

EXPLORING THE PERCEPTIONS OF SINGLE WOMEN
ON EDUCATING THEIR GIRL CHILDREN
(A STUDY IN WARANGAL DISTRICT, TELANGANA)

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DECLARATION

I, Rashmitha Reddy, hereby declare that this dissertation entitled '**Exploring the Perceptions of single women on educating their girl children** (A study in Warangal district, Telangana)' is the outcome of my own study undertaken under the guidance of Dr. Jayasree Subramanian, Associate Professor, Azim Premji School of education, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Hyderabad. It has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, or certificate of this Institute or of any other institute or university. I have duly acknowledged all the sources used by me in the preparation of this dissertation.

26.03.2018

Rashmitha Reddy

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled ‘ **Exploring the Perceptions of single women on educating their girl children** (A study in Warangal district, Telangana)’ is the record of the original work done by Rashmitha Reddy under my guidance and supervision. The results of the research presented in this dissertation have not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, or certificate of this Institute or any other institute or university.

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Glossary

Vidakulu : Meaning of divorce according to Telugu community

Vitantuvu; Meaning of widowed according to Telugu community.

Bava : Husband's older brother.

Vara lakshmi vratam: A festival to make peace with the goddess Lakshmi. It is an important pooja celebrated by many women in Warangal.

Vayanam : Offering fruits and Prasad in pooja only to married women.

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CHAPTER-1

INTRODUCTION

The position and status of Single women in Indian society is not encouraging. The birth of a female child itself is an occasion of sorrow and not a joy. A girl is brought up in a sheltered and protected manner with the role idea of getting her married at the earliest. Marriage seems the end for which a girl has to be groomed. As such, a married woman is considered virtuous and respectable and therefore accorded a high place in society. Having been brought up in such an atmosphere attempts to deviate from the normal conventions of the society are usually scorned. The divorced women are regarded with the suspicion. Woman who fail to live through a marriage partnership though it is an unhappy or even a brutal relationship are rejected by society. Even where the break in marriage is initiated by the husband it is always the women's behaviour that is questioned and the man receives the sympathy and support of the society.

Single women in this study fall into two categories: **Widows and Divorced women**

The discrimination differs in degree in the various religious communities but the general social attached to them prevails. Whatever the category of singleness, whether self imposed or circumstantial, young or old, working or non-working the problems they face are almost similar, with variation only in intensity and not in kind.

1.1.Women and education:

Social attitudes, norms and beliefs reflect on women's poor access to education. Differences in male-female literacy levels, differences in urban and rural female literacy levels and varying literacy levels in different areas do point out that within the available educational infrastructure, female face social discrimination both in access to education and quality of education. Thus, restricted access to female education is furthered not only by family, even religious practices/caste practises demand that a girl must remain protected and chaste.

Further, the popular notion which is used to explain girl's dropping out of school or not sending them to school at all is that girls are biologically and mentally inferior and incapable of being educated. A combination of these factors determines the socio-cultural atmosphere that restricts female access to education in the region. We may state that gender bias (discrimination against a person on the basis of sex) is not endemic to education but it is systematic. It is interesting to note that apartheid of gender and sexism pervades all spheres of public and private life in India.

Education is one of the most basic requirements for human development. With education, opportunities for employment are broadened and income levels will increase Sharma (2007). The development of the nation and the individual progress is dependent on the education. Education is also equally important to improve the women's autonomy and status. It gives them more confidence and decision making power within the household (Sharma & nagar, 2007).

1.2 .Norms and Expectations;

Clearly, our ideas of male and female natures derive less from empirical facts and observations and more from norms and expectations that govern our lives. Even those lives and actions run in different contradiction to these norms accept the latter's salience. Norms that set standards of typical ideal male and female behaviour favour different roles and responsibilities for men and women. These norms usually have to do with patterns of work, modes of feeling and relating, style of clothing, systems of learning and communication and, most significantly, access to resources and power. Norms and expectations exist in almost all societies, to a greater or lesser degree. They are however, not unchanging. Nor are they consistent and uniform. Certain norms may be found in one historical period they may apply to certain sorts of women and not to

certain others. Expectations are defined in different ways in different societies. With the same society there may exist different sorts of expectations.

In whatever form or forms norms and expectations exist, they are propounded in a systematic fashion. That is, they are not random opinions, held by some and ignore by others. Either they are eccentric ideas which no one takes seriously. They exist as the very stuff of commonsense, informing the way we behave in an everyday sense.

‘Achieving quality (education) for All’ theme of global monitory report (GMR). It estimated that in India, one million children or more are likely to be out of the school. Fact that gender disparities arises worldwide for the access to education, this report included equality and gender parity as one of the goal that should be achieved by 2015. It has also pointed about the girl children who face disadvantage in double terms of being a female in this patriarchal world. Therefore this study looks in to the single women girl children education, at demand side factors like restrain girls from education and cultural aspects. This also combines gender and class since the study involves middle class single women who have one girl and son from two different castes.

1.3. Area of study:

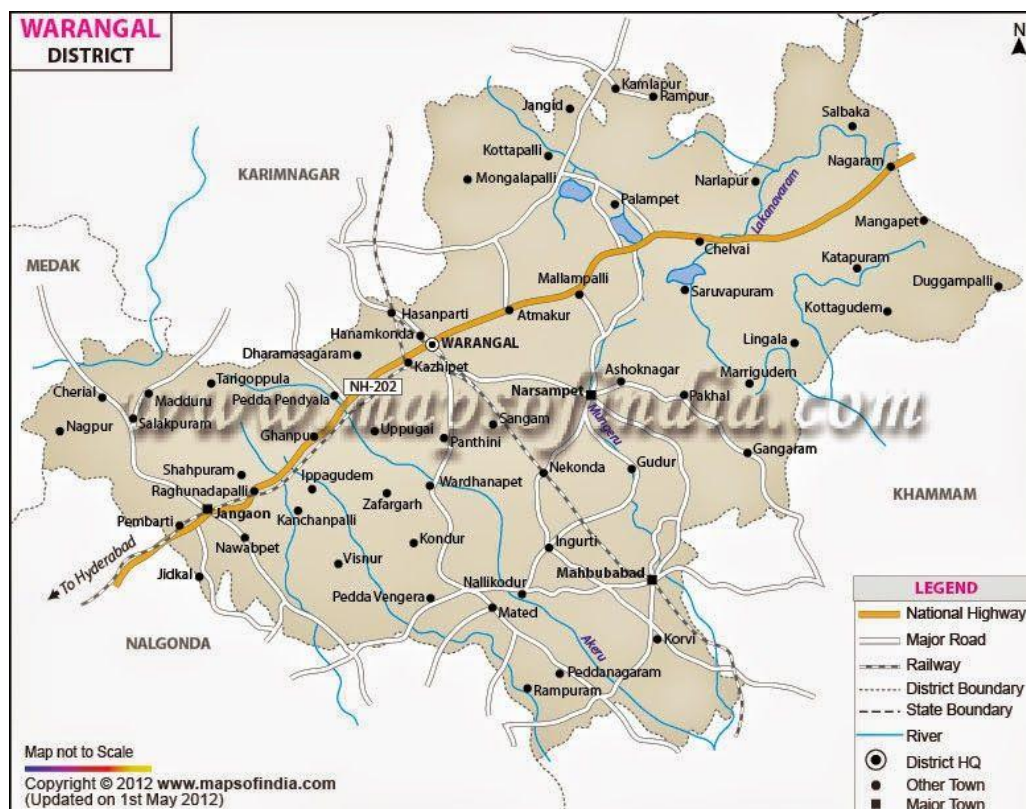
Telangana is the 29th state formed on 2nd of June 2014. The state of Telangana is divided into 31 districts. Among the 31 districts, Warangal is one of the districts. Telugu is the local language here. And also some people speak Urdu. As per 2011 census literacy rate of state is 66.54%. Male literacy 75.04% and female literacy 57.99%. Male and female population of Warangal district was 17, 59,281 and 17, 53,295 respectively. Distribution of population by age group of 15-59 in Warangal urban according to 2011 census was 3,34,466 male and 3,32,220 female. Scheduled castes literacy population of Warangal district is 70.77% male and

52.89% females. Social composition of population out of the total population of the state, scheduled castes continue 15.45%

Figure 1: Telangana and its districts (source: MapsofIndia.com)



Figure 2: Warangal district (source: MapsofIndia.com)



1.4. Overview of structure of research:

The first part of the research study talks about the introduction of single women in three different themes like problems of single women, women and education , expectations and norms followed by single women for their daughter's education . The second chapter literature Review talks about the significance Literature on the topic perceptions of single women on educating their girl child.

The next part consists of Methodology, objectives and research questions of the study. This includes what kind of research data is collected from the field and says about whom researcher will use this data for analysing the study objectives.

Third part consists of analysis; this chapter contains the narrative stories of the field study analysed by the researcher based on the questioners. The last part of the study consists of findings and conclusion for the research study; this consists of major findings, recommendations for the further study, overall conclusion of the research

CHAPTER; 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction:

Despite rapid advances in the standard of living of people worldwide, the conditions for the certain section of people still remains distressing , namely, that of divorced women and widows (UN division for Advancement of women, 2000). To know in depth, the victimization and discrimination of single women one has to start from the status of women the cultural norms, value systems and cultural norms that influence social expectations regarding the behaviour of women's roles and their positions in the society. It needs to be understood that single women polices should not underline only its improvements and the income levels but also should address her burden of separation from husband and dealing with desertion for their children's education, especially girl child.

2.2 Women Historical Perspective:

In Indian society women are treated as a pride. Women was known as, Ardhangini-one half of husband's body. (Sharma, 1997, p.189). As a sister, wife and mother she is occupied an honoured place. She is the perfect example of affection and love, boldness and courage, suffering and sacrifice.

However during the history women lost their honoured place due to political, social and economic factors. Evils customs like purdah, child marriage and sati, dowry system, enforced widowhood, crept in the society and this led to the decline in women's status outside and inside the home. During the past few years, abortion and female feticide, sexual harassment has given an inclination of the most horrible behaviour patterns are dominant in the society. Majority of the women live in a life of dependency that does not possess any self - Identity. Struggle for

parity, equality and justice between men and women continues with more and more literature appearing on the topic of empowerment of women.

2.3Widowhood;

Widowhood is associated with physical, psychological and social functioning and increased risk for mortality (stroebe and strobe 1987). Depression is a particularly common response to widowhood, at least in the first year or two following the death (vachon et al.

1982).Educational, marital and employment changes the position of widow's children. And also mainly widows face problems in securing the right type of life partners for their children, especially their daughters. Information was sought from the widows about the educational level of their children. About 45% of the children had been studying. Nearly 23% children are school drop outs. They discontinued their studies soon after their father's death. The percentage of drop outs was higher in the case of children of urban widows as compared to the children belonging to rural widows (T.N kitchulu, 1993).

