in Agartala city of Tripura through structured interviews and using purposive sampling method. This study reveals

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that single women those are widow, divorcee and unmarried are found isolated by the society. They are not allowed to participate in any social and religious festivals or gatherings because of considering them as unlucky, unholy and inauspicious. To achieve the objective of the study both primary and secondary data collected. 70 respondents are purposively selected from municipal areas of Agartala. Respondents are having single status due to widowhood, divorce and remain unmarried. The result indicates various challenges and non supportive attitude of society towards single women in Agartala city, Tripura, India.

Keywords: Single Women, Social Challenges, Social Difficulties.

Introduction

In India society, women are always recognized by their marital status. Single status of women due to widowhood, divorce or unmarried are seen inauspicious way. Traditionally, in Indian society not even mentions any such status called single or self independent women. But eventually due rapid social changes in society due to modernization, urbanization and developing scenario of educational facilities makes women more aware to actualizing them self and makes them capable to go outside and face the world without depending of their male counterpart. It is already known that for women, lots have been done since independence but simultaneously lots need to be done in future. Recently growing new life style makes women educated and involved in the employment sectors. Though changes toward women are slowly increase but at the same time several women already reached the pillar of success and society accept it

positively. The matter goes wrong for society when women are found single even if they may be economically stable and self-dependent (Neasly 1994). Single women are mainly categorized by their problematic marital status of divorce, widowhood and remain unmarried. These three different segments of single women are chosen for this particular study to justify the objectives.

Unstable population growth in India, mainly in the urban areas gives a chance to live women with single status even though they live with their family members like children, parents or in-laws. Majority of them are employed and overburdened by family or children responsibilities including financial provision, housekeeping and also parenting. Society not just denies single women presence but not easily accept single status of women positively. Single women in urban areas are facing various social problems which need to be explored, so that the present study makes a crystal clear picture about challenges and difficulties in everyday life of single women. Due to different kinds of social strata single women face difficulties and challenges in every spare of life. This study reveals that majority of them face serious financial instability vis-a-vis social insecurity only because of their single status. This paper suggests that a newly emerging category of single women surrounded by various kinds of problematic issues related to their personal and intimate social life is a need to be explored in front of present contemporary society. From a sociological perspective, the study on single women is important because it indicates the changing patterns of the most important institution of society which is called family. From a legal perspective, the empirical study on single women investigates, to what extent women are identified as single and what types of legislative possibilities exist for them.

Review of Literature

Rick Nauert (2010) in the study '*Single women continue to face social challenges*', views the societal and familial challenges single women face when they reach their mid-30s. The writer found that although the number of single women has increased, the stigma associated with being single at that age has not diminished. He conducted interviews of 32 single women who never married; those women felt that considerable attention was directed at them of their age and single status. Nauert includes criteria of single women's social world into three parts: (i) Awareness of shifting reality as they become older. (ii) Reminders that they are on a different life path than most women when others inquire about their single status and during events including social gatherings and weddings. (iii) Feeling of insecurity and displacement in their families of origin when parents and siblings remark about their singlehood and make jokes or rude comments.

Asha Kahru (2006) in '*Single women no problem: challenging Indian Realities*' writes that a woman worldwide does most of the unpaid sustenance work at home, besides the paid work outside. Rural women are the most affected by this type of gender inequality. However, the urban Indian woman is in a much better situation today. Being both educationally and economically privileged, single women can be self-sufficient. But because unmarried single women are often not able to find a suitable partner, they are either living single or have to manage into a family, where single women all too often become victims of domestic violence. The author feels that urban Indian women today can and should defy the patriarchal structures and live an autonomous life. This book shows how an

alternative lifestyle, a so-called organic agricultural lifestyle can provide them an alternative, in which they can live a dignified life, receive immense love and respect from the rural folk as well as contribute towards the much neglected rural development of India.

Sandhya (1994) in '*Widowhood: A socio-Psychiatric study*', state that widows the most deprived and neglected segment of the Indian society are discriminated doubly: one as a women and second as a widow. Sandhya in her book briefly evaluate the living conditions of widows and encounter their problems. This study focused the effect of widowhood on the different aspect of the widow's life. In this book sandhya conclude that a commission on the status of single women is needed to go through the living condition of these women in our country. Widows are part of women population and they suffer from all the prejudices a women suffers, all the programmers for widows should from part of the women programs.

Tuula Gordon (1994) in his book '*Single women: on the Margins?*' examine the phenomenon of single womanhood in societies that values women only if the conform to the roles of wife and mother. Otherwise they are seen as threatening to social order. Gordon interviews 72 single women of various abilities and classes. These women live in Helsinki at London or the San Francisco Bay area. They are all older than 35 years. Included in her sample are single mothers, divorced women and women who have never been married and lesbians. Gordon in her study searches the experiences of single women's statements about their feeling and their life style.

