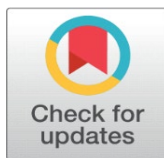# PERCEPTION OF SINGLE MALE AND SINGLE FEMALE TOWARDS MARRIAGE, SEX AND BEING SINGLE

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ABSTRACT

The inequalities people encounter on a daily basis are not typical. When the status of being single is cited as abnormal, stigmatization and inequality are also seen as abnormal behaviors. The way singles are viewed in relation to marriage reveals both their positive and negative sentiments. To find out what kind of perspectives single people have about marriage, their perceptions and attitudes toward marriage and marital status are examined. Different perspectives on marriage and married life are held by single people. Given this context, the current study attempted to compare and examine the opinions and attitudes of single men and women toward marriage, sex, and being single. To contrast and look into the reasons behind the continued single status of these men and women.

Keywords: Marriage, Perception, Single Men and Women

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of marriage as a sociological problem is too broad and intricate to be briefly reviewed synoptically. Despite this, numerous academicians have made an effort to offer a comprehensive understanding of the institution in light of significant sociological discoveries. One of the universal social structure created to govern and manage human existence is marriage. It is closely related to the family institution. In actuality, the two institutions enhance one another. It is an institution that has varied cultural connotations. Although its forms, functions, and goals may vary from society to society, it is an institution that exists worldwide. In sociological terms, marriage is a legally recognized partnership between two people that usually entails social, emotional, and legal links. This institution has a crucial role in forming social norms and values and forms the basis of family structures. It is more than just a legally binding agreement. It promotes emotional stability and security by representing love, friendship, and trust between lovers. Furthermore, marriage is essential to the establishment of families, cultural customs, and the upholding of social norms.

[1]According to Robert H. Loure (1957), "Marriage signified those unquestionably approved unions, which continued beyond sexual satisfaction. Due to the fact that sexual gratification could frequently be obtained outside of marriage, it came to emphasize family life."

Marriage is an institution that is shaped by the behaviors of society. It is a dynamic institution where a variety of factors can work together to influence the population's many variables and create a marital squeeze against both men and women. The elements that have a significant impact on the marriage market include increased levels of education, women's maximum employment involvement, and shifting marital and sexual preferences.

According to Alvin Toffler's (1970) book 'The Future Shock,' society has experienced a significant transformation from the industrial revolution to the super industrial revolution. The concepts of freedom of choice gave rise to traditional family structures and were quickly overtaken by modernity. He maintained that our world is very different from a world where marriage is transient rather than permanent and where family structures are varied and colorful. Divorce is common, and being unmarried is not a crime in the future. He foresaw the dissolution of families and the acceptance of childless couples, gay marriages, and single parenthood. He saw how people's behaviors were evolving as they moved toward a more technologically advanced and contemporary world.

It is clear that the world is changing, and no culture can avoid change in this quickly evolving environment. In actuality, societal change is inevitable in all societies, and any attempt to stop it would be futile. [2]According to Jenson, "Social change can be characterized as a shift in people's behaviors and perspectives." Both of these ideas suggest that social change is necessary for society to improve. For this reason, societal changes have become a fact and a reality. It will be quite difficult for us to adapt to the changing world if we refuse to accept these changes. We are aware that all living societies evolve throughout time, and that survival becomes challenging if they don't. We discover the same thing across history for a very long time. These societal shifts have affected not only human behavior but also the roles and responsibilities of men and women as needed. The most notable social shift has been the shift in marriage patterns.

In their perspectives on modernity, marriage, and families, modernists like Anthony Giddens and Philip W. Sutton (2013) claimed that individualization theory is the observer of changes in family life. The conventional marriage and family structure has changed, as seen by the erosion of binding morality and the rise of individualism and self-interest. When comparing marriage patterns between 1970 and 2002, Haralambos and Holborn (2014) discovered significant changes in both family life and society. They found that the percentage of people living alone and cohabitating increased significantly from 5 percent to 19.9 percent, and the percentage of marriages decreased from 76.2 percent to 53.8 percent.

According to K. B. K. Singh (1992), many people raised the marriage age due to economic pressure. A man who has multiple daughters must save up enough money for their wedding while continuing them to be unmarried. Many women are forced to stay unmarried by these conditions. Taking and giving dowries is illegal in India, even if someone directly or indirectly demands extra money from the bridegroom's parents. Sometimes, because of financial circumstances, parents are unable to satisfy the needs of the groom and his family and spend their entire lives saving money for the cost of the marriage. Bella DePaulo (2015) correctly points out in her research, there is no empirical evidence that married people are marginally happier than single people and that married people are less happy than single people.

