

# DEPRESSION AND LONELINESS AMONG SINGLE MOTHER OF JAMMU CITY

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## INTRODUCTION

Single parent family may be defined as “A family comprising of a single mother or father having their own dependent children”. The single parent family is created in a number of ways, death of one parent, divorce, separation and desertion. ‘Single parent families’ is a concept that defines, families in which either the father or mother is absent because of divorce, marital separation, out-of-wedlock pregnancy, or death (**Greenberg, 2002**). In the mid-twentieth centuries, most single-parent families came about because of the death of a spouse. A single parent faces double responsibilities requiring time, attention and money of the parent. Hence, less attention is paid to the psychological well-being and education of the child. Traditionally death of a spouse was the commonest cause of single parent family but now more and more single parent families are visible as a result of divorce or separation of couples with children. Single parenting is a situation in which one of the two individuals (i.e., mother or father) involved in the conception of the child becomes merely responsible for the upbringing of the child (**Ortese, 1998**). There has been a world-wide increase in single parenting and a general increase in children living in single parent homes. The increase in single-parent families over the past few decades, has led to a serious debate on the impact it would have on society and how it would affect the children. **India 2001 Census**, reported that there were 40 million women who were single (divorced and separated) and over the age of 30 (**BBC, 2014**). Today, 9.5% of families in the general population of our country are identified as having lone parents (**Census of India, 2011**), as against 27% of similar families for the United States during 2010. Worldwide statistics point out that 16% of the families can be classified as Single Parent Families (**Leman, 2005**).

A single mother is a woman, taking care of her children, but does not have the support of her husband in raising children. In India, with gradual break-up of joint family system and with increasing rate of divorce, the single mothers are left alone to fend for themselves. The role of a single mother requires that the parent takes on responsibility that may have been shared by their spouse. Single mothers experience ancillary role strain as a parent. In addition to becoming the primary wage earner, a woman is forced to shoulder other responsibilities of her husband. However, the lack of structure, and contradictory enforcement of parental standards, children who

are living with single mother have a home life that is different from children living with both the parents. Being a single parent can be firm and lonely. There is often no other adult with whom to share decision making, discipline and financial responsibilities. The full encumber of child care, earning a living and parenting falls on one individual (Kotwal and Prabahkar, 2009).

With this background the present study was conducted to assess and understand the challenges and difficulties faced by single mother and also determine the level of depression and loneliness encountered by single mothers and correlate the challenges, depression and loneliness of sample mothers.

## RESEARCH MEHODOLGY

### ➤ **Sample Size:**

The sample for the study was comprised of 40 single mothers.

### ➤ **Locale of the study:**

The entire sample for the present research work was selected from Urban and Semi Urban areas of Jammu District of J&K.

### ➤ **Sampling Technique:**

The sample of the proposed research was selected from the Urban and Semi- Urban areas of the Jammu District has 71 wards, out of these 20 wards were selected randomly. These families were selected purposively and then through snowball sampling technique more families were contacted. From each family unit identified, the available lone mother.

### ➤ **Criteria for sample selection**

- Only those mother were selected who share the household alone with their children.
- Only those mother wereselected who was permanent residents of Jammu District.
- Single mother headed family should be existing for at least past one complete year.

### ➤ **Tools for data collection:**

**Following tools was used for data collection:**

- a) **Interview Schedule:** A self-devised interview schedule was used to collect information about the status of the single mother. It will include questions on background variables, type of family, number of children, financial assistance, causes of single parent family, time duration of single status, sharing of responsibilities.
- b) **Emotional and Social Loneliness Scale:** The Loneliness Scale was developed by Gierveld (2001). Loneliness scale has a total of 11-items, which can have **separate emotional (6 items) and social 5 items)** subscales **Beck's Depression Inventory-II (BDI-II):** The Beck Depression Inventory (BDI-II),

created by **Beck (1996)** is a 21- question multiple-choice self-report inventory, used for measuring the severity of Depression.

