A Sociological Study Of Problems, Difficulties, Challenges And Social Stigma Faced By Single Male And Single Female In U.T. Chandigarh

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Abstract

The trend of delaying marriage is rapidly increasing. The Indian institution of marriage has changed significantly, especially in the past 50 years. People are becoming less aware of the strict customs and standards surrounding marriage these days. We are seeing a rise in the number of singles or unmarried people, as well as an increase in the age at which people marry. Being single has replaced the system of marriage. The experience of being single differs for male and female due to the societal construction of gender. Given this context, the present study compares the problems, difficulties, challenges and social stigma that single male and female encounter on a daily basis.

Keywords: Single male, Single female, Problems, Difficulties, Challenges and Social stigma.

Introduction

Remaining single has replaced the system of marriage. Similar to many Western and European nations, India is witnessing a notable increase in the trend of postponing marriage among urban populations in recent times. There is an increase in the age of marriage, as well as a rise in divorce, separation, and bride famine, alongside a noticeable growth in the number of singles or unmarried individuals. Marriage and family serve as the essential building blocks of our society. These institutions serve as the foundational pillars of every society. It is widely held that marriage provides greater stability and respect. Our culture instills in us the values of marriage and family. Everyone is conditioned to marry and start a family. Marriage is a social institution that allows people to satisfy their needs and social desires. According to Prabhu, H. (1940), marriage is regarded

as a necessity in India, and everyone must follow the dharma's precepts in order to achieve moksha. People who are married are thought to receive greater respect and honor as well as more revered position. Families and marriage serve as the foundation for a clan's or society's growth. Humans learn what is required of them in society through their social union. Consequently, marriage and the family are the two oldest and most enduring social customs. One of the most significant institutions in human society is marriage. Both legal experts and sociologists have given it different definitions.

[1]According to George A. Lundberg, a marriage is a "system of laws that specify the rights, obligations, and privileges of the husband and wife toward one another".

[2]According to sociologist Mazumdar, "marriage is a socially sanctioned union of male and female for the purpose of establishing (a) household (b) entering into sex relationship (c) procreating and (d) providing care for the offspring".

Alvin Toffler (1970) also foresaw a future in which marriage would be transient rather than permanent, divorce would be common, and being unmarried would not be a crime. According to American sociologist Talcott Parsons (1955), the American family has experienced significant transformation and is a sign of disorganization in social structure. In his explanation of the changes in the family system, Parsons cited three facts: such as high divorce rates, shifts in sex morality, and declining birth rates, that demonstrate how structural changes in the marriage system have an impact on the social system. Due to the length of time spent married and the discontent with marriage, many people would rather remain single or not attempt a new marriage.

There has been a significant shift in the traditions surrounding marriage. Marriage and the family system have become less conventional as a result of modernization, individualization, westernization, and globalization. Additionally, it led to the emergence of new family forms in India and around the world, such as, live-in relationships, and same sex partnerships.

Changes in conventional Marriage system

There is a strong belief that the institutions of marriage and the family are primarily responsible for society's survival. According to John Levy and Ruth Munroe (1945) marriage is a socially and legally accepted institution that creates family and kinship; as such, it is considered a sacred institution. Given the shifts in the family structure from joint to nuclear, homosexual, and lesbian families. Therefore, in today's society, very few people adhere to traditional marriage and family values. Over time, we could also observe shifts in

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[1] George Andrew Lundberg - *Sociology* 133 (Harper and Brothers, New York, 1958).

[2] H.T. Mazumdar - *Grammar of Sociology*, 502 (Asia Publishing House 1966).

marriage customs. Marriage traditions have evolved, including from arranged to love marriage, age at marriage, same-sex marriage, families with only one parent, postponing marriage, and similar behaviors.

Diversity in marriage and the family is associated with shifts in the importance placed on people, especially when it comes to meeting their wants and desires. In today's world, people choose to live more intentionally. According to Talcott Parsons (1964), the reason for the increase in divorce rates is because marriage is becoming more and more valued, and people are expecting and demanding more from it, which leads to the disintegration of the marriage. As a result, the marriage and family structure are increasingly becoming obsolete. Diversity in marriage and family structures received international attention in the 20th century. They highlighted the waning of rigid marriage standards and the growing trend of people in society delaying marriage and living as singles.

Marriage and family are important aspects of life that mark a turning point for each individual. Every society still has an impact on marriage and the family, despite the fact that they have undoubtedly changed significantly throughout time and across cultural boundaries. People are gradually but steadily abandoning the customs of traditional marriage. Emile Durkheim (2001) supported the idea that society is a Sui Generis and that individuals existed before society (as stated in Adams, Bert N., Sydie, R.A., 2001). However, marriage is not a Sui Generis and does not predate society; rather, it is a personal decision that can be altered. There has been a huge shift in the traditions around marriage and getting married.

