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## **A STUDY ON CHALLENGES FACED BY SINGLE PARENTS**

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### **ABSTRACT:**

The Research paper presents “A study on challenges faced by Single Parent” is a descriptive study. This study is carried out in Vadodara study from the single parents. This research proposal aims to investigate the many challenges faced by single parents and their children in terms of psychological, economic, and social aspects. Single parenthood has become a widespread feature in modern society due to a variety of factors, including divorce, separation, and the ability to raise a child independently. Understanding the unique challenges faced by single parents is crucial in the development of targeted support structures and policies to ease their challenges. To gain a comprehensive picture of the challenges faced by single parents, this study will use a mixed-methods approach that includes quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. To capture a broad range of experiences, the study will focus on a diverse group of single parents from various socioeconomic backgrounds, ethnicities, and geographical locations. Single parents face significant stress, loneliness, and loneliness, as well as difficulties in terms of mental health. In addition, the report will explore the economic challenges faced by single parents, such as financial difficulties, limited employment opportunities, and difficulties balancing work and childcare obligations. In addition, the study will examine the economic implications of single parenthood, including its effect on social support networks, stigma, and the potential impact on children's social development.

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**KEYWORDS:** Single parent, Divorce, Separation, Single Fatherhood & Single Motherhood

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### **INTRODUCTION :**

In India, single parents signify father or mother the one who is staying alone with their children without his/her partner, because of death, divorce or separation. In a case of divorce/separation normally, the mother is given custody of the children. Divorce is the most street-full experience that one can have in adulthood. It can be also drastically upsetting to children. Life is tough for most single parent families in India. Yet many people go for divorce or separation rather than stick in an unhappy relationship, even though they know the struggling of adjustments. A single parent need not be the natural mother or father of the child as some person choose to become the single parent by fostering the child. The organic or natural parents are not able to take care of the child due to illness, a death of one or both parent, an incapability of the extended family to care for the child or parental abandonment, extra-marital affairs etc. Most of the time if a mother is alive; she hold on to the custody of her child or children.

The term single parent family is different from the term female-headed family. A single parent family, by definition, can be either male headed or female headed. According to Thompson and gongla, “single parent families are those in which a single parent father or mother is raising his or her children”. In many societies, the duty of the mother are more clearly defined than that of the father. To be mother means to be nourished, diapered, cuddled, loved, cherished, talked to, and cared for. The need for maternal care is biologically determined. Lack of mothering endangers the child's mental health and intimidate their survival. In comparison fathering involves less nature and more culture. In former times mother represented love and sympathy, while father symbolized discipline and ethics. A Single parent father is involved in mothering activities such as feeding, diapering and bathing the child etc. If the fathers are away for long period this can harm a child's psychological development, especially if happens before school age. In families where fathers or controlling, super visionary personality is not in the house, boys may run and greater risk of becoming derelict. Single parenthood can be the very tough task and it is challenging. The interplay and they are brought up in the family the difference can be very visible while comparing to the both parents family. In single parent family, they include their children in the day to day running of the family.

The Single parent often discusses topics with their children that parents in two parent households often discuss with each other; they believe that the children in the family are the right person to address their situation. The teenager may experience many adult responsibilities far earlier. Being a single parent is not at all an easy task. You have to go through various problems and face the challenges all alone. Not only parents but single parenting can cause various types of problems to children also as well as they may suffer from psychological disorders, depression, anxiety, and various other health-related issues. Single Parenting is stressful issue as they tries to fulfill by taking up all the responsibilities.