➤ **Data Analysis:**

For analyzing the results of the present research work both qualitative and quantitative methods were utilized. Content analysis of parent-child relation will be carried out. Statistical analysis was done by using mean, standard deviation, chi-square and correlation.

## RESULTS

### i). BACKGROUND INFORMATION

#### 1. Age of the sample mothers

**Table 1**  
**Age of sample mothers**

Age group	Mothers	
	N	%
30-40years	16	40
41-50 years	24	60
Total	40	100
Mean± S.D	42.2±5.73	

Table 1 depicts that the mean age of the respondents was 42.2±5.73. Majority (60%) of the sample mother were in the age group of 41-50 years. Further, 40% of the mothers were in the age group of 30-40 years.

#### 2. Education Qualifications of sample mothers

**Table 2**  
**Education Qualification of sample mothers**

Education Qualification	Mothers	
	N	%
5 <sup>th</sup> -10 <sup>th</sup>	17	42.5
Upto 12 <sup>th</sup>	10	25
Graduation	10	25
Post-Graduation	3	7.5
Total	40	100

Table 2 shows that majority (42.5%) of the sample mother were educated upto 5<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>. 25% of the mothers were educated upto 12<sup>th</sup> and graduate. Further, 7.5% of mothers were educated upto post graduation.

### 3. Occupation of mothers

**Table 3**  
**Occupation of mothers**

Occupation	Mothers	
	N	%
Home maker	15	37.5
Working outside	25	62.5
Total	40	100

Table 3 reveals that majority (62.5%) of sample respondents were working outside the home. 37.5% of the mothers were home maker.

### 5. Number of children

**Table 5**  
**Number of children**

Children	Mothers	
	N	%
1	14	35.0
2	18	45.0
3	8	20.0
More than 3	-	-
Total	40	100

Table 5 depicts that majority (45%) of the respondents had two children. Further, 35% of the respondents had one child. 20% of the sample mother had three children.

### 6. Personal income of sample mother

**Table 6**  
**Personal Income of Sample Mother**

Monthly Income	Mothers	
	N	%
Upto 5,000	7	17.5
5,000-10,000	15	37.5
10,000-15,000	9	22.5
15,000-20,000	4	10.0
Above 20,000	5	12.5
Total	40	100

Table 6 shows that most(37.5%) of the sample respondents had monthly income between 5,000-10,000 followed by, 22.5% of the respondents had income between 10,000- 15,000. Further, results show that 17.5% of the respondents had income upto 5,000.

## ii). PROBLEMS AND DIFFICULTIES FACED BY SINGLE MOTHER

## 1. Reason for being a single mother

**Table 7**  
Reason for being a single mother

Reasons	Mothers	
	N	%
Divorce	6	15
Death of the partner	24	60
Seperation	10	25
Total	40	100

Table 7 majority (60%) of the respondent were widows, 25% of sample mother were separated from their husband. Further, 15% of the mothers were divorced.

## 2. Number of years spent as single mother

**Table 8**  
Number of years spent as single mother

Years	Mothers	
	N	%
1-3 years	2	5
3-5 years	8	20.0
5-8 years	11	27.5
More than 8 years	19	47.5
Total	40	100

Table 8 depicts that almost 47.5% of the Respondents had spent more than 8 years as single parent, 27.5% of the mothers had spent 5-8 years and 20% of the respondents spent 3-5 years looking after the family single handedly.

## 3. Problems faced as a Single Parent

**Table 9**  
Problems faced as a single Parent

Problems	Mothers	
	N	%
Financial	14	35.0
Social adjustment	6	15.0
Personal loneliness	9	22.5
Time conflict	4	10.0
All of the above	7	17.5
Total	40	100

Table 9 reveals that most of the respondents (35%) were faced financial problems as a single parent because she is the only earner in her family. 22.5% of the respondents had faced personal loneliness further,

17% of the sample mothers had faced all problems (financial, social adjustment, time conflict and personal loneliness) as a single mother. 15% of the mothers had faced social adjustment and 10% had faced problem in time conflict.