Status of widow:

The Latin term for 'widow', is viduva, related to a root meaning 'to place apart'. India has the largest number of widow's record in the world-33million. "Fifty-four per cent of women aged 50-60 and over are widows, 12 percent of women aged 35-39. Remarriage is the exception rather than the rule, and only 10 percent of the widows marry again" (Trivedi, sareen, &Dhyaani,2009). India is the only country where widowhood is shown as personal status, exists a as a social institution. Widow's stigmatization and deprivation are exacerbated by religious and ritual symbolism. Widows Remarriage may be forbidden in the higher castes, in some cases when remarriage is permitted, it may be restricted to a family member. Further, a widow upon remarriage may be required to give up custody of her children as well as any property rights she may have. If she keeps her children with her after remarriage, she may fear

they will be ill-treated. Indian widows are often regarded as ‘evil eyes’. Words in the vernacular are artlessly pejorative: “whore”, “witch” and “dakan”.

“Widowhood is a state of social death, even among the higher castes”, says Mohini Giri, a veteran activist in the fight for women’s rights. Anyhow today’s widows are not forced to die in sati ritual, but they are expected to feel sadness trauma until their death. They are accused of being responsible for the husband’s death, expected to have a spiritual life with many restrictions which affects them both psychologically and physically.”

Whether old or young, widowed women leave behind their colourful saris, Jewellery. All of this is designed for not to encourage male sexual desire, according to the Meera Khanna, contributor of a book called Living Death: Trauma of widowhood in India.

There has been a huge increase in the number of widows in India since 2001 according to the 2001 census data. In 2001, only 18.5 lakh or 0.7% of the population of 102 cores was widowed. In 2011 were 121 cores and of this 4.6% or 5.6 core are widowed. As per the research done by the guild for service (sahoo, 2014) as a whole majority of the widows population percentages are more than the married women.

Meera Khanna says, “Generally all widows are ostracized”. An educated woman may have independence and money, when she becomes widow even that is snatched away. In this patriarchal society, men say that culturally as a widow you cannot do anything like, should not look beautiful. She adds “It’s the mind of society we need to change not the women” (Damon, 2007)

2.4 Divorced women:

The phenomenon of divorce is increasing attention as a stress-inducing life crisis that affects over two million adults and one million children annually (Dohrebwend, 1974). The problems and stresses encountered by the divorced women fall roughly into three major categories;

interpersonal, pragmatic concerns and social problems (Hetherington et al., 1989). A majority of divorced women (59.20%) had been facing problems in bringing up their children education after divorce. They face financial problems due to the absence of father in the family and also it was difficult to control the children.

Several reasons have been shown for choosing out of marriages these days like character assassination, violence, problems of adjustment mainly in the joint family, alcoholism, cruelty, extramarital affairs and the hateful impact of the outside world in the terms of lack of role models and falling values (Thara, 2002). Divorce has been rated as the one of the most stressful from a large number of potential life events (Holmes and Rahe, 1967; Gahler, 2006). Marital dissolution is associated with a large number of the social problems. Many empirical studies also repeatedly show this. For example, divorces have the smaller social networks and they are more likely to lack social support (Gahler, 2006). Also they get the experience of negative life events of psychological and physical problems for them and their children as usual. Moreover, divorced women are mainly exposed to the economic hardship (Johnson and Wu, 2002; Lorenz et al., 1997).

It has been shown that women report more marital complaints and report them earlier than men. Divorce of women and men's well being affects in different ways. For example, Men have lower levels of distress, which could predict higher incomes after divorce. Lives of women are also changed in other ways that may affect their well-being in a more negative way. They have to experience the overload risk custody of the children (Gahler, 2002). It is argued that traditional gender roles that are unequal distribution of unpaid work would predict single women to be better off than single men (Gove, 1972; Iverson and rosenbulth, 2006). In contrast others argue that women take larger responsibility for the marriage, invest more in the family, that is the reason they feel that the divorce is the greater failure than the men (kurdek, 1990; hung et al., 2004).

2.6 Understanding educational inequality;

Researchers on gender and education initially emphasised that increased participation of girls in education would eliminate inequality. Additionally, the emphasis was on under-achievement and under-representation (Megarry 1984) they also suggested that sex role socialisation and consequent stereotyping of the feminine role impacted upon the girl's educational situation. Under-achievement of girls and whether girls were segregated into humanities and arts and boys into science were concerns at the school level. Later, the subject choice and its relationship to gender in higher education also received attention (Thomas 1990; Hudson 1972). It is argued that the clustering of women in specific subjects leads to their occupational segregation (Shrape 1976). Since masculinity and femininity are social constructions (Keller 1997), the underlying assumptions about the disciplinary choices have to be uncovered along with their close connection to women's place in society (Hardings 1986). Thomas (1990;5) argues that it is a reflection of the balance of power between the sexes.

The constitution of independent India propagated the idea of equality for men and women and abolished discrimination on the basis of sex. Within this ideological framework education was assigned a new role.

2.7 Status of girls' education in India:

In January 2013, a study called "survey for assessment of dropout rates in 21 states" was published under sarva siksha Abhiyan. They gave some interesting facts in this study. It is found that drop-out rate at the primary level was almost similar for boys and girls whereas the same was higher for boys at the upper primary level than the girls. In 2009-10, 2.99% girls dropped out from school because of non-availability of separate girls school. The reasons behind the dropout, it was found that 23.622% of girls were dropped out were due to help required in the domestic work. At all the state level, 1.99% girls dropped out because the

parents felt that there was no need (or) use to study for girls, whereas the same figure was 8% for the state Telangana. The data on current activity of dropout children shows that 1/3rd of the girls were engaged in the household work, which is higher in the proportion than boys (1/5th).

Gender gap in education is a thing of past and imaginary; but as we go deeper into the different aspects of the same, it is revealed that gender roles and cultural factors play an important role in determining girls' access to schools. Patriarchy, parental perceptions and son preference of investing in someone else's 'property' are the larger frameworks identified as the risk factors for girl's education. South Asia has earned a fame of leading the world in early marriages, 58% of the girls get married before the age of 18 years. The agriculture and home based work and the invisible, unaccounted labour of girls in domestic chores are a major barrier to their education. UNICEF has outlined the following general barriers to girl's education-

- Family poverty
- Lack of relevance of school to the lives of children
- Uneven playing field from the start
- Weak legal frameworks around education.

Apart from these, inherent gender inequality and power relations in the society have a big role in creating barriers to girls' education which are not addressed by the simplify measures to enhance retention and enrolment. In fact school education has not been acknowledged and addressed adequately rather than reinforces the gender inequalities and gender stereotypes.

India and many state government has adopted many affirmative policies to promote girls education but still all these years, the improvement in girls education is nothing in comparison to the economic development of the country. The Main barriers to education of girls in India are-

Poverty:

Patriarchal setup of society adds with the poor economic conditions of families, stereotypes' and gender roles to make it more difficult for girls to access education. They are not seen as the Recourse enhance of the family earning, they are assigned to domestic roles. Patriarchy is shown that they are excluded from the decision making of the family. Therefore, their education is not just unnecessary luxury but also a liability (chitrakaar,2009).Also the practise of dowry makes a girl education as an more economic disadvantage . For example, if the girl is more educated they should search for the more educated groom for which they need to pay more dowries. Therefore, education of girls weighs heavy on the finances of the family.

State policies

On providing education to the disadvantaged sector of the society the quality aspect is not given importance in policies. The state has only created the access to education and thus shows a huge gap between education of poor and rich. Public schooling is for poor kids and girls where there is no quality of learning; those who can buy education can go to private schools. The policy approach has targeted reinforced social reproduction and gender stereotypes rather than social transformation.

2.8. Higher education and gendered leadership:

Women in higher education are from the privileged homes and the elite and, therefore do not need attention. "Clearly, something does happen in higher education, it is not enough to say that it trains elite. It is not the end of process, but in many ways a beginning. It may be worth looking at it as a process. Which plays a crucial role in the creation and reproduction of gender difference" (Thomas 1990;7) .

Girl children education dropout concept:

At the global level, weber (1988) and Rumberger(2011) classify the reasons for school dropouts into three kinds that is to say problems related to personal problems, family and problems related school. Some main family related problems are related to low level of parental education, poor socio-economic position and solo parent families. When it comes to personal reasons of dropouts of girl children problems will be related to discipline and marriage etc.

In education system, dropout is a universal problem, in educationally backward districts and states dropouts are much higher. Besides girls dropout rates are found higher than the Boys dropouts in India (chug, 2011). Dropout in secondary education is alarming in India. The data reveals that boys dropout rate is less than the girls dropout , resulting in a widening of gender gap between secondary and primary and tertiary enrolment ratios and amid secondary (Alagusundram, sivakumar and Rajendrap rasad, 2015).

Case of Telangana:

The data for academic year 2013-2014 across the ten districts of Telangana shows a pitiable situation of secondary education in the context of the girl children school dropout rate. Reason was as soon as girls enter school parents start planning to get them into marriage, easy way to turn into brides is a result of dropping out from school.(pagadala;2012)

The population of Warangal is largely dependent on the farming and therefore income certainly forces parents to get their daughters married off premature. Education can play a decisive role in child marriages.

Indian Economy, with expanding the Post Liberalization, Privatization, and globalization (LPG) of the 1990s, it was believed that in all forms of poverty would be a 'thing of the past'. However, years of high economic growth rate was not able to break the rigid patriarchal and

societal gender relations. Poverty affected by women are not primarily due to low incomes, instead, inequality has its most important roots in inadequate access to lack of political rights, resources, and limited social options as well as in a greater vulnerability to crises and risks (Rodenburg, 2004)

Addressing gender equality and poverty alleviation are two different overlapping things which is needed to be addressed differently at the time of policy formulation (Chant, 2008). Often programs like poverty alleviation programs in Costa Rica, *oportunidades* / *progresas* in Mexico focus solely on female and women headed households, excluding the importance and role of men in family. In Indian society this exclusion is more patriarchal. This approach might further breed discrimination against women and violence and hinder her participation.

2.9. Cultural upbringing of girls:

The “culture, state and girls: An educational perspective” article very perspicuously captures what it is like to grow up as female. The girl child is learned from her childhood to develop submissiveness and dependence, self-denial and self-effacement. It starts with the newborn baby birth in the family which is treated with sense of burden and displeasure. The second stage comes when she enters puberty and she is told that acceptability in the society becomes severely restricted and becomes reduced, impure and carefree child-like behaviour. The third stage when she sees her elder sister or family member’s going through the process of getting married, she learns the character of ‘normative’ that she needs to possess in order to meet the ultimate goal of her life marriage. So, in her entire childhood, a girl grows up around the ideas of domesticity and motherhood in life. She is expected to be like her mother whose role she internalizes and observes. However, ‘cultural imprinting’ is the appropriate concept to be used for girls because they were never given chance to develop their individual perspective, practices and rituals are simply imposed on them.

