

I, ME AND OTHER: A STUDY OF SINGLE WOMEN IN AGARTALA TOWN

INTRODUCTION

Women occupied low status in comparison to men in Indian society. Patriarchal Indian society always wants to see women as mother, daughter, sister and wife. Hindu religious text stated that in every cycle of life women should remain under the control of man like in childhood she must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband and in old age to her son (Altaker 1938). A women's prestige, honour, dignity related to her male counterpart. Indian society considers a women's life become successful when she get married and give birth of children. Unmarried, divorce and widow are considered as unfortunate and occupied low status in comparison to married women. Earlier, patriarchal society denies to recognized single women, sati and sending Bengali widow to Kashi/Banaras are the example of it. But with the passes of time things started changing. Due to spread of education, industrialisation, urbanisation, passes of several laws in favour of women etc. brings change in the life of women too. Now they can get education, can select their life partner, can divorce their husband, large number of them came out from home for earning, as a result number of single women also increases in different strata of society.

Single women may be define, a women who is not in any kind of serious relationship or unmarried. The term 'single' generally refer to someone who is not involved any kind of serious relationship, including marriage, engagement or long term dating. Legally a person may be define as single if he or she currently divorced, widow/widower, and unmarried cohabiters or have always been single. For various reason a women may remain single like-by choice she may maintain single status, financial reason, health problem, widowhood, divorce etc. Women who remain single are stigmatised by society because of prejudicial beliefs. 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. According to 2011 census around 3.6 Crore of women having single status.

The women who become single due to the death of husband face difficulties to survive. Earlier widows were not permitted to lead normal life. Their dress pattern, food habit, movement were restricted by the society. Bengali, widows were forced to shave their hair, wear white cloth and eat vegetable and lastly most of them were sent to Kashi and Banaras for ever where they have to beg for

maintain their livelihood. So, single woman as widow was not accepted as a matter of concern in India. Similarly there was no concept of divorce in India. If a woman gets married she has to maintain their relationship under any circumstances. It is believed that god selects the mate for everyone and marriage is seven births bonding between husband and wife. It is the duty of women to maintain the relationship by serving her husband and in-laws, giving birth of children etc. at the same time society permit men to many more then one and leave his wife any time with or without reason. Still in India, widows, divorce and unmarried woman are subject to social exclusion, harassment, isolation which makes their life more miserable. In patriarchal society, single womanhood is not a common phenomenon which result another prominent face of gender injustice. Single women with self-headship face lots of difficulties for maintaining themselves and their children. Majority of them undergo psychological pressure because of their single status. They suffer from insecurity, loneliness, financial hardship and so on which ultimately lead them to face identity crisis.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Numbers of studies have highlighted the different aspect of women's life in India. Here some of relevant reviews are highlighted.

Rama Metha (1975) said that ratio of divorce women is increases in modern time but remarriage of divorce mother is very rare due to social and cultural practice. According to Metha, the young generation is increasingly ignorant of the ritualistic basis of marriage. Therefore in the modern and developed societies divorce is more frequently increase. This study also reveals that due to the social and cultural complexities, mobility of job, impact of capitalism, emerging industrialization, urbanization, change attitudes on traditional norms and values system is causing the disintegration of marital relations.

Lopata (1979) said that social securities are nonexistence for Indian widows. Widows mainly those who are unemployed seem to depend on other support and adjustment systems made available by nature or tradition. Unemployed widow needs parental support to maintain their life, and such supports could be grouped into economic, social service or emotional support.

Michael Allen (1982) stated that in recent time the fundamentalists desire to protect the idea of traditional Hindu family system and perform such previous rules for women when they were mere animals without tongue. The most common example are found from the evidence of 'Sati' i.e. the wife jumping into the funeral of her deceased husband so as to finish off the family name with respect. Other forms of Hindu traditional customs like child marriage, taboos on widow remarriage, divorce etc, curve the freedom of women.

Munira, Herchant (1983) conducted study among 50 divorce Muslim women in Bombay and Pune, and found that Muslims women are mostly habituated with the divorce procedure or Talak. Some husbands have divorce their wives by oral pronouncement, of the word 'thalak' three times. He also found that nearly 50% divorce women have brought back with them their entire dowry after divorce and rest has not received any maintenance. He argues that majority of Muslim women face problems during period of divorce and after divorce.

Pothan, S. (1986) talk about the condition of widows and divorce women in different period of Hindu society. Pothan stated that during the medieval period (879 - 1768) widow remarriage and divorcing husband was not allowed among the higher caste society. However, divorce has been permitted under the special legal provision for Christian; on the other hand the dissolution of Muslim Marriage Act III of 1939 has been permitted women to divorce on special ground. He also said that dowry plays significant role in arrange marriage and many cases it directly or indirectly related to marital breakdown.

Hutton (1935) says single women suffer from insecurity feelings, loneliness and face numerous problems in their daily life both inside and outside of their houses. He further stated that those women refused to settle down in marriages were felt absence of respect, freedom and compatibility, but those women faced hardship and infinite challenges while walking out of oppressive marriages, or who, after being deserted by men, have negotiated with myriad challenges of life to live with single identity.

Allen (1989) mentioned about social desirable position for women which is always found absent for single women. They are living in a strain and facing emotional stigma from their family members. Single women face lots of problems regarding their social, economic and psychological conditions.

Smith (1951) analyzed the problems and patterns of adjustment of single women. He points out that such women due to social inhabitation, subjugation and exploitation creates a tendency to lead a secure life. Smith further stated that single women in urban settings form every class, include lower class, lower middle class, middle class and upper class facings diverse problems. Even though they are educated and employed. Such women do not have the authority and power to take decisions by their own, they have to serve their family members, spend their income for family. But family not shown interested in their matters rather creates inter-personal conflicts.

Drezea and Srinivasan (1998) study brought to light on economic condition of low-income widows in rural areas in India, particularly both north and south India. Authors said that all

widows are found in a very vulnerable condition. The situation in north India is comparatively worse than south India, where the natal family seems to give more support. Authors say that the both side of India have different experience for widows. In the matter of household head four fifth of cases found in south India, while only four eighth case found in north India.

Singh (2000) gives much attention to the issues on safety and social security of single women in India. He stated that in Indian society because of cultural factors single women can easily survived mostly in the urban areas. For him a never married woman in Indian compare to western countries never assumed as unattractive because family enterprise take all decisions of marriage, so major reason for remain unmarried are assumed that there was not enough dowry, no perfect match, irresponsible parents or absent of parents and so on.

In sum, these studies highlight three aspects of the single women: (i) definition of single women, (ii) social and economic security-identity of single women and (iii) the problems and challenges faced by single women. Unmarried, widow, divorced, deserted or separated women are single women. Largely deprived of security they negotiate myriads of challenges within their families as well as while walking outside.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Following are the objectives of the study:

- To understand the socio-economic conditions of single women in Agartala town of Tripura.
- To ascertain the difficulties faced by single women in Agartala town of Tripura.
- To investigate identity crisis of the single women in Agartala town of Tripura from an 'I' – 'Me' perspective (self-perception and others' perceptions).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In view of above objectives, the following questions have been framed

- Do political, economic and educational statuses influence social status of single women in society?
- Do single women differ in social, economic, political and health related difficulties?
- Is there identity crisis among single women in society?
- Does social attitude create any pressure on self-concept, self-esteem and identity crisis among single women in society?