Challenges and social stigma faced by single people

The concepts of 'Living Without a Mate' in the United States were developed by American sociologist Harold T. Christensen in 1950. Christensen's theories have mostly addressed people who have never married and those who have remained unmarried because a spouse passed away. According to US census data, the proportion of unmarried people and the age at marriage have increased throughout the years. People prioritize their personal growth over marriage. Women are quite selective when it comes to finding a partner, and often put off marriage in order to advance their careers. This manifested as "marrying down," which has caused society to evolve into a more complex system of novel phenomena. In his book "Living without a Mate," he examined the process of adjustment that led to the issues faced by single people. Stigma makes it harder for single people to adjust, especially for unmarried women. This suggests that being unmarried is a sin or a fault because one has no control over one's circumstances and status, and spinsterhood is frequently viewed as a personal failure where one feels inferior. Therefore, society is structured and defined to favor successful couples, while unmarried people are viewed as skeptical.

Some significant viewpoints on marriage and singlehood have been methodically outlined in sociologist Peter J. Stein's book 'Single Life: Unmarried Adults in Social Context' (1981). Due to psychological and sexual elements in their relationships, married people who suffer loneliness, disconnection, and dissatisfaction are more likely to stay single. He distinguished between push and pull factors, with psychological well-being being

closely linked to women and sexual availability for both men and women being a significant motivator for the pull factor. Therefore, being single could become a significant alternative method by which the majority of people decide not to get married or stay single.

According to Bella DePaulo (2015), being married won't make you happier, healthier, or live a longer life. She backs up these claims with scientific data, pointing out that singles are healthier than married people and that single people exercise more. Marriage is more difficult, and while many individuals have had good married lives, there are situations in which they may break up. She believed that the conventional elements of marriage were undermined by family differences. Numerous changes have occurred in these social structures, including separation, divorce, and cohabitation. They have changed the possible happiness link of an individual who is capable of obtaining everything outside of marriage. As a result, living alone became a productive existence.

According to Julie Michelle Tweed (2008), women who are single go through several phases of life as they become older. Every woman who has reached the age of thirty is subject to stereotypes; this is seen as a pivotal period in the marriage. She compared unmarried women to men who had never married, saying that the former are more socially abnormal. Women are still treated with disrespect by patriarchal societal ideas, particularly when they are unmarried and referred to as "cat lady" or "remained."

In India, being single is viewed as sinful. Humans are inclined and socialized toward marriage because they are unable to live alone. An effort has been made to investigate the unmarried population in this context. The main issues of the current study are what kinds of stressors and pressures these single male and single female experience. Given this context, the present study compares the problems, difficulties, challenges and social stigma that single male and female encounter on a daily basis.

Objectives of the Study

1. To compare and investigate problems and difficulties of the single male and single female.
2. To compare and investigate the challenges that single male and single female face.
3. To compare and investigate social stigma that these single male and single female face in their everyday life.

Locale of the Study

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

Sampling and Techniques for Data Collection

It may surprise individuals to learn that it is not accepted to remain unmarried in India. As a result, the number of unmarried people is dispersed and rather enigmatic. Identifying the singles in one location is really challenging. Because of this limitation, the snowball sampling approach was used to choose the study's

respondents. In Union Territory of Chandigarh, respondents who are single, who never married or who are divorced or widow/widower, who live without a partner were included in the current study. The respondents who were above thirty years of age were included in the study. In order to gather information on the factors that contribute to men and women staying unmarried, the study used a qualitative approach. Some responders, however, refused to speak with someone directly about their unmarried status. Singles' information was gathered using a questionnaire. In the process of gathering data, the researcher encountered a few challenges. Some of the respondents were illiterate, and an interview schedule was created for them in addition to the literate respondents. Since case study method was used, forty respondents provided data for the collection. In order to compare and investigate the issues facing single male and single female, both male and female, twenty men and twenty women were selected for each category. This gave the researcher a thorough understanding of the comparison of problems, difficulties, challenges, and social stigma faced by single male and single female in their everyday life.

Table 1: Showing problems and difficulties faced by single male and single female

Problems and difficulties	Male	Female	Total
Feel lonely	12(60)	15(75)	27(67.5)
Excluded from social events	13(65)	17(85)	30(75)
Do not get rented house easily	15(75)	11(55)	26(650
Society looks on with suspicion	15(75)	17(85)	32(80)
Do not get respect from family members	16(80)	19(95)	35(87.5)
Fear of not finding a deep connection with partner after marriage	14(70)	18(90)	32(80)
Always Pressurized to settle down	17(85)	19(95)	36(90)
Total	20(100)	20(100)	40(100)

Figures in parentheses column wise indicate percentages

*The respondents have given multiple answers. Total percentage was calculated from the total number of both male and female respondents separately (i.e., 20 each).

From the narratives of the respondents and table 1 it could be said that there were 15 males and 18 female respondents who were literate. 15 male respondents and 18 female respondents work in some capacity and earn more than 10,000 rupees per month. There were 17 female responders and 12 male respondents who chose to remain single. However, due to financial restrictions and unemployment, three female respondents and eight male respondents remained unmarried involuntarily. It could be summarized that 60 percent of male respondents and 75 percent of female respondents feel lonely. There were 65 percent of male respondents and 85 percent of female respondents who gets excluded from social events by their friends

and relatives. It was found that 75 percent of male respondents and 55 percent of female respondents had trouble finding a rental home. There were 75 percent of male respondents and 85 percent of female respondents who are looked with suspicion by society members be it their friends, neighbors or relatives. 80 percent of male respondents and 95 percent of female respondents do not get respect from family members and frequently make fun of them. There were 70 percent of male respondents and 90 percent of female respondents who fear of not finding a deep connection with their partner after marriage. There were 85 percent of male respondents and 95 percent of female respondents who are always pressurized to settle down and start a family.