Martha Alter Chen (1998) in his work '*Widow in India: social neglect and public action*', assemble papers related with widow

problems. Widowhood confers a peculiar new struggle on women, wife with contradictions; they are expected to conform to an enormous burden of restrictive customs that marginalize from their community and family, while at the same time they often end up the sole source of material and emotional support for their children and their family members. This work mainly explores crucial question of again, morbidity and mortality, social security poverty employment and public advocacy taking in account the symbolic and material consequences of widowhood. In introductory part, Chen provides a useful overview of the predicament faced by widows. She broadly lists them as limited freedom to remarry, insecure property rights, social restriction on living arrangements, restricted employment opportunities and lack of social support. Chen tries to explore the background information on the differential status of women to examine widowhood as a cause of deprivation.

Objective of the Study

- The main objective of this paper is to study the socio-economic position of single women in Agartala city.
- To understand the problems or difficulties faces by single women residing in Agartala.

Study Area

The universe for the present study is the single women of Agartala, state capital of Tripura. Agartala is situated in Sadar subdivision of west Tripura district. Agartala is located at 23300N latitude and 91300E longitude. Total geographical area of Agartala is 58.84 km². Agartala city is mainly administrated by Municipal Corporation.

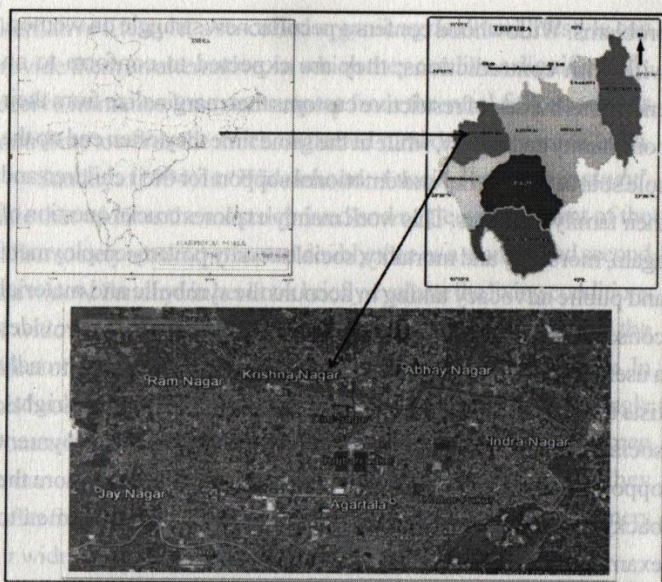


Figure 1: Location Map of the Study Area

Methodology

The sample was collected from the Agartala municipal ward areas which consist of 35 wards within four zones. From each zone respondents were selected through Purposive sampling technique. In addition, different books articles and publication were used for obtaining secondary data. Research study was mainly concentrated at eight wards of four zones which covered ten areas of Agartala i.e., Joynagar, Ramnagar, Krishnanagar Avoyanagar, M. B. Tilla, Ujan Abhoynagar, Dhaleswar, Natun Palli, Lake Chowmuhani, Bordowali. A structured interview schedule has used as a tool of data collection. The interview schedule contains personal profile of

the respondents, family particulars, age at marriage, particulars of the husbands and problem experienced by the respondents.

Findings and Discussion

Age and Marital status: 50% women were widow and 30% women were legally divorced, 20% women were separated more than 3 years and 24% were unmarried. In this study age has been categorized into five groups. Up to 35 year age were found 14.29% respondents, 36 – 45 years age respondents are found 22.07%, 46 – 55 years were found 28.57%, 56 – 65 years age respondents were 19.49% and lastly more than 65 years old respondents were 15.58%.

Table no: 1.

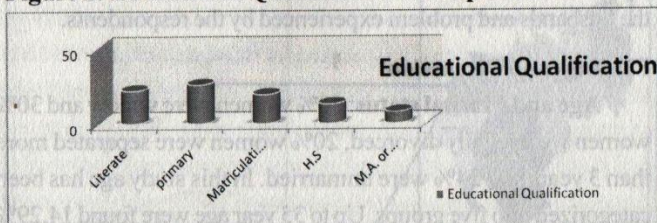
Distribution of respondents on the basis of Age and Marital status