METHODOLOGY

Study Area

Tripura is one of the eight States of the North-East India. The total area of Tripura is 10,486 Square kilometer and located in between 22°56'N - 24°32'N north Latitude and 90°09'-92°20'E East longitude. It has diverse range of topography, people, flora and fauna (Bhatt & Bhargava 2006). Agartala is the capital of Tripura as well as Head-quarter of West Tripura District. It is the second largest populous state capital in North-East India after Guwahati and India's third international internet gateway after Mumbai and Chennai. Agartala is situated in between 23°45'-23°55'N latitude and 91°15'-91°20' E longitude. According to 2011 census report, Agartala town is 4, 00,004 out of which 2, 00,132 (50.03%) are male and 1, 99,872 (49.96%) are female. Literacy rate of the town is quite high as 94.45% people of the town are literate, among them 1, 75,170 (50.81%) are male and 1, 69,541(49.19%) are female.

Universe and Unit of the study

Agartala Town, the capital of Tripura constitutes the universe and single woman that is who unmarried, widow and divorced constitutes the unit of the study. Agartala town is situated west district of Tripura and bounded by Bangladesh border in three sides. Agartala Municipal Council has four zones namely west, south, east and central and 35 wards. The total area of the town is 58.38 sq km. single women living ward no 3, 5, 11, 12, 14, 19, 23, 24, 25, 26, 30, 31, 19 and 34 are the unit of the study.

Source and types of Data

Both primary and secondary data were used for this research work. Primary data was collected from field through structured interview scheduled, observation and informal discussion methods also applied for collecting primary data. Secondary data was collected from various governmental and non-governmental organizations for clear understanding of administrative aspects about this research work, the census handbook is the most applied secondary data source for this research work, books, periodicals, journals, web data and Economic and statistical analysis report, as well as published government circular issues from time to time were selected.

Tools and Technique of Data Collection

Primary data were collection through structured interview scheduled. The schedule was finalized after pilot study done on 23 single women and additional modifications were introduced afterwards. During analysis of the pilot study, some question about environment of working sectors and information about mental health condition were not found enough. Therefore some additional questions were added later to enrich the study. The data collection tool was schedule that was combined with both close-ended and open-ended questions.

MAJOR FINDINGS

Society and Single Women

1. The age of the respondents ranges from 31 -- 61 and above years. 19% respondents belongs to the age group of 41 to 45 years, 18.66% respondents from the age group of 31 to 35 years, 16% respondents from the age group of 36 to 40 year, 13.67% respondents belongs to 46 to 50 years and 32.33% respondents belong to 51 and 60 years of age. Most of the respondents are in middle and old age.
2. Marital status-wise, 30% unmarried, 16.67% divorced and 14.85% widow respondents belong to 41 to 45 years of age. 24.50% divorced, 21.09% widow and 5.71% unmarried respondents belong to 31 to 35 years age. 19.60% divorce, 18.76% widow and 7.14% unmarried respondents belongs to the age group of 36 to 40 years. 22.85% unmarried, 19.04% widow and 10.79% divorce respondents belong to the age group of 46 to 50 years. 17.14% unmarried, 12.5% widow and 5.89% divorced belongs to 56 - 60 year age and 11.71% widow, 8.58% unmarried and 4.90% divorce respondents belongs to above 60 years.
3. Possibility of marriage above 30 years women is less. Again though, remarriage of widow and divorced women is permitted by law but till it's rarely practice in society. And if the widow and divorced women have one or two issues then chance for remarriage is became almost nil. In the field it was observed that age of the respondents is the matter of social significance and many of the respondents achieve single marital status through divorce or widowhood at the early stage of their life.
4. Respondents belong to four different religious groups, (a) Hindu, (b) Muslim, (c) Christen and (d) Buddhist. 59.34% respondents are Hindu, 19.33% are Christian, 14.33% are Muslim and 7% are Buddhist. Among the respondents 42.66% respondents are widows 34% respondents are divorced and 23.33% respondents are unmarried. Marital statuswise, 71.88% widows, 59.80% divorced and 35.71% unmarried are Hindu; 40% unmarried, 15.62% widows and 9.80% divorced are Christian; 25.50% divorced, 8.60% widows and 8.58% unmarried are Muslim and 15.17% unmarried, 3.90% widows and 4.90% divorced Buddhist. Therefore it is observed that majority of the respondents are Hindu followed by Christian, Muslim and Buddhist.
5. The respondents are from tribal and non-tribal communities. Four fifths (80.33%) of the respondents belong to non-tribal groups and nearly one fifth (19.67%) of the respondents belongs to different tribal groups. In Tripura 19 tribal communities are living in different parts. Among tribal respondents, 72.89% belong to Tripuri tribe, 10.16% respondents are Hallam, 6.77% respondents are Reange and 5.09% respondents are Jamatia and Chakma.
6. All these tribes are original inhabitants of Tripura. Tripuri consider themselves as part of Tibeto-Burman ethnic group. Ethnically, Halam belongs to the Cocase – Mongoloid origin of Kuki-Chin tribes. They are divided into several sub-clans, such as *Kolai*, *Kov-Bong*, *Keipeng*, *Bong*, *Saka*

Chep, Thanga Chep, Dab, Bongser, Molsum, Rupini, Rangkhwl, Chorai, Langai, Kaireng, Ranglong, Naveen and Murasing. Jamatia tribe has a distinct feature of Mongoloid origin. Reangs are bucolic tribe with the, original traditional name 'Bru'. They consider themselves as nomadic tribe.

7. Non-tribal Hindu society is stratified on the basis of caste. Indian constitution brought all the caste under three broad categories – namely general, SC and OBC. All the non-tribal single women of Agartala belongs to three caste categories, namely General caste (GEN), Schedule Castes (SCs), and Other Backward classes (OBCs). Of these over two fifths (46.89%) of the respondents belong to general caste category, 27.39% belong to scheduled castes category and one fourth (25.72%) belong to other backward classes. Beside these 19.67% of the respondents belong to seclude tribes (ST) category.
8. So far as mother tongue of the respondents are concern 80.33% mother tongue is Bengali. 14.28% respondents' mother tongue is Kokborok, 2% respondents' mother tongue is Halam, 1.33% respondents' mother tongue is Reange, 1% respondents each have mother tongue of Jamatia and Chakma.
9. Being a multi-lingual town majority of the people are living Agartala known more than one language. A large number of respondents can use more than one language easily to communicate with others.
10. Near nine tenth respondents can speak two languages namely Bengali and Hindi (76.34%) and Kokborok and Bengali (11.33%). 8% can speak three language like kokborok, English and Hindi 3%, Bengali, kokborok, and Reang 1%, Bengali, kokborok and Jamatiya 1%. Near 3.33% respondents can speak four languages. So among the respondents' Bengali and Hindi are common languages for communication.
11. The respondents show considerable diversity in terms of their nativity. Nearly two fourths (46.33%) of the respondents originally belong to Agartala town and the rest (53.67%) of the respondents are migrated to Agartala from different places of the state. Nearly three fourths of the respondents migrated from different rural areas of the state and one fourth of the respondents migrated from urban areas.
12. Literacy is predominant features among the respondents around one fourth are illiterate and rest are educated at various levels. Educational level of the respondents ranges from primary to master degree level. Around three fourth of the respondents are literate and one fourth are illiterate. So far as educational qualification is concern 25.67% respondents are illiterate, 16.33% respondents are educated up to Primary level, 15.67% are educated up to Middle school, 15.33% respondents are literates, 8.33% respondents are educated up to High-Secondarylevel, 7% respondents are educated up to H.S.L.C level, 6.67% respondents are educated up to graduate level and 5% up to Master degree level.
13. Single women in Agartala town belong to both nuclear and joint family. Around 80% respondents belong to nuclear family and 20% belong to joint family. According to respondents' marital status,