According to Darwin (1839), As the family's primary provider and head of household, husbands govern and guide their lives. Wives' roles are restricted to the four walls of the home. Marriage limits one's ability to be happy. Work for financial gain will be the only way to be happy, and there are many opportunities for travel, reading, and having a consistent companion. Many of the study's respondents expressed their worn-out opinions about marriage, which is an example of Darwin's (Ibid) viewpoints. (Cited in John van Wyhe, ed. 2002).

In her book "Challenge of being Single," Marie Edwards (1974) addresses the subject of whether marriage is necessary. Additionally, when she speaks to singles, she gets asked, "What's wrong with you?" How come you're not married, people ask? the majority of single people find the question awkward and bothersome, and it gets worse as they get older. There are significant disparities and inequalities in the social order as a result of the marriage-focused society's domination over singles. These disparities portrayed singles as a negative reference group at the bottom level and marriage as a hegemonic group at the top. According to Marie Edwards (1974), many single people who are content,

healthy, happy, well-adjusted, and actively enjoying their lives that they wish not to get married forever." In this study, a correspondingly higher percentage of single people reported that they enjoy being single. Despite the fact that it is difficult for people to live alone in a society that values marriage, many women have responded in a surprising way that they enjoy their way of life.

Haralambos and Holborn, (2013) Conflict theorists contend that social inequality and difficulties stem from familial socialization, where social discrimination is prevalent among social groups The majority of marriage-minded people subordinate their authority over minorities at the foundation of the family and marriage system, which is where tyranny occurs. For example, married people receive respect and honor in society, control the means of production, and have influence over social standards. The married-dominated, marriage-minded, and family structures view singles as weak, ostracized, and disregarded.

The theory of social stigma developed by Goffman in 1963 is linked to unwanted inequalities. Stigma management is a widespread social phenomenon that takes place anywhere identity standards exist. Therefore, Goffman's theory of stigma is applicable to singles and single life. He asserts that stigma arises anywhere identity standards exist. Single people and single life are always seen as being very different. The two stigma kinds are representations of how people view single people. Similar to how Goffman portrays symbols for stigma, wearing mangal sutra or getting married are regarded as signals of social prestige. Labeling someone, endorsing Goffman's viewpoint, or making disparaging remarks about single people all contribute to a stigmatized and unfavorable attitude toward them. Howard Becker's (1963) More troublesome than physical challenges are mental stigma. It originates in society when single people are labeled, tagged, or branded with derogatory titles. Becker's Labelling-Stigma theory addresses many roles that are unique and that society labels as deviant behavior rather than typical roles that are expected and reflect our life. In "normal society," staying single is viewed as deviant behavior. As a result, married people cite or call them horrible names that have a direct impact on their mental health.

William Fielding Ogburn, (1922) Cultural lag, in Ogburn's opinion, is the term used to describe the societal issues that arise when society takes a while to adopt new technologies. As a result, despite modern culture and modernization, single people still fall behind married or marriage-minded people. While a lot of people are influenced by and leaning toward modern society, single people are not accepted in the same culture. Marriage is still promoted as the ideal and desirable social position by cultural ideals. Therefore, rather of adapting or developing creative significance, singlehood or being single occupies a stigmatized role.

Institutions are composed of role connections, according to William J. Goode (1960), who also uses the concept of "role strain" to approach social action and social structure. They experienced challenges in carrying out their role responsibilities. Role interactions are viewed as a series of "role bargains" and as an ongoing process of choosing between different role behaviors in which each person aims to lessen the burden of his position. As a result, many people experience role strain as a result of these role interactions. Singles, in particular, feel pressured to fulfill many roles at one point or to live up to parental expectations. It makes it difficult for single people to live regular lives and may cause them to reclaim their duties. One of the main social duties of the social system is that a person should or must get married during their lifetime. These roles' responsibilities and pressures aid in understanding how an unmarried person fulfills socially required roles, and these viewpoints are utilized to understand how single people deal with role conflict, role strain, and role deprivation while maintaining their single or unmarried status.

1.2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1) To compare and investigate the views and attitudes of single male and single female on marriage, sex, and singledom.
2) To compare and investigate why these single male and single female remained single.

2. LOCALE OF THE STUDY

In view of the objectives mentioned above, the proposed study, has been conducted in different areas of S.A.S Nagar, Mohali, Punjab.

2.1. SAMPLING AND TECHNIQUES FOR DATA COLLECTION

The population of married people can be found; however, it is difficult to locate unmarried people. Due to this constraint, the study's respondents were selected using the snowball sampling technique. In the current study, case study method was employed to have an in-depth understanding of the problem. The study includes individuals who are single, never married, divorced, widowed, or widower and who do not have a partner. The study comprised respondents who were thirty-five years and older. Data for the collection came from forty respondents. In order to compare and examine the opinions and attitudes of single men and women toward marriage, sex, and being single, as well as to compare and examine the reasons behind their continued single status. For each category, twenty men and twenty women were chosen. This provided the researcher with a comprehensive grasp of how single men and women perceive marriage, sex, and singledom, as well as the reasons behind their continued single status.