Practice depriving girls from education:

“Cultural stereotypes and household behaviour”, Neera Burra Article talks about the present definition of girl children suffer severely about the expanding for the scope of child labour beyond the wage employment. The huge dropout rate for the girl children is indicated that girls are needed for other activities like farm work, looking after other siblings in home, domestic work (Burra, 2001). The common justification given for the girl child labour is poverty. Home based work implies that more hands will fetch more income. So generally parents engage their children to work with them. But this is not only one problem, girls also face discrimination under patriarchal norms; they are socialized into their expected adult roles (child rearing, household work) right from the childhood they are kept restricted within in the four walls away from the education .

According to Amartya Sen., “The capabilities of girls will be severely restricted by the denial of education”. Child labour, leading to the denial of education, traditions and mindsets, deep-seated beliefs. The parents have the false consciousness that education has no relevance for their daughters. The MVF foundation, Telangana state based NGO has attacked these gender stereotypes and has contributed a great deal to shaping the cultural preferences of the community. It was observed that false excuses of safety and blackmailing to get married were used to keep girls away from education and trapped in the vicious circle. Here it is importance to draw a distinction between universalism and cultural relativism. The state should try to make some negotiations within in the cultural boundaries rather than culture as an immutable force. For example, it can be non-formal education for girls whose parents are not interested to send their daughters to school. This would further marginalize them. The gap between non formal system and formal systems would become glaring. The state policy should be based on the universal ideas like justice, liberty and equality on which our constitution is based.

Education: Interface between state and culture:

There is a huge gap between the state's policy of girl child centred education and the upbringing of girls in their home. The instrumentality of sexuality and female body is strongly established in the educational context as well as the cultural. When it comes to education there is no intrinsic value for girls but in home the traditional role emphasise the centrality of female body. It is expected that education will lead to the child health, lower fertility and better maternal etc. Thus, the state urgently needs to remove the patriarchal structure of the education system. It faces the dual challenge –one is freeing the curriculum and pedagogy from the gender bias, two providing an environment to experience the universal normative childhood so that the same patriarchal structure is not reproduced and reinforced at educational institutions as well.

So, in order to address gender disparity in education there is a need to emote the mental inclusions binding girls in traditional roles. Mental blocks are so pervasive and deep that they have acquired a psycho-social base in the culture. The educational aim in a democracy is to enable all children to realise their right to participate in governance a responsible and sensitive citizens who are also capable of shaping their personal destiny (Kumar and Gupta,2008).

2.10.Gap:

During the literature Review the researcher went through many essays, books, journals, articles the gap came across was that the Indian society always victimized the widow. Even the literature often highlighted the negative aspects of widowhood and divorce practices unlike the west especially American nation was able to accept widow as an individual who is experiencing pain of loose. Certain measure of professional help and social support Indian widow and divorced women need to receive in order to overcome the situation and pick the fragments of life to start again.

There are different studies on sexuality, Risk, health problems, psychological and pleasure experienced by single women. But there is very limited research done on the single women's children education especially on girl child education. So far there is no policy for single women children education. Studying about the single women's children education is under-researched phenomenon, which demands greater attention. There is an urgent need to study about gender gap in education among their children to create awareness for the parents about the girl child education.

2.11. Objectives of the research:

The major objectives of the study are mentioned below:

- 1) To explore single women's perceptions on the socio-cultural norms regulating the opportunities for women's education and employment.
- 2) Given that there is a significant gender gap in education, to understand if there is a gender gap in education among the children of single women in Telangana.
- 3) To understand if change in marital status of women has an impact of their choices regarding their daughters education and employment.

2.12. Research questions used for this study:

- 1) What are the perceptions of single women on education and employment for women with respect to their social –cultural norms?
- 2) Is there a gender gap in education among the single women's children? And what factors influence this?
- 3) Does the change in marital status of women impact their daughter's education and employment?

2.13. Significance of the study:

The single women today are asserting her right as an individual in all walks of life. However, in the Indian context her status is an era of discrimination. This discrimination cuts across all sections of women (Chen, 2000; patil, 2000). A review of the studies of women at large and the women education and employment in particular brings forth the point that studies on the women in the education and employment are only a rare few. In many studies the major concentration are on the trends of women participation in work, their family life and the working conditions of women and their problems. But the present study intends to explore a wide range of issues ranging from socio-economic conditions, differential education for them and their children, family life, working relationships and reasons, membership of organisations and living conditions of women. Single women's children, son and daughter are provided access to different types of education. In accordance with the male role of earners, they are given education and skills which have remunerative value. Females, on the other hand, attain education and skills relating to child care and house-keeping. In India for well-being of the single women's there are very few government schemes. But for their children's education and well-being of daughters there are no schemes. Therefore, to understand the perceptions of single women on educating their girl child would be very significant.

CHAPTER; 3

RESEARCH METHODS

3.1. Overview of the Research Design:

Qualitative research method is used in this study. The main focus in the qualitative research is to understand, explain, explore, discover and clarify situations, feelings, perceptions, attitudes, values, beliefs and experiences of a group of people. This means that qualitative researchers study the things in attempting to make sense of natural setting, or interpret phenomena in the term of different meanings people bring to them (Denzin & Linclon, 2005, p.3).

Qualitative study is used in this study due to its several unique aspects, which provides rich insightful results:

- The ‘‘power-gap’’ between the researcher and the study population is far smaller because of the informality in structure and situation in which data is collected.
- It is subjective understanding rather than objective aggregation.
- It is the voice of the every individual.
- The opportunity to interpret non-verbal communication, observe and record. For example voice intonation, body, language as part of a participant’s feedback, which is valuable asset for during analysis and during interviews.

Narrative Research, grounded theory, case study, phenomenology and ethnography are the five major theoretical approaches for qualitative study. Phenomenology is considered as the appropriate and suitable for this study because “the phenomenological study the lived experiences concept or describes the meaning for several individuals” (Creswell,2007, p.57).The reason for choosing phenomenological inquiry to explore “what” single women experienced after the Death of their husband and “how” they have experienced it.

3.2 Research site:

Data was collected from Telangana in consonance with the objective of the research study to find out the perceptions of single women about education of their girl children in the specific context of Warangal. To make the data more reliable data is collected from two places in Warangal, one is Hasanparthy and the other is Wardhannapet. Both the areas are selected keeping in mind that the customs and traditions followed by the single women are not common. This is to the different perspective from both the areas

3.2.1 Background of the Area of study:

In Telangana state Warangal is the second largest city with the population of about nine Lakhs. Warangal city has 42 villages. As per 2001 census average sex ratio in the 42 villages is estimated at 957. The 42 villages show the population of SC as 27.1 percent and Reddy population of 3.4 percent.

Economy of the Warangal district is predominantly agriculture in nature. Warangal is the rice growing region and most of the women do work in the field, they grow rice for their commerce and subsistence.

3.2.2 Profile of the general population of the Area:

Telangana state has an area of 1, 12,077 sq.km with population of 3, 52, 86,757. Major cities of the Telangana state include Hyderabad, Warangal, Nizamabad and Karimnagar. According to the 2001 census **Warangal** district population is 3522644. Its total area is 12846 km² and 11 largest state by area, It is the 13th largest district in the state by population, 82nd largest district in the country by population. There are 1766622 males and 1756022 females. Among the total population 2330581 are literate. Warangal is the 11th highest district in the state by literacy rate and in the country's literacy rate it is 469th district. Literacy rate of Warangal district is 66.16.

Telugu is the local language in the Warangal. Also certain group of communities speaks Urdu, Lambadi etc.

3.3. Subject population

The subject population of my research study is middle aged (30-50 years) single women living with their children (each having one son and daughter) and belong to either the SC category or Reddy caste. I only focused on these two categories SC and OC (Reddy) castes because different communities like BC, ST will follow different rules and regulations for the single women. As the socio cultural norms towards women's education, marriage, singlehood and other important aspects of life are linked to the caste background to which one belongs, we decide to restrict ourselves to only two castes categories, namely SC and OC and even within OC only the Reddy caste because the time constraint within which we had to this work. The single women who don't have girl child are excluded from my study. Demographic variables such as social status, economic status, employment status, income, living status, and children's education etc are analyzed in order to understand the perceptions of single women about their daughter education.

3.4 Sampling Methodology:

In my study purposive sampling is adopted as I purposefully wanted to incorporate middle-aged single women within the age group of 30-50 years and who are living with their children, especially having at least one daughter and son. The participants were chosen on the basis of variables such as caste, age group and number of children etc and considered to be relevant for my research topic.

3.5 Data collection

A Primary and secondary modes of data collection are used in my study. For primary data collection in-depth interviews were collected. Secondary data helped me to collect the data of sixteen participants for my study. For collecting secondary data, I visited Warangal based organisation Bala vikasa which works on the widow's empowerment program. I also visited district census office in order to collect the census data of the Warangal district.

The theoretical roots of In-depth interviewing are in what is known as the interpretive tradition. Because this method involves repeated contacts and hence an extended length of time spent with an informant, it is assumed that the rapport between researcher and informant will be increase, confidence and understanding of the corresponding members will lead to In-depth information and accurate.

Open-ended and semi-structured questions were made to conduct the interviews for the participants in my study. In a structured interview the researcher asks a predetermined set of questions, using the same wording and order of questions as specified in the interview schedule. The open ended questions will remove bias between the investigator and researcher and allows respondents to express themselves freely. The duration of the interview was around one to two hours. In the study questions were related to the middle aged participants with the children to know about the perceptions of their children education and how they dealt with different restrictions imposed on them after their husband's death and to explore the social , economical, and educational status of single women.

Observation was also made to get the deeper understanding about the phenomenon. It also helped me in the situation where full and /or accurate information cannot be elicited by questioning, because respondents either are not co-operative or unaware of the answers because it is difficult for them to detach themselves from the interaction.

3.6Field Report

3.6.1. Sample size

As the main aim in qualitative study enquires is to explore the diversity, sample size and sampling strategy do not play a significant role in the selection n of sample. If selected carefully, diversity can be extensively and accurately described on the basis of information obtained even from one individual. (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2011). The sample size for my research is sixteen. In-depth understanding phenomenon logic of qualitative research is concerned with the small sample size. Having applied purposive sampling in my study I have chosen single women from two different caste categories, SC and OC (reddy) from two different blocks of Warangal district . Out of the sixteen participants eight belong to the SC category and four of them belong to mala caste and other four belong to madiga caste. The eight participants from the OC category all belong to Reddy caste. Among these sixteen participants eight participants are selected from the Wardhannapet and other eight participants are selected from the Hasanparthy.

3.6.2 A reflexive note on the process

As a researcher working on a sensitive topic like marital status of women, experiences of widowhood and about their education of girl child, I was extremely anxious about my state of being a female researcher from same background. I was conscious all the time that my interpretation and understanding about the perceptions of single women are influenced by my standpoints or my social positions which may lead to possible bias in the analysis of the study. I tried as much as possible to keep aside my own assumptions, biases and interpretation about the phenomenon of single women's girl child education and examined the phenomenon from the perceptive of single women, in order to solve this problem.