92.72% unmarried, 80.40% divorced and 71.1% widows to nuclear family. 28.90% widows, 19.60% divorced and 4.28% unmarried respondents belong to joint family.

- 14.** Regarding the size of family it is found that 41% families have to 1 to 2 members. 34.67% family has 3 – 4 members, 15% respondent's family has 5 – 6 members, 6.67% respondent's family has 7 – 8 members, 1% and 1.66% respondent's are living with 9 – 10 and above 11 and above family members respectively. So it is show that three fourth of the respondents have small size of family.
- 15.** Though single women are those who not in long term relationship but on the basis of their earlier marital status mainly concerned with the single women, on the baisis of earlier marital status the respondents divided into two categories divorced and widows and also include those who never married. Among them 42.66% respondents are widow, 34% are divorce and 23.33% are unmarried.
- 16.** Arranged marriage is a dominating form of marriage in traditional Hindu sociey. But own choice and love marriage is also emarging phenomenon of in the society. Over three fourth (69.56%) of the respondents' marriage were arrange marriage. 22.17% respondents were married according to their own. 8.26% respondents were choice their life partners and after that their parents arranged marriage through negotiation.
- 17.** About the age at marriage % respondents married at the age of 16 – 17 years; 50.79% married at the age of 18 – 19 years; 19.53% married at the age of 20 – 21 years; 3.90% married at the age of 22 – 23 years; 3.91% married at the age 24 – 25 years. So child marriage is rarely prevailing in Agartala town.
- 18.** The once married respondents spends different years of cojugal life. During these period they gather sweet or bitter experience of life. Some of them happily lead married life while other from the beganing of conjugal life faces different types of problems. Of them 32.60% respondents lead 7 – 8 years conjugal life, 26.52% respondents lead 3 – 4 years conjugal life, 19.13% respondents lead 5 – 6 years married life, 14.80% of the respondents lead 1 – 2 years of conjugal life, 4.34% respondents lead 9 – 10 years of conjugal life, 2.17% respondents lead 11 – 12 years of conjugal life and 0.43% respondents lead more than 13 years conjugal life.
- 19.** Majority of the respondents conjugal life lasted between 1 to 8 years, and very negligible portion of respondents lead 9 and above 13 years of conjugal life. So the length of conjugal life of once married single women was not too long.
- 20.** The various factors responsible for the single status of the respondents. Around 42.67% respondents became single due to death of their husband, 34% respondents became single due to divorce, 11.67% respondents' remained single to support their parents, 5.33% respondents remain unmarried due to financial cirsis, 2.33% respondents decided to remaine single because of they give importance to their career, 1.67% respondents devoted their life for religious pourpose and decided to remaine unmarried,

1.33% respondents were single because of physical disabilities or diseases, 1% respondent respondents decided to remain unmarried due to failure or in loveaffair or unable to marry beloved one.

21. A part from unmarried once married repondents became single in a particur age of their life. Most of them enter into marrital life in their teen age and within short period they became single. three fifthe (60.93%) widow respondents became single at the age group of 20 – 21 years, one fifth (20.31%) respondents became single at the age group of 26 and above years, 7.81% widow respondents became single at the age group of 22 -23 years, 5.47% respondnets became single at the age group of 18 – 19 years, 4.68% respondents became single at the age group of 24 – 25 years and 0.80% respondents became single at the age group of 16 – 17 years.
22. As most of the respondents became single in youth age there is a possibility of remarriage. Though widow remarriage and remarriage of divorce is legally sanctioned but among the Hindus it is not much practice. When the divorced and widow respondents were asked about their remarriage, most of them laugh by listen this particular question, some remain silent where other express that because of their children they never think of remarriage.

Economy and Single Women

1. Nearly 95% respondents are employed or engaged in various economic activities. All the widows, nine tenth (91.18%) of the divorced and 98% of the unmarried respondents are employed. Over one tenth (11.42%) unmarried. 8.59% widows and 1.97% divorced are engaged in government service, one fifth widows and over one fifth (23.19%) of the divorced and unmarried engaged in private service; over half (52%) of the respondents widows, divorced and unmarried respondents are engaged in domestic work/wage labour. So wage labour and domestic work is the main occupation for the single women is all the categories - widows, divorced and unmarried.
2. A large number of single women of Agartala town derive their livelihood as domestic workers for a very less wage. They are either part-time domestic workers usually cleaning houses and utensils and washing clothes in morning and evening times. In return they get Rs 800 – Rs 1000 per month and one time tea. Most of them work for three to four houses everyday; otherwise it is impossible for them to survive. Full-time domestic workers are mostly live with their masters' families. They practically did all the works including cooking, cleaning, looking after younger and elder persons etc. In return they get Rs 1500/- – Rs 2500/- per month along with three times meal, clothes etc.
3. The conditions of unemployed respondents are worst. They depend on their parents and siblings for their survival. Among unemployed single women 41.67% respondents have physical problem, 25% respondents have very small child and 33.33% respondents are preparing themselves through different skill training like tailoring and embroidery, beautician course from their locality. Most of them

express their view that they were treated extra burden by their family member and ignored them totally in family decision making process.