Table 1: Showing perception of respondents regarding statement "Would you like to live your entire life without a companion?"

Response	Male	Female	Total
Yes	10(50)	12(60)	22(55)
No	6(30)	4(20)	10(25)
Can't say	4(20)	4(20)	8(20)
Total	20(100)	20(100)	40(100)

Figures in parentheses column wise indicate percentages

From the narratives of the respondents and Table 1 it could be said that there were 50 percent of male respondents and 60 percent of female respondents who said that they would 'yes' desire to live their entire lives without a companion. There were 30 percent of male respondents and 20 percent of female respondents who did not want to live their entire life without a partner. It was found that 20 percent of male respondents and female respondents who were unsure if they would like to live their entire lives without a companion.

Table 2: Showing perception of respondents regarding statement "Do you think singles are happy in comparison to married couples?"

Response	Male	Female	Total
Yes	14(70)	15(75)	29(72.5)
No	4(20)	3(15)	7(17.5)
Can't say	2(10)	2(10)	4(10)
Total	20(100)	20(100)	40(100)

Figures in parentheses column wise indicate percentages

From Table 2 it could be summarized that 70 percent of male respondents and 75 percent of female respondents who believes that singles are happy in comparison to married couples. It was found that there were 20 percent of male respondents and 15 percent of female respondents who disagree with the statement that singles are happy in comparison to married couples. It could be said that there were 10 percent of male respondents and female respondents who were not sure about the same thing. The study supports the findings of Marie Edwards (1974), who states that many single women enjoy their way of life.

From the narratives of the respondents, it could be said that those single respondents who are voluntarily single are living their lives happily. Respondents who are single for other reasons, however, continue to compare their lives to those of married couples and view them as their model for a happy ending. They feel that their lives would have been happier if they had been married. They feel isolated, depressed, unwanted, and in need of a life companion. Conversely, those individuals who choose to remain single feel more fulfilled and think their lives are less stressful than those of married persons.

Table 3: Showing perception of respondents regarding statement "Do you believe that marriage makes life more stable?"

Response	Male	Female	Total
Yes	2(10)	1(5)	3(7.5)
No	8(40)	15(75)	20(50)
Can't say	10(50)	4(20)	14(35)
Total	20(100)	20(100)	40(100)

Figures in parentheses column wise indicate percentages

From Table 3 it could be said that there were 10 percent of male respondents and 5 percent of female respondents who believe that 'yes' marriage makes life more stable. It was found that there were 40 percent of male respondents and 75 percent of female respondents who 'did not' believe that marriage makes life more stable. There were 50 percent of male respondents and 20 percent of female respondents who were 'not sure' about the statement that marriage makes life more stable.

Based on the respondents' narratives, it can be inferred that a higher proportion of female respondents think marriage would not lead to stability in their lives because they stated in their narratives that they would have to handle a lot of responsibilities after marriage. They don't want to spend their lives working at such thankless jobs. They admitted to seeing their married friends, whose lifestyles haunt them by taking on a great deal of responsibility by themselves. They said that after being married, their married female friends had completely changed as people and long to return to their former lives, which they really enjoyed.

Table 4: Showing perception of respondents regarding statement "When someone asks you why you're single, how does that make you feel??"

Response	Male	Female	Total
Awkward	6(30)	5(25)	11(27.5)
Bothersome	7(35)	3(15)	10(25)
Feels anxious	5(25)	6(30)	11(27.5)
Feels angry	15(75)	18(90)	33(82.5)
Affects me a lot	5(25)	6(30)	11(27.5)
Does not affect me	15(75)	14(70)	29(72.5)
I don't care about what people think	15(75)	14(70)	29(72.5)
Total	20(100)	20(100)	40(100)

Figures in parentheses column wise indicate percentages

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

From the narratives of the respondents and Table 4 it could be summarized that there were 30 percent of male respondents and 25 percent of female respondents find it 'awkward' when someone asks them why they are single. There were 35 percent of male respondents and 15 percent of female respondents who get 'bothersome' when someone asks them why they are single. It was found that there were 25 percent of male respondents and 30 percent of female respondents who 'feels anxious' about the same thing. There were 75 percent of male respondents and 90 percent of female respondents who get 'angry' about the same thing. There were 25 percent of male respondents and 30 percent of female respondents who gets 'affected a lot' when someone asks them why they are single. 75 percent of male respondents and 70 percent of female respondents 'does not get affected' when someone asks them why they are single. There were 75 percent of male respondents and 70 percent of female respondents who 'don't care about what people think'.

From the narratives of the respondents, it could be summarized that single male and female do not care about society what they believe or what they say. They claimed to be well-educated and to know how to handle these individuals. Those who compel them to marry are falling behind, they said. Marriage is still portrayed as the ideal and desirable social status by cultural norms, and people still lag behind despite modern culture and modernization. It is imperative that these illiterate and medieval individuals adapt to modern society and its culture.

