

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

A Comparative Study on Life Satisfaction Level of Single Women

Dr. Licy A. D.

Associate Professor, HOD, Department of Sociology, Carmel College, Mala, Thrissur, Kerala, India

Abstract:

Feminism means movements towards creating a new order of society that ensures women's full self determined life for women. Feminism is a force that is generated out of women's unity. This force led to create new social atmosphere in Kerala society. The singleton has emerged as a distinct social category in the rapidly changing Kerala society. This paper examines the life satisfaction level of the singletons, in Kerala. It focuses on the Life satisfaction is a subjective assessment of the quality of one's life. So an attempt is made in this paper to analyse the life satisfaction level of single women with the help of a ten point scale. It included three aspects- general, social and personal life satisfaction. The result proves that most single women are satisfied with their life. The high expectations of singletons negatively affect their life satisfaction level. The life satisfaction is varying according to their education, employment, income and place of residence. It is found that religion has no influence in the level of life satisfaction of single women. Life satisfaction level of spinsters varies more on the basis of education than singletons. In both generations, higher education reduced their life satisfaction level. The employment, income and place of residence made more variation in singletons life satisfaction compared to spinsters. There is a significant association between stress and life satisfaction of single women and it indicated that high stress lead to high life satisfaction. Single women's support system and life satisfaction are associated and single women, who have high support system, they have high expectations in their life. If they can't fulfill this expectation, their life satisfaction level will decrease. The life satisfaction level of single women on the basis of motivational factors- chance and choice, indicated that there is difference between chance group and choice group in their life satisfaction level and the life satisfaction is always varying according to their motivational factors. High expectations of choice group of single women led them to low level of life satisfaction.

Keywords: Single women, spinster, Singleton and life satisfaction

1. Introduction

The changes in the last few decades are so rapid and far reaching that many thinkers look upon this as a new era in human history. The processes of industrialisation, urbanisation and secularisation have brought about many socio- psychological changes in the attitudes and values of the people. The most striking one is the emancipation of women from their traditional bound ethos challenging the institution of marriage and family.

In Kerala society, Singlehood is not a new phenomenon. From ancient times, many girls from Namboothiri families remained single. They were restricted by endogamy. That is, they were allowed to marry only from their own caste. The eldest son in the family had the right to marry from the same caste. All other Namboothiri males were allowed to establish relation or "sambantham" from other caste people. This prevented many Namboothiri girls the chance of marriage. Keralites never overlooked them but had a sympathetic eye and respect. They were very beautiful, healthy and showed interest in various fields of art and knowledge. Many modern singletons believe that the stereotype of an old maid –spinster is becoming a thing of the past. The single women have emerged as a distinct social category in rapidly changing urban India. We have a number of successful unmarried women who enjoy high status in the fields of various professions, services and social works. Today a new and positive stereotype is applied for modern single women. A modern singleton is seen as urban, highly educated, relatively young, ambitious, single minded, determined, active and a career woman. By rejecting marriage and children she has made a conscious choice to be single. This study presents the emergence of singletons as a new global sociological phenomenon of the Twenty first century and traces the generation differentials of single women in two generations – the Spinsters and Singletons.

2. Methodology

2.1. Objectives

To analyse the intergenerational difference in the level of life satisfaction of single women.

2.2. Hypotheses

The two broad hypotheses that may be formulated are:

- (1) There is generation differential among single women of Kerala with regard to Life satisfaction.
- (2) The motivational factors-chance or choice determine women and the life satisfaction level of single women.

2.3. Clarification of the Concepts

2.3.1. Single Women

Single women are those who have crossed the marriageable age (35) and are yet not married. In the present study single women belonging to two generations are studied, that is, 65 to 80 and 35 to 50.

2.3.2. Generation Differentials

According to Developmental theory, the generation differentials are considered as 'generation gap.' In this study, generation differentials mean a relative difference in the ideas of single women belonging to two generations, that is, single women of the age group of 65 to 80 and 35 to 50.

2.3.3. Spinster

Single women who are not married and do not belong to any religious organizations, and who belong to the age group of 65 to 80 are referred as spinsters.

2.3.4. Singleton

Single women who are not married and do not belong to any religious organizations, and who belong to the age group of 35 to 50, are referred as singletons.

2.3.5. Life Satisfaction

It refers to the overall well-being of the single women in two generations and a retrospective evaluation of their satisfaction of life through self-judgments.

Age, education, occupation, religion, region and place of living are considered as independent variables. Life satisfaction is the dependent variable. The interplay of these variables are analysed in this article. The present research work is designed to study the life of single women. So an analytical cum comparative design is adopted- discovering, 'what is happening', analysing, 'what has happened', inferring, 'why it is so' and suggesting 'what can be done about it'. The Universe of the study comprises of unmarried single women, not belonging to any religious organisation, of Kerala. The total sample of the study consists of 450 women selected from the unmarried single women in Thiruvananthapuram, Ernakulam and Calicut districts for getting the socio-cultural and geographical representation of the north, south and central parts of the Kerala, with 225 spinsters and 225 singletons. From each district 75 spinsters and 75 singletons, and thus 150 samples are collected from one district. Because of lack of statistical documents/reports about the single women in Kerala, researcher used snowball sampling. The Pilot study was conducted in Ernakulam district, as it was easy to get both urban and rural single women. The data collection was mainly based on primary and secondary data. Secondary data refers to that 'already recorded for some other purpose but used in the particular research project'. In this present study secondary data was collected from census reports, seminar reports, pamphlets, journals, periodicals, books, news papers, reports and publications of various associations, and various publications of the central, state and local governments. Primary data is collected from younger and older generation of single women. For collecting the primary data, the researcher developed Interview schedule and a ten point scale. The major limitation of the study is the inadequacy of the availability of recorded material, which forced the researcher to use, the Snow ball sampling, which has its own limitation.

3. Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction is considered to be the cognitive or judgmental component of subjective well-being. It manifests itself in confidence, sociability, feeling of competence and happiness. It can be assumed that life satisfaction implies qualities such as positive mental health, good temperament and low alienation. Life satisfaction reflects individual's global assessment of their present quality of life based on personally chosen criteria. Every individual performs a sum total of a variety of roles and the competence and success depends upon how one fulfills all these roles. If the roles are performed according to the expectations of the society, the individual is regarded as a socially competent person. It raises one's own image and enhances the self-esteem as a worthy person. In other words, if the role is not according to the societal norms, the self-image will decrease and he would not be considered as a worthy person. Loewenstein (1981) found that life satisfaction is significantly correlated to factors such as good health, not being lonely, living as couples, having friends and being engaged in work. She adds that life satisfaction level does not vary by sexual needs. Sousa and Lyubomirsky (2001) say that the greater the gender equality within a culture, the greater life satisfaction. The negative attitude of the society and family members always affect unfavorably the level of their life satisfaction. In 'women issues', Misra (1992) reveals that this satisfaction level of single woman depends upon the attitude of society towards them. In general, all the single women agree on the point that the disadvantages of remaining unmarried over-ride the advantages, especially in a country like India. Frijters (2000) viewed that health is a major determinant of life satisfaction and poor health is associated with a decline in latent life satisfaction. Baily and Miller (1998) have related life satisfaction to job satisfaction, interpersonal relationships,

socio-economic status, education, family background, and many other variables. All these relationships indicate that life satisfaction is a multidimensional concept. Warren (2006) in her study "Women" deals with the aspects of retirement for older men and women in Australia. She found that life satisfaction was higher for retired people with a spouse or partner than it was for single retirees. Single women expected to retire at a later age than partnered women.

One of the goals of this study is to analyse the life satisfaction level of the single women. Since life satisfaction is an individual evaluation, the respondents are asked to evaluate themselves on a ten point scale. Here, the term life satisfaction includes personal life satisfaction, social life satisfaction and general life satisfaction levels of single women. It is the retrospective evaluation of life, happiness through self- judgments referring to the overall well being of them. The ten point scale was classified into three degrees, that is, those who evaluate themselves between 21-30 are considered to have high life satisfaction, those who belong to 12-20 as moderate and those who belong to 3-11 as low life satisfaction level. Table below shows the self report of the single women about their life satisfaction level.

| | High | Moderate | Low | Total |
|------------|-------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Spinsters | 105 46.7 64.0 | 80 35.6 54.1 | 40 17.8 29.0 | 225 100 50 |
| Singletons | 59 26.2 36.0 | 68 30.2 45.9 | 98 43.6 71.0 | 225 100 50 |
| Total | 164 36.4 100 | 148 32.9 100 | 138 30.7 100 | 450 100 100 |

Table 1: Frequency of the Life satisfaction level of Single Women

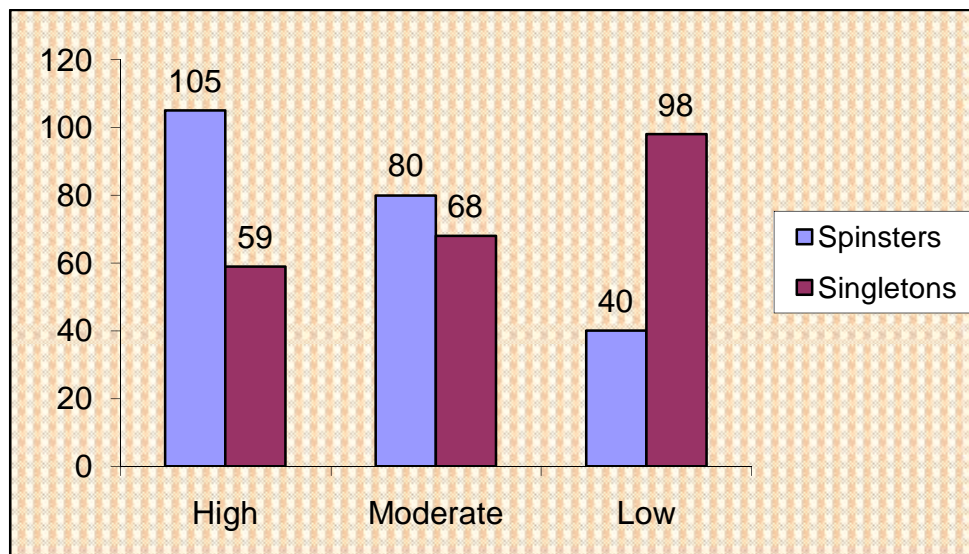


Figure 1: Life satisfaction level of Single Women

Out of total respondents (450), 36.4 percent have life satisfaction and only 30.7 percent of single women have low life satisfaction. Spinsters' indicated better life satisfaction and only 17.8 percent come under low life satisfaction. Ratra (2006) says, the popular belief that an old person who has never married will face an unhappy, lonely old age is not true. The present study proves this. But singletons rate of life satisfaction is very low. Present study compels us to analyse why more singleton's come under the low life satisfaction category than spinsters.

In traditional Indian culture, old age is considered as one of the stages of human developments that is highly respected and is authoritative in the family. Elderly people enjoy good respect in the society because of their rich worldly experience. The situation is fast changing because of the effect of rapid industrialisation, modernisation and the changing pattern of family. Sometimes, there is no one to look after them due to different reasons (Gowri *et al.* 2003). This situation may affect the life satisfaction level of spinsters and reduce the level of life satisfaction. But the present study found that singletons are better adjusted, less stressed, highly supportive, but less satisfied with their life. Michalos' Multiple-Discrepancy Theory (1986) is relevant here. According to this theory, satisfaction is determined by one's perception of "how things are" vs. "how they should be". Small discrepancies among these areas result in greater life satisfaction. Large discrepancies among these areas result in smaller life satisfaction. In the case of singletons, they have high expectation and they couldn't reach their expectation. Thus the gap between their expectations and reality is very high. So automatically their life satisfaction level decreases in proportion to their expectation.