4. Majority of the respondents work outside to insure their livelihood and survival. Among them those who were house wife earlier, fall sudden economic crisis due to separation from their husband. But situation is quite different in the case of unmarried respondents because they are well aware about their condition and mentally prepared that they have earn to maintain themselves and contribute to their parental family. Around 96% respondents are working and among them 73% enter in work force after becoming single. So entering in workforce is a kind of new experience for them. Most of working respondents said that they faced adjustment problem in the beginning in work place.
5. Among the working women 28.48% experience humiliation and less pament in work place, 15.98% face criticism for their single status, 13.88% face humiliation and torture in work place, 12.05% suffer from overburden of work and less payment, 7.98%, 4.51% face rough behaviour and sexual harassment in work place respectively. Whereas only 13.19% does not experience any problem in work place. So it can be said that respondent's work environment is not good, healthy and safe for them. Unfortunately most of them fail to protect themselves from this type of exploitation in workplace rather they consider it as their destiny.
6. Majority of the single women of Agartala belong to lower income group as 33% respondents monthly income is between 1000 – 3000 Rs, 32.67% respondents monthly income is between Rs 4000 to Rs 6000/-, 14% respondents monthly income is between Rs 7000 – 9000/-, 6.33% respondents monthly income is between 10000 – 12000/- Rs, 5.33% respondents monthly income is between 13000 – 15000/- Rs, and 4% respondents have no income. 2% respondent's monthly income is more than 21000 Rs. 1.66% respondents income is between 16000 – 18000 Rs per month. 1% respondent's monthly income is between 19000 to 21000 Rs per month. More than one third respondents belongs to 1000 to 3000 Rs income group and near half of the respondents belongs to 4000/- to 9000/- income group. Therefore it can be said that near three fourth respondents belongs to marginal income group. Almost all respondents' income derived from secondary sources. The low economic condition directly reflects financial instability among the single women of Agartala town.
7. In patriarchal society money is always kept by the male members of the family. The same picture is also found in the case of single women of Agartala town. About two thirds (65.33%) of the respondents have no control over their income; 20.66% of the respondents' have full control over their income and 14% respondents have partially control over their income. 28.12% income controlled by their father and brother, 24.65% respondents income controlled by their son and daughter, 21.65% respondents income utilized by themselves, 6.25% respondents income utilized by themselves and their father, 4.16% respondents' income controlled by themselves and their son, 3.12% respondent's income controlled by their in-laws, 2.08% respondents income controlled by themselves and their sister and 1.38% respondents income controlled by themselves along with their son and daughter.

- 8.** Marital status wise, 81.26% widows, 71.57% divorced and 27.15% unmarried respondents do not have any control over their income. 41.43% unmarried, 9.80% divorce and 2.34% widows have partial control over their income. 31.42% unmarried, 18.63% divorce and 16.40% widows have full control over their income.
- 9.** Of the earning single women 28.12% respondents' income is controlled by their father/brother and 24.65% respondents' income is controlled by their son/daughter. 21.65% respondents' income is utilized by themselves; 6.25% respondents' income is utilized by themselves as well as their father, 4.16% respondents' income is controlled by themselves as well as their son; 3.12% respondents' income is controlled by their in-laws; 2.08% respondents' income is controlled by themselves as well as their sisters and 1.38% respondents' income is controlled by themselves as well as son and daughter. Thus single women have less control over whatever they earn and those who have the control over their income do not constitute more than one fifth.
- 10.** So far as the ownership of property is concern, the condition of single women is more miserable. Over one tenth of the single women (14.33%) have property in their name and the rest do not have any property in their name. Thus the respondents' without property are found in most disadvantage position.
- 11.** Marital statuswise, 91.42% unmarried, 78.43% divorced and 72% widow respondents do not have any property in their name. 17.97% widows, 13.72% divorced and 8.58% unmarried respondents have property in their name. 9.37% widow and 7.85% divorced respondents did not respond. It is observed that majority of respondents' do not hold property in their name.
- 12.** Of the respondents, 79% do not hold any land in their name. 17% respondents hold less than one bigha of land and 4% respondents have approximately one bigha land in their name. Marital statuswise, 91.42% unmarried, 78.43% divorced and 72.66% widow respondents do not hold any land in their name. 21.88% widows, 17.65% divorced and 7.14% unmarried respondents hold less than one bigha land in their name and 5.46% widow, 3.92% divorced and 1.42% unmarried respondents hold approximately one bigha land in their name. Thus, one fourth respondents hold less than one bigha land in their name.
- 13.** Of the respondents who hold land, one fifth (20.55%) got share out of parental land, nearly one tenth (8.21%) got their husband's land and only negligible portion of the respondents purchased it; and only 5.48% respondents have joint ownership with their husband. Marital statuswise, 92.86% divorced, 83.33% unmarried and 43.48% widow respondents purchased land. 16.67% unmarried, 13.04% widows and 7.14% divorced respondents got share out of their parental land. 26.09% widows received share of their husband's land and 17.39% widows have joint ownership with their husbands.

14. Of the respondents, nearly two fifths have savings account and the rest do not have. Marital statuswise, 73.52% divorced, 61.42% unmarried and 55.47% widow respondents do not have any savings account and 44.53% widows, 38.57% unmarried and 21.09% divorced respondents have savings account.
15. Majority of respondents are belongs to low income group, so it is difficult for them to save some position of their income for future Of the respondents who have savings one fifth (20%) have monthly savings in various private or chit fund companies; 7.67% respondents have monthly recurring deposits in post office, 5.33% respondents have fixed deposits in bank for duration and 4% respondents have LIC policy.
16. Majority of respondents do not have any savings and of those who have saving, most of them save their part of income in the chit fund companies. Very few of respondents have savings in post office, LIC and bank. Thus it clearly shows that single women are economically deprived and they are not economically empowered.
17. Economic condition of single women is not good. Near nine tenth respondents neither have property in their name nor have control over their own income. Those who have control over their own income spend for domestic consumption only. They are over burdened with work as well as they humiliation, torture, sexual harassment, less payment, criticism in their work place. The condition of unemployed single women is worse in comparison to working single women. They always depend on others for their day to day need. It looks patriarchal value and custom restrict them to get economic self dependency.

Health and Single Women

1. Housing and health is closely related. Improper house condition rise health risk e.g. respiratory and cardiovascular diseases from indoor air pollution, too hot and too cold temperature inside house may cause illness, small and congested house there is, possibility of spread of communicable diseases etc.
2. Regarding house condition, it is found that two fifths 40.33% respondents living in hut with tin fancying and tin roof, 22.67% respondents living in half brick wall with tin roof, 12.33% respondents living in full brick wall with tin roof, 11.67% respondents living in hut with bamboo and tin roof, 8.67% respondents living in R.C.C. building and 4.33% respondents living in hut with mud wall, floor and tin roof.
3. Number of rooms in the house indicates the living standard of the people. 39.33% respondents are living in two-room house, 23.67% respondents are living in one- room house, 22.67% respondents are living in three-room house and 14.28% of respondents are living in more than three-room houses.