#### 4. Reaction of others towards Single Mother

**Table 10**  
**Reaction of others towards Single Mother**

Reaction of everybody	Mothers	
	N	%
Showing Empathy	10	25.0
Neglecting you	12	30.0
Pity on you	16	40.0
Anger	2	5.0
Total	40	100

Table 10 shows that majority (40%) of the respondents showed pity towards them as a single mother, followed by 30% of the mother who reported feeling neglected, and being giving less preavilage. 25% of the respondents had shown empathy and 5% had shown angry kind of reaction towards single mother.

#### iii). DEPRESSION OF SINGLE MOTHER

##### 1. Overall Depression among Single mother

**Table 11**  
**Overall Depression among Single Mothers**

Levels	Mothers	
	N	%
Minimal	6	15.0
Mild	6	15.0
Moderate	11	27.5
Severe	17	42.5
Total	40	100

Table 11 depicts that on overall, majority (42.5%) of sample mothers had 'Severe' level of Depression, which shows that mothers feel depressed because they were getting easily tired and they cannot do their worked on time, further 27.5% of respondents had 'Moderate level'. 15% of sample mother had suffer from 'Minimal and Mild' level of Depression.

## 2. Depression among single mother across the age

**Table 12**  
Depression among single mother across the age

$\chi^2 =$

Levels	Mothers		Total (n=40)
	30-40Years (n=16)	41-50Years (n=24)	
Minimal	1(6.25)	5(20.8)	6(15.0)
Mild	1(6.25)	5(20.8)	6(15)
Moderate	5(31.2)	6(25)	11(27.5)
Severe	9(56.2)	8(33.3)	17(42.5)
Total	16(99.9)	24(99.9)	40(100)

across age = 40.4, p-value = 0.257, non- significant

Table 12 depicts that majority (42.5%) of the sample mothers had 'severe' level of depression which shows that they faced many emotional problems and even in some cases health problems. In the age group of 30-40 years, majority (56.2%) of the sample mothers had 'Severe' level of depression as most of them she felt that there is no importance of her life, her life has come to an end, followed by 31.2% of mothers had 'Moderate' level of depression. In the age group of 41-50 years, most (33.3%) of the mothers had 'Severe' level of depression whereas, 25% of the sample respondents had 'Moderate' level of depression because. 20.8% of the respondent mothers had 'Minimal' and 'Mild' Levels of the depression. *Calculation of chi square reveals non-significant differences across the age of the single mothers.*

### iv). LONELINESS AMONG SINGLE MOTHER

#### 1. Overall Loneliness among single Mother

**Table 13**  
Overall Loneliness among Single mother

Levels	Mothers	
	N	%
Not lonely	-	-
Moderate lonely	12	30
Severe lonely	22	55
Very Severe lonely	6	15
Total	40	100

Table 13 depicts that on overall, majority (55%) of sample mothers had 'Severe' level of Loneliness which shows that they feel rejected as a single parent, followed by 30% of respondents had 'Moderate' level of Social and Emotional Loneliness. 15% of sample mother had suffer from 'Very Severe' level of Loneliness showing

that they felt all alone and missed having a partner to share their lives and emotions. The feeling of been lonely made them unable to trust others. None of the respondent were in the 'Not Lonely category' of Loneliness.

## 2. Loneliness among single mother across the age

**Table 14**  
**Loneliness among single mother across the age**

Levels	Mothers (n=40)		Total (n=40)
	30-40 Years (n=16)	41-50 Years (n=24)	
Not lonely	-	-	-
Moderate lonely	3(18.7)	9(37.5)	12 (30)
Severe lonely	10(62.5)	12(50)	22(55)
Very Severe lonely	3(18.7)	3(12.5)	6(15)
Total	16(100)	24(100)	40(100)

$\chi^2$  = across age = 16.4, p-value = 0.439, non-significant

Table 14 depicts that in the age group of 30-40 years, majority (62.5%) of the sample mothers had 'Severe' level of Loneliness, followed by 18.7% each of mothers having 'Moderate' and 'Very severe' level of Loneliness, which shows that mothers did not share their day to day problems with others. In the age group of 41-50 years, most (50%) of the mothers also had 'Severe' level of Loneliness whereas, 37.5% of the sample respondents had 'Moderate' level of Loneliness. 12.5% of the respondent mothers had 'Very Severe' Levels of the Loneliness. *Calculation of chi square reveals non-significant differences across the age of the single mothers.*

