



## Perception of Single Women towards Marriage, Career and Education

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### Abstract:

*'Women today are more practical and rational than earlier'*

*From being a superior subordinate in the family who preferred being a home-maker to having a career and who largely went by her husband's diktats to one who considers herself equal to her husband and plays an important role in important financial decisions, the Indian women has never been as expressive and independent as she is today. Today modern women are more sensible when it comes to marriage. She does not hang of her hopes as dreams on finding prince charming but she does put a lot of focus on making solid choices and taking care of herself.*

*Over the past decades, there have been many changes in the attitudes towards marriage among women in the world. These attitudes are caused by today's society and women being more focused on their career than getting married. Many women are investing a lot of time in higher education and pursuing careers, and in the process they're deferring marriage.*

*Today women are also obtaining advanced degrees and becoming more successful in work place. They are giving much more importance to the education and career as they want to become self dependent. Education for single women is much more important because it is only after achieving education that they can get a job. It is necessary for their survival to be economically independent.*

*However, not much research has been done on single women .Yet, because of their special status, and they deserve a critical outlook analysis. The present study is a small attempt to throw light on the*

*status and problems of unmarried working women, which so far have received little scholarly attention in India.*

**Key words:** Perception, Single woman, career, marriage, education.

Being single was not the dominating reality of my Life until others  
makes you aware of it  
-A respondent

The above judgment may be seen as an articulation of socio-cultural belief. Such expression encompasses several issues, such as: why is a woman to remain dependent on males? Why is it difficult for a woman to decide her own life space? Does marriage have to be the be-all end –all of a woman's life? More specifically, can a woman choose to remain single throughout her life in the existing Indian social set up? What are the options before her?

Getting marriage is one of the big decisions in a woman's life. Historically, women have not had access to the same opportunities as men which encouraged them to marry just to make a better life for themselves. Today woman have more option, among which one of them is the right to be single.

Throughout history, a very different picture has been painted when it comes to the Single Woman vs. the Single Man. Single men are seen as "bachelors" - independent, having fun, and enjoying life to its fullest before getting "chained down" by a woman. Single women on the other hand, have long been seen as less than whole if they're not attached, lonely spinsters, and cat ladies. Hopefully by now in the age of human equality, we all know these archaic views is just that - out of date, and untrue? Over the past decades, there have been many changes in the attitude toward marriage among the women and other society members. These attitudes are caused by today society and woman being more focused on their career then getting married. It has been observed that increased options outside marriage are more influential in a women's decision not to marry, than the increased barriers to marriage.

According to Science Careers magazine, one reason that women might have less confidence than men in their careers is the pressures that they face in raising a family. And many women choose

a fulfilling career over a committed relationship today because they now have the freedom to make that choice. (Danzon 2011).

According to Matthew Fitzgerald (2009) reason for staying single is that you can enjoy the opportunity of building your career without draining the tons of energy a permanent relationship entails. You remain free to put in long hours, work on the weekends or do whatever else you have to do to be successful. This is especially true if you're working in any kind of time-demanding field, such as medicine, law or entrepreneurship.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, there are more than 14 million unmarried women living alone -- about 15.2% of the total households in the nation. That percentage climbs slightly each year. In fact, in 2005 for the first time ever, households run by singles outnumbered households headed by married couples (Cory 2009). Experts say that the divorce rate is one factor contributing to the trend. Another is a tendency among better educated, more secure women to postpone marriage.

Whatever the social pressure, it is clear that singles have been growing in number in India. The figures reveal that, since the 1960s, there has been a marked increase in never-married woman. A brief survey of the Census Report 1961-1991 reveal that numerically they form a significant percentage of the population and therefore should not be overlooked. A census conducted in 1980 revealed that a large number of highly educated woman were still unmarried despite being above 40 year of age.

Regarding the changing attitude towards marriage, education and employment and single women, a few of the Asian studies, such as those Merchant (1935); Kapadia (1954); Desai (1959); Ross (1961); Hate (1969); KrishnaMurty (1970); Tripathi (1967); Narain (1975); Salaff (1981); Krishnakumari (1987); Rozario (1986); Rathaur (1990); Borooah (1993); Jethani (1994); Palariwala and Agnihotri (1994,1999) have shown that the attitudes of educated women particularly educated women, have considered changed especially with regard to own status and with regard to marriage and the problems and constraints of the single women in specifically.