4. Of the widows, 39.06% are living in two-room houses, 22.65% in three-roomhouses, 21.10% is one-room houses and 17.19% in three-room houses. Of the divorced 40.20% are living in two-room houses, 33.33% in one room houses, 20.59% and 5.88% each in three-room houses and more than three-room houses. Of 70 unmarried respondents, 38.58% are living in two-room houses, 25.71% in three-room houses, 21.42% and 14.29% in more than three-room house and one- room houses respectively. Therefore, most of the respondents live in an inadequate and congested accommodation in a limited space which affects the health of the respondents and their children. Some of the respondents said that due to financial crisis they could not afford a house of two or three-room on rent.
5. So far as ownership of house is concern, 38.67% respondents live in rented houses; 47.41% unmarried, 46.08% divorced and 28.12% widows. 36.67% of the respondents live in parents' house; 49.21% widows, 29.41% divorced and 24.28% unmarried. 14.33% respondents live in their own houses; 16.67% - divorced, 14.85% - widows and 10% unmarried, 7% respondents live in friends'/relatives' houses; 18.58% - unmarried, 1.96% - divorced and 4.69% - widows. 3.33% respondents' live in their husband house, of them 5.88% divorced and 3.13% widow. Thus, it is found that around three fourths (75.35%) of the respondents reside either in their prenatal house or in rented house. So, approximately nine tenths of the respondents do not have any permanent place to live. They live in rented house, parents', relatives' or friends' house, which is not at all permanent accommodation and any time they may be asked to vacate. Around nine tenth of the respondents does not have any permanent place to live. They either live in rented, parents or friends houses which are not at all permanent accommodation, any time they may ask for living. They always remain in fear of displacement.
6. Over nine tenths (91%) of the respondents have electricity facility in their houses. It is observed that a large number of respondents use electricity but many of them illegally access electricity. They did not take formal electricity connection from Tripura state electricity board. Illegally they manage one single connection from their relatives or neighbours and pay to them a fixed amount on monthly basis.
7. Cooking fuel has its effect on health condition of a person. 48% of the respondents use firewood/cow dung cakes/ dry leaves/ bamboo etc. 39.67% of respondents use Gass stove (LPG) and 12.33% of respondents use Kerosene Stove for cooking.
8. Marital statuswise, 51.56% widows, 46.08% divorced, 44.29% unmarried uses firewood/cow dung or cake/bamboo etc. for cooking, 41.18% divorced, 40% unmarried and 38.29% widows uses LPG for cooking and 15.71% unmarried, 12.74% divorced and 10.15% widows uses kerosene stove for cooking.
9. Nearly fifty percent respondent's uses biomass for cooking. The use of these fuel resulted health hazard and air pollution. Women are more affected by it because cooking in Indian society mostly done by female.

- 10.** Nearly two fifth (37%) of the respondents collect water from tube well, 36.33% respondents collect water form community tap, 14.34% respondents collect water from river and 12.33% respondents collect water from pond.
- 11.** Regarding purification of drinking water it is found that 69% respondents drink water from ordinary filter, 21.67% respondents purifies water by boiling, 7.66% respondents drink water without purifying and only 1.67% respondents purify water by using electronic purifier. near three fourth of the respondents drink water either without purification on by using ordinary filter which can clean water but not can not purifying it. Most of them were unaware about it and express their view that water collected from community tap (PHE) and tube well is safe for drinking.
- 12.** Bathroom is a place where to start and end the day. But this one room can pose potential threats if not maintain properly. Over half (52.67%) of the respondents have pacca bathroom, nearly one third (35%) of the respondents have kachaha bathroom and 12.33% respondents do not have bathroom. On the basis of marital status, 54.68% widows have pacca bathroom; 32.04% respondents have kachcha bathroom and 13.28% respondents do not have bathroom. Similarly, 50% divorced respondents have pacca bathroom, 45.09% have kachcha bathroom and 3.92% respondents do not have any bathroom. Nearly half of the unmarried respondents 51.42% have pacca bathroom, 25.71% have kachcha bathroom and 22.85% do not have any bathroom. It is observed that those respondents who do not have bathrooms take bath in open places like common splay point, pound or river. Respondents said that in open place they could not clean their body properly.
- 13.** Sanitation is a system that promotes proper disposal of human and animal wastes, proper use of toilet and avoiding open space defecation. Poor sanitation is one of the root causes of diseases. Of the respondents 41.67% have Kachcha latrine and 35.33% have low cost sanitary. 17.33% have sanitary, and 5.66% respondents do not have latrine. Over two fifths of the respondents use kacha latrine and more than one third of respondents use low cost sanitary. Using kachaha latrine and open defecation indicates respondents' adjustment with poor sanitary condition which results health risks.
- 14.** Hygiene is any practice activity that one performs to keep things clean to maintain health. Personal hygiene habits largely depend on the culture in which people live in. Personal hygiene includes bathing, washing hands etc. personal hygiene habits always protects people from various diseases and also help in maintaining good health. So far as bathing habit is concerned one finds that 36.33% widows, 30.66% divorced and 17.66% unmarried respondents have regular bathing habit and 6.33% widows, 5.66% unmarried and 2% divorced have irregular bathing habits.

15. On the issues of washing clothes 32.67% divorced, 27.67% widow and 14% unmarried respondents have regular habit of washing clothes and 15% widows, 9.33% unmarried and 1.33% divorced respondents have irregular habit.
16. Of the respondents' 28% divorced, 25.67% widow and 22% unmarried respondents clean their teeth regularly whereas 17% widows, 6% divorced and 1.33% unmarried respondents clean their teeth irregularly.
17. 14% divorced, 11.33% widow and 7.66% unmarried respondents' have regular habits washing hand regularly before food and after coming from loo and 31.33% widows, 20% divorcee and 15.66% unmarried respondents wash their hands regularly before food and after coming from loo. On the other hand 31.33% widows, 20% divorced and 15.66% unmarried respondents do not wash their hands properly before and after coming from loo.
18. Most of the respondents cooked food in aluminum or steel vessels on 'Chullah' (Firewood oven made by mud and bricks) and gas stove. Mostly food is cooked once in a day in morning. In the morning most of the respondents' clean their kitchen and utensils after that they cook. They use much palm oil and spice for cooking. It is found that the respondents do not clean vegetables, fish and meat properly before cooking.
19. So far as food consumption is concerned it is found that near 28.67% respondents take rice, vegetables, pulses and cheese. 24.33% respondents take Rice, flour, Vegetables, cheese, meat, fish. 20.33% respondents take rice, flour, vegetables, cheese, meat, fish, and dry fish. 18% respondents take rice, vegetables, fish and cheese. 8.67% respondents take Rice, whole wheat, Vegetables, cheese, meat, fish, egg and dry fish. Most of the respondents are non-vegetarian and take rice, cheese, vegetables and fish etc. Some of the respondents especially widow respondents are vegetarian. There is a custom among the Bengali widows that after the death of husband they take vegetarian food for at least one year.
20. About eating practice it is found that three fifths (59%) of the respondents' take meal twice a day, 28.33% respondents takes meal thrice a day, only 8.34% respondents take meal more than three times and 4.33% respondents take meal once in a day. So, most of the single women's food habit is hazardous for health.
- Those who take food once in a day are more or less related to their economic condition. They go out for work in morning after taking tea and biscuit and return home around 4.00 PM. After returning home they cook and then they take meal. They are not aware that this type of food habit is hazardous for health.
21. Of the respondents 42.66% take tea regularly, nearly 18.67% take tea and coffee, both, 16.67% take tea, milk and coffee, 12.67% take tea and lemon juice regularly, 9.33% take tea and fruit juice occasionally.