In summary, single women are more likely to experience loneliness. Their family members and friends exclude them from social gatherings. Society watches suspiciously. They are not respected by their relatives. They also worry about not developing a close bond with their spouse after marriage. Compared to unmarried males, friends and family constantly pressure unmarried women to get married.

Table 2: Showing challenges faced by single male and single female

Challenges	Male	Female	Total
Financial concerns	15(75)	8(40)	23(57.5)
Difficulty managing household tasks	18(90)	11(55)	29(72.5)
Lack of companion to share experiences with	13(65)	14(70)	27(67.5)
Lack of emotional support	11(55)	15(75)	26(65)
No one to rely on when sick	16(80)	11(55)	27(67.5)
Total	20(100)	20(100)	40(100)

Figures in parentheses column wise indicate percentages

*The respondents have given multiple answers. Total percentage was calculated from the total number of both male and female respondents separately (i.e., 20 each).

From the narratives of the respondents and table 2 it could be summarized that 75 percent of male respondents and 40 percent of female respondents face financial difficulties. There were 90 percent of male respondents and 55 percent of female respondents who find difficulty managing household tasks. There were 65 percent of male respondents and 70 percent of female respondents who feel lack of companion to share experiences with. Emotional support is lacking for 55 percent of male respondents and 75 percent of female respondents. There were 80 percent of male respondents and 55 percent of female respondents who mentioned that they have no one to rely on when they get sick.

Compared to single women, single men have greater financial worries and struggle to manage domestic tasks. When they are sick, they have no one to turn to. However, single women are more likely to face a lack of emotional support and a lack of a companion with whom to discuss their experiences.

Table 3: Showing Social stigma faced by single male and single female

Social stigma	Male	Female	Total
Subject to frequent mockery from your friends and relatives	16(80)	19(95)	35(87.5)
Called as Infertile	11(55)	17(85)	28(70)
Leading to assumptions about potential inadequacies in relationships	16(80)	19(95)	35(87.5)
Considered as having personal flaws	14(70)	18(90)	32(80)
Single shaming	11(55)	20(100)	31(77.5)
Considered as fearless	17(85)	18(90)	35(87.5)
Considered as sexually active	13(65)	16(80)	29(72.5)
Considered as characterless	11(55)	18(90)	29(72.5)
Considered as self-centered	12(60)	17(85)	29(72.5)
Considered as carefree	16(80)	19(95)	35(87.5)
Total	20(100)	20(100)	40(100)

Figures in parentheses column wise indicate percentages

*The respondents have given multiple answers. Total percentage was calculated from the total number of both male and female respondents separately (i.e., 20 each).

From the narratives of the respondents and table 3 it could be summarized that 80 percent of male respondents and 95 percent of female respondents are 'subject to frequent mockery from your friends and relatives'. There were 55 percent of male respondents and 85 percent of female respondents who were 'Called as Infertile' by their friends and relatives. It was found that there were 80 percent of male respondents and 95 percent of female respondents mentioned that they are considered to assumptions about potential inadequacies in relationships. 70 percent of male respondents and 90 percent of female respondents are 'considered as having personal flaws.' There were 55 percent of male respondents and 100 percent of female respondents face single shaming. There were 85 percent of male respondents and 90 percent of female respondents who are considered as fearless. There were 65 percent of male respondents and 80 percent of female respondents who are considered as sexually active. There were 55 percent of male respondents and 90 percent of female respondents who are considered as characterless. 60 percent of male respondents and 85 percent of female respondents are considered as self-centered. There were 80 percent of male respondents and 95 percent of female respondents who are considered as carefree.

In comparison to single male, it may be said that single female is frequently made fun of by their friends and family. Female who are single must deal with extra stigma. Compared to the single male, they are viewed as being far more sexually active, characterless, self-centered, and carefree.

Conclusion

This study looked into the changing views on marriage and family. A sociological analysis of singlehood concentrates on the various problems associated with living alone in the "couple world." It conceptual views explores the issues and challenges faced by single people and offers perceptive knowledge about them. It looks into the difficulties and social stigma that these single people deal with on a daily basis. It could be summarized that while single men rarely face the same prejudices as single women, women who stay unmarried are more stigmatized as lonely and unattractive spinsters. Due to unemployment and financial limitations, men continued to be single. They don't want to be single themselves. On the other hand, financially independent women are not interested in marriage. Many misconceptions are debunked about singlehood. Contradictory stereotypes are involved. In dual core, singles are associated with the stereotyped mindset. On the surface, single male and single female are described as fearless, sexually active, and carefree. On the other hand, single male and single female are also perceived as impotent, having personal flaws, and self-centered. Stereotypes about single male and single female are widespread and prevalent in all cultures.

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