In a country like Bangladesh, where the purdah system is still prevent, a study conducted by Santi Rozario(1986) found that there has been an increase in the number of never married women among Muslim, Hindu and Christian Bengalis since the early 1970s. The

causes for this new emerging phenomenon are related to socio – economic changes that have been taking place in Bangladesh since 1971. In her recent study (1998) 'Disjunctions and Continuities: Dowry and the position of Single women in Bangladesh', the same author has stated that, besides other factors, dowry has acted as one of the causes for an increase in the number of girls remaining unmarried. Marcia Bedard (1992) and others contend that the happiness of single people is related to meeting their social and economic needs, not to the issue of being single.

A survey on single woman done by the website single-woman-today.com has find out certain reasons for woman being single.

Career driven: "I have not put off relationships but my career comes before love. If marriage doesn't happen, so be it." - Rachel, 38 an IT manager.

One of the main reasons why women stay single is because women today are more driven to get the next promotion, become financially secure and to enjoy the fruits of their education and hard work. Marriage is way down in their list of goals to achieve.

The Asian avoidance of marriage is new, and striking. Only 30 years ago, just 2% of women were single in most Asian countries. The share of unmarried women in their 30s in Japan, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong has risen 20 points or more. In Thailand, the number of women entering their 40s without being married increased from 7% in 1980 to 12% in 2000. In some cities, rates of non-marriage are higher: 20% among women aged 40-44 in Bangkok; 27% among 30-34-year-olds in Hong Kong. In South Korea, young men complain that women are on "Marriage strike."

"Becoming financially secure:- Because of education and exposure, women are becoming financially literate. They have learned to put their money on high yield investments and manage their finances. Many never married women are proud house owners and live a comfortable lifestyle. There is no longer a need to marry for financial security".

Independent: "I am 50 and never married. I never wanted to. I have a satisfying job, my own apartment, and I enjoy my living space. I have a circle of friends and I meet my nuclear family often. I dine, travel, shop and jog alone but I don't feel odd. My hobbies like reading, writing and practicing yoga keep me energized. I don't want my life any other way" - Angela, a bachelorette, 50

Women have learned to create their own safe havens. They know how to feel good about themselves and manage their lives without the presence of men. They love the autonomy, of not being controlled and told what to do, when and how to do things. Not having to answer for their actions and decisions is bliss.

No desire for marriage:-One of the reasons why women stay single is because they have no desire for marriage. There are women who find meaning in life only through their faith and religion. And there are some individuals who have experienced traumatic childhood like rape or sexual abuse and have closed themselves off from intimacy and marriage.

The modern woman sees a life that is wide open for her and one with many opportunities and possibilities .While she is not against marriage ,She wants to succeed at her chosen career and she wants to be able to contribute to the overall wellbeing of a family, including from a financial angles.

In recent years, the increasing incidence of single hood among middle-class women is explained by their economic independence (Baker 1967; Adams 1976; Braito and Anderson 1983). Similar views are expressed by Freeman and Klaus, who opine that ‘employed or financially independent middle-class women ,no longer regarded marriage ,as necessary for financial support or for self respect .There are new acceptable means to earn money and a growing openness about the fragility of happiness in marriage.

The trend among women to wed later is closely related to education. The more education a woman has received, the more likely she is to delay marriage. For women in the 25 to 29 year old age bracket, 40% are single. However, of the university graduates in this same age bracket, 54% are single. Of the women in this age bracket with no more than a high school education, only 25% have remained single. (Sumiko Iwao 2011)

Nine of every 10 women still want to get married, but the kind of marriage they want has changed a lot in the past decade. There’s more emphasis on careers than ever before. Remaining a single woman is a choice that females often make in today society and it’s becoming a more popular and accepted practice. Woman today are enjoying more success and independence than ever before and taking advantage of professional opportunities. Choosing to stay single is

becoming a preferred way of life for more woman today than at any other time.

"The cultural pattern is still for men to choose woman who are not their equals, even though women are increasingly becoming their equals in their careers and their education," said Laurel Richardson, a sociology professor at Ohio State University who has written a new book on single women and their options, "The New Other Woman." (The Free Press).