Before going to the field work, I had a anxiety and nervousness about how to contact and build a good rapport of conversation with the middle aged single women about the sensitive topic for in-depth interviews. However, I realized that my apprehensions in the field were just imaginary and participants were friendly and I had a good rapport with them. They were cooperative and did not have reservations about answering any of the questions I post to them throughout my interview session. Before taking the interview I had a informal interaction initially to build a good rapport with them has turned out to be a fruitful rapport building strategy. Informal conversation and informal time spent with them like having tea, food, talking about their childhood experiences and about their children made the relations more comfortable for both me and participants. I also got so many invitations for lunch and dinner with them.

Overall, my field visit provided a good understanding and learning experience. It gave me new insights about the field realities and helped me to understand how difficult it is for a woman to survive in the absence of husband and bring up her children in a society which is dominated by the males.

3.6.3. Challenges faced during field visit:

- As a young researcher conducting interviews with older women who were either widowed or divorced and asking about their change in the marital status and their experiences in life posed its own challenges for me. I found building rapport with the participants was difficult at the initial stage.
- The inquisitive nature of the in-laws and family members of the single women or sometimes other community members frequently disturbed the interview process. Most of the time family members or children used to check the interview process (or) try to involve in the conversations.

- Even though all the participants gave consent to record the interviews, they became very much nervous and conscious about what to say and how to say it during the interview process.

3.6.4. Logistical issues:

Travelling to the two different blocks was a big issue to me because often it was not easy to find a means of transport. The distance of the field site is very far from my home. The average distance would be 20km from my home. But, meeting the NGO members in the village was not that difficult, it met them at their workplaces to seek the information about the participants for research.

3.7 Data saturation:

First I have done 16 in-depth interview data, and then I moved to the coding process. During the coding process I did not find any new themes or data coming up. It showed me the repeated instances over and over in the coding. So I moved to the process of data analysing the data.

3.8 Data Analysis

In qualitative research the general process for data analysis consists of organizing and preparing the transcript data then reducing them into the process of coding , reducing them into themes and data in figures, discussion or a table. In this approach undoubtedly there will be some variations (creswell, 2007 p.148)

I followed steps given by different researcher such as Moustakas, creswell,kisber etc. to analyse the interview data in my study. The reason behind following these was I found it to be more practical and more useful for analyzing the interview data. These steps are mentioned below:

- From your field notes develop a framework of your write-up and as you go through your notes directly integrate that information within the structure developed. If you adopt this method, you need to be reasonably clear about the structure. It does not mean that you develop the structure as you go on analysing; still, a clear vision will be of immense help in slotting information gathered in the field by you into the write-up.
- The second method is that you transcribe your field notes to be read by you over and over again to identify the main themes. These themes become the basis of your write-up.

I tried to put my knowledge, and personal experiences aside as much as possible about the perceptions of single women on educating their girl children during the whole process of my analysis. In order to describe the whole phenomenon only through the lens of the participants.

3.9 Issues of validity:

In terms of measurement procedures, therefore, validity is the ability of an instrument to measure what it is designed to measure; ‘validity is defined as the degree to which the researcher has measured what he has set out to measure’ (Smit 1991: 106).

In this context, eight primary strategies are made by the Creswell to balance against bias and to enhance rigor as these strategies work and they help ensure trustworthiness or validity of the research findings (Armour, Rivaux, & Bell, 2009). These strategies are as follows;

- Peer review or debriefing
- Clarification of researcher bias
- Triangulation to gain different perspectives on a given topic from different sources.
- Member checking
- Thick description
- Engagement with participants for diminishing both respondent and researcher bias

- External Audit
- Negative case analysis

Creswell's suggested some other techniques besides them to enhance validity and subjectivity.

In the qualitative research paradigm these techniques improve the quality.

I used the following strategies in order to validate my research findings:

3.9.1 Engagement with participants:

Persistent observation and prolonged engagement with my research participants in the field not only helped me to build a good rapport with the participants but also provided me with the deep insights of phenomena under my study. During the interviews also it helped to correct the misinformation which I acquired. Engagement with the participants helped me to decide about the focus and purpose of my research which is very important for validity of research finding.

3.9.2 Peer Review or debriefing:

For checking the qualitative research validity peer debriefing is an important aspect. I discussed so many aspects with my friends about the study all along the research process, which helped me to check the external check of the research process. To know about in depth meaning of single women customs, traditions followed by them, I contacted with female peers for how get over the initial apprehensions regarding the interview process. In addition, discussion with the peers about the interpretations, methods and meanings provided me an opportunity to get their feedback and their valuable suggestions for better analysis of my data.

3.10. Ethical procedures followed

3.10.1 Privacy of informant and de-identification of data

The identities of the participants are not disclosed in this study and pseudonyms were used in order to preserve the namelessness of the participants. And also I assured the participants that

information given by them would be kept confidential. I also kept maximum privacy about the participants in my entire process of the study and all the data in the study was de-identified.

3.10.3 Physical data security

All the recorded audio tapes during the interview with the consent of the participants, transcriptions written in my copy and few photo copies of single women (clicked with the prior information) everything was protected by safe in my personal laptop.

3.10.4 Risks and benefits:

I informed about the risks about the study before the interview that I will ask to share your personal information and confidential information about their life (or) daily routine during the interview. I also informed the participants that if they are not interested to answer my questions in the interview they do not have to give me answers are to justify it. Regarding the benefits of my study to the participants, I informed that my study is not going to benefit the participants directly, but it will help me to study and explore the conditions of single women's girl child education.

CHAPTER-4

ANALYSIS

4.1 Sample characteristics

A sample of sixteen middle aged single women (widows and divorcees) living with their children was selected using the purposive sampling method, to participate in this study of perceptions of single women on educating their daughters. The age of the participants ranged between 30-50 years. Based on my observation of participants financial conditions, education and resources and family background etc I would classify all them as belonging to middle class background. Out of the sixteen participants, eight participants were identified widows, other eight participants were divorced. Among them all of them twelve persons are living independently, two of them are staying with the natal family and other two of them were living with the in-laws. Among these participants most they are involved in agricultural work; four of the participants were engaged in the government sector employment. Four participants studied under matriculation (10th class), five participants qualified matriculation exam, three participants passed higher secondary exams, four participants had bachelor Degrees. Among the participants twelve of them have two children, three of them have three children and two of them have four children.

The socio demographic profile of the participants is shown with the figures and tables;

4.1.1. Sample division on the basis of caste

Table:4.1.1. Participants divisions on the basis of caste.

S.No	Name of the village	Widowed	Divorced	Total
1	Hasanparthy	SC-1 OC-3	SC-2 OC-2	8
2	Wardhannapet	SC-2 OC-2	SC-3 OC-1	8
	Total			16

Data was collected from Warangal district, Telangana, with the objective of the research study to know the perceptions of single women about their girl child education. To make data more reliable data is collected from the two places in Warangal, one is Hasanparthy and other is Wardhannapet. Both the areas are selected keeping in mind that the study was to conduct on sc and Reddy community. According to the village population in Hasanparthy village most of the Reddy community people stay and in Wardhannapet sc community will stay. Data is collected from the two places because to know the different perspectives from the both areas.

4.1.2 Age group:

Among the sixteen participants, seven participants come under the age group of 30-35, four participants were under the 35-40, three participants were in the 40-45 age and two of them were under 45-50. In total they were sixteen participants.

Table: 4.1.2.Age group off the participants

S.No	Age Group	No. of participants
1	30-35	4
2	35-40	7
3	40-45	3
4	45-50	2
	Total	16

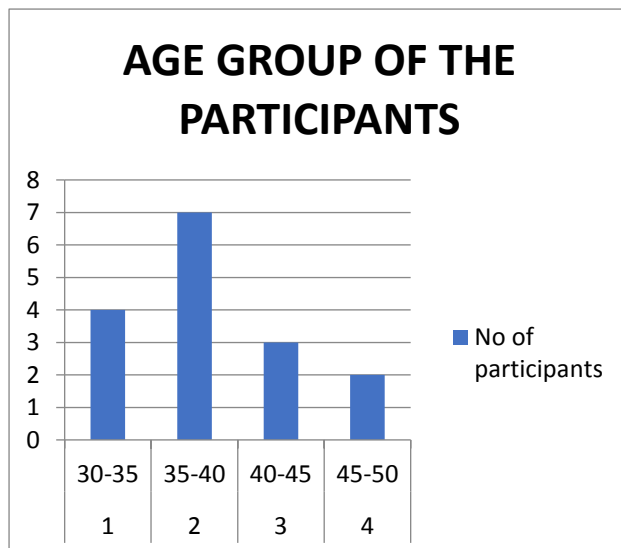


Figure: 4.1.2. Age group of participants

4.1.3 No. of children

As mentioned earlier, among the sixteen participants in the study, twelve of them have two children, three of them have three children and one of the participant have four children. For this study I was so particular about choosing the single women, I have chosen people who have two children and more especially with one son and one daughter.

Table: 4.1.3. No. Of children of the participants

S/No	No. of children	No. of participants
1	Two children	12(6SC+6OC)
2	3 children	3 2(SC+1OC)
3	More than 3 children	1 (OC)
	Total	16

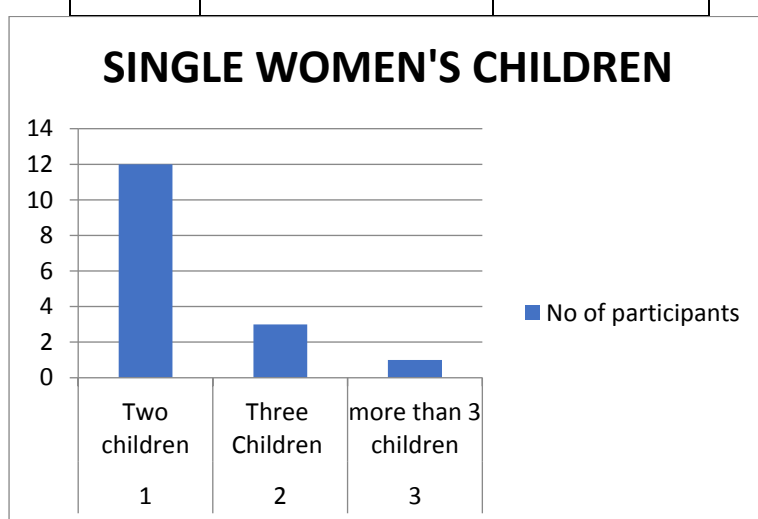


Figure: 4.1.3. No. of children of the participants

4.1.4: Living Arrangement:

Most of participants were living independently with their children and there were only few participants living with the natal or marital family. According to the caste wise division of participants, five SC category women and seven OC category women are staying independently, two of the OC (Reddy) single women are staying with marital family, one SC and one OC women are staying with natal family. Living status of the participants is very important aspect to know about how these women are economically stable to educate their children.