- 22.** Of the respondents 36% do not have any kind of addiction to intoxicating things, 26.67% take pan supari and tobacco regularly. One fourth (25.67%) of the respondents take pan supari and gutkha, 8.66% take bidi and pan supari, 2.66% respondents take bidi, pan supari and wine.
- 23.** Single women of Agartala town are mostly neglected and highly vulnerable to diseases with high degree of malnutrition, unhygienic living condition, over burden of work, casual attitude towards health etc. The single women frequently suffer from different types of diseases like hepatitis, dysentery, cold and cough, vitamin deficiency, anemia, nutritional disorder, skin problem etc. Of the respondents 34.67% did not suffer from any disease for last five years. 12% respondents suffer from arthritis, fever, weakness, body pain, 11% from thyroid, gastric, dysentery, body pain, 10% from gastric, colitis, malaria and body pain, 8.33% from fever, cold and cough, gastric, dysentery. 5.67% from migraine, fever, cold and cough gastric, dysentery, pox, and body pain. 4% from digestive disorder, headache, gastric, Jaundice and physical disabilities, skin problem, hearing problem respectively. 2.67% from asthma, fever, cold and cough gastric, dysentery, 2.33% from chronic dysentery and blood dysentery, weakness, body pain, 1.66% from high blood pressure, headache, gastric and 1% from diabetes, headache, urine problem and piles, weakness, body pain and tuberculosis, fever, cold and cough, weakness.
- 24.** Of the respondents who suffered from disease 37% took modern allopathic treatments, 16.66% took homeopathic treatment, 5% took treatment from traditional healers, 3.66% applied home remedies and 3% took Ayurvedic medicine for treatments.
- 25.** So far as expenditure on health is concerned it is found that 35.33% of the respondents spend less than 100 Rs for health problems per month. 29.33% respondents spend money when health problem arises. 22.68% respondents spend 101 Rs to 200 Rs per month as health expenditure. 6% respondents spend 201 Rs to 300 Rs as monthly health expenditure. 5.33% respondents spend 301 Rs to 400 Rs per month as health expenditure. 1% respondents spend 401 Rs to 500 Rs per month as health expenditure and 0.33% respondents spend more then 500 Rs as monthly expenditure for health. Near one third respondents spend less than 100 Rs for their health problem. Many respondents spend money when any kind of health problem arises though at that time amount of money depends on their earning or savings.
- 26.** For understanding reproductive health status of single women the discussion includes menstrual problems, conception status, age at first conception, gap between the children, mode of delivery, place of delivery pre natal and post natal health care etc.
- 27.** Over half (55.33%) of the respondents have regular menstrual cycle, nearly one fourth (26.67%) of the respondents' menstrual cycle stop permanently due to menopause and less than one fifth (18%) of the respondents have irregular menstrual cycle.

- 28.** Of the respondents 44% suffer from excessive bleeding, weakness and pain during menstrual cycle. 26.66% of the respondents have reached menopause stage. 21% of the respondents suffer from pain in lower abdomen, irregularities and irritation during menstruation. Marital statuswise, 58.82% divorced, 48.43% widows and 14.28% unmarried suffer from excessive bleeding, weakness and pain during menstruation. 32.03% widow, 25.71% unmarried and 20.58% divorced respondents have reached the menopause stage and 42.85% unmarried, 17.96% widow and 9.80% divorced respondents suffer from pain in lower abdomen, irregularities and irritation.
- 29.** Conception status of respondents was counted by excluding unmarried single women. It is found that among divorced and widow respondents 73.91% have children and 26.09% respondents do not have any children. Marital status wise 75% widows and 72.54% divorced have children. 27.46% divorced and 25% widows do not have any children.
- 30.** Over two fifth 41.76% respondents had their first conception in the age group of 18 – 19 years, 24.70% respondents had their conception in the age group of 20 - 21 years, 13.52% respondents had their conception in the age group of 22 – 23 years, 7.05% respondents has their first conception at the age group of 24 -25years, 4.11% respondents had their first conception at the age group of 26 – 27 years, 3.52% respondents had their first conception at the age group 28 – 29 years, 1% respondents had their first conception at the age group of 32 and above, 0.58% respondents had their first conception in the age of 16 to 17 years and 30 – 31 years respectively.
- 31.** Over four fifths (82.95%) respondent delivered their baby in government hospital; one tenth (10.58%) respondents delivered their baby in private hospital or nursing home; 4.70% delivered in Primary health center, 1.77% respondents delivered at home.
- 32.** Pre-natal or anti natal care is a type of preventive health care for pregnant women during the pregnancy time. Among the respondents over three fourths (77.07%) respondents take no special diet during pregnancy. 8.23% respondents take fruits and milk regularly during pregnancy period. 7.64% respondents take fish, meat, green vegetables and vitamins during pregnancy period and 7.06% respondents take fish, meat, vegetables and health drinks during pregnancy period.
- 33.** Marital statuswise, of the widow respondents 79.73% take normal food diet, 10.81% take fish, meat, vegetables and health drinks, 6.67% take fruit and milk in their regular food habits and only 2.70% take fish, meat , vegetables and vitamins regularly during pregnancy period. Of the divorce respondents three fourths (75%) take normal foods during pregnancy period, 11.45% take fish, meat, vegetables and vitamins; 9.39% take fruit and milk in their regular diet and 4.16% take fish, meat, vegetables health drinks in their daily diet during pregnancy period. It is found that majority of the

respondents in both single categories do not take special food items during their pregnancy time affects their health directly.

- 34.** Over half (55.89%) of the respondents did not visit doctors or hospitals for their monthly checkup; 58.10% widows and 54.17% divorced. Near one third (34.70%) of the respondents did not visit doctor or hospital during pregnancy period; 36.46% divorced and 32.43% widows. They all are under the supervision of Asha worker. 9.41% respondents regularly visited doctors or hospital for monthly checkup during their pregnancy; 9.47% widows and 9.37% divorced.
- 35.** Regarding family planning it is finds that, 89.41% respondents adopted family planning while 9.41% respondents did not adopt any kind of family planning and 1.18% respondents did not give response to this question.
- 36.** The concept of mental health include subjective well-being, perceived self- efficacy, autonomy, competence, intergenerational dependence and self actualization of one's intellectual and emotional potential among other (Bagga and sakurkar 2013). If a person has feelings of inferiority, low self esteem, shame and being of low rank in their social surroundings then its reflects the state of depression which is not considered as good for mental health condition (Brown and Harris 1989). 53.33% respondents feel mentally stress occasionally, 22.33% respondents feel high mental stress every time. 16.67% respondents do not response to this question and 7.67% respondents do not suffer from mental stress.
- 37.** The single women suffer from mental stress due to several reasons. One fourth 25.99% respondents feel mentally stressful due to economic crisis, 19.38% respondents have major health problems which cause mental stress among them. 18.50% respondents feel stress because they have fear for future, 12.77% respondents found mentally stress because they constantly facing bad behaviour of neighbors or relatives. 8.37% respondents feel stress because of loneliness.
- 7.92% respondents feel stress because of insecurity and 7.04% respondent's share that their husband's ill behaviour creates stress for them.
- 38.** Due to stress they face different types of problem which affect their day to day life activities. Most commonly they suffer from hypertension, anxiety, depression etc. Of the respondents 36.67% respondents suffer from hypertension, anxiety and inferiority complex, 22.33% respondents have the feeling of regrets, 21.67% respondents suffer from depression, 11% respondents suffer from insomnia and losing peace of mind and 8.33% respondents said that they less temper and become aggressive.
- 39.** Marital statuswise, 37.03% widows, 27.45% divorced and 12.85% unmarried respondents suffer from hypertension, anxiety and inferiority complex. 50% unmarried, 25.50% divorced and 4.69% widows have strong feelings of regrets. 26.578% widows, 20.59% divorced and 14.28% unmarried respondents suffer from depression. 14.70% divorced, 11.47% unmarried and 7.81% widows suffer

from insomnia and losing peace of mind. Where as 11.76% divorced, 11.42% unmarried and 3.90% widows suffer from loses of temper and became aggressive for any simple reason.