## Table no 18 Inter-correlation among demographic profile, challenges, Depression and Loneliness of sample mothers

Variables	Age	Education	Occupation	Income	Years spent	Problems faced	Depression	Loneliness
Age	-							
Education	-.500**	-						
Occupation	.316*	-.652**	-					
Income	-.041	.409**	-.349*	-				
Years spent	.600**	-.372*	.077	.036	-			
Problems faced	.021	.054	-.079	.005	.015	-		
Depression	-.301	-.041	.113	.105	-.147	-.147	-	
Loneliness	-.187	.006	.099	.085	-.331*	.222	-.005	-

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).



\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

When the correlation among the variables was analyzed for the entire sample, it was found that the demographic variables and challenges and difficulties faced by respondents were positively significantly correlated with each other. Age is positively significantly correlated with occupation ( $r=.316^*$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), years spent as single parent ( $r=.600^{**}$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and were negatively significantly correlated with education ( $r= -.500^{**}$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Educational qualification is positively significantly correlated with income of the family ( $r=.409^{**}$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and were negatively significantly correlated with occupation ( $r= -.652^{**}$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), years spent as a single parent ( $r= -.372^*$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Occupation is negatively significantly correlated with income of the family ( $r= -.349^*$ ,  $p<0.05$ ).

The difficulties and challenges faced by single mother were positively significantly correlated with each other. Years spent as a single parent is negatively significantly correlated with personal loneliness ( $r= -.331^*$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) which shows that as the time elapsed in their separation, their loneliness decreases because now they easily cope up with the difficulties that they face earlier.

## CONCLUSION

The role of single parent is challenging one especially when the family is headed by a woman. It is more difficult when a woman has never previously worked outside the home. The role of a single mother requires that the parent takes on responsibility that may have been shared by their spouse. Single mothers experience additional role strain as a parent. In addition to becoming the primary wage earner, a woman is forced to shoulder other responsibilities of her husband. The results revealed that the mean age of the sample mothers were  $42.2\pm 5.73$  years. Majority of the single mothers were educated upto 5<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup>. Most of the respondents mothers were working outside the home, similar result shows in the study by *Acharya et al (2011)*, Forty percent of the respondents were 'working outside the home' The main reason for being a single mother was due to 'Death of the Partner', similar results were noted in another study by *Acharya et al (2011)*, 'Death of a spouse' was the commonest cause of single parent family. Most of the single mothers had spent 'more than 8 years' as a single parent. Majority of the sample mother had 2 children and were residing in family house. Further results revealed that the 'Financial Problems' were the main stressor for majority of the single mothers. Similar result shows in the study by (*Weldegabreal, 2014 and Kotwal and Prabhakar, 2009*) single mothers faced financial problems after the death of the partner.

Majority of the respondent mothers had 'Severe Level' of Depression, similar result were noted in the study by (*McLanahan and Sandefur, 1994 and Cairney 2003*). Single mothers tend to be so 'depressed' at their lack of status and income. According to their age, the sample mothers had also 'Severe' level of

Depression. Most of the respondent mothers had 'severe level' of Emotional and Social Loneliness. Weldegabreal (2014) also noted that 'Loneliness' was the main stressor for majority of the single mothers. According to their age, the sample mothers also had 'Severe' level of Emotional and Social Loneliness. Statistical procedure indicates 'insignificant difference' according to the occupation and across the age of the sample mothers. The inter correlation between Demographic variables of sample mothers were 'positively significantly' correlated with their challenges and difficulties, but depression and loneliness were 'negatively significantly' correlated with challenges and difficulties faced by respondents.

So, it could be concluded that majority of single mothers faced difficulties and challenges related to economic, emotional and social aspects and also suffered from severe level of depression and loneliness.

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