

# To Study the Social Adjustment of Single Mothers

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## ARTICLE DETAILS

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to study the social adjustment of single mothers. The sample comprised of 100 subjects of age group 25-40 selected purposively from Nuclear and Joint families of Udaipur and Jodhpur city. Mean and S.D. was calculated to analyze the data. Social adjustment inventory by R.C. Deva (1982) was used. Results revealed that there is a significant difference between the social adjustment of single mothers living in nuclear and joint family.

## 1. Introduction

Family is an institution which nurtures many of the socialization processes of the child. Family is a basic social unit consisting of parents and their children, considered as a group, whether dwelling together or not. It is the main social agent for providing affection and socialization of young children.

**"Family is a fundamental social group in society typically consisting of one or two parents and their children."**

A family is a domestic group of people, or a number of domestic groups, typically affiliated by birth or marriage, or by comparable legal relationships including domestic partnership, adoption, surname and in some cases ownership (as was the case in the Roman Empire). **Family structure** can be defined in terms of parents relationship with children in the household (for example, biological or non-biological), parents' marital status and relationship history (**for example, divorced, separated, remarried**), the number of parents in the family, parents sexual orientation. Today, the nature of family is changing. Marriage is no longer regarded as an essential prerequisite to family life. Divorce rate has increased rapidly resulting in single parent families. Joint family has been replaced by Nuclear family / Single parent family.

**A family can be a single parent family, step family, or a first marriage family. But of all family types, single parent families have made the most gains during the past few decades.**

Parenting is the act or process of raising children. Single parenting on the other hand is exactly the same yet with only one parent raising her child or children. **The Single-parenthood can be defined as when one out of two people who is responsible for the nurturing and child rearing is not available and the work meant for two people is now carried out by only one person.**

The single parent family has also been termed the one parent, the lone parent, and the solo parent family, among others, to describe its structure. **Single parenting** is a full time job that involves hard work, dedication, exhaustion and regular overtime. Single parent families can no longer be viewed as non-traditional families. These families are all around us today. The single parent family is the biggest change society has seen

in terms of the changes in family structures. One in four children is born to a single mother.

## Important reasons of formation of single parent families are discussed below :-

### 1. Death :-

In India many single parent families are because of death of a spouse.

### 2. Divorce :-

The divorce of parents, even if it is an amicable decision, tears apart a family the fundamental unit of Indian society.

### 3. Job separation :-

Now a day's people are concentrating more on their jobs than their families with growing urbanization and materialism parents are compelled to seek job away from their families.

Today not only men but women are also seeking jobs outside their homes. This phenomenon is termed **as part time single parenting.**

**"A single mother may be a woman with one or more children who was previously married but is now separated, divorced or widowed, or someone with children who was never married.** The U.S. Bureau of statistics in 2011 reports the number of single parent families between 2000 & 2008 increased from 27 percent to 29.5 percent in the United States, from 20.7 to 25 percent in the United Kingdoms and from 8.3 in 2000 to 10.2 percent in 2005 in Japan.

**Social adjustment** is very important for success in life. **It is commonly defined as 'change in habitual conduct or behavior which an individual must make in order to fit into the community in which he lives.'**

**Social adjustment** is an effort made by an individual to cope with standards, values and needs of a society in order to be accepted. It involves coping with new standard and value. Emotional adjustment is a pre-requisite for social adjustment. **It has been found that emotionally well-adjusted persons are quick to establish affectional relations with others.**

The study reports on a sample of 207 recently divorced women who are parents of 8th and 9th graders. Overall, the findings suggest that there are 2 routes to poor adjustment among single parents. One consists of the ramifications of inadequate resources, whereas the other involves the consequences of an antisocial orientation. Antisocial behavior

trait is adversely related to quality of parenting, and indirectly influence level of psychological distress through its positive relationship with economic strain and negative events. **Kavas, et al. (2013)** conducted a study on single mothers in Turkey. The study qualitatively examined various cultural and structural factors faced by single mothers in a patriarchal society. Results demonstrated that single mothers faced numerous challenges, including the difficulty to maintain authority in their new family setting; the struggle to keep the sense of a complete family; and the experience of negative attitudes toward single mothers and their children.

**Single parents tended to be more socially isolated than married parents.** They worked longer hours and received less emotional and less parental support. They tended to have less stable social networks and experience more potentially stressful life changes. Only in the household area did single mothers report more difficulties coping than 2-parent mothers. No significant differences were found in any of the five mother-child interaction variables. Different variables predicted mother-child interaction in the two samples. Predicting optimal mother-child interaction in single-parent families were fewer stressful life events, reduced social contact, increased parenting support, and hours maternal employment. Predicting optimal interaction in 2-parent families were fewer stressful life events, satisfaction with emotional support, and the availability of household help. Social contacts, household help, and employment differentially predicted mother-child interactions in the 2 groups. Implications of these differences for descriptions of the effect of social networks and maternal adjustment on child development are considered, as are implications for intervention.