Table: 4.1.4: Living Arrangement of the participants

S.No	Living Arrangement	# participants
1	Independent	12 (5SC+7OC)
2	Living with marital family	02 (SC)
3	Living with Natal family	02(1SC+1OC)
	Total	16

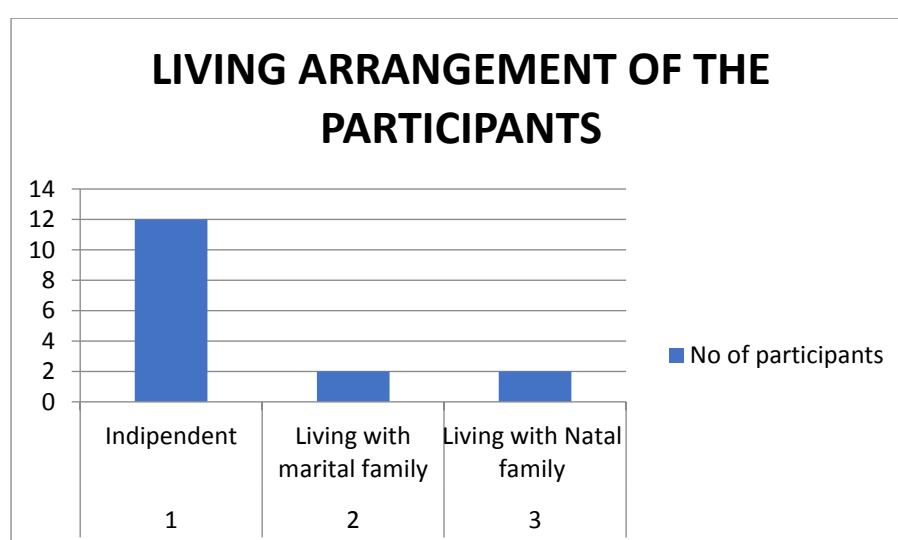


Figure: 4.1.4 living status of the participants

4.1.5. Employment status of single women:

The employment status of the participants is the one of the most important aspect for understating about their children education, to know change in the marital status had any impact on them. Majority of the participants are working in their own agricultural fields, four of them are working in private sector; of the four one is a tailor in a small boutique owned by her, two are working as teachers in private schools and one more is looking after a rice mill owned by her. Three of them are not working for money, andtheir financial needs are met by the what they earn from leasing their land. In short, among the sixteen participants in my

study, only three of them are not working for money and are dependent on their brothers-in-law, natal family and marital family. These three women are from Reddy caste. All the schedule caste category women are engaged in some organised or unorganised work.

Table: 4.1.5. Employment status of the participants

S. No	Employment status	No. of participant
1	Private sector	4 (3SC+1OC)
2	Agricultural work	9 (5SC+4OC)
3	Not working	3 (OC)
	Total	16

Following figure shows the employment status of the participants

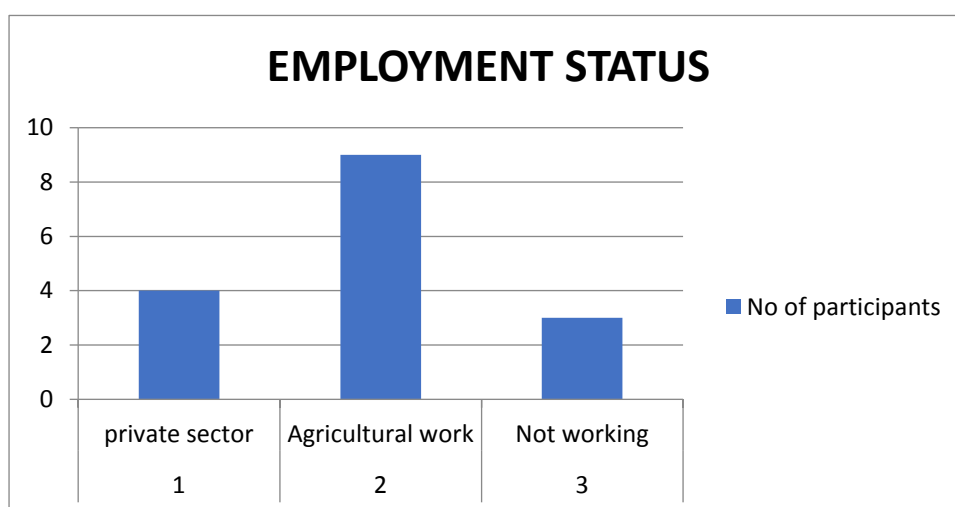


Figure: 4.1.5. Employment status of the participants

4.1.6. Educational level of single women

Educational level is very important to understand about the perceptions of single women about their girl child education. Only four participants completed degree in the whole sixteen member's sample among them two of them are from SC and other two women are from OC

caste. Two members from SC caste and one Reddy caste women completed till inter second year, five members completed up to tenth class belong to three SC and two Reddy community women and four members completed till primary level among them three of them belong to Reddy community and one of them from Madiga community. In my study there are no illiterate women.

Table 4.1.6.Educational level of the participants

S/No	EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	No. of participants
1	Degree	4(2SC+2OC)
2	12 th	3 (2SC+1OC)
3	up to 10 th class	5 (3SC+2OC)
4	Primary level	4(3OC+1SC)
5	Illiterate	0
	Total	16

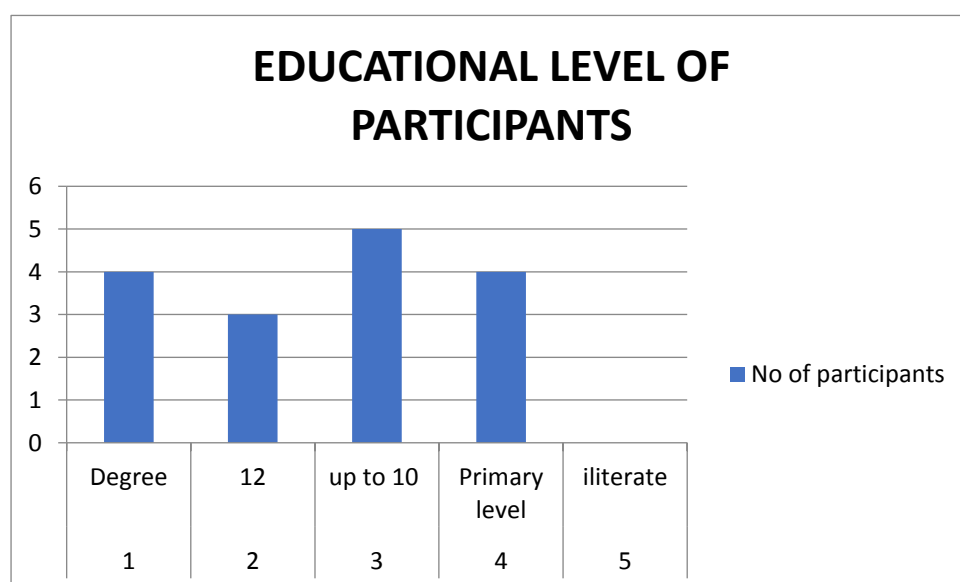


Figure: 4.1.6.Educational level of the participants.

4.2 Perceptions of single women through narratives

4.2.1. Educational status of single women:

Educational status of women is the one of the most important aspect to know about the perceptions of their girl child education. Most of the participants in the research study completed till tenth class, only few of them completed higher studies. Among all the sixteen participants most of the women from the SC caste especially mala category women have not completed their higher education compared to the Reddy caste women in the both blocks of Warangal. Many of them answered for the reason behind it was, they were married at the age of eighteen. And after marriage they got very less chances of studying

Some of them said that their parents had lack of interest in their education. Though they were allowed to study, after coming from school they had to help their parents working in the agricultural fields or cooking. Few of them said lack of awareness or own interest in going to school is also one reason. One of the participants, Lekha said that she was a bright student during her school days; her teachers also liked her for the way she showed interest towards the education. But she said that she could study only till tenth class because her father decided to get her married.

My father never gave much attention to study and he is very strict. I was studying in 10th class, my father decided to do marriage without my interest. He forced me for marriage.

And after marriage I stayed in my in-laws home. My husband said me to continue studies, but at that age I could not manage home and studies. So I stopped studying (Lekha)

Majority of them said they faced discriminations at childhood from their family members. They were not paid equal attention with the brothers. Being a girl they had some restrictions in home like not allowed to stay outside for late night, not allowed to play with other boys in schools and having to do household work at home unlike their brothers.

4.2.2. Social status of single women:

According to the tradition followed by the Warangal single women, widows follow some rules and restrictions till one year after the husband's death. The whole one year they are not supposed to wear bright clothes, bangles, Bindi and will not go to temple etc. These women are not allowed to attend functions or auspicious occasions as and they are treated as the impure till the one year. Among all the sixteen participants most of the women from SC category are not following traditions and rules and easily mingled with the other people in the society, they are way forward than Reddy caste women.

Ya, I eat everything in home no restrictions in food. But I can't eat food in others home (or) from other kitchen till one month of his death. I am not allowed to go outside of the home till ten days of his death. I can't put bindi on my forehead forever...I can't enter temple for a period of one yearI am not allowed to bless anyone in the functions and for few functions like (vara lakshmi vratam and ganpati puja) people will not inform us to attend. In case if I attend functions also People talk among themselves that why she is attending functions and they get shani to us...(bartha chanipoyina bada lekunda function ki ochindi....tanu deevista manake shani).

After the death anniversary of husband or divorce most of the restrictions got removed for them but they leave under the community member's observation. One of the participant mentioned that after divorce, she rarely goes to her children school meeting she feel depressed with the words when people talk around her. Regarding the community members interaction especially with the male members, participants will rarely talk to the male members and will not allow male members to home. These single women are more concerned about their status and reputaion in the community. Most of the participants used common phase; " barta chanipoyina

(or) veedakulu ichi andaritho matladadaniki deniki siggu vundali” (after husband death or divorce , she should feel shy for speaking to others)

Some participants in the study said that they still live in their world, by being good or loyal to their husband family members.

One participant mentioned that “I got divorced at the age of 22, after that I did not marry any one till now..I had two children, I work so hard in field whole day for my children...I try to be good to everyone and I rarely speak with other community members(paused for a while) but still people point out me that I had an extra- marital affair and he is investing on me and my children...(Deepthi)

Most of my participants say that they learnt this norms and restrictions from mother-in-laws or mother, from childhood they have seen some widows following these rules in their community and village. These restrictions are passed word of mouth by family members or community elders , so they simply follow them.