To prove this hypothesis, Mann-Whitney Test is used. The Life satisfaction of the single women belonging to the two generations is classified and then the Mean and S.D were calculated. The differences are tested for significance by finding the Critical Ratio (C.R). The result is given in the table 2.

| | Generations | |
|----------------|-------------|------------|
| | Spinsters | Singletons |
| Mean | 17.94 | 13.62 |
| SD | 6.51 | 7.01 |
| Critical Ratio | 6.61 | |
| 'p' value | P<0.001 | |

Table 2: Mann-Whitney test on Life satisfaction of Single Women

Since the calculated Mean of spinsters is high compared to singletons, it can be said that the life satisfaction level of spinsters is high compared to singletons. The Critical ratio 6.61 is highly significant at 0.001 levels which prove that difference between the singletons and spinsters, with respect to the life satisfaction is significant. The study indicated that the Multiple discrepancy theory is relevant. This study reveals that life satisfaction level is high for spinsters because their gap between the reality and expectation is very low compared to singletons. Thus the hypothesis, there is a significant difference between spinster and singleton on their life satisfaction level is proved.

The discussions about the life satisfaction level of single women in two generations inspire us to analyse the degree of their happiness and the degree of their singlehood enjoyment. To get data for this researcher included some direct questions in the interview schedule.

3.1. Life Satisfaction and Happiness of Single Women

In the book, 'City of God', Varro (2002) reveals that the happiness of people would be one way of measuring the level of life satisfaction. If the person enjoys happiness in life, the life satisfaction level would be very high. The earlier studies pointed out that these two factors are closely related. Trimberger (2005) in his study 'The new single women' found that modern singles are happy with their life and the prospect of remaining single. At the same time, contradictory opinions are also reported by other social scientists. During the time of interview, one of the respondents revealed that an unmarried girl can lead a happy life provided she is employed, because she will be occupied, independent and could not brood over it. The new role has given women a new confidence and freedom. Most of the working women are generally happy because they have a sense of identity instead of being known in other's label. Now society appreciates her for economic contribution or takes note the creative work they do. This is the reason, why working women seem to be happier than non-working. Single women having high life satisfaction is expected to have better adjustment with her life situation and vice-versa. Earlier, in the present study, it was found out that most of the singletons became single mainly for freedom and independence. That is, the spirit of freedom allows them to enjoy more happiness in their life.

The discussions about single women's happiness, reflects that many studies have been done on this subject, but these studies have not related the stage of happiness with life satisfaction. So an attempt is made to assess the influence of happiness on the level of life satisfaction. For this respondents were asked whether they are happy in their state of singlehood. The responses are presented in the table 8.7.

| Spinsters | | | | | |
|------------|----------|----------|---------|---------|--|
| | High | Moderate | Low | Total | |
| Yes | 25 53.2 | 19 40.4 | 3 6.4 | 47 100 | |
| | 71.4 | 15.4 | 4.5 | 20.9 | |
| Somewhat | 8 15.4 | 37 71.2 | 7 13.5 | 52 100 | |
| | 22.9 | 30.1 | 10.4 | 23.1 | |
| No | 2 1.6 | 67 53.2 | 57 45.2 | 126 100 | |
| | 5.7 | 54.5 | 85.1 | 56.0 | |
| Total | 35 15.6 | 123 54.7 | 67 29.8 | 225 | |
| | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 100 | |
| Singletons | | | | | |
| Yes | 88 68.2 | 34 26.4 | 7 5.4 | 129 100 | |
| | 88 | 37.8 | 20 | 57.3 | |
| Somewhat | 5 15.2 | 25 75.8 | 3 9.1 | 33 100 | |
| | 5 | 27.8 | 8.6 | 14.7 | |
| No | 7 11.1 | 31 49.2 | 25 39.7 | 63 100 | |
| | 7 | 34.4 | 71.4 | 28.0 | |
| Total | 100 44.4 | 90 40.0 | 35 15.6 | 225 100 | |
| | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | |

Table 3: Life Satisfaction and Happiness of Single Women

The findings of the present study indicate that in both generations, those who enjoyed more happiness in their life have high life satisfaction. The responses reveal that while only 21 percent of the spinsters are happy with their singlehood life, 57 percent of the singletons are happy. Further analysis of the association between state of happiness and life satisfaction shows that 68.2 percent singletons who said they are happy are those who have high life satisfaction. The discussion about the degree of happiness is not

favourable to the findings of the statistical analysis of the life satisfaction level of single women. Here we see a contradiction that singletons are better but in the case of life satisfaction, spinsters are better than singletons. It may be because of unawareness of their life style condition. Other wise, they are not willing to reveal the exact condition of their life. Because of their prejudice, a lot of bias crept into the data which was collected through direct questions from Interview schedule. But life satisfaction scale provides a good picture of the exact satisfactory level. Here they couldn't hide about themselves.

4. Factors that Influence the Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction depends on the expectations of what one is capable of accomplishing, one's past circumstances, one's ideals, what one feels he deserves, what one minimally requires to be content, and what one ultimately believes. Generally it is believed that the life satisfaction level of single women is based on the whole aspects of their life; their education, employment, income, place of residence, religion and motivational factors. So an attempt is made to find out how far these factors influence the level of life satisfaction of single women.

Every human beings life history indicates that their ideas and attitudes directly influence their life satisfaction level. Education gives not only a modern outlook and rational perspective, but it also liberates women from their invisible enslaved chains. Moreover, education fosters a sense of independence and self-sufficiency in women (Desai 1967). The attitudes and values propagated by education play a significant role in building the personality, individuality and the entire mental makeup of an individual. Education is a means to women for economic security and it allows her to overcome her personality defects. Education help women to empowerment and raise their social status in the society. Education may also provide access to greater occupational and income opportunities, which may additionally influence life satisfaction. It is assumed that educated women enjoy higher status in the society than the uneducated women and based on their educational qualifications the life satisfaction level of the single women may vary. A One Way ANOVA was done to find out the difference between different educational groups and life satisfaction level. The results of the One Way ANOVA is presented in the table No.4.

| Spinsters | | | | | |
|------------------------------|-----|-------|------|---------|----------|
| Educational Level | N* | Mean | SD | F value | P value |
| P.G and other higher studies | 90 | 14.30 | 6.27 | 34.374 | 0.0001** |
| College education | 55 | 18.72 | 5.70 | | |
| School education | 80 | 21.51 | 5.03 | | |
| Total | 225 | 17.94 | 6.51 | | |
| Singletons | | | | | |
| P.G and other higher studies | 190 | 12.27 | 6.24 | 28.97 | 0.0001** |
| College education | 25 | 20.28 | 6.59 | | |
| School education | 10 | 22.70 | 6.07 | | |
| Total | 225 | 13.62 | 7.01 | | |