Age group	Widow	Divorce	Unmarried	Grand Total
Up to 35	5(14.28%)	7(33.33%)	2(14.28%)	14(20%)
36 – 45	9(25.71%)	5(23.80%)	3(21.42%)	17(24.28%)
46 – 55	10(28.57%)	6(28.57%)	7(50%)	23(32.86%)
56 – 65	6(17.14%)	2(9.52%)	1(7.14%)	9(12.86%)
More then 65	5(14.28%)	1(4.76%)	1(7.14%)	7(10%)
Total	35(100%)	21(100%)	14(100%)	70(100%)

Source: Field work 2015-16

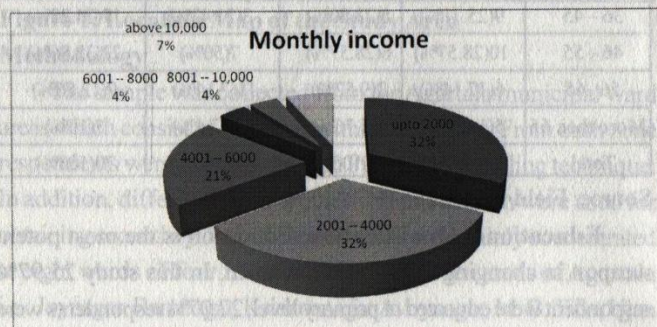
Educational Qualification: Education is the most potent weapon in changing the status of women. In this study 25.97% respondent were educated at primary level, 22.07% respondents were only literate, 19.49% were qualified in Matriculation level, 12.99% respondents were H.S. qualified, 11.69% respondents were graduate and 7.79% respondents were qualified in M.A. or equal level.

Figure 2: Educational Qualification of Respondents



Economic status: Economic status comprises of the position, power, abilities of women and work done by them. Among all respondents 32.47% earn up to 2000 Rs as same as 32.47% respondents per month income 2001-4000 Rs. 20.78% respondents earn 4001 – 6000. 3.90% respondents earn 6001 – 8000 Rs. Similarly 3.89% respondent’s income level 8001 – 10,000 Rs. 6.50% respondents were income level above 10,000Rs.

Figure 3: Monthly income of respondents.



Types of family: 74.29% respondents were live in joint family whereas 25.71% respondents were live in nuclear family. Because of single status respondent mostly prefer to leave with their guardians.

On the basis of their marital status, 74.26% among all widow respondents were live in joint family; where as only 25.71 widows live in nuclear family. 80.96% divorce or separated women were found in joint family settings, 19.04% divorce or separated women live in nuclear family. 64.29% unmarried live in joint family and 35.71% unmarried live in nuclear family.

Table no: 2.

Distribution of respondents on the basis of Family types.

Family types	Widow	Divorce	Unmarried	Grand Total
Joint family	26(74.26%)	17(80.96%)	9(64.29%)	52(74.29%)
Nuclear Family	9(25.71%)	4(19.04%)	5(35.71%)	18(25.71%)
Total	35(100%)	21(100%)	14(100%)	70(100%)

Source: field work 2015-2016

Difficulties in social life

Social life of Single women consists by huge number of difficulties with miscellaneous issues in society. Basically living single is also provoking huge questions about women. Majority of them except that society is seen them as something for gossip and criticized. Unmarried respondents were found tired to explain why they are not married at their marriageable age. Widow’s found so much of negative attitude towards them. If someone sees a widow while moving out in the morning, he/she is apt to return to their home to nullify the bad luck that is apt to come by seeing this inauspicious person first thing in the day. Marriage break-up is considered the woman’s fault, even if the husband has gone off with another woman. There is no tradition of seeing the Single Woman as a person in the community.

land or property. Even though legally women have the equal right in their parents property and also have the right in husband property

Difficulties in personal life

Once the husband is no more or has left his wife, the in-laws do not usually want the responsibility of their daughter-in-law; their parents and brothers thought they had married her off, forever; and remarriage for widows is culturally not common. Most of them feel loneliness even after they live with in family. No one easily accept and welcome single women.

Table no: 3.

Distribution of respondents on the basis of lonely feelings.

Do you Feel lonely?	Widow	Divorce	Unmarried	Total
Yes	16 (45.71%)	15 (71.43%)	4 (28.58%)	35 (50%)
No	6 (17.14%)	2 (9.53%)	3 (21.42%)	11 (15.71%)
Sometimes	12 (34.29%)	4 (19.04%)	6 (42.86%)	22 (31.43%)
No response	1 (2.86%)	-	1 (7.14%)	2 (2.86%)
Total	35(100%)	21(100%)	14(100%)	70(100%)

Source: field work 2015-16

Above table shown that half portion of the respondents were always feel lonely. Where as 31.43% respondents were feel lonely but not always, 15.71% respondents were share that they never feel lonely yet. Out of 70 respondents 2.86% respondents were found totally confused in this question of loneliness, so no response found from them.