4.2.3. Economic status of single women;

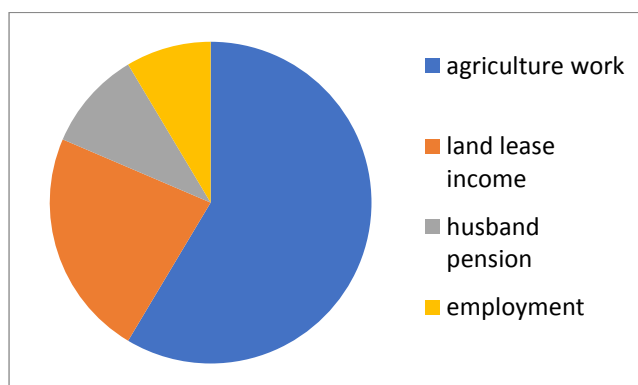


Figure: 4.2.2 Economic status of single women

Single women's conditions after husbands unexpected death or divorce brings a hard time.

Before marriage and after marriage they enjoyed life, after sudden change in the marital status they are suffering now. Most of the participants are working in agricultural fields for living, which they have not done before when their husband was there with them. Participants spent so much of money on their husband's treatment and in courts for official divorce note which pushed them into severe economic problems. One participant mentioned that she spent their whole property on her husband's treatment and now still she and her children are clearing the debt. Another participant says that;

I took loans from different people when my husband was going under treatment. It's been almost 3 years of my husband death. But still me and my children are paying the debt....it is so hard to send my two children to education , my son studying b.com final year, every Sunday he help me in agricultural work...(paused) my daughter studied till 9th class ...she want to study more...(wiping eyes) but I can't afford money on her for education... she says we could have built a big house and spent so much of money on my children education if cancer had not struck to him (Anitha).

Most of the participants say that acquiring property after the change in the marital status is very difficult. One participant tells that she hesitates to claims the property after divorce because she was so afraid of her in-laws and brother-in-law ,till date she never asked about property ;but she want her husband's property to plan children's education and future.

I used to stay with my husband's family...After divorce, I got separated from that home..

Now I am staying independently. Till now I did not ask about my property, I am so scared to ask my in-laws because she was so angry on me about the divorce issue....but now, I want to take my property back because my children are growing up...and I am not economically

stable to send my children to college ...when my children ask me money for tuition fee I feel so bad and pity for them..(Kavitha)

One participant mentioned that whenever she goes to ask property from in-laws home, she was threatened by brother-in-law.

4.2.4 .Children's education

Table: 4.2.2.children's Education

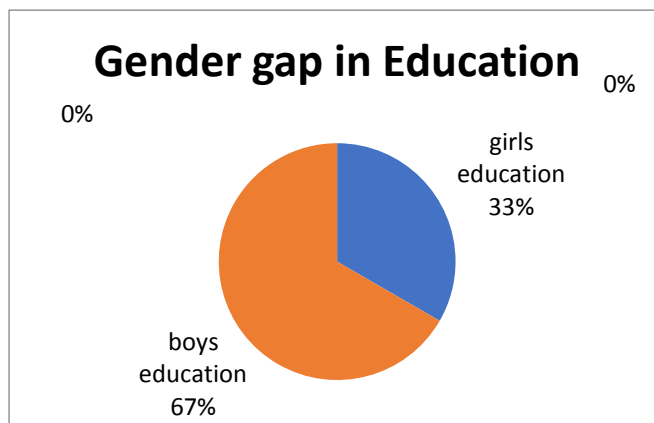
S.N		Sons	Daughters
Still in School	G	4	3
	P	3	2
Stopped after 10th		0	4
In Inter		7	2
Stopped after inter		0	3
B.Tech/ B.Com	D	1-G 2-P	0
BA	D	0	G-2
B.Tech/ B.Com	F	3	0
BA	F	0	1
Total		20	17

G-government school; P-private school; D-Doing degree; F-finished degree

Above data shows the figure of the single women children's education. In total there are twenty boys and seventeen girls .Most of the participants were successful in sending their son's to school or college but not with daughters. According to the data provided in the above table shows the drop out of girls is more than the boys. More over most of the SC category single women girl child dropouts are more compare to the Reddy caste women. One of the participant noted that she work hard for their children, nenu na pillala kosame batukutunna (I living for my children only) but still cannot afford money to send them in a good institutions.

When I and my husband got divorced, my son is studying class 12th in good institution and my daughter in 9th class. After sudden change in the marital status ...household situation was changed ... (paused) my husband left both of them with me and went away to Dubai ...it was a hard situation for me to see my family..For me it is like starting a new life with lot of challenges.. Economically we became poor, now my daughter stopped studying and helping me at home and my son is continuing his studies in government collage... (Aparna)

Gender gap in education:



Above diagram shows the percentage of the participant's children education. Majority of the participant's sons completed higher studies and doing job, girl children stopped after 10th class, and very few completed degree. They say that it is common among our culture and traditions. They are following their history and this notion had built up their mind from their childhood and it is still continuing. Manjula (participant) says "me and my **brother** when we were in adulthood; our futures appear more or less fixed, both in terms of emotional lives and work roles. I assumed that I have to get married, cultivate patience and raise children, put the family interest over the above all else, to accept that women have to sacrifice their wants for the good of the family. My brother was convinced that once he finishes university he has to find a job".

From childhood she has seen her father, relatives and peer groups telling themselves that they cannot afford to be light-hearted about life, bold and dynamic; they have to be serious, not emotional or sentimental and learn to be responsible and dignified.

One of the participants in the study says:

“I have three children two boys and one girl” as a single women taking the responsibilities of the children was a big task for me...due to the present condition of mine..I cannot send my daughter to school, because of finance problem. I am sending my two sons to collage ...so that they will do job and take the responsibilities of their sister..(Paused) any how I have to do marriage for my daughter, she will leave the home...but my sons will stay here only...and I have a hope that they will take care of me.(padma)

Some participants also expressed that they are very concerned about the daughter's safety than boy's safety while sending to school /collage/ employment. They are very much concerned about their daughter character and they believe in protecting their daughter and their own character by themselves. They say for individual character is very important. Participants inform their daughters to not to talk to the people (especially boys) and not to make friends with strangers. One participant said that:

..In our community we will not send our daughter to other place to study. She studied till 10th class, and after that there are no better collages nearby our place..She have to either stay in the residential collage or travel daily...I am not in a position to afford the expenses for the residential collage..And also afraid to send my daughter out for safety issues...(Lakshmi)

Also further she noted:

My mother-in-law stays with us, now a days she is not feeling well...and she have to take complete bed rest...for me it became an extra burden to take care o her...I work more than

eight hours in field for the household expenses and for children's education ...so at this point I took help of my daughter..She helps me in the household work... And she will take care of her brothers and grand -mother in home... (Lakshmi)

4.2.5. Change in marital status of women:

Life before husband's death (or) Divorce:

Majority of the participants in the study said that they love their husbands and they took good care for them. Although there were some arguments, fights or conflicts among them but at the end they were okay with it. They tell fights are common among all the marriages. Few of them said that, because of the husband drinking alcohol, dowry there used to be regular quarrel among us, now after separation our family stays in peace environment. One participant noted that

Me and my husband don't have good mutual understanding..I can say that mutual understanding among the couples was one of the most important factor of happy married life...I am private school primary teacher ...I used to be busy with my school work; he never understood the work pressure of mine. He never used to take care of our children when I am busy with my work....(Nirmala)

Some think that their husbands have the right to scold them whenever they do mistakes. When he is in presence there will be no pressure on them or feel stress to make decisions, they used to do all the necessary arrangements for the households. One participant mentioned that

"I and my husband used to fight but it would not last for long time". My husband used to love me so much and took care of me .wife-husband fights are very common....when he was there everything was good in family...we stayed in luxurious life..I can say that if my husband is in home..i feel more comfortable and tensionless ..(intlo bartha vunapudu ,alanti bada kanipivavu naku) (Aparna)

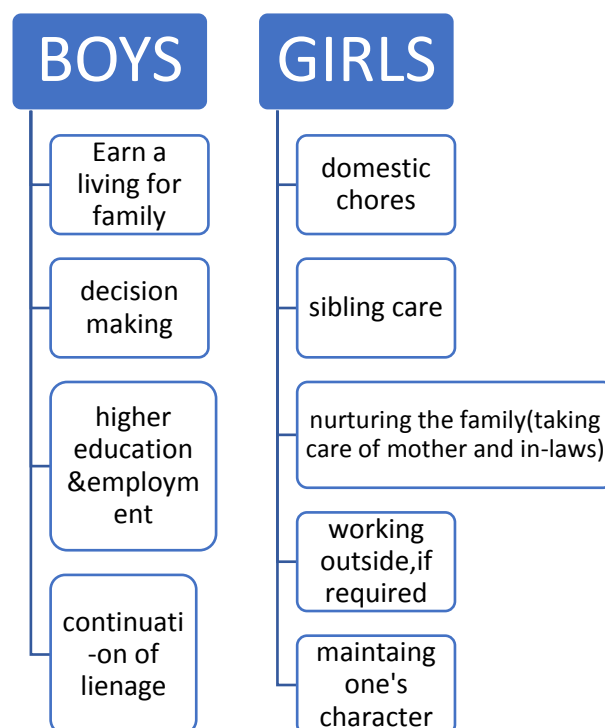
Life after husband death (or) Divorce:

Single women's conditions after the husband's death or divorce brings a hard time. Majority of the participants said that living conditions of them had changed after the change in the marital status; they used to be happy when their husbands are alive. Two participants in the study said that they were never happy with their husbands, after the marriage to till end. One participant mentioned that:

My husband used to drink so much and all the time we had huge fights among us, from the day one of my marriage I faced problem with him.... We used to stay in a joint family...after my marriage situations changed, he used to harass me for money to drink, he never saved money much for household purposei have waited till my children completed primary school for his change in behaviour, but he never changed(paused) for the better future of my children , I got divorced with him...physically and mentally me and my children are happy with the divorce ... but economically we became soo poor because acquiring property after husband divorce became very difficult for me..And now I am working hard to send my children to college.(Riya)

4.2.6. Daughter's education and employment.

- **Difference in value of a son and a daughter's education**



Above data shows the similar responses of the participants for the preference of the daughter and son's education. Majority of the participant's children boys are sent for the higher education and job, girl child is seen in different fields like working at household, taking responsibilities and completing her education. Only few of them were success at sending their daughter to higher education. One of the participants noted that:

Change in the marital status has changed my entire life. I and my children are segregated from the in-laws family after the sudden death of my husband. I have two sons and one daughter. I am sending my son's to school and college. My daughter was elder to them, she completed class 10th. My daughter (srija) helps me in household work....She herself decided not study after seeing the economical conditions of home. She wants' her brothers to be in good position... (Paused) and she is already 22, I am planning to marry her very soon... (latha)

Some participants regret that because of the divorce (or) husband death they failed to give higher education for their girl child because of the financial problems in the home. There small amount of the income and assets are not giving any opportunities to their children education.