Today women are also obtaining advanced degrees and becoming more successful in work place. They are giving much more importance to the education and career as they want to become self dependent. Education for single women is much more important because it is only after achieving education that they can get a job. It is necessary for their survival to be economically independent. Educational attainment of a woman plays an important part in determining her standard of living, socio-cultural status and esteem in the society. Educational attainment influences her outlook, her attitude towards changing times and her capacity for adjustment to the myriad demands of her circumstances. Educational status can therefore be considered a useful index to socio-economic position of an individual. Previously they used to get married at early age but now time has changed. The researcher has selected this topic to know the perception of woman and the factors which are responsible for such a changes i.e. women becoming more self dependent and getting married late.

### **1.5 Objectives of the study**

- 1) To study the perception of single woman towards education
- 2) To study the perception of single woman towards career
- 3) To study the perception of single woman towards marriage

### **1.6 Research questions**

- 1) What is the perception of single woman towards education?
- 2) What is the perception of single woman towards career?
- 3) What is the perception of single woman towards marriage?

### **1.7 Delimitations of the study**

1. This study will be delimited to the Punjab state.
2. This study will be delimited to the Jalandhar district of Punjab state.

3. The study will be limited only to the single women with different job profiles of Jalandhar district.

### **Method, Procedure and Sample**

In the present study the descriptive method is designed keeping in mind the aim of the study i.e. Perception of Single Woman Towards Marriage, Career and Education. The sampling frame for the present study constitutes multiple of different occupational women of Jalandhar district.. For present study the stratified & purposive sampling was used to draw the sample. 120 Women of different job profiles from Jalandhar district were selected for the study. In order to conduct the present study the investigator visited different women who are unmarried and are above the age of 28 years and working at different job profiles.

In the present study the investigator used the self developed scale on the “Perception of single women towards marriage, career and education.”

### **Results and Interpretations**

In order to exercise the perception of single women towards marriage, career and education, the investigators used questionnaire for collecting data. Collected data was analyzed with the help of percentage value.

Table 3.1 shows that majority of the respondent were those who remained single out of their individual choice, cited reasons such as pursuit of career, unwillingness to marry, desire for self identity and independence, high ambitions, and dedication of life for a noble cause. They agreed that women can take better care of her parents if she is single.

They were not against the institution of marriage or were not influenced by other causes like physical disability among women; past experience of others like divorce, adultery, relationship; past experience of women itself; social maladies; fear of losing independence after marriage; expiry of age or the financial problem of parents. Single women think that marriage is not a barrier to achieve their goals of life. But they are afraid of getting victim of violence after marriage or lose their identity.

Table 3.2 interprets majority of the single women want to make their own way in the society. They want to be independent in

their life. They prefer career more than their relationships. They want to compete with others in the society. They have so career oriented that they are ready to do night jobs and consider them safe for themselves. They think that marriage will bond their freedom, they will not be able to do whatever they want to do within their career hence they remain single.

According to Science Careers magazine, one reason that women might have less confidence than men in their careers is the pressures that they face in raising a family. And many women choose a fulfilling career over a committed relationship today because they now have the freedom to make that choice. (Danzer 2011). Now-a-days women usually prefer to take up a job and be economically and financially secure and in this process at times they cross marriageable age or become very ambitious. Women who are ambitious about her career might not wish to enter into marital life. Careers imply a long, if not lifetime commitment to moving upward through a series of related occupations and status according to a schedule (International Encyclopedia of Social Science 1972; 252).

According to Matthew Fitzgerald (2009) reason for staying single is that a women can enjoy the opportunity of building her career without draining the tons of energy a permanent relationship entails. She remain free to put in long hours, work on the weekends or do whatever else she has to do to be successful.

From table 3.3 it is clear that single women want to be economically independent for which they think that education is an important aspect. Almost majority of women are in favor of education. They consider education as an important tool for the survival in the society. Women consider education as an important factor, helping them in decision making. They believe that educated women can do all the things as men in their profession as education makes the women self-confident & help them to build up their self- esteem.

But they do not consider marriage as a barrier in the way to attain formal education. Majority of single women believe that even less educated women can lead a happy & independent life.

## **Conclusion**

The study concludes that woman who are independent, who stand on their own two feet usually have higher expectations for their



spouses. A career is an important and necessary component of their lives providing them with economic security, social identify and freedom to pursue an independent life. For many of the woman their career was a significance factor which enables them to negotiate specific life style choices.