40. Health care of the respondents depends upon their economic condition. Those single women have better economic condition can afford to visit doctors and private hospital for treatment. But those who are poor especially living bellow poverty level, they can approach government hospital or smart health card. About three fifths 58.67% respondents do not have any health care or medical insurance. 29% respondents have smart card /health card or medical insurance. 12.33% respondents do not give any kind of response.
41. Marital statuswise, 66.68% divorced, 55.46% widows and 52.85% unmarried respondents do not have any smart card/ health card/ health insurance. 34.28% unmarried, 30.46% widows and 23.52% divorced respondents have smart card/ health card or health insurance. On the other hand 14.08% widows, 12.85% unmarried and 9.80% divorced respondents do not give any response to this question.
42. The poor economic conditions, overburden of work, casual attitude towards health, irregular food habit, poor living condition, loneliness, attitude of neighbor/relatives are the major factors for the poor health of single women in Agartala.

Power Structure and Single Women

1. In patriarchal domain, the family structure consider elderly male person as 'head of the family' who have the power and control over all family matters and take active decision making role. So it means male are symbolizes power and authority in the family structure. But this traditional family structure has been experiencing considerable change due to rapid transformation through urbanization, industrialization and globalization. Now a days family headed by women has become a significant phenomenon worldwide which directly challenged the standard of household composition headed by male members. Divorce, separation, widowhood and migration are the major reasons for increasing the number of female headed family. So in India, female headship is not seems as power status among women but a forced phenomena to face various miseries like economic hardship, overburden of work, insecurity feelings, feelings of worthlessness, stress and social criticism and so on.
2. So far as headship of the family is concern it is found that 47.67% respondents' family headed by themselves, 15% each family headed by respondents father and son, 11% respondents' families headed by their brothers and 8.33% respondents' families headed by their mother, 1.67% respondents family headed by in-laws, 1.33% family headed by daughter.
3. Marital statuswise, 51.96% divorced, 48.58% unmarried and 43.75% widows respondents' families headed by themselves. 24.28% unmarried, 18.75% widows, and 3.92% divorced respondent's family

headed by their father. 21.56% divorced and 12.96% widow respondents' family headed by their son. 15.71% unmarried, 9.80% divorced and 9.37% widows respondents' families headed by their brother.

11.76% divorced, 11.42% unmarried and 3.90% widow respondents' families headed by their mother.

4. Though large number of single women leading their family life under the headship of other person but in many occasion most of them are consulted by the head of their family for taking major decision especially decision related to them. Over two fifths 18.67% respondents take all family decisions by themselves, 17% respondents takes family decisions by consulting with their brothers, 16.33% respondents takes decisions by consulting with their son and daughter, 13.67% respondents family decisions taken by their father, 13.33% respondents family decisions taken by their brother, 8.33% respondents family decisions were taken by themselves but always consult with their father, 1.67% respondents family decisions taken by their father-in-law or brother-in-law.

5. Marital Statuswise, 28.57% unmarried, 27.45% divorced and 6.25% widows takes all family decision by themselves, 17.64% divorced, 17.14% unmarried and

16.40% widows' take all family decisions by consulting with their brothers. 22.54% divorced and 20.31% widows takes all family decisions after consulting with their son/daughters'. 18.76% widows, 18.57% unmarried and 3.92% divorced respondents' family decisions taken by their father. 14.70% divorced,

14.28% unmarried and 11.71% widows family decisions taken by them along with the advice of their mother. 15.71% unmarried, 9.80% divorced and 9.38% widows' family decisions taken by their brother. 13.29% widows, 5.71% unmarried and 3.92% divorced takes all major decision of their family by consulting with their father. 3.90% widows family decisions taken by their father-in-law and brother-in-law.

6. Caste panchayat is also known as community panchayat. It is a formally organized unit in the Indian society. The key objective of caste panchayat is to

maintain unity of the caste and secure uniformity of the rules. Caste panchayat play significant role in rural society but in certain extent it also plays role in urban areas. Caste Panchayats in Agartala town is mainly functioning among Muslims, schedule castes especially among the 'Rishidas' or 'Rabidas'. They call it as '*Somaj*'.

7. Over three fourth (76.67%) respondents do not have any idea about caste panchayat, 23.33% respondents have knowledge about caste panchayat. Maritalstatus-wise, 84.28% unmarried, 82.03% widows and 64.70% divorced respondents' do not have any idea about caste panchayat. Whereas 35.29% divorced, 17.97% widows and 15.71% unmarried respondents have knowledge about caste panchayat.

- 8.** To evaluate role of single women in caste panchayat, it is found that none of the single women, irrespective of caste and community is member of a caste panchayat. Moreover no woman is permitted to sit along with men in a caste panchayat meeting. Woman is permitted to attend a panchayat meeting only when she has a filed complaint before the panchayat when it gives verdict. 14.28% respondents have attended their respective caste panchayat meetings either as complainant or accused.
- 9.** Over half (55%) of the respondents do not involve in any political organization; 72.28% unmarried 78.12% widows, and 12.74% divorced. One third (34%) of the respondents occasionally attend political party meeting; 74.50% are divorced followed by 18.58% unmarried and 10.17% widows. 11% respondents actively participate in political activities like meetings, political rallies, fund collection etc; 12.74% are divorced 11.71% widows and 7.14% unmarried. Mostly young and middle age single women participate actively in political activities.
- 10.** Agartala municipal council is the body which governs and maintains the town. It is one of the oldest municipal body in north-east India, founded in 1871. Agartala municipal council consist of 35 wards and 42 members including one chairman, one Vice-chairman, three chairman of council and 37 ward members. Most of the respondents are not formal member of any political organization. More than three fourth of the respondents are aware about municipal council's activity either partially or fully. But in spite of knowing the activities of municipal council most of the respondents deprived from getting the benefits of various schemes of municipal council.
- 11.** Nearly half of respondents participate their respective ward meetings regularly which were organized by the councilor to discuss various welfare scheme, programs and developmental plan regarding ward and selections of beneficiaries' for various schemes.
- 12.** So far as satisfaction of municipal activities, over two fifths (42%) of the respondents partially satisfied with the role of municipal council, 34% respondents not satisfied with the role of municipal council, 14.33% respondents expressed their full satisfaction regarding the role of municipal council and 9.67% respondents not give any response to this question.
- 13.** Only a negligible portion of single women expect contested in municipal council election.
- 14.** Over three fifths (62.67%) of the respondents do not have membership of any political party, 37.33% respondents are the member of political party. Marital statuswise, 68.58% unmarried, 60.93% widows and 60.79% divorced respondents do not have any membership in political party. 39.21% divorced, 39.07% widows and 31.42%unmarried have membership in political party.
- 15.** Of the respondents 80% cast their vote in assembly, municipal council and parliament elections. One tenth (10%) of the respondents have not cast their vote in any election and the same percentages of the

respondents did not respond this question. Marital status-wise 86.60% widows, 78.58% unmarried and 76.48% divorced respondents cast their vote in elections. 14.28% unmarried, 10.93% widow and 5.88% divorced respondents do not cast their vote. 17.64% divorced, 7.14% unmarried and 5.47% widow respondents do not give any response.