One of the participants says:

My Daughter was very good in academics, teachers used to tell me that if she will continue or do like this she will be a Doctor in future. She was interested in Science background. But after the sudden death of my husband ... (stopped)(crying)...she was psychologically disturbed . And she took a break of one year..And she couldn't clear the Emcet exam.. That was a big shock to our family. And I am not in a good position to buy her seat also... now she is staying along with me in home..My son and daughter have an age gape gap of 5 years ...now my son is studying 10th class. My daughter helps me in the household work and agricultural work for the expenses of my son's education(Anitha)

After his death me and my children came out from my in-laws home. Sudden death of him, made us to live in problematic situation. I have two sons and one daughter. My sons take decisions in the family, elder one completed b.com and he is working now, younger one is studying in class 12th. My daughter completed inter second year and staying in home. For further studies she asked me to send to other city but me and my son did not agree for that. We want her to get married as early as possible....(Kavitha)

Few participants mentioned that we have to marry our daughter's that was a big burden for us. Anyhow after marriage daughter goes to the in-laws home, and they have to stay with their sons'.. This is the reason for educating their son's and expecting her son to be in the good position.

Girl child employment

Some single women are successful in sending their girl child to school and collage but not ready to send their daughter for working outside. Majority of the participants give priority for marriage rather doing employment. They want their daughter to live happy life, and she should not face these kind of problems any more in her life (vala kuturu pelli chesikoni santhosanga vundali, elantivi tanu jeevetam apudu barinchodu anade vala asha) one of the participant noted :

I completed till inter second year before the marriage. After my marriage with the support of my husband I did degree. But due do the family problems and children. (Especially my mother-in-law) I did not go for job. After my husband death I became hopeless, everyone nearby home pointed me as a reason for my husband death. So I don't want the same thing to repeat in my daughter case, I want her to get married and then it's her wish and her in-laws wish about the employment...(Komala)

From my maternal and paternal side family not even one girl went out for employment. My daughter studied till degree. And she

Few participants said that they want their daughter to complete their higher studies and get good job. But they say according to the tradition and cultural norms followed in their villages they will marry their daughter very soon and they will not send their daughters for higher education. so they are following the same . One participant mentioned that;

My daughter completed Arts (degree) , recently she got job in one private school as social tuition teacher. She worked there for few months and stopped...because her job timings are from 6-8pm in the night. from the day one of her job ...I heard negative versions of people telling about me...people nearby my home says that ...I got divorced without my husband interest, (wiped tears) and now sending my daughter to job

without marrying her....one day in our balcony , my aunty said in front of my daughter that we should not send your daughter to job because people are thinking she had an external affair near the school..From that day my daughter left the job and sitting alone in home...and helping me in stitching work...(Nirmala)

She further noted:

Even my daughter wanted to go for competitive exams coaching to get the government job. Now in this present condition, I could not provide her sufficient money for her coaching. But still she do hard work, whenever she gets free time in the home she reads news paper, books in the home apart from stitching. She applies for the government jobs but we all know that how difficult it was to get in to it. I always pray to god for her bright future.

The participants also informed that their daughters are aware about the conditions and restrictions that they have to follow. So they never demanded education or employment from the participants.

4.2.7. Consequences of widowhood and divorce on girl child: Education and social status:

The education and social status of girl children are dependent on the widows' employment status, economic condition and pension etc. Family and society support is one of the biggest factors that determine the overall status of single women's children.

Consequences on their education:

Some women are successful in sending their both son and daughter to schools and colleges and maintaining the expenses. Most of them are feeling difficulty to send their daughters to school (or) collages.

Single women who are living by engaging in informal work and without pension say that their children, mainly girl child in the house takes much stress in earning money rather than

studying. Searching for the ways to earn the money for maintaining the family, child also works as salesmen in clothing store, opening a small store of bangles shop, grocery store etc during the festival seasons such as dhussera, diwali , exhibitions etc. Thus, girl child is deprived with education while searching for ways to earn money for maintaining their family. One of the participants, Aruna confided:

...ya after his death, both my son and daughter think much about their future and I also know it will effect on their education. My daughter works along with me in field for earning money to send her brother collage. My son also takes so much of pressure and stress to get job or he thinks how to earn the money. He also distracted slowly from study by thinking much about the future and how to earn money... (Aruna)

Some participants failed to give higher education and they regret for that because of the financial problems. Their small amount of money does not help in giving education opportunities to their children. One of the participants, pallavi noted that

I feel sorry that I could not fulfil my daughter educational needs properly. My daughter was pursuing degree from kakatiya university, but she had to end her course in between....I am not financially good to support her to complete her degree.(pallavi)
She further says:

Even my son wants to go for Telangana state group1 coaching centre to prepare for the exam. But I could not provide enough money for his coaching. Now he is staying at home, coming along with me to work in the field at mornings and preparing at for exam at night. I always pray to god to give bright future for my kids.(pallavi)

The participants were told that their children also aware about the condition of the home and they never demand anything from the participants.

Consequences on their social status:

Majority of the participants in this study informed that their children do face discrimination from their community or family members. One participant noted:

Before my husband death, we all stayed together in in-laws house. My children are born and brought up in their house only. Her husband sudden death (car accident)... (Paused) he came to pick up me from my mother house. In his way he got accident...so everyone pointed out me as the reason for my husband death....after this incident me and my children are sent out of the in-laws home. For every festival the whole family members are invited for their home...except me and my children...I feel so bad for my children...they never celebrated festivals with family members and cousins..(sunitha)

After divorce, it was a hard time for me and my children. When we got separated, my children are very young. I faced so many problems with their education, my daughter psychologically got disturbed with the incident. She is more attached to his father.... But my husband don't want to take her daughter along with her...after this situation, she took almost six months to get cured. Till now she feels shy to talk to the other people in the society....(Kavitha)

Some of the participants in the study will not allow their children to mingle in the community and so no one in the community will get the chance to behave with them differently.

No, I have not found any problem which they face here. My daughter will never go out except to school and markets. No one treated her badly. Even my daughter will not mingle with other children much, she has her school friends they would go out together and sometimes they also come home. So, no one treats them badly (shanthi)

4.3. DISCUSSION:

Phenomenon of gender and single women socio –economic conditions were discussed in the above analysis. The research has emphasized throughout the identities, roles and relationships that are associated with gender have come about as a result of human agency. That is, they are neither innate, nor given, but constructed, made and re-made by human beings as they lived, worked, loved and procreated. Through an examination of male and female relationships in diverse fields, from sexuality to economics, the arguments in the study have drawn attention to a crucial fact; gender norms and regulate male and female behaviour may be tracked back to a very important historical development; the regulation of women to the realms of sexuality, reproduction and mothering.

One of the more intriguing questions that this analysis raises has to do with the tenacity of gender norms. How they survived and why? Even if we are to admit that to sometime in the distant past, women's reproductive functions were deemed important, why should it continue to define and influence subsequent perceptions of women? In these research participants responses to these concerns are brief but immensely suggestive: the subordination of women did not happen as a singular event. Single women especially widows so-called untouchables and their children were all equally subjected to a social and economic system of oppression and exploitation. Gender is a crucial node in the creation of power, religious authority, sexual norms, brute force, or a combination of all these worked to create patriarchal systems.

This system of norms, structure and individual performances of norms together create a social order we recognize as patriarchal. Patriarchy, however, is not merely a regulated system, it is also the world we live in, and embodied in the ways we dress, speak, love and die. Of the several elements which constitute patriarchy, gender is perhaps the most significant, because it allows for the articulation of power within relationships that are fundamental and intimate. In

this sense, gender is not merely an ordering principle, a basis from which to understand how men and women came to be what they are today, but also a relationship. This relationship of the two sexes, mediated by ideas and structures, organizes our world in particular and hierarchical ways. Gender is thus not merely a methodological category but a way of signifying relationships of power.

The status of widows is far inferior to divorce women because they are considered as the unfortunate women, whose sins have brought them widowhood. The system of exploitation does not end in the family but extended outside, ie., at a work place and society. Working women are exposed to the outside world. Being single they become vulnerable, they are victimised and viewed by men as an object of pleasure in the case of the divorced women they are considered as the highly deviant women who are on the lookout for new ventures. But on the other hand they are looked on with suspicion or morally loose women. While widows are sympathized with for their misfortune no chance is left unexplored to exploit them. Sometimes they are lured and often victimized. Exploited by men at the work place and deprived of a respectable position in society they are not spared by their fellow women colleagues who subject to unhealthy discussion on their personal lives so that it upsets their mental balance.

Thus it is seen that these problem exist in isolation, they are interlinked and one perpetuates the other. Under the circumstances it is important to understand and suggest measures to help them minimise their problems and lead a happy life in society. In this connection it was felt that no outsider can have an insight into the intensity of their problems as they themselves can. As such it becomes obvious that relief measures are best explained by them as per their needs. The following are the suggestions made by the single women for their welfare. From the two categories that is divorce and widows most of them have unanimously suggested the need for setting up homes. The next important suggestion is the need to render financial help in order to reduce their problems and children sufferings. There should be a conscious mobilisation of

awareness among all sections of the society starting from the family as a unit to overcome certain misconceptions and practices connected to single women in society and treat them with human dignity and understanding.

From the above discussions some of the measures are suggested by the participants related to the sufferings of being single women. Though the constitution of India guarantees equal rights and opportunities to women in India, in reality the life of women is steeped in misery and subjugation. This is specifically true of single women who are further exploited and victimized.

- The ideas that carers are for boys and marriage for girls should be wiped out. Marriage should not be made as the ultimate aim of a girl's life. Daughters who want to pursue their career should be encouraged and their status should not cause an impediment to progress in their career or in their personal Life.
- As regards the widows, the taboos and restrictions imposed on widows are indeed pathetic. Condemned by society they are forced to lead a miserable life until their death, unlike a widower who remarries.
- The concept of divorce or separation being relatively a novel phenomenon in Indian society, in general there is a greater need for understanding of the problems faced by these women.

Singlehood is looked down in Indian society. Marriages being the ultimate goal of their lives women are taught to tolerate and overcome the stress and strains of marital relationships even under the worst conditions. This is because women once married are considered as a property lost. A woman who breaks does not receive the sympathy or support of the parents or her siblings. On the other hand she has to constantly face the rage of society. Thus due to fear of being subjected to intense psycho-socio problems most women, though they face several conflicts, prefer to live in a marriage than out of it. Thus it is only under severe conditions that

the breakdown of marriage takes place. Under such circumstances greater sympathy should be given to women.