The new opportunities for education and employment, the emergence of new socio-economic patterns, as a result of growing patterns of urbanization and new developmental models as well as the privileges of new, equal, legal and political rights to women, are also slowly changing the traditional concepts of the role and status of women in contemporary Indian society.

Most of the single women are happy to be single, have thinking and working freedom and earn self-sufficient income. Most women believe that marriage is not necessary and not good for woman. Single woman are able to take care of themselves without marriage. Marriage is not good because it is woman burdens with regard to being single, all single women believe that single makes their lives flexible and independent in terms of living, working, finance, private time, resulting in value and happiness.

Women have shown improvement in education and now are a big part of the workforce. With this in their hands, women no longer have the need to rely on men for support. Today those women who marry latter are likely to have a career, be financially stable and be at least middle class.

Education for single women was very important because it was only after acquiring education that they could get a job. In some cases, girls were unwilling to marry in the absence of a suitable partner of their choice, academic caliber and understanding, etc. The parental house seems to offer the best possible security to single women. This also indicates that familial relationship still ensures help and support to same single women in the changing society. They feel that the parental house or living with parents provides them with a feeling of security and respectability. The women considering the factor of security do not prefer to live in rented accommodation. The study also revealed that whether or not their decision was voluntary, their family members provided support, especially parents.

The study has indicated that there is a qualitative acceptance of education as a necessity for women. This represents a clean departure from the traditional outlook on the primary role of women

in society as homemaker or wife/mother. Earlier the education of women was not considered a primary thing. While discussing choice and voluntariness it was evident that some women have decided to be single whilst others have opted for singlehood because of decisions they had made at various stages in their lives or because circumstances had not been in favor of them.

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**Table 3.1 Showing Results Pertaining to the Perception of Single Women towards Marriage**

Sr. No	QUESTIONS	SD	A	N	D	SD
1.	Single women get equal respect in society as the married women	21 (17.5)	64 (53.3)	23 (19.16)	12 (10)	0 (0)
2.	It is good for single women to have male friend than to get married.	5 (4.16)	15 (12.5)	48 (40)	49 (40.8)	3 (2.5)
3.	The single woman not married is in better position to take care of her parents.	20 (16.6)	52 (43.3)	39 (32.5)	7 (5.8)	2 (1.66)
4.	The single women finds acceptance in the contemporary Society, even though not married.	10 (8.3)	61 (50.8)	39 (32.5)	10 (8.3)	0 (0)
5	The single women can lead a happy life without any male support.	15 (12.5)	39 (32.5)	53 (44.16)	11 (9.16)	2 (1.66)
6.	Physical disability among women is one of the cause for being unmarried.	0 (0)	15 (12.5)	34 (33.9)	50 (41.6)	21 (17.5)
7.	The experience of others like divorce, adultery, relationship also causes the women not to marry.	0 (0)	10 (8.3)	41 (34.16)	56 (46.6)	13 (10.8)
8.	Sometimes, past experience of women is the cause to remain single.	2 (1.66)	13 (10.8)	43 (35.8)	48 (40)	14 (11.66)
9.	The women think that marriage is a barrier in the way to achieve their goals of life.	5 (4.16)	20 (16.6)	42 (35)	42 (35)	11 (9.16)
10	The women show reluctance to marriage due to fear of losing their independence	2 (1.66)	13 (10.8)	48 (40)	41 (34.16)	16 (13.33)
11	Women remain single because the age of marriage expires.	3 (2.5)	18 (15)	40 (33.3)	48 (40)	11 (9.16)
12	The financial problem of parents is one of the causes to remain single.	3 (2.5)	18 (15)	38 (31.6)	54 (45)	7 (5.83)
13	Women prefer to remain single as she is afraid of becoming victim of violence	22 (18.3)	36 (30)	37 (30.8)	21 (17.5)	4 (3.33)
14	Sometimes social maladies make women lose interest in marriage.	1 (0.8)	15 (12.5)	36 (30)	51 (42.5)	17 (14.6)
15	Now a day's woman remains single because they are not to find suitable match.	0 (0)	20 (16.6)	34 (28.3)	49 (40.8)	17 (14.16)