16. Large number of single women casted their vote in different level of election shows they are much politically empower. But practically more than nine tenth respondents cast their vote according to choice and advice of other. It reflects that single women are not much politically aware and fail to understand the cost of their vote. Most of them exercise their voting right in almost all election as per decision and wish of others.

17. Briefly, the single women in Agartala town are not politically empowered.

Among them very few participate in decision making process either in family's decisions or other formal organizations decision. Large numbers of single women are aware about different government scheme implemented by the municipal council. In exercising voting right, a very few cast their vote according to their own choice.

Self-Perception, Social Attitude and Single Women

1. I and Me as a part of ones self. 'I' is spontaneous, impulsive and creative and

'Me' is reflective and socially aware. Mead is of the view that 'I' is the un-socialized self, an assortment of personal desire, needs, decisions and disposition and 'Me' is the socialized self made up of the internalized attitudes of other as experienced in the daily life.

2. Conceptualization of 'I' and 'Me' in the context of single women of Agartala town is mainly emphasis about their social self. According to G. H. Mead (1934),

I and me is a part of ones self. in his view 'I' is the un-socialized self, on assortment of personal desire, needs, decisions and dispositions and 'Me' is the socialized self, made up of the internalized attitudes of others as experienced in the daily life activity.

3. In India, women are assessed on the basis of her sacrifices which include not thinking for self. A woman is considered good when she devoted her life towards her husband and husbands' family without expecting any return from them.

Before marriage girls have to obey the decision of family even she is not permitted to select her life partner, after marriage husband and in-laws expected that newly married bride should have to follow all the norms and values of their family without any question. They are not ready to recognize the bride as individual human being and have personal liking, disliking, wish, dreams etc. The respondents were asked about their self awareness, identity, desire and dream related to themselves then various types of responses come.

4. Most of the respondents do not thinking about self, as their self and concept of 'I' assimilated with their children and family's identity. They have no time to think about themselves because they are busy with different types of responsibilities and for these they lost themselves.
5. Majority of the respondents' single status not chosen by themselves various circumstances and situation compel them to be a single. This indicates how much sadness and helpless they feel. They find themselves unwanted invisible within their family and society.
6. Majority of the (93.33%) respondents express their dissatisfaction regarding singlehood and 6.67% respondents express their satisfaction regarding single hood.
7. Martial statuswise, 98.43% widows, 91.42% unmarried and 88.23% divorced express dissatisfaction with their present life situation regarding single hood. 11.76% divorced, 8.58% unmarried and 1.56% widows express their satisfaction regarding their singlehood status.
8. Single women have facing identity crisis, they are not aware about their identity as because they do not think about their self separately.
9. Family's attitude will reflect single women's parental family's attitude toward them. Because parental family is the one from where they can get help and support. Large number of women after death of husband and divorce fell helpless and seek emotional, moral and sometime financial support from parental home. Where as unmarried women from the beginning remain with parental family. Their parents always remain with them. But after the death of parents, problem started with unmarried also. Over two fifth (46.67%) of the respondents sometimes received support from their family, 29% respondents always get support from their parental family's and 24.33% respondents never get any support from their parental family.
10. Marital statuswise, 58.59% widows, 45.71% unmarried and 32.35% divorced respondents occasionally get support from their parental family. 48.58% unmarried, 24.21% widows and 21.56% divorced always get support from their parental family. 46.09% divorced 17.20% widows and 5.71% unmarried respondents never received any kind of support from their family.
11. The respondents get different types of support from their parental home these are financial support, moral support. Less than half (47%) respondents get moral support from their parental family, 29.33% respondents never get any support from their parental family, 18% respondents get financial support and 10.67% respondent get financial support during crisis situations.
12. Marital status wise, 57.81% widows, 45.71% unmarried and 19.60% divorced get moral support from their parental family. 60.80% divorced, 17.19% widows and 5.71% unmarried never get any support from their family members. 34.29% unmarried, 14.84% widows and 10.78% divorced respondents get financial support regularly. 14.29% unmarried, 10.16% widows and 8.82% divorced respondents get financial support in crisis situations from their parental family.

SUMMARY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Single women work hard both at home and outside for maintaining themselves and children. They define themselves within familial role as a responsible daughter and single mother. Majority of the respondents' either lives in rented house, or their parents', relatives' and friends' house. They do not have permanent accommodation. Around fourth fifth (80%) respondents belongs to nuclear family and rest from joint family. Majority of single women in Agartala town are working. Around 96% women earn from different sources for maintaining themselves and their family.

Among the earning single women 65.33% have no control over their income, which reflects that in spite of earning they have less power to control their own income. Most of the respondents' economically not empowered but in case of property ownership very few (14.33%) of the respondents' have property in their name. However, those respondents have property, majority (65.76%) of the respondents' owned property by themselves. So far as saving is concern.

Only 37% respondents have saving in their name. The respondents living condition made an impact on their health. Majority of the respondents live in one or two rooms. Almost fifty percent of the respondents use firewood, cow dung cake, dry leaves or

bamboo for cooking which make in direct impact on their health condition. However, most (69%) of the respondents drink water from ordinary filter and 7.66% respondents drink water without purification. Morbidity among the respondents is high with almost 65.33% of the respondents' reporting ill-health. 65.33% respondents suffer from different types of diseases but they did not give priority for proper treatment. Many of them have gynecological complicacy related to their reproductive health. The divorced and widows those have children majority of them not get proper nutritious food during pregnancy. Many single women suffer from various mental problems. Majority of the respondents' feel insecurity, low self-esteem, loneliness which reflects their state of depression among them. Single women leading their life with 'self-headship' where 47.67% respondents are the head of their family and the rest percent respondents' family headed by their parents', children and siblings'. Very few respondents family headed by their in-laws'. Over half (55%) of the respondents' do not have any involvement in political organization. Membership in political organization found informal in nature but large number of respondents participate in political decision making process through casting their vote.

Social attitude towards single women is not good. They experience embarrassing moment in social gathering due to their single status. Majority of them are not supported and help by the parents and close relatives. Widows and divorced are always blame for their marital status. Widows are not invited by the neighbor and relative in auspicious occasion. Many of divorced single women experienced that after separated from their husband their close friends started to avoid them. Similarly unmarried respondents express their view that in any social and religious gathering they suffer from

various questions regarding their singleness and always asked about their future life. In many occasions they were not welcome properly and sometimes ignored. So they fail to find their self identity in social gatherings. Many single women did not have time and situation to think about themselves separately. They neither have future plan nor have any expectation from society.

Thus, single women of Agartala town have low socio-economic, political and health status. They survive in society with lost of mental and economic pressure. They suffer from identity crisis and failed to establish themselves as separate human beings with their own ideas, values and behaviour. Society did not give due respect to them.