There are so many reasons which can lead to single parenting like the death of another parent, divorce, etc. Regardless of whatever may be the cause behind single parenting, there's one thing we as a society could do that changes our thinking towards them and support them in this journey so that problems faced by single parents decrease. Let us now know about the problems faced by single parents they are as follows –

### **Problems Faced by Single Parents:**

Lack Of Financial Support	Handling Legal Documents
No Social Support	Stereotypical Society to Deal With
Being Pressurized To Get Remarried	Children's Suffering From Psychological Problems
Popping Up Of Proposals And In A Balanced State Of Mind	Children's Getting Engaged In Wrong Activities
Lack of Spending Quality Time with Your Child	Children's Getting Engaged In Wrong Activities

#### ***Lack Of Financial Support :***

Financial problems are one of the major issue faced by single parents, especially single mothers. They have to see after household activities and then work out to pay their expenses. No financial support is available to them, they have to manage everything by their own and at the same, and they have to focus after their children and their needs.

#### ***No Social Support:***

In this society, single parents are always considered weaker and the one who needs support. Especially women, there are so many problems faced by single mothers in society. And what they need is Social support which is not provided to them. They have to be there for themselves without expecting it from someone else from the society.

#### ***Being Pressurized To Get Remarried:***

Yes, single parents have to suffer through this social pressure i.e. to get married. They keep on getting proposals and are being forced by their families to accept them and live their life comfortably. This is a problem faced by single-parent families. They have to keep listening to an undying list of reasons for getting married all the time. And the fact that always bring out them is should they think again over all that advice? Will remarriage be a good option?

#### ***Popping Up Of Proposals And In A Balanced State Of Mind:***

Being a single parent you will often be getting so many proposals for remarriage. And you are always in an indecision state of mind where you will be stuck between numerous thoughts coming to your mind like should they accept the proposal or not?

#### ***Lack of Spending Quality Time with Your Child:***

Single parents, i.e., face a significant challenge. They are unable to spend quality time with their children. They continue to live in this resentment because they have so many responsibilities on their chest to tackle. They find that time is extremely important in their lives, and they often find it difficult to spend some quality time with their children. And this makes parents anxious about whether their child will be confident enough? Is their child strong enough to cope with this world's chaos? Will they be able to withstand and cope in this world?

#### ***Handling Legal Documents***

Being a single parent, especially a mother, means you have to deal with a variety of challenges in handling their children's legal documents. Their names are often required in many court documents, as in India, and they often have to go through so many extra-legal steps to present the papers in their favour, and as a single parent they will always have to deal with legal documents. Single mothers face one of the most difficult challenges in handling legal documents.'

#### ***Stereotypical Society to Deal With:***

Society always judges single parents very easily especially when it comes to woman's they have to go through a lot of problems living in a society full of stereotypes. Single parents were never being treated just like other parents. Society instead of understanding their difficulties/problems creates more problems for them like not behaving properly, always making they feel weak and what not. But, despite the challenges faced by single mothers. They are very strong. They have pick out a path to go through which is not at all easy. They are superwomen who deal with their issues all alone and society must change their point of view towards single mothers and need to understand the problems they are facing.

***Children's Suffering From Psychological Problems:***

Single parenting not only affects parents negatively, but also causes problems for children. Children with single parents often have a lot of psychological problems, such as depression, anxiety, and inability to communicate with others, loneliness, and other health problems. You should arrange for child care for your children. And it is often said that single parents leave alone because they do not mix up with other children's, they have a lack of confidence, and they also live in fear of being asked about their other parent.

***Children's Getting Engaged In Wrong Activities:***

There are so many responsibilities a single parent has to deal with due which they are not able to look after their children and there's a very higher chance that lack of spending time with their children can lead to children getting engaged in wrong Activities like consuming drugs, alcohol, etc. And it is also being observed that many of these children either they are not good at studies or they leave their schooling in the middle itself. A child counsellor will help you to get out of your wrong habits.

***Difficulty in Trusting People:***

They have to deal with a household job as well as work out how to budget their money, which results in leaving their child with someone else. And this society is full of bad guys. There are so many people who pretend to be nice, but on the outside, they have a different perspective or point of view. It is also difficult for parents to trust people. Single parents face the biggest challenge.