Values in bracket show percentage

**Table 3.2 Showing Results Pertaining to the Perception of Single Women Towards Career.**

Sr. No.	QUESTION	SA	A	N	D	SD
1.	The late night jobs are safe for women	11 (9.16)	37 (30.8)	43 (35.5)	22 (18.3)	7 (5.83)
2	The career opportunities for women come to an end after marriage.	4 (34.16)	16 (3.33)	22 (18.3)	57 (47.5)	21 (17.5)
3	In present scenario, women are more conscious of high status and luxurious life.	14 (11.66)	64 (53.3)	35 (29.16)	7 (5.83)	0 (0)
4	Women do not want to lag behind in the society.	24 (20)	70 (58.3)	19 (15.8)	7 (5.83)	0 (0)
5	Now a day's women give more preference to their career than relationship	16 (13.3)	52 (43.3)	34 (28.33)	18 (15)	0 (0)
6	Women remain unmarried because they want freedom.	26 (21.6)	47 (39.16)	27 (22.5)	15 (12.5)	5 (4.16)
7	Women do not want to depend on others for the fulfillment of her needs.	22 (18.3)	62 (51.66)	28 (23.3)	5 (4.16)	3 (2.5)
8	Women want to prove her worth in the society by remaining single. Women want to prove her worth in the society by remaining Single	17 (14.16)	43 (35.8)	34 (28.3)	22 (18.3)	4 (3.33)
9	By remaining single, women want to contribute to the welfare of society	13 (10.8)	48 (40)	42 (35)	16 (13.3)	1 (0.8)
10	Single women want to secure their future by attaining higher education.	30 (25)	45 (37.5)	33 (21.5)	12 (10)	0 (0)
11	Women do not marry as to give priority to their career.	24 (20)	49 (40.8)	31 (25.8)	15 (12.5)	1 (0.8)
12	Women want to excel in her career by remaining single.	15 (12.5)	42 (35)	45 (37.5)	16 (13.3)	2 (1.66)
13	Women have learnt to create their own heaven so they choose career first	26 (21.66)	55 (45.8)	26 (21.6)	11 (9.16)	2 (1.66)

Values in bracket shows percentage

**Table 3.3 Showing Results Pertaining to the Perception of Single Women Towards Education.**

Sr. No	QUESTIONS	SA	A	N	D	SD
1.	Women's rising economic independence and investment in accumulation, is clearly the reason behind for delayed marriage.	25 (20.8)	54 (45)	32 (26.6)	8 (6.66)	1 (0.8)
2.	Without education a women cannot survive in present society.	41 (34.16)	49 (40.8)	20 (16.66)	10 (8.33)	0 (0)
3.	Educated women are aware of their legal rights.	40 (33.3)	49 (40.8)	21 (17.5)	10 (8.33)	0 (0)
4.	Education develops decision making ability among women.	39 (32.5)	57 (47.5)	14 (1.66)	8 (6.66)	2 (1.66)
5.	Education develops the personality of women.	38 (31.66)	51 (42.5)	22 (18.3)	8 (6.66)	1 (0.8)
6	Educated women are on equal footing with man.	44 (36.6)	41 (34.16)	26 (21.66)	7 (5.83)	2 (1.66)
7	Education develops self confidence and self esteem among women.	44 (36.6)	55 (45.8)	16 (13.33)	4 (3.33)	1 (0.8)
8	Through education women becomes emotionally strong.	34 (28.3)	61 (50.8)	17 (14.16)	7 (5.83)	1 (0.8)
9	Women think that without education, good and independent life is impossible	2 (1.66)	11 (9.16)	16 (13.33)	59 (49.16)	32 (26.66)
10	Women want recognition of their single status at the national or international level.	33 (27.5)	51 (42.5)	25 (20.83)	10 (8.33)	1 (0.8)
11	By education women learn to believe in their actions not on their fate.	41 (34.16)	55 (45.8)	18 (15)	5 (4.16)	1 (0.8)
12	Women uphold this viewpoint; education helps them in the realization of their dreams.	54 (45)	45 (37.5)	18 (15)	2 (1.66)	1 (0.8)
13	Single women want to secure their future by attaining higher education.	30 (25)	45 (37.5)	33 (21.5)	12 (10)	0 (0)

Values in brackets shows percentage