**2. Objectives**

1. To study the social adjustment of single mothers belonging to nuclear and joint family.
2. To compare the social adjustment of single mothers belonging to nuclear and joint family.

**4. Results and discussion**

**Result Table - 1**

Variable	Mean	S.D.	t- value	Standard t- value	Significance
Single Mother (Nuclear Family)	58.16	22.37	2.737	2.66 **	Significant at 0.01 level
Single Mother (Joint Family)	73.36	37.76			

It is clear from the Table – 1 that the Mean and S.D. score of social adjustment of single mother belonging to nuclear family is 58.16 and 22.37 respectively. The Mean and S.D. score of social adjustment of single mother belonging to joint family is 73.36 and 37.76 respectively.

In order to find out the significance of difference t – test was applied. The results revealed that there is a significant difference between the social adjustment of single mother belonging to nuclear family and joint family. Divorce disrupts social networks, as measured by loss or change of friends, and disrupted socializing. Divorced parents have been found to encounter many difficulties in social adjustments. Adjustment

**3. Methodology**

**(a) Sample**

The sample consisted of 100 subjects of age group 25-40 selected purposively from nuclear and joint families of Udaipur and Jodhpur city. Among these 50 respondents were from Single mother group belonging to Nuclear family and 50 from Single mother group belonging to Joint family .

**(b) Variables**

Independent variable : Single mother .  
Nuclear and Joint Family.  
Dependent variable : Social Adjustment

**(c) Tools and Materials :**

The social adjustment inventory by Dr. R.C. Deva (1982) was used. It includes items for the assessment of emotional as well as social adjustment.

For the scoring purpose , there are 3 scoring stencils. Each stencil has a pattern of holes which reveal the responses. Adjacent to each hole in the key is a number indicating the weight to be given to it , if a response appears through the hole.

The inventory has yielded satisfactory reliability and validity indices.The test- retest reliability after a period of two months was .91 . The validity of the two scales has come out to be .81 and .79 respectively.

**(d) Procedure :**

First of all the purpose of the study was explained to subjects which helped to establish proper rapport with them. The Social Adjustment Inventory was administered. Respondents were asked to fill the questionnaire according to the instructions. They were assumed that their responses would be kept confidential. The answered questionnaire were collected and scored according to the manual .The scores obtained were analyzed statistically. Mean and SD values were calculated. T- test has been applied to find out the significance of difference between both groups in reference to variables taken.

among divorced individuals is positively associated with education, employment and large networks of supportive kin and friends. **Single mothers with little education** have low access to social network support, and those who are under severe economic pressure report both high exposure to negative events and low social support. Negative life events and inadequate social support, in turn, are associated with psychological distress and the use of ineffectual parenting practices. **Hong (2011)**concluded that the lived world of Taiwanese sole mothers was replete with daily difficulties marked by isolation, loneliness, social disapproval and rejection. Feelings of sadness and dejection were their daily

companions. Little social support, experienced feelings of helplessness and hopelessness and lack of self confidence to assume responsibility for the physical and mental health needs of themselves and their children. Results indicated that Compared to partnered mothers, lone mothers had a significantly higher risk of poor/fair health after adjusted for mediating factors (living natural parent, emotional support from siblings, social activities, educational attainment, equalized household income, and subjective economic status). . **Single parents tended to be more socially isolated than married parents.** They worked longer hours and received less emotional and less parental support. They tended to have less stable social networks and experience more potentially stressful life changes.

**Keating, et al. (2004)** conducted a study on 20 single, un-partnered, first time mothers to understand the experience of

single mothers during the first three months post - natal. The findings of the study were related to identification of psycho social distress and multiple losses - family rejection, loss of a partner or boyfriend, a gradual erosion of support of friends, alterations to their physical and emotional sense of self and loss of long held hopes and dreams. Studies revealed that not only do single mothers lack support from the society, they also suffer negative social stigma. Findings suggested that that social isolation , downward social comparison , conflict avoidance and self reliance were the emotional self – protective survival strategies used. Strategies to move up economically and emotionally related to the women's desire for a better lift for themselves and their families. Studies suggested that improving social welfare benefits and housing situations for single mothers will definitely help them lead a health promoting lifestyle.

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