CHAPTER-5

CONCLUSION

5.1. Findings

The main findings of the study shows that among all the single women's children from both the SC and OC (Reddy) caste category girl child got less privilege for education and employment than boys . Of the sixteen single women interviewed for this study, twelve of them do not seem to consider education and employment necessary for girl child and other four say that they want to educate their female children but financially they are not capable for educating them, even though they have not curtailed their sons' education. Majority of the participants, who stay independently, continue to dependent on the members of the family, like brothers-in-law, mothers-in-law, for financial support. As a result, they are following the restrictions and traditions imposed for them by the family and fail to take decisions in the family about their girl child education. On the other hand few participants who are educated and not dependent on any one, taking decisions on their own about their girl child education want their girl child to be educated but still failed to send their daughters to education and employment because of financial problems. There is no much difference regarding the caste, when it comes to the girl child education. Both SC and OC (Reddy) single women are not ready to send their daughter for education and employment. Researched Data shows the difference between boy and girl children education. Among twenty boys and seventeen girl children of participants all boys are studying now and most of them completed their degrees and doing job, but girls most of them did not completed their studies and they were not allowed for employment.

According to the study the gender gap in the education and the problems under tradition, caste and culture among the daughters for access to education and employment are discussed below with three following themes:

Gender socialisation:

- ❖ In the community the expected gendered roles are followed like this-for women it includes looking after family members, nurturing and domestic chores. The role of the men shows as continuing the lineage, earning for the family and decision making.
- ❖ Girl's education and job are sensed differently by the people. For them girl education and employment are not compulsory, in case if she is contributing some amount of money to the family they think it is beneficial for family financial contribution and can have a less burden for dowry in marriage situations .
- ❖ As most of the girl children aspirations and interests in stitching, tailoring and household chores reflects the incorporation of the gender roles.
- ❖ Since there is a priority for marriage, these single women pressure girls to choose for humanities and arts at the secondary level. And it is show there is no difference in the boys and girls in the school.

Marriage:

- ❖ Single women perception about their girl child marriage, is a parental responsibility and social duty that must be accomplished. Moreover, thoughts about the marriage are not expressed by them for girls. The girls understanding about the marriage is sensed to be looking after husband, family members and household chores.

- ❖ These women says that, they did not see girl child education as a threat for traditional norms (or) duties of women, marriage delay etc.. But they spoken that they are bound to the societal expectations and norms, which are completely out of their control.
- ❖ In the both communities the average marriage age is 17-21 years as confirm by the participants. In particular to mala caste in sc category, it is 13-16 years. Early marriage is seen as frequent in mala caste in Wardhannapet community.
- ❖ The dowry practise is still continuing in the both communities, but more relevant and demanded in Reddy caste. Here there is also a practise of marrying girl to the brother-in-law in the family. According to the participants study, sc category follows this tradition more.

Finance problem:

- ❖ Poverty was one of the main causes for not educating their daughters as per the participant's explanation. Sudden change in the marital status had brought them to a terrible situation of poverty.
- ❖ Most of them think that money spending on their daughter's education will be like extra burden to them.
- ❖ Economic conditions of family ads to the society patriarchal setup and the stereotypes, gender roles make it more difficult for access to girl's education.
- ❖ Dowry system is still prevalent in Warangal. For more educated women they have to pay more for a heavy dowry educated groom. Therefore, girl's education makes heavy on the family finances.

The study also shows that after change in marital status of women there was an impact on girl child education and employment. Most of the single women's children were sent to school (or) collage when they lived with their husbands. After sudden change in the status of the family the situation has changed in their homes. Patriarchy and male preference is shown in education. Girl child was affected in for change in the marital status.

5.2. RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATION FOR POLICY

The research study provides a broad understanding of the perceptions of single women on educating their girl children and consequences on their educational status, social status and cultural status in Warangal for Mala, Madiga and Reddy community.

There were no strategies and support systems for single women's children. There should be further research done on the single women's children with respect to their consequences on their education, economic and social status.

The problems faced by the single women and their children are not well recognised in the society. The government should give special attention to middle aged single women to improve the well-being of their girl child and family. And also there should be a strict law on the property rights for single women, so that they can easily get access to their husband's property share after husband's death or divorce. Main finding of the research study shows that due to the finance problem or poor economic conditions they cannot send their daughter to education. Therefore, government should provide scholarship for the girl child for their improvement of well being and education. The non-government organisations should form the group for all the middle aged single women who are living with the children and bring them to a common platform and provide a guidance regarding the education, physical and emotional strength for them.

All the educated people should strive to change the society and outlook through education and social awakening and action in order to raise the status of single women. The right type of education to help them to face the problems of life and build up the right attitude towards life is essential.

In this connection the media like Newspapers, Radio, and TV have a large role to play in reaching the masses. Media should make deliberate attempts to negate the prejudices that exist against singlehood. Above all there should be a sympathetic and human approach towards the problems of single women.

Divorced women have expressed discontent over delay in legal proceedings in the confirmation of separation or divorce. The concept of family courts which is recommended and already accepted should be implemented at the earliest to deal effectively with matrimonial cases.

This research study did not focus on the single women sexuality and remarriage which is the major area to be studied for the further research.

There is also need to do further research on comparison of single women's girl child education with other parts of the country.

The practices, cultural norms and tradition create inflexible structure in the girls which incorporate within the reality and results in accepting the priorities of family over the personal desires or not desiring education. This same kind of phenomenon is not observed in the boys, even though they have the same circumstances. One of the important aspects should be informed that improving the economic or the financial security for the single women is not the solution, they have to give importance to their dignity and self respect in the society. Therefore, our community in general or society should give the self-respect, securing their dignity and allowing them job opportunities and should also provide a chance to participate in the mainstream society. There should be change in the society regarding the traditional mindset

and social norms imposed on the single women (especially on widows). For their children well being our society should accept them as a part of mainstream in the society.

Appendix-1

Questions

- 1) Name
- 2) Village /Town/City
- 3) Area
- 4) Age
- 5) Caste

Questions about Educational status of women:

- 1) What is your educational qualification?
- 2) Are you happy with the level of education you got? Or did you want to study more?
 - (a) If yes, why you did not continue?
- 3) As a young girl, did you dream of taking up a job?
 - (a) If yes, why did you not realize it?
 - (*) what job did you desire to take up?
 - (*) Did you have a role model?
 - (*) was the role model from your extended family or outside?
 - (b) If no, why?
- 4) Are you employed (or) un employed
 - (a) If you are employed? What you are doing?
 - (b) Do your husband /children cooperate with you in domestic work?
- 5) How supportive were your parents/ husband about your employment?

- 6) Do you think your parents should have educated you enough and prioritized your employment before you were married off?
- 7) If your husband helped you with domestic work, would you have been able to take up employment?
- 8) What is your role in the decision making of the family?

Questions about Social status of women:

- 1) Where do you stay – with your parental family/ your marital family/ independently?
- 2) When your husband died/divorced?
- 3) After marriage how long you both stayed together?
- 4) Change in the marital status had any change in the family status?
- 5) What kind of social norms and traditions control single women in your caste?
- 6) Do you think caste has an impact on you?
- 7) Do you think these are all good or some changes are needed?
- 8) Do you have any family pressure for remarriage?
- 9) Did you consider marrying again? If yes/ why you did not marry?
- 10) Do you think widows have a chance to get married often? And do you think they should have a chance?
- 11) What are the norms, practices, customs and traditions that single woman are expected to follow in your family/community?

(Probe: Compare the role of sexes in family, household, livelihood earning, child rearing etc.)
- 12) What may be some advantages you have as a single woman?
- 13) What kind of challenges do you face with society as a single woman?

Questions about Economic status:

- 1) What kind of job your husband did before divorce/died
- 2) Do you receive any financial support – like pension/alimony
- 3) What are the sources of income?
- 4) If you are unemployed / what are the external sources of income?
- 5) Did you not think of taking up a job after you got widowed/divorced? Why?
- 6) Change in the marital status had any impact on your children's education?
- 7) You have any support from your family for educating your children?
- 8) Do you think single women should have access to specific help to deal with finances on bereavement and loss?

Questions about Children's education

- 1) How many children do you have?
- 2) What they are studying
 - (a) Which school/collage boy is sent? Why?
 - (b) Which school/collage girl is sent? Why?
- 3) The degree/stream which they are pursuing now is their own interest or the choice of your family?
- 4) What you want your child to achieve / become in his life?
- 5) How are you planning for it for your child to achieve?
- 6) What is your viewpoint regarding the career aspects of your children in their own fields.
Would you like them to pursue a job?
- 7) What customs are followed in your community regarding girls' education?
- 8) What is the difference in bringing up a girl and a boy?
(Probe: Different values imparted to girls and boys)
- 9) Will you allow your girl children to work?

- 10) Do you think that only certain professions are limited to girls and boys and vice versa as in for boys engineering and girls teaching?
- 11) What is the difference in value of a son and a daughter's education for you?
(Probe: Continuation of lineage, Dowry practice, Economic gains)
- 12) What do you think about girl child employment?
- 13) Don't you see that more and more women are taking up employment?
- 14) Don't you think employment gives a woman a better economic stability and a social status?
- 15) Seeing your situation as widow/divorced, doesn't your daughter think being employed is very important to her?
- 16) Don't you think your daughter should have a job first and foremost before marriage?
(a) If no, why?
- 17) What does your daughter say? Does she want to first get a job and then marry or she does not want to take up a job?
- 18) Do you think will education & employment affect and bring changes in the present lifestyle, role and position of women in the society?
- 19) Don't you think there should be a change in situation when you were married and now when you have to marry your daughter?

ANNEXURE-II
Informed Consent Form

Title of the study: Exploring the perceptions of single women on educating their girl children (A study in Warangal District, Telangana).

Dear participant,

I am a student of MA. Programme in Women's studies programme at Tata Institute of social sciences, Hyderabad. I am doing research on single women's perceptions about their girl child education.

The purpose of the study: To understand the perceptions of single women practices, socio-economic and cultural conditions of women from SC and Reddy category about their girl child education.

You will be asked about the living conditions, change in marital status, family status and educational back ground, etc.

I understand that you may feel discomfort about to open disclosure about the family status, marital status, which inconveniences you. Your participation is voluntary.

It does not cost to participate in this study, nor there any monetary compensation for your participation. Refusal of participation or withdrawal in the study does not cost or benefit. It is completely dependent on the participants.

Your anonymity will be maintained during the data analysis or presentation of findings and results like ;(1) research data transcriptions, video or recording are not saved with your name.(2) Any recordings or files will be in a secured location or stored which are accessible only to a authorised person .(3) you will be assigned with some other name throughout the research data analysis .

Tata Institute of Social sciences, Hyderabad has approved the procedures of this study. If you have any doubt or questions about the study, you can feel free to ask me at anytime throughout the study my email id: rashmiwsa@gmail.com or by contacting Dr. Jayasree Subramanian, Associate professor, Azim premji school of Education, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Hyderabad.

Certificate of consent:

I understand the nature of this study and I agree to participate. I received a copy of this form. I will give permission to the researcher to present this work in oral/ written form or presentation.

I consent voluntarily to be a participant in the study.

Name of participant:

Signature of participant:

Date:

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