Table 5: Showing perception of respondents regarding statement "Do you think living alone is challenging?"

Response	Male	Female	Total
Yes	6(30)	9(45)	15(37.5)
No	9(45)	7(35)	16(40)
Can't say	5(25)	4(20)	9(22.5)
Total	20(100)	20(100)	40(100)

Figures in parentheses column wise indicate percentages

From the narratives of the respondents and Table 5 it could be summarized that there were 30 percent of male respondents and 45 percent of female respondents believe that living alone is challenging. There were 45 percent of male respondents and 35 percent of female respondents who do not believe that living alone is challenging. It was found that there were 25 percent of male respondents and 20 percent of female respondents who are not sure that living alone is challenging or not.

Table 6: Showing perception of respondents regarding statement "Do you experience role-strain? That playing several parts at once puts pressure on you?"

Response	Male	Female	Total
Yes	9(45)	10(50)	19(47.5)
No	7(30)	7(30)	14(35)
Can't say	4(20)	3(15)	7(17.5)
Total	20(100)	20(100)	40(100)

Figures in parentheses column wise indicate percentages

From the narratives of the respondents and Table 6 it was found that there were 45 percent of male respondents and 50 percent of female respondents who do experience role-strain and that playing several parts at once puts pressure on them. There were 30 percent of male and female respondents who do not experience role-strain and that playing several parts at once puts pressure on them. It could be said that there were 20 percent of male respondents and 15 percent of female respondents who are not sure that do they experience role-strain or not. The study supports the findings of William J. Goode (1960), who states that Singles, in particular, feel pressured to fulfill many roles at one point or to live up to parental expectations.

From the narratives of the respondents, it could be summarized that single individuals do not want to get married because they fear having to take on a lot of responsibilities and that staying single would allow them to live happy and stress-free lives. According to the respondents, family life causes a lot of stress, which they want to avoid. They will be forced to accept obligations they do not want to take on by their partners when they marry or enter into a relationship. They feel pressured to fulfill many roles.

Table 7: Showing perception of respondents regarding statement "What made you decide to stay single?"

Response	Male	Female	Total
Financial constraints	15(75)	8(40)	23(57.5)
Marriage has evolved into a business	12(60)	17(85)	29(72.5)
Independence is lost	14(70)	16(80)	30(75)
Fear of intimacy	5(25)	11(55)	16(40)
Being single can provide you the chance to concentrate on your personal development	15(75)	17(85)	32(80)

Past relationship trauma	9(45)	5(25)	14(35)
So that I can see anybody I desire	12(60)	4(20)	16(40)
Without familial responsibilities, single people are content	8(40)	7(35)	15(37.5)
I put my own needs and wants first	6(30)	5(25)	11(27.5)
Total	20(100)	20(100)	40(100)

Figures in parentheses column wise indicate percentages

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

From the narratives of the respondents and Table 7 it was found that there were 75 percent of male respondents and 40 percent of female respondents are single because of 'financial constraints.' There were 60 percent of male respondents and 85 percent of female respondents believe that marriage has evolved into a business because of this reason they are still single. There were 70 percent of male respondents and 80 percent of female respondents are still single because they believe that 'independence is lost' because of marriage. There were 25 percent of male respondents and 55 percent of female respondents who 'fear intimacy'. It was found that there were 75 percent of male respondents and 85 percent of female respondents who believe that 'being single can provide the chance to concentrate on your personal development'. There were 45 percent of male respondents and 25 percent of female respondents who are still single because they suffer 'past relationship trauma'. There were 60 percent of male respondents and 20 percent of female respondents are still single 'so that they could see anybody they desire.' There were 40 percent of male respondents and 35 percent of female respondents are still single because they believe that 'without familial responsibilities, single people are content.' There were 30 percent of male respondents and 25 percent of female respondents are still single because they 'put their own needs and wants first.'

From the narratives of the respondents, it could be summarized that single people do think that marriage has become a business since women want wealthy husbands and men want responsible, hardworking wives who look after their entire family. Respondents stated that they had seen their parents, married acquaintances, relatives and some also talked about their past life experiences and concluded that freedom is lost after marriage. Married people are so busy with their life that they don't have time for personal development. Family was important to individuals in the past, but now everyone is focused on money. Relationships are not valued, thus living alone and content is preferable.

3. CONCLUSION

This study is unique in that it includes both male and female respondents who have never married, divorced, or are widow or widower. These impressions show that single people have differing views on remaining single in the absence of a life mate. People perceive being single to be detrimental, yet single people do not. They believe they enjoy a stress-free, cheerful, and contented existence. The respondents of the study are contentedly embracing their single status.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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None.

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