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**REVIEW OF LITERATURE:**

- **Mackay and Ross (2005)** discussed the benefits of single parenting on children, stressing that although it raises the chance of negative, emotional and behavioral consequences, other factors play a role in determining the outcomes, such as parental age, education, income, and social assistance. According to the authors, successful outcomes for children in single-parent households are more likely when there are favorable outcomes.
- **Swain and Pillai (2005)** investigated the household arrangements of females with children based on the National Family Health Survey. They found that a significant number of females (51%) head their own households, with some of them living with their own households, while others are living with their parents or in-laws (28%) or other caregivers (10%). The report also highlighted that divorced and separated females are less likely to be the head of the household than widows.
- **Maldonado and Nieuwenhuis (2019)** addressed the main challenges faced by single parents, presenting a balanced perspective that acknowledges the benefits and wellbeing benefits associated with single parenting. The study examined a variety of factors, including general contributions, insufficiency, child safety, and stereotypes, as well as the effect of employment on single-parent children upbringing.
- **Cote et al. (2003)** identified income was cited as a significant contributor to poor outcomes in single parent households. Children from lower income families have more difficulties in their daily lives than those from more prosperous families. This disparity was attributed to the family, school and neighborhood conditions, as well as a lack of access to financial and psychological resources, according to the authors.
- **Bennett et al. (2005)** gave insights into the traumatic experiences and profound sense of disorientation faced by single parents after the death of their partner. The authors emphasized that the pain associated with such loss could be similar to the death of a child, highlighting the significant negative effect of these life events on single parents.
- **Amanto, Paul R. (2000)** pointed out that the single parent families' experiences differ greatly, depending on whether the parents' divorce or separation provides relief from conflicts or resulted from unexpected stress or illness. The author highlighted that Children will feel a sense of relief and joy when separation removes conflict from the household. However, children may also experience a sense of loss and longing when a good and noble parent is no longer present due to unexpected circumstances.
- **Tischler, M. (2008)** analyzed resettlement and reintegration: Single mothers' reflections on their experiences of homelessness, and the research sought to address psychosocial aspects of single mothers' resettlement journeys during a period of homelessness. Most women begun the process of resettlement by improving their physical appearance, according to findings. Women had achieved personal growth by escaping violence, overcoming poverty, and creating new opportunities for themselves and their children.

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**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:*****OBJECTIVES:***

- To understand the effect of single parenting on individuals who assume the sole responsibility of raising their children in the absence of another parent.
- To explore the specific challenges and opportunities faced by single parents, whether they are fathers or mothers, in their quest to raise children independently.
- To determine the socioeconomic status of a single parent in Vadodara city.
- To investigate the challenges faced by a single parent with respect to age and gender of the child/children.

**UNIVERSE:**

The universe consists of all survey elements that are suitable for the inclusion in the research study. The universe for the present research study includes the single parents of Vadodara City in Gujarat.

**SAMPLE:**

The sample consists of thirty single parents.

**SAMPLING METHOD:**

Purposive sampling method was used to select a particular unit for the present study which comprises of thirty single parents. The single parent's motivation was to have the ability to solve the societal or financial challenges as a single parent, and they also have a positive message to other single parents to get back to normal, which could improve society's image of the single parent. They can also be helpful in obtaining the most accurate conclusions from the study.

**TOOLS OF DATA COLLECTION:**

Questionnaire and Interview Schedule were the tools for the present study.

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**FINDINGS:**

According to the present study, 80.0 percent (n=24) are female respondents, while 20.0 percent (n=6) are male respondents.

From the present study, it is found that 36.70 percent (n=11) respondents are under the age category of 35-45, 33.30 percent (n=10) respondents are under the age category of 25-35, while 20.0 percent (n=6) respondents are under the age category of above 45 and 10.0 percent (n=3) respondents are under the age group of 18-25.

From the present study, the employment status of single parents are found that 50.0 percent (n=15) respondents are doing Full-time job, while 26.70 percent (n=8) respondents are unemployed, while 16.70 percent (n=5) respondents are doing Part-time job, while 6.70 percent (n=2) respondents are doing other work.