Difficulties of poor health

Single life of women creates many complicated health problems like migration, Parkinson, neurological problem, and so on. Due to

poverty, a single woman does not take nutritious diets or normal diet. Because of traditional socialization whatever food is available in the home is first serve to male family members then rest food taken by women. On the other hand women life has been traditionally consider as turtle life. For this kind of thinking most of the single women not go for treatment, even there is provision of lady doctor. These conditions result in single women being anemic and not robust in health. Out of 70 respondents 66% respondents were habituated in home remedies or Ayurvedic treatment. 27% respondents were believed on traditional treatments, only 7% respondents regularly concern by doctor.

Difficulties in work place

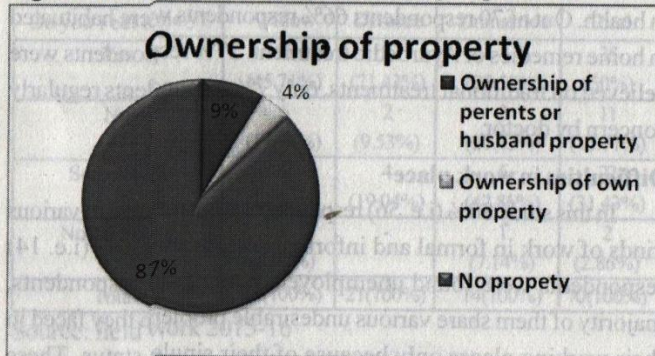
In this study 80% (i.e. 56) respondents were involve in various kinds of work in formal and informal sectors and 20% (i.e. 14) respondents were found unemployed. Among 56 respondents, majority of them share various undesirable problem they faced in their working places only because of their single status. These problems are includes, bad behaviour, proposal, indications, harassment, economic exploitation and so on. Because of patriarchal mind setup, society never blames men but without knowing anything women are declare as faulty along with a general comment that women may influence the male first for her self fulfillment then blame the innocent men.

Difficulties in land and property ownership

Generally being a woman it is found hard to have ownership of land or property. Even though legally women have the equal right in their parents property and also have the right in husband property

as wife. But practical field observation make totally different picture about ownership of land by single women. Among 70 respondents 87.14% (i.e 61) respondents have no ownership of land where as 4.28% (i.e. 3) respondents have their own property. Only 8.57% (i.e. 6) respondents were getting the prenatal and husband property ownership.

Figure 4: Ownership of property among respondents



Lack of social security

Single women in Indian context made found less secure socially and economically. Though various government schemes for empowering women and pension schemes makes small amount of help to secure their presence. But different drawbacks arise due to mindset of society. Where not only men are creates problem to single women, rather women are act as enemy for them. Insecurity feeling among single women mainly form because of economic crises. Because of low educational qualities and less skilled women not get quality job with a handsome amount of salary. Majority of them are involved in informal sectors with low wages income. Rather single

women are found problems in getting job easily. Whereas they have lots of pressure for maintains themselves and their children or family. Among 70 respondents 32.85% were found economically insecure. 31.42% respondents were feels insecure from their family members and 35.71% respondents were feeling insecure in their working place. So its reveals that all respondents have the strong believe of insecurity though cause may differ from each other.

Conclusion

According to census 2011, Agartala has 10499 female populations, out of them 12806 were widow, 958 were divorcee or separated and 659 were unmarried in all ages. Though single women are found in urban areas more because of various employment possibilities but difficulties and challenges are caught them because of social attitudes and their single complicated status (Neshla 1997). This study reveals that economic crisis and low education are barriro to solve their problems. On the other hand, modernization may reach to every corner of Indian society but the orthodox mindset make internal limitation of thinking among society. People still have negative thinking and attitude towards single women which nourishes the difficulties of single women for survive in society. Like other parts in India, Single women in Agartala are too facing same kinds of challenges and difficulties.

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Education and Rural Development: An Analysis

Jyogal Jyoti Gogoi

Introduction

Development does not start with goods; it starts with people with education, organization and discipline, without these, all resources remains latent, untapped potential.

The term rural development is very comprehensive. It generally refers to the process of improving the quality of life and economic wellbeing of people living in relatively isolated and sparsely populated areas. Moreover it is also includes improving their health education, health environment, fairness in come distribution etc. The world Bank has defined rural development as a strategy designed to improve the economy and social life of a specific group of people- the rural poor.

Education has been deemed as the basic input to development of the individual as well as society. This idea has been embodied both in our ancient and modern literature. One finds references in Vadas, Upanishadas, Puranas, Dharmashastras and Kautily's Arthashastra, where education and knowledge have benn described as supreme form of assets, generators of material and non-material