Table 4: One Way ANOVA on Education and Life Satisfaction of Single Women
*indicates number, ** statistically significant at 0.001 level

The statistical analysis shows that different educational qualifications made variations in the level of life satisfaction of single women. The variation is significant but the interesting point that can be mentioned is that the highest mean score in life satisfaction is found among lower educated single women both among spinsters and singletons. The mean score indicates that higher educated groups have lower life satisfaction level. Campbell (1976) conceptualised life satisfaction as the difference between what one wants and what one has – essentially a comparison between reality and the ideal. The distance between these two determine the level of life satisfaction of a person. In the case single women, they have their own desires about ideal life. But the real life is far away from it. For singletons' this gap is too wide. The findings of the present study are supported by Campbell and his colleagues. Lounsbury (2004) in her study 'personality and satisfaction', found that career satisfaction and life satisfaction were significantly correlated. Employment increases the quality and degree of life satisfaction. Single women's sense of self and identity are more strongly tied to their occupational status than it is for ordinary women. "Money and Power" are not still appropriate goals for women in the work place. Instead, creativity and self-fulfillment are considered more appropriate roles in these single women's definitions of themselves as 'career women'. Some single professional women seem satisfied or even ecstatic with their freedom. Carroll (2005) explains interestingly for both men and women the longer the unemployment history the greater the probability of reporting low life satisfaction. So an attempt is made to find out whether life satisfaction varies on the basis of their employment.

| Spinsters | | | | | |
|-------------------|-----|-------|------|---------|----------|
| Employed status | N* | Mean | SD | F value | P value |
| Employed/ retired | 90 | 13.59 | 6.08 | 95.424 | 0.0001** |
| Unemployed | 135 | 20.85 | 5.01 | | |
| Total | 225 | 17.94 | 6.51 | | |
| Singletons | | | | | |
| Employed/ retired | 148 | 10.51 | 5.34 | 137.266 | 0.0001** |
| Unemployed | 77 | 19.61 | 5.88 | | |
| Total | 225 | 13.62 | 7.01 | | |

Table 5: One Way ANOVA on Employment and Life Satisfaction

*indicates number ** statistically significant at 0.001 level

Here the Mean score indicates that unemployed single women have high life satisfaction level than the employed. The reason behind this fact is that the employed single women's expectations are very high and they couldn't achieve their expectations. But in the case of unemployed single women, they do not have much expectation. So the life satisfaction level of the employed single women is lower than the unemployed single women. Another interesting observation is that, compared to spinsters, singletons life satisfaction Mean Score are lower. In contemporary socio-economic structure, income is one of the most important bases of social differentiation and of distribution of power, prestige and privileges in society (Ranjan 1993). Sousa and Lyubomirsky (2001) say that there is a high relationship between life satisfaction level and the income level of individuals. He added that income appears to be a better predictor of life satisfaction than level of education. That is, the economic aspect of the single women actually determined the level of their life satisfaction.

According to Engels and Marx (1848), women employment and economic security would largely free women from economic dependence upon man. Blumberg (1984) argues that the key factor that determines the status of women in the world's societies is their level of economic power. Where women's economic power is high women are able to translate their power into relatively high status. They again say that there is a high relationship between life satisfaction level and the income level of individuals and the poorer singles obtain greater satisfaction from life because the achievement surpasses their expectations of what is attainable. This relationship is a very complicated one. In modern times, women's economic security and self-sufficiency inspire them to become single. A social dictum exists in our society is that single women are a burden to others and their life as malcolony. Economic freedom changed this situation and raised their status. Blumberg again says that single hood is a result of their economic independence and self-sufficiency. That is, income is a strong instrument for influencing the level of life satisfaction. So a One Way ANOVA is used to find out the variation in life satisfaction in relation to their income.

| Spinsters | | | | | |
|-------------------|-----|-------|------|---------|----------|
| Income level | N* | Mean | SD | F value | P value |
| Very High | 9 | 11.88 | 7.13 | 9.769 | 0.0001** |
| High | 32 | 11.25 | 4.77 | | |
| Moderate | 34 | 13.94 | 4.69 | | |
| Low | 8 | 21.75 | 4.53 | | |
| Total | 83 | 13.43 | 5.76 | | |
| Singletons | | | | | |
| Very High | 62 | 8.56 | 2.55 | 16.280 | 0.0001** |
| High | 48 | 10.08 | 4.76 | | |
| Moderate | 30 | 12.47 | 6.69 | | |
| Low | 8 | 19.50 | 5.26 | | |
| Total | 148 | 10.44 | 5.19 | | |

Table 6: One Way ANOVA on Income and Life Satisfaction

*indicates number, ** statistically significant at 0.001 level

The statistical analysis indicates that there is significant variation in the different income groups of single women in two generations. When income level increases, life satisfaction level decrease, and vice versa. That is, the life satisfaction mean score indicate that low income group of single women have high life satisfaction level. In the case of income also Michalo's (1986) theory is very relevant. Here also the gap between the expectation and reality of singleton is very wide. So singletons life satisfaction level is below the spinsters. The attitudes and behaviours of individuals vary according to their society and region. The attitudes of individuals around them determine the single women's level of life satisfaction. . So the level of life satisfaction varies in relation to their place of residence or region. One Way ANOVA is used to see whether the life satisfaction level of spinster and singleton vary according to places of residence.

| Spinsters | | | | | |
|--------------------|-----|-------|------|---------|----------|
| Place of residence | N* | Mean | SD | F value | P value |
| Rural | 87 | 20.34 | 5.74 | 20.936 | 0.0001** |
| Urban | 138 | 16.43 | 6.54 | | |
| Total | 225 | 17.94 | 6.51 | | |
| Singletons | | | | | |
| Rural | 88 | 17.75 | 6.88 | 64.194 | 0.0001** |
| Urban | 137 | 10.97 | 5.71 | | |
| Total | 225 | 13.62 | 7.01 | | |

Table 7: One Way ANOVA on Place of Residence and Life Satisfaction of Single Women
*indicates number, ** statistically significant at 0.001 level

The table indicates that there is difference between single women belonging to different region in their life satisfaction level. Singleton's regional variation is higher than spinsters. The analysis pointed out that the rural singles have high life satisfaction level than the urban single women. Here also it can be observed the relevance of Multiple Discrepancy theory. The living circumstances inspired the urban women to expect more from the life. But they couldn't achieve it. So their life satisfaction level is lesser than their rural counter parts.

In the life of single women religion is a guiding factor. Their life style inspires them to adhere with religious practices and enjoy mental relaxation. A good number of single women spend time in reflection of the Scripture and worship. Ahuja (1996) says that single women may get emotional support by engaging themselves in religious activities or talking to their spiritual friends and it is a good support more than any other source. It is quite natural that older single women are more religious minded than the younger singles. So their religious influence on life satisfaction is very high. Keeping in view the above ideas, researcher tried to find out whether there is any variation in life satisfaction level on the bases of their religion.

| Spinsters | | | | | |
|------------|-----|-------|------|---------|---------|
| Religions | N* | Mean | SD | F value | P value |
| Hindus | 118 | 18.26 | 6.60 | 2.571 | 0.079 |
| Christians | 98 | 17.19 | 6.35 | | |
| Muslims | 9 | 22.00 | 5.98 | | |
| Total | 225 | 17.94 | 6.51 | | |
| Singletons | | | | | |
| Hindus | 105 | 13.73 | 7.05 | 1.753 | 0.176 |
| Christians | 86 | 12.72 | 6.78 | | |
| Muslims | 34 | 15.41 | 7.30 | | |
| Total | 225 | 13.62 | 7.01 | | |

Table 8: One Way ANOVA on Religion and Life Satisfaction of Single Women
* indicates Number

The statistical analysis shows that there is no significant variation on life satisfaction level of single women in both generations on the basis of their religion. The Mean score observes that in both generations, Muslim single women have better life satisfaction than the other two religious groups and the spinsters have better Mean Score than singletons indicating that religion has more influence in the life of spinsters because of their value system attained during their childhood days. Our findings are supported by Sandhya and Jethani. Jethani (1994) pointed out that unmarried women of old age believe more in religious rituals and they become the prime promoters of religious beliefs. They divert their attention from worldly problems by concentrating more on religious activities. Through religion they extended their relationship networks and life satisfaction.

All these analyses prove that there is generation gap in the two category of women. That is, there is difference between spinsters and singletons with regard to their life satisfaction. The life satisfaction varies significantly on the basis of education, employment, income and region. That is when single women are better educated, employed, have good income and are residing in urban area, they have less life satisfaction. Religion is found to be having no role in the life satisfaction level of single women.

5. Life Satisfaction and Adjustment Level of Single Women

Adjustment is the satisfactory relation of an organism to its environment. It is a gradual process in day to day life. Schneiders (1960) in his study 'Personal adjustment and mental health' defined that adjustment is simply an organism's individual, peculiar way of reacting to inner demands. In some instances, this reaction is efficient, satisfying and we say that it is good adjustment. When the reaction is inefficient and unsatisfactory; we call it a bad adjustment. Good adjustment always lead us to life satisfaction. Keeping these ideas in mind, an attempt has been made here to find out the how far adjustments influence the level of life satisfaction.

| | High life Satisfaction | Moderate Satisfaction | Low Satisfaction | Total Satisfaction |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| High adjustment | 16 10.2 | 46 29.3 | 95 60.5 | 157 100 |
| | 9.8 | 31.1 | 68.8 | 34.9 |
| Moderate adjustment | 93 42.7 | 86 39.4 | 39 17.9 | 218 100 |
| | 56.7 | 58.1 | 28.3 | 48.4 |
| Low adjustment | 55 73.3 | 16 21.3 | 4 5.3 | 75 100 |
| | 33.5 | 10.8 | 2.9 | 16.7 |
| Total adjustment | 164 36.4 | 148 32.9 | 138 30.7 | 450 100 |
| | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Table 9: Life Satisfaction and Adjustment
 $\chi^2 = 139, 42 P < 0.001$, statistically significant

The chi-square analysis shows that there is association between adjustment and life satisfaction. However, interestingly the percentage analysis shows that while only 10.2 percent of highly adjusted singles have high life satisfaction, 60 percent of them have low life satisfaction. In the case of low adjustment it is otherwise. Seventy three percent low adjusted single women have high life satisfaction. It is because single women are generally adjusted with the life but they are not totally satisfied to their status of singlehood.

6. Life Satisfaction and Stress level of Single Women

It is generally believed that there is an inverse relationship between life satisfaction and stress level of single women. Earlier studies pointed out that stress of the single women is an obstacle for their satisfaction in life. So here, an attempt is made to find out whether stress is an obstacle in the life satisfaction of single women of Kerala.

| | High | Moderate | Low | Total |
|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| High stress | 25 55.6 | 12 26.7 | 8 17.8 | 45 100 |
| | 15.2 | 8.1 | 5.8 | 10.0 |
| Moderate | 101 55.5 | 56 30.8 | 25 13.7 | 182 100 |
| | 61.6 | 37.8 | 18.1 | 40.4 |
| Low | 38 17.0 | 80 35.9 | 105 47.1 | 223 100 |
| | 23.2 | 54.1 | 76.1 | 49.6 |
| Total | 164 36.4 | 148 32.9 | 138 30.7 | 450 100 |
| | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Table 10: Life Satisfaction and Stress
 $\chi^2 = 86.11, P < 0.001$, statistically significant

The Chi-square analysis indicates that there is a significant association between life satisfaction and stress. The percentage analysis shows that 55.6 percent of the high stress single women have high life satisfaction and among the low stress single women only 17.0 percent of them have high life satisfaction. Hence stress is a positive catalyst for life satisfaction. Achievement of the life goals raised the single women in the ladder of their life satisfaction. In the case of single women of Kerala, stress is not an obstacle in their life satisfaction. The table shows that high stress need not always lead to low life satisfaction.

7. Life Satisfaction and Support System Level of Single Women

Several studies have examined the relationship between social support and life satisfaction among the single women. Most of these literatures have indicated a positive relationship between social support and life satisfaction. Many studies found that social support was significantly related to life satisfaction. From the earlier studies, we can realise that in a women's life, relationships with others are very crucial for life satisfaction. So an attempt is made to know whether there is any association between single women's life satisfaction and support systems in Kerala.

| Support System | High life Satisfaction | Moderate life Satisfaction | Low life Satisfaction | Total |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|
| High support system | 16 11.3 | 44 31.0 | 82 57.7 | 142 100 |
| | 9.8 | 29.7 | 59.4 | 31.6 |
| Moderate support system | 50 30.7 | 66 40.5 | 47 28.8 | 163 100 |
| | 30.5 | 44.6 | 34.1 | 36.2 |
| Low support system | 98 67.6 | 38 26.2 | 9 6.2 | 145 100 |
| | 59.8 | 25.7 | 6.5 | 32.2 |
| Total | 164 36.4 | 148 32.9 | 138 30.7 | 450 100 |
| | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Table 11: Life Satisfaction and Support System

$X^2=132.18, P<0.001, statistically\ significant$

The Chi-square analysis of the life satisfaction and support system of the single women yields a highly significant value. Here also the inverse relationship between life satisfaction and support system is observed. The percentage analysis indicates that while only 11.3 percent of these who have high support system have high life satisfaction, 57.7 percent of them have only low life satisfaction. It is because single women, who have high support system, have high expectations also in their life. When they can't fulfill this expectation, their life satisfaction level will decrease.

8. Life Satisfaction and Motivational Factor of Single Women

Erikson (1964) says, ability to make ones own decisions and to take responsibility for ones own actions are all implied in independence. Earlier studies pointed out that the motivational factor is a strong element to determine the life satisfaction level. On the basis of this fundamental factor, an attempt is made to examine how the motivational factors influence the life satisfaction of single women of two generations.

| | High | Moderate | Low | Total |
|-------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Spinsters | | | | |
| By chance | 102 57.6 97.1 | 66 37.3 82.5 | 9 5.1 22.5 | 177 (100) 78.7 |
| By Choice | 3 6.3 2.9 | 14 29.2 17.5 | 31 64.6 77.5 | 48 (100) 21.3 |
| Total | 105 46.7 100 | 80 35.6 100 | 40 17.8 100 | 225 (100) 100 |
| Singletons | | | | |
| By chance | 57 57.6 96.6 | 36 36.4 52.9 | 6 6.1 6.1 | 99 (100) 44 |
| By Choice | 2 1.6 3.4 | 32 25.4 47.1 | 92 73.0 93.9 | 126 (100) 56 |
| Total | 59 26.2 100 | 68 30.2 100 | 98 43.6 100 | 225 (100) 100 |

Table 12: Life satisfaction and Motivational factor of the Single Women

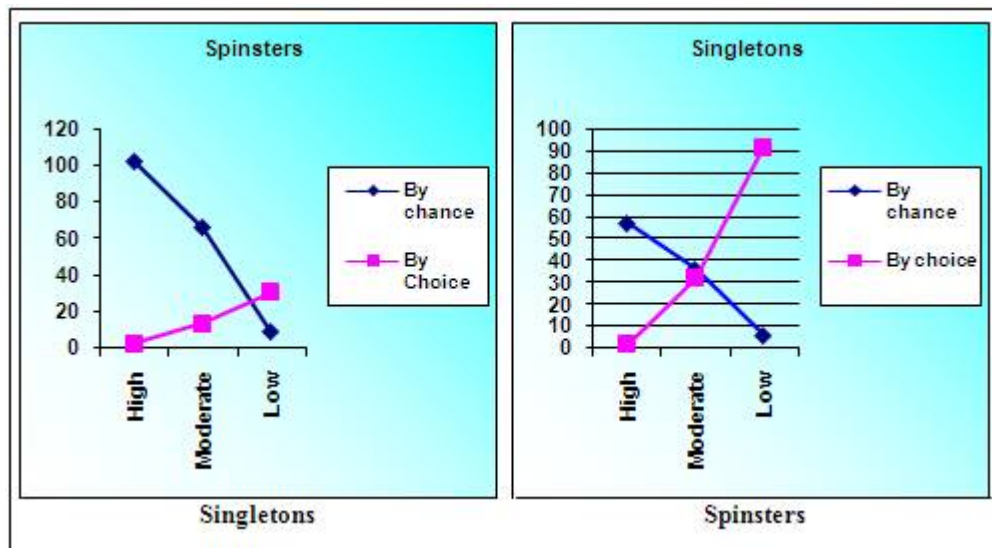


Figure 2: Life satisfaction and Motivational factor of the Single Women.

In both generations, chance group have high life satisfaction than the choice group. It is noticed that age could not make any difference between the association of motivational factor and life satisfaction. The table shows that even among singletons, who became single by their own choice, life satisfaction is very low compared to those who became single by the chance. The findings of the present study is contradictory to the findings of Kachru. Kachru (2006) revealed that single woman, who by conscious choice has decided to live without a partner, enjoyed their life and there is no bitterness and frustrations in their life. In earlier analysis of life satisfaction the same trend is found. The choice group single women's life satisfaction is very low because their life expectations are high which they could not achieve. But the chance group singles do not have that much expectations in their life. So the gap between the reality and expectations of chance group single women are not too wide. Thus their life satisfaction is high compared to choice group.

One of the hypothesis of the study is that the motivational factors-chance and choice determine the level of life satisfaction of single women in both generations. Before proving the hypothesis an attempt is made to find out the difference between chance group and choice group on their life satisfaction level. The total single women belonging to the two major motivational factors were classified as chance group and choice group. Then the Mean and S.D were calculated. The difference between total life satisfaction levels of two groups were tested for significance by finding the Critical Ratio (C.R). The results are shown in table 8.14. Here the standard deviation is high, so Mann-Whitney test for testing the equality of means of Total support system is applied.

| | Motivational Factors | |
|----------------|----------------------|--------------|
| | Chance Group | Choice Group |
| Number | 276 | 174 |
| Mean | 6.63 | 3.25 |
| SD | 1.94 | 1.39 |
| Critical Ratio | 14.79 | |
| 'p' value | P<0.001 | |

Table 13: Mann-Whitney Test on Life Satisfaction and Motivational factors

The statistical calculations indicate that the difference between the chance group and choice group in the case of their life satisfaction is significant. The Mean Score of the choice group single women life satisfaction level is around half of the Mean Score of life satisfaction level of the chance group single women. It indicates that motivational factors of singlehood are strong to determinants in the level of life satisfaction single women.