Considering the present study, the type of accommodation of single parent are found that 63.30 percent (n=19) respondents are living at Self-owned home and 36.70 percent (n=11) respondents are living at a Rented home.

From the present study, the respondents number of children are found that 50.0 percent (n=15) respondents are having two children's while, 40.0 percent (n=12) respondents are having one children and 10.0 percent (n=3) respondents are having three children's.

From the present study, it is found that 63.30 percent (n=19) respondents are live alone with their child and 36.70 percent (n=11) respondents are not living alone with their child.

The respondents causes to become a single parent are found that 60.0 percent (n=18) respondents are widowed while, 36.70 percent (n=11) respondents are divorced and 3.30 percent (n=1) respondent are having other reason.

Talking about the time period to been a single parent are found that 33.30 percent (n=10) respondents are single parent from 1-2 years while, 30.0 percent (n=9) respondents are single parent from above 5 years while, 26.70 percent (n=8) respondents are single parent from 3-4 years while, 6.70 percent (n=2) respondents are single parent from 4-5 years and 3.30 percent (n=1) respondent are single parent from less than 12 months.

Looking at respondents personal view, it is found that 53.30 percent (n=16) respondents are able to concentrate on whatever they were doing and 46.70 percent (n=14) respondents are not able to concentrate on whatever they were doing.

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**CONCLUSIONS:**

Regarding the background variable, it can be concluded that the majority of respondents belong to the 35-45 age group. In addition, most of the respondents are female. Based on the answers given, it can be concluded that the majority of them worked full time. During our conversation, they told me that they have to do work full-time because they had no other choice and that meeting the needs of their household was crucial. Regarding the living arrangements of the respondents, the majority of them are have self-owned home. Most of the respondents also have two children.

Most of the respondents were divorced and separated. In addition, becoming a single parent takes one to two years. It can also be said that single parents could not focus on their work due to various factors including financial difficulties, social stigma, problems at home and others that affected their mental health and made it difficult for them to focus on their own lives. They could not sleep because they were constantly worried about what might happen in the future. Such thoughts ran through in their head all the time. It can be concluded that most of the respondents can manage their fast and busy life. They can also feel warmth and love towards loved ones. Most of them had time to spend with their children. They could make decisions about things.

They become physically ill due to personal worries, because they said that they sometimes get depressed because of constant thinking. If we talk about the current state of their parents, it can be concluded that most of them are have contact with their parents. And they also receive moral and financial support from parents. They get good ideas from their parents about how to do things. Most parents come to them when they have problems or need

advice. Many of the respondents children like to hear what they think. And many of them believe that negative attitudes towards single parents are on the rise. They feel good about their current work and family life. Many of them experience discrimination at the workplace for being a single parent, while interviewing a single parent, one of them shared the experience of discrimination that at their workplace, so many are used to mistreat them or talk bad about them behind their backs. They also isolate themselves from the work group due to being a single parent.

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## SUGGESTIONS:

According to the major findings and conclusions of the present study, it can suggested that Government should open counselling centres for single parents whose financial condition is not good can come here for their counselling at lower cost. Because when I did this study, I found out that single parents are often in depression in their lives, due to which they do not pay attention to work and due to lack of money, they can't even go to a counsellor. So the government should work on this.

The government should form a committee where a single parent who has been discriminated at work place or elsewhere can come here and file a lawsuit. Because I came to know that people do not consider single parent as normal and look down on them, disrespect them and even talk bad about them. Due to which single parents aren't considered to be safe. And after seeing all this, they also fell into depression. So because of this problem, if the government takes legal actions against those who harass single parents and exclude them from workplace, then the culprit will not repeat this.

Establish support groups specifically designed to address the challenges faced by single parents, focusing on providing emotional support, sharing information, and offering advice. Develop programs to assist single parents who are out of work in finding suitable employment opportunities, such as job training, career counselling, and access to childcare services. To relieve financial burdens and promote economic stability, advocate for increased financial assistance for single parents, including subsidies for housing, childcare and education.

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