A One Way ANOVA is used to find whether the spinsters and singletons of different motivational groups vary in life satisfaction level.

| Spinsters | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----|-------|------|---------|----------|
| Motivational factors | N* | Mean | SD | F value | P value |
| Chance | 177 | 19.97 | 5.39 | 124.367 | 0.0001** |
| Choice | 48 | 10.48 | 4.56 | | |
| Total | 225 | 17.95 | 6.51 | | |
| Singletons | | | | | |
| Chance | 99 | 19.47 | 5.91 | 272.155 | 0.0001** |
| Choice | 126 | 9.02 | 3.51 | | |
| Total | 225 | 13.62 | 7.01 | | |

Table 14: One Way ANOVA on Motivational factors and Life Satisfaction of Single Women

*indicates number, ** statistically significant at 0.001 level

The analysis shows that there is significant variation on life satisfaction level of single women by motivational factors in both generations. In both generations, majority of single women who come under 'chance' group, belongs to high life satisfaction level and those who belong to 'choice' group; their life satisfaction level is low. Motivational factors made variation in life satisfaction to a higher extent in the chance group than in the choice group in both generations. Here also the same trend already found in earlier analysis is seeing, that is, choice group singles have high motivation or ambitions in their life. But as couldn't achieve these goals, their life satisfaction level became very low compared to the chance group. The hypothesis of the study, the motivational factors-chance and choice determine the life satisfaction level of single women has been proved.

9. Conclusion

Life satisfaction is a subjective assessment of the quality of one's life. So an attempt is made in this chapter to analyse the life satisfaction level of single women with the help of a ten point scale. It included three aspects- general, social and personal life satisfaction. The result proves that most single women are satisfied with their life. Only 30.7 percentage of single women have low life satisfaction, spinsters revealed they have better life satisfaction, only 17.8 percent of spinsters come under low life satisfaction section. But 43.6 percentage of singletons revealed that they have low life satisfaction. Singletons' Mean score is also low compared to spinsters. The high expectations of singletons negatively affect their life satisfaction level. The statistical tool, Mann Whitney test proved that the hypothesis, there is a significant difference between spinsters and singletons in their life satisfaction level.

The analysis found that the level of life satisfaction is varying according to their education, employment, income and place of residence. It is found that religion has no influence in the level of life satisfaction of single women. It is found life satisfaction level of spinsters varies more on the basis of education than singletons. In both generations, higher education reduced their life satisfaction level. The employment, income and place of residence made more variation in singletons life satisfaction compared to spinsters. The percentage distribution and Chi-square analysis found that there is significant relationship between the dependent variables adjustment, stress and support system and life satisfaction level of single women. It is found that the adjustment and life satisfaction are highly associated. The study found, the high stress need not always lead them to low life satisfaction. There is a significant association between stress and life satisfaction of single women and it indicated that high stress lead to high life satisfaction. Single

women's support system and life satisfaction are associated and single women, who have high support system, they have high expectations in their life. If they can't fulfill this expectation, their life satisfaction level will decrease.

The analysis of the life satisfaction level of single women on the basis of motivational factors- chance and choice, indicated that there is difference between chance group and choice group in their life satisfaction level and the life satisfaction is always varying according to their motivational factors. With the help of statistical analysis, the hypothesis the motivational factors –chance and choice determines the life satisfaction level of single women has been proved significantly. The findings of the present study pointed out that the Mean score of life satisfaction of the choice group is lesser than the chance group. High expectations of choice group of single women led them to low level of life satisfaction. However, with the help of statistical analysis of ANOVA found that the level of life satisfaction is varying according to their motivational factors-chance and choice.

10. References

- i. Adams, Christine.1996. 'A choice not to wed? Unmarried women in 18th century France'. *Journal of Social History*. 29(4): 883-885.
- ii. Adams, M.1971. 'The Single Women in today's Society'. *The American Journal of orthopsychiatry*.41: 776-786.
- iii. Adams, M. 1976. *Single Blessedness: Observations on the single status in Married society*. New York: Basic Books.
- iv. Adithi, N. 2000. *Personality, stress perceptions and stress tolerance levels of working and non-working women*. PhD thesis. Thiruvananthapuram: University of Kerala.
- v. Ahuja, Mukesh.1996. *WIDOWS: Role adjustments and violence*. New Delhi: Wishwa Prakashan.
- vi. Allen, Katherine.R.1989 *Single women family Ties*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- vii. Baetlett, W.E and Oldham, D. 1978. 'Career adjustment counseling of young and old women'. *Vocational Guidance quarterly*. 27(2): 156-164.
- viii. Bailey, R.C and Miller, C .1998. 'Life satisfaction and life demands in college students'. *Social Behaviour and Personality*. 27(3): 51-56.
- ix. Bakos, Susan. C.1985.*This was not supposed to Happen: Single Women, Over 30 Talks about Frankly About their Lives*. New York: Continuum.
- x. Campbell, Angus.1976. *The quality of American Life*. New York: Sage Publication.
- xi. Cannon, W.B.1935. 'Stresses and Strains of Homeostasis'. *American journal of medical sciences*. 189 (1): 1-14.
- xii. Carroll, Nick. 2005. *Unemployment and Psychological Well-Being*. New Delhi: ANU Centre for Economic Policy Research.
- xiii. Chaterjee, H.1957. 'Position of women as reflected in the forms of Marriage'. *Calcutta Review*. October. 15 (1): 67-72
- xiv. Chaterjee, S.K .1975. 'Position of Women in Subansiri'. *Arunachal News*. 4 (8) Nov: 21-24.
- xv. Chaturvedi, Archana. 2006. 'Single Women and Accommodation Problem'. *Women's Link*. 12 (3) July-Sep: 47-58.
- xvi. Cross, Linda Berg.2004. 'Single Professional Women: A global Phenomenon Challenges and Oppertunities'. *Journal of International Women's Studies* .Vol.5. June: 12-28.
- xvii. Dalton, Sandra .T.1992. 'Lived experience of Never-married women'. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing*. Vol. 13.No. 2. April-June: 527- 538.
- xviii. Darrington, Jana; Piercy.W. Kathleen and Niehuis, Sylvia .2005. 'The social and cultural Construction of Single hood among Young, Single Mormons'. *The Qualitative Report*. 10 (4) Dec: 639-661.
- xix. Desai, A.R.1967. 'Social Change and Educational Policy'. Gore, M.S. *Sociology of education in India*.PP. 28-41. New Delhi: NCERT.
- xx. Desai, Arvindrai. N. 1972. 'The Spinster Has a World to Win'. *Social Welfare*. 18 (11) : 15-22.
- xxi. Desai, Neera .1945. *Stratification among the Muslims*. Delhi: Manohar Book Service.
- xxii. Desai, Neera.1957. *Women in Modern India*. Bombay: Vora and co. Publishers.
- xxiii. Ean Tan Joo.2002. 'Living Arrangement of Never – married Thai women in a time of Rapid Social Change'. *SOJOURN*. 17 (1): 24-51.
- xxiv. Edwards, M and Hoover, E.1974. *The Challenge of Being Single*. Los Angeles: J.P.Tarcher.
- xxv. Engels, Frederich and Marx, Karl.1848. *The Communist Manifesto*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- xxvi. Engels, Frederich. 1884. *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the state*. New York: International Publishers.
- xxvii. Erikson, E.H .1964. 'Inner and outer Space: Reflections on Woman hood'. *Daedalus*. 93: 582-606.
- xxviii. Frijters, Paul. 2000. *Can the large swings in Russian life satisfaction be explained by ups and downs in real incomes?* Germany: University of Melbourne.
- xxix. Ghadially, R and Kumar, Pramod. 1986. *Staying as Single Women*. *Social Welfare*. 33 (4) July: 10-12.
- xxx. Ghosh , D.2003. 'Single 'n' swinging'. *The Week*. 23rd. Jan.P.5.
- xxxi. Gordon, Tuula .1994. *Single women: On the margins?* London: Macmillan.
- xxxii. Gowri, Geetha R; Reddy, P.J and Usharani, D.2003. *Elderly Women: A study of the unorganized sector*. New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House.
- xxxiii. Gulathi, Leela.1978. *Gender Profile – Kerala*. New Delhi: Royal Netherlands Embassy.
- xxxiv. Jethani, Urmila.1994. *Single Women*. Jaipur: Rawat Publications.
- xxxv. Kachru, Asha.2006. *Single Women: No Problem! Challenging Indian Realities*. New Delhi: The Women Press.
- xxxvi. Kapoor, Deepti. 2005. 'Single and swinging'. *The Week*. 23 (13) Feb: 41-44.
- xxxvii. Kapur, Promilla.1970. *Marriage and working women in India*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House.

- xxxviii. Lieberman, Seymour.1956. 'The effects of changes in the roles on the attitudes of roles occupants'. Human relations. 9 (4): 385-402.
- xxxix. Limaye, Champa.1999. WOMEN: Power and Progress. Delhi: B.R. Publishing Corporation.
- xl. Lounsbury, John W. 2004. 'Personality, Career Satisfaction and Life satisfaction: Test of a directional model'. Journal of career Assessment. 12 (4) November: 395-406.
- xli. Loewenstein, Sophie Freud. 1981. 'A study of satisfaction and stress of single women in mid life'. Journal of Women's History. 7 (11) November: 1127-1141.
- xlii. Marx, Karl.1864. Capital: A Critical analysis of capitalistic production. Vol.1. New York: International Publishers.
- xliii. Maslow, A.H.1954. Motivation and personality. New York: Harper.
- xliv. Matheson, Jill and Babb, Penny (2002) Social Trends. London: National statistical publications.
- xlv. Michalos, Alex C.1986. An Application of Multiple discrepancies theory (MDT) to seniors. Social Indicators Research. 40 (3) May: 32-48.
- xlvi. Mishra, Sangeetha.1993. Status of Women in Changing urban Hindu family. New Delhi: Radha publications.
- xlvii. Misra, Lakshmi.1992. Women's issues- An Indian Perspective. New Delhi: Northern Book Centre.
- xlviii. Pandey, Veena Pani .2002. Problems of women's marriage and violence. New Delhi: Mohit Publications.
- xlix. Ranjan, Kumud .1993. Women and Modern Occupation in India. Allahabad: Chugh Publications.
- l. Schneiders, A.A.1960. Personal adjustment and Mental Health. New York: Renehast and Winston.
- li. Trimberger, E.Kay.2005. The New Single Women. Boston: Beacon Press.
- lii. Wakil, Parvezs.1980. 'To be or to be married'. International Journal of Sociology of the Family. July-Dec.10: 311-318.
- liii. Welsh, Kylie.2004. Single, white females. London: Zeus publications.
- liv. William F. Buckley jr. 2000. 'Unmarried Women Behind the Crisis'. National Review. 52 (24): 994-1012.
- lv. www.nairs.in/acha_j.htm dt. 28/4/2007
- lvi. www.malayogam.esmartweb.com dt. 28/4/2007
- lvii. www.kudamaloorsarmaji.com/jathakam.asp dt. 28/4/2007
- lviii. www.censusindia.net dt. 16/5/ 2007
- lix. www.censuskerala.org dt. 16/5/2007
- lx. www.mozdir.com/women/spinsters dt. 16/5/2007
- lxi. www.clas.ufi_edu.users/gathers dt. 16/5/ 2007
- lxii. www.csa.com/journals dt.22/6/2008
- lxiii. www.geocities.com/mpsjournals dt. 22/6.2008
- lxiv. www.journals.uchicago.edu/signs. dt